

## Frequently Asked Questions

### → Immigration procedures

#### What is the IND?

The IND stands for the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst), the government agency under the Ministry of Justice and Security that handles immigration matters in the Netherlands.

At VU Amsterdam we are not the IND, but we act as intermediaries between students and the IND to assist with student's immigration application process.

#### What's the difference between a long stay entry visa (MVV) and a residence permit (VVR)?

- **MVV:** A visa that allows entry into the Netherlands/Schengen area. It is a sticker in your passport, valid for three months after issuance. Must be collected from the Dutch embassy/consulate within 90 days.
- **VVR:** A residence permit that allows you to legally stay in the Netherlands. It looks like an ID card, and you must collect it from the IND before the MVV expires. It is valid for the entire duration of your study programme, plus three months.

#### Do I need an MVV or VVR?

All non-EU citizens need at least a VVR to stay in the Netherlands legally.

Some nationalities also require an MVV to enter the Netherlands. For more details, check [www.vu.nl/visa](http://www.vu.nl/visa).

#### I have non-EU nationality, and a long-term residence permit from another European country. Do I still need a VVR?

Yes, your European residence permit only allows you to stay in other European countries for up to 90 days. Since your program at VU lasts longer than this, you'll need a Dutch residence permit (VVR).

#### I have a study residence permit from another EU country. Do I still need a VVR?

If you have a valid study residence permit from another EU country and will stay in the Netherlands for less than 360 days, you don't need a VVR. You will be able to make use of the [intra-EU mobility scheme](#). We would inform the IND of your incoming mobility on your behalf, and students have to provide us with the required documents (the same as those required for the VVR procedure).

#### My MVV is only valid for three months. Do I need to extend it?

No, MVVs are always valid for three months, which gives you enough time to travel to the Netherlands and collect your VVR.

**Is an MVV the same as a short-stay visa (VKV)?**

No, they are different:

**MVV:** For long stays (over 90 days)

**VKV:** For short stays (up to 90 days).

Being exempt from a VKV does not automatically exempt you from needing an MVV. You cannot study on a tourist visa. If you need an MVV but entered on a VKV, your VVR application will not be accepted.

**I have a nationality that requires an MVV but also hold a residence permit for a Schengen country. Do I still need an MVV?**

If your Schengen residence permit is valid until close to the start of your semester, you don't need an MVV to travel to the Netherlands. However, if your Schengen permit expires before you travel to the Netherlands, you'll need an MVV to enter the country.

**I have applied to extend my Schengen residence permit, but it hasn't been approved yet. Do I still need an MVV?**

Yes, the IND does not accept confirmation of an extension request as an exemption from the MVV requirement. We need a copy of your new Schengen permit to apply for your residence permit without an MVV.

**Can I collect my MVV in a country where I currently live but is not my native country?**

Yes, if:

- You currently live there, long-term (over three months).
- Your residence permit in that country is valid long enough for you to collect your MVV and travel to the Netherlands.

If not, you'll need to collect your MVV in your home country. Or another country [designated by the Dutch government](#), if collection in your home country is not possible due to lack of Dutch representation.

**There is no Dutch embassy in my home country. Can I choose where to collect my MVV?**

No, you must collect your MVV at the location specified by the Dutch government. Use this [website](#) to check the location. For example, students from Mauritius must collect their MVV in Tanzania.

**Do I need to bring my IND approval letter to my MVV appointment?**

This depends on the embassy, so we would recommend checking this with them directly. We recommend scheduling your MVV appointment 2-3 weeks after receiving our approval email. It usually takes this long for us to receive the IND's approval letter by post, which we'll then email to you.

**Can I change the embassy where I'll collect my MVV?**

If you made a mistake choosing the embassy we can request a change, but you'll need to provide a valid reason. Email us with your request and explanation so we can forward it to the IND.

**Exception:** If you're a Chinese student, you can choose any embassy in China to collect your MVV without contacting us.

**Is there a deadline for collecting the MVV at the embassy?**

Yes, the MVV should be collected within 90 days of approval. However, please take care not to collect it too early. As the MVV is valid for only three months from the date of issue, it needs to still be valid by the time you go to collect your residence permit in the Netherlands.

**I would like to bring my partner and/or child(ren). Is this possible?**

Yes, it's possible, but you will need to arrange their visa and/or residence permit applications yourself, as VU Amsterdam cannot assist with this process.

For more information, please visit the IND website:

- [Bringing a partner](#)
- [Bringing children under 18](#)

**Can I apply for a Work Holiday Permit (WHP) via VU Amsterdam?**

Exchange students from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Uruguay can apply for a WHP instead of a residence permit for study.

Canadian, Australian en New Zealand students can apply directly through the [IND website](#).

Students from the remaining countries will have to check with the Dutch embassy/consulate in their country whether this option is available. VU Amsterdam does not assist with WHP applications.

Note: The WHP is only available for exchange programs lasting one semester and cannot be used for a full year of a bachelor's or master's degree program.

Please keep us updated on your application status so we can adjust your information in the VU system accordingly.

**My application for the WHP might not be approved before the start of the exchange program. Is this a problem?**

No, as long as your application is submitted before the start of your study program, you can stay in the Netherlands on your passport for up to 90 days after arrival. Within this period, you will likely receive approval for your WHP application.

**I currently have a Dutch residence permit for study and will be going on exchange in another Schengen country. Do I need to apply for a permit for that country?**

Check with the international office of your destination university to confirm if you need to apply for a permit for that country.

Please also inform us of your outgoing mobility, as we need to notify the IND about your plans. Ensure your Dutch residence permit is valid before traveling. You cannot travel with an expired permit, so be sure to extend it before going to another country.

**When can I deregister from my current Dutch university when switching to VU?**

You can deregister from your current university once all required documents for the change of sponsor procedure have been uploaded, reviewed, and accepted by the VU student immigration team. After that, the application will be sent to the IND.

At this point, you can contact the relevant department at your current university to begin the unenrollment process.

**I have a Dutch residence permit but I have now obtained citizenship of an EU country. What do I do?**

As you are now an EU citizen, you no longer need a residence permit to stay in the Netherlands or any other EU country. Please inform the student immigration team in this case, so that we can update the visa information in your student file accordingly and deregister your residence permit. You will have to inform the municipality you live in of the change as well, so that your nationality can be automatically updated in your student file.

**→ VisaCare and required documents**

**What is VisaCare?**

VisaCare is the immigration portal used by VU Amsterdam for uploading and managing immigration documents and applications.

**I paid the visa fee but haven't received access to VisaCare. What should I do?**

After payment in your VU dashboard, you'll receive a VisaCare login email within 3–5 days. If not, email us at [studentimmigration@vu.nl](mailto:studentimmigration@vu.nl) for help.

**What happens after I upload documents to VisaCare?**

We'll review your documents within a few working days. If they are approved, you will receive confirmation of this. If they are rejected, you will receive an email that specifies why and what should be corrected.

**My bank cannot provide a statement confirming unrestricted withdrawals. Is this mandatory?**

Yes. If your account type isn't explicitly listed as checking, regular savings or current, something to that effect needs to be stated on the document. Alternatively, you can submit a 3-month transaction history showing withdrawals from the account(s) instead.

**How can I change my source of financial means?**

Email [studentimmigration@vu.nl](mailto:studentimmigration@vu.nl) with a concise request for the change. You can't update this yourself.

**My sponsor doesn't have a passport. What can they provide instead?**

Submit another legal ID (e.g., an ID card) that includes the same (or similar) details as a passport. If the document is not in Dutch or English, a certified translation is required. The ID must include a signature.

**What should I do if I don't have a V-number?**

Leave the V-number section blank. This is a number assigned to students by the IND and is different from your student number.

**What are antecedents? Does a speeding ticket count?**

Antecedents are criminal offenses in or outside the Netherlands. Speeding tickets from outside the Netherlands don't count, but for example overstaying your visa in the Netherlands does.

**I don't have a Dutch bank account yet. Should I check the refund box?**

No, you don't need to check this box. You can ignore the deadline.

### **I'm receiving reminder emails from VisaCare. What should I do?**

Log in to VisaCare to check for documents that haven't been uploaded yet. The reminder for uploading your residence permit card can be ignored until you're able to complete this step, as you might not have entered the Netherlands yet.

### **Can I get a refund if I cancel my immigration application?**

- **Before IND submission:** Full refund if application not started in VisaCare; otherwise, €85 is deducted.
- **After IND submission:** No refund.

### **I applied for a scholarship, but the results are pending. Can I start my immigration process?**

Yes, you can upload the other required documents while you await the results. If the deadline approaches, you'll need to provide alternate proof of funds to avoid delays.

### **Can I proceed if my English test result isn't submitted yet?**

Yes, you can upload the other required documents while you await the results. However, the English test must be provided to the International Student Advisor before the immigration deadline.

### **My visa fee payment status changed from "PAID" to "OPEN." Do I need to pay again?**

No, this is a technical glitch. If in doubt, please email us.

## **→ Practicalities**

### **How do I collect my VVR in the Netherlands?**

- **Fall semester (starting in September):** The IND organizes central collection days. You will receive more information about these collection days sometime in July/August.
- **Spring semester (starting in February):** You must make an appointment with the IND to collect your residence permit at the IND desk you selected.

In the summer, the IND requires all international students to collect their permit for study during one of the collection days. They will automatically cancel any separate appointments made for collection at an IND desk.

If you cannot attend the collection days due to exceptional circumstances, you can schedule an individual appointment with the IND, **but only after the last central collection day.**

### **Can I travel within Europe using my MVV or VVR?**

- **With MVV:** Yes, you can travel within the Schengen area for up to 90 days or until your MVV expires.
- **With VVR:** Yes, your residence permit allows unlimited travel between Schengen countries while valid. However, you can only stay in another Schengen country for up to 90 uninterrupted days. Some countries require your VVR to be valid for 3-6 months after arrival, so check these rules before traveling.

### **What is a BSN, and is this related to my residence permit?**

A BSN is a citizen service number required for practical matters such as opening a bank account or getting a phone plan. The BSN is often confused with the residence permit, but they are separate. The **IND** handles immigration matters, while the **municipality** issues the BSN. Both institutions communicate to monitor your legal stay in the Netherlands, so it's essential to register with the municipality and collect your residence permit on time.

### **Why do I need to register with the municipality?**

You must register with the municipality to maintain the validity of your residence permit. The procedure for registration differs depending on where you live. Check our [website](#) for details on registering in **Amsterdam, Amstelveen, or Diemen**. If you plan to register in another municipality, please consult their website for the specific procedure.

Failure to register can lead to fines or even revocation of the residence permit.

### **I have not yet collected my student residence permit card. Can I continue with practical matters?**

If you haven't collected your student residence permit card yet, you can use your IND approval letter to register with the municipality or open a bank account while waiting for your residence permit card. However, it's important to collect your residence permit card as soon as possible.

### **I cannot make an appointment at the IND to submit my biometrics or collect my residence permit card. What should I do?**

If you're having trouble making an appointment at the IND to submit biometrics or collect your residence permit card, check the IND appointment tool regularly, as cancellations can create openings. We cannot influence the IND's appointment schedule, so be sure to monitor it often.

### **Do I need to arrange my own health insurance?**

Yes, all international students must have valid health insurance for their entire stay in the Netherlands. An often-used option for international students who need private health insurance is [AON Student Insurance](#).

Unless you are employed by a Dutch company, it is not possible to take out Dutch basic health insurance. For more information, please review our [website](#).

### **Do I need to bring a birth certificate?**

You do not need to bring a birth certificate if you will be living in **Amsterdam** or **Amstelveen**. If you will be living in another municipality, a birth certificate may be required. Please check this with the municipality directly. If you do bring a birth certificate, please ensure that it is [legalised](#) before coming to the Netherlands.

### **I had transferred funds to the university as proof of financial means, how do I receive my living expenses back?**

If you transferred funds to the university as proof of financial means, you must complete the online form available in your VisaCare To Do list and provide us with your Dutch bank information.

### **What do I do if my residence permit card is lost/stolen?**

If your residence permit card is lost or stolen, report the loss to the police immediately. Then, apply for a replacement with the IND as soon as possible. You can find more information about this on the IND [website](#).

### **Do I take the TB test in my home country?**

You must take the TB test within three months of arriving in the Netherlands. The test should not be done in your home country, but at a [Public Health Service](#) office (GGD) here in the Netherlands.

### **How do I make an appointment for the TB test?**

We will send an email to students in September (starting in fall semester) and in February (starting in spring semester) who need to take the TB test with instructions on how to make an appointment. The cost of the TB test is €54 (as of 1/1/24, subject to change). Please note that payment can only be made using a debit card.

## **→ Work and internships**

### **Can I work while studying?**

If you are a non-EU citizen, you will need a work permit to work in the Netherlands. Your employer must apply for this permit at the UWV. But even with a work permit, there are restrictions: with a student residence permit, you can [work](#) a maximum of 16 hours per week **or** full-time in the months June, July and August. For more information about rules and regulations, please visit [this website](#).

Citizens of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Uruguay who have applied for and received a Working Holiday permit can work without restrictions. This permit is only available for exchange or semester students who will be attending VU Amsterdam for one semester. This permit allows you to work and study without needing a separate work permit. Please be aware that students must apply for this permit themselves.

### **Can I do an internship in the Netherlands?**

Yes. If you hold a residence permit for study purposes in the Netherlands and the internship is part of your studies, your internship provider won't have to apply for a work permit for you and there will be no restriction in the number of hours you're allowed to work. You must complete the [internship agreement](#), have it signed by yourself, your faculty (internship supervisor) and yourself. Then please send a copy to [studentimmigration@vu.nl](mailto:studentimmigration@vu.nl) so that we can archive it. Keep a copy of the agreement at your internship placement.

Please note that we cannot determine whether your internship is part of your studies, and we cannot sign the agreement for you. Please contact your faculty administration/internship supervisor for more information.

If the internship is not part of your programme you will need a work permit, and your internship provider will have to apply for this on your behalf. You will also be restricted to working no more than 16 hours a week.

**Exchange students: Please note that internships and research projects are not part of exchange agreements with partners abroad. Therefore, exchange students are not allowed to perform an internship during their stay in Amsterdam.**

**Can I go to an internship placement in another EU country with my Dutch residence permit?**

For internships lasting no longer than 90 days: if the internship is part of your degree programme at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, you can stay in the other Schengen country for up to 90 days. Check with the authorities of that country to see if you need a work permit.

For internships lasting longer than 90 days: if the internship is part of your degree programme at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, you will need to apply for a residence permit for the country where the internship is located. Also, check if a work permit is required.

Students are allowed to stay outside of the Netherlands for up to a year if there abroad for study purposes.

**→ During your studies at the VU**

**When can I start extending my residence permit?**

We can start the [process](#) three months before your current residence permit expires. If you are eligible for an extension, the student immigration team will notify you. For example, if your residence permit expires on 30 November, you can expect an email from us near the end of September.

**For how long will my residence permit be extended?**

Residence permits are typically extended for one year. If you are beginning a new study program that takes longer than one year, your permit will be extended for the duration of that program.

**Do I need to show proof of income to extend my residence permit?**

You do not need to submit a bank statement. However, the IND requires you to provide a signed [income statement](#).

**What is the “V-number” in the income statement form?**

Your V-number is located on the back of your residence permit card at the bottom, following the letters 'VNR'.

**I haven't received my extended residence permit and need to leave the Netherlands. How can I re-enter?**

You cannot travel with an expired residence permit. If your permit expires while you are abroad or you haven't collected your new one, you will need a return visa to re-enter the Netherlands. For more information, visit the [IND website](#).

**Do I need to provide new biometrics for extending my residence permit?**

Yes, you must provide your biometrics again when extending your residence permit.



**I need to stop my studies temporarily or permanently. What happens to my residence permit?**

As your recognized sponsor, VU is required to notify the IND and withdraw our sponsorship of your residence permit for study. This means you must leave the Netherlands within four weeks of us confirming the deregistration, and that the residence permit will be revoked.

**Can I switch to another study programme?**

If you have a residence permit for study, you must meet the [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(MOMI\)](#) requirements to switch programs at VU. If you need guidance, please contact your [academic advisor](#).

**Can a student who hasn't met the MOMI requirements or received an exemption start a new programme at VU?**

No, this is only possible if the student has achieved the minimum required credits or received an exemption. They may return to VU a year later to resume their studies. It is possible to switch to another educational institution in the Netherlands.

**Can a student who hasn't met MOMI requirements or received an exemption transfer to another university?**

Yes, such a transfer to another university is allowed.

**I am switching from a permit for the purpose of study to one for another purpose (stay with family, highly skilled migrant, etc.). Can I continue my studies?**

Yes. Please make sure to forward a copy of your new residence permit (front and back) to the Student Desk and inform us (student immigration) of the change.

**I am switching from a permit for the purpose of study to one for another purpose (stay with family, highly skilled migrant, etc.). Does the MOMI requirement or the other regulations regarding the student permit still apply to me?**

No, in that case you no longer have to meet the minimum MOMI requirement, and the maximum of 16 hours of work a week no longer applies. However, be aware that other permit types have their own requirements that must be met.

**→ After your studies at the VU**

**When can I apply for an orientation year permit?**

You can apply for the [orientation year permit](#) after receiving confirmation that you have officially graduated. If you have not yet received your diploma, you can download a [graduation statement](#). We recommend applying for the permit before your current permit expires to avoid gaps in your residency.

**Does the university assist with orientation year permit applications?**

No, you must apply for this directly with the IND. For more information, visit the [IND website](#).

**How long will my residence permit remain valid after graduation?**

Your residence permit will remain valid for three months after your graduation date, or until the expiry date of your residence permit card, whichever comes first.

**How do I return my residence permit card?**

You will need to return your residence permit card to the IND either at their desk or via postal service. Please see: [Leaving the Netherlands | IND](#)