



Frequently Asked Questions

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Concerning various types of immigration procedures

What is the difference between a visa (MVV) and a residence permit (VVR)?

A long stay entry visa (MVV) is used to enter the Netherlands and a residence permit (VVR) is a document that gives you the right to stay here legally and looks similar to an ID card. Citizens of certain nationalities cannot just travel to the Netherlands; these nationalities require a visa sticker (MVV) in their passport which allows them to enter the Netherlands. A visa sticker is collected at the Dutch Embassy or Consulate in your home country (or a third-party country if there is no Dutch representation in your own country). Conversely, all non-EU citizens need a residence permit. This is an ID card which you will receive in the Netherlands. Please note that a long stay entry visa (MVV) is not the same as a short stay visa (VKV). While your nationality may be exempted from the VKV visa, this does not necessarily entail that you are exempted from a MVV visa as well (see section List of frequently used terms).

My visa is only valid for three months, do I need to extend my MVV visa?

The entry visa for students is always valid for three months so there is nothing to worry about. If your nationality requires a long stay entry visa (MVV) and residence permit (VVR), we will apply for both. You will collect the visa at the Embassy or Consulate in your home country. This is a sticker that is placed in your passport. The visa is always valid for three months. This is due to the fact that a visa is only used to travel to the Netherlands. From the moment you have collected the visa, you have three months to travel to the Netherlands. The residence permit on the other hand is an ID card that you will pick up in the Netherlands. This is the actual document that allows you to stay legally in the Netherlands during your studies here.

Can I study here using a short term/tourist visa (VKV)?

No, this is not possible. You can only stay in the Netherlands for 90 days on a short stay visa. The study programmes at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam are longer than 90 days*. It is also not possible to enter the Netherlands on a short stay visa and obtain a residence permit here. You can only obtain a residence permit in combination with a long stay entry visa (MVV) in case you require a visa**.

* *The only exception to this are Summer and Winter School courses.*

** *This only applies to nationals who require a visa to enter the Netherlands.*

Required documents

My sponsor does not have a passport, what should I do?

In case your sponsor does not have a passport, you can provide any other form of legal identification (such as an ID card) as long as it contains the same information that a passport does. If this type of identification is only issued in your native language, then you will need to have the document translated into Dutch or English by a sworn and certified translator.

Do I need to bring a birth certificate?

This depends on the municipality you'll be living in, as most of them require a legalized copy of your birth certificate when you register with them. If you will be living in Amsterdam or Amstelveen you do not need to bring a birth certificate. If you will be living anywhere else, we recommend you bring a legalized birth certificate with you.

My bank cannot provide a bank declaration with a signature and stamp, is it really necessary?

Yes, the bank declaration really needs to meet all the requirements. Your bank should be able to issue a document that adheres to the Dutch Immigration Law. However, if you really cannot get the bank declaration we need, you are advised to transfer the proof of financial means instead.

My bank cannot provide a bank declaration that mentions there is no restriction on withdrawal or similar information that declares the funds are freely accessible at any time, is this really necessary?

Yes, the bank declaration really needs to meet all the requirements. If your bank account is of any other type than a checking, regular savings or current account, then we really need this extra information. After all, money that might be frozen in an account cannot be used to pay for living expenses or tuition fees, so that is why we need to have this information. Your bank should be able to issue a document that adheres to the Dutch Immigration Law. However, if you really cannot get the bank declaration we need, you are advised to transfer the proof of financial means instead.

Traveling

I wish to travel through Europe, can I do this with my Dutch entry visa and residence permit?

Yes, you can travel to Schengen member states only. Before you travel, please check whether the countries of your destination are Schengen states. Your entry visa (MVV) allows you to travel through Schengen countries for a maximum of 90 days. [Please check the Schengen calculator](#) to check how many days you still have left.

The residence permit for study allows you to live and study in the Netherlands, and to travel to all the Schengen countries and back to the Netherlands as often as you like while the permit is valid. Please note though that the maximum amount of days you can spend uninterrupted in another Schengen country is 90 days. Also note that some countries require that your Dutch residence permit continues to be valid for a specific period of time (either three or six months) after your arrival in their country. This may have a significant effect on your travel plans, particularly during the summer months. Please remember this when you

are planning to travel outside the Netherlands and check about any such requirements before you book any travel tickets.

Practicalities (BSN, municipality registration)

What is the municipality and a BSN, and is this related to my residence permit?

The municipality is the local government of a city or village. Most VU students will fall under the municipality of Amsterdam, Amstelveen or Diemen. It is necessary to register with the municipality in order to adhere to the requirements of your residence permit. When you have registered at the town hall, you will receive your citizen service number (called the BSN) within a few weeks (both Amsterdam and Amstelveen municipalities are usually present during the Arrival Days and you can register then as well).

A BSN is a citizen service number needed to arrange all sorts of practical matters such as opening a Dutch bank account. Students often mistake the BSN for their residence permit, and the municipality for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND). However, these are two separate institutions. The IND handles immigration matters and the municipality arranges the registrations in the town hall. Please check the list of 'frequently used terms' below as well. The two institutions do check with each other whether you have legal stay. For example, the municipality may not register you if they see that you did not apply for a residence permit or when you did not collect it in time.

I do not have my study residence permit card yet and therefore cannot register at the municipality or open a bank account.

You can use the IND approval letter that we emailed to you in order to register at the municipality, or to open a bank account, while you are waiting to receive your residence permit card from the IND.

I cannot make an appointment at the IND to submit my biometrics or to collect my residence permit card.

Unfortunately we are not able to influence the IND schedule, but we would recommend that you check the appointment tool regularly as earlier time slots often appear due to last minute cancellations. Please make sure to first select the IND desk location so that you can view the most up-to-date schedule. In the meantime you can use the IND approval letter as proof of your residence status in the Netherlands.

You will be required to upload a copy of your residence permit card in VisaCare after you have collected it from the IND Desk. You can ignore the deadline given in VisaCare and weekly reminder emails, as we cannot disable them. The deadline is automatically generated.

Do I need to arrange my own health insurance?

Yes, as an international student you are required by Dutch law to have a valid health insurance for the duration of your entire stay in the Netherlands. Please see [this page](#) for further information.

Work and Internships

I would like to work while studying. Is that possible?

In case you hold a non-EU nationality, you will need a work permit to be able to work. Your employer needs to apply for a work permit for you at the UWV. Even with a work permit there are still restrictions. As a student, you are allowed to work a maximum of 16 hours a week.

Please visit [this website](#) for more information about rules and regulations.

Citizens of Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and Uruguay are eligible to apply for a special type of residence permit called the Working Holiday Programme/Working Holiday Scheme (WHP/WHS). The WHP/WHS allows you to work and study here for one year without needing a work permit. If you would like to study here with the WHP, only short study programs are allowed, which makes the permit ideal for exchange students who will be attending the VU for one semester, and who have one of the above mentioned nationalities.

I would like to go to an internship placement in another EU country, can I do this with my Dutch residence permit?

If you are an EU national, you are free to participate in an internship in any Schengen country. It is not so simple if you are a non-EU national.

When the internship is part of your degree programme at VU Amsterdam and the internship will last no longer than 90 days, you can stay in the other Schengen country for 90 days. Please note that you do need to check with the authorities of that country whether you need a work permit to carry out your internship.

When the internship is part of your degree programme at VU Amsterdam and the internship will last longer than 90 days, you will need to apply for a residence permit of the country of placement as well. Again, you also need to check whether you need a work permit.

If you wish to do an internship after you finished your studies here, you will need to apply for a residence permit and a work permit for that country.

Can I do an internship in the Netherlands?

This depends. If you have a residence permit for study purposes in the Netherlands, and when the internship **is relevant to your studies**, you can participate in an internship (this does not apply to exchange students, see below).

You do need to [complete the following internship agreement](#) and send it to studentimmigration@vu.nl. Also keep a copy of the agreement at your internship placement.

In case the internship is not relevant to your studies and/or when you do not have a residence permit for study, you require a work permit. Your internship provider will have to apply for the work permit for you.

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

I will be a student at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and I would like to bring my partner and/or child(ren). Is this possible?

Yes, you can apply for their residence permit(s) as well. You can submit their application once we have submitted your own visa application. You can submit your family's visa application directly with the IND. You can find more information on our website, www.vu.nl/visa (section 'bringing family members') or on the website of the IND.

List of Frequently Used Terms

<u>Term</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Biometrics	Biometrics in the context of the visa application refers to your fingerprints and photo. The IND needs to take your biometrics (fingerprints) and a photo in order to produce the residence permit card. When you have an entry visa (MVV), the Dutch Embassy or Consulate will take your biometrics. If you only require a residence permit, you need to visit the IND office to provide your biometrics. Because appointment slots are limited, we recommend that you book your IND biometrics appointment in advance so that you can visit the IND shortly after your arrival in the Netherlands.
BSN	Citizen Service Number. This is your identity number for all communications with the government authorities.
GGD	The Municipal Health Service. At the GGD you need to take the Tuberculosis test (only applicable to citizens of certain countries). Check this list to see whether you are exempted or not.
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Service. Processes applications for visas and residence permits.
Municipality	Town hall, local government. In Dutch known as a "gemeente".
MVV	Long stay entry visa, valid for 90 days after collection. MVV visas cannot be extended. If you have not travelled to the Netherlands and your MVV has expired, then you will most likely need to start a new visa application.
Schengen	Schengen Area, named after "the Schengen Agreement", signifies a zone where 26 different European nations acknowledge the abolishment of their internal borders with other member nations. This allows people from member states to travel, work and live freely in other member states. You can travel up to 90 days within a period of 180 days in Schengen member states with your Dutch MVV or residence permit.
UWV	UWV (Employee Insurance Agency) is an autonomous administrative authority and is commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) to implement employee insurances and provide labor market and data services. The UWV also handles the work permit applications.

VKV	Short term visa, also referred to as a tourist visa. With this visa you can enter the Netherlands and stay here for a maximum of 90 days. You cannot receive a residence permit in combination with a VKV.
V-number	Visa number. This is a number allocated to you in relation to your residence permit. You can find the v-number on the backside of your residence permit. We also e-mail you this number before arrival.
VVR	Residence permit, valid for the duration of your studies + three months.
WHP/WHs	Working Holiday Programme/Working Holiday Scheme. This is a special type of residence permit. The WHP/WHs allows you to both work and study here (short programmes only). Citizens from Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and Uruguay are eligible to apply. Please do check the requirements on the website of the IND.
Work permit	Non-EU nationals are not free on the labor market in Europe. In order to work, they will need a work permit. In the Netherlands there are certain exceptions to this rule. For example, if you will carry out an internship that is relevant to your studies.
