

# International Onboarding Guide

Getting Started at  
VU Amsterdam

Prospectus for Bachelor's  
and Master's students



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# 1. About Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam ('VU Amsterdam') is a leading European research university established in 1880. With more than 31,000 students, we are a modern organisation at the cutting edge of academic higher education. Our students are challenged to ask critical questions, tackle problems and place what they learn in a wider philosophical, ethical and social context.

## ☆ Quality of education

At VU Amsterdam, we pride ourselves on the exceptional quality of our teaching. Students benefit from working in relatively small groups, where interaction and a personal approach are highly emphasised. Our well-organised teaching methods are reflected in the clear structure of our study programmes.

## 📄 Accreditation

VU Amsterdam is fully recognised by the Dutch Ministry of Education as a research university. All degree programmes at VU Amsterdam are accredited or in the process of being accredited by NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders. This organisation, established by international treaty, ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flemish-speaking Belgium through rigorous accreditation processes.

VU Amsterdam offers a wide range of English-taught programmes at three levels: Bachelor's (BA, BSc, LLB), Master's (MA, MSc, LLM) and doctoral (PhD). Nine faculties share a single campus and cover a wide spectrum of arts, sciences, business and medicine.

### Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes:

- 16 interdisciplinary research institutes
- Over 170 programmes taught in English
- Only single-campus university in Amsterdam

### Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam:

- is consistently listed among the world's top universities in various rankings and the Netherlands' top 3 universities in the area of sustainability;
- is located in one of the most dynamic and fast-growing business districts in the Netherlands;
- offers an international environment, exemplified by the Mixed Classroom Educational Model which builds upon differences to enrich the learning experience;
- is located in lively and multicultural Amsterdam, the city with the largest concentration of students in the Netherlands, where English is widely spoken;
- is open to all cultures, nationalities and religions.

## 🏛️ 9 faculties

Academisch Centrum Tandheelkunde Amsterdam (ACTA)  
Faculty of Science (BETA)  
Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences (FBMS)  
Faculty of Humanities (HUM)  
Faculty of Medicine (MED)  
Faculty of Law (LAW)  
Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS)  
Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT)  
School of Business and Economics (SBE)

[Explore the faculties](#)

## University facts & figures

🎓 31,949  
Students in total



🌐 133  
Different nationalities



🏠 Campus university



👤 20  
International Student Advisors



👤 123  
International Student Ambassadors



👤 6,169  
International students

# 2. Onboarding

## Time to start your onboarding journey!

Once you have secured your (conditional) admission to VU Amsterdam, your exciting student onboarding journey begins. We use the term onboarding to refer to the process of you, our new students, becoming acquainted with the practical, social, and academic aspects of your new study environment. To optimise your student experience, VU Amsterdam offers a range of onboarding services and activities, including online pre-departure sessions, academic workshops and of course our introduction week (see below). The aim of our [onboarding programme](#) is to help ease the challenges you may face within and outside of the classroom, such as language barriers and difficulties integrating into the campus culture.

Bachelor's and Master's students have varying needs and experience levels; our onboarding services are tailored to these two groups. Below are a few examples of services that are included in the onboarding programme.



### Connect with fellow students

During your studies there will be plenty of opportunities to meet fellow (international) students through the events and activities organised by VU Amsterdam, your faculty or study/student association. The good news is, you do not have to wait until you arrive at VU Amsterdam to start making connections with other fellow (international) students. A few months before the start of your studies, you will receive an invitation via email, inviting you to download the Goin' app. Through the [Goin' app](#), you can find and connect with other VU Amsterdam students with similar interests, characteristics or nationalities, make groups and exchange helpful tips. This will allow you to start your university experience on the right foot and gain a true sense of community.

### Tip: recommended arrival day

We recommend Bachelor's students arrive in Amsterdam on 19 August and Master's students on 20 August at the latest, especially if you want to participate in the Practical Matters Days and Introduction Week.

## Pre-departure sessions

Each year, the International Office organises pre-departure sessions to help you start your student journey successfully. These sessions offer valuable insights into studying at VU Amsterdam, covering topics such as important steps to take after admission, connecting with peers and your new home country and arranging practical matters. They also provide opportunities to get answers to questions about student life, housing and the immigration/visa process.

## Practical Matters Days

The Introduction Week also includes the [Practical Matters Days](#). These days focus on assisting you in getting all the practicalities sorted, from getting a health/liability insurance to opening a Dutch bank account and joining ESN VU Amsterdam.

## Introduction Week

Your onboarding journey may include the [Introduction Week](#), a fun one-time event welcoming you to the university. During your first days, VU Amsterdam will arrange several activities in order to help you become acquainted with the city of Amsterdam, the university campus, and your fellow students. All kinds of activities are offered such as social, cultural and sports events.

You will receive useful information on how to make the most out of your time at VU Amsterdam, both on a social and academic level.

## Chat with student/alumni ambassadors

As part of your student journey, we invite you to talk to a current VU student. Our [International Student Ambassadors and Alumni Ambassadors](#) are ready to answer any questions related to student life topics, such as how easy it is to find a room, what classes are like and how they settled in when they moved to a new country. You can easily [start a conversation](#) with one of our Ambassadors through the live chat; you can even filter ambassadors by programme or country!

## Jumpstart

Studying abroad in Amsterdam can be a big step and is often accompanied by cultural shock and academic adjustments. The [Jumpstart programme](#) is designed to bridge the academic gap, ease your transition to VU Amsterdam and connect you with fellow students. Jumpstart offers tailored workshops on academic writing, finding literature, plagiarism and understanding the Dutch higher education system. Each workshop is followed by a social or cultural activity. What's more, you can customise your own Jumpstart experience!



# 3. Practical information

## Steps to take after your (conditional) admission

### 1. Complete your admission

#### A certified copy of your diploma

Before you can be admitted unconditionally to our university, we need to receive a [certified copy of your diploma](#) or a statement of graduation which must be certified as a genuine copy of the original by the issuing school/university.

#### English proficiency test results

Additionally, we also need to receive your sufficient English language test scores. Find the minimum required scores on the website: [Bachelor's](#) and [Master's](#).

### 2. Confirm your participation and apply for student services

After you have been admitted we ask you to confirm your participation in [your personal dashboard on vu.nl](#) and select the services you may need. Please note that all students with a non-EU/EEA nationality need to apply for a visa and/or residence permit.

In certain cases you may need to eliminate specific subject deficiencies before you can confirm participation. Deficiencies for regular degree programmes must be eliminated by **31 August**, for students who require a visa/residence permit the deadline is **1 June** and for numerus fixus study programmes the deadline is **15 July**; read more about deficiencies on [this page](#).

Read the online admission, [accommodation](#) and [visa](#) (if applicable) pages in [your personal dashboard on vu.nl](#) carefully to see if you need to send us any additional documents. If you need to apply for a visa and/or residence permit, you will have to upload all required documentation **before 1 June**. After this date, your application for services may be delayed, which means we cannot guarantee your start date at VU Amsterdam.

### 3. Pay the tuition fees

After you have fulfilled all admission and enrolment requirements and paid your [tuition fees](#) you will be officially enrolled.

You will have to pay the tuition fees before the start of the programme, **31 August**. There are different payment methods available.

## Before arrival

### Apply for a visa and/or residence permit (if needed)

#### Confirm your participation

While confirming your participation in your personal dashboard on [vu.nl](#), you can indicate whether you need a visa and/or residence permit and if you wish to apply for accommodation through VU Amsterdam. There are four steps you need to be aware of (if applicable):

1. Confirm your participation in your personal dashboard on vu.nl. In certain cases you may need to eliminate specific subject deficiencies before you can confirm participation.
2. Fill in the visa form in your personal dashboard and indicate whether you need to apply for a student residence permit. The visa application deadline is **1 June**.
3. Transfer your visa fee and/or housing fee via the online payment tool in your personal dashboard on vu.nl. Housing is assigned on a first paid, first served basis.

#### Entry visa (MVV) and residence permit (VVR)

There are two types of immigration procedures:

1. Residence permit (VVR) procedure: no entry visa required, which means you enter the Netherlands with your passport.
2. Long stay entry visa (MVV) and residence permit (VVR) procedure: entry visa required, which you have to collect at the Dutch representation before you can enter the Netherlands.

Whether you need an entry visa (MVV) and/or residence permit (VVR) depends on your nationality (please see figure below). VU Amsterdam will apply on your behalf. From 1 April you need to submit your application as part of your immigration procedure. Once the visa section in your personal dashboard on vu.nl is open, you first need to answer a short questionnaire. After you pay the visa fee through the online payment tool in your personal dashboard on vu.nl, you will receive an instruction e-mail for our immigration portal called 'VisaCare', where you need to submit the required documents. Your contact person of the Services team will inform you once the residence permit and/or visa has been approved by the Dutch Immigration Service (IND). Also, you will be notified when and where you can collect the visa and/or residence permit.

Find more information about the immigration procedures on the [visa and residence permit page](#).

For questions related to the immigration procedure, you can contact the Student Immigration team.

✉ [studentimmigration@vu.nl](mailto:studentimmigration@vu.nl)  
 ☎ +31 (0)20 598 3078  
 (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, between 10:30-12:30 CET)

#### Proof of financial means

When you are not from an EU/EEA country you must prove that you are able to finance the costs of living in the Netherlands. The Dutch Immigration Service determines the amount per month/year. You need to be able to prove that you have at least €1,200\*\* per month for the total duration of your study programme enrolment.

Additionally, you need to prove that you can pay your tuition fees. This means that the proof of financial means consists of proof that you can pay both the tuition fees and living expenses. In VisaCare you can upload the required documents. There are different options to prove you have sufficient financial means.

#### Tuberculosis test

A tuberculosis test may be part of your application for a residence permit after arrival in the Netherlands. VU Amsterdam will inform you when and where to go, depending on your nationality. You need to pay the cost of the TB test yourself.

#### Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Dutch Immigration Service (IND) requires that all students with a residence permit for study purposes achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress. This means that students need to obtain at least 50% of the credits of their study programme each year in order to keep their residence permit for the next academic year. VU Amsterdam will check each year whether you meet these requirements. When students do not meet the requirements and there is no excusable reason for not passing enough courses, the International Office is obliged to inform the IND. Consequently your residence permit will be withdrawn regardless of the expiry date listed on the actual permit. This law applies to all students with a residence permit for study purposes. Please be aware that it is not possible to register for another study programme at VU Amsterdam if you do not meet the criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Find more information about what happens after admission on [this page](#).

### Any questions?

Contact the International Student Advisors of your programme. [Bachelor's](#) and [Master's](#)

Nationality	Entry visa	Residence permit	Costs
EU/EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland)	No	No	€ 0
Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, South Korea, United States of America, Vatican City, United Kingdom*	No	Yes	€ 275
Israel, San Marino	Yes	Yes	€ 0
Other countries	Yes	Yes	€ 275

## Arrange accommodation

If you plan to study at VU Amsterdam, it is essential to think of a place to live. Unfortunately, finding a room in Amsterdam is difficult and stressful. The housing market is extremely tight. We advise you to start looking for housing early and to not limit your search to Amsterdam but also check the options in neighbouring cities and villages.

In case you do not have a permanent room one month before the start of your study programme, we recommend not to come to Amsterdam and defer for example your study plans to the next academic year.

## Options to find a room

### 1. Register on student housing platforms

As soon as you decide to study in Amsterdam, we strongly advise you to immediately register on student housing platforms because they work with registration time. Rooms are offered to the highest ranked student on the waiting list.

### 2. Housing on the private market

Another option is to look independently for housing on the private market. This is very time consuming; we advise students to start their search early in the year. Private market rentals begin from €808. However, many students choose to share apartments to cut the rental costs. You should also search outside of Amsterdam. While searching, be aware of scams; if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

### 3. Housing via VU Amsterdam

VU Amsterdam has a limited number of housing options available for 1st year international Bachelor's and Master's students. We offer a variety of housing at different locations varying in price from €450 to €1,250. The average rental price is €700.

The rental contract is limited to only 1 academic year. After the first year, students need to find housing by themselves, even if the study programme is 2 or 3 years.

Be aware, that we can only accommodate max. 50% of all incoming 1st year students. Also, VU Accommodation is assigned on a first paid, first served basis. Students can apply for housing starting from October in the previous academic year.

Please check [the accommodation page](#) for information about how to apply for housing via VU Amsterdam. To confirm your application, a housing fee of €500 needs to be paid which is refundable until 1 July.

## Arrange insurance

### Health insurance

Valid health insurance is compulsory in the Netherlands. If you have not arranged a valid insurance yet, make sure that you do so as soon as possible. There are numerous options to insure your medical costs depending on your period of stay in the Netherlands and your nationality. Please see the [insurance page](#) for more details.

### Insurance package


VU Amsterdam has assisted [Aon Student Insurance](#) with the development of a tailor-made ICS Complete+insurance for international students. This insurance package covers health and non-medical costs worldwide. The package includes home contents, baggage, accidents, liability and legal costs. The complete insurance policy information and quote about this insurance can be found on their website.

Are you planning on working while studying? If you get a job during your studies or undertake a paid internship, student insurance is not sufficient. You will need to purchase Dutch "basis" health insurance. For more information please visit the [Nuffic website](#).

### Liability insurance

You are liable for all associated costs when you cause an accident involving injury to others or damage to property. The resulting claim for damages could be very expensive. Therefore, we would strongly urge you to take out adequate liability insurance. [Read more on the insurance page](#).

For questions related to accommodation, you can contact the Student Accommodation team.

 [studentaccommodation@vu.nl](mailto:studentaccommodation@vu.nl)  
 +31 (0)20 598 1813 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday between 11.00-13.00 AM CET)



## Familiarise yourself with the Dutch academic culture

### Education

The quality of Dutch higher education is amongst the best in the world. Education at VU Amsterdam is structured according to the Bachelor's and Master's system. In general, the teaching style can be described as student-centred; we stimulate students to develop their own opinion through independent and creative thinking. This means that teaching is conducted in small seminars where interaction is the norm rather than the exception. At VU Amsterdam students are encouraged to engage their professors in a discussion.

This focus on interaction also means that many courses will involve some type of group work. You will join efforts with your classmates to complete an assignment, presentation etc. If you want to know more about how to prepare yourself for this education style please see the [Jumpstart page](#) and the [Onboarding page](#).

### Academic year

The academic year starts in the first week of September and is divided into two semesters. Each semester consists of three periods of 8+8+4 weeks. Examinations are held at the end of each semester (January and June), or at the end of the eight- or four- week period. You are registered as a student from 1 September until 31 August.

### Credits

At VU Amsterdam, credits are listed according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The ECTS credit system is based on study workload, which includes contact hours, time spent completing papers, assignments and preparing for examinations. In this system, 1 ECTS credit point represents 28 hours of study (including class attendance). A full-time student is expected to earn 60 ECTS credits in one academic year, and 30 credits in one semester.

### Dutch grading system

When you come to the Netherlands to study you will probably expect that many things are different than in your home country. The grading system may also not be the same as what you are used to. There are many different grading systems in the world, such as (from lowest to highest grade) 1 to 5, 1 to 10, 1 to 20, 1 to 100, 5 to 1, F to A.

In the Netherlands, the traditional grading scale is from 1 through to 10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest grade. The pass mark for a single subject is 6. Grades 1 through to 4 are very rarely given, and the same is true for grades 9 and 10. The most common grades in both secondary and higher education are 6 and 7.

Visit the [Nuffic website](#) for more information about the Dutch grading system and how grades are distributed.



### Instruction style

Study hours at VU Amsterdam are a combination of hours spent in class with the instructor and hours spent out of class working independently. In general, a VU student has about 10 hours per week of strictly student/professor contact hours. The remaining hours are spent outside of the classroom and can include time spent working on assignments with other students from your course, known as "work groups" or time spent working individually on assignments, known as "self-study."


Generally, you can expect a high level of classroom interaction, independence and active learning, direct feedback and social equality, and no grade inflation. On the other hand, you are expected to be an active learner and critical thinker, to be present, on time and prepared, and to be accountable and transparent when submitting assignments.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or using others' work without acknowledgment or source references, is considered a serious offense at VU Amsterdam. If you are caught committing such acts, your work will be declared invalid, among other possibly more serious consequences. Therefore, make sure to inform yourself and understand how to apply the rules. Note: even self-plagiarism is possible!

### Binding recommendation on continuation of studies (BSA)

In your first year as a Bachelor's student, you must obtain a certain number of credits and complete possibly one or more specific courses complying with the BSA norm. At the end of your first year you will receive either a positive or a negative BSA. A negative BSA means you will not be able to re-enroll in this particular VU programme for the next three years. You can always appeal this decision.

 Grades	Ects % Bachelor's	Ects % Master's
10	0.4	0.5
9,5	1.1	1.1
9	3.7	4.9
8,5	14.4	8.2
8	14.4	19.2
7,5	16.3	17.4
7	20.0	20.4
6,5	16.1	12.4
6	21.2	16.0

## After arrival

### Registration with the municipality

For a stay in the Netherlands of more than four months, you need to register as a resident with the municipality. If you are going to live at student campus Uilenstede, you need to register at the municipality of Amstelveen.

Doing so will enable you to get your [Citizen service number \(Burgerservicenummer or BSN\)](#). You need a BSN to open a bank account, take out health insurance or get a job or internship position in the Netherlands.

More information about registering with the municipality can be found on [this page](#). During the Practical Matters Day, it will also be possible to register at the municipality of Amstelveen directly.

### Get your DigiD

After you receive your [BSN](#), you can apply for a DigiD. This ID allows you to take care of government related issues online. You can use DigiD to log in to government websites like Studielink, DUO (study finances), Belastingdienst (taxes) or municipality services.

### Set up a bank account (if necessary)

You may need a current bank account to manage your day-to-day finances. There are several options available to you; in order to get an account you can go to a bank's office once you have arrived in the Netherlands or register with an online bank, such as Bunq. Most people use a Maestro debit card (pinpas in Dutch). Many grocery stores do not accept credit cards and some stores have even stopped accepting cash. You also need a bank account to work or do an internship. Find more information about opening a bank account on [this page](#).

## Health matters

### The General Practitioner

The General Practitioner/Family doctor plays a key role in the Dutch health care system. You should consult your GP when you become ill, need a prescription or suffer from mental problems. The GP will either refer you to a specialist or treat you himself/herself.

As a student at VU Amsterdam living in Amsterdam or in the surrounding areas such as Amstelveen/Uilenstede, you will be able to register with the GP at the University General Practice (located in the VU Medical Centre on our campus) once you have a valid health insurance. More information can be found on their [website](#). If you live outside of Amsterdam, you can look for a GP close to your home.

[More extensive information on health care providers in the Netherlands can be found on this information sheet.](#)

### The dentist

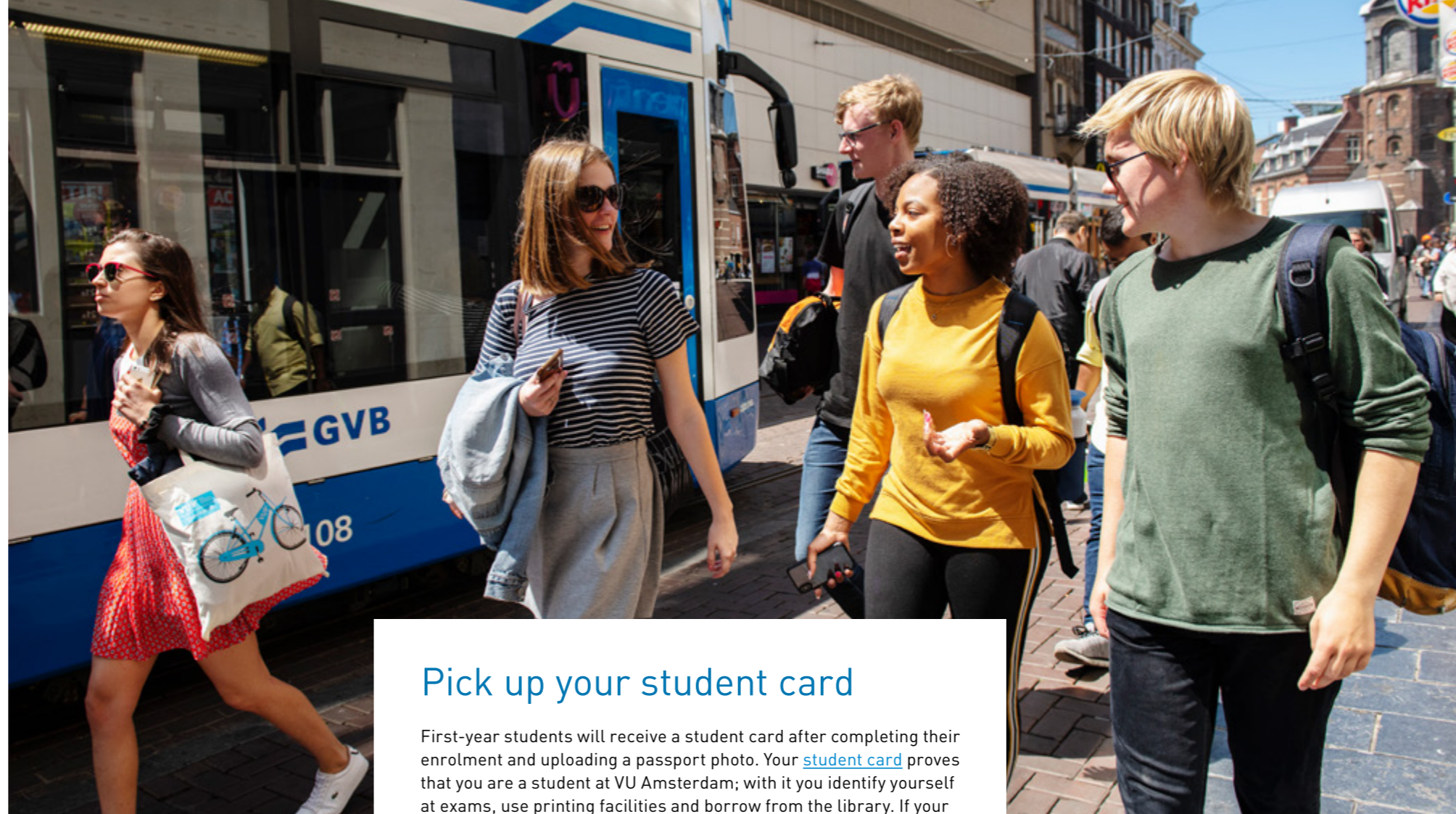
All students of VU Amsterdam who stay for more than one year can register with ACTA (the Faculty of Dentistry) for dental care. Students who stay for less than one year can contact the Tandartsbemiddelingsbureau. They will assist you in finding a dentist who can help you at short notice.

#### ACTA (Dentists)

T : +31 (0)20 598 0380  
I : [ACTA](#)  
T : [info@acta.nl](mailto:info@acta.nl)

#### Dentistry intermediary agency

T : +31 (0)20 506 3841



### Pick up your student card

First-year students will receive a student card after completing their enrolment and uploading a passport photo. Your [student card](#) proves that you are a student at VU Amsterdam; with it you identify yourself at exams, use printing facilities and borrow from the library. If your card is ready on time, you can pick it up on Arrival Day. Otherwise, the [Student Desk](#) will inform you about when and where to pick it up.

## Getting around



### By bike

After you arrive we recommend getting a bike! Biking is the easiest way to get around in Amsterdam and surrounding areas and, although public transport is very efficient in Amsterdam, it can be fairly expensive. You can buy a new or refurbished bike or even rent one (e.g. via Swapfiets, which includes full support services in case your bike needs maintenance or gets stolen).

In order to prepare you for the hustle and bustle that is Amsterdam bike life, former VU Amsterdam students Thijs and Rendel have created a [video](#) to prepare you how to navigate the streets of this city, for example how to cross the tram rails and how to blend in with the locals cycling-wise – safety first!



### Public transport

To travel by train, bus, metro and tram, you can use a debit or credit card or buy a [public transport chip card](#) (OV-chipkaart). These cards are sold at [GVB Tickets & Info](#) points and at ticket vending machines. It is important that you always check in and check out of each vehicle with your card, including when transferring.

[Plan your journey here.](#)

# 4. Financial information

## Tuition fees

Students from the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) pay the same tuition fees as Dutch students. The tuition fees for most programmes are determined by the Dutch government on an annual basis. Tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students vary depending on the programme. Please check the website for up-to-date information on tuition fees for [Bachelor's students](#) or [Master's students](#).

## Student finance

You are only eligible to apply for Student Finance if you are a Dutch national or have the same rights based on your residence permit or your nationality. You can then apply for a grant, the interest bearing loan, the student travel product and the tuition fees loan. For more up-to-date information on Student Finance please check the website of [DUO](#).

€ 1,000 to 2,000  
Monthly living costs

While living as a student in Amsterdam you should expect to spend between €900 and €1,700 per month (not including tuition fees).  
By way of indication:

Accommodation	€450 - €1250	per month
Food etc.	€325 - €400	per month
Public transport	€60	per month
Insurance	€75	per month
Books and printing	€30	per month
Other costs: clothing etc.	€100	per month

## Working while you study

If you want to work in the Netherlands alongside your studies, it is important to know the rules and regulations. Students from the EU/EEA who wish to work alongside their studies have the same rights as Dutch students. You do not need a work permit and the hours that you are allowed to work per week are not restricted. However, in most cases you will have to be able to speak a reasonable amount of Dutch.

Non-EU/EEA students and Croats require a work permit. With a work permit you are only allowed to work a maximum of 16 hours per week OR fulltime during the summer months. [Read more about working in the Netherlands while studying.](#)

## Student discounts

Many bars, restaurants, museums and cinemas give student discounts. Most of these ask for proof in the form of a student card from your institution.

[The International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#) can give you discounts on travel, shopping and museums. It is valid worldwide.

# 5. Student life (on campus)

## Study facilities

### University Library

Our [University Library](#) is a relatively large and wellstocked academic library. This means you can consult a vast range of resources, either on paper or in digital form, to help you with your coursework and research. The library's collection is distributed among several locations. All VU students are automatically a member of the University Library and may borrow materials upon showing their student card. The University Library does more than just lending out textbooks. For example, it organises various courses and workshops. Most products and services are free for VU Amsterdam students.

### VU Audiovisual Centre (AVC)

[VU Audiovisual Centre \(AVC\)](#) is a state-of-the-art study and research environment on the first floor of the main building. VU Audiovisual Centre offers students, teaching staff and researchers the opportunity to experiment with the latest technologies and educational applications. All facilities are made available free of charge. It is also a perfect place for you to work together on joint assignments.

### Campus-wide wireless network

A wireless network is available throughout the whole VU campus with high bandwidth, including hotspots with extra high bandwidth. You can access this wireless network with your own notebook free of charge. When you want to install WIFI on your laptop please visit the IT service desk in the VU Amsterdam main building. If you already have 3G or 4G on your mobile phone you can install Get WIFI on your mobile phone via [www.vu.nl/wireless](http://www.vu.nl/wireless).

### 📶 VU Amsterdam has three wireless internet networks

VU-Campusnet	For students and employees with a VUNet-ID
Guest-network for visitors	To access this network you need a temporary visitors account
Eduroam	VU employees and students can use the eduroam network which is also available at other educational institutions affiliated with eduroam

### Computer rooms

There are several computer rooms and internet work spaces available, as well as a notebook study room. Students wishing to study using a notebook or laptop should go to the study room in the main building (ground floor, room 0B-06). It has sixty workspaces, each equipped with a notebook holder, plug-in keyboard, power outlet and adjustable chair. The room is divided into two sections: the 'silent area' for private study, and a 'working area' in which you can talk with other students and work together on your joint assignment. There are also a number of places reserved for wheelchair users.

### Copy centre

The Copy centre's services include photocopying (black and white or colour), printing, lamination, thermal binding and data processing.

There are also self-service multifunctional copying machines available that you can use to print, copy or scan. They can be found throughout the campus and can be accessed using your student card.

## Associations

### Student associations

There are many [student associations](#) you can join to make the most out of your time as a student. From general associations and sports associations, to culture and art associations, there is something for everyone's tastes and likes.

VU Amsterdam has its own organisation for all international and Dutch students, ESN VU Amsterdam. It brings together Dutch and international students from a variety of disciplines, with the aim of introducing them to the university and Amsterdam and making them feel at home. The association organises a variety of activities, including cocktail parties, weekly get-togethers (borrels) and social gatherings. Read more on their [website](#).

### Study associations

Study associations are organisations specifically for students of the same study programme or faculty. Founded by students, these associations focus on the academic content of your studies while emphasising fun and stress relief. They often organise activities exclusive to the students of the study programme or faculty, and you can frequently get discounts on study books!





## VU Bookstore

The VU Bookstore in the main building stocks a wide range of academic and scientific textbooks. It specialises in Economics, Finance, Law, Theology and Medicine, but also offers books on other subjects as well as general reading material. You can buy all compulsory literature for your classes at this bookstore. The VU Bookstore now incorporates a general stationery department which sells magazines, greetings cards, postage stamps, public transport tickets, pre-paid smartcards, etc.

Tip! The website offers discounts to members of study associations.

[Visit the VU bookstore website.](#)



## Language courses

### VU-NT2 Academy

The Dutch as a Second Language Department offers various courses in Dutch. Whether you are new to our language or speak it reasonably well, they can help you with learning Dutch fast and effectively. [See VU-NT2's website.](#)

### VU Taalloket (language centre)

[VU Taalloket](#) is an independent translation and language-training agency affiliated with VU Amsterdam. They provide translations, language and communication training courses and text editing services.

## Uilenstede student campus

A part of the student accommodation is located at Uilenstede. Here you can find a café/ bar and the main location of our sports centre. It is easy to reach, located only five minutes by bicycle from the university.

### Places to eat and drink at VU Amsterdam

Restaurants	Three restaurants on campus with light lunch opportunities
Mainstreet and coffee bars	You can pick up a coffee 'to go' at Mainstreet in the entrance hall of the Main Building. Pastries and light snacks are also available
Grand Café Living	Grand café with terrace

## Food and drinks

There are a supermarket and three restaurants on campus where you can enjoy a light lunch. The restaurant in the main building also provides hot meals at lunchtime and in the late afternoon/early evening. There are also a number of coffee bars throughout the campus, as well as Grand Café Living and Spar supermarket.

## VU Sports Centre

The [VU Sports Centre](#) is a sports facility offered by the university. It offers a very wide range of opportunities to play sports and keep fit. There is a special offer available for international students.



## Theatre Café Bar Boele

Bar Boele is a theatre café, run by Rialto and Griffioen. It's an international living room on campus - a place to get inspired, to meet new people, to hang out with friends, or to have a drink after a film or theatre performance. You can order drinks and bar food. Bar Boele also has its own event stage, for open mics, pub quizzes and more. You can find Bar Boele next to the entrance of the NU-building.



## Art and culture

Learning and personal development should go beyond the set course curriculum. VU Amsterdam therefore actively promotes arts and culture and is the only Dutch university that has its own theatre, course centre, cinema and art gallery.

## VU Griffioen

Visit [VU Griffioen](#) to see professional theatrical performances or to join a creative course or workshop. Every year, Griffioen puts on over 150 performances. In our theatre you will find anything from comedy to drama, music and dance, performed by both established artists and upcoming talent.

You can also join over 70 types of courses and workshops that include everything from dance to music, mindfulness, drama, writing, photography, painting and more.

### Movie theatre Rialto VU

Movie theatre [Rialto](#) has opened a new location on campus. They now have 4 state-of-the-art screening rooms in the New University building where you can see quality films from all over the world.

### VU Choirs and Orchestras

VU Amsterdam has four music groups: the VU Orchestra, the VU Choir, the VU Chamber Orchestra, and the VU Chamber Choir. See [this page](#) for more information.

### VU ART SCIENCE gallery

The [VU ART SCIENCE gallery](#) focuses on the interaction between art and science. VU Amsterdam initiated the gallery, as it encourages the exchange of multidisciplinary knowledge.

## The city of Amsterdam

Amsterdam is one of the most multicultural cities in the world and home to around 180 different nationalities. English is widely spoken. At VU Amsterdam, some 84 nationalities work and study closely together creating a vibrant international academic community.

[Discover more about Amsterdam.](#)



# Studying at VU Amsterdam: good to know

## Canvas

Our digital learning environment is Canvas; here you will find, among other things, the syllabus for each course and other useful documents as well as information on your progress. Sometimes you will have to hand in assignments through Canvas.

## VU mail

Each student is assigned a personal VU Amsterdam email address before the start of their studies. In your VU mailbox you receive important notifications regarding class cancellations, information meetings, your study progress and other relevant information.

## VunetID and VU.nl

Your VUnetID is your username and password to access all digital services VU Amsterdam has to offer, such as your personal dashboard on [VU.nl](#) and [Canvas](#). You also need your VUnetID to be able to take digital exams.

[VU.nl](#) is an important information source during your studies. On your personal dashboard you can find all relevant information such as your email, your personal schedule, exam grades, important announcements, news and all you want to know about courses, examinations, student wellbeing or student guidance. As soon as you receive your VUnetID and your application is completed, you can enter all VU.nl services.

You can also use your VUnetID to buy software at a bargain price via [Surfspot](#).

## Student e-mail

All VU students will be provided with an e-mail address upon registration. We urge you to start using your VU student mail account as soon as possible as VU Amsterdam will use this account to communicate with you. You do not want to miss out on important information and deadlines!

## Timetable (rooster)

Your [personalised timetable](#) provides an overview of all your registered lectures, seminars and exams, telling you where you need to be and when. You can also synchronise your schedule with your personal Apple, Google, Outlook or other calendars. Find more information on [this page](#).

## Study guide

The [Study guide](#) is an important source of information, offering a complete overview of the content of education (including courses, periods, literature) and the test format(s). Make sure you are familiar with the content of the Study guide for each course you are enrolled in.

## Books

In the course descriptions in the [Study guide](#) you will find the literature you need for each course. You might receive more information about extra relevant literature during the first lecture of the course in question or via Canvas.

## VU buildings opening hours and visiting addresses

See all opening hours [here](#).



## Studying in the Netherlands

### Discover more about studying in the Netherlands

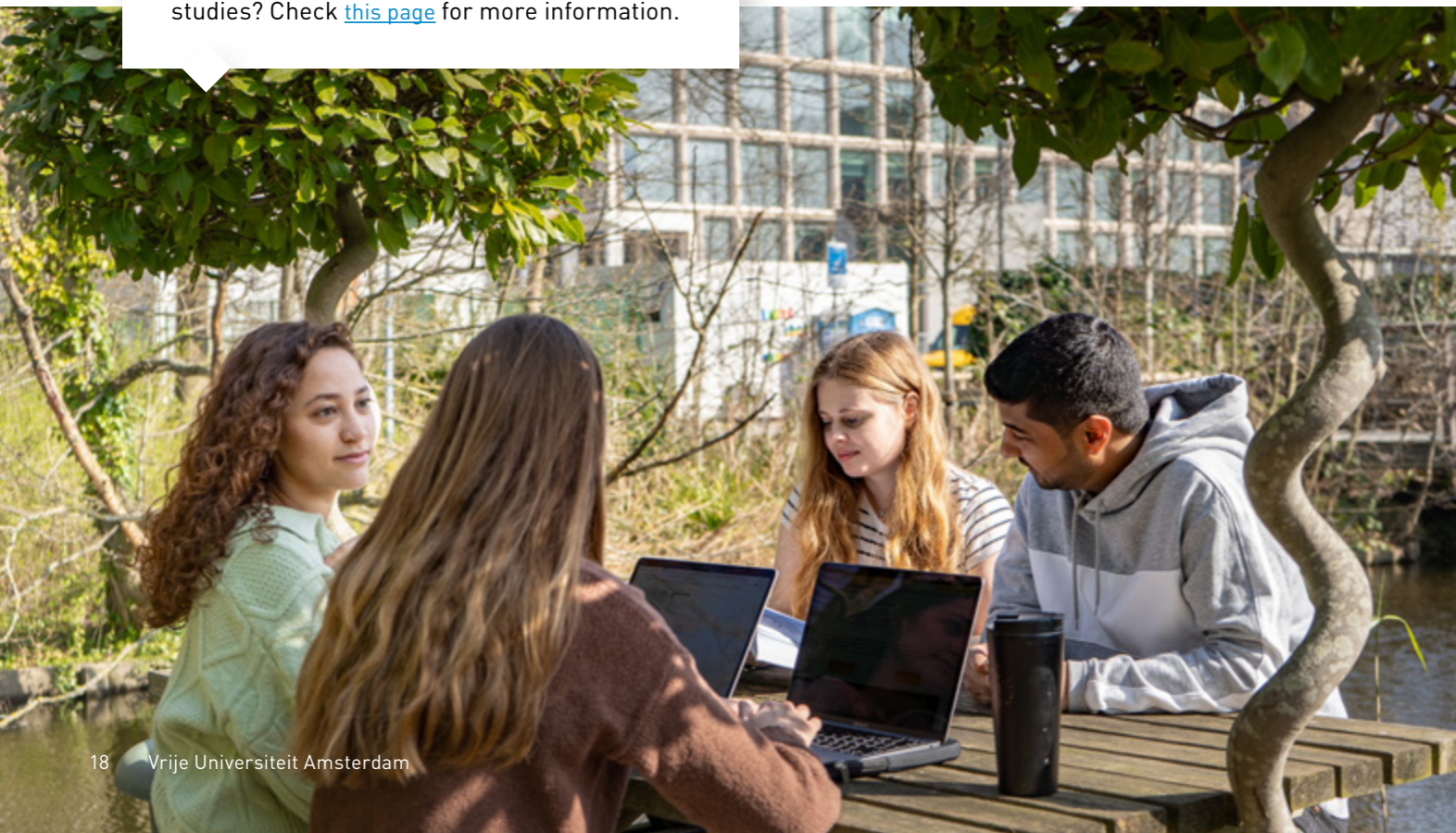
Did you know that VU Amsterdam has its very own [student blog](#) with blog posts written by students for students? On this platform you can read insider perspectives by VU students on navigating life as a student in the Netherlands. You will also find valuable tips, ranging from must-visit sights and museums to how to successfully transition to student life and mastering study techniques. Another website with a lot of useful information about studying in the Netherlands that we recommend you explore is [studyinnl.org](#).

### Learn basic Dutch

Would you like to learn enough Dutch alongside your studies to help you feel more at home on campus? With '[Basic Dutch on Campus](#)' you will learn all the basics, from how to introduce yourself to ordering a meal and chatting with local students and teachers. The best part? VU Amsterdam offers international students two modules of this specific course at a greatly reduced rate!



Need more information about the start of your studies? Check [this page](#) for more information.



Did you know that...

 934,927

Amsterdam has approximately 934,927 inhabitants?



 219.3 km<sup>2</sup>

Amsterdam is the largest city in the Netherlands?

 127,500

With almost 127,500 students, Amsterdam is a great and lively place to study?



 14th

According to Mercer's 2023 Quality of Living Survey, Amsterdam is ranked 14th worldwide?



 40

Amsterdam has 40 parks to relax or work out in?



 165

Amsterdam has 165 canals and 1,753 bridges, even more than Venice?



 4th

Amsterdam is one of the safest cities in the world?



 75

Amsterdam has 75 museums?

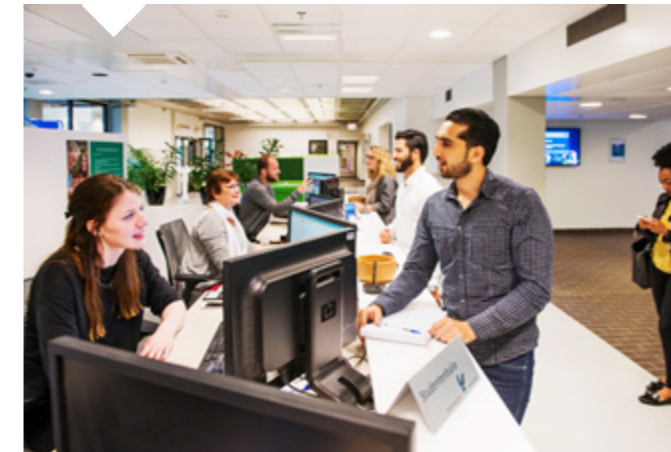


## 6. Student support and wellbeing

### Student services

#### Student desk

For general questions, for example on tuition fee payments, the [student desk](#) in the main building of VU Amsterdam is open.



#### Academic advisors

Each faculty has at least one [academic advisor](#) who can help you plan your studies, choose any extra courses that may be useful, discuss personal matters which may affect your studies and who can advise you on career choices. The academic advisor can also offer help to students with a disability or chronic illness. It is advised to discuss the possibilities before your arrival. Read more about [studying with a disability here](#). In some cases, the academic advisor may refer you to someone else if he/she thinks they are better suited to help you. [You can contact an academic advisor through your personal dashboard on vu.nl.](#)

#### Examination Committees

The Examination Committees are tasked with assessing the study programmes and upholding the quality of the examinations. The Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) of your study programme can be found on the website of your faculty.

You can send a request to the committee for matters regarding your study programme (exemptions, results, exams, internships) in your personal dashboard on vu.nl. If you disagree with the outcome of the Committee you can lodge an appeal with the Examinations Appeal Board. Student Ombudsman

The [Student Ombudsman](#) helps students with problems or complaints that cannot be resolved by any other body within the university. For example, if you feel that the faculty has treated you unreasonably or if your rights as a student have been infringed upon. They act independently, are impartial, and will deal with all complaints in the strictest confidence.

#### Student general counsellors

Student general counsellors offer advice and are able to help you address various matters. These may include study progress issues, financial matters and personal matters. Meetings with academic advisors and general counsellors are confidential and free of charge. You can make an appointment to meet one of the student general counsellors online. Read more about the student general counselling service [here](#).

#### Psychological counsellors / University psychologists

If you experience study-related problems such as fear of failure, lack of motivation, procrastination, examination stress or personal problems such as loneliness, home sickness, adjustment problems, grief, feeling depressed, anger, anxiety and lack of self-esteem you can ask the [VU psychologists](#) for help. VU psychologists can help students who would benefit from more intensive or specialised care and can help with finding the necessary care outside VU Amsterdam. For a referral it is important to have an insurance policy that covers mental health care in the Netherlands, and to have approval from your General Practitioner.

Consultations are strictly confidential. You can make an appointment through your personal dashboard on vu.nl. Besides individual sessions, our psychologists offer a course called [Back-on-track-studygroup](#) for international students. Please visit your personal dashboard on vu.nl as well for tips on how to handle or prevent psychological problems yourself. You can contact a VU psychologist by sending an e-mail to [psychologists@vu.nl](mailto:psychologists@vu.nl).

#### Confidential counsellors

The Executive Board is keen to ensure that VU Amsterdam offers a safe and pleasant environment for all staff and students. Sexual harassment and other forms of undesirable conduct (violence, intimidation, aggression, bullying) will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Special 'confidential counsellors' have been appointed and they can help you when you feel intimidated in any way. Find more information and how to get in touch [here](#).

#### Social safety coordinator

The [social safety coordinator](#) is an expert in addressing concerning behavior and provides advice in situations where safety may be compromised. If you encounter or become aware of a (socially) unsafe situation that requires immediate action, you can contact the social safety coordinator.



## 😊 Student Wellbeing Point

The Student Wellbeing Point is a no-cost, peer-to-peer support service available to all students at VU Amsterdam. The Point is staffed by VU students who have been trained to handle common concerns and problems that students might experience. The Point itself is located in the Main Building but Point Peers can also be reached via an online chat box and Zoom. The Point Peers are happy to help, whether by listening, offering advice or referring you to other services provided by VU Amsterdam, like Academic Advisors and Student Psychologists.

Come visit the [Student Wellbeing Point](#) if you have any questions or want to have a conversation with a fellow student about wellbeing at VU Amsterdam!

## Wellbeing Boosters @ VU Amsterdam

Student communities: [study associations](#) and [student associations](#)

Theatre and creative courses: explore them at [Griffioen](#)

Read, meditate and connect at [The Mindful Library](#)

Free student events and activities: see [Life is better in 3D](#)

LGBTQIA+ community: discover [VU Pride](#)

Community, support and sports: check [VU Sports Centre](#)

Programmes on life's bigger questions: see [NEWConnective](#)

Free coaching, practical tips & tools: find them at [Caring Universities](#)

### International student Chaplaincy

VU Amsterdam offers students a range of religious facilities and services. These include the Student Chaplaincy, a meditation room and an Islamic prayer room.

Read more about [religion and identity at VU Amsterdam](#).

# Student Wellbeing Point

Peer-to-Peer Support

Monday-Friday 10.00-16.00

VU Main Building, Ground Floor

## Student wellbeing calendar



### Wellbeing platform

During your time at VU Amsterdam you might need some extra support, on an academic or personal level. All information about wellbeing and safety can be found on: [vu.nl/wellbeing](https://vu.nl/wellbeing).

### VU Career Services

During your studies, you can reach out to VU Career Services for guidance on your future career. The faculties provide assistance with various questions and offer career advice, workshops, and training courses to prepare you for job applications and the labor market. Additionally, VU Career Services offers a test portal where you can access a variety of assessment and personality tests.

On [this page](#), you can find what type of services each faculty offers.

# 7. Calendar

## 2024-2025

### Introduction and welcome activities

20-21 August 2024  
21-27 August 2024  
23-27 August 2024

### Semester 1

2 September 2024 - 31 January 2025  
2 September 2024  
21-25 October 2024  
16-20 December 2024  
27-31 January 2025

### Semester 2

3 February - 27 June 2025  
24-28 March 2025  
22-28 May 2025  
23-27 June 2025  
21-25 July 2025

### Public holidays

23 December 2024 - 5 January 2025  
25-26 December 2024  
31 December 2024  
1 January 2025  
18 April 2025  
20-21 April 2025  
27 April 2025  
5 May 2025  
29 May 2025  
8-9 June 2025

Practical Matters Days  
Introduction week Bachelor's students  
Introduction week Master's students

### Semester 1

Opening Academic Year  
Exam period I  
Exam period II  
Exam period III

### Semester 2

Exam period IV  
Exam period V  
Exam period VI  
Resits

### University is closed

Christmas  
New Year's Eve  
New Year's Day  
Good Friday  
Easter  
King's Day (Koningsdag)  
Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag)  
Ascension Day  
Pentecost

Please note that the sections in purple are public holidays in the Netherlands, meaning that the university is closed. For a complete overview check your personal dashboard on [vu.nl](http://vu.nl).

\* No rights can be derived from this academic calendar. Faculty calendars, including resit dates, may differ from the academic calendar.

### August 2024

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	Practical Matters Days			17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Introduction week						

### September 2024

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
Opening Academic Year						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

### October 2024

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Exam Period I			17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
30	31					

### November 2024

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### December 2024

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Exam Period II			12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Christmas				
New Year's Eve						

### January 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	New Year's Day		11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Exam Period III			23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### February 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

### March 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Exam Period IV			20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

### April 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	Good Friday	1	Easter	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Easter		30				King's Day

### May 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
						Memorial Day
Liberation Day			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	Exam Period V		17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Ascension Day						

### June 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
						Pentecost
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	Exam Period VI					

### July 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	Resits		6	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

# 2025-2026

## Introduction and welcome activities

- 20-21 August 2025
- 21-27 August 2025
- 23-27 August 2025

- Practical Matters Days
- Introduction week Bachelor's students
- Introduction week Master's students

## Semester 1

- 2 September 2024 - 31 January 2025
- 1 September 2025
- 20-24 October 2025
- 15-19 December 2024
- 20 December 2024 - 4 January 2025
- 26-30 January 2025

- Semester 1
- Opening Academic Year
- Exam period I
- Exam period II
- University is closed
- Exam period III

## Semester 2

- 2 February - 26 June 2025
- 23-27 March 2025
- 22-29 May 2025
- 23-27 June 2025

- Semester 2
- Exam period IV
- Exam period V
- Exam period VI

## Public holidays

- 22 December 2025 - 2 January 2026
- 25-26 December 2025
- 1 January 2026
- 3 April 2026
- 5-6 April 2026
- 27 April 2026
- 5 May 2026
- 14 May 2026
- 24-25 May 2026

- University is closed
- Christmas
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter
- King's Day (Koningsdag)
- Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag)
- Ascension Day
- Pentecost

Please note that the sections in purple are public holidays in the Netherlands, meaning that the university is closed. For a complete overview check your personal dashboard on [vu.nl](http://vu.nl).

*\*No rights can be derived from this academic calendar. Faculty calendars, including resit dates, may differ from the academic calendar.*

## August 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Practical Matters Days			16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	Introduction week		

## September 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Opening Academic Year			12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## October 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			
Exam Period I			16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## November 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## December 2025

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Exam Period II			11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Christmas		24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
New Year's Eve						

## January 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	New Year's Day			11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Exam Period III			22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## Februari 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

## March 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Exam Period IV			19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## April 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
King's Day						

## May 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
Memorial Day		Liberation Day		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	Exam Period V	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	Ascension Day		22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	Pentecost	

## June 2026

ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
Exam Period VI						

## July 2026

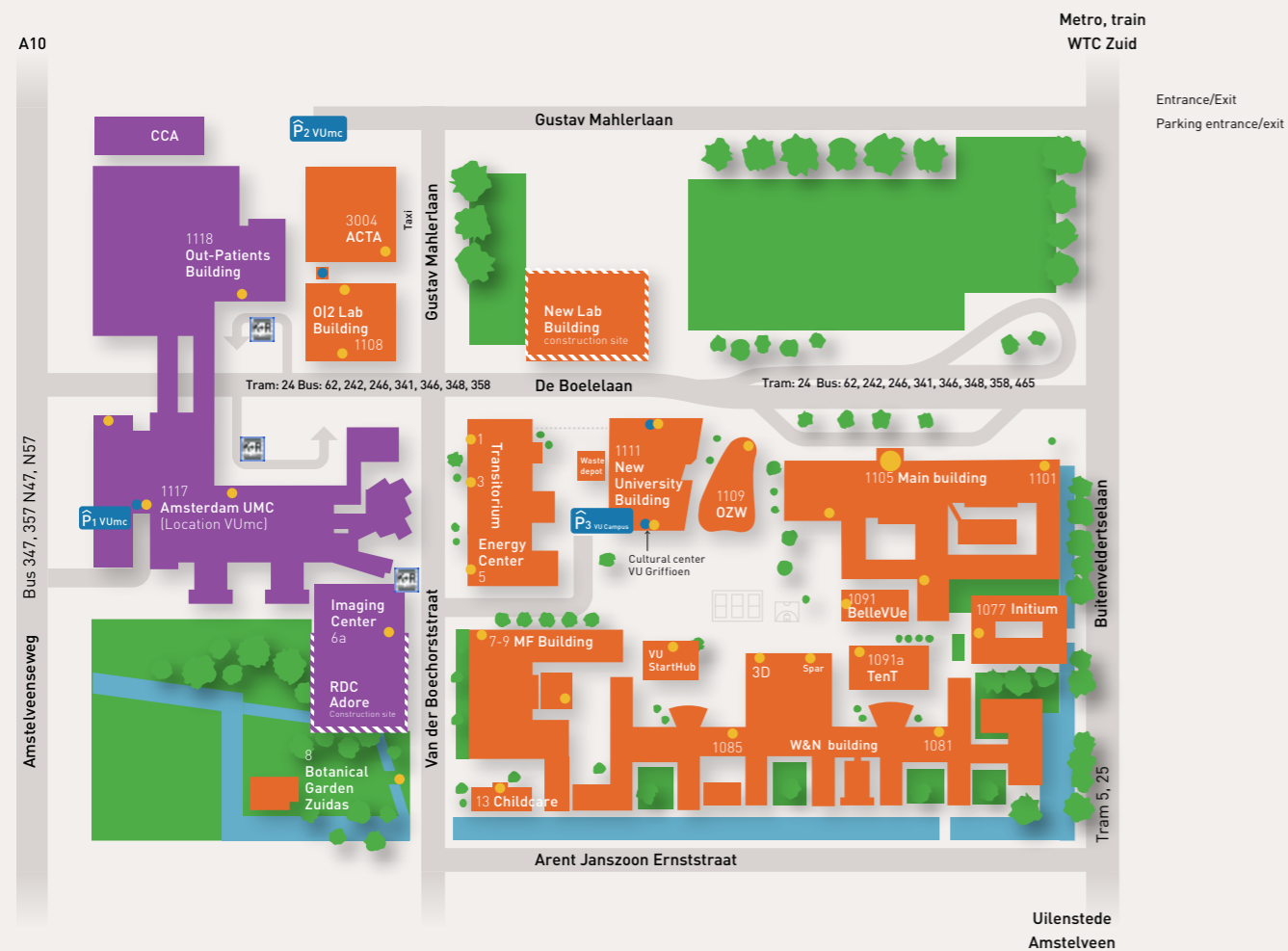
ma	di	wo	do	vr	za	zo
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

# 8. VU Campus + Uilenstede Maps

See also [campustour.vu.nl](http://campustour.vu.nl)

Are you curious about what VU Amsterdam's campus looks like and what you can do there? Take a virtual stroll and discover the campus with our interactive campus tour! Visit [campustour.vu.nl](http://campustour.vu.nl) to explore the facilities and get a glimpse of campus life.







VU Amsterdam Campus Map



Uilenstede student campus



## Social Media

-  [facebook.com/vuamsterdam](https://facebook.com/vuamsterdam)  
(International students)
-  [twitter.com/VUamsterdam](https://twitter.com/VUamsterdam)  
(Dutch only)
-  [linkedin.com/company/vrije-universiteit-amsterdam](https://linkedin.com/company/vrije-universiteit-amsterdam)
-  [youtube.com/vrijeuniversiteit](https://youtube.com/vrijeuniversiteit)
-  [instagram.com/vuamsterdam](https://instagram.com/vuamsterdam)
-  [amsterdamstudents.com](http://amsterdamstudents.com)  
(Student blog)

## Contact

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