

Frequently Asked Questions

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Concerning various types of visas

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, how can I solve this problem?

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 not possible either 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?

No, you do not need to bring a birth certificate when you will be living in Amsterdam or Amstelveen.

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 not 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, municipalities)

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 students will fall under the municipality of Amsterdam or Amstelveen. It is necessary to register with the municipality in order to keep the right 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 Naturalisation Department (IND). However, these are two separate institutions. The IND handles immigration matters and the municipality arranges the registrations in the town hall. Please check List of frequently used terms 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.

Work and Internships

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

In case you hold a non-EU nationality, you need a work permit to be able to work. Your employer needs to apply for a work permit 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 and South Korea are eligible to apply for a special type of residence permit called the Working Holiday Programme/Working Holiday Scheme (WHP/WHS). WHP/WHS allows you to work and study here without needing a work permit.

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 Vrije Universiteit 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 Vrije Universiteit 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.

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 here or in your home country (in case you are an Exchange student at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) then you can participate in an internship. 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.

Family

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, we can apply for a visa (if applicable) and residence permit on behalf of your family members. Please visit the section Bringing Family Members for the required documents.

List of Frequently Used Terms

Term	Explanation
Biometrics	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. We will inform you about this shortly before the Arrival Days.
BSN	Citizen Service Number. This is an identity number for all communications with the Government authorities.
File number	This is the file number of your immigration application at the IND. It always starts with Z1-. We e-mail you this number before arrival.
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 Naturalisation Department. Handles applications for visas and residence permits.
Municipality	Town hall, local government.

MVV	Long stay entry visa, valid for three months.
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 labour market and data services. The UWV also handles the applications for a work permit
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 back side of your residence permit. We also e-mail you this number before arrival.
VVR	Residence permit, valid for the period of your studies.
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. Citizens from Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Korea are eligible to apply. Please do check the requirements on our website and the IND’s.
Work permit	Non-EU nationals are not free on the labour market in Europe. In order to work, they 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.