

International Student Survival Guide

presented by



This document



This document was created to provide new international students with an overview of the most important things when arriving in the Netherlands. With it, we aim to help students feel less overwhelmed. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to us on Instagram [@diss_tud](https://www.instagram.com/diss_tud) or send an email to board@diss-online.nl

TU Delft holds a wide array of [study and student associations](#). **Delft International Student Society (DISS)** is the go-to international student association in Delft. It is dedicated to supporting and connecting international students.

For only €5 you can become a member and get access/discounts to:

- Events
 - Free monthly pizza evenings
 - Themed parties
 - Association excursions to nearby cities
 - And much more...
- Our international student network



What to expect in this document

Essential Dutch Vocabulary

- Basic Greetings, Common Phrases, Useful Words for Daily Life

Dutch Cultural Norms

- General and Social Etiquette, Dutch values

Housing in the Netherlands

- DUWO / University Housing, Private Housing Options

Transportation

- Public transport overview, OV-chipkaart, Cycling

Obtaining your BSN (Citizen Service Number)

- 4 Steps to Receive Your BSN

Opening a Dutch Bank Account

- Why Open a Dutch Bank Account?, Choosing a Bank and Opening an Account

Getting a Dutch Phone Number

- Why Get a Dutch Phone Number, Types of Plans

Shopping and Stores

- Grocery Stores, Household Items and Furniture, Online Shopping

Beneficial Apps for International Students

- TU Delft Apps, Food Delivery Apps, Grocery Delivery Apps, Weather Apps, Public Transportation Apps, Payment Apps, Social Apps, Second-Hand Market Apps

Mental Health Resources

- MOTIV, Hii Delft, TU Delft Psychological Services, 113 Suicide Prevention, E-Health (Gezonde Boel)

Biggest Dutch Events

Other Helpful Links

- Getting Your Student Card, Printing at TU Delft, Student Services Portal , Contact Centre

The International Student Checklist

- Apply for and obtain your student visa/residence permit (if applicable)
- Arrange housing (DUWO, private housing, etc.)
- Obtain health insurance that is valid in the Netherlands
- Get your Citizen Service Number (BSN)
- Open a Dutch bank account
- Get a Dutch phone number
- Obtain an OV-chipkaart for public transportation
- Consider getting a bike for daily commutes
- Familiarize yourself with the rest of this document including dutch vocabulary, norms, essential apps, stores etc.

***Cross-check with other sources and don't rely exclusively on this document.*

Essential Dutch Vocabulary

While Dutch is the national language in the Netherlands, most people speak English fluently. However, learning a few basic Dutch phrases can help you integrate better.

DUTCH

ENGLISH

Hallo/Doei	Hi/Bye
Goedemorgen	Good morning
Goedemiddag	Good afternoon
Goedenavond	Good evening
Proost!	Cheers!
Alsjeblieft	Please
Dank je wel	Thank you
Ja / Nee	Yes / No
Hoe gaat het?	How are you?
Het gaat goed, dank je	I'm good, thanks
Hoe heet je?	What's your name?
Ik heet...	My name is...
Spreek je Engels?	Do you speak English?
Ik begrijp het niet	I don't understand
Kunt u mij helpen?	Can you help me?
Hoeveel kost dit?	How much is this?
Waar is de wc?	Where's the bathroom?
Ik wil graag...	I'd like...

Dutch Cultural Norms

General Etiquette

- **Greetings:** When you meet someone new, a handshake will do. With friends, it's three kisses on the cheek—starting with the left.
- **Directness:** Dutch folks value honesty and straightforwardness, so feel free to express your opinions clearly and respectfully. This might seem blunt at first, but it's just their way of keeping things clear and transparent.

Social Etiquette

- **Scheduling:** Plan your social activities in advance. It's rare to drop by someone's place unannounced, so always call or text before visiting. The Dutch love their agendas and planning ahead.
- **Gift-Giving:** Visiting someone's home? Bring a small gift like chocolates, flowers.
- **Dining:** Dinner usually starts early around 6 PM and is the main meal of the day. Expect simple dishes like the common AVG (aardappels, vlees, en groente – potatoes, meat, and vegetables). When dining out, splitting the bill equally using apps like Tikkie is common.

Dutch Values

- **Tolerance and Openness:** The Netherlands is known for its open-minded and tolerant society, including liberal attitudes towards LGBT+ rights and soft drug use. You'll find a welcoming and diverse environment.
- **Cycling:** In the Netherlands, biking isn't just a hobby—it's a daily necessity for nearly everyone. The extensive network of bike paths and bike-friendly infrastructure makes cycling an integral part of Dutch life.

Housing in the Netherlands

1. DUWO / University Housing

Overview: DUWO is the largest student housing provider in Delft, working closely with TU Delft to offer student housing. It's a reliable option, especially for first-year international students.

Application:

- **When to Apply:** Early application is crucial. The application is done through DUWO's website or the university's enrollment page on osiaan.tudelft.nl.
- **Rental Periods:**
 - **BSc Students:** 1 year maximum.
 - **MSc Students:** 2 years maximum.
- **Availability:** Rooms are limited and allocated based on the tuition payment date. Popular buildings include Prof. Schermerhornstraat, Michiel de Ruyterweg, and Rotterdamseweg.

Additional Services: DUWO also offers Room.nl, where selection is based on account creation date, making it less suitable for short-term international students.

2. Facebook

Overview: Facebook is a primary platform for finding housing in Delft. Many students find accommodation through various groups where current tenants post available rooms.

Groups to Join:

- [Kamer in Delft](#)
- [Delft Housing](#)
- [Find room in Delft](#)

Tips for Applying:

- **Personalize Your Message:** Introduce yourself, share your hobbies, and make your message personal and engaging. Stand out among many applicants by being genuine and friendly.
- **Be Persistent:** Keep applying to multiple ads as the housing market in Delft is competitive.

- **Look elsewhere:** Besides Delft look at other nearby cities to live such as The Hague and Rotterdam
- **Beware of Scams:** Always verify the legitimacy of offers and avoid payments before seeing the property or signing a contract.

Process:

- **Initial Contact:** Reach out via email or direct message to express interest.
- **Viewings:** If selected, you might be invited to viewings or calls.
- **House Openings:** Some houses hold “instemmings” where multiple applicants visit the house and introduce themselves.

3. Other Housing Platforms

Kamernet.nl:

- **Overview:** Kamernet is a popular platform where many rooms are listed, ranging from independent studios to large student houses.
- **Cost:** For €26, you can respond to unlimited housing ads for 15 days.
 - Tip: Rooms on Kamernet are frequently listed on other platforms like Facebook, so consider checking those to save money.
- **Website:** [Kamernet.nl](https://www.kamernet.nl)

Xior Student Housing:

- **Locations:**
 - Phoenixstraat 16A-1 t/m 16A-91
 - Antonia Veerstraat 1-15
 - Barbarasteeg 2
- **Reviews:** Generally positive, with ratings around 4.1 to 5.0.
- **Facilities:** Typically include furnished rooms with shared or private amenities depending on the building.

Transportation

Public Transport Overview

The Netherlands boasts an extensive and efficient public transport network, making it easy to travel within and between cities. The main components include:

- **Trains:** Operated by NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen), trains are a reliable and popular option for inter-city travel.
 - **Discount Products:** Consider purchasing discount passes like "Dal Voordeel" (off-peak discount) if you travel frequently.
- **Buses:** Connect various neighborhoods and towns, often serving as the first or last leg of your journey.
- **Trams:** Available in larger cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, providing convenient city travel.
- **Metro Systems:** Found in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the metro is ideal for longer distances within the city.

NS Reisplanner or 9292: These apps are extremely helpful for planning your journeys by bus, tram, or train.

OV-chipkaart

The OV-chipkaart is the primary payment method for all public transport in the Netherlands. There are two types:

- **Personal OV-chipkaart:** Ideal for long-term stays. It's linked to your name, allowing for automatic top-ups and access to special discounts.
- **Anonymous OV-chipkaart:** Suitable for short-term visitors. It can be purchased and used without personal registration.

To use the OV-chipkaart, simply check in at the start of your journey and check out at the end by tapping the card on the designated readers.

Student Travel Product

As an international student, you may be eligible for the Student Travel Product, which offers free or discounted travel on public transport. You can choose between a weekday or

weekend pass, depending on your travel needs. For additional information on the requirements, please visit [DUO's eligibility page](#).

Cycling

Cycling is deeply embedded in Dutch culture and is often the most practical mode of transportation for students. Consider:

- **Buying a Bike:** For an affordable second-hand bike, check out apps like Marktplaats or purchase one during the introduction week. Alternatively, you can always visit a bike shop later on.
- **Renting a Bike:** Services like Swapfiets offer monthly rentals with maintenance included, making it easy to get around.
- **Bike-Sharing Services:** OV-fiets is a popular bike-sharing service provided by NS (Dutch Railways). It's available at many train stations, making it ideal for quick commutes.

Obtaining your BSN

As a new international student at TU Delft, obtaining a BSN (Burgerservicenummer or Citizen Service Number) is essential for various administrative tasks, such as opening a bank account, registering for health insurance, and more. Visit <https://www.delft.nl/en/moving-delft-abroad> for more information, here are the steps summarised:

Step 1: Make an Appointment

1. Online Appointment:

- Use the code provided by TU Delft to book an appointment online with the Delft Registration Office. If you don't have a code, contact TU Delft to obtain one.
- **Location:** Delft Registration Office, Stationsplein 1, Delft.

1. Phone Appointment:

- Alternatively, you can call 14015 to schedule your appointment. Note that this number works without an area code, even from mobile phones.

Step 2: Gather Required Documents

Ensure you have all the necessary documents before your appointment. Missing documents can result in the need to reschedule.

1. Valid Travel Document:

- **Passport** (for all students)
- **Identity Card** (EU/EFTA students only)

1. Proof of Address:

- **Rental Agreement** or **Purchase Agreement**.
 - If you are staying with someone, bring a signed **Authorisation for Lodging** form from the primary resident or owner, along with a copy of their proof of identification and their purchase or rental agreement.

1. Additional Documents for First-Time Residents:

- **Birth Certificate** (recent original, if available)
- **Marriage or Divorce Certificate** (recent original, if applicable)
- **Proof of Deregistration** (if coming from the Caribbean Netherlands).

1. Residence Permit:

- **Non-EU Students:** Bring a copy of your **MVV Visa** stamped on the page in your passport. If you do not need an MVV Visa, a print of the confirmation email from TU Delft with the subject 'Residence Permit' is also acceptable.

Step 3: Attend Your Appointment

1. **Be On Time:** Arrive at the Delft Registration Office on time. If you are late, you will need to reschedule your appointment.
2. **Document Verification:** During the appointment, your documents will be verified. Ensure all documents are in print, as there are no printing facilities at the municipality office. There are printing facilities throughout the TU Delft campus.

Step 4: Receive Your BSN

1. **Immediate Issuance:** If all your documents are in order, you will receive your BSN immediately during the appointment.
2. **Written Confirmation:** Within 4 weeks, you will receive a written confirmation of your registration, including your BSN.

Important Tips

- **Plan Ahead:** Schedule your appointment as soon as possible to avoid delays.
- **Document Preparation:** Double-check that you have all required documents and copies before your appointment.
- **Legalisation of Documents:** If your documents are from certain countries, they may need to be legalised or have an apostille stamp. Check the Dutch government's [website](#) for more information.

Opening a Dutch bank account

Opening a Dutch bank account is essential for non-EU students studying in the Netherlands. It simplifies financial transactions, helps avoid foreign currency conversion fees, and is often required for various subscriptions and services. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the process.

Why Open a Dutch Bank Account?

1. **Avoid Foreign Transaction Fees:** Using a foreign bank account can incur conversion fees for every purchase.
2. **Local Payments:** Dutch debit cards (Maestro) are widely accepted, whereas foreign cards may not be.
3. **Health Insurance and Subscriptions:** Many services, including health insurance and gym memberships, require a Dutch bank account.
4. **Faster Transactions:** Benefit from the iDEAL payment system for quick and easy online payments.

Choosing a Bank

Several banks in the Netherlands offer student-friendly accounts. Here are some of the best options:

Traditional Banks

1. ABN AMRO
2. ING
3. Rabobank

Online Banks

1. Revolut
2. Bunq

Documents Required

To open a student bank account in the Netherlands, you will generally need:

- **Valid Proof of Identity:** Passport or ID card.
- **Proof of Dutch Residence:** Rental contract or registration with the municipality.
- **BSN (Burgerservicenummer):** Issued upon registration with the local municipality.
- **Proof of Enrollment:** Confirmation from your Dutch educational institution.

- **Residence Permit:** Required if you are not from the EU.

Steps to Open an Account

1. **Gather Documents:** Ensure you have all the necessary documents.
2. **Choose a Bank:** Decide between a traditional bank or an online bank based on your needs.
3. **Apply Online or In-Person:**
 - **Online:** Many banks allow you to open an account via their website or mobile app.
 - **In-Person:** Some banks may require a visit to a branch to verify your identity.
1. **Verify Identity:** Complete any required identity verification steps.
2. **Receive Account Details:** Once approved, you'll receive your account details and debit card.

Getting a Dutch phone number

As an international student in the Netherlands, having a Dutch phone number can significantly ease your daily life.

Why Get a Dutch Phone Number?

- **Avoid Unexpected Costs:** Using a foreign number can incur high roaming charges.
- **Better Reception and Internet:** Local providers offer better network coverage and faster internet speeds.
- **Trustworthiness:** A Dutch number is more trusted for local communications.
- **Administrative Ease:** Necessary for many local services, including banking, healthcare, and subscriptions.

Types of Plans

1. Prepaid SIM Cards

- **Ideal for:** Short-term stays or infrequent phone use.
- **Features:** Pay-as-you-go, no long-term commitment.
- **Providers:** Lebara, Lycamobile, Vodafone.

1. SIM-Only Contracts

- **Ideal for:** Long-term stays and regular phone use.
- **Features:** Monthly payments, often cheaper than prepaid in the long run.
- **Providers:** Youfone, Simyo, T-Mobile, Tele2.

1. Mobile Phone Contracts

- **Ideal for:** Those needing a new phone along with a plan.
- **Features:** Includes a phone, higher monthly costs, longer contract durations (12-24 months).
- **Providers:** KPN, Vodafone, Odido (formerly T-Mobile and Tele2).

Required Documents

To get a Dutch phone number, you'll typically need:

- **Valid Proof of Identity:** Passport or ID card.
- **Proof of Address:** Rental agreement or utility bill.
- **BSN (Burgerservicenummer):** Issued upon registration with the municipality.
- **Dutch Bank Account:** Required for contract payments.
- **Residence Permit:** If you're a non-EU citizen.

Steps to Get a Dutch Phone Number

1. **Choose a Plan:** Decide between prepaid, SIM-only, or a mobile phone contract based on your needs.
2. **Gather Documents:** Ensure you have all necessary identification and proof of address.
3. **Visit a Store or Apply Online:** Go to a provider's store or their website to sign up.
4. **Receive Your SIM Card:** You'll get your SIM card either immediately in-store or by mail.
5. **Activate Your Plan:** Follow the provider's instructions to activate your SIM card and start using your new Dutch phone number.

Stores

Grocery Stores

Albert Heijn

- **Features:** One of the largest supermarket chains in the Netherlands with a broad product range.
- **Tips:** Use the Albert Heijn Bonus Card for discounts. Sign up through their app or website.

Jumbo

- **Features:** A major supermarket chain known for competitive pricing and a wide selection of products.
- **Tips:** Keep an eye out for weekly deals and promotions.

Lidl and Aldi

- **Features:** Discount supermarkets offering budget-friendly prices.
- **Tips:** Great options for students wanting to save on groceries.

Household Items and Furniture

IKEA

- **Features:** Well-known for affordable furniture and home essentials.
- **Locations:** Multiple locations across the Netherlands, including Delft.

Action

- **Features:** Offers a diverse range of household items, cleaning supplies, and decor at low prices.

Xenos

- **Features:** Specializes in affordable home decor and furniture.

Online Shopping and Marketplaces

- **Bol.com**
- **Amazon NL**

Helpful Apps

Navigating life in a new country can be challenging, but with the right apps, you can make your transition smoother. Here's a list of essential apps for international students arriving at TU Delft, categorized by their utility.

TU Delft Apps

1. My TU Delft

- **Description:** The official app for students at TU Delft.
- **Features:** Access to grades, schedules, study progress, and more.

1. Pulse

- **Description:** Learning management system used at TU Delft.
- **Features:** Course materials, announcements, and assignments.

Food Delivery Apps

1. Thuisbezorgd

- **Description:** The Dutch version of Just Eat, offering a wide range of cuisine options from local restaurants.

1. Uber Eats

- **Description:** Popular international food delivery app.

1. Too Good To Go

- **Description:** App to buy surplus food from restaurants and stores at reduced prices, helping to combat food waste.

Grocery Delivery Apps

1. Flink

- **Description:** Quick grocery delivery service.

1. Getir

- **Description:** Quick grocery delivery service.

1. Picnic

- **Description:** Online supermarket with scheduled delivery times.

Weather App

1. Buienradar

- **Description:** Popular Dutch weather app focusing on rain forecasts.

Payment App

1. Tikkie

- **Description:** Easy-to-use app for sending and receiving payment requests.
- **Features:** Quick payment links via WhatsApp, no fees for transactions.
- **Availability:** Requires a Dutch bank account.

Social Apps

1. WhatsApp

- **Description:** Widely used messaging app in the Netherlands.

Second-Hand Market Apps

1. Marktplaats

- **Description:** Largest online marketplace for buying and selling used goods.

1. Vinted

- **Description:** Platform for buying and selling second-hand clothing.

Mental health support

Anyone can experience mental health difficulties, and international students might be especially vulnerable due to new and unfamiliar environments. It's important to know that it's okay to seek help and support. There are several resources available for you at TU Delft, where you can talk about your troubles without any pressure.

MOTIV

MOTIV is a center for personal development that collaborates with TU Delft. They provide a student support line where conversations are confidential and do not need to be centered around a specific problem. If you need someone to talk to about your situation or anything on your mind, you can contact them via email or phone. All of this information is available via their [website](#).

Hii Delft

Hii Delft is an initiative created by students, for students, with help and feedback from psychologists and student counselors. The aim is to support personal development through peer support groups and workshops.

TU Delft Psychological Services

TU Delft has several psychologists available to help students. The process to meet them is straightforward:

- **Walk-in Hours:** For a short conversation, simply show up during walk-in hours.
- **Appointments:** They may advise you to make an appointment for a longer session, which is free of charge and limited to three sessions per student.

E-Health

Gezonde Boel is a platform provided by TU Delft to support your mental and physical health. It includes various help groups, courses, and more.

113 Suicide Prevention

If you or someone around you is in crisis and experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm contact 113 Suicide Prevention.

Biggest events of the year



LEIDS ONTZET

Date: October 3

Celebrates the liberation of Leiden from Spanish rule in 1574. Activities include parades, fireworks, and traditional foods like hutspot (stew).



CARNIVAL (CARNAVAL)

Date: February/March (dates vary based on Easter)

A festive season with parades, costumes, and parties, particularly popular in the southern regions of the Netherlands.

1



OWEE / IP

Date: Mid-August

The introduction week for new students at TU Delft, featuring various social and cultural activities, including sports events, parties, and campus tours.

2



SINTERKLAAS ARRIVAL

Date: Mid-November

Marks the arrival of Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas) in the Netherlands, with parades and festivities leading up to December 5th, when gifts are exchanged.

3

4



KING'S DAY (KONINGS DAG)

Date: April 27

A national holiday celebrating the King's birthday with street markets, music, and parades. Everyone dresses in orange, the national color.

5

Other helpful links

[Getting Your Student Card](#) - Find out how to obtain your student ID card.

[Printing at TU Delft](#) - Learn how to use and set up printers on campus.

[Student Services Portal](#) - Access a central hub for administrative services like study places and maps.

[Contact Centre](#) - Reach out for general support and assistance.

[Emergency Contact](#) - Find immediate support and assistance in urgent situations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We hope you found the information helpful and that you learned something new to ease your transition into life in the Netherlands. The Delft International Student Society (DISS) is here to support and connect you, making your experience as an international student enjoyable and fulfilling.

We look forward to seeing you at our events, whether it's our themed parties, free monthly pizza evenings, or something else. Remember, **for only €5**, you can become a member and gain access to all these activities and more.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to us on Instagram @diss_tud or email board@diss-online.nl. Welcome to Delft, and we hope to see you soon at one of our events!

Best regards,
The DISS Team

