

Utrecht

..... Utrecht Region Newcomer's guide

Useful information to
consider before, during
and after your move.

Index

1. Here's where it all starts	3	8. Finding a place to call home	21
Expat Center Utrecht -		Renting	21
A helpful simplifier of your		Tenancy rights (you have many.)	21
new life.	3	Buying simplified	24
		Utilities; gas, water, electricity,	24
2. Get yourself registered	4	internet	24
DigiD	4	Waste and recycling	24
3. Financial matters	6	9. Find a job - No Dutch required	25
How to open a bank account	6	Volunteering	25
What you need to know			
about credit cards	7	10. A handy list of key phrases,	26
Taxes!	7	courses and apps	
30% tax ruling	7		
		11. Public holidays	28
4. Your health	8	Dutch holidays 2017	28
Dutch Healthcare	8	Dutch holidays 2018	28
Health insurance	8	School holidays	29
5. How do I get around?	10	12. Explore the Utrecht region	30
Biking	10	and beyond	
Bike lessons for adults	10	Good to know	30
Public transportation	12	Your go to culture, sport and	
Taxis	14	life resources	30
Driver's license	14		
		13. Get connected	32
6. Childcare & Dutch		Mobile phone	32
educational system	16	Internet	32
Childcare	16	International groups & resources	33
Dutch primary education	16		
Dutch secondary education	16	14. Essential contacts and	34
International School Utrecht	28	resources	
		Municipalities	35
7. University level studying		Hospitals and medical centres	36
in Utrecht	20		
Orientation year for recent		15. International Talent	38
international graduates	20	Community Utrecht Region	

You have stumbled onto a city unlike any other. One that you can get your arms around, while also being knocked off your feet. By its culture. By its beauty. By its vitality. By its boldness. By its community.

This is no anonymous metropolis. This is a place to call home. To slow down. To create amazing things, together with a vibrant, warm and collaborative community of people from around the globe.

We are Utrecht, and now you are too. You are part of what makes this city special, and it is our intention to give you the best possible start here. Let's create the future together!

Whether you've done a lot of research or just came here on a gut sense, there's much to know about life in this unique city. What you hold in your hand is the key to your new home. There are many details, both important and delightful, with which we'll get you familiar.

The hardest part is over. You are here.

Before we get to the small details, we'd like to help you get to know your new city a little better. Its people, its economy, its history and its future. You'll find Utrecht a unique mix of the intimacy of a small town with the vibrancy of a global player. We both embrace our history and eagerly chart a course into the future. We are eager to create what's next, and you're just what we need.

When you're done reading this, we hope you'll feel confident, informed, and excited to start your new life here. If you have more questions (which you will!), you'll find a plethora of resources inside here to get them answered. However, there's two resources that we encourage you to lean on most: The Expat Center Utrecht and the Expats Utrecht Facebook group.

These, in many ways, are a smart, connected, realtime source of what life is like in the Utrecht region. They will help calm your nerves, build your confidence and speed your integration into life here.

And, let's remove a worry right now: between the Google Chrome browser and Google Translate app you'll have most everything written in Dutch shown to you in your language of choice. Even offline materials. Ok, exhale, and carry on!

Finally, a great alternative to navigating Dutch language phone menus is Facebook Messenger, Twitter or WhatsApp, on which most businesses and institutions will be glad to help you.

Let's begin, shall we?



1. Here's where it all starts

Expat Center Utrecht: A helpful simplifier of your new life.

Moving to a new country involves a lot of moving parts! The Expat Center Utrecht (ECU) is a one-stop shop for international people, here to assist you in navigating and smoothing out the process.

If you're an expat located in the municipality of Utrecht or partnering municipalities working for an employer that is registered as a 'erkend referent' (recognized sponsor) with the Immigration and Naturalization Office (IND), you can use the ECU through your

employer to swiftly arrange the government formalities of getting a residence permit and getting registered.

When registered, you can finish payroll registration at your company, open a bank account, sign up for health insurance, register for internet and more, sooner than previously possible, saving time so you can start settling in our beautiful region.

This service is available only by appointment.

Beyond that, you can drop in on Tuesday and Thursday for questions on practical matters or more information on professional services in English at the Expat Center Information desk. You'll find it staffed by people just like you: Expats creating a new life in Utrecht, only they've been here long enough to confidently fill you in on all the important details of life here. Or point you to who and what can. The Information Desk is staffed with volunteers of ACCESS, a not-for-profit organization supporting the international community in the Netherlands.



Address:

Stadsplateau 1 (City Hall next to Utrecht central station), Utrecht



E-mail:

expatcenterutrecht@utrecht.nl
<https://www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/living/expat-center/>



Walk-in hours Expat Center

Information Desk: Tuesday and Thursday: 9.00-17.00. City Hall and thus the Expat Center Utrecht is closed on public holidays. Governmental services for formalities by appointment only.

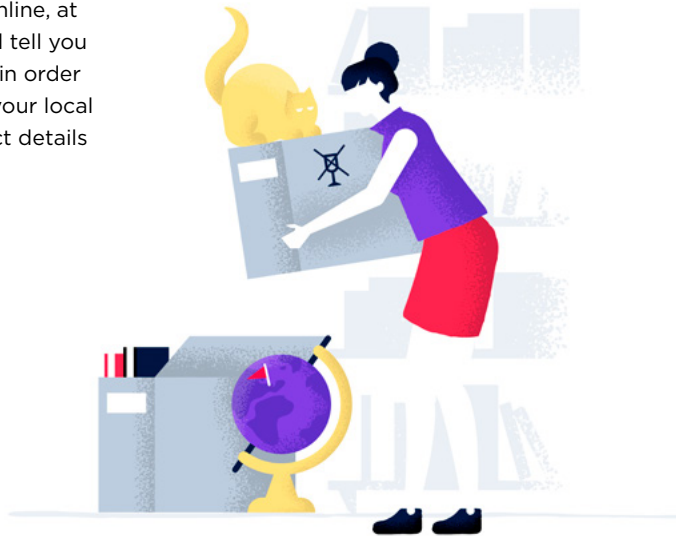
2. Make it official – get yourself registered

If you're planning on living here for more than 4 months within a 6 month period, you and your family are required to register in person with the municipality of your residence and obtain a citizen service number ([BSN - Burgerservicenummer](#)) within 5 days. Your BSN is a key to many activities, such as signing utilities service contracts, getting ongoing mobile phone service, opening a bank account, signing up for health insurance, doing taxes and more.

You can easily make an appointment to get registered by phone or online, at which time the municipality will tell you what exactly you need to bring in order to complete registration. Find your local municipality ([Gemeente](#)) contact details in the back of this booklet.

DigiD

Here in the Netherlands, you'll find businesses and organizations take your identity protection seriously. One tool used towards this aim is the DigiD. It's a digital signature identity verification that many governmental organizations and businesses use to provide access to their online services. Tax filing is one example. You can get your DigiD after you have received your BSN by going to www.digid.nl/en. With this, you can quickly sign in and access personal data or submit forms digitally.



3. Financial matters

How to open a bank account

Once you're registered in the Netherlands and have obtained your BSN, you're ready for the next step: opening a bank account. You'll find that, perhaps unlike where you've come from, there are many banks that operate largely online, alongside your standard branch-based conventional banks. Each have a range of options to meet your financial needs and are equally supportive.

To open an account, you can either begin the process online or if it's a branch-based bank, make an appointment with one of their advisors.

After you have applied to open an account, you will receive your debit card and PIN by post.

ABN AMRO bank offers banking in English: You can reach them 24 hours a day. Make an appointment through their website or call one of their English-speaking advisors at 0900 - 81 70. From outside the Netherlands, call +31 10 241 17 20. For more information see: www.abnamro.nl/en

Documents generally required:

- Valid ID, plus residence permit if applicable;
- Your Dutch Citizen Service Number (BSN), which you'll get when you register at the municipality where you will be living in;
- Proof of address (BSN confirmation document, utility bill, rental contract etc.);
- You may also need evidence of income, such as an employment contract, statement of initial employment particulars or three consecutive payslips.

! Pro tip: Bear in mind that all banks ultimately offer English language customer service, and you can use Google's Chrome browser and Translate app to convert materials into the language of your preference. Among our banks is what's considered among the most sustainable in the world, Triodos, based locally here in Zeist!

Another quick and approachable way to communicate in English is via bank's Facebook messenger and Twitter support.

What you need to know about credit cards

It's important to note that credit cards are not widely used in the Netherlands. They are generally not accepted in grocery stores, and are mainly used for larger purchases, along with restaurants, airports and clothing stores. One interim solution until you get a local bank account is getting cash from [geldautomaat](#) (ATM) machines, for which you'll only get charged your bank's fees, with none coming from the bank related to the ATM you're using. For some, you'll find this fee is trivial.

Taxes!

Everyone in the Netherlands is taxed on their income, wealth and assets. The amount of tax you pay depends on your level of income. A percentage of your monthly salary is automatically deducted by your employer. In February of the next year you will receive your annual salary statement at your home address or digitally. This document is important when filing taxes with the Dutch Tax authorities.

It is required to file a tax return in the Netherlands if you;

- Have received an [aangiftebrief](#) (letter) from the Dutch Tax authorities.
- Have other sources of income (for example other salaries, own business here or elsewhere, savings, investments etc.)

Find more information at the Tax and Customs Administration website ([belastingdienst](#)): www.belastingdienst.nl (information is available in English and in German).

30% tax ruling

Moving to a new country can be a taxing experience, but one delightful way to reduce the amount you pay is the 30% Tax Ruling. What's this, you ask? If you qualify, 30% of your gross income is entirely tax free, for up to 8 years! What this means is that the highest effective tax rate (52%) is reduced to 36.4%.

Are you a highly skilled migrant or scientific researcher? If the necessary conditions are met, your employer may grant you (but is not obliged to do so) a tax-free allowance of up to a maximum of 30% of your gross salary as a reimbursement for the extra costs involved in living abroad.

It's one of the many ways we appreciate and support the unique contributions expats make to our country.

More information can also be found at the Dutch Tax office website: www.belastingdienst.nl

4. Your health

In the Netherlands, there are many types of insurance to cover all manners of mishaps. Though they are not compulsory, some – like liability insurance – are strongly recommended. Everyone who lives or works in the Netherlands is legally obliged to take out standard health insurance within 3 months after arriving in the Netherlands. All in all, you'll find your out of pockets costs minimal and your health well looked after.

Dutch healthcare

Dutch healthcare is regarded as among the best in the world, and citizens in the Netherlands have access to both advanced treatments and preventive care. The government funds hospitals and long-term care through taxation, while medical insurance is used to pay for short-term treatment.

There is very little difference between private and public hospitals, with the quality of care being extremely high in both. Keep in mind that you cannot see a specialist without obtaining a referral from your General Practitioner (GP or huisarts).

Given that, it's crucial to get yourself registered with a GP shortly after you arrive. In a decidedly Dutch touch, it would be handy when your GP is located within a certain amount of minutes of your residence by bike, should they need to come to see you at home! Most doctors speak English.

Health insurance

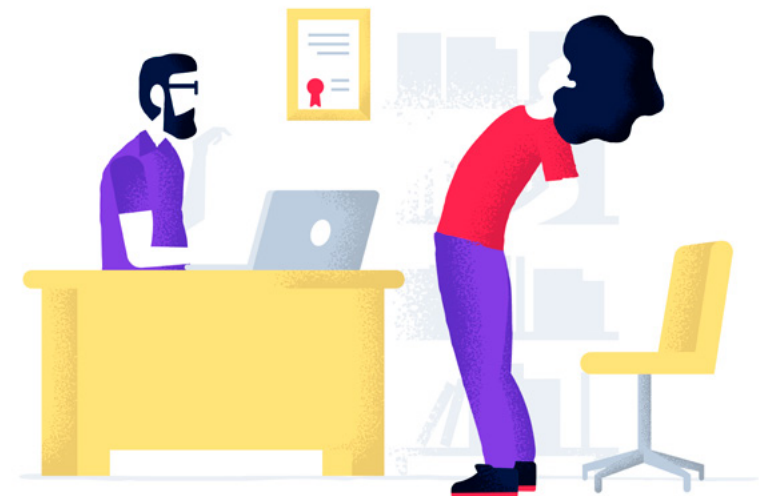
It is mandatory to purchase at least basic health insurance (*basisverzekering*), even if you are already insured in another country. Children under 18 years old are insured via their parents at no extra cost. Parents must register their child with an insurance company within four months of their birth.

You'll find a large number of health insurance companies (*zorgverzekeraars*) to choose from, and can change insurers once a year. A BSN is required to register for health insurance. In a refreshingly egalitarian touch, healthcare insurers are obliged to accept anyone who applies for the basic health insurance and must charge all policyholders the same premium, regardless of their age or state of health.

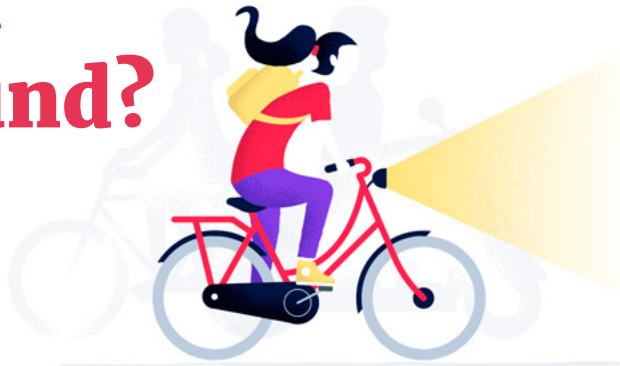
If you'd like to go beyond the basics, you can get additional insurance for things like dentistry, physiotherapy, and a range of holistic modalities. In this case, insurance companies are not obliged to accept everyone who applies.

To get a sense for how it all works, you can download the 'Healthcare in the Netherlands' brochure, produced by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, at the Utrechtregion.com website.

One way to quickly sift through your options is *Zorgwijzer*, a free health insurance broker: www.zorgwijzer.nl/zorgvergelijker/english Here you can search for the options you'd like with selected filters, or call them toll free at 0800-646 4644 to get your health insurance questions answered and sign up once you're satisfied.



5. How do I get around?



Biking

The Dutch biking philosophy can be summed up in two words: calm & assertive. Embody these two qualities and you'll have a fine time out there.

If you've already arrived here, you won't be surprised to hear that there are more bicycles than people, by a large margin! With hundreds of kilometers of separated bike paths, you'll find it enjoyable and much easier to get around on two wheels in Utrecht. We are proud to have the world's biggest bike parking garage at the central train station - 12,500 spots.

When you're ready to join the action, you have many choices to buy a bicycle, both online and in person. While new bikes are readily available, you can do as the locals do and find a solid used bike, sold at most shops. A good one will run you about €150. You can certainly go cheaper, via sites like MarktPlaats www.marktplaats.nl (in Dutch).

While it may look to you like bikes can be (and are) parked anywhere, be aware that there are certain spots that it's prohibited, and may result in your ride being taken by city officials. Don't worry, you can go pay the fine and retrieve your bike from the municipal depot.

You'll find that most places that sell bikes often also fix them too. They're called [fietsenwinkels](#). No appointment needed, and for minor repairs, same day service is generally possible.

There are some rules that you as a cyclist should know, but also keep in mind that not all Dutch cyclists take the rules or traffic lights very seriously so always be alert. In the Netherlands no helmets are required. To keep everybody happy and safe, always signal where you're turning by pointing the direction, or down if you're slowing/stopping in an unexpected place.

Bike lessons for adults

Now, we know not all of you were born on two wheels as the Dutch seem to have been, and if you're feeling a little shaky about biking, or perhaps have never learned how to bike, you're in luck! 'Harten voor sport' offers English cycling lessons for adults in Utrecht called The Bikemasters. Over the course of 10 lessons, bike provided, you'll be confidently in the thick of things in no time.

Location: Community centre

De Nieuwe Jutter

Address: Amerhof 66, Utrecht

Contact: Defietsmeesters.nl (in Dutch)

Public transport

While you could well purchase daily and weekly transit passes, the easiest way to get around on mass transit is the 'OV Chipkaart'. Given a wide range of transit companies accept it, it will connect you across the country with ease.

You have two options: Get an anonymous card (one that's not tied to a specific person, useful if you plan to share it with others) at train stations, tabacconists or supermarkets. Or to get the maximum value, get a personal card, available online at www.ov-chipkaart.nl, with which you can subscribe to annually renewable discount offerings with your favoured transit companies.

! **Pro tip:** Always be sure to check in and out of each part of your journey, as lack of checkout means your

card balance has been deducted by a substantial amount more than your trip likely costed, a measure done at check in to ensure people check out. But don't worry, if you forget, you can get the balance corrected at the transit stores at major train stops such as Utrecht Centraal. Machines to top up your credit are located both at train stations, our ubiquitous Albert Heijn grocery stores and more.

U- OV: Utrecht's regional bus and tram system

Buses and trams are operated by U-OV (Qbuzz) which runs around 30 bus lines around the city. Between IJsselstein, Nieuwegein and Utrecht there is a fast tram ([snelttram](#)).

Utrecht Bus / Tram Tickets: A one-time single (U-OV paper ticket) costs €2.70 (as of 2017) which can be bought from the driver. After 18:00 on Thursdays and Fridays and over the whole weekend, the single U-OV can also be used as a return ticket. Single or multi-day options are available: 1 day (€6), 3 days (€11.50) or 5 days (€16) all available as a paper ticket.

Alternatively, if you have a OV Chipkaart, it's welcome on U-OV buses. Note that they are unrelated entities, the OV Chipkaart serving as credit for fares on a wide range of domestic transit systems.

For more information about bus stops and timetables see: <https://u-ov.info/plan-mijn-reis/visit-utrecht-area>

22 MILLION
BICYCLES
FOR 1 MILLION-
INHABITANTS

Useful public transport planners:

- For all public transport in NL: 9292.nl/en or download the app. This planner can tell you the itinerary from address to address combining any number of transit systems.
- For trains only: NS.nl/eng or download the app. You can add a 40% discount subscription to your personal OV Chipkaart. Please inquire at the NS service desk.

Taxis

Taxis are quite expensive in the Netherlands. A regular taxi from Utrecht to Amsterdam might cost you about €140,- whereas a train will be €7,50, and is available directly to Schiphol airport. If you need a taxi, please make sure the meter runs or the costs are clear before you leave. Uber is also widely used in the main cities in the Netherlands. Go to www.taxi.nl (in Dutch) for a price quote or to order a taxi online.

Driver's license

With any foreign driver's license you are allowed to drive in the Netherlands for 6 months after you register with your municipality. After that period you need to have a Dutch driver's license. Some internationals are able to exchange their driver's license for a Dutch one easily including, but not limited to EU and EEA citizens and expats who have the 30% tax facility status.

To exchange your driver's license for a Dutch one, please make an appointment at city hall and bring valid identity papers,

your foreign driver's license and a photo. This is only possible if you are registered as a resident of the Netherlands and have a valid residence permit. You may also be asked to provide a certificate of fitness. The rules differ per country of origin: visit www.rdw.nl/englishinformation or call 0900-0739 for more information.

An application for a Dutch driving license costs around 40 euros and is paid in advance. The process takes approximately two weeks. Make sure this is done before your current license expires!

For resident and visitor parking permits (parkeervergunningen) contact your municipality.

Don't own a car, but want to drive? Not a problem! There are several peer-to-peer and carshare options available to you. Peer-to-peer means you can rent a quality vetted, insured car from a private individual, via such services as SnappCar.nl or MyWheels.nl. Carsharing means you have on demand access to a fleet of vehicles parked throughout the region, available 24 hours. Greenwheels.nl or Connectcar.nl are two options, and you can find many more at www.utrechtdeelt.nl/wat-autodelen (in Dutch)

Traffic rules can be found at www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/brochures/2012/02/28/verkeersborden-en-verkeersregels-in-nederland-engels



6. Childcare & Dutch educational system

Childcare

While options for childcare are diverse and numerous, demand is high and waiting lists may be up to six months long, so it pays to be proactive. Note that some Dutch (and international) employers have their own childcare facilities.

Your options:

- Toddlers centre ([peuterspeelzaal](#)) for children 2-4, usually for a few hours per day. Peuterspeelzalen are usually connected to a primary school.
- Daycare centre ([kinderdagverblijf](#)) for children 0-4. Service by private providers. Opening hours typically range from early morning until 18.00/18.30.
- BSO, afterschool care ([Buitenschoolse opvang](#)). This is offered often in collaboration with primary schools and/or a daycare centre.
- Babysitter, au-pair, live-in nanny, host parent

Child daycare costs may be subsidized by the Dutch tax authorities when both parents are working. The child care benefit ([kinderopvangtoeslag](#)) can be applied for at the Dutch Tax authorities (www.belastingdienst.nl - select English; search childcare).

Dutch primary education

Here in the Utrecht region, you will find a generous selection of schools with a wide range of educational philosophies and practices. Children are truly put in the forefront here, supported to be competent, confident participants in the modern, connected, multi-disciplinary world we find ourselves in.

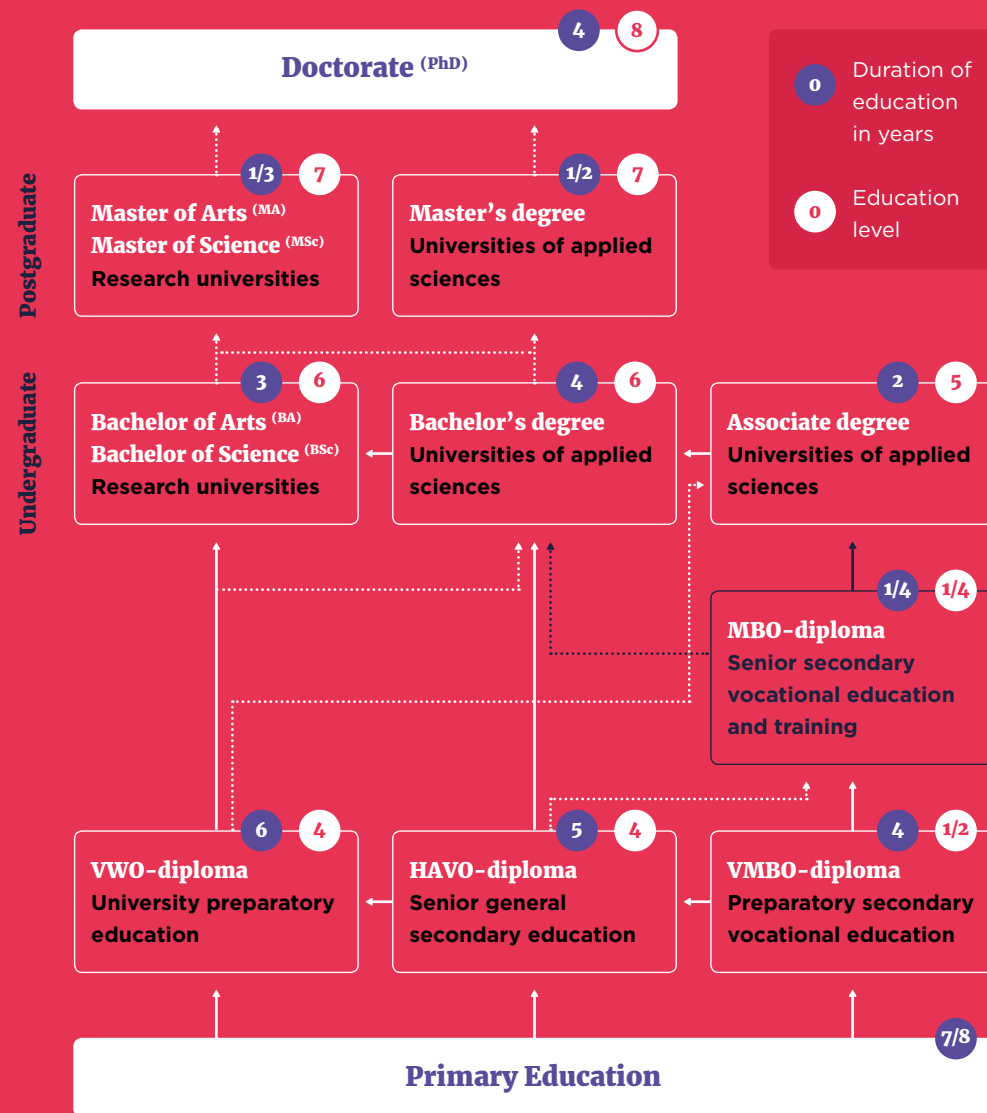
In the Netherlands, most children start primary school ([basisschool](#)) the day after their fourth birthday, with many children transitioning from Dutch childcare centres. Children are required to attend after they turn 5. The school year begins in August and is broken up by numerous holidays (listed below). In the final year of Dutch primary school, parents, children and teachers decide together, with the help of a standardized national test (CITO), which type of secondary school is most appropriate.

Dutch secondary education

Children usually attend a secondary school ([middelbare school](#)) from ages 12 to 18. There are three types of schools:

- VMBO: Pre-vocational secondary education
- Havo: Senior general secondary education. A completed havo degree gives access to a University of Applied Sciences.
- VWO: Pre-university education

Education System The Netherlands



! **Tip:** An increasing number of Dutch schools offer bilingual education meaning that roughly half the subjects are taught in English.

Dutch schools are government funded and require only a small parental fee, if at all.

International School Utrecht

There are two types of international schools: independent international schools (private schools) and those partially funded by the government or municipality (public/private schools). The latter place a lot of emphasis on connecting with Dutch society. The International School Utrecht (ISUtrecht) is a public/private school and provides an accessible learning environment to primary and secondary students from diverse international backgrounds.

ISUtrecht is a fully accredited International Baccalaureate World School teaching the Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programme. Enrollment in August 2016 was more than 400 students, representing some 30 nationalities. More information at www.isutrecht.nl

The Dutch education system described: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/publications/find-a-publication/education-system-the-netherlands.pdf>

To find out more about international and Dutch education, visit www.educaide.nl
To find an overview of Dutch international schools, visit www.dutchinternationalschools.nl



Other international schools in the Utrecht region include:



Amsterdam international community school
aics.espritscholen.nl



International school of Amsterdam
isa.nl



British school of Amsterdam
britams.nl



Ecole française d'Amsterdam
lyceevangogh.nl



Florencius international school
florenciusinternationalschool.nl



Idealfuture chinese int'l
idealfuture.nl/cnschool



Gifted minds int'l school
giftedmindsinternationalschool.com



International primary school letterland – Almere
letterland.nl



International school Almere
internationalschoolalmere.nl



International school Hilversum
atscholen.nl/scholen/voortgezet_onderwijs/ish



Ips violenschool
www.ipshilversum.nl



Korean school of Amsterdam
koreanschool.nl



Japanese kindergarten
www.tulipgakuen.nl



Japanese school of Amsterdam
jsa.nl

7. University level studying in Utrecht

As a would be student here in the Netherlands, you will be faced with an enjoyable quandary: Which of the nearly infinite options will you choose?

The region offers students an inspiring international learning environment with an extensive range of English-taught programs, courses and study programs covering a wide variety of fields. Prospective international students can enroll in an English-taught degree program or a short course, while Dutch speakers can also enroll in a Dutch-language program.

Go to urhome.utrechtregion.com/en/study/finding-education to compare the offerings of the universities, colleges and other education providers. Study in Holland is another platform which provides a tonne of information about studying in the Netherlands: www.studyinholland.nl

If you're an EU student in search of a loan, go to DUO at www.duo.nl/particulier/international-student or check with your university for more information about student travel products, student loans and more.

There are many different student organizations and societies in Utrecht. Some of them are internationally oriented – such as the Erasmus Student Network www.esn-utrecht.nl.

Orientation year for recent international graduates

Want to live here with less restrictions and more possibilities? The orientation year ([oriëntatiejaar](#)) permit allows non-EU recent graduates of a Dutch university and non-EU scientific researchers to stay in or come back to the Netherlands for a period of up to twelve months. During this period, you can seek employment or work without needing an extra work permit. International graduates can apply within three years after their graduation from a Dutch university.

More information can be found at the official Immigration and Naturalization Office (IND) website: ind.nl/en/work/Pages/Looking-for-a-job-after-study-promotion-or-research.aspx or ask at your knowledge institution.

8. Finding a place to call home

Whether you're looking for an outdoor lifestyle, a place in the heart of a historic city or a family home with room for the kids to run around, you'll find it here. Your options range from detached suburban homes to rural living and efficiently laid out urban apartments, flats and townhouses.

Renting

If you're planning a short-term stay in the Utrecht Region (less than five years), renting may be your best bet.

Tenancy rights (you have many)

The housing market in the Netherlands is tight which unfortunately sometimes results in illegal practices. Internationals are an easy target since they don't know their rights and often don't speak Dutch. So please make sure to learn more about tenancy rights and contract details before signing your first rental contract.

Major points to look for in a rental contract include:

- The correct rental price, and whether it includes service charges, energy bills, and local taxes such as property, trash disposal and sewage taxes.
- Deposit; 1-2 month's rent is normal.

- Duration of the contract. Most are fixed for one year with a notice period of one month from either party.
- Who's responsible for maintenance and repairs.

Also make sure to ask the rental agency if they charge a mediation fee. The Expats in Utrecht Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/expatsutrecht is a quick, current time resource for your questions/ resource suggestions in this regard.

Here is a quick, accurate overview of the Dutch housing market: www.government.nl/topics/housing/rented-housing

Want to talk to someone? Your local [huurteam](#) is happy to, advising on rent levels and the like. The [Juridisch Loket](#) offer free legal advice to people on low incomes.



Utrecht huurteam: (in Dutch)
www.huurteam-utrecht.nl/en
call 085-2734933 or what's app:
+31 (0)6 411 46 715

Normal rental prices can be checked at
www.normalehuur.nl (huurprijscheck) (in Dutch)

Legal assistance:

Juridisch Loket: www.juridischloket.nl
(in Dutch) or call 0900-8020.
Address in Utrecht:
Catharijnesingel 55, Utrecht
Address in Amersfoort:
Van Asch van Wijckstraat 2, Amersfoort

Legal assistance for students (in Dutch)
VIDIUS: <http://vidius.nl/rechtshulp/>

Useful websites to search for your next home include:

- www.funda.nl (in Dutch)
- www.rooftrack.nl/en Rooftrack is an initiative from WoningNet and offers a wide range of available properties in the non-subsidized rental market. Rooftrack's website displays rental properties from both housing associations as well as professional property management corporations in the cities of Amsterdam, Almere, Haarlem and Utrecht.

Student Housing

The Utrecht region is home to some of the Netherlands' most prestigious universities, renowned knowledge institutions and more than 70.000 students. Given this, it's important to start your home search early in order to find affordable housing, preferably before you arrive. If you are in an exchange program, your university might be able to arrange accommodation for you.

Useful sources include:

SSH student housing:
www.sshxl.nl/en
Room rentals: kamernet.nl/en
Expats in Utrecht Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/expatsutrecht

Specific Facebook groups about room rentals (information is mostly in Dutch)
Utrecht:

www.facebook.com/groups/woonruimteutrecht

Kamer in Utrecht Facebook group:
www.facebook.com/groups/234214686628695

Amersfoort:
Kamer in Amersfoort Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/1568118990139543

9. Find a job – no Dutch required

Buying simplified

If you are planning on staying in the Utrecht Region for three years or more, then one option may be to buy a property. There are many ways to go about house hunting in the Utrecht Region: Real estate agents (who charge you an additional fee), adverts, online property search websites such as www.funda.nl and new building developments, of which many are being built as you read this.

Financial advice

The Dutch tax authorities provide an annual tax benefit for home owners which makes buying an attractive option. A financial advisor can work out what mortgage is best for you and what it will cost you. Additionally there are the so-called buyer's costs (*kosten koper*). These are the costs you incur for things like the services of the real estate agent, and real estate transfer costs. It's always advisable to seek expert advice on financial and legal aspects if you want to buy a property.

Utilities

Read the water, gas and electricity meters and notify your suppliers when you move into your new home. Your real estate agent will usually be able to help you with transferring the water, gas and electricity contracts of your new home to your name.

A note about internet: keep in mind that this may take a bit of time, largely depending on the provider. There are many different providers such as UPC, Ziggo, KPN and many more. AanbiederCheck www.aanbiedercheck.nl/en is a fast option to discern the best option for you.

Waste and recycling

Here in the Netherlands, taking out the trash, recycling and compost can be a nice form of exercise, as most collection is centralized in neighbourhood receptacles, generally within 500 meters of your home.

Want to know more about where and when to dispose your trash? Utrecht residents: Go to www.mijnafvalwijzer.nl or download the app (also available in English). For those of you that live outside of Utrecht city, please check with your local municipality.

Don't worry if you're not a master of Dutch (yet) as the Utrecht region offers many opportunities for non-Dutch speakers. Both Dutch and the more than 1.000 international companies that are located here are always looking for talent from abroad.

With unemployment levels amongst the lowest in the EU, the odds of advancing your career in the Utrecht Region are certainly in your favour. The Utrecht Region job portal provides a real-time overview of all non-Dutch speaking vacancies and assignments in the region.

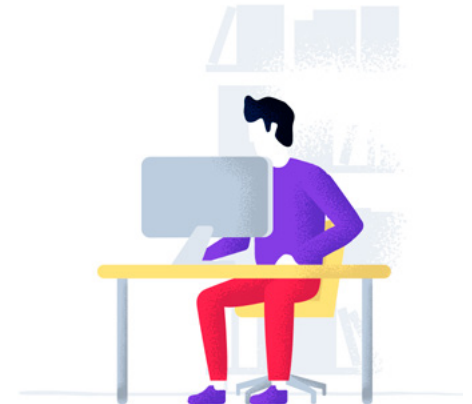
Explore urhome.utrechtregion.com/en/work/jobportal

Average salaries can be checked at: www.intermediair.nl/salariskompas/ (in Dutch) or the Expats in Utrecht Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/expatsutrecht

is a reliable source to ask about your specialty, and often hear back from a currently in the field practitioner.

Volunteering

We are a community that likes to help one another, and you'll find copious options to do so. For all things volunteering, go to www.vcutrecht.nl (in Dutch), or you can ask in person at the information desk at the Expat Center Utrecht. If you're specifically interested in working with refugees, go to *Vluchtelingenwerk Midden Nederland* at www.vwmn.nl (in Dutch).



10. A handy list of key phrases, courses and apps

Essential words

While most Dutch speak English, taking time to get to know and use at least a few words in Dutch will take you a long way towards connecting with others. The Dutch will probably quickly switch to English but will very much appreciate your effort.

If you would like to learn Dutch thoroughly, several organizations offer language classes.

These words are good to know:

Dutch	English
Hallo	Hello
Goedemorgen	Good morning
Goedemiddag	Good afternoon
Goedenavond	Good evening
Dag ^(formal)	Bye
Doei ^(informal)	Bye
Tot ziens	See you later
Dankuwel ^(formal)	Thank you
Dankjewel ^(informal)	Thank you
Alstublieft ^(formal)	Please
Alsjeblieft ^(informal)	Please

Inquire at the Expat Center Utrecht Information Desk about language course providers. They range from traditional academic style courses at schools to intimate, social, in home group classes. You can get a head start on your own via apps such as Duolingo, Mondly and more.

While cheeky, the blog 'Stuff Dutch people like' illustrates some typical Dutch manners.

stuffdutchpeoplelike.com

Dutch	English
Ja	Yes
Nee	No
Lekker	Tasty
Mooi	Beautiful
Gezellig	Sociable / cosy / fun
Open	Open
Gesloten	Closed
Spreekt u Engels?	Do you speak English?



11. Public holidays

Dutch holidays 2017

Sinterklaas	December 5 (not an official holiday)
Christmas Day <i>Eerste Kerstdag</i>	December 25
Boxing Day <i>Tweede Kerstdag</i>	December 26
New Year's Eve <i>Oudejaarsavond</i>	December 31 (not an official holiday)

Dutch holidays 2018

New Year's Day <i>Nieuwjaarsdag</i>	January 1
Good Friday <i>Goede Vrijdag</i>	March 30
Easter Sunday <i>Eerste Paasdag</i>	April 1
Easter Monday <i>Tweede Paasdag</i>	April 2
King's Day <i>Koningsdag</i>	April 27
National Remembrance Day <i>Dodenherdenking</i>	May 4 (not an official holiday)
Liberation Day <i>Bevrijdingsdag</i>	May 5 (every 5 years; next in 2020)
Ascension Day <i>Hemelvaartsdag</i>	May 10
Whit (Pentecost) Sunday <i>Eerste Pinksterdag</i>	May 20
Whit (Pentecost) Monday <i>Tweede Pinksterdag</i>	May 21
Sinterklaas	December 5 (not an official holiday)
Christmas Day <i>Eerste Kerstdag</i>	December 25
Boxing Day <i>Tweede Kerstdag</i>	December 26
New Year's Eve <i>Oudejaarsavond</i>	December 31 (not an official holiday)

School holidays

In the Netherlands school holidays differ per region. Dutch schools and subsidized international schools in the Netherlands are divided into three regions: North, Central and South. To avoid a holiday rush, each region has its own vacation schedule. Utrecht belongs to the central region.

Some school holidays (*schoolvakanties*) such as the summer, Christmas and May vacations, are fixed. Since schools have the flexibility to extend the May holiday

by one week and can deviate from the advised spring/autumn breaks, it always pays to check the precise dates with your school.

Can I take my child on vacation outside of the school holiday periods? The Dutch government does not permit parents to take their children on vacation outside of the school holiday periods (exceptions apply). Parents who do this violate the Compulsory Education law (*Leerplichtwet*).

School holidays for Dutch primary and secondary schools in the Utrecht region

- Autumn vacation (*herfstvakantie*)
October 14 - October 22, 2017
- Christmas vacation (*kerstvakantie*)
December 23, 2017 - January 7, 2018

12. Explore the Utrecht region and beyond

As is to be expected of a city with its roots in medieval times, Utrecht and the surrounding area has a long and rich cultural history. If you stroll between the lively docks of the historical Oudegracht and the city centre, you come across countless national monuments and world heritage sites. And if you jump on your bike, you'll soon be at impressive citadels, forts, castles, farms, gorgeous rivers and lakes.

By train you can easily reach other big (international) cities or small towns from 'Utrecht Centraal' (Utrecht's central station). Within an hour of travel, you can experience all of the Dutch icons and take in endless fields of flowers, castles, windmills and beautiful art.

Amsterdam and Schiphol Airport are just 30 minutes by a direct train; Rotterdam and The Hague 45 minutes. Daily international trains run to and from Brussels (2 hours), Cologne (2.5 hours) and Paris (3.5 hours).

Good to know

- Films are nearly always shown in their original language with Dutch subtitles, with the exception of children's films.

- The museum card ([museumkaart](http://museumkaart.nl)) is a hidden gem, giving you access to hundreds of museums throughout the Netherlands for a single, exceptionally reasonable annual membership of about €60 for adults and €30 for children. www.museumkaart.nl
- King's day ([Koningsdag](http://koningsdag.nl)) is on 27 April and celebrates King Willem-Alexander's birthday. On that day Dutch towns will turn into a huge orange street party and open-air flea market.

Your go to culture, sport and life resources

Looking for unique and hidden spots in Utrecht city? Download the USE-IT app or visit www.use-it.travel/cities/detail/utrecht. Local citizens provide you with

lots of tips about great restaurants, unique shops, little coffee bars and much more. You can also find information about nice biking and walking routes.

Go to www.visit-utrecht.com for more tips on exploring and experiencing the Utrecht region.

Time to Momo is an frequently updated, often surprising guide app that will have you feeling like a local in no time. Walks, destinations, even a few hundred phrases to get you started! www.timetomomo.com/nl/webshop/utrechtapp

For an excellent in the know guide packed with tips relating to ongoing cultural activities, nightlife, restaurants, and shopping in the city and region of Utrecht, check out the free bimonthly English magazine MAG Utrecht. You can find it distributed throughout the area, or visit www.magutrecht.com for more information.

Parnassos Cultural Centre:
<https://www.uu.nl/en/parnassos>

Parnassos is the cultural centre of Utrecht University. At Parnassos you can attend courses and workshops, visit concerts, and much more. Parnassos is open to students and staff of participating institutions for higher education; alumni and others interested are welcome too.

Sports

Sportcentre Olympos:

www.olympos.nl/en-us/home.aspx

Sportcentrum Olympos has extensive and versatile facilities. These are situated at the Utrecht Science Park, which is also home to Utrecht University, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU), the Hubrecht Institute and other top research institutions, innovative companies and student housing complexes. Together, this mix of science, students, sport and commerce creates a dynamic climate in which to work and study. Students and employees of Utrecht's higher education institutions form the primary group Olympos is dedicated to serving. In addition, Olympos welcomes other sports enthusiasts as well.

13. Get connected

Mobile phone

You can sign an ongoing contract with a mobile phone provider once you are officially registered as a resident, have a BSN, and a bank account. Prepaid cards are a convenient option when you've just arrived, as they're widely available, with none of the above requirements.

Internet

Free wifi is available in many cafes, libraries and through the city of Utrecht. We have many coworking spaces that offer free or low cost day options as well - A great way to meet our diverse and active entrepreneurial community in the bargain. See utilities to learn about the many in home internet service options available to you.

International groups and resources

Of all the resources we've suggested thus far, these are perhaps the most potent: Human connections to people who've recently experienced what you have, and are happy to lift up those after them.

Expats in Utrecht facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/expats-utrecht This vibrant group of people is in many ways your one stop shop for just about any question, request or idea you have about life in the Utrecht region. And don't let the name fool you, this group is comprised of people far beyond the city

of Utrecht. Here you can find a home, a friend, fun things to do and where to get that special spice you miss from home.

Expats in Amersfoort facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/165124386878273 Small but mighty, this group also includes those from Woudenberg, Soest, Hilversum, Zeist, Leusden and more.

Meetup Groups: We love to use MeetUp here, and you will too. You'll find vibrant and welcoming groups for just about any activity here, from drinks with your fellow expats to cinema nights, language cafes and more. Make The Most of Utrecht is one prime example.

<https://www.meetup.com/enjoy-utrecht>

Utrecht mamas: Mothers are what in many ways knits our society together, and this group is where you'll find a supportive, funny, caring group of both Dutch and international people (which, by the way, includes and welcomes a handful of papas as well!) www.facebook.com/groups/utrechtmamas

Internations Utrecht: An active global networking community that proactively seeks to connect people, both online and at their many in person events.

www.internations.org/utrecht-expats

International Woman's contact Utrecht:

If you're a woman, this group is your key to the city, truly. With nearly daily events, this is an excellent way to build friendships and sense of community in this region. It's open to both international women and locals who wish to connect with the broader world community. Its aim is to facilitate and foster friendship and understanding between women of all nationalities. www.iwcu.nl

Erasmus Student Network: If you're an international student, this is your group. This student led network organizes field trips, workshops, sport activities and introductions for international students. www.esn-utrecht.nl

German group 'Deutschklasse': German? It's here where you can find your home away from home, and continue to educate your children in the German language and culture. www.deutschklasse.nl

International neighbor group: The International Neighbor Group organizes social activities for international staff, Ph.D. students and Master's students at Utrecht University, the Utrecht Medical Centre and related research institutions. sites.google.com/site/ingutrecht

Resources for internationals include:

ACCESS is a not-for-profit organization which supports the international community in the Netherlands. Its professional volunteer staff can answer questions and provide information on important internationals issues, and its Counselling Services Network is on-call to

refer to experienced and qualified professionals aware of the challenges facing internationals in need of support. You can get in touch with **ACCESS** 0900 222 2377 (€0.20 p/m) or email at helpdesk@access-nl.org or visit www.access-nl.org for their free FAQ Guides & other helpful resources.

www.xpat.nl The Xpat journal magazine and the Holland Handbook give a wealth of information for internationals. You can also download the Holland Handbook app.

www.dutchnews.nl Get a sense for the pulse of your new country here, with English language coverage of Dutch news.

www.iamexpat.nl A lively media hub for expat life in the Netherlands. Insightful, provocative articles, job search, on and offline community are all to be found here.

www.expatica.com/nl Comprehensive information on life in the Netherlands

Government.nl is the official English-language website of the Dutch central government.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) is the immigration department of the Dutch government. Their website covers education, employment, permits and visas, social security, taxes and vehicles. www.ind.nl/en Also, note that they have active and friendly support on Twitter via DM for even the smallest of questions.

14 Essential contacts and resources

 **Emergencies**
Police, Ambulance
112



 **Police**
Non-emergency
0900 - 8844



Municipalities

Municipal services

Change of address, exchange driving license, obtain an extract ([uittreksel](#)) from the Municipal Personal Records Database ([BRP](#)), register a birth, marriage or death and much more.

Most things can either be arranged online or by appointment. Contact your municipality for more information.



Utrecht

www.utrecht.nl

Stadsplateau 1
14030 or +31 30 286 0000
from abroad

The City of Utrecht can also be contacted on WhatsApp by sending a message to +31 (0)6-24 92 76 65



Amersfoort

www.amersfoort.nl

Stadhuisplein 1
14033 or +31 33 469 5111
from abroad



De Bilt

www.debilt.nl

Soestdijkseweg Zuid 173
+31 (0)30 228 9411



Hilversum

www.hilversum.nl

Oude Enghweg 23
14035 or +31 35 629 2000
from abroad



Nieuwegein

www.nieuwegein.nl

Stadsplein 1
14030 or +31 30 607 1911
from abroad



Stichtse Vecht

www.stichtsevecht.nl

Endelhovenlaan 1, Maarssen
140346 or +31 34 625 4000
from abroad



Zeist

www.zeist.nl

Het Rond 1
14030 or +31 698 7911
from abroad

Hospitals and medical centres



Utrecht

University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU)

Heidelberglaan 100
+31 088 755 5555
www.umcutrecht.nl/en



Utrecht

St. Antonius Ziekenhuis

Soestwetering 1
+31 088 320 3000
www.antoniusziekenhuis.nl



Utrecht

Diakonessenhuis

Bosboomstraat 1
+31 088 250 5050
www.diakonessenhuis.nl



Utrecht

Wilhelmina Kinderziekenhuis (Children's hospital)

Lundlaan 6
+31 088 755 5555
www.hetwkz.nl/en

Princess Maxima Center for pediatric oncology (within the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital)

Lundlaan 6
+31 088 972 7272
www.prinsesmaximacentrum.com



Utrecht

St. Antonius Polyclinic

Neckardreef 6
+31 088 320 3007
www.antoniusziekenhuis.nl



Amersfoort

Meander Medisch Centrum

Maatweg 3
+31 088 850 5050
www.meandermc.nl



Hilversum

Tergooi

Van Riebeeckweg 212
+31 088 753 1753
www.tergooi.nl



Nieuwegein

St. Antonius Ziekenhuis

Koekoekslaan 1
+31 088 320 3000
www.antoniusziekenhuis.nl



Zeist

Diakonessenhuis Zeist

Prof. Lorentzlaan 76
+31 088 250 5050
www.diakonessenhuis.nl



15. International talent community Utrecht region

The International Talent Community Utrecht Region (ITCU) offers several services and events to help make newcomers feel at home in the Utrecht Region.

For additional information you can visit the Utrecht Region Portal or for specific questions please contact us at ITC@economicboardutrecht.nl and we are happy to help you with any questions regarding the ITCU and upcoming events. Also keep an eye on the Utrecht Region Portal for any new events coming up.

Utrecht Region Portal

Utrechtregion.com offers high quality, multilingual information to international talents considering settling temporarily or permanently in the Utrecht Region and to those who are already living here. This information guides internationals through the entire process of their 'customer journey'.

Utrecht Region Introduction day

The introduction programme consists of an Introductory Course, Cultural Awareness Training and Survival Dutch. It provides international talents, their partners and children a set of the most relevant services for a good start in the Utrecht Region.

Royal Welcome Event

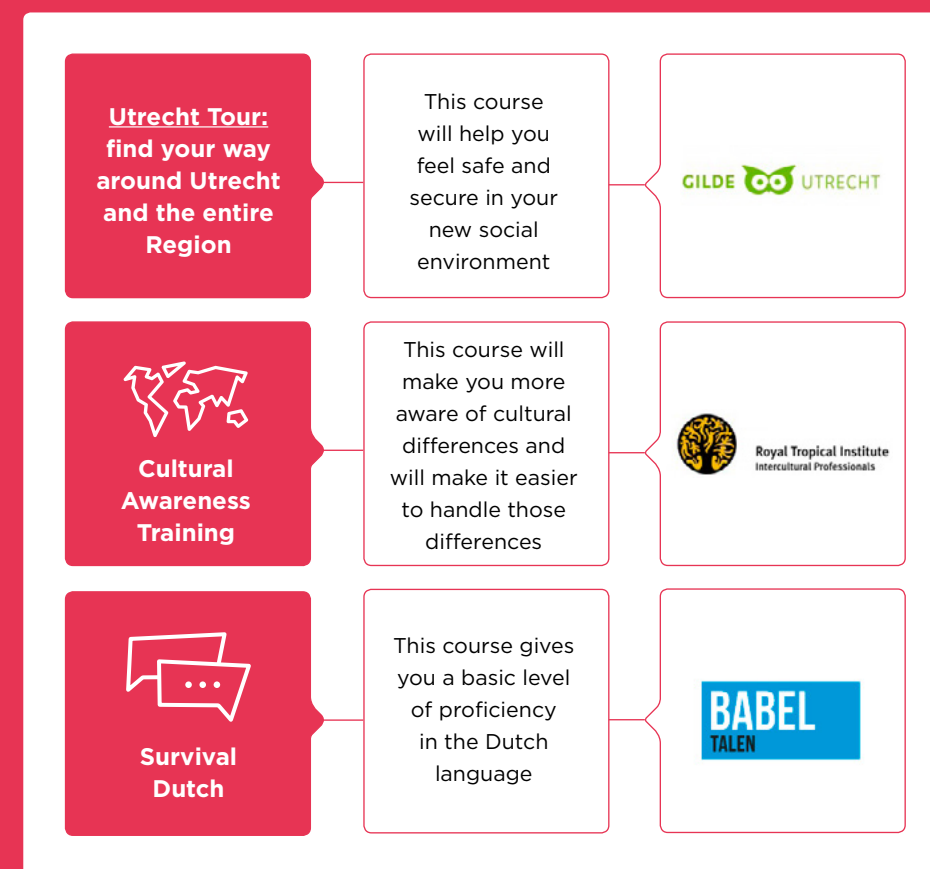
To make newcomers feel welcome in the Utrecht Region an annual royal welcome event is organised. At the welcome event all newcomers are welcomed to the Utrecht Region by the mayor of their municipality.

Talent programme

The key activities of the programme are focusing on matchmaking between talents and employees and clients. To do so a job portal with all available non-Dutch speaking jobs was developed and integrated into utrechtregion.com and an annual talent event was organised. During the talent event international workers, students and self-employed people are matched with potential employers and clients. The talent event will be organised in close collaboration with all knowledge institutions in the Utrecht Region. For internationals that want to start their business in the Utrecht Region an additional start-up programme was developed in which international start-ups receive supervision to

Introduction day

Learn all about the Dutch and living in the Utrecht Region



transform their idea into an innovative product or service.

Socialisation Programme

The socialisation programme focuses on the socialisation and integration of internationals and their spouses. The programme is based on individual memberships. These individual members will initiate and organise the activities

offered within the programme. As part of the socialisation programme, Utrecht Region ambassadors have been recruited. These ambassadors are themselves internationals and are willing to assist new arrivals in the first period after arrival. During a personal interview they share their experiences and give tips about living and working in the Utrecht Region.



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UTRECHT REGION