

STAYING AFTER YOUR STUDIES TO FIND A JOB AS A HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANT

If you are an international student and you graduate from an accredited higher education institution in the Netherlands, you can stay on for 12 months after your graduation date to look for work as a highly skilled migrant (also referred to as 'knowledge migrant').

This new rule came into effect on 20 December 2007. Previously, it was only possible to stay for three months to look for work. The minimum salary you need to earn to qualify as a highly skilled migrant has been reduced for this group from €35,997 to €25,800 gross a year.

Do I need to inform the IND that I am looking for work?

If you have a residence permit for study purposes, you can look for work for up to 12 months after your graduation. However, you must ask the Immigration & Naturalization Service (IND) to change the purpose of stay endorsed on your residence permit to '*verblijf gedurende zoekjaar afgestudeerde*' (seeking work after graduation). You can do this using the application form that can be found on the website of the IND. The title of the form is: 'Application residence permit or change to restriction without MVV'. Under paragraph 6 'object of residence in the Netherlands' you should tick the box: 'Following completion of your study, to look for a job, as a highly skilled migrant and to utilise the search period'. The search period is 12 months from your graduation date. You have to enclose an authenticated copy of your diploma when handing in your application at the IND front office in your region (make sure you phone for an appointment first: 0900-1234561). The appropriate fee is € 331. If you find work as a highly skilled migrant within the 12 month search period, you will once again have to notify the IND of the change to the purpose of your stay. Your prospective employer will need to have a 'highly skilled migrant agreement' with the IND and will be able to provide you with the right form. Once again, a fee of € 331 will be charged.

Work permit (TWV) not required

In the 12 month period while you look for work as a highly skilled migrant, you are free to take up paid employment. This means that you can work freely without the need for a work permit (*tewerkstellingsvergunning* or *TWV*). This allows you to earn money to pay your own way while searching for work as a highly skilled migrant. You will not be able to apply for any state benefits during this period. Once you find suitable work as a highly skilled migrant and you apply to the IND to change the purpose of your stay, you will no longer have to show that you have sufficient resources to live from.

Your residence permit will be endorsed with the words: '*Arbeid vrij toegestaan, TWV niet vereist. Beroep op publieke middelen kan gevolgen hebben voor het verblijfsrecht*' ('Free to work. No work permit required. Reliance on state benefits may affect residence entitlement').

Basic public healthcare insurance

If you do not take up paid employment while looking for work as a highly skilled migrant, you will not be required to take out basic public healthcare insurance (*basisverzekering*). A private health care insurance is sufficient. However, as soon as you take up any form of paid employment, you will need to arrange basic public healthcare insurance cover.

Further information

These new rules are based on the amended Foreign Nationals Act Implementation Guidelines (*Vreemdelingencirculaire*), as published in the Netherlands Government Gazette (*Staatscourant*) of 18 December 2007. The amended Foreign Nationals Order (*Vreemdelingenbesluit*) can be found in the Netherlands Bulletin of Acts and Orders (*Staatsblad*), vol. 502, 2007. Both can be accessed via the government's legislation website: www.wetten.overheid.nl.

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Administering international mobility programmes (scholarships) and institutional cooperation programmes.

- **Communication**

Providing information about higher education systems in the Netherlands and in other countries; providing credential evaluation services; providing information in the Netherlands about studying abroad, and in other countries about studying in Holland; promoting Dutch higher education in other countries; encouraging international mobility.

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