

Study and internship abroad? www.wilweg.nl

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This fact sheet is part of the 'WilWeg', a Nuffic initiative intended to let Dutch students know about their options for going on a study exchange or doing an internship abroad.

This fact sheet often refers to the website www.wilweg.nl for more information.

Please note, however, that the information on the website is in Dutch.



Study

If you want to study abroad, you have various options. You could go abroad for part of your studies or do an entire bachelor's or master's programme, either through an exchange programme or on your own initiative.

Exchange programmes

If you have decided to study abroad for part of your degree, an exchange programme may be what you're looking for. Nearly all research universities and universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands have exchange partnerships with foreign education institutions, for example through the Erasmus programme. See also <http://erasmus.wilweg.nl>.

The advantage of an exchange programme is that many of the details that need to be worked out have already been arranged, such as housing, insurance, recognition of your credits, assistance and guidance on location, exemption from paying tuition, and – last but not least – a student grant. For more information about specific exchange programmes you might be eligible for, please contact the international office or the international contact officer at your university. They will be able to tell you about the programmes your institution belongs to and what your options are. See <http://informatiebronnen.wilweg.nl> for contact details.

On your own

Your options are not limited to the foreign institutions that have an exchange agreement with your university. If you would prefer not to use those contacts or are not eligible for the exchange programmes, you will have to make your own arrangements. Find out as much as you can about education systems, study programmes and all sorts of other practical matters, such as enrolment, visas and permits. The country pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl> is a good place to start.

Recognition of your credits

If you organize your own study programme abroad, you need to make clear arrangements for credit recognition. Many universities in Europe use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS is a set of agreements made by education institutions for mutual recognition of credits. Check whether the institution you choose uses this system. If it does not, please contact your tutor or the international coordinator at your university to make arrangements in advance for recognition of your credits. See also <http://studiepunten.wilweg.nl>.

Full bachelor's degree

If you are considering studying abroad for an entire degree programme, you naturally want to know if your Dutch secondary school diploma is a valid qualification for admission to a programme in another country.

Admission is generally not a problem in most countries if you have a university preparatory education diploma (vwo-diploma). You may or may not be eligible for admission if you have a senior general secondary education diploma (havo-diploma) or senior secondary vocational education diploma (mbo-diploma); eligibility differs depending on the country and programme. Since the final decision is made by the foreign education institution, you should ask that institution about its admission policies. The country information pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl> list admission requirements by country and offer links to foreign education institutions. Also check <http://bachelor.wilweg.nl>.

Full master's degree

If you have a Dutch bachelor's degree, you are generally eligible for admission to a master's programme abroad. There are several factors you need to take into account. For additional information, visit: <http://master.wilweg.nl>. Always make sure that you receive a diploma supplement for your Dutch study programme. The diploma supplement states that the study programme and the degree are accredited, explains how the Dutch marking system works and notes that a Dutch hogeschool is called a 'university of applied sciences' abroad. See also <http://europass.wilweg.nl>.

There are various ways to find a suitable master's degree programme in another country. Check the country pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl>, which offer links to education institutions in various countries. Ask the people around you, such as your professors or fellow students, or visit www.mastersportal.eu. See also <http://master.wilweg.nl>.

Funding

And who is going to pay for it all? As of September 2007, you can do an entire bachelor's or master's degree programme abroad without losing your Dutch government student grants and loans. In addition to the option of retaining your student grants and loans and the well-known Erasmus exchange programme, there are also other funding options for arranging your international study plans. More information on these options is provided in the section on Funding below and on <http://financiering.wilweg.nl>.

International credential evaluation

Many foreign diplomas are considered equivalent to Dutch higher education diplomas. However, if you want to use a Dutch title associated with an academic credential on the basis of a foreign degree programme, you will need to request official dispensation from the Information Management Group. To find out the value of the higher education diplomas you earned abroad after you return to the Netherlands, you can request evaluation of your credentials by the Credential Evaluation Information Centre or the UWV WERKbedrijf. In addition, if you want to work in the Netherlands on the basis of a diploma you earned abroad, you may have to deal with professional recognition. Welcome to the world of international credential evaluation! More detailed information about international credential evaluation is available at <http://diplomawaardering.wilweg.nl>.

Internship

Doing an internship abroad means more than gaining work experience; you will also discover another language, culture and people. But how do you find an internship position that is right for you, what should you keep in mind during your preparations, and what needs to be in the internship contract? The answers to all these questions and many more are available below and at <http://stage.wilweg.nl>.

Finding an internship

Try to use the contacts available to you through your own university. Visit the international office, international contact officer or internship coordinator for your programme. Contact details are available from <http://informatiebronnen.wilweg.nl>.

You could also consider multinational corporations like Shell or ING, which have a separate internship bureau for internships at their foreign offices. And have you ever considered an internship with a European Union agency

or institute? The web pages at <http://stagezoeken.wilweg.nl> offer tips about how to find a foreign internship on your own. If you prefer not to arrange everything yourself, you could always use the services of a commercial internship agency. A list of such agencies is also available on the WilWeg website: <http://stagebemiddeling.wilweg.nl>.

Internship contract

Sign an internship contract before your departure. The contract should specify the internship assignment, internship guidance to be provided by the education institution and the organization offering the internship, the duration of the internship and the internship pay. You should also consider aspects such as the number of hours you work per week, the position you hold, the tasks expected of you, days of holiday leave, insurance and taxes. The contract must be signed by the organization providing the internship, your education institution and you yourself. For more information, please visit <http://stageovereenkomst.wilweg.nl>.

Internship pay, wage tax and health insurance

Whether or not you receive pay for your internship depends on your internship company. In most cases, you will not have to pay income tax. Ask your future employer to be sure. More information about foreign tax matters is available via www.ibfd.org, the Dutch tax information line for private individuals (0800 0543) or the country pages on www.wilweg.nl.

Whether basic Dutch health insurance offers you coverage during your internship abroad depends on whether your internship income represents compensation for your expenses or, instead, is a realistic compensation for the work you will be doing. Detailed information about health insurance for students and interns abroad is available at <http://verzekeringen.wilweg.nl>.

Visas and permits

Find out well in advance which formal arrangements you need to make before your departure and which documents you will need. A work permit is not required for Dutch students within the European Union, but it is required in other countries. Keep in mind that arranging a visa or work permit for a non-European country can take quite a long time. A number of countries, including the United States, Canada and Australia, require you to arrange a visa in advance, which also includes the work permit. More information about visas and permits is available on the country pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl>. You can also contact the embassy of the country of your choice.

Funding

If you will be doing your internship in one of the EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Turkey, you may be eligible for an Erasmus scholarship. More information on the range of options and the terms and conditions is available at <http://erasmus.wilweg.nl>. There are also various other options for funding for your internship abroad. More information on this topic is provided in the next section on Funding and at <http://financiering.wilweg.nl>.

Funding

And who is going to pay for it all? The costs of study or an internship abroad often give rise to misunderstandings. Of course it costs more to study or do an internship abroad than it would to stay in the Netherlands, but there are many options for funding your foreign plans. The European Union, the Dutch government and all sorts of companies and foundations offer grants and scholarships for students who want to do an internship or pursue all or part of their studies abroad.

- Erasmus for study and internship

The Erasmus programme, which is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, is a European Commission initiative to promote cooperation between participating countries at all levels of education. The Erasmus scholarship is for students and interns from all disciplines who would like to spend some time abroad to study or for an internship. For more information on the terms and conditions, participating countries and scholarship amounts, check <http://erasmus.wilweg.nl>.

- VSB fund scholarship

The VSB fund also offers scholarships. These scholarships provide students the opportunity to study or do research abroad after completing a degree at a Dutch research university or university of applied sciences affiliated with the VSB fund scholarship Programme. Visit <http://vsb.wilweg.nl> for more information.

- Cultural Agreements

The Netherlands has signed Cultural Agreements with many other countries, which offer grants and scholarships to allow Dutch students to study or do research in that country for a limited period of time. Some countries also offer grants for summer language courses. Visit <http://cv.wilweg.nl> for more information.

- Fulbright scholarships for the United States

Each year the Fulbright Center offers scholarships to fund study or research in the United States. For an overview of grants and scholarships, visit <http://beurzen.wilweg.nl>.

- Student grants and loans

If you will be abroad for a short period of time for study or an internship, you may be able to keep your Dutch government student grants and loans. You may also be eligible to receive student grants and loans for a full bachelor's or master's degree programme in another country. More information and details on the additional terms are available on the Information Management Group website:

<http://www.ib-groep.nl/particulieren/studiefinanciering/sfho/buitenland/buitenland.asp> or at <http://financiering.wilweg.nl>.

- Nuffic Beursopener

The Beursopener search engine provides information on a wide range of grants and scholarships. This Nuffic-operated search site is for students, interns and researchers seeking a position abroad for study, internship or research purposes. The Beursopener site offers information on more than 250 different grants and scholarships. Visit www.beursopener.nl for more information.

Budget

When you apply for a scholarship the funding agency generally wants to see your budget estimate. The site <http://begroting.wilweg.nl> offers hints and tips for drawing up a budget. This information may also be useful even if you are not applying for a scholarship, simply to help you arrive at an accurate estimate of all the costs involved.

Preparation

Studying or doing an internship abroad requires some degree of preparation. It is important to start making all the arrangements well in advance. If you start a year before your planned departure, you will have more than enough time. A year may seem like a long time, but it will help you avoid last-minute surprises. This section offers useful tips on the practical matters you need to arrange for a stay abroad. These tips are intended as a checklist to help you plan your international experience as efficiently as possible.

Accommodation

There are various ways for you to arrange your accommodation abroad. The most obvious approach is to ask for help from the foreign institution you will be attending. You may also ask if your own Dutch education institution can help you through their contacts with foreign institutions or via students who have visited that country in the past. Some countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have campus accommodation where you can stay. If you are doing an internship, you can ask your future employer whether he or she might be able to help you find a place to live.

The site <http://landen.wilweg.nl> offers information on accommodation in various countries, how to find a place to live and approximate costs. Rental fees differ dramatically from region to region; a room in downtown London naturally costs much more than a room in Ljubljana. If you have not been able to arrange accommodation before you leave, there is no need to panic. Book a room in a cheap hotel or youth hostel and start looking for a suitable student room from there.

Visas and permits

As a Dutch citizen, you will not need a visa or work permit in the countries of the European Union. Arranging a visa or work permit in other European countries is generally fairly easy. However, these documents are less easy to arrange in non-European countries: applications can take months or, in some cases, as long as a year! Every country has different visa requirements, and you may or may not need a visa. For additional information and embassy addresses, visit: <http://landen.wilweg.nl>. Information is also available on the visa services website (www.visumdienst.nl). If you want to work part-time alongside your studies, check the country pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl> under Werken tijdens je studie for specific information on permits (in Dutch).

Insurance

Make sure that you have arranged sufficient insurance coverage before leaving for another country. The basic Dutch health insurance policy generally offers worldwide coverage, but there are exceptions. For example, if you take a part-time job in another country or have a paid internship position, you may fall into a different insurance category. The site at <http://verzekeringen.wilweg.nl> offers information on insurance for Dutch students going abroad. You may also want to see the country pages at <http://landen.wilweg.nl> to check if your insurance coverage is sufficient for the country you will be visiting. You may need additional insurance or special student insurance.

First-hand experience

This brochure mainly offers practical information and a few stories from students about real-life experiences. But actually talking to students who have already been there can also be fun and informative. Online communities like Hyves and MySpace put you in touch with students around the world. They can give you useful tips on how to survive as a student abroad and how to find a place to stay. Or sign up with NEWS, the NewStudent organization. NEWS manages an online database of Dutch students who studied or are currently studying at universities abroad. Join NEWS for free by registering at www.newstudent.nl. Check out stories from students who have been there at <http://ervaringen.wilweg.nl>.

Nuffic Netherlands Education Support Offices (Nesos)

If you are considering studying or doing an internship in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Thailand, Taipei or Vietnam, contact the local Nuffic Neso. The local Nuffic offices can give you more information about study and internship opportunities in that region. Nuffic Nesos can also help you contact institutions and students directly. The various Nuffic Neso websites are listed at www.nuffic.nl/neso.

Checklist

What	How long before departure
Decide what you want to do (study/internship)	one year
Coordination with your degree programme Make arrangements with your programme in the Netherlands about recognition of the foreign credits or internship. Visit http://studiepunten.wilweg.nl or http://stage.wilweg.nl .	
Grant and scholarship applications Visit http://beurzen.wilweg.nl to see if you are eligible for grants or scholarships. Don't forget to check if you can retain your Dutch student grants and loans abroad: http://studiefinanciering.wilweg.nl .	one year
Visa and permits More information about visas and permits is available on the country pages at http://landen.wilweg.nl .	one year
Accommodation More information about accommodation is available on the country pages at http://landen.wilweg.nl . You can also sublet your own room in the Netherlands to earn extra money.	three months
Insurance Make sure you have sufficient insurance coverage before you leave. Check http://verzekeringen.wilweg.nl .	three months
Arranging your trip	three months
Vaccinations and health insurance Make sure you have sufficient insurance coverage before you leave. Check http://gezondheid.wilweg.nl .	three months
Language preparation If you do not speak the local language well, you may want to take a language course first. More information is available at http://taalcursus.wilweg.nl .	

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Nuffic is the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education. Our motto is Linking Knowledge Worldwide. This means linking people, because it's knowledge that makes us unique as people. Nuffic works in line with Dutch government policy to serve students and higher education institutions in three key areas:

Programme Management

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

Information Services

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.

Expertise

Conducting studies into international cooperation in higher education; providing information to expert groups and consultation forums; transferring our knowledge of international cooperation in higher education through courses and seminars.

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