K12 ACADEMICS — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERIES

Studying in the Netherlands

A guide for international students & families — how Dutch higher education works, the residence-permit process, applying via Studielink, English-taught programs, costs, and the orientation-year visa.

K12 ACADEMICS

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

ENGLISH-TAUGHT, AND HIGHLY RANKED

The Netherlands is one of Europe's most popular English-taught study destinations — with **2,000+ programs in English**, 13 universities in the global top 200, and a famously practical, discussion-based style. The visa route is smooth (**your university usually sponsors it**), and a post-study **orientation year** lets you stay to work. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Dutch rules, the funds requirement, and tuition change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the IND, Nuffic/Study in NL, and your university**.

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STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose the Netherlands

WHAT TO KNOW

The Netherlands offers **huge numbers of English-taught programs, highly ranked universities, an innovative teaching style, and strong post-study options** — in a compact, international, English-friendly country (over 90% of Dutch speak English).

BY THE NUMBERS

2,000+ English programs	Top-200 universities	Post-study
study without Dutch	13 of them	the orientation year

HOW TO HELP

Weigh the Netherlands' **English-taught quality and post-study options** against costs and the housing shortage — for English-speaking students, it's one of Europe's best-value routes.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can complete an entire degree **in English** here — a major draw for students who don't speak Dutch.

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STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Dutch higher education has two types: **research universities** (theoretical; 3-year bachelor's, 1–2-year master's) and **universities of applied sciences (hogescholen)** (practical, career-focused, 4-year bachelor's). Both are well-regarded.

BY THE NUMBERS

Research universities	Applied sciences	Both strong
theoretical	practical & career-focused	choose by goal

HOW TO HELP

Choose between a **research university and a university of applied sciences (hogeschool)** based on whether you want academic depth or hands-on, professional study.

GOOD TO KNOW

Applied-sciences (hogeschool) programs are practical and employer-connected — a strong option, not a lesser one.

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STEP 03 OF 10

Understand the Visa & Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

EU/EEA/Swiss students need no visa. Most other students need a **residence permit**, and many also a provisional entry permit (**MVV**). The good news: your **university is your sponsor and applies for both on your behalf** through the IND.

BY THE NUMBERS

MVV + permit	University sponsors	Via the IND
for most non-EU	applies for you	the immigration service

HOW TO HELP

Let your **university handle the MVV/residence-permit application** as your sponsor (they do this routinely) — your job is to provide documents and funds proof promptly.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because the university sponsors your permit, the Dutch process is **smoother than most** — respond quickly to their document requests.

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STEP 04 OF 10

Apply Through Studielink

WHAT TO KNOW

Applications go through **Studielink**, the official Dutch system, then each university's portal for documents. Non-EU deadlines are often around **May 1** (some earlier), and popular capped programs use a **numerus fixus** selection.

BY THE NUMBERS

Studielink	~May 1	Numerus fixus
the official system	common non-EU deadline	capped/selective programs

HOW TO HELP

Apply via **Studielink** well before the deadline (earlier for non-EU, to allow visa time), and check whether your program has a **numerus fixus** cap with its own timeline.

WATCH OUT

Non-EU students should apply **early** (often by ~May 1) to leave time for the residence-permit process.

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STEP 05 OF 10

Meet Admissions Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Requirements are set per program and typically include **academic qualifications, English-test scores, and sometimes a motivation letter or interview**. Credential recognition may apply. Selective programs ask for more.

BY THE NUMBERS

Qualifications	English scores	Sometimes
meet the program	IELTS/TOEFL	letter or interview

HOW TO HELP

Check each program's **specific entry requirements**, prepare your qualifications and English scores, and add a strong motivation letter where asked.

GOOD TO KNOW

Entry requirements are **program-specific** — always read the individual program page.

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STEP 06 OF 10

Meet English Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

For the many **English-taught** programs you prove English — commonly **IELTS (around 6.0–6.5) or TOEFL (~80–90)**. Dutch isn't required to study, though a little helps daily life in a very English-friendly country.

BY THE NUMBERS

IELTS ~6.0–6.5	No Dutch needed	English-friendly
or TOEFL ~80–90	to study	90%+ speak it

HOW TO HELP

Take an **accepted English test** and meet your program's score — you can study entirely in English, though learning some Dutch eases daily life and work.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need Dutch to study — but some Dutch helps with jobs, housing, and integration.

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STEP 07 OF 10

Plan for Costs & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

EU/EEA students pay the low **statutory fee** (recently ~€2,530–2,600/year). Non-EU students pay institutional rates: roughly **€8,000–15,000/year (bachelor's)** and **€12,000–30,000 (master's)**. Scholarships exist (Holland Scholarship, university awards).

BY THE NUMBERS

EU	Non-EU	Scholarships
~€2,530/year	~€8k–30k/year	Holland Scholarship & more

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **non-EU institutional tuition plus living costs**, and pursue scholarships like the **Holland Scholarship** and university awards.

GOOD TO KNOW

Non-EU tuition varies widely by program — compare rates when shortlisting, and apply for scholarships early.

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STEP 08 OF 10

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the permit you must prove funds — recently about **€1,094 per month (~€13,000/year)**. You'll also need **health insurance** valid in the Netherlands, and proof of accommodation.

BY THE NUMBERS

Prove funds	Health insurance	Accommodation
~€1,094/month	required	proof needed

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** at the current monthly amount, arrange valid **health insurance**, and line up accommodation — which is genuinely hard to find (see next step).

WATCH OUT

The monthly funds figure is **set yearly by the IND** — confirm the current amount before you apply.

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STEP 09 OF 10

Prepare for the Move (Mind the Housing)

WHAT TO KNOW

The Netherlands has a **severe student-housing shortage** — start your housing search **very early**, and be cautious of scams. Students usually live in shared houses across the city, not on campus. Register with your municipality on arrival.

BY THE NUMBERS

Housing shortage	Off-campus	Register
start early!	shared student houses	with the municipality

HOW TO HELP

Begin your **housing search immediately** after admission (it's the biggest practical challenge), avoid scams, and register with your municipality once you arrive.

WATCH OUT

The **housing shortage is real and severe** — secure accommodation before you commit, and never pay large sums sight-unseen.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Thrive & Work

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU students can work **limited hours** (recently up to 16 hours/week during term with a permit, or full-time in June–August). After graduating, the **orientation year (zoekjaar)** lets you stay ~12 months to work or find a job — a strong pathway to staying on.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work	Orientation year	Work freely
~16 hrs/week (non-EU)	~12 months post-study	during the zoekjaar

HOW TO HELP

Understand the **work limits** during study, and plan for the **orientation year** after graduating — it lets you work freely while finding a skilled job.

GOOD TO KNOW

The post-study **orientation year** is a big advantage — you can apply within three years of graduating and work without a separate permit.

QUICK REFERENCE

Studying in the Netherlands: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with the IND, Nuffic/Study in NL, and your university.

The system

Research universities (theoretical) and universities of applied sciences/hogescholen (practical); 2,000+ English-taught programs; academic year ~September–June.

The permit

EU/EEA/Swiss need no visa; most others need a residence permit (and often an MVV entry permit) — your university sponsors and applies for it via the IND.

Applying & English

Apply via Studielink (non-EU often by ~May 1; numerus fixus for capped programs); prove English (IELTS ~6.0–6.5 or TOEFL); no Dutch needed to study.

Money

EU pay the statutory fee (~€2,530); non-EU pay ~€8k–30k/year; prove funds (~€1,094/month) plus health insurance; scholarships include the Holland Scholarship.

Housing, work & after

Severe housing shortage — search early; non-EU work ~16 hrs/week; the post-study orientation year (zoekjaar) allows ~12 months to work and find a job.

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