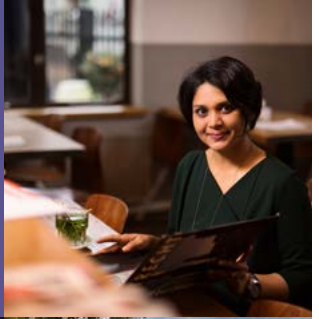




NEWCOMER'S GUIDE



Useful information
for adjusting to your
new life and getting
settled in Utrecht



Index

1. Welcome to Utrecht Region	3
2. Utrecht Region at a glance	6
3. Housing – finding a place to call home	10
4. Formalities	16
5. Financial matters	20
6. How do I get around	24
7. Your health	34
8. Childcare & Dutch educational system	38
9. University level studying in Utrecht	44
10. Learning the Dutch Language	47
11. Finding a job	53
12. Finding your Dutch way	55
13. Explore Utrecht Region and beyond	59
14. Get connected	66
15. Essential Contacts And Resources	71
16. Partners	74

This guide has been published by the International Talent Community (ITC) Utrecht Region and Utrecht Marketing.

2nd edition, September 2018

www.utrechtregion.com

Created with the help of: Daniëlle Ziermans & Tessa Wapstra, Economic Board Utrecht (content), Ardi Eleveld, Utrecht Marketing (content), Today (design), Paul Smith (copywriter), Jo Hayman (editor), Juri Hiensch, Marisa Broekhuizen, Kostas Brejaart & Ramon Mosterd (photography). Many thanks to all of ITC's partners and stakeholders who have devoted their valuable time and energy to make this edition more informative than the first.



1. Welcome to Utrecht Region

Arriving in a new country can be both exhilarating and an overwhelming challenge, and you will likely have a number of questions that need to be answered right away. This Newcomer's Guide features essential information to help new residents like yourself settle into our beautiful region with as much ease and confidence as possible.

Utrecht Region offers the best of all worlds. The region has a long and rich cultural history, reflected in its architecture and overall ambiance. Take a stroll along the lively canals in one of our beautiful cities and you'll discover countless monuments and world heritage sites. If you prefer nature, grab a bike and you can soon be cycling along rivers and through woods, surprised by the impressive number of citadels, forts, castles you are likely to pass.

Don't just take our word for it. Here is what those who discovered the Utrecht Region before you have to say:

Nesrine Lee: "Hummus comes in more flavours here than in Lebanon."

Paul & Vanessa Smith: "It was Utrecht's child-friendliness that had a magnetic appeal for us. That we felt safe leaving our door open nearly the whole summer says a lot about the safety we feel living here. Children have so many options to play, learn and grow."

Chitra Natjaran: "My husband was offered a job here. We arrived on a very cold and dark winter day, with no one outside. My immediate reaction was where have we landed? Who would have thought at that time we would voluntarily stay here for 10 years?"

Amanda Laguna: "Living in the Utrecht Region is wonderful. You should be able to become Dutch, embrace and be proud. So be prepared for Sinterklaas, bread for lunch, the rain, biking, making appointments, questions about money and train delays."

Vishwaraj Jadeja: "I love being able to bike around the center and in the countryside without the risk of hitting a car. Cars actually stop when I am riding my bike. On my racing bike, I never have to worry about being hit. The respect for bikers is huge. It is special."

Catherine Berthiaume: “Finding a place of my own and feeling at home was difficult at the beginning. Fortunately, I gradually built up my own group of friends and that helped me a lot in finding my place here in the Utrecht Region.”

Bright O Richards: “Crime rates are low in the Utrecht Region and you can clearly see Utrecht is a city full of students. So it’s a young city and it stays young and fresh. I love that! I also like the cultural sector of Utrecht with Tivoli and the Schouwburg, the city theatre which has a wonderful program.”

Nadja Linthorst: “I thoroughly enjoy running in the vicinity of Rhijnauwen, with all its greenery, and yet close to the city of Utrecht. Running along the canal is also highly recommendable. You definitely discover lots of Utrecht by bicycling, running or just strolling around.”

We invite you to discover Utrecht Region just like Nesrine, Paul & Vanessa, Chitra, Amanda, Vishwaraj, Catherine, Bright and Nadja did.

About us

The Newcomer’s Guide Utrecht Region is a product of a close cooperation between *Utrecht Marketing* and the *International Talent Community*. The Newcomers Guide was produced with the input and suggestions of many internationals and partners who we would like to thank for their contribution.

Utrecht Marketing and the *International Talent Community* aim to help newcomers feel at home in our friendly, welcoming and connected region. To do so, we have set up several services, campaigns and programmes that also might be of interest to you.

1. Utrechtregion.com - For more information about living, working and studying in Utrecht Region you can go to talent.utrechtregion.com.
2. Talent Event Utrecht Region – Expand your network and find your dream job at the Talent Event Utrecht Region.
3. Expat Center Utrecht Region – Here you can arrange formalities such as registration but also ask questions at the information desk.
4. Socialisation programme – Meet up with other internationals during one of our social events, see when the next one is happening at talent.utrechtregion.com.
5. Introduction programme – A quick way to get started here, consists of an introductory course, cultural awareness

training, survival Dutch and a Q & A about housing options in the region (check if your employer offers this programme).

6. Welcome programme - To make newcomers feel at home we annually organise a Royal Welcome Event on King’s Day. Get acquainted with this Dutch tradition and other newcomers at the same time.

7. MAG - This is your guide to finding all the cultural events happening in Utrecht Region. Find more information:

www.magutrecht.com.

2. Utrecht Region at a glance

Utrecht Region

Utrecht Region is conveniently located in the centre of the Netherlands, only 30 minutes from Amsterdam by train. The Utrecht Railway station is the largest of the Netherlands, processing as many passengers as Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

Fun Facts about the Region:

- Utrecht Region: 1,2 million inhabitants
- More than 1.000 foreign companies
- Utrecht is the 2nd most bike friendly city on the planet
- The 'Miffy' (Nijntje, to the locals) rabbit cartoon character for children was created by Dutchman Dick Bruna who was born in the city of Utrecht. See if you can spot the Nijntje crossing signal downtown!

Utrecht:

Capital city of the province of Utrecht
Population: **347.000**

Utrecht is the youngest, fastest growing and most highly educated city in the Netherlands. On top of that, Utrecht is considered one of the happiest cities in the world, according to the United Nations. Utrecht has a welcoming character with an increasing number of internationals calling Utrecht home. As well as a significant amount of international students, Utrecht University is the largest university of the Netherlands. With many squares, restaurants of all kinds, cinemas and theatres, the city of Utrecht has much to offer.



Living in the Utrecht Region;
a few cities highlighted



Amersfoort

Population: **155.000**

Founded more than 800 years ago, Amersfoort is now a modern and very liveable city around a beautiful historic city centre. Amersfoort has been awarded 'Best Dutch large city to live and work in' for three consecutive years. Amersfoort's population is a good mix of singles, couples and families with kids.

Zeist

Population: **63.000**

Zeist is nestled in the woody area of Utrechtse Heuvelrug. Zeist municipality is predominately green, with its share of lakes, canals and other waters, both in the village and outside.



Nieuwegein

Population: **62.000**

Nieuwegein is close to both the city of Utrecht and the countryside, offering affordable housing in an economically strong area. The municipality came into its own in the 70s, as it rapidly began to develop to meet the increasing demand for family housing near Utrecht. Because of this, Nieuwegein is at its core a very young and thriving city.



Stichtse Vecht (Breukelen, Maarssen, Loenen)

Population: **65.000**

The Stichtse Vecht municipality lies between the cities of Amsterdam and Utrecht, where you can find picturesque villages, copious lakes, two castles and the prestigious Nyenrode Business University. Visit talent.utrechtregion.com for more information.



**UTRECHT
REGION:
1,2
MILLION
INHABITANTS**

3. Housing – Finding a place to call home

Whether you are 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 suburban homes to rural living, apartments, flats and townhouses.

Renting

If you're planning a short-term stay in Utrecht Region (*less than 3 years, according to our experts at Expat Mortgages*), renting may be your best option.

It's always good to familiarise yourself with tenancy rights, (*as tenants in the Netherlands have many*) and contract details before signing your first rental contract. To avoid being scammed, make sure you have a trusted professional (e.g., real estate agent or experienced consultant) look over your contract to spot any non-standard demands or clauses that may not represent your best interests.

If you are able to obtain an English rental contract (*which is uncommon for most Dutch landlords, unless they are listing*

through an international agency), or have a professional consultant who can translate the Dutch rental contract for you, make sure you or your representative, pay special attention to the following major points:

- The correct rental price is listed, and itemisation of what the price covers, including service charges, energy bills, and local taxes such as property, trash disposal and sewage taxes.
- Deposit: 1-2 month's rent is normal, although 3 month's rent is not unheard of.
- Duration of the contract. Most are fixed for one year with a notice period of one month from either party, after the first year has passed.
- Who's responsible for maintenance and repairs.

Also make sure to ask the rental agency if they charge a mediation fee. Many agencies already receive a fee from the owner for listing the home, so they should not receive an additional fee from the tenant in the process.

Useful websites include:

www.pararius.nl

www.funda.nl

www.rooftrack.nl/en Rooftrack is an initiative from WoningNet and offers a wide range of available properties in the non-subsidised rental market. Rooftrack's website displays rental properties in the cities of Amsterdam, Almere, Haarlem and Utrecht.

Student Housing

Utrecht Region is home to some of the Netherlands' most prestigious universities, renowned knowledge institutions and more than 70.000 students. It's also very popular with international students, although finding a place to stay during your studies has become increasingly difficult over the years, as working tenants systematically outcompete students for housing. Because of these difficulties, it's important to start your home search early in order to find available affordable housing. If you are in an program, your university might be able to arrange accommodation for you, although they are limited in the numbers of students they can help.

Useful websites include:

SSH student housing: www.sshxl.nl/en

Holland2Stay:

www.holland2stay.com/utrecht

Room rentals: www.kamernet.nl

Tenancy rights

In the Netherlands, an independent organisation deals with problems between tenants and landlords: the Rent Tribunal (*huurcommissie*). Further information (in Dutch) can be found at www.huurcommissie.nl; because this site is not offered in English, we encourage you to view the url in a Chrome browser which will automatically translate it for you into the language of your choice, or if you're on another browser, you can either copy/paste the url into www.translate.google.com or download the Google Translate plugin if available.

Buying

The housing market in the Netherlands has seen many changes, going from a seller's market to a buyer's market and back again within the space of 25 years. Buying a property is an expensive investment and it is advisable to hire professionals (*e.g. mortgage advisors and/or real estate consultants/agents*) to help you with the process of buying a property in the Netherlands. Other means of finding homes without necessarily incurring a service fee include searching public adverts, online property search websites



such as www.funda.nl and registering with the websites of any new build developments you discover. Be aware, however, that these will most likely be exclusively in Dutch, so have www.translate.google.com on hand. Know that many websites require you to subscribe for a fee before they will let you view their properties or book a physical viewing.

If you plan on staying in the Netherlands for a longer period of time, buying a house might be an attractive option. You do not have to be a native to be eligible for a mortgage. Financial advisers are eager to inform you about the various options and advantages. Furthermore, independent mortgage advisors cooperate with different banks and make sure you can get the product and service that will best fit your situation; an added bonus: their service fee is tax deductible. A very common beginner's mistake that expats looking to purchase a home make is the initiation of a property search before fully investigating their finance options. We strongly advise expats to reverse this process, determining their actual available budget *before* they start looking for a property.

Financial advice

The Dutch tax authorities provide an annual tax benefit for homeowners, which makes the purchase of a home

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*), incurred for services provided by the real estate agent(s), and real estate transfer costs (6%). It's always advisable to seek expert advice on financial and legal aspects if you want to buy a property.

Utilities

When you move into your new home, read the water, gas and electricity meters and notify your suppliers. Your estate agent will usually be able to help you with transferring the water, gas and electricity contracts of your new home to your name. If you do not have an agent to help you set up your utilities, The Dutch Review has published an excellent article to explain the basics: <https://dutchreview.com/expat/moving/a-simple-guide-to-sorting-utilities-in-the-netherlands/>.

Waste and recycling

Want to know more about where and when to dispose of your trash and compostables? Go to www.mijnafvalwijzer.nl Enter your postal code (post-code) and house number (huisnummer) on the initially all Dutch menu. Your street address should appear automatically. Then click "Ga door" (continue) taking you to the main site, where if you prefer,

select the British flag in the upper right-hand corner of the page to proceed in English. Alternatively, you can download the app, which is also available in English. Recycling facilities (glass, paper, plastics) can usually be found within 500 meters of your home.

Internet service

Depending on the provider, it may take weeks to arrange your internet service, so ask around on the many social media groups related to Utrecht Region to see what the best and most time-efficient providers are, then try to set up a contract the moment you have made the purchase or rental of your new home official. Internet providers include: UPC, Ziggo, KPN, Tele2 and many more.

Trusted housing market focused service providers in Utrecht Region

Mortgage Providers

Expat Mortgages

An initial meeting with one of Expat Mortgages' advisors is free of charge and it will give you an accurate assessment of the price range that fits your budget and the related monthly payments. This way you can act quickly when finding the perfect house and start negotiating about price and terms right away.

Independent Expat Finance

Independent Expat Finance customised financial services on mortgages, consumer loans and (health) insurance for expats in the Netherlands, and Dutch expats abroad. Independent Expat Finance will work on your behalf to find you a suitable mortgage with the best interest rate available. They save you money and get you the best terms and lenders' policies that suit your situation, wishes, and budget. The only fee they charge is when they broker your mortgage deal.

Rabobank

In addition to helping you create your own Dutch bank account, Rabobank advisors can help you navigate the purchase of your home, including setting up a mortgage plan. Make an appointment for a free orientation meeting. Contact expats.utrecht@rabobank.nl or call (030) 287 87 87.

Finding a home

Interhouse

Interhouse Huur- en Verhuurprofessionals® is a renowned rental property estate agent with self-supporting offices on a franchise basis in a number of cities, including Utrecht. They manage a sizeable portfolio to help clients find their future home. Interhouse has at its disposal an extensive network of supply and demand and

works at building long-term business relationships with its clients.

SJV Vastgoed

SJV Vastgoed's strong client relationships and trusted partners vouch for the quality of its services and commitment to finding the right home, both in the rental and sales market, for its clients. With lengthy experience in the housing market and knowledge of the rules and regulations of the Dutch housing market, SJV Vastgoed will guide you through the entire process, protecting your interests and answering any housing related question you may have.

SSH Student Housing

Helps international students and staff find short and longstay fully-furnished accommodations in Utrecht. Institutions whose students and employees are eligible to use SSH include: Utrecht University, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, TIAS School for Business and Society, SSC, and Aiesec

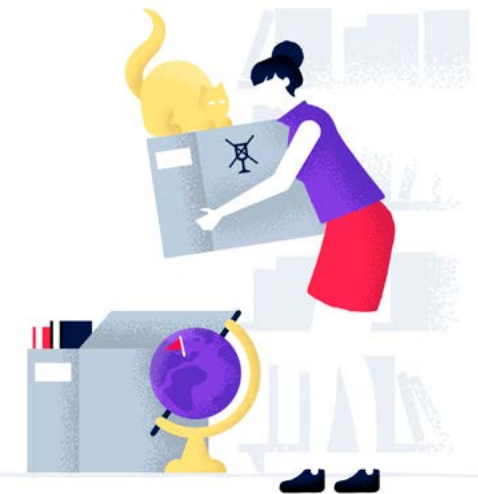
VGW

VGW Housing is an experienced home mediator. VGW Housing is specialised in renting out well-maintained studios, apartments and houses that are often fully furnished as well. They offer different price ranges of accommodations in all areas of Utrecht. VGW's aim is to make

the process as quick and easy as possible for its clients. One can expect high quality service, available 7 days a week, 12 hours a day by phone. Also available for viewings during weekends.

Utrecht City Apartments

Utrecht City Apartments offers you self-sufficient short and long stay accommodations: All apartments and studios boast a kitchen and bathroom. Free Wi-Fi, towels and bed linen are also included.



4. Formalities

Registering yourself and your family with the municipality

If you are planning on living here for more than 4 months within a 6 month period, you and your family are required to register in person at the municipality of your residence, obtaining a citizen service number (BSN - Burgerservicenummer) within 5 days of your arrival. 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.

What documents do you need at your registration appointment with the city?

- A valid proof of identity of every person to be registered.
- A valid travel document or other legal documents with your personal details and nationality.

- A proof of de-registration when you come from Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Saba or Sint Eustatius.
- A rental contract or contract of sale of your home, or your proprietor's permission, for which you need to complete the form 'verklaring bewoning adres' (pdf in Dutch).
- Original documents from abroad (not older than 1 year) of yourself and your children, such as birth and marriage certificates, or a deed of divorce.

Only English, German and French deeds will be accepted without translation by a sworn translator. Foreign documents have to meet the rules for legislation foreign documents. Rules vary depending on the country where the documents were issued. Up to 4 weeks later, your registration will be listed in the Basic Registration of Persons (BRP). If you also apply for a residence permit, your registration will become definitive if the municipality is informed by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, IND) that you are allowed to live in the Netherlands. When you register, you will receive a citizen service number (BSN - burgerservicenummer) during your appointment.



DigiD

Here in the Netherlands, you'll find businesses and organisations take your identity protection seriously. One tool used towards this aim is the DigiD. It's a digital signature identity verification that many governmental organisations and businesses use to provide access to their online services, tax filing being 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.

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 useful resource for international people, here to assist you in navigating and smoothing out the process. The Expat Center Utrecht offers two services:

1. Government formalities for those who qualify – a one-stop shop for residence permit and municipal registration.

If you're an expat located in the municipality of Utrecht and working for an employer that is registered as a 'erkend referent' (*recognised sponsor*)

with the Immigration and Naturalisation Office (IND), you can use the ECU through your employer to swiftly arrange the government formalities of obtaining a residence permit and registering with the City. When registered, you can finish payroll registration at your company, open a bank account, sign up for health insurance, register for an internet plan and more, sooner than previously possible, saving time so you can start settling in. This service is available only by appointment (*made by your employer*) and is not available to the general public.

2. Information desk – ACCESS is ready to help you!

Although the one-stop shop (residence permit and registration) is only available to those who qualify, the information desk is there for anyone who has a question about working, living or studying in Utrecht Region. You can drop in at the Expat Center Information desk on Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 5pm for questions on practical matters or more information on professional services in English. You'll find it staffed by people just like you: internationals creating a new life in Utrecht Region, 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 organisation supporting the international community in the Netherlands.



Address:

Stadsplateau 1 (City Hall next to Utrecht centralstation)



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. City Hall and thus the Expat Center Utrecht is closed on public holidays. Governmental services for formalities (IND and Utrecht Civil Services/ Burgerzaken) can be provided by appointment only; can be made online.

5. Financial matters

Banking in The Netherlands

As your new job may be filled with challenges, it is important to make sure your stay in the Netherlands is as comfortable as possible. Banks strive to help and assist you with your financial needs, from the moment your career placement begins in the Netherlands.

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 banks. Each have a range of options to meet your financial needs and are equally supportive, although not all banks offer the same level of service in English, so it is important to do your research.

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, PIN and identifier by post.

Getting started

A current Dutch account is the basis of your banking. You can make and receive payments and use a debit card for your most important banking matters.

It should be noted that many stores are so-called "PIN only" (debit card) and do not accept cash.

To open a bank account, the following documents are required

- Proper identification such as your passport, identity card or residence permit.
- Your residential address in the Netherlands, confirmed by a rental agreement or house ownership document.
- You may also need evidence of income, such as statement of initial employment particulars or three consecutive payslips.

The bank will be able to make all the necessary arrangements as soon as you meet and upon presentation of the required documents.

Exceptions: currently, one new bank provider, BUNQ, allows you to create a bank account without paperwork and without actually meeting anyone in person; instead, a video conference on your phone is sufficient to verify your

identity and there are no requirements to be physically present at any bank location in order to complete your application process. The company calls it "the fully mobile experience." For more information: www.bunq.com

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 and offer require the input of a pin number for validation. 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.

Filing Your Taxes in the Netherlands

Everyone in the Netherlands is taxed on their income, wealth and assets. The amount of tax you pay depends on your level of income. Your employer will automatically deduct a percentage of your monthly salary to this end. 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.

Filing a tax return in the Netherlands is necessary if you:

- Have received an aangiftebrief (*declaration letter*) from the Dutch Tax authorities.
- Have other sources of income (for example, other salaries, you own a business here or elsewhere, savings, investments, etc.). Find more information at the Tax and Customs Administration website (*belastingdienst*): www.belastingdienst.nl Information is also available in English and German.

First Time Tax Filers

Most tax returns are filed digitally; many of the fields have already been filled in for you, and you simply verify that the information they have on file is correct. However, for first-timers, the digital option is not available. If you lived part of the previous tax year in the Netherlands, you are required to fill your tax return (specifically, the M form, aka M biljet) in by hand; the size of the M-biljet can be daunting for first-time tax payers in the Netherlands and the language can be extremely confusing for even the most advanced Dutch speaker. It is important to know that the explanatory notes for the M form, issued by the Dutch Tax authorities, are only available in Dutch. However, explanatory notes for the C form (which is similar to the M form, but used specifically for

those Dutch citizens living outside of the Netherlands or those residents who do not wish to submit their tax forms using the digital process) are provided in English and can be an excellent guide for filling in the M form; the pdf guide for 2017 can be downloaded at the Dutch Tax Authorities' website and is titled: Explanatory Notes Tax Return Form C 2017. Visit www.belastingdienst.nl and select "English Site" under "Languages" in the grey menu at the bottom of the page. To receive free one-on-one assistance with your M form, call the tax information line for non-resident issues (disregard the name, as this designates the department responsible for assistance in English) and make an appointment to fill in your M-biljet with an employee. To contact them, (055) 5 385 385.

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! Note that this length is currently under discussion. 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, but is not obliged to do so, grant you

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

Our trusted Tax and Financial Service Providers

Expatax – A full service tax and accounting firm in the Netherlands that specialises in internationals. Expatax is a one-stop shop for accounting, tax, payroll and company formation services in the Netherlands, since 2001. All services are combined in one company, meaning that they can advise you from different angles. Their knowledge base is constantly growing, so whether you are an employee, freelancer, employer or multinational, Expatax keeps you compliant with Dutch tax laws and maximises your tax benefits.



6. 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 Region. We are proud to have the world's biggest bike parking garage at the central train station in Utrecht - 12,500 spots.

Purchasing a bike

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 reliable used bike, sold at most shops. A quality one will run you about €150. You can certainly go cheaper, via sites like MarktPlaats

www.marktplaats.nl (in Dutch). Another possible option is Swapfiets. You pay a monthly fee and you receive a brand new bike; when your bike breaks or gets stolen, just contact Swapfiets and they will come to you within 12 hours to either fix it or bring you a new one. Find the options available in your area here:

www.swapfiets.nl/en

Renting a bike

If you are not ready to commit to a purchase, there are many opportunities to rent, mostly for daily excursions. The local Tourist Information Center (aka VVV) is an excellent place to rent bikes, and is located next to the Dom Tower. Your options are plentiful in the region, so don't hesitate to search online for the nearest providers using the Dutch term "fiets huren <city name>."

Like other major regions in the Netherlands, bike theft is an unfortunate fact of life here. So be careful to lock

up your bike sufficiently secured. Most people combine both the standard rear wheel lock and another lock to secure the front wheel or, preferably, to a fixed object. A small but useful tip: rotate the rear wheel so that the inflation stem is just next to where you're locking your rear wheel, as it discourages opportunistic thieves because of likely destruction of the stem when they attempt to break the lock, flattening the tire and making street sale or transportation of your bike more challenging.

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

Utrecht: www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/living/mobility/cycling/bicycle-gone
Amersfoort: www.amersfoort.nl/parkeren-verkeer-en-vervoer/to/fiets-verwijderd.htm (in Dutch only)

You'll find that most places that sell bikes commonly fix them too. They're called fietsenwinkels. No appointment needed, and for minor repairs, same day service is generally possible.

Bike rules to live by

There are some key rules that you as a cyclist, but also keep in mind that not take the rules or traffic lights seriously,

so always be alert.

- Always bike on the right side of the road, using the bike lane if possible. Don't cycle on footpaths.
- 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.
- Keep an eye on other traffic: scooters, taxis, buses, large delivery vans that might have trouble seeing you if you're biking in their blind spot and of course be aware of other cyclists and scooterists who are legally allowed use of the same lanes, as of this moment.
- Stop in front of a pedestrian crossing (or crosswalk).
- Stop at red traffic lights.
- Give way to traffic coming from the right.
- Light at night: it's required by law to use front and back lights on your bicycle after dark.
- In the Netherlands, no helmets are required. However, if you have not ridden a bike in a number of years, it might be wise to invest in one while you are re-familiarising your body with biking.
- Lock it right: Always lock your bike to something secure and immovable if possible. Don't rely solely on the lock that immobilises your back wheel. Although this makes it slightly more difficult to steal, all the thief needs to do is pick up the back half of your bike and roll it on the front wheel to walk away with relative ease.

22 MILLION
BICYCLES
FOR 1 MILLION-
INHABITANTS

- An official bike rack is a wonderful investment to make; it helps you transport heavy groceries when you underestimate your grocery list or when you need to supply a party with a crate or two of beer.
- A final warning to help prepare you for your biking adventure here in the Netherlands: people can and will pass you on all sides; do not be alarmed and try not to swerve in surprise, as most locals have been riding since early childhood and are extremely adept at navigating even the smallest spaces.

Bike lessons for adults

Given not everyone is born on two wheels as the Dutch seem to have been, you may be 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 biking alongside the natives in no time.

Location: Communitycentre
De Nieuwe Jutter

Address: Amerhof 66, Utrecht
Contact: www.defietsmeesters.nl
(in Dutch)

Need other options for biking lessons? View an overview of which teacher is closest to you at www.fietsdocenten.fietsersbond.nl.

Public transport

While you could easily purchase daily and weekly passes, the most efficient way to get around throughout the Netherlands is the OV Chipkaart. Given the wide range of companies that accept it, will to cities and towns across the country with ease; you no longer need to think about strip tickets or metro tickets to get to and from your destination. The OV Chipkaart is offered in two forms:

1) An anonymous card (one that is not tied to a specific person, useful if you plan to share it with others and valid for 5 years) can be purchased train stations, tobacconists or a variety of supermarkets in your area. For an overview of these locations, visit www.ov-chipkaart.nl/service-and-contact/service-points-finder.htm or

2) For maximum value, a personalised card, available online at www.ov-chipkaart.nl, which you can subscribe annually discount offerings with your favoured transit companies you can set up automatic top-ups of your balance to keep you over the €10-20 minimum upon check-in at train stations. Important note: as indicated above, to check in at any train station, the minimum balance on the card is €10-20 depending on whether you've subscribed to a discount offering or not; if you use an anonymous OV Chipkaart or don't choose the automatic top-up option on your personalised card expect to recharge your pass regularly.



Note that manually topping up is easily done, both at stations and various grocery stores such as Albert Heijn, at the signature yellow kiosks.

! **Pro tip:** Always be sure to check in and out of the bus, tram or train at each part of your journey, as failure to check out will result in a substantial deduction of your card balance, more than your trip likely costs; this measure is taken at check-in to ensure that people actually 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 Central. Additionally, you can go to www.uitcheckgemist.nl Note that when correcting this online, it may take two weeks to be reflected in your balance.

Utrecht Region Pass: access to public transport and as well as valued destinations in the Province

If you have a credit card, you could consider getting a Utrecht Region Pass instead of the OV-Chipkaart. The Utrecht Region Pass is a "pay-as-you-go" public card with national coverage conveniently linked to your credit card. It provides easy and carefree access to the entire public transport system in the Netherlands, including the OV-fiets (public transport bicycle). You can reserve it online at www.utrechtregionpass.com, then collect it at one of the conveniently located

pick-up points indicated on the website and you're ready to travel! It eliminates the worries about having enough balance on the card, as you never need to 'charge it': The payment takes place automatically. A dedicated help desk is at your service to answer your questions. For you can rent a Utrecht Region Pass for a month (reservation & rental costs) plus the regular public transport costs for the kilometers you use. Each additional month you add to your pass will cost you €2,50. The costs to travel are the same as traveling with the OV-Chipkaart. As an extra service, the Utrecht Region Pass provides an easier way to get from point A to B, coupled with extra insights about the area to discover and explore. Get inspired at www.visitutrechtregion.com. This portal provides an overview of all the different locations worth visiting and some that are connected to the pass within Utrecht Region.

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

Buses and trams are operated by U-OV (Qbuzz), which runs around 30 bus lines throughout the region. Between IJsselstein, Nieuwegein and Utrecht there is a fast tram (sneltram). U-OV (Qbuzz) is currently the primary company providing bus connections from Bunnik, De Bilt, Houten, Stichtse Vecht, Nieuwegein, Utrecht, Vianen, IJsselstein and Zeist. Utrecht Tickets: A one-time single (U-OV paper ticket) costs €2.80 (as of 2018) and

can be purchased from the driver when you step onto the bus or tram. After 18:00 on Thursdays and Fridays and throughout the entire weekend, the single U-OV ticket can also be used as a return ticket. Single or multi-day purchase options are also available: 1 day (€4), 2 days (€7) or 5 days (€9,50), all available for purchase as a paper ticket. Note that as of the date of publishing this guide, they are in the process of converting most buses to "Pin only" (debit chip card) rather than cash. These need to be Maestro network.

Alternatively, if you have an OV Chipkaart or a Utrecht Region Pass, both are welcome on U-OV buses. Note that the OV Chipkaart and Utrecht Region Pass are unrelated entities, although both serve as credit for fares on a wide range of domestic transit systems.

For transport around Amersfoort municipality, Syntus is the primary transit provider, which, like U-OV, also accepts Utrecht Region Passes.

For those who live outside of the city, it can be beneficial to use the Park and Ride (PR) system, wherein you park your car at a designated P+R parking lot, purchase one ticket which allows you 24 hour access to the U-OV buses and trains throughout the city for one fee (for a maximum of individuals) and parking all day; it is important to note that your P+R

paper ticket only works on U-OV buses, so any buses from other providers (e.g. Syntus) will not accept entry. P+R lots are located around the outskirts of the city centre as well as surrounding towns in Utrecht Region, providing multiple places to access the inner city quickly and cheaply. For more information about P+R in and around Utrecht city, see: www.parkeren-utrecht.nl/pr (in Dutch). For more information about bus stops and timetables see: www.u-ov.info/reizen/reisplanner (in Dutch)

Public Transit in Amersfoort

Syntus is the company responsible for public transit within Amersfoort. Syntus offers its passengers various ways to purchase a ticket:

- At the Syntus webshop.
- Using your personal or anonymous OV-Chipkaart
- At the Syntus Service Desk in the Amersfoort bus station.
- Via the Syntus app. You can use this and never be without a ticket again. Click here for more information. www.syntusutrecht.nl/en-gb.

Transport planners:

- For all public transport in NL: www.9292.nl/en or download the app. This planner can tell you the itinerary from address to address combining any number of systems. Another popular

app: NS Reisplanner Xtra; many people prefer the user-friendly and service-oriented nature of Reisplanner over 9292's minimalistic approach to travel. Reisplanner shows you exactly where you are on your journey, and allows you to enter business/organisation names rather than only allowing street addresses as 9292 does.

- 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 or explore your options online at www.ns.nl/en/season-tickets.

Taxis

Taxis are quite expensive in the Netherlands and are not typically hailed from the street-side or curb, except at major train stations. In general, you need to call or reserve your taxi online.

A regular taxi from Utrecht to Amsterdam might cost you anywhere from, depending on whether you share a taxi with other passengers headed in the same direction or prefer to ride privately, and of course which taxi provider you are using. In comparison, a train ticket will cost around €7,50 per person, and is available directly to Amsterdam Schiphol airport. If you need a taxi, please make sure the meter is fully functional and that the costs are agreed before you leave for destinations, or that you have chosen a fixed-rate fee. Uber is also widely used in the main cities in the Netherlands.

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, just make an appointment at city hall and bring valid identity papers, your foreign driver's license and a photo. The exchange of your driver's license is only possible if you are a registered resident of the Netherlands with a BSN and residence permit (verblijfsvergunning). You may also be asked to provide a certificate of fitness. The rules differ per country of origin. Please visit www.rdw.nl/information-in-english or call 0900-0739 for more information.

An application for a Dutch driver's license costs approximately 40 euros and is paid in advance. The process takes approximately two weeks to complete – and they often take your foreign license during the interim, so make sure you have planned for this eventuality before you go in for the initial appointment. Key point: Make sure you make your exchange before your current license expires!

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

If you don't own a car but still want to drive on occasion, there are several peer-to-peer and car-share options available to Utrecht Region residents. 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 Car-sharing 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 well-known options, and you can find many more at www.utrechtdeelt.nl/wat-autodelen (in Dutch). Traffic rules can be found at www.government.nl.

Car insurance

Dutch law mandates that every car owner obtain basic liability car insurance. Called statutory liability insurance (or *wettelijke aansprakelijkheid (WA) verzekering*), covers the damage for which the car owner is legally liable. Because the insurance is tied to the car, other drivers are also covered when they have an accident while driving your car, unless this person is not legally authorised to drive a car. Additional insurance, called *WA + beperkt casco*, or statutory liability + limited hull, can be purchased to cover damage to the car from a number

of specific damaging events, which can include theft, fire, hail/storm and window breakage. A deductible usually applies here. The maximum car insurance that covers theft, fire and injury to yourself or your vehicle (*aka all risk autoverzekering*) is called All Risk car insurance; All Risk car insurance has a more extensive coverage than the limited hull insurance. With All Risk car insurance, damage to the car is covered in most situations.

To compare the most popular car insurance providers and their rates/packages, refer to www.verzekering.nl/autoverzekering/. The site is in Dutch so view the url in the Chrome browser, or one that you can add the Google Translate plugin, to see the site in your preferred language. The most well-known car insurance companies include: ABN-AMRO, Aegon, Autoweek, CentraalBeheer, Ditzo, FBTO, Klaverblad verzekeringen, HEMA verzekeringen, InShared, Nationale Nederlanden, OHRA, Unive & Verzekerezelf.nl.

7. Your health

In the Netherlands, there are many types of insurance to cover all manner 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 of arriving and insurance agencies will back-calculate their charges to the date you registered with the City, so expect your first payment to reflect this. All in all, you will find your out of pocket costs minimal and your health well looked after.

Healthcare in the Netherlands

Healthcare in the Netherlands ranks amongst the best in the world, giving people access to the most advanced treatments and preventative care. Some things, however, may be arranged in a different way than you are used to.

The general practitioner (GP)

The GP or 'huisarts' is your first contact for all medical questions and complaints. GPs are trained specialists in treating the most common complaints such as pediatric diseases and gynaecological complaints. When needed, your GP will prescribe medication or refer you to a diagnostic centre, hospital

or medical specialist. It is not possible to see a medical specialist without a referral. Prescriptions are a pharmacy (Apotheek), which are often located either near your home or sometimes within the GPs office building.

The GP will also often serve as your link to most other services, such as midwifery and physiotherapy. Most GP's speak English and will be happy to hold a free, introductory meeting with you. We strongly recommend registering with a GP in your area as soon as you are settled. Check www.h4i.nl on how to find a suitable GP.

Emergencies

Your GP will explain what you need to do in case of an emergency during or after office hours. In case of a life-threatening emergency you can always call 112. This will give you access to all emergency services.

Other services

For more information about Dutch healthcare and services like GP services, preventive screening, dental care, pharmacies or mental healthcare visit: www.h4i.nl.

The GGD is the Dutch Community Health Services Association, primarily

responsible for preventative health care across a range of topics including child health care, environmental health, socio-medical advice, periodic sanitary inspections, public health for asylum seekers, medical screening, epidemiology, health education and community mental health. They offer advice on childhood and adult vaccinations, and administer travel vaccinations for residents preparing to travel abroad to areas of increased risk for disease transmission. For more information about the GGD offices in Utrecht Region, please visit: www.ggdru.nl (in Dutch).



Health insurance in the Netherlands

If you live or work in the Netherlands you are required to take out a basic Dutch health insurance policy (Basisverzekering) within months of your arrival, even if you are already insured in another country.

You are free to choose your health insurance provider and may change provider every year; in fact, many Dutch natives do this almost every year to benefit from discounts offered to new customers. In some cases companies will offer corporate healthcare insurance. Check with your employer if this applies to you.

The Dutch basic health insurance policy offers a universal package for everyone over the age of 18 years. Children under 18 years are insured via their parents' health insurance policy at no extra cost. An insurer is obliged to accept anyone who applies for its Basisverzekering and must charge all policyholders the same premium, regardless of their age or state of health. In addition you may take out additional insurance for services like dental care or physiotherapy. For these, insurers are not obliged to cover all who apply.

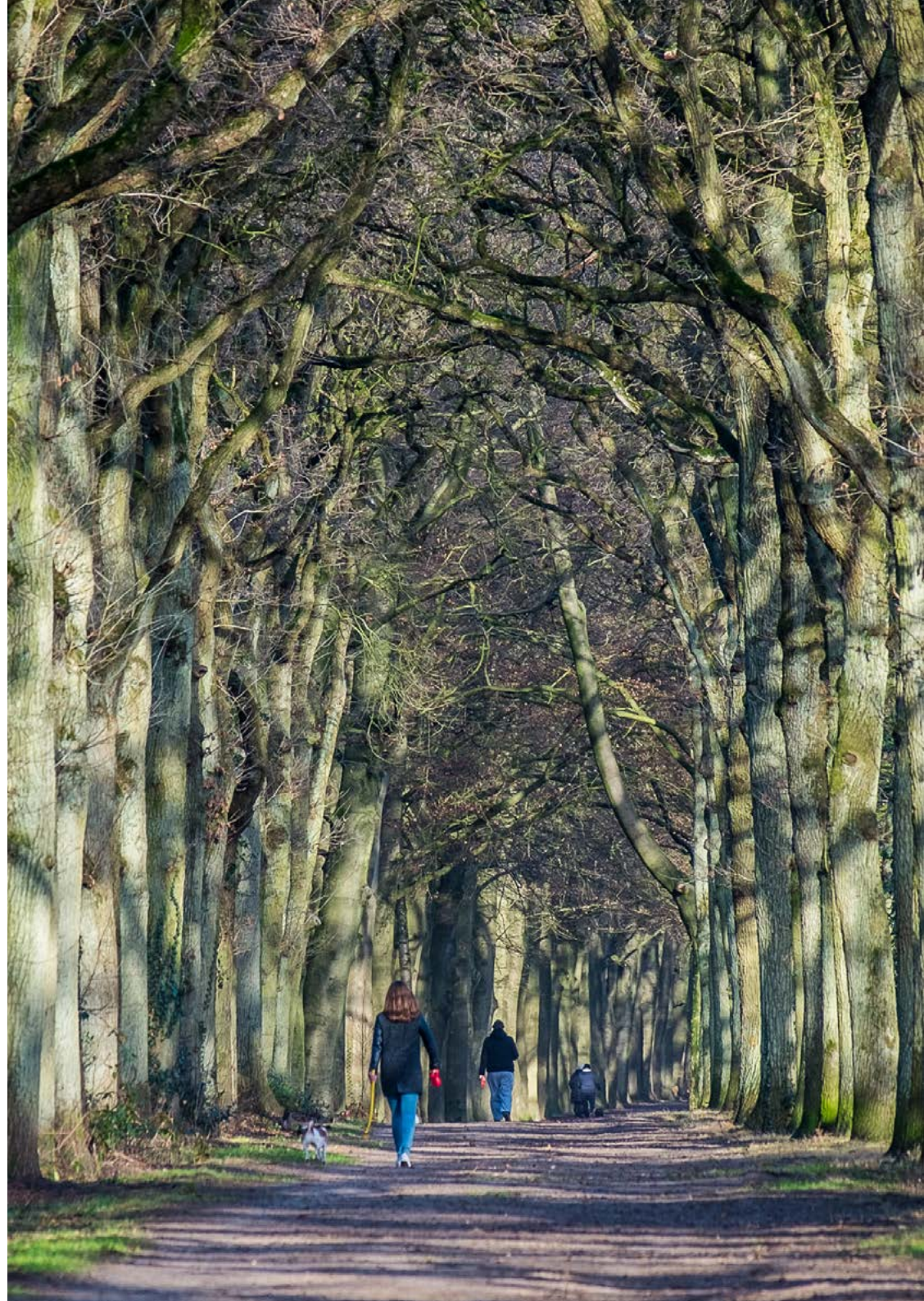
Cost of healthcare and health insurance

Health insurance providers will charge you a monthly premium for their Basic Insurance Coverage (aka Basisverzekering), which is dependent on the level of deductible that you've chosen. A deductible is mandatory in most cases.

Consultations by your GP are fully covered, but in some cases you will have to make a contribution to cover the costs of diagnostics and medication to a maximum of your annual deductible. Any medical specialist and hospital care costs exceeding your annual deductible are fully covered. The government may extend a benefit to help cover the costs of healthcare for those with lower incomes.

To learn more about health insurance, type of policies, finding a provider, as well as costs and benefits, visit here: www.h4i.nl.

About H4i: Healthcare for internationals is a non-profit organisation that helps internationals to navigate Dutch healthcare. It also helps Dutch healthcare providers to better the needs of internationals. Information provided by H4i is reviewed by both professionals and an international panel.



8. 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:

- Toddler playgroup (peuterspeelzaal) for children 2-4 years of age, usually for a few hours per day, twice a week. Connected to a primary school and are basically a form of play-oriented preparation for primary school, allowing children the opportunity to acclimate to working with other children in a structured setting.
- Daycare centre (kinderdagverblijf) for children 0-4 years of age. Service by private providers. Opening hours typically range from early morning until 18.00/18.30.
- BSO, after school care (Buitenschoolse opvang). This is generally offered in collaboration with primary schools and/or a daycare centre, although parents are encouraged to look at the various BSOs available in their area. Parents are a great source of knowledge and can offer reliable real-life reviews of the BSOs available to you. Some BSOs offer an emphasis on outdoor play, others on a particular

sport or dance, other artistic pursuits. While of course you want to seek the most fitting option for your child, be aware that certain days may be popular with other parents and you may have to put your child or children on a waiting list before you can obtain the best case scenario.

- Babysitter, au-pair, live-in nanny, registered host parent (aka registered gastouder)

The Dutch Tax authorities may offer subsidy for child day-care costs when both parents are working, depending on your total income. The childcare benefit (kinderopvangtoeslag) must be applied for through the Dutch Tax authorities (www.belastingdienst.nl - select English; search childcare).

- ! **Tip: handy tool: Childcare allowance calculator:** www.blueumbrella.nl/childcare-allowance-calculator/

Education

Education in the Netherlands is ranked among the best of the world, being in the top 10 of all OECD countries.

Dutch primary education

Here in Utrecht Region, you will find a generous selection of schools with a wide range of educational philosophies

and practices. Children are truly prioritised 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 (*so they can celebrate the day itself with their peuterspeelzaal friends and teachers*), with many children transitioning from their current childcare centres or toddler play groups. Children are legally required to attend school after they turn 5, so make sure to take any non-school ordained holiday trips before, when they are no longer allowed to miss scheduled school days. The school year begins in August and is broken up by numerous holidays, listed later in this guide. In the final year of Dutch primary school parents, children and teachers decide

together with the help of a standardised national test (CITO) and feedback from the teacher, which type of secondary school is most appropriate for your child.

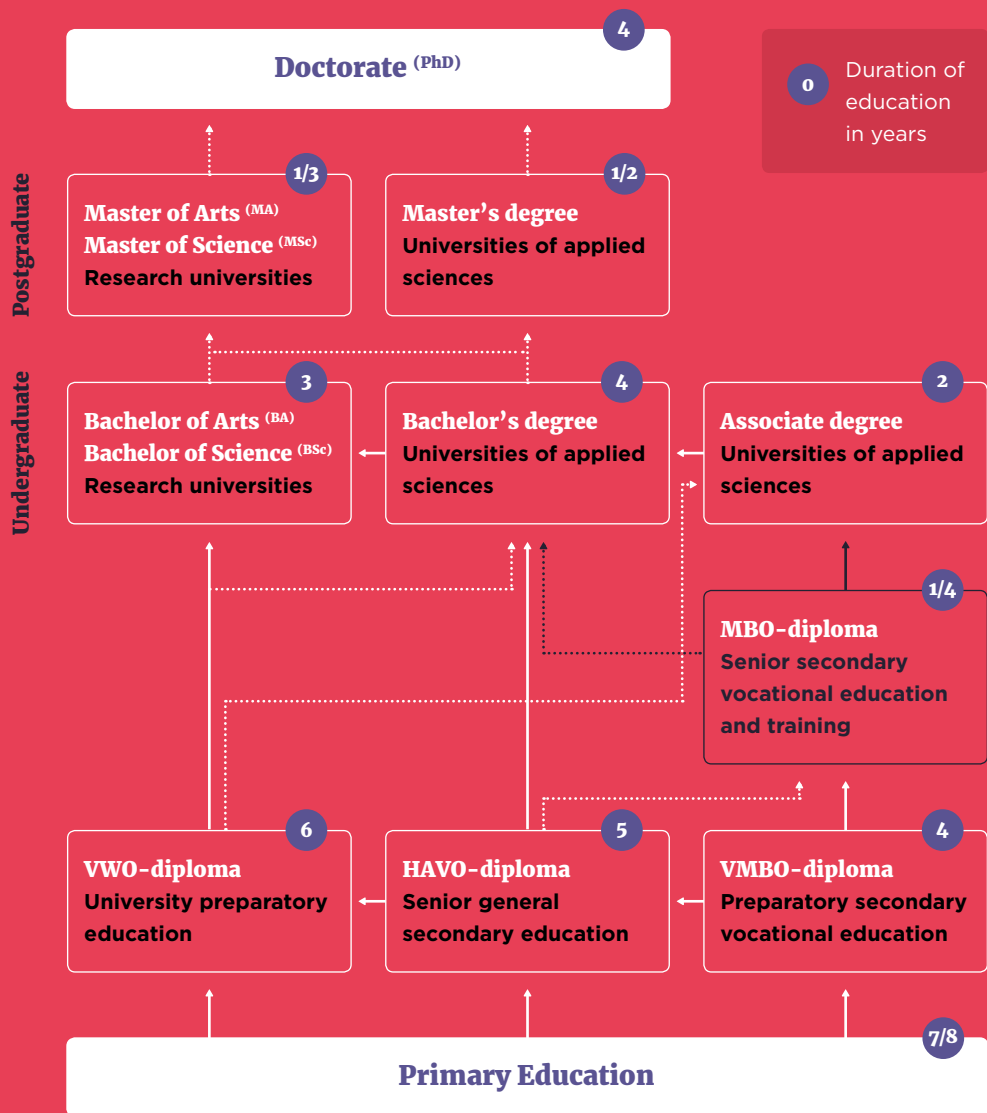
Dutch secondary education

Children usually attend a secondary school/high school (middelbare school) from ages 12 to 18. There are three types of schools available:

- VMBO: Pre-vocational secondary education
- HAVO: Senior general secondary education. A completed HAVO degree gives access to a University of Applied Sciences (or HBO)
- VWO: Pre-university education



Education System The Netherlands



International Education

Utrecht Region offers a wide variety of education possibilities for international children of all ages.

An increasing number of Dutch schools offer bilingual education, meaning that roughly half the subjects are taught in English. Though be aware the exams have to be taken in Dutch!

Dutch public schools are government funded and require only a small parental fee, if any.

International School Utrecht (ISUtrecht)

The International School Utrecht is based on the IB World School curriculum, offering a complete and connected International Baccalaureate programme for students from the ages of 4-18. Since opening its doors in August 2012, the school has flourished and now has an enrolment of nearly 600 students, together representing some 40 nationalities.

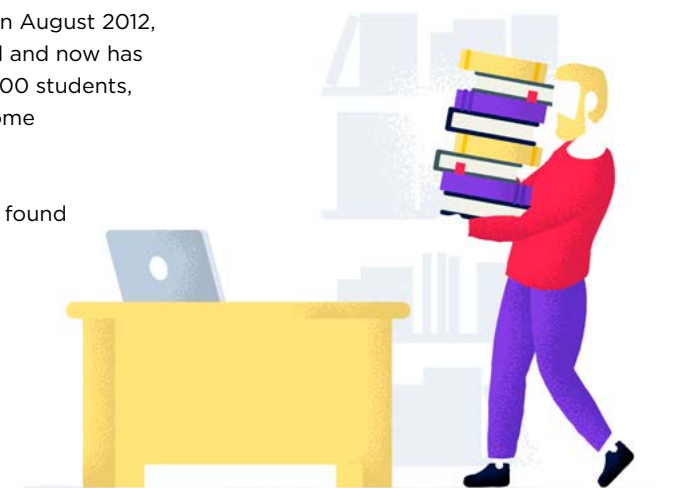
More information can be found at www.isutrecht.nl.

International School Hilversum

The International School Hilversum is also an IB World School and offers three programmes: The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years (PYP), Middle Years (MYP) and the full Diploma Programme (IBDP).

In addition to international schools, several Dutch schools offer bilingual education possibilities throughout the Utrecht Region. In these schools, subjects get taught both in Dutch and English.

The following schools have international education facilities at the primary or secondary level in Utrecht Region:



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

The Dutch Ministry of Education website offers a number of publications on all aspects of the Dutch education system:

www.government.nl/topics/themes/education.

To find out more about international and Dutch education, visit www.educaide.nl

To find an overview of Dutch international schools, visit www.dutchinternational-schools.nl

Library Resources

Are you a bookworm? Or are you looking for a quiet place to read, study, or entertain your children without spending money?

If so, we recommend making use of one of Utrecht Region's many public libraries. They are located all over Utrecht Region, so one is bound to be near where you live. Entry is free and our libraries also provide various interesting activities for a variety of ages. Some even have cafes! For more information about libraries in the city of Utrecht, visit www.bibliotheekutrecht.nl/english.html.



9. University level studying in Utrecht

As a potential student here in the Netherlands, you will be faced with an enjoyable dilemma: Which of the nearly countless programme options will you choose?

The region offers students an inspiring international learning environment with an extensive range of English-taught programmes, courses and study programmes covering a wide variety of fields. Prospective international students can enrol in an English-taught degree programme or a short course, while Dutch speakers can also enrol in a Dutch-language programme. To apply for study, students should first contact the institution offering the course, which will specify the required qualifications for admission, bachelor's, master's, or PhD programme.

To compare the offerings of universities, colleges and other education providers, go to www.talent.utrechtregion.com/en/study/finding-education. Study In Holland provides copious information about studying in the Netherlands: www.study-inholland.nl. Nuffic also provides a ton of information about internationalization in education: www.nuffic.nl/en

EU students can get a loan for their study in the Netherlands and even work for a certain amount of hours per week,

if they so choose. 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 organisations 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 of a Dutch university

The orientation year (zoekjaar) permit allows recent graduates from non-EU countries and scientific researchers to stay in or come to the Netherlands for a period of up to twelve months after graduation. During this period, they can seek employment or work without needing an extra work permit. International graduates can apply within three years after their graduation. More information can be found at <https://ind.nl/en/work>.

Utrecht Region's Universities

Utrecht University

Located amongst the winding streets of the city centre of Utrecht and radiating out to the beautiful rural fringes, Utrecht University (UU) is a hub of international research and is the highest ranked university in the Netherlands! With a range of English taught Bachelor and Master programmes the university has a healthy international student population. Thanks to UU's innovative research Utrecht is also home to a wealth of field-leading researchers from across the globe who strive to create better, healthier, and more sustainable societies. The university also partners with organisations across the city to offer a comprehensive Summer School and Dutch and foreign language education through the Babel language institute. For more information, visit www.uu.nl/en

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (HU) is one of the largest continuing education colleges in the Netherlands and is funded by the state. It has over 35,000 students with more than one hundred different nationalities. And yet the educational environment feels personal, due to the numerous locations where the courses are housed

according to discipline, and the high quality of the teaching staff who place great emphasis on personal supervision.

One of the missions of HU is to contribute to a sustainable knowledge society with people as the starting point. It's a place where students and staff have the opportunity to broaden their horizons and feel at home. The HU offers well over 80 study programmes. Some of its programmes are fully taught in English. HU also offers practice-based education. For example, you will work in exciting real-life projects together with other students for international companies. Internships are part of the programme as well. For more information, visit their website: www.international.hu.nl

Nyenrode Business University

Nyenrode Business University works on a sustainable future by stimulating their students and participants to grow into responsible leaders. Nyenrode's educational purpose reaches beyond the transfer and creation of knowledge by also emphasising the need to build ones character and focus on attitude and personal skills. Therefore, they offer their students and participants a combination of academic theory, practical relevance and personal development.

10. Learning the Dutch Language

Nyenrode has traditionally been internationally oriented. The university offers intensive academic education, short-term and longer-term programs in the fields of business, management, accountancy, controlling, and fiscal law. In these areas they also undertake scientific research. Nyenrode Business University is the only private university in the Netherlands, founded in 1946 by business and for business. For more information, visit their website: www.nyenrode.nl/en/home



HKU University of the Arts Utrecht

HKU University of the Arts Utrecht offers preparatory courses, bachelor and master programmes and research degrees in fine art, design, media, games and interaction, music, theatre and arts management. With more than 3,900 students, HKU University of the Arts Utrecht is one of the largest art and culture-oriented institutes in Europe.

For more information, visit their website: www.hku.nl/Home.htm

Utrecht Summer School

Utrecht Summer School started in 1987 and has developed into one of the largest summer schools in Europe, offering over 200 courses in virtually all disciplines by Utrecht University, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht and HKU University of the Arts Utrecht. These institutions for higher education offer high quality, fully accredited summer courses at bachelor, master and PhD levels. All courses are taught in English. For most of the courses ECTS credits are awarded. In 2016 Utrecht Summer School attracted over 3500 students from about 120 different countries.

www.utrechtsummerschool.nl/

Understanding (the) Dutch

Essential words

Speaking a few words in Dutch can be an excellent way of connecting and building rapport with the locals. The Dutch will probably quickly switch to English, but will generally very much appreciate your effort. A few introductory words that will quickly become second nature to you:

Dutch

Hallo
Goedemorgen
Goedemiddag
Goedenavond
Dag (formal) Doej (informal)
Tot ziens
Dankuwel (formal) Dankjewel (informal)
Alstublieft (formal) Alsjeblieft (informal)
Ja
Nee
Lekker
Mooi
Gezellig
Open
Gesloten
Spreekt u Engels?

Means (in English)

Hello
Good morning
Good afternoon
Good evening
Bye
See you later
Thank you
Please
Yes
No
Tasty
Beautiful
Sociable / cosy / fun
Open
Closed
Do you speak English?

There are a number of options for you to learn Dutch, ranging from one-on-one in a cafe to formal classroom settings. Sample of your potential choices.

NL Educatie's Taalplus Dutch courses

NL Educatie's Taalplus works in collaboration with participating municipalities and employers to combat illiteracy in the Netherlands. They offer free* language courses to the public in the following areas: Utrecht, Nieuwegein, Woerden, Zeist & Maarssen. Taalplus offers beginners and advanced classes, extending their focus to include literacy and language acquisition for those learning Dutch as a second language, as well. Upon registration, administrators will call you to set up an assessment test to determine your current level of Dutch proficiency; you will be placed in a class according to your level of proficiency and educational background. Once you have passed your language exam, you will be reimbursed for your registration fee, currently €45.

Important to note: certain criteria will affect your eligibility to participate in a Taalplus Dutch course: 1) You are employed, and 2) have at least a higher vocational education in your own country and are fluent in English, German or French. If you are concerned that you are ineligible, please call Taalplus to verify: 030 - 30 31 234.

Because of its popularity, Taalplus often has a waiting list for participants; your placement will depend on your level of Dutch as well as the flexibility of your schedule; if you have a tight schedule, you may need to wait months before you are offered a place a course. For more information, visit (*in Dutch, so please take advantage of Google Translate to help you navigate*) www.nleducatie.com.

Volksuniversiteit Utrecht (VU) has been offering affordable options for internationals interested in learning Dutch, as well as a large variety of other languages, since the 1930s. For more information, please visit their website, which is published in the following languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish: www.volksuniversiteitutrecht.nl/talen.

Babel offers a wide range of Dutch language courses, starting from beginners to advanced level. Their courses are located in three different places, accommodating different location needs. www.babel.nl/en.

Dutch First also offers several Dutch courses, including standard and intensive lessons. To ascertain your current level of your Dutch, Dutch First offers a free assessment test. If you want a friendly and professional staff leading a language course full of relevant activities and fun, we recommend Dutch First. www.dutchfirst.nl/en

Levin Language School also has a number of courses to choose one from. You can check them out here: www.levinlanguage.nl/en

Free Online Dutch Courses

Don't have enough time to go to a language school? Not to worry, you can check out these options to learn Dutch online for free, at your own pace: www.learnndutch.org www.jekanmewat.nl (in Dutch)

Remote classes

If you prefer the commitment of a paid personalised course but you don't have the time to travel to and from school, you can choose one of these online courses. In this way, you can get the atmosphere and community of a school environment while you study in the comfort of your home. www.dutchpod101.com www.learnndutch.org www.babbel.com

For an entertaining guide to Dutchness which pokes fun at some of the more endearing quirks associated with Dutch culture, go to the blog 'Stuff Dutch people like' www.stuffdutchpeoplelike.com. To get sense for the many uses the Dutch have for the word "lekker," read StuffDutchPeopleLike's article about it: www.stuffdutchpeoplelike.com/2012/09/30/no-12-lekker



Public holidays

Dutch holidays 2019/2020

New Year's Day <i>Nieuwjaarsdag</i>	January 1
Good Friday <i>Goede Vrijdag</i>	2019: April 19 (not an official holiday) 2020: April 10 (not an official holiday)
Easter Sunday <i>Eerste Paasdag</i>	2019: April 21 2020: April 12
Easter Monday <i>Tweede Paasdag</i>	2019: April 22 2020: April 13
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>	2019: May 30 2020: May 21
Whit (Pentecost) Sunday <i>Eerste Pinksterdag</i>	2019: June 9 2020: May 31
Whit (Pentecost) Monday <i>Tweede Pinksterdag</i>	2019: June 9 2020: June 1
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)

11. Finding a job

Dutch School holidays (which do not always correspond with international school holidays)

In the Netherlands school holidays differ per region. Dutch schools and 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. Schools have the flexibility to extend the May holiday by one week. It is therefore important to always check the precise dates with your school. Schools are also allowed to deviate from the advised holiday period for spring break and the autumn holiday.

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. Parents who do this without first obtaining written permission from the school board, for special health or family considerations, violate the Compulsory Education law (Leerplichtwet).

School holidays for primary and high schools in Utrecht: www.government.nl

Utrecht region offers many opportunities for non-Dutch speakers. Both Dutch and the more than 1.000 international companies located here are frequently looking for talent from abroad. And with unemployment levels among the lowest in the EU, the odds of advancing your career in 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. There you can explore thousands of non-Dutch speaking vacancies currently available – and new jobs are added every day. Visit <http://talent.utrechtregion.com/en/work/jobportal>.

Volunteering

Go to www.vcutrecht.nl or contact the Expat Center Utrecht for more information about volunteering in Utrecht Region.

Working as a Freelancer

Shared office buildings, flexible workspaces, and virtual offices - Utrecht Region offers an abundant and growing variety of possibilities for small companies or freelancers. All the centres mentioned below are entrepreneurial hubs

for start-ups, established businesses and entrepreneurs to meet, network and collaborate.

Highlighted co-working spaces in the city of Utrecht – Given the dynamic, expanding and ever evolving nature of Utrecht Region's flex work spaces, we invite you to see the complete overview for more options. Here's a small sample of what's available:

JIM (Jaarbeurs Innovation Mile)

focuses on innovators that are active in the fields of urban living, smart sustainable environment, life sciences and health. Literally just across the way



12. Finding your Dutch way

from Utrecht Central Station, you can find personalised workspaces, flex desks, demo and open meeting spaces (<http://jim.spaces.nexodus.com/en>).

DotSlash is a newly developed startup hub, within biking distance from Utrecht Central Station (www.dotslash.surf).

Tribes Utrecht Central Station offers inspiring workplaces for business nomads. Tribes also operates in Germany, Belgium and other cities in the Netherlands (www.tribes.world/en).

A complete overview of business centres can be found here: www.utrechtcityin-business.com/en/business-locations/flexible-work-spaces.

For another perspective on the best flex-work spots, check out: www.exploreutrecht.nl/en/work-it-32-best-flexible-work-spots-for-freelancers.

Highlighted co-working spaces in the city of Amersfoort

Is Amersfoort also freelancer-friendly? Yes it is!

Around Amersfoort Central station and Amersfoort city centre:

Regus Station2Station is part of Regus, who operate business centres all over the country and also several in Utrecht Region (www.regus.nl).

Seats2Meet offers work & meeting spaces and 40 dedicated workspaces for freelancers, most options free! There is a strong emphasis on collaboration there, with a dedicated internal network that encourages people to share what they're working on, and seeking to work on. New work happens naturally. (www.seats2meet.com).

Around highway A1:

Regus A1 is strategically located on highway A1 and near one of the largest railway junctions in the Netherlands.

Atoomclub Amersfoort A1 provides a stimulating work environment and is also easily accessible by car (www.atoomclub.nl).

They have another business centre in the city of Utrecht.

Though you will meet a lot of internationals in Utrecht Region, the way daily life is organised still has its roots in the background and history of the Netherlands. Your journey of getting settled in Utrecht Region has probably been (or is going to be) full of surprises, some pleasant and some less pleasant, or even frustrating. Navigating your way around the cultural aspects of daily life in the Netherlands can pose some interesting challenges, and seen another way, opportunities. We'd like to help make it go as well as possible, with a few cultural insights to help smoothen the road forward.

Social life

One important aspect of creating your home is getting in contact with your neighbours. You may have already found out that privacy is quite a big thing in the Netherlands. Given that, you may wonder, what is the best way to meet them? Thankfully, it's quite relaxed and direct. Most Dutch people present themselves when they move to a new neighbourhood by knocking on their neighbours' door, introducing themselves, perhaps sharing what brought them to their new home, and asking if the neighbors would have time for a coffee. Sometimes that coffee may wait for months, sometimes even

never, but it can also frequently end up being a spontaneous get-together. Just start small, with the two neighbours living next to you. They will likely then introduce you to others.

What about making friends?

One thing to keep in mind is that it can take time to make friends with the Dutch. If you realise after all your efforts that you still don't have a big crowd of Dutch friends, it's likely not you, but rather the privacy-focused and busy Dutch mindset. As the Dutch like sports and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, you might have better chances if you register with a sports club (sportvereniging). Did you know that Dutch soccer teams call the moment of socialising after the match 'the third half'? Sports here can be about being healthy, but most often it also means sharing a drink.

Work culture

You have managed to find a great job in Utrecht, that's great news! However, the work culture may be different than you're accustomed to. Though you might work in an international setting, it is also possible you will work with a Dutch manager in a Dutch team. Though you may have learned about the directness of the Dutch, sometimes

it can come across as being close to rude. Keep in mind that in general, that's not their intention. Rather, it is his or her way of showing transparency, which they actually consider being well mannered, rather than being passive and unclear about your thoughts. On YouTube you can find many very interesting videos on Dutch culture that can put your experiences into context. You can also register for an introduction day to learn more about the Netherlands and see what works for you. The Netherlands can be so much more fun and fulfilling if you find your way into Dutch culture.

Work Culture Highlight: How to be successful in the Dutch 'poldermodel'

A key point to understand is that Dutch societal norms and values evolved from an originally Calvinistic society. While only a minority of the population practices the Protestant faith, honesty and evenhandedness are paramount. An aspect that may confuse you is their individualism, since so many of the Dutch are actively involved in social clubs. It's important to understand and recognise the mechanism behind this, as it may help you steer safely through office politics. The time the Dutch spend on deliberation seemingly contradicts the often-heard argument that 'time

is money'. However, once consensus has been established, things move at a high speed, with a greater number of people supporting the agreed upon actions, and therefore the results being more durable. This successful method was named 'poldermodel' by the British and has over time won a lot of admiration worldwide. The Dutch are meticulous planners and do not hesitate to let you know what they feel when they consider you are wasting their time.

Dutch people are known for directness, but don't try to match it from the start! It requires a lot of fine-tuning to know on what topics and in which situations you can be direct to whom. While it seems that the Dutch are an egalitarian society where showing off is not appreciated, there are exceptions: If you have your facts and arguments right and verified, you can display your expertise. You may earn yourself status because you have acquired an academic title or arrived at an influential position by hard work and/or serving society. Despite the high level of transparency, private life, salary levels and professional ambitions can be no-go areas.

In the Netherlands everybody is your co-worker; regardless of their position.

Dutch language and grammar foster the use of short and neutral sentences. You'll find this is reflected in the way Dutch colleagues communicate in English. This can be experienced by non-native people as lacking politeness or courtesy, while for your co-worker saying it, they're actually trying to be friendly. You may find yourself truly appreciating the lack of facade, pretense, and obscurity in communication, your relations with your co-workers and friends clear and ultimately more enjoyable.



Sports Culture

For the health conscious Dutch, a sport is not just something to watch and cheer for. Sports and all forms of physical activity are valued as a cornerstone of a happy and healthy life. They are an important form of leisure activity for the Dutch: 52% of the population participate in a sport on a weekly basis! Quite uniquely for the world, almost all Dutch primary school children go to school by bicycle or foot, which lays a solid foundation for leading an active life their whole lives.

Utrecht Region, with its woods, hills and Holland's 'Lake District' offers numerous possibilities for outdoor sports, such as off-road biking, race cycling, triathlon, equestrian sports, rowing and golf. The city of Utrecht has more than 300 sports clubs! Collectively, they offer in excess of 40 types of sport.

It's notable that in the Netherlands, such non-commercial sports clubs are the most important framework for organised sport activities – more than schools, municipal organisations or commercial providers. 85% of sports clubs use volunteers. If you or your children play a sport at such a sports club (*vereniging*) you are often expected to occasionally

13. Explore Utrecht Region and beyond

help out, helping keep everybody's annual fee costs low. This might include being asked to take up a shift at the canteen's kitchen/bar or being asked to bring/pick up the team from events. Here again, you'll find a natural way to become more immersed in and part of the Dutch culture.

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 not affiliated with the University. One notable inclusion in the Olympos resources is Kalymnos, two climbing walls, one of which spans the entire height of the eight storey parking garage they're adjacent to! See www.olympos.nl/en-us/sportsprogrammes/kalymnosclimbingwall.aspx for more.

Utrecht Region

Utrecht Region is the oldest region in the Netherlands: Centrally located in the country, it is where living, working and recreation are good and plentiful. Here you will find beautiful, varied landscapes and attractive cities such as Utrecht and Amersfoort, excellent cultural facilities and internationally renowned knowledge institutes.

As is to be expected of a region with its roots in medieval times, Utrecht Region has a long and rich cultural history. You can explore between the lively docks of the historical canals and come across countless national monuments and world heritage sites. If you prefer nature, a quick bike ride have you at numerous citadels, forts, castles, farms, serene rivers and lakes.

Cultural Gems Of Utrecht Region

Domplein

The 2,000 year old Domplein (square) is where the Romans built the Castellum Traiectum fort that laid the foundation for Utrecht.

Dom tower

For more than six centuries, the city and its surroundings have been dominated by the magnificent Dom Tower, at 122 metres the highest medieval building in the Netherlands. Climb 465 steps and you'll

be rewarded with a stunning view of the city and rural landscape beyond it. www.domtower.com.

Trajectum Lumen

A unique way to illuminate Utrecht's history and present, at night you can follow a light trail on the ground that leads past the beautiful work of numerous artists. Starting point: TivoliVredenburg. www.trajectumlumen.com.

Museums

Spoorwegmuseum, Utrecht

This museum tells the story of 175 years of railways in the Netherlands and houses an extensive collection of historic trains. Thomas and Chuggington are regular visitors as well. www.spoorwegmuseum.nl.

Museum Speelklok, Utrecht

Museum Speelklok shows you centuries old self-playing musical instruments, from the smallest music box to the largest dance and barrel organs. Be sure to take in the guided tour, different every time, giving you the historical context and a frequent dose of the unexpected. If Dutch isn't your first language, they're happy to also do the tour in English as well. www.museumspeelklok.nl.

Miffy Museum, Utrecht

The house of Miffy, or as locally known, Nijntje, is a museum for all ages where you can discover the world of designer Dick Bruna's most famous creation: Miffy. The little rabbit was created in 1955 and has become an international celebrity, not only as a children's book character, but also as a design icon. www.nijntjemuseum.nl.

Centraal Museum, Utrecht

Centraal Museum shows modern art, fashion and costumes, city history, early art and applied art. They also own the largest collection of objects designed by Rietveld in the world, including his world-famous zig-zag chair and red-and-blue chair. www.centraalmuseum.nl/en.

Rietveld Schröder house, Utrecht

In 1924 furniture maker and architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964) realised this unique building, a UNESCO World heritage site. It is the only building built according to the architectural principles of De Stijl. Utrecht is internationally known as the city where Rietveld lived and worked all his life. www.rietveldschroderhuis.nl/en.

Mondriaanhuis, Amersfoort

Mondriaan and Rietveld, part of 'De Stijl' art movement, were born in Utrecht Region. Visit the house where Piet Mondriaan was born in 1872. www.mondriaanhuis.nl.

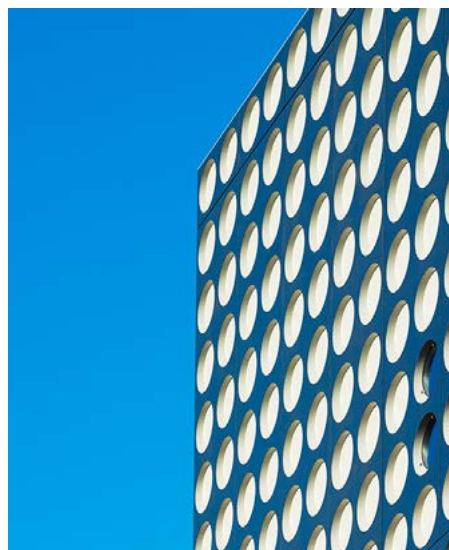
Kunsthalkade, Amersfoort

Kunsthalkade offers exhibitions in the field of contemporary/modern art, architecture, design and contemporary visual culture. www.kunsthalkade.nl
National Military Museum, Soest exhibits aircraft, tanks, armoured vehicles and helicopters, with many interactive ways to engage you and your children: www.nmm.nl/en.

Music

TivoliVredenburg

TivoliVredenburg, containing numerous venues within, offers a stage for all music genres: classical, pop, dance, jazz and everything in between. www.tivolivredenburg.nl



Festivals & Events

Utrecht offers too many festivals throughout the year to count, with a program full of theatre, dance, music, film, workshops and more on large and small stages, squares and parks.

A selection of yearly recurring events:

- Cultural Sundays showcases a number of art disciplines, including theatre, opera, music, dance, film, literature, visual arts, street culture and storytelling around a central theme: www.culturelezendagen.nl/english.
- Early Music festival focuses on medieval, renaissance and baroque music: www.oudemuziek.nl
- Le Guess Who? presents an eclectic range of artists from the Netherlands and abroad that are hand selected for their uniqueness, a fresh discovery waiting for you: www.leguesswho.nl
- Winter Utrecht presents a selection of wintry events and activities in the area: www.winter-utrecht.nl
- SPRING Performing Arts Festival is a 10-day international festival presenting new developments in the performing arts with a focus on cross-over between dance and theatre. www.springutrecht.nl.
- International Literature Festival Utrecht: Bringing a broad range of international and domestic authors, this event has something for everybody. www.ilfu.nl
- Nederlands Film Festival: The

Nederlands Film Festival (Dutch Film Festival) gives film culture the honoured platform that it deserves. From late September until early October, NFF shines the spotlight on Dutch-produced feature films, documentaries, animations, short films, television dramas, games, interactive projects and events for young and old. The best of their programme is made available to an English speaking audience, with over 50 international screenings in 2018. What began as a modest festival has grown in scale since the early 80s, making NFF the face of Dutch film culture. NFF actively supports the public and film professionals throughout the year, showcasing Dutch film as art, craft, entertainment and a mirror of society to stimulate, support, promote and provide context for Dutch film culture. The highlight of NFF's year is its annual festival, celebrating Dutch film and placing it in the spotlight for a few weeks every year. For the professional world, the festival is also the leading platform for substantive exchange and innovation. www.filmfestival.nl/en.

History And Nature

Utrecht is surrounded by a mosaic of landscapes, picturesque villages, welcoming cities and a rich cultural heritage. In Utrecht region you can easily roam off the beaten track and explore

a rich combination of nature, tranquility and beautiful old buildings.

A few regional highlights:

Utrechtse Heuvelrug

Just outside the city of Utrecht and right in the centre of the Netherlands one can find 23,000 hectares of forests and heathlands in this National Park.

The New Dutch Waterline

The largest defensive structure in the Netherlands consists of forts, embankments, locks, canals, and bunkers. Dating back to 1815, this historic line of defence was designed to quickly inundate large tracts of land in order to protect the Netherlands from enemy troops during wartime. www.nieuwe-hollandsewaterlinie.nl/en. The many remaining forts also provide an authentic backdrop for theatre performances, film screenings, concerts, exhibitions and art shows.

Bunschoten Spakenburg

An authentic Dutch fisherman's village at the Eemlake.

De Haar Castle

Brigitte Bardot, Yves Saint Laurent, Roger Moore, Gregory Peck have been guests at De Haar Castle, the largest and most luxurious castle in the Netherlands. Its splendid rooms and extensive gardens can be visited 7 days a week at select

times. The Castle also hosts various cultural events throughout the year. www.kasteeldehaar.nl/english.

Ouwehands Zoo

Ouwehands Zoo, Rhenen is home to the giant pandas Wu Wen and Xing Ya. www.ouwehand.nl/en.

Check out www.visitutrechtregion.com for more ideas.

Want to venture out of the region?

By train you can easily reach other major cities or small towns, both domestic and internationally, from Utrecht Centraal, Utrecht's central station. Within an hour of travel, you can experience all of the Dutch icons and take in our many fields of flowers, castles, windmills and beautiful art.

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

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,

memorable shops, coffee bars with character and much more. Here you can also find information about biking and walking routes.

Visit www.visitutrechtregion.com and www.exploreutrecht.nl for more tips on exploring and experiencing Utrecht Region.

Time to Momo is a 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 on-going 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 (e.g. at Expat Center Utrecht), or visit www.magutrecht.com for more information.

Campfire also provides weekly updates about what's happening in Utrecht www.lightacampfire.com/utrecht

Tourist Information centres in Utrecht and Amersfoort:

Utrecht

www.visit-utrecht.com. You will find the Tourist Information Centre at the foot of the famous Dom Tower.

Amersfoort

www.vvvamersfoort.nl/en.

Parnassos Cultural Centre:

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 other interested people are welcome too.

Good to know

- Films are nearly always shown in their original language with Dutch subtitles, with the exception of children's films; although don't despair, most major children's titles will have at least a few subtitled screenings as well, generally the 3D version. The Museum Card (Museumkaart) gives 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. For more information, visit: www.museumkaart.nl (in Dutch).
- King's day (Koningsdag) is on 27 April and celebrates King's birthday. On this day, Dutch towns turn into a huge orange street party and open-air flea market.
- The minimum drinking age is 18 (changed from 16 years in 2014)
 - Supermarkets and retailers of alcohol will ask for identification if there is any doubt.
- The minimum age for consumption and purchase of cigarettes and other tobacco products is also 18.

The International Talent Community Utrecht Region (Itcu)

The ITCU offers several services and events to help make newcomers feel at home in Utrecht Region. Some of those are listed here but there are always new things being created. For additional information you can visit Utrecht Region Portal or for specific questions please contact us at ITC@economicboard-utrecht.nl and we are happy to help you with any questions regarding the ITCU and upcoming events. The Utrecht Region Portal is a good resource to discover new upcoming events.

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.

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 Utrecht Region.

Royal Welcome Event

It's here that 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/clients. To do so a job portal with all available non-Dutch speaking jobs has been developed and integrated into utrechtregion.com, and an annual talent event organised. During the talent event international workers, students and self-employed people are matched with potential employers and clients. The talent event is 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 startup programme was developed in which international startups receive supervision to 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.

14. Get connected

Mobile phone

You can sign a permanent contract with a mobile phone provider once you are officially registered as a resident, have a BSN and a domestic bank account. Those who are still waiting on their BSN to be issued are not eligible. To circumvent this, many initially choose for a prepaid sim card, which does not require a proof of residence and registration. These can be found both at the various mobile phone service providers and frequently in grocery store checkout lines.

Internet

Free wifi is widely available in cafes, libraries, public spaces and trains.

International groups and resources

The international community in Utrecht Region is quite active on social media, often using Facebook as a central way to connect with more experienced residents and research various topics relevant to settling in and acclimating to the Netherlands. Because of this, many FB groups work alongside one another, each with a different focus or way of working. As there are too many different groups to all mention here and the options continue to increase,

we have compiled some of the more widely known groups for you to explore. Please do not stop here, however. By searching “expats” or “internationals” and/or your nationality plus city, neighborhood, or region name, you are bound to find a wealth of groups that might prove equally, if not more, resourceful.

Expats Utrecht Facebook Group:

Boasting almost 20,000 members, Expats Utrecht is one of Utrecht’s largest international online communities; members share knowledge and first-hand experiences of life in Utrecht, promote businesses, discuss regional and national events, as well as a number of other internationally oriented topics. www.facebook.com/groups/expatsutrecht. Do be sure to search the group for the answer to your question first, as it may have already been covered in detail, extensively!

Amersfoort Expats & Int’ls Facebook Group:

Founded in 2004, this active community welcomes expats and internationals living in Amersfoort or the surrounding areas (Woudenberg, Soest, Hilversum, Zeist, Leusden, etc). The Amersfoort Expats & Int’ls community arranges outings in and

around Amersfoort, including walking/ biking tours, quiz-nights, special events, indoor/outdoor, day/evening activities, and family-friendly events. www.facebook.com/groups/165124386878273.

Utrecht Mamas Facebook Group:

Provides information and support on a wide variety of issues relevant to both local and international parents in the Utrecht region. Papas are welcome too! www.facebook.com/groups/utrechtmamas.

Italiani ad Utrecht Facebook Group:

Created in 2012, this group is oriented towards Italians living in Utrecht, who have had the chance to visit this beautiful city or to those who would like to visit or live there. They encourage the sharing of advice, life or work experience, tourist information, as well as event organisation. www.facebook.com/groups/108984185897376.

Meetup Groups:

Locals host regular social events such as dinners, drinks and karaoke nights with a goal of meeting people and making friends. Groups range from broad to highly specific interests. Search a little, find a lot! www.meetup.com. One of the most popular examples is the Make The

Most Of Utrecht Meetup: www.meetup.com/nl-NL/enjoy-utrecht.

Internations Utrecht:

Global networking community active both online and off, that organises meet-ups and events for expats. www.internations.org/utrecht-expats.

International Woman’s Contact Utrecht (IWCU):

A wonderful resource open to all women who are living or have lived in an international environment. Its aim is to facilitate and foster friendship and understanding between women of all nationalities. It offers an extensive range of events which to engage with and create community. www.iwcu.nl.

Erasmus Student Network:

Students organise field trips, workshops, sport activities and introductions for fellow international students. www.esn-utrecht.nl.

German group ‘Deutschklasse’:

Gives German parents and their children a platform to nurture their language, culture and tradition. www.deutschklasse.nl.

International Neighbour Group:

The International Neighbour Group organises social activities for international staff, Ph.D. students and Master's students at Utrecht University, the Utrecht Medical Center and related research institutions.

<https://sites.google.com/site/ingutrecht/>

Indian network:

Bridging the Gap Foundation (BTG) is known for its exciting and unique events hosted regularly their key purpose being "bridging the gap" between the Netherlands and India.

www.bridgingthegapfoundation.eu.

Association of Taiwan Young Professionals in the Netherlands (TYPIN)

TYPIN, a membership organisation made up of young professionals, entrepreneurs, executives, creative thinkers, and social people who live and work in the Netherlands, events, athletics, and professional workshops/presentations for a growing membership of local young professionals.

<https://atypin.wixsite.com/mysite>.

ACSSNL (the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars in the Netherlands).

The ACSSNL organises everything from

sports events to gala singing contests. As a legal entity recognised by the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and linked to the Chinese embassy, Chinese nationals can use this resource to easily integrate into a well-connected network that can help with meetup opportunities, bureaucratic and legal advice, as well as any of the common issues facing other newcomers. ACSSNL has its own WeChat channel that offers student-run news broadcasts, articles, and events. Utrecht has its own chapter of the ACSSNL. www.acssnl.org.

Additional resources for internationals include:

www.xpat.nl. The Xpat journal magazine and the Holland Handbook give a wealth of information for internationals.

www.dutchnews.nl. English summary of Dutch news.

www.iamexpat.nl. A vast online resource for expat related needs, spanning career, housing, education, lifestyle, and expat specific services.

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

www.dutchreview.com. A Dutch magazine for expats, Dutchies with an international taste, internationalists with a Dutch appetite in short: anything involving Dutchness.

www.access-nl.org Comprehensive trusted information on all aspects of life in the Netherlands, as well as a large resource of vetted, certified counselors and psychologists who offer their services in English; ACCESS also supports providers that offer English services across the country.



15. Essential Contacts And Resources

Emergencies

Police, Ambulance

112



Police

Non-emergency

0900 - 8844



Municipalities within Utrecht Region

Municipal services

Municipal services include a change of address, exchange of foreign driver's license, printing an extract (uittreksel) from the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP), registering a birth,

marriage or death and much more. Do make sure check the municipality's website to determine whether you need to make an appointment first or need to order the document online.



Utrecht

www.utrecht.nl

Stadsplateau 1

The city of Utrecht's central information number can be reached

by calling 14030. Yes, that's the entirety of the number! The city of Utrecht can also be contacted on WhatsApp by sending a message to 06-24 92 76 65



Amersfoort

www.amersfoort.nl/english

Stadhuisplein 1

Phone: 14033



De Bilt

www.debilt.nl

Soestdijkseweg Zuid 173

Phone: (0)30 228 9411



Hilversum

www.hilversum.nl

Oude Enghweg 23

Phone: 14035



Nieuwegein

www.nieuwegein.nl

Stadsplein 1

Phone: 14030



Stichtse Vecht

www.stichtsevecht.nl

Endelhovenlaan 1, Maarsse

Phone: 140346



Zeist

www.zeist.nl

Het Rond 1

Phone: 14030

Hospitals and medical centres



Utrecht

Academisch Ziekenhuis Utrecht (AZU) University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU)
Heidelberglaan 100
Phone: 088 755 5555
www.umcutrecht.nl/en/1



Utrecht

Diakonessenhuis
Bosboomstraat 1
Phone: 088 250 5000
www.diakonessenhuis.nl
(in Dutch)



Utrecht

St. Antonius Ziekenhuis (multiple locations in Utrecht Region)
Soestwetering 1
+31 088 320 3000
www.antoniusziekenhuis.nl



Utrecht

St. Antonius Polyclinic
Neckardreef 6
+31 088 320 3007
www.antoniusziekenhuis.nl
(in Dutch)



Utrecht

Wilhelmina Kinderziekenhuis (Children's hospital)
Lundlaan 6
+31 088 755 5555
www.hetwkz.nl/en

Princess Maxima Center for Pediatric Oncology

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



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

Other

ACCESS is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the international community in the Netherlands. Its professional volunteer staff can answer questions and provide information on important international 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), email helpdesk@access-nl.org or visit www.access-nl.org for their free FAQ Guides & other helpful resources.

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. You can find information about the following topics on the website: education, employment, permits and visa, social security, taxes and vehicles. www.ind.nl/en

16. Partners

Partnership programme

Utrecht Region works with a number of official partners to assist you with every step in the process of moving, living and thriving here. Rest assured, all our partners meet our minimum criteria, such as having all relevant company information available in English, including website, flyers and agreeing to cooperate in our client monitoring project. We regularly request feedback from internationals to assess the quality of our partners' services, with their identity remaining private when we share with our partners. Adjustments will be made to our partner list as appropriate.

Disclaimer:

The information in this booklet is general in nature and not intended as advice. ITC BV cannot be held liable for the consequences resulting from the use of the information in this booklet. A number of hyperlinks on Utrecht Region's website and in this booklet lead to websites maintained by third parties, over which ITC BV has no control. ITC BV gives no guarantee regarding the correctness or completeness of the information presented. The presence of hyperlinks to third-party websites does not mean that ITC BV endorses their content.

The information in this booklet is covered by ITC BV copyright. If you wish to publish information about ITC BV or use the ITC BV logo/ Utrecht Region logo, you must ask ITC BV for consent before publication via itc@economicboardutrecht.nl.

ITC BV can refuse to give consent for further publication.

All aspects of Dutch Life

- ACCESS

Housing

- VGW
- Interhouse
- Sjouke Jager Vastgoed
- SSH
- Expat Mortgages
- Utrecht City Apartments
- Independent Expat Finance

Language Courses

- Dutch First
- Babel Languages

Finding a job

- Adams Recruitment
- Undutchables
- The True Talent Team
- VVH Business Translations
- Rabobank
- Danone Nutricia
- Yokogawa
- Rovisys
- Qorvo
- SKF
- Teamexpat

Study

- HU
- UU
- HKU
- Nyenrode Business University

Financial Matters

- Rabobank
- Expat Mortgages
- Independent Expat Finance
- Van Luin Assuranten
- Expatax
- Dutch Tax Advice

Education

- ISU
- Royal Tropical Institute

Courses

- Casita Coaching

Communities

- ACCESS
- AIESEC
- TYPIN
- Bridging the Gap
- ExpatsUtrecht

Miscellaneous

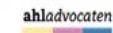
- Utrecht Video
- TivoliVredenburg
- VVH Business Translations
- Boxx
- Pallas Attorneys-at-Law
- AHL Immigration Lawyers



ITC is made possible by:



Partners ITC



**WELCOME TO
UTRECHT
REGION**