International Student Guide
Hello!

We welcome you to Campus Fryslân and to Leeuwarden. We hope you are excited to start this new adventure! It might seem overwhelming now that you are just starting it. We hope this International Student Guide will help you settle into Leeuwarden and make your life a little easier.

In this guide, you will find information about all sorts of topics, ranging from finding housing to applying for government support, with helpful hyperlinks to relevant sites. Whether you are a Bachelor, Master or PhD student, international or Dutch, this guide is here to help you go through the different steps. You can refer back to it whenever you need to.

This guide has been created by the Support International Students (SIS) Committee in collaboration with the Marketing, Communications and International Affairs and Student Service Desk teams of Campus Fryslân. The SIS Committee is part of the faculty’s study association Nobis Cura Futuri. In addition to this guide, the SIS Committee aspires to help all students at Campus Fryslân throughout their entire study time. So whenever you have a question, please reach out to the SIS Committee. Our email address is siscommittee@sa-ncf.com.

Good luck and kind regards,

The SIS committee and partners
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Step 1 Entry Visa and Residence Permit

If you are obligated to have a visa whilst residing in the Netherlands, ensure having a hard copy of your visa with you upon arrival.

Under Dutch law, students cannot apply for a visa and residence permit individually. The visa/residence permit procedures can only be started by the Immigration Service Desk (ISD) once you have fulfilled all the conditions of your admission to the university. ISD will provide students with detailed information on whether they need to apply for an entry visa or residence permit and will give instructions about the application procedures. Pay close attention to the deadlines and procedures.

<table>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, for stays of 90 days or more</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, for stays of 90 days or more</td>
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If you have a valid residence permit card for one of the Schengen countries, you do not need an entry visa (MVV). However, you will need a Dutch residence permit if your stay is longer than 90 days. Ensure that your residence permit card is valid until at least the starting date of your study programme at the University of Groningen. Check this student journey tool to see if you need a visa and/or residence permit.

You can find general information about visas and residence permits here on the UG website.
Step 2 Insurances

Health Insurances

Why do I need health insurance?
Everyone residing in the Netherlands is required by law to have valid health insurance. International students are not automatically insured, so they must arrange their own health insurance. You are obligated to have either Dutch or international health insurance depending on various factors.

You need to have an international health insurance if you:
• Stay in the Netherlands for study and research purposes only, and you do not make money;
• Are on an orientation year with a search visa.

You are obligated to have Dutch health insurance if you:
• Are a PhD Scholarship student participating in the PhD Scholarship Programme;
• Study in the Netherlands and have a (part-time) job or an internship with a minimum wage salary;
• Study in the Netherlands and have a zero-hour (casual) working contract.

International Health Insurance

If you don’t qualify for Dutch Health Insurance, you need to take insurance from your home country or from an international private health insurance company such as AON. If your insurance company in your home country does not cover you during your stay in the Netherlands, then you can apply for private health insurance through AON. The private health insurance from AON has different types of insurances. The type depends on your country of origin, age, whether you are employed in the Netherlands and the duration of your stay. Aon has the most extensive coverage, and you can pay monthly (approximately 40 euro per month).

In some cases, you will have to pay the services upfront and apply for reimbursement through your insurance company.

What is the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)?
If you don’t qualify for Dutch Health Insurance and come from the European area such as the EU-, EEA-countries and Switzerland, you may have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You can get the EHIC from your own insurance company or institution in your home country if you are insured under a national health service. EHIC is valid in the Netherlands and other EU countries. Please note you will have to apply for this at your national health insurance provider. With the EHIC, you will not have to pay for medical treatments that are free for local residents in the Netherlands, and you may be eligible for reimbursements. Check step 8 on how to apply for reimbursement.

This insurance does not, however, cover everything. Check with your EHIC provider for more details regarding what treatments are covered for you. EHIC does not cover liability insurance, home insurance, or travel insurance. You can take out an additional insurance package at AON for these. Please note that some national health insurers in EU countries will only cover your healthcare costs in another country for a limited time; this is often the case for mature students (older than 28 or 30) and workers on training abroad. If this is the case for you, you will need to seek another insurance if you want medical cover.

You will not have to pay for treatment if the treatment is free for local residents. In the Netherlands, this includes consultations with a registered General Practitioner working under the Dutch public healthcare scheme. Follow-up treatment and rehabilitation are excluded from coverage.

Dutch Health Insurance

Which provider to choose?
There are a lot of companies that provide health insurance. Each company has different prices and coverage. We recommend you to look at this Dutch health insurance comparer website. There is an overview of the different basic health insurances available and their cost. You can also filter the website to your wishes, such as things you like to be covered. You can change your health insurance only once a year before the new year starts.

How much is Dutch insurance?
The average basic Dutch health insurance premium in 2022 is about 140 euros per month. Premiums are paid directly by each person to the chosen health insurance company. The amount depends on the selected healthcare policy, deductible excess and selected supplemental coverages. If you’re required to take out Dutch public health insurance, you may also be eligible for health care benefits (zorgtoeslag). Check the Belastingdienst page for more information.

What does basic Dutch health insurance cover?
All Dutch healthcare insurance companies must offer at least the basic health care cover package (basisverzekering). This is stipulated in Dutch health laws.
This basic package contains most medical coverages required:

- Visits and treatment by a general practitioner
- Pharmaceuticals (with reference from a physician/general practitioner)
- Medical care, operations and other treatments performed by doctors and physicians, such as cardiologists, dermatologists, surgeons, etc.
- Certain medical aids
- Dental care (until the age of 18)
- Physiotherapy for people with certain chronic diseases
- Psychological healthcare (with reference from a physician)
- Hospital care
- Pregnancy- and birth care (maternity and obstetric care)
- Emergency transport by ambulance
- Occupational therapy
- Speech-language pathology
- Dietary advice
- Special health care programs and population medical research
- Emergency medical treatment abroad according to Dutch standards

What exactly is covered in your health insurance by these supplemental packages varies highly per insurance company and type of packages. Depending on supplemental packages you may choose, other treatments and types of medication could be covered by any Dutch insurance company that is not covered in the basic package. For instance, if you are not eligible for physiotherapy in the basic package based on your medical record, physiotherapy could be covered in an additional package as well as birth control from 21 on.

More information about Dutch health insurance can be found on this website or this website.

When to terminate Dutch public health insurance
You should terminate your Dutch public health insurance if you do not have a part-time job or leave the Netherlands. Please note that when you leave the Netherlands, you must not forget to deregister from your municipality and forward them your new postal address. In this way, you will avoid incorrect fines.

CAK Letter
You might receive a letter from the CAK, standing for the Central Administration Office, about your insurance obligation. You need to take action within three months, or you will receive a fine of approximately 380 euros, even if you incorrectly received the letter from the CAK. Please contact the ISD and make an online appointment with them so that they can assess your situation and advise what kind of action you can take regarding this matter.

Liability insurance (aansprakelijkheidsverzekering)
Having liability insurance can protect you against the risk of liability as a result of accidents caused by you that have led to injuries and (material) damages of others. If the other party or person reclains the financial loss caused by the injuries/damages, liability insurance will reimburse (some of) these costs to them. Be aware that liability insurances do not cover all costs and that it is not mandatory to have such insurance.

Which provider to choose?
Each provider in the Netherlands has different prices and might cover different costs. You can google the insurance and look at the various providers. However, you can look at this website. It shows the eight most common providers of liability insurance. You can also fill in your information on this website, which will then automatically search the internet for fitting insurance for you. It is all in Dutch, so it might require some Google Translate or a Dutch friend who could help you.

Home insurance (inboedelverzekering)
Home insurance covers the possible damage done to your belongings in your house. Your belongings in this context mean all the things you own and that you can easily move from one place to another (such as clothing, furniture and appliances). This insurance insures your belongings when damage is done by, for example, a fire, flooding, theft, lightning strike, storm, violent robbery, explosion, etc. The coverage of these insurances is very specific and can differ per insurance provider, so it is important to check that out.

This type of insurance is not always mandatory, so you do not have to take it out if you do not want to, although your landlord might ask you to take it. It highly depends on whether you have a lot of high-value belongings. For most students, it is not profitable to have home insurance. Please look into this insurance if you feel it is necessary. You can check out the following website. The website is in Dutch, so it might require some assistance to work this out.

In case you have AON health insurance, your package might already include liability, legal assistance, home and personal items insurance.
Step 2

Insurances
Step 3 Finding Housing

All students coming to Leeuwarden will need to find a place to live, except for the first-year students of the bachelor Global Responsibility and Leadership (GRL) as housing is residential during the first year. GRL students can use this information when looking for housing for their second year.

Preferably, looking for accommodation should be done before arrival. This chapter will elaborate on finding housing in Leeuwarden, the city where our faculty is located, or in Groningen, the city where the main campus of the University of Groningen is located. It could be that one of the recommended searching actions will lead you to villages surrounding Leeuwarden or Groningen as well.

Leeuwarden
If you choose to live in Leeuwarden, this excellent hyperlinked blog about the best neighborhoods to live in and can be a good reference. This blog will give you an idea of the city’s layout to make a more informed decision. When looking for accommodation, you can look at various online housing platforms and Facebook. Below, you will find a list of websites and Facebook groups to check out! Do not forget to look at our other blog containing top tips for finding housing in Leeuwarden.

Housing for new GRL Bachelor students
Campus Fryslân currently works with the company Student Stay for their housing options for the first-year students of the bachelor GRL. Although this cooperation between Student Stay and Campus Fryslân might change in the future, the current steps to find housing as a new first-year GRL student are in line with the steps found from Student Stay.

Information about how to register for GRL housing will be shared with you directly via the admissions office.

Finding Housing in Leeuwarden
There are different websites you can visit to find accommodation. Below is a list with some good examples:

- Student Stay
- Markt 058
- Xior student housing
- Rooms in Leeuwarden
- Kamernet
- SSBB
- Pararius
- 123wonen.nl
- Estatia

Facebook Groups for accommodation in Leeuwarden
Apart from the listed websites above, another way to find housing is via Facebook. On Facebook, there are many different groups where people offer rooms or ask for one. Below is a list of Facebook groups you could join whilst you look for accommodation:

- Leeuwarden Housing, Rooms, Apartments
- Rooms / Housing / Huisvesting Leeuwarden
- Find Houses for rent in Leeuwarden
- Kamers Studios en appartementen in Leeuwarden
- Leeuwarden Housing Market
- Student Stay
- Studentenkamers in Leeuwarden

There is a relatively big offer on Facebook, ranging from single rooms to houses for multiple people and more. You can take two approaches in your search for a room on Facebook. The first one is that you just roam through all the advertisements and see if there is anything that you are interested in. The second approach is to post an advertisement yourself saying a few things about yourself and asking if anybody has/knows a room for you. Of course, you can also combine the two methods.

Once you find a room you are interested in, you will need to contact the person who offers the room. Since you are looking on Facebook, this contact will often happen via Messenger. Here you can ask the person more questions about the venue and see if you are actually interested. If that is the case, you can schedule an appointment to look at the place. It is essential to have a look at the room (either yourself or someone you trust) to know that the offer is not a scam. We also advise you to bring someone to view the room for safety. After you have seen the room and you know you want to take it, you can contact the person who offers it again and get to signing a contract.

In Leeuwarden and Groningen, there is a shortage of available accommodations for students. Therefore, it is important to realize that you are probably not the only one interested in a particular room. Hence, it might take a while before attaining your future living place, therefore starting searching early for accommodation is useful.
One thing that is important to remember is that Facebook is a place where scammers are active. Please be careful when looking for a room there! The list of tips at the end of this section includes tips to avoid falling for a scam.

**Markt058**
Close to the central station of Leeuwarden is a large building filled with modern studios for students. To live here, you should apply for a room. To apply for Markt058, you can follow the instructions on their website, which are pretty straightforward. You can change the language settings of the website to your preferred language. There is, however, a waiting list to get a room in this building. Therefore, it is wise to apply as soon as possible to increase your chances of getting a place. Even when living in a studio is not your first choice, you can still apply for a studio at Markt058 as a backup option.

**Housing agent**
Another helpful way to find a room, if you are not comfortable looking for a room yourself on the internet, might be a housing agent. When you contact housing agents, they will likely ask you questions such as your price range, preferred room size, minimum room size, number of housemates, own facilities etc. After answering these questions, a meeting will be scheduled where the agent will show some rooms. From these rooms, you can pick your preferred one. Once you choose the room, they will send you a contract to sign and when to pick up your keys! As a side note, be aware that housing agents work with a fee, discuss this directly with the agent before starting the procedure.

**Groningen**
If you choose to live in Groningen (not possible for first-year GRL students), you can look at the blog that will give you a student’s guide to Groningen neighborhoods. This blog will provide you with an idea of the city’s layout to make a more informed decision. When searching for accommodation, you can look at various online housing platforms and Facebook. Below you will find a list of Facebook groups to check out!

If you choose to live in Groningen, be aware to add train travel expenses to your monthly budget (about 22 euros round trip per day).

Facebook Groups for Accommodation in Groningen:
- Student Housing Groningen
- Apartments and Houses Groningen
- Free Housing Announcements Groningen
- Rooms / Housing / Kamers Groningen

**Moving Form**
When moving out within the Netherlands, you must notify the municipality. When you move within the municipality of Leeuwarden, you can inform them in two different ways. One possibility is to fill in a moving form, and here you can find a guide with translation for this moving form. The second method is logging in with your DigID (DigID explanation can be found below) and changing your address there. The last option is also viable for moving out of Leeuwarden. If you move to another municipality within the Netherlands, you also have to sign in with your new municipality. Some municipalities notify your former municipality themselves, meaning that you do not need to deregister at your old municipality. If you are moving to another country, you have to resign from your municipality if you will be longer than eight months away from your main municipality. You have to do this five days before your actual move. You can do this in the ways mentioned above.

**A few things to keep in mind**
1. Many students will try to find a place to live at the beginning of the academic year, during summer, and during January and February. Therefore, it is wise to start looking for a room as early as possible.
2. Always use official websites or companies you can trace to a physical address to lower the chances of being scammed.
3. The agency costs and rental fees of commercial agencies and private landlords can be high. Remain critical, visit the room beforehand, and always read your contract carefully. If the contract is offered in Dutch, ask someone to translate it carefully for you.
4. Landlords should not charge you to sign the contract as this act is illegal in the Netherlands.
5. Do not pay anything before you have a written contract, and always ask for a receipt of payment.
6. Be aware of scammers! If the rent looks too good to be true for the location/type of housing, or the pictures are unidentifiable, you might be looking at something that is not genuine.
7. Avoid identity theft: never send a copy of your passport to strangers.
8. If you wish to rent a room in a building that has three or more residents, you should check if the proprietor has the correct permissions to ensure you can register at the address. The fact that you need to be able to register is essential because as an international student staying in the Netherlands for longer than four months, you are obligated to be registered at an address (for instance, to claim housing allowance or trash exemption).
9. Do not go to a viewing alone. If possible, take a Dutch speaker with you as some landlords do not/barely speak English.
10. Never pay for a room you have not seen. If you cannot view the room yourself, send someone you trust to check the place. Never transfer money through services such as PayPal or Western Union, the payment should be traceable and done to a bank account.
Step 4 Dutch Phone Number

Why do you need a Dutch phone number?
You do not need a Dutch phone number per se. Yet, without having one, some Dutch institutions and, for instance, hospitals, cannot contact you. Therefore, you may want to buy a Dutch SIM card when you move to the Netherlands or plan a longer-term stay.

How to get a Dutch phone number
There are two ways to go about this. One way is to buy a pre-paid sim card at a local phone shop. There you can buy the card and put money on the card in order to be able to call or text. For the long term, a subscription might serve your wishes better. This requires you to go to a provider's website and apply for a subscription. You will have to complete some steps, and they will then send you a sim card to your address. You can always switch from a pre-paid card to a subscription.

Mobile phone operators in the Netherlands
There are many mobile operators in the Netherlands, so competition is fierce, and mobile package deals typically offer good value for money. Many provide a range of deals depending on usage and budget. Some, including KPN and Vodafone, also offer discounts should you choose to take out another service, such as home internet or TV. As such, it pays to shop around. It is good to compare mobile operators as many offer add-on benefits.

Mobile operators in the Netherlands include:
• KPN
• Vodafone
• T-Mobile
• Tele2
• Expat Mobile
• Youfone
• Simpel
• Lebara
• Belsimpel

KPN is the biggest mobile operator in the Netherlands in terms of users, enjoying a market share of around 35% in 2018. The network also claims 99% of 4G coverage across the country, with plans to roll out its 5G capabilities in the next few years. KPN also operates Telfort as well as no-frills providers Simyo and international-focused Ortel.

Vodafone is the second-biggest operator and offers mobile discounts when you take out TV and internet with Ziggo. Alongside T-Mobile and Tele2, all four of the biggest Dutch mobile operators claim almost total 4G coverage of the Netherlands, so you’ll always be able to stay in touch.

Comparing Dutch mobile phone operators
Still not sure which operator to choose? Thankfully, there are plenty of options for comparing mobile phone plans and tariffs. These comparison sites can give you a better idea of what type of plans you can choose from, and many have additional deals for new customers:
• Mobiel.nl
• UnitedConsumers

If you’re still not sure of which operator to choose – or simply want someone else to take the stress out of setting up your mobile phone – why not choose a set-up service? Expat-friendly specialists such as Partner Pete can help find the right provider for you and set you up with a brand new SIM.

Mobile phone coverage in the Netherlands
Mobile coverage in the Netherlands is typically better in larger cities. However, rural Dutch areas are surprisingly well connected compared to other countries. If you want to check coverage before buying, visit www.nperf.com and check your local area.
Step 5 Emergency Contacts

Why do you need an emergency contact?
It is good to have a contact person that can be called when something happens or in case of an emergency. Some Dutch institutions like hospitals require you to give them a contact person. This way, they know who to contact about your situation when you are in a state of emergency. This emergency contact person can then call your family or close friends and inform them of your situation.

Who should you have as a contact person?
Your emergency contact needs to be someone who currently lives in the Netherlands and has a Dutch phone number. This can be someone you know and trust in the Netherlands, such as a Dutch friend or relative. It could also be another international student who meets the formerly mentioned requirements. This person would agree to you sharing their contact information in those cases where it is asked, for example, in the hospital. It is recommended that your emergency contact person also has the contact information of other people you are close to, such as family or other friends who might not live in the Netherlands. This way, your contact person can contact your family outside the Netherlands when you are unable to do it yourself.

Informing a contact person for university, who should this be?
The university also has a form where you can fill in your contact person. This way, the university also has someone to contact if something happens. This one does not have to live in the Netherlands, so you can fill in a family member or close friend of your choice, regardless of their nationality. This form will be shared with you usually during the introduction week. If you did not receive it or lost it, you can contact the Student Service Desk (cf-sec@rug.nl).
Step 5

Emergency Contacts
Step 6 Registration and BSN

What is BSN, and why do you need it?
When you are coming to study in the Netherlands for longer than four months, you must inform the municipality of Leeuwarden about your stay and address in Leeuwarden (or the Municipality of Groningen, in the event you decide to take up residence in Groningen). After your registration, they provide you with your citizen service number (BSN). This BSN is your personal number for contacts with the authorities. For example, you need a BSN to request a housing allowance, open a bank account and register at a GP.

Registration with the Municipality must be completed within 5 days of your arrival in the Netherlands so ensure to book an appointment in advance. You should be aware that you can only register at the municipality when you have an address/housing, and you need to show your rental contract. Campus Fryslân will also provide information about registering with the municipality through the newsletters and pre-departure webinars.

Please note, as an international at the moment of registration you will be required to provide specific documents (listed below). Ensure you collect these via the specific institutions in your home country before your arrival in the Netherlands.

You receive the confirmation of registration at the municipality and BSN only once. Hence, it is of importance to keep the original papers safe. If you have any questions about the procedure or the registration, you can send an email to burgerzaken@leeuwarden.nl. This email is meant explicitly for questions you might have about your residence in the municipality of Leeuwarden. A BSN number is valid for the rest of your life, even if at some point you should decide to leave the Netherlands, so please ensure to store it safely in the event you might return and want to register again as a resident.

Registration at a Municipality in the Netherlands is free of costs.

How to book an appointment with the municipality
To book an appointment with the Municipality of Leeuwarden, you can call the municipality or make an appointment online. The form you have to fill out online is in Dutch; if your browser does not translate it to English, see the picture below for English instructions. Your appointment will take place at the Oldehoofsterkerkhof 2 in Leeuwarden. You will register in person, and the municipality will send you your BSN by mail. Receiving the BSN in this manner will take around two weeks. Contact details to contact the municipality are listed on the right.

Campus Fryslân organizes, in cooperation with the Municipality, the possibility to book specific time slots during which a student can register themselves at the municipality and receive their BSN. At this moment no specific information is available on this matter but more will be shared during pre-departure webinars and via email.

Similar procedure applies to book an appointment with the Municipality of Groningen, and the website already offers this in English.

Documents to bring to your appointment at the municipality
- Original valid passport/ID card
- A copy of your signed rental agreement
- Copies of all pages in passport with stamps/stickers & holder page
- Your birth certificate (original copy)
- A valid residence permit or proof you have applied for one (sticker or letter IND).
- If you have previously lived in the Netherlands: Citizen service number (BSN), formerly known as ‘social security number’.
- A proof of deregistration with the PIVA if you are moving to the Netherlands from Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.
- Copy of the enrollment to the university

Tips
- Download the DigiD app beforehand
- Scan the documents you will receive and save them, for example, in your email or cloud service.
- Save your BSN number somewhere where it is always accessible, such as a contact number on your phone.
- University has printers if you need to print documents for the municipality.
- If you cannot print the necessary documents before your appointment, you can call the municipality to ask whether you can email the documents to them.
Step 7 DigiD

What is DigiD?
DigiD is short for Digital Identification, and you could see it as an online passport. It is a system by which the Dutch government can detect someone’s identity on the internet. Your DigiD is meant to be used for arranging many different things with government institutions in a safe but online way. The DigiD is linked to your BSN number (citizen service number) and other personal information.

What can I use a DigiD for?
A DigiD is a secure way to handle your important business online. Having a DigiD is not obligatory in the Netherlands, yet, you need one to do your administration online. This administration includes, for instance, paying taxes, applying for (student) benefits, receiving allowances, and checking your pension. Additionally, the police, water boards, Dutch healthcare companies and providers, government departments and city municipalities use the DigiD as an online identification. Therefore, a DigiD is necessary to log in and make reservations for appointments successfully. For instance, if you want to get vaccinated or do a COVID-test, you need a DigiD to schedule an appointment at the right institution.

How do I get one?
You can request a DigiD for free on the DigiD website by clicking the apply button (“aanvragen”). Make sure to translate the DigiD website into English. Be aware that the entire process of requesting and activating the DigiD takes approximately a week to finalize. After you have completed all the steps on the website, you will receive a letter to the address you filled in. The letter will include a code that is needed to activate your account. You will receive the letter with the code within five working days. After receiving, you have 20 days to activate your account.

DigiD app
Once you have retrieved your DigiD login details, you can download the app. The app makes logging into government institutions that require DigiD easier. Therefore, it is recommended to download the app. You can download the app through your AppStore or Google Play store. It is necessary to have a device with iOS (version 12 or higher) or Android (version 7.0 or higher). Once the app is installed, you can link it to your own DigiD. Connecting the app and your DigiD can be done through a text, an ID-check or a password and username. When you open the app for the first time, it asks you if you use it on another device. You have to say no to this question. Hereafter, you verify your identity using one of the three previously mentioned activation methods. If you are verified, you add a passcode that you will use when logging in somewhere with the app. Lastly, you can receive notifications on the app as well. They will ask for your email address to send you a verification. When the app is activated, you will receive a letter in the mail to confirm the activation.

How can I log in?
Logging in with the device on which the app is installed
If you’re logging in with a telephone or tablet on which the DigiD app is installed, you will only need your PIN. Follow these instructions:
1. Open your browser and go to the website you want to log in to.
2. Click ‘Login with DigiD’ and check the web address. It should be: https://digid.nl/inloggen.
3. Click ‘Log in with the app’.
4. Click ‘On this device’.
5. The DigiD app will open automatically.
6. Click ‘Log in’.
7. Enter your PIN.
8. You are logged in.

Logging in with the device on which the app is not installed
If you are logging in with a computer or any other device on which the DigiD app is not installed, you will need your device with your DigiD app at hand. Follow the instructions:
1. Open your browser and go to the website you want to log in to.
2. Click ‘Login with DigiD’ and check the web address. It should be: https://digid.nl/inloggen.
3. Click ‘Log in with the app’.
4. Optional, click ‘On other device’.
5. Open the app, you will see a four digit code
6. Enter the code on the website
7. Click next, and scan the QR code
8. Confirm that you want to log in to the app
9. Enter your PIN
10. You are logged in

I can’t remember my details, what do I do now?
If you forgot your username, you need to apply for a new DigiD because your username is considered to be private information. Therefore, the helpdesk can not look up your details after you forget them. Your only option after forgetting your username is to apply for a new DigiD.

You can reset your password via “Reset password”. Keep in mind that you can reset your password only when you still know your ‘old’ password. If you forget your password, you also need to apply again for the DigiD.
Step 8 Health Services and registering at a General Practitioner

Emergency Situations
In case of an emergency or life-threatening situation, the phone number you can call in the Netherlands is 112. This number will put you in contact with police, firefighters, and health practitioners, depending on your situation. You can always call 112, even without a connection with your provider. Always remember to take your health insurance card with you.

Hospital:
Medisch Centrum Leeuwarden
Henri Dunantweg 2, 8934 AD Leeuwarden
+31 (0)58 286 66 66
Medisch Centrum Leeuwarden

Non-emergency matters that require the police:
0900-8844 (with a Dutch phone number) or
+31 34 357 8844 (with a non-Dutch phone number).

National suicide hotline prevention:
0800-0113 or
113
These numbers only work if you are calling from the Netherlands.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Netherlands also has a 112 app. You can download it on your phone, and in case of an emergency, the app translates texts automatically from a large selection of languages to Dutch and is also very helpful if someone is deaf or hard of hearing. This app is especially helpful if you are in a situation where you can not speak or you do not know what your location is. The app shows you exact coordinates of your location.

What is a GP and why do I need one?
In the Netherlands, the General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor is your first point of contact if you do not feel well. Be sure to sign up with a GP as soon as possible after your arrival and/or move (with) in the Netherlands. Do not wait until you are sick. Immediately signing up is strongly advised because you need to be registered with a GP in your new hometown before you can make an appointment and receive further care. Make sure you have a valid Dutch/international health insurance before registering at a GP. Check step 2 in this guide for more information about health insurance.

Hospital visits are reserved for emergency situations and specialist care in the Netherlands. Unless you need emergency care, always contact your GP first. To make an appointment with your GP, you need to call their reception which is usually open in the morning on weekdays. Check your GP’s website for accurate information. Your GP works as a gatekeeper to specialists and will make you a referral to specialists if needed. Emergency rooms are expensive, and hospitals will send you back to your GP if your situation is not life-threatening. Most specialists will also ask if you have a referral from the GP, and only accept you with a referral. Next to this, most (Dutch) insurances cover the treatment if a GP refers you.

Where to find a GP? In Leeuwarden, this GP practice currently accepts students to register as patients:

Arts en Zorg
Sixmastraat 22 (2nd floor)
8932 PA Leeuwarden
Tel.: 058 – 216 49 69 (bereikbaar van maandag t/m vrijdag
van 8.00 tot 12.00)
E-mail: leeuwarden@artsenzorg.nl

Huisartsenpraktijk Kolthoff
JH Knoopstraat 6b
8933 GS Leeuwarden
Tel.: 058 212 33 65
www.praktijkkolthoff.nl (website in several languages available)

Huisartsenpraktijk Acacia B.V.
Knoopstraat 6 C
8933GS Leeuwarden
Tel: 058-2127647
www.huisartsenpraktijkacacia.nl

To register at this particular GP, please call them first to check which type of insurance they accept: EHIC, AON or both. After calling, you can fill in a registration form at the practice. Acceptance means that this GP will submit the bill on your behalf to AON. If you have EHIC, you need to declare the bill yourself at Zilveren Kruis or your own insurance company. With the declaration, you can indicate if they should send the payment to you or the health care provider directly.

Alternatively, through this website you’ll find an extensive list with GP’s in Leeuwarden.

Should you have further questions about general practitioners, health care or insurance in the Netherlands, please contact the CF Student Service Desk at cf-sec@rug.nl or visit their office on the second floor of our faculty building.
Refund of medical costs with EHIC
You have to pay for medical treatment yourself in some cases, but you might be eligible for reimbursement if you have EHIC. If you cannot send the invoices to your health insurance provider directly, you will have to send the invoices in the Netherlands to the Dutch insurance company Zilveren Kruis, with:
• a copy of your EHIC
• your address and
• bank account number
To receive a refund of the costs. You can send the documents to the following address:
Zilveren Kruis
Groep Buitenlands Recht
Postbus 650
7300 AR Apeldoorn
If you cannot submit a claim for reimbursement during your stay, contact your national health insurance provider once you return home. Your national health insurer will contact Zilveren Kruis. You are entitled to reimbursement based on the tariffs that Zilveren Kruis usually reimburses under the Dutch legislation.

Non-emergency medical help when GP is closed
Your GP is not open at night, during the weekend and on public holidays. Suppose you still need non-emergency medical care (e.g. flu). In that case, you can call the out-of-hours medical services of Dokterswacht Friesland to discuss if the hospital wants to see you immediately, if you can visit the on-call GP for the non-emergency situations which cannot wait till when the GP office is open again, or whether you can wait until your GP is open again.

Call Dokterswacht Friesland:
• 0900 - 112 7 112 (with a Dutch phone number)
• 088 - 112 7 112 (with a non-Dutch phone number)

Opening-hours of the Dokterswacht Friesland:
• Weekdays: 17.00 hrs - 8.00 hrs
• During the weekends: between Friday 17.00 hrs and Monday 8.00 hrs
• On holidays: from 8.00 hrs till 8.00 hrs the next working day.
• In sum: basically always when the GP office is closed.

More information regarding the Dokterswacht Friesland can be found on: https://www.dokterswacht.nl/

When visiting a Dutch GP, be aware of the cultural differences. Most international students get frustrated as the Dutch Health system can be tricky and very different from the health support you receive at your home country. GP appointments last between 10 to max 15 minutes, sometimes 5 minutes is considered enough, and antibiotic resistance is taken very seriously. Sometimes all that your body needs is rest and paracetamol (according to Dutch GPs). Be patient and ask a Dutch fellow student or staff for support on how to deal with the system.

Dentists
Dental and oral medicine is privatised in the Netherlands and is generally not covered by basic insurance policies. Be sure to check if your insurance package covers dentistry; if it is, make sure to keep your receipt so you can get a refund from your insurance company. You often can get separate dentist insurance. Dentists are not part of GP’s. If you need to seek consultation from a dentist, you can contact them directly without a GP’s referral.

Physiotherapists
Back pain, sprained a muscle, RSI complaints?... You do need to go to your GP for a visit to a physiotherapist, although it can’t hurt to do so if you suspect something more serious. You can visit a physiotherapist without a referral, do check if and how many sessions are covered by your insurance. You can easily find a physiotherapist, specialised in your particular area of complaints by searching Google.

What are the GGD & GGZ? Vaccinations, tests and anonymous treatment
GGD
GGD Fryslân is a municipal health service that performs tasks such as infectious disease control and testing (e.g. COVID-19 testing), providing travel medicines and vaccinations, and testing for sexually transmitted diseases. Please note that you have the option to remain anonymous if you visit the GGD.

If you come from a high-risk area regarding tuberculosis, you will be required to take a test for tuberculosis at the GGD as a precondition for obtaining your residence permit. A second test is not compulsory, though highly recommended by the GGD.

Services by the GGD are also available in Groningen.

GGZ
GGZ Friesland is an organisation with mental health and addiction care providers mainly for crisis care. However, you need a referral from your GP to enter the GGZ. They also refer back to the GP or the Doktersdienst in case of immediate danger or emergency.

In Groningen there is no centralized organization collecting all mental health care providers. Please refer to your GP (or the Doktersdienst outside office hours) to put you in contact with a GGZ professional.

Mental Health Support
Are you experiencing mental problems that affect your daily life? If so, you can make an appointment with your General Practitioner (GP). The GP can then put you in touch with suitable care providers within their own general practice or elsewhere. If your mental problems are of a serious nature, or if you are in a crisis situation, always contact your GP.
You need a referral letter from your GP to access further psychological care, often visits to a psychologist are only covered by your insurance if you were referred by a GP. For some international insurance this may not be the case, check your policy first!

If mental health problems influence your studies, you are always welcome to contact your study advisor for extra support. This may be in the form of leniency with attendance or deadlines, support with communication to your lecturers, or planning a lower workload in ECTS. In the latter case you may be eligible for financial support from the UG’s Graduation Fund, but notifying a study advisor first is then mandatory. You may be asked for documentation.

If you experience stress or other mental/psychological problems, you may not immediately need full therapy. Alternatively, perhaps you just need someone to talk to at a particular time, or you prefer to get started with your request for help on your own. On this page, you will find more support options and referral addresses where you will find the people who are best able to answer a number of common questions in the area of mental well-being. Depending on your situation and the nature of your request for help, various options are available within the University of Groningen and elsewhere.

Note that visits to a UG psychologist are free of charge and you do not need a GP’s referral.

Mental health support at Campus Fryslan and Leeuwarden
Currently one of the UG psychologists is available at the Beurs or online bi-weekly on Thursdays. Find contact details here, bottom of the page.

Mental health organizations and private practices you might want to check out are:
- Forte GGZ students outpatient clinic (Leeuwarden & Groningen)
- Synaeda, 2 locations in Leeuwarden
- Machteld Kiestra, psychologenpraktijk Emmakade
- Psychologenpraktijk Eewal
- Overview of English speaking therapists (or online therapy options)
- The Sexual Assault Center offers free professional assistance to anyone who has had to deal with a sexually inappropriate experience. They can also assist you in filing a police report. You are advised to report a sexually inappropriate experience to the vice squad as soon as possible.

Useful links with some extra information
- https://www.rug.nl/education/bachelor/international-students/financial-matters/health-insurance-for-international-students?cid=verint_10_15067_15067
Why do you need a bank account?
As an international student coming to the Netherlands, getting a Dutch bank account is a good idea. A Dutch bank account makes paying online more effortless, and most stores in the Netherlands do not accept Visa cards and/or cash. Furthermore, you need a Dutch bank account to apply and receive allowances from the Dutch government, such as housing allowance. You also usually require a Dutch bank account to work and receive a salary in the Netherlands. Additionally, getting cash money from a Dutch ATM might cost you money with a foreign card, which is free for people with a Dutch bank account.

Yet, it is entirely up to you whether you decide to set up a bank account in the Netherlands or not, as it is not mandatory to have a Dutch bank account while residing in the Netherlands.

How do you set up a bank account?
To get a bank account, you need to take a few steps. The process is not the same for every bank, but this is a general process.

1. Choose at which bank you want to open an account.
2. Buy a BRP paper (‘green paper’) from the municipality (gemeente). This paper costs about €10, but it might be necessary and is helpful to have anyway. Take cash with you because you might not be able to pay with your current card.
3. Either call or go in person to the bank of your choice to get an appointment/more information. Some banks also have the option to open an account online.
4. In the meeting with the bank, have your passport (and VISA), registration statement, BSN, BRP and enrollment statement from the university with you. These documents should be preferably printed if you have an on-site appointment.
5. You will get your card by mail within a few weeks. Follow the instructions that come with the mail to check how you can enable your card to work correctly.

Remember that you must apply for a BSN number first before applying for a Dutch bank account.

Some Dutch banks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank name</th>
<th>Office in Leeuwarden?</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABN AMRO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ABN AMRO Bank - ABN AMRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ING</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ING in English - ING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabobank</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rabobank - Particulieren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Bankieren in jouw belang - SNS Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASN Bank</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>ASN Bank - Laat je geld werken aan een duurzame wereld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunq</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>bunq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is an IBAN?
IBAN is an abbreviation for International Bank Account Number. This number is displayed on your bank card. You will need the IBAN for transferring money or asking for money from, for instance, your friends (See the paragraph ‘Tikkie’ in this chapter as well). In the Netherlands, the number is displayed as follows: Country code › NL 2-digit control numbers 4 letters that identify your bank 10 digits

For example, if you have a Dutch bank account at the ING, your IBAN would be: NL 73 INGB 123 456 78 00

What if you lost your bank card?
If you lose your card or it is stolen, it is important to contact your bank to block your card. It differs per bank how you can inform about your lost or stolen card; some you need to call (and are available 24/7 for such cases), for other banks, it is sufficient to make a notification in their online app. Until you report the disappearance of your card, you are responsible for any misuse of your card, and thus banks are not accountable when money gets taken from your bank account by misusers. Some banks will ask a fee for supplying you with a new card. Others do not.

Until you receive your new card, some banks in the Netherlands allow you to withdraw some money from your account with an identity document (e.g. passport) in one of their branches. Make sure to call them beforehand to ask whether withdrawing cash is possible in this way.

Something that is highly advised is to also report the stolen card at one of the police stations. Reporting is an extra way of ensuring that nobody else can steal your card and use it.
Tikkie
Tikkie is an app that is used by a number of people in the Netherlands. This app allows you to ask and receive money and to pay people money by sending a link on, for instance, WhatsApp (this is called a ‘tikkie’). You can download the app in the Google Play Store or the App Store. You can install the Tikkie app only if you have a Dutch bank account (it does not matter from which bank!), and you need either a Dutch, Belgian or German phone number. In case you send a tikkie to someone for them to pay you, it is of importance that they have a Dutch bank account as well. Otherwise, they will not be able to pay you via a tikkie. You do not have to have the Tikkie app on your phone to pay a tikkie.

Tips
• For internationals, it is practical to have a bank with an office in Leeuwarden (or Groningen, depending on where you live) to help you in person in case you have problems.
• Some banks ask you to pay a small fee every year to make use of their services and the bank account in itself. Often, for students, this fee does not apply. You can check per bank whether you need to pay for this service or not before registering at their bank.
• Are you under 18 when you want to open a bank account? Call your chosen bank to inform them that you are under 18 before opening your account, as they might need additional information and documents before they can open an account for you.
• More information about Dutch bank accounts here on the University of Groningen website.
Step 9

Setting up a bank account
Step 10 Applying for Housing Allowance (Huurtoeslag)

Housing allowance is a financial benefit provided by the Dutch government to help people pay rent. The housing allowance can be up to €200 per month, and students are entitled to it depending on their budget.

Conditions that you should meet to be able to receive the housing allowance:

- You are 18 years of age or older
- You rent an independent accommodation (This means having your independent address, own front door, toilet, and kitchen. There are some exceptions)
- You are registered at your address in the Netherlands and have a BSN
- You have a DigID in order to be able to log in to the website
- Your basic rent needs to be lower than €452.20 (for people older than 23, this amount is €808.06). Basic rent is the rent without any utilities and furniture. In Dutch, it is called 'kale huur', and the amount is specified in your rental contract;
- Your (combined) income and capital are not too high. You can find out when your income is too high here. You fill these in when applying
- You have the nationality of an EU country, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland or Switzerland. If you are from another country, you need a valid residence permit or work permit to apply

We can always advise you to try to apply for a housing allowance even if you’re not sure if you can receive the allowance as it can save you a lot of money in the long run. If you cannot receive the allowance, it will be apparent that you are not eligible during the application process.

The application process

The application process consists of a few steps you need to go through. One way to apply for housing allowance is to use this link. On this website, press the following button:

Mijn toeslagen

Another way is to go straight to https://mijn.toeslagen.nl. Here you can immediately log in with your DigID.

The ‘Mijn toeslagen’ (‘My allowances’) website is entirely in Dutch. You may want to ask a Dutch person to assist you or watch the following video provided by the SIS committee. The video is 5 minutes long and quite informative, and it will guide you through the entire process of applying for housing allowance!

Contacting the Belastingdienst

You can call different phone numbers to reach the Belastingdienst and ask them about financial benefits.

Calling from the Netherlands: 0800 - 0543
Calling from outside of the Netherlands: +31 555 385 385.

Opening hours are:
Monday till Thursday: 8:00 hrs - 20:00 hrs
Friday: 8:00 hrs - 17:00 hrs

You can access the webpage that provides the contact information here.

When you call the Belastingdienst, always keep your BSN at hand. Having your BSN at hand will speed up the process and save both you and the person on the other side of the phone trouble.
Step 11 Applying for tax exemptions ("kwijtsheding")

In the Netherlands, every house or apartment gets taxed for disposing of garbage and being connected to the sewer. The municipality monitors taxes, and it is something that students will have to deal with as well. The amount that you have to pay for this tax can be relatively high. If you have a low income, you might get an exemption not to pay these taxes.

There are two taxes that you should be aware of. The two taxes are the 'Gemeentelijke heffingen' (municipal taxes), which include sewage and garbage, and the 'Waterschapsbelasting' (water taxes) from the Noordelijk Belastingkantoor (Northern Tax Office). You get notified about these taxes by receiving a letter. You will receive two separate letters since they are taxes from two different institutions. For both, you can apply for an exemption.

These taxes are given to each house and not each individual. When you live in a single apartment with your own front door, you will receive a tax bill. However, when you live in a student house with multiple people, you share the bill with other tenants. It is also possible that your landlord takes care of these taxes or that they have already incorporated it into your rent. Talk to your landlord if you want to know whether or not that is the case.

Gemeentelijke Heffingen

This tax is about paying for the fact that your house/apartment is connected to the sewage system and that you make use of the city’s garbage disposal system. The amount you have to pay is calculated based on the value of your accommodation. Once you get a letter from the municipality of Leeuwarden regarding this tax, you can start taking action by asking for an exemption. This video explains what you should do after you receive this letter. You can keep in mind that once you have applied for an exemption, you do not have to pay until the municipality decides whether you are eligible for the exemption or not. So, once you have applied for exemption, the deadline of the initial payment will be extended until you receive the letter with the final decision. After following the steps explained in the first video, you will probably receive another letter after a while. The municipality will ask for more information to review your situation in this letter. In this second video, we explain how to fill in the form in that letter. The letter with the final decision can take up to 6 months.

Noordelijk Belastingkantoor

The tax that the Noordelijk Belastingkantoor asks you to pay concerns water management in the Netherlands. The process of exemption for this tax starts when you receive a letter. In this letter, a referral to their site is made. On this website, you can either pay the amount stated in the letter or apply for the exemption (kwijtsheding). If you choose to pay, you can go to this page, where you can select how you would like to pay. The next step is to log in to your account of the Noordelijk Belastingkantoor with DigID. If you decide to apply for exemption, you can go to their website and choose "Kwijtsheding aanvragen", which directs you to a new page. To apply for the exemption, you need to log in to "MijnNoordelijkbelastingkantoor" and log in with your DigID. You have to follow the steps and fill in your personal information from here on forward. Once you have filled all of this information in, you will receive two letters. The first one is a letter that indicates that the Noordelijk Belastingkantoor received your application for exemption and that they are considering it. The second one, you receive a letter with either a confirmation of exemption, a request for more information, or a rejection.
In terms of financing/support, you can get a significant amount of support from the Dutch government. A helpful website is iamexpat.nl; it has a lot of good info, all in English. Here is a complete list from their website. Overall, the most important thing is to register with your municipality when you arrive, then you can apply for your DigID, and only then can you apply for any benefits.

Generally, the most common types of benefits you can get are:

- **Tuition Fee Loan**
- **Supplementary Grant**
- **Zorgtoeslag (healthcare allowance)**
- **Huurtoeslag (rent benefit)** - You can receive this benefit if you have your own front door and do not share amenities with others. Check step 10 (housing allowance) for more information on this.

### Applying for the Tuition Fee Loan

You can apply for a tuition fee loan from the Dutch government if you meet the requirements. An important fact about this fee loan is that you do not get the loan in a lump sum. Each month you get the annual tuition fee divided by twelve. For example, if your tuition fee is €2000, you will get approximately €166 per month throughout the academic year. As it is always the case with a loan, you will eventually have to pay it back. Often, the interest percentage for the tuition fee loan is 0%. You have to log into "Mijn DUO" to apply for this loan. Once logged in, you go to "Mijn Producten" and then "Studiefinanciering". Here you can find all the loans you can apply to. You can then select the one you want to apply for and follow the instructions.

### Applying for the Supplementary Grant

Your eligibility for this benefit depends on your parents’ income from the past two years. The supplementary grant is a bit more complicated to apply for than the tuition fee loan as they need more documents and information from you. The steps to apply are pretty clear on the website. Important to realize is that this is indeed a grant/gift; however, there are some terms and conditions. The money you receive will only become a gift if you get a higher education diploma within ten years of applying for this grant.

### Applying for Healthcare Allowance (i.e. Zorgtoeslag)

It is compulsory to get Dutch health insurance when you work in the Netherlands as an international. More information about Dutch health insurance is in step 2. Many students can get healthcare allowance from the Dutch government to pay for their healthcare insurance. Whether you can receive a healthcare allowance depends on your assets and income. The amount of allowance you can potentially receive depends on your income. Furthermore, you need to be over the age of 18 to receive it.

You can find more information about healthcare allowance [here](#). You can browse around there and find out more about this particular allowance. Eventually, you will find yourself directed to this [link](#), which is where you can log in to "Mijn toeslagen" (My allowances). Here you should click the following button on the website to log in with your DigID.

![Mijn toeslagen](#)

If you have already applied for housing allowance (huurtoeslag), this environment will seem familiar. If you need a refresher on how this process works, you can check out the following video about housing allowance. Note that there are some differences when it comes to healthcare insurance. When logged in to ‘Mijn toeslagen’, you can click the button “zorgtoeslag” > aanvragen” (healthcare allowance > apply) on the website to apply for healthcare allowance.

![Zorgtoeslag](#)

From there on, you should follow the steps that the website directs you to take. This website is in Dutch, so you might need some assistance from Google Translate or a Dutch friend.

Please note that entitlement to these loans are based on your individual case and most of the times your nationality plays a decisive role on whether you can apply for the loan or not.
Step 13 Transport

When you arrive in Leeuwarden, your main way of transportation is probably going by bike. However you can also make use of buses, trains and other means of transport. This chapter will give you all the information you will need to efficiently transport yourself around Leeuwarden/the Netherlands.

Bike
First the fine that you can receive when using your phone while biking. You are not allowed to hold your phone while biking, meaning that listening to music hands-free or looking at your phone in a holder is allowed. The amount of the fine can change yearly. A useful website to look up the current amount (of any fine) can be found here. To prevent your bike from getting stolen, lock your bike with a chain into a bicycle rack.

You can get a bike quite easily. In Leeuwarden, there are a few different options to get yourself a bike. You can buy a new one in one of the bike shops that you can find with the help of Google Maps.

If you wish to rent a bike, There is the concept of a Swapfiets, a bike subscription. Swapfiets fixes your bike within 15 minutes if it breaks, or they will either give you another one. You have to pay around 12 euros a month for such a subscription. To find out more about Swapfiets, you can look at their website.

Second-hand bikes can be found through either Facebook Marktplaats or Marktplaats app. When buying a second-hand bike, ask the seller for the frame number. With that, you can check with the police whether you are buying a stolen bike. If the provider of the bike denies you this number, you should be careful.

Remember to try testing the bike before you buy it. This way, you know whether anything is wrong with it and if it fits you.

Train
In the Netherlands, there are three main train providers, NS, Arriva and Blauwnet. NS trains ride through the whole of the Netherlands, the Arriva trains ride in several provinces, for example, Friesland, Zwolle and Groningen, and the Blauwnet trains ride only in the state of Overijssel. All of them accept driving with an OV-card (more about the OV-card below) and single-use tickets. The main thing you have to make sure of is that you check in with the right machine when you travel. The NS trains are connected to the yellow poles and gates, and the Arriva and Blauwnet check-in machines are always blue. If you travel by Arriva train, you check in with a blue machine and with NS you check in with the yellow machine.

When you travel with both trains, for example, the first half with an Arriva train to Groningen, and from Groningen on with an NS train to Zwolle, you also have to check-in and out with the different train providers. The little poles that you will need in order to make the switch can often be found on the platform where you arrive. You should always be aware of the provider you will travel with. You can usually see online the travel descriptions of what trains you will be sitting in.

The example:
• Leeuwarden to Groningen is with Arriva, so you check in with the blue machines from Arriva at Leeuwarden station.
• In Groningen you have to transfer to a NS train. In order to do this you check out on the blue Arriva machines and check in on the yellow NS machines.
• Once you arrive in Zwolle all you have to do is check out with the yellow NS machines.

Payment methods for public transport
If you are going to travel by public transport within the Netherlands, you can use either single-use tickets or an OV-card with subscriptions.

Single-use ticket
If you travel only a few times a year, single-use tickets would be the best way to travel. You can access these online: on this website and through the app 9292, where you can both buy them and find them later on. You can also buy the tickets from the large yellow NS machines that can be found in the station.

OV-card
If you do not want to use the single-use ticket option, you can buy an OV-card through the OV-chipcard website. On this website, you have the option to buy either an anonymous OV-card or a personal OV-card. In general, both cards work the same: you put money on the card that you use for travelling. The main difference is that with a personal OV card, you can add a subscription for a discount to the card. To use your OV-card, you need to have a minimum amount of money on it. The minimum amount differs for each card and the public transportation provider you travel with.
If you travel often, it is more beneficial to take on a subscription with a personal card. Although Dutch students have the luxury that they can travel for free during either the week or weekend, international students cannot make use of this benefit. Yet, there are subscriptions that make travelling cheaper. The subscription most often used by international students is the "Dal Voordeel" subscription. With this, you get a 40% discount when you travel during off-peak hours. For the train, the off-peak hours are on working days before 06:30 hrs, between 09:00 hrs and 16:00 hrs and after 18:30 hrs. You can travel with a discount all day long on weekends and public holidays. This discount can be shared with other students. If you want to make use of this sharing discount function, you have to add the subscription to your card before the trip with the big machines on the stations (the same ones you use for buying tickets). However, you can only use this function if you have a subscription that allows this on your card. In order to get the right subscription, you have to buy a personal OV card and look at the NS site for the right subscription. Of course, there are many more different subscriptions. To find the one that works the best for you, you can look at all the options on this website.

Another option is the Flex subscription. This subscription is for free and works as follows.

- You do not have to add money to your account before traveling.
- The amount of money you spend will be kept track of until the end of the month.
- The total amount will be deducted from your bank account automatically.

The advantage of this subscription is that you do not have to put money on your card before you travel. On the other hand, this can make it more difficult for you to keep track of your travel expenses, and a large amount of money might be taken from your bank account by the end of the month.

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### Useful apps

There are two apps considered helpful if you are using public transportation. The advantages of both are mentioned below.

#### NS

The NS app focuses on the national train system and can be connected to your OV-card in case you own one. In the app, you can fill in from the start of your journey to your destination. Afterwards, the app will show you the train(s) and the metro/tram/bus you might have to use to reach your desired destination. If you want to have the metro/tram/bus mentioned in your journey planning, you have to fill in the exact location of your destination instead of the main stations you are leaving from and going to. Before your departure, it is smart to always check the app to see any cancellations or delays expected for your journey. In the NS-app, you can access your card information or the ticket shop. The NS-app contains plenty of information in itself as well. If you click on the ‘More’ option in the app, you will see frequently asked questions and answers.

#### 9292

The 9292-app is more focused on all types of public transport, ranging from trains to ferries. If you insert the exact place of departure and destination, the app will even show the (possible additional) walking routes. Although this app is quite useful as a result of the walking feature, the NS-app is more precise regarding possible delays and cancellations and tracking your destination during the journey. Therefore, using both apps is the most efficient way to reach your desired destination.

Both apps are user friendly. Yet, it is always helpful to make yourself familiar with the apps before your first time travelling with them!
Step 13 Transport
**Tips and tricks**

This chapter will provide you with some last random, useful recommendations, tips, apps, and websites.

**Groceries**

There are multiple supermarkets in Leeuwarden. During national public holidays in the Netherlands, supermarkets often change their opening times. Most supermarkets announce their adjusted opening times due to holidays via posters in their store a couple of days before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chain</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Link to Google Maps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Albert Heijn| All locations| Monday - Saturday: 08:00 - 22:00
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00 | Among the 8 locations is a to-go store at the central station and an XL-store at Tijnjedyk 76. The to-go store has extra-long opening hours. Sometimes called 'Appie' or 'AH'. | Click |
| Jumbo       | All locations| Monday - Saturday: 08:00 - 21:00
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00 | Jumbo Lieuwenburg 165 has different opening hours | Click |
| Poiesz      | All locations| Monday - Wednesday & Saturday: 08:00 - 20:00
Thursday & Friday: 08:00 - 21:00
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00 | | Click |
| Lidl        | All locations| Check the link for openings hours, they differ per location | In general cheaper than AH, Jumbo & Poiesz. | Click |
| Aldi        | All locations| Monday - Saturday: 08:00 - 20:00
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00 | In general cheaper than AH, Jumbo & Poiesz. | Click |
| Ecoplaza    | Amelandsstraat 20, 8911 KA | Monday - Saturday: 08:30 - 18:30 | Biological | Click |
| Spar        | Wirdumerdijk 7, 8911CB | Monday - Saturday: 07:30 - 22:00
Sunday: 12:00 - 18:00 | In the city center, small store, most expensive compared to the rest of this list | Click |
Albert Heijn and Jumbo have apps where you can check their products beforehand. Apps can be downloaded in the App Store and Play Store.

Albert Heijn, Jumbo, and Poiesz also offer the option to order online and deliver your groceries. Sometimes, this option comes with additional costs. Another option to order groceries is at Flink. This company is also more expensive and delivers only in a certain area in Leeuwarden. Check via this link whether they deliver at your address.

Furthermore, some other international supermarkets are located throughout the city, but they do not have websites to link here. Wander through the city and you will find them!

Market
Every Friday from about 08:00 hrs to 17:00 hrs, there is a market at the Wilhelmina square (8911JH), where you can also purchase fresh fruit and veggies, clothes, and other products at different stands.

Helpful apps
• Buienalarm (in the PlayStore and AppStore). This app will tell you when it is supposed to rain if you fill in your location.
• TooGoodToGo (in the Play Store and App Store). This app shows where you can buy food that restaurants and grocery stores cannot sell anymore but is still good to eat. You can buy these products for a reduced price and sometimes you do not know what you will get beforehand.
• Duolingo (in the PlayStore and App Store). To learn some Dutch words.
• Marktplaats (in the PlayStore and App Store). People offer their second-hand products on this platform, and you can bid on the products, e.g. second-hand furniture.
• DigID. Check step 7 for more information on this.
• 112. Check step 8 for more information.
• 9292 (in the PlayStore and App Store). This app shows you the updated public transport times and whether something is wrong along your route. Check step 13 for more information.
• GoSharing (in the PlayStore and App Store). Via this app, you can rent electric bikes and scooters to drive in Leeuwarden. In the app, you can see where the shared vehicles are located for pick up and where you can park them.
• Berichtenbox (in the PlayStore and App Store). An app from the Dutch government, where you can receive any letters online instead of a letter in your physical mailbox.
• In case you have a Dutch bank account, check if they might have an app!

Helpful websites
• Click, another guide for international students in Leeuwarden
• Click, a website where you can find information regarding trash and how to separate it and where to dispose your garbage. Although the website is not in English, it works fine if you let your browser translate it for you.

Helpful tips
• You can drink tap water in the Netherlands.
• In some stores and restaurants in Leeuwarden, you cannot pay with cash. Therefore, it is a good idea to have your card with you!