Exchange Guide
Incoming Students
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Disclaimer:
This Exchange Guide was made with care before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, some information does not correspond with the current situation. When in doubt reading through the Exchange Guide, do contact the International Office to inquire about the most up to date information.

Home to the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2016
welcome

General Information
University of Groningen

Student Support

Living in Groningen

Studying at the Faculty of Science and Engineering

Contact Information
International Office
exchange.science@rug.nl
Bernoulliborg
Room 5161.0143
Nijenborgh 9
9747 AG Groningen
the Netherlands
Dear exchange student,

Welcome to the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) of the University of Groningen! We hope your exchange period will be an unforgettable experience. By joining us, you will become part of an inspiring, diverse and creative international community of staff and students.

This guide will support your international experience and besides this guide, the International Office Team of FSE is here to help you! You can contact us at exchange.science@rug.nl or visit us at the Bernoulliborg on Zernike Campus.

We wish you a fantastic and memorable time at the University of Groningen!

The International Office Team
Henriette Mulder
Astrid Beijen-Den Boer
Martine Roukema
Annouck van Zutphen
The Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) is one of the 11 faculties of the University of Groningen and encompasses a vast array of disciplines and research strengths. There is a broad range of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes in the fields of Science, Engineering and the Life Sciences. Our courses are English-taught both at undergraduate and graduate level.

Our research institutes pursue fundamental key questions while collaborating with partners from industry, the medical world and other realms of society.

The Faculty is located at Zernike Campus, in the north-western part of the city. The majority of FSE’s buildings are located here.

At Zernike, more than 6300 researchers, employees and students of FSE work together on innovative solutions which are of importance, now and in the future.
An exchange period at university is exciting and fun, but it can also be demanding and challenging. At the University of Groningen, you will have a wide support network to help and advice you on various aspects of your exchange. The International Office of FSE is there to assist you in case questions or issues arise.

International Office

The International Office of the Faculty of Science and Engineering assists FSE-students before, during and after the process of studying abroad and exchange students whilst studying at the FSE.

The office is located in the Education Support Centre (location Zernike, Bernoulliborg) and you can visit our desk Monday through Thursday from 10.30am – 12.00pm for quick questions and to get signatures on your paperwork. If you have more complicated questions, you can book an appointment.

Mentor Programme

For incoming exchange students the International Office has set up a mentor programme. In this programme there are small groups, each with their own mentor. The mentor is a student at the University of Groningen who can help with all sorts of practical and student related matters.

Each group has its own meetings during the exchange period and, if preferred, you can already contact your mentor before coming to Groningen.

Contact Information

exchange.science@rug.nl

Bernoulliborg
Room 5161.0143
Nijenborgh 9
9747 AG Groningen
the Netherlands
**Immigration Service Desk (ISD)**
For general information about visa and immigration procedures, you can contact the ISD.

You can reach them by e-mail (isd@rug.nl) or telephone (+31 50 363 8181).
You can also book an appointment on their [website](#).

The ISD will also be present at the university wide Welcoming Ceremony for international students during the introduction week at the start of the new semester.

**Central Student Administration (CSA)**
At the CSA you can pick up your University Card and/or make a request for a statement of enrolment.

You can contact the CSA by phone, e-mail or by visiting their desk. Contact information and application forms can be found on their [website](#).

**Student Support Centre (SSC)**
The SSC is the student counselling expertise center of the University of Groningen. Their student counsellors, student psychologists and trainers work together to provide an integrated package of student support.

The SSC has a wide range of support facilities - information and advice, individual sessions, short-term therapy and a variety of workshops and training courses.
**STUDENT SUPPORT**

**Language Centre**
At the **Language Centre**, you can improve your language skills and intercultural understanding.

As an exchange student in Groningen, the most obvious option would be to attend a language course in Dutch. Apart from Dutch, the Language Centre also offers language courses in e.g. Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

**ESN Groningen**
ESN Groningen is a student organisation which is part of the Erasmus Student Network. ESN is focused on the motto “students helping students” and this is achieved by organising over 150 activities for (international) students throughout the year, including a huge introduction week at the start of each semester.

Check their [website](#) to read more about all activities ESN organizes to see what’s coming up.

**ACLO Sports Club**
The **ACLO** is the overarching student sports organisation of the University of Groningen, the Hanze university of applied sciences and for the 49 sports clubs of the ACLO. For the students of the University of Groningen the ACLO offers a large variety of sports.

You can attend a lot of different activities during group lessons or open hours. More info can be found on their [website](#).
Study Associations

Study Associations play an important role in the lives of many of our students, both in a social as in a study-supportive context. They organise a wide variety of activities throughout the academic year, providing you with lots of opportunities to get in touch with other (international) students. Study associations also have great offers on certain necessities (e.g. books, lab coats, etc.) and organise study-related events such as company tours and conventions.
When you are coming to the Netherlands for the first time there are so many things to arrange and explore. Finding accommodation, health insurance, getting around in Groningen; all you need to know is in this chapter.

**Housing**

Groningen has the highest density of students in the Netherlands and finding accommodation might be challenging. The University works with SSH XL to provide accommodation for international students with residences spread throughout the city. There is more information about rules, regulations, housing offers and costs on the website of SSH XL. Take a look at ‘How it works’ and ‘Available housing’ to learn more about the application and registration process. The rental period is the same as your study period; so from a minimum of 1 month up to a maximum of 12 months.

Please note that it is very important that you apply for accommodation with SSH XL as soon as possible. Applying early will increase the chance of finding a room. To reserve a room a down payment of approximately € 100 is needed.

After your application at the Faculty of Science and Engineering as an exchange student we will keep you updated about the housing process. Keep an eye on your mailbox!

Whilst the University does work with SSH XL, it does not provide any student housing itself. The ‘reserved’ rooms within SSH properties become available in approximately early May and November. Continue reading to find more information about other housing options.
LIVING IN GRONINGEN

Want to live with friends or on your own? There are several alternatives to SSH where you can find private accommodation. You can find a room through commercial agencies or private landlords spread throughout Groningen. Below are some websites with other options for housing:

www.athomeingroningen.com
Provides information on house-hunting and living in Groningen

https://www.rug.nl/education/exchange/study-in-groningen/
Advice from the University of Groningen

Please keep in mind that rents and agency costs of both commercial agencies and private landlords can be high. It is also very important to remain cautious, visit the room beforehand, read your rental agreement carefully and beware of scammers! Do not pay anything upfront if you haven’t seen the room. Also, it is not very likely that a real homeowner will contact you on Facebook or other social media to offer you a room. If you do not trust an offer, please contact us.

Registration at City Hall
Anyone staying in the Netherlands for four months or longer must register with the Municipal Personal Records Database (in Dutch: Basisregistratie Personen, BRP) at City Hall. This is necessary in order to obtain a BSN (social security number). The BSN is required if you apply for e.g. a Dutch insurance, phone subscription or bank account.

Non-EU/EEA students can register with their MVV visa, residence permit card or a confirmation letter from the Immigration Services (IND). If the Immigration Service Desk (ISD) has applied for your residence permit you will receive further information about your registration at City Hall from them.

In the month of September the municipality of Groningen has extended opening hours during which you can register in the BRP. This is for EU students only. The appointment schedule of the municipality of Groningen can be found on their website.

At City Hall you need the following documents for registration:
- Valid passport (for Non-EU/EEA students also MVV visa, residence permit or letter of confirmation)
- Rental agreement or other proof of accommodation that verifies your address in Groningen
- BRP registration form (download here)
Even when you are emerged in your exchange bubble, it is still important to keep an eye on your health. In this part of the guide you can find information about emergency phone numbers, pharmacies and insurances.

**General Practitioners**

In the Netherlands, a general practitioner (GP) or family doctor is called a ‘huisarts’. GP’s can be visited during consulting hours after making an appointment by telephone.

We strongly advise you to register with a GP as soon as possible. After you have registered with a GP you can make an appointment when necessary.

There is a GP for international students (‘studentarts’) both at Zernike Campus and in the city centre. Both practices are open from Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 17.00.

The GPs prefer to communicate by e-mail (info@studentarts.nl) but for urgent matters you can dial (+31 (0)50 211 0 911)

---

**Studentarts**

Location Zernike

Zernikeplein 17 (parking P4, building S, rear entrance)

9747 AS Groningen

**Studentarts**

Location Hanzeplein

Hanzeplein 121 (opposite of the UMCG entrance)

9713 GW Groningen

---

**Emergencies outside office hours**

Should you urgently require the help of a GP at night, during the weekend or on public holidays, you should call the central ‘After-hours GP service’ (Centrale Doktersdienst). In most cases, they will ask you to come over for a consultation.

Van Swietenlaan 2b

9728 NZ Groningen

Tel: 0900 - 92 29

(with a non-Dutch phone number: +31 88 330 1300) Please keep your insurance card at hand when you call.

Opening hours:

Evening 17.00 - 08.00 and in the weekend 08.00 - 08.00.

---

**Emergency**

In case of an emergency, please dial **112**, the emergency phone number. They can assist you with police, firefighters and/or health practitioners.

For police matters that are not an emergency, please dial **0900-8844**
In the Netherlands, a pharmacy (apotheek) and a drugstore (drogist) are not the same. A drugstore only sells toiletries and drugs for minor complaints such as headaches and colds. However, if the doctor or specialist prescribes prescription drugs, you need to go to a pharmacy. You will need to register with your local pharmacy just as you do with your general practitioner.

Pharmacy Hanzeplein (Apotheek Hanzeplein)
Hanzeplein 122
9713 GW Groningen
tel: +31 (0)50 311 50 20 (during office hours)
fax: +31 (0)50 311 50 21
webservice@hanzeplein.nl
www.apotheekhanzeplein.leef.nl (in Dutch)

After 8 p.m. and on weekends, please dial: 0900 111 50 20 (€ 0.20 p/m)

Hospitals
In the Netherlands it is not customary to go to the hospital (ziekenhuis) for minor symptoms like headaches or stomach aches. In these cases you visit your GP.

There are two hospitals in the city of Groningen:

University Medical center Groningen (UMCG)
Hanzeplein 1, 9713 GZ Groningen
Tel + 31 (0)50 361 61 61

Martini Hospital
Van Swietenplein 1, 9728 NX Groningen
Tel + 31 (0)50 524 52 45
Health insurance
The Netherlands has a high level of medical care. It is, however, very important to be properly insured. Medical costs can be very high, especially if they include a stay in a hospital.

Students enrolled at institutes of higher education are not automatically insured for medical expenses abroad. You must arrange this yourself, either before coming to the Netherlands or upon arrival. What kind of health insurance applies to you depends on your country of origin, age, the length of your stay and whether you have a job in the Netherlands besides studying. Below you will find an overview of health insurance possibilities and the way to pay or reimburse invoices.

European Union Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
Citizens from the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland can use a health insurance from their native country as long as it has European coverage (EHIC). With the EHIC you will continue to be covered by the insurance in your home country. You will not have to pay for treatment if the treatment is free for local residents. In the Netherlands, this includes consultations at a General Practitioner.

Additional insurance
The EHIC insurance does not include liability insurance, household contents insurance or luggage insurance. At AON you will be able to take out an additional insurance package. This could be the right choice for you as an unemployed international student.

Private Health Care Insurance
Non-EU/EEA students will need to take out a private Health Care insurance. It is possible that the health insurance you currently have will cover your costs during your stay in the Netherlands. Be sure to check the details of your coverage with your insurance company. If your insurance company does not cover your costs during your stay in the Netherlands, you can apply for a private insurance of AON.
The city of Groningen is regarded as the cycling capital of the Netherlands and you will understand why as soon as you first set foot in the city. On average, there are more bicycles than inhabitants and for you as an exchange student, cycling is by far the cheapest, easiest and fastest way of transportation.

Since bicycles are so important to the Dutch people, a wide variety of shops exist that sell bikes, but also provide the service of fixing your bike when it is malfunctioning. Buying a new bike will cost you approximately €300,00 or even more.

Luckily, you can save a lot of money by buying a second-hand bike at one of the many bicycle shops throughout the city. It is also possible to buy a bicycle (starting at €65,00) in the bike shelter underneath the public library (Oude Boteringestraat 16). Information can be found on this website which is unfortunately only in Dutch. A final option would be to rent a bike for the duration of your stay in Groningen at SWAP Fiets or Boogle Bike. This ensures that you will always have a bicycle that functions properly.

Please beware that you can use your phone only as a handsfree device on your bike. Violation of this rule will cost you dearly.

Public transport is another way of getting around. In Groningen, Qbuzz is the major public transport bus service operator and their website can be used to plan your trip. Tickets can be bought on the bus, but if you plan on making more trips by public transportation, it’s favourable to buy a so-called OV-Chipcard. This card is the national public transport ticket for buses, trains, trams and metros; a contactless smart card system that is used for all types of public transport in the Netherlands. It is available in a disposable form (for occasional usage) and reusable versions (either anonymous or personalized). It can be bought at a lot of shops in Groningen. As an exchange student, the most suitable option would be to purchase one of the reusable versions, since possessing this card will ensure that you will always be able to make use of the public transport network. With the OV-chipcard you have to check in before your trip and check out after having reached your destination. If you switch to another transport company during your trip, you have to check out with the first company and check in with the new one. E.g. if you take a train to Amsterdam and a bus to the city centre, do not forget to check out at the train station and check in when entering the bus.

Please find more information about the system and how to use the OV-Chipcard at the following web pages:
- OV-chipkaart
- How To Buy Dutch Train Tickets
- NS – Dutch Railway Company

Since downtown Groningen is a very compact and almost everything is within walking distance, getting around on foot is an option that a lot of people like to choose. Maps of the city centre and Zernike Campus can be found elsewhere in this guide and provide a useful tool to find your way.
While studying at the Faculty of Science and Engineering as an exchange student, information about the facilities, student card and other practical things might come in handy. This chapter of the guide will tell you more about these subjects.

As soon as the International Office receives your application, we will register you as an exchange student at the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the University of Groningen. You will receive a student number and an e-mail address. You will also gain access to the Student Portal. The e-mail account will be your main means of communication with professors, fellow students etc. The sign-on page for activating your e-mail account can be found through the following link.

University card
As a student at our University, you will also receive a University card that will remain valid throughout your entire study career in Groningen. It can be picked up at the Central Student Administration in the city centre and can be used for the following purposes:

- getting coffee and tea from the vending machines
- printing and copying documents
- borrowing books from the University Library
- as proof of identity when you are taking an exam. This is mandatory.
- to use the facilities of the ACLO Sports Centre

Your University card will include a photo. You must upload this photo yourself. Please do so via the app ‘Enrolment and photo’ under RUG tools on the Student Portal (log in with your S-number and password). You also need to deposit money on your University Card via myPrint for making use of a.o. the printers and coffee machines.
**Student Portal**

The Student Portal is your main information hub. It serves as a communication portal for students and teachers and it gives personalized access to all relevant study information and tools, such as course enrollment, the schedule generator and your grades.

On the tab ‘Today’ you can see widgets about the courses you are enrolled in, a personalized schedule, your study progress and important announcements of the university and your faculty (‘Need to know’ and ‘Nice to know’). On the ‘Today’ tab you can also get access to important University of Groningen tools such as Ocasys (course catalogue), Progress (grades and enrollment) and your Student Mail.

On the second tab ‘Study Info’ you can find information regarding regulations, technical support and ICT, student facilities, counselling, FAQs etc. Here you can also find information about the International Office. On the third tab ‘Career’ you will find the career services of your faculty and the university.

**Ocasys**

The Ocasys website gives all the course information you need. Search for courses, click on a course name and you will get detailed information about a course, such as lecturer, form of assessment and the required literature.

**ProgressWWW**

The University of Groningen uses the website ProgressWWW for students to enrol for course units. The International Office has enrolled you for the courses in your study programme. Make sure to check your enrollments before the start of the courses. As soon as you are enrolled for your courses, you will be enrolled automatically for the corresponding exam. You can also use ProgRESS to view your exam results and messages from the faculty.

To change enrollments, always visit the academic adviser first, because (s)he needs to give approval for changes in your study programme. To contact your academic advisor, you can visit them during open office hours (for quick questions, max 10 minutes) or make an appointment. The contact details and open office hours of the academic advisor of your degree programme can be found on the Student Portal. Please make sure that you have consulted the information on the Student Portal before you contact the advisor.
WiFi
eduroam is a wireless internet access within the buildings of the RUG for both students and employees (also of other institutes of higher education and universities). This access is realised through authentication by the institute in question. For more information about the configuration for every kind of device, please view the manuals on the Student Portal.

Computer Workstations
Within the buildings of the University of Groningen there are many computer workstations at the disposal of students and staff. Use your university student account to gain access to these computers. They are equipped with standard software and offer full internet access. Furthermore, they provide easy access to scientific literature that might not be accessible on your own device.

Libraries
The University of Groningen Library has three locations: one general location and two faculty specific locations. In our libraries, you can find a quiet place to study, textbooks for your courses and a large amount of academic journals.

City Centre Library
This library, also known as the University Library, is the main library of the University and serves as an information centre for the entire academic community in Groningen. The University Library is mostly known by students as the UB (UniversiteitsBibliotheek). The UB is located in the centre of Groningen, opposite the Academy Building. The UB holds about three million books and journals for students to use. In addition, you can consult digital databases from any of the University libraries. Besides academic literature, the UB also has 1600 places to study with minimal distraction. Finally, if you need to discuss a group project or just want to take a break from studying, the UB has plenty of space to socialise and have a coffee with your friends.

Zernike Library & Central Medical Library
The two faculty libraries (The Zernike Library and the Central Medical Library) have a selection of textbooks and journals more focused on the research field of the relevant faculty. The Zernike Library is located in the Duisenberg Building and the Central Medical Library is located in the University Medical Centre Groningen.

Repro shop
The main Faculty’s Reproshop is located in the Bernoulliborg, on the first floor. Its opening hours are Monday till Friday: 8.30 a.m. until 5 p.m. You can order your syllabuses via the link and you will receive a notification to pick it up. You can contact the Reproshop by e-mail: reproberoulli@rug.nl.
Places to visit

**Groningen Province**
Groningen is the northeastern province of the Netherlands. It borders on Friesland to the west, Drenthe to the south, the German state of Lower Saxony (districts of Leer and Emsland) to the east, and the Wadden Sea to the north. On this [website](#) you can find all kinds of activities and places to visit such as the Pieterburen Seal Sanctuary, the botanical gardens of Hortus Haren and Bourtange, the centuries-old fortified town.

**Wadden Islands**
In the Netherlands we have the Dutch Wadden Islands. These islands form an archipelago at the eastern edge of the North Sea in northwestern Europe, stretching from the northwest of the Netherlands through Germany to the west of Denmark. You can take the ferry and visit these islands, but it is also possible to take guided walks (mud walking) to some of these islands. Find more information on this [website](#).

**Delta Works**
The Delta Works (Dutch: Deltawerken) is a series of construction projects in the southwest of the Netherlands to protect a large area of land around the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta from the sea. The works consist of dams, sluices, locks, dykes, levees and storm surge barriers located in the provinces of South Holland and Zeeland. More information can be found on this [website](#).