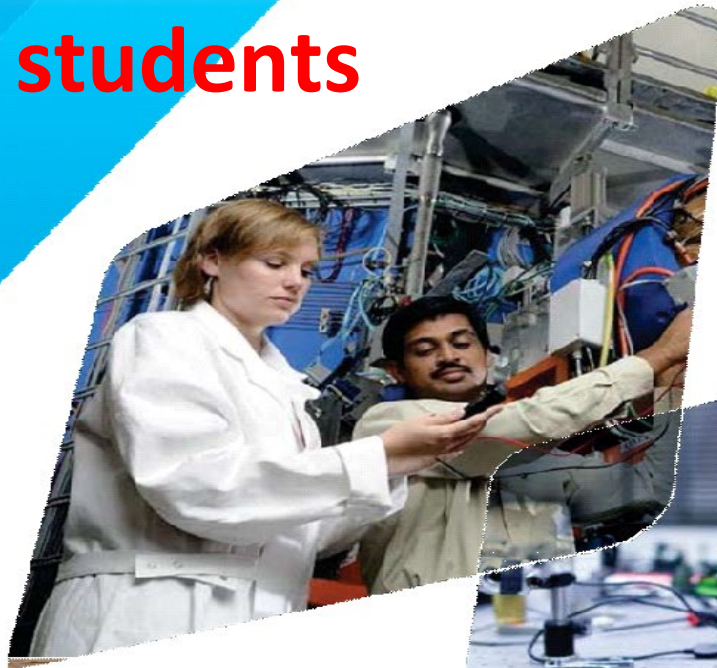




university of
groningen

faculty of science
and engineering

Education Primer for new Bachelor's and Master's students



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ABOUT THIS PRIMER

This education primer is meant to help you to quickly find your way around at the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE). It gives a brief overview of the many facilities and services that you may make use of during your studies here, and describes where to find more detailed information about them.

The primer is written for international students as well as for Dutch students who are new at the University of Groningen (UG). Some parts will however only be relevant for international students.

In this primer, we regularly refer to the [digital Student Portal](#) for additional information. The Student Portal serves as your primary source of information about the UG, the FSE and your degree programme. We strongly recommend that you read all information about your degree programme on the Student Portal, particularly the Study Info tab of the Student Portal, before the start of the academic year. **Information about your personal account, and all communication and information systems of the University of Groningen, including instructions about the use of the Student portal, is provided in an [external document](#) in your information package.** Please read this document, and make the short assignments, to get acquainted with the various systems as soon as possible.

If you are an international student, the following two sources are also worth considering:

- The university's websites for international [Master's](#) and [Bachelor's](#) international students (for financial issues, health matters, and visa and immigration, etc).
- The [Pre-departure Guide](#) (to be found at the above-mentioned website) - This digital brochure provides general information about the Netherlands, about living in the city of Groningen, and about studying at the University of Groningen.

We wish you an enjoyable and memorable time in Groningen!

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1. ARRIVING IN GRONINGEN

1.1. Residence permit

If you are an international student and you have [applied in time for a residence permit](#), it will be ready for you upon arrival. The [International Service Desk](#) will inform you when and where you can pick up your residence permit. More information is available in the [Pre-departure Guide](#).

1.2. Municipal registration at the city hall

Anyone staying in the Netherlands for four months or longer must [register with the Municipal Personal Records Database](#) (Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie or GBA) at the City Hall. You are advised to register as soon as possible as you may need your registration papers for other purposes. Non-EU/EEA students can only register after they have picked up the confirmation letter for the residence permit application from the [Immigration Service Desk](#).

1.3. Your address in Groningen

The [Housing Office](#) offers furnished rooms in International Student Houses and Dutch Student Houses. More information is available in the [Pre-departure Guide](#). Finding somewhere to live can be daunting, especially if you are moving to the Netherlands for the first time. Around 20,000 students will all be looking for a room at the same time in Groningen so start your search as soon as possible. It is your own responsibility to find somewhere to live. The University of Groningen does NOT provide accommodation for students. We advise that you start looking for accommodation as early as possible since it will be very difficult to secure somewhere to stay if you wait too long. Tips on looking for accommodation can be found on the University [website](#).

It is important that your address in Groningen is registered at the university, because all official mail is sent to that address. If you move to another room during your stay in Groningen, you should use [Studielink](#) to let the University know.

1.4. Immigration Service Desk (ISD)

The [Immigration Service Desk](#) (ISD) provides information with regard to studying and temporary residence in Groningen. It assists with any questions you may have about issues such as regulations relating to medical care, financial matters, accommodation, and facilities within the city.

1.5. Information Services

If you have questions about your application, admission, registration or deregistration, or other financial matters, you can contact UG [Student Information and Administration](#) (SIA). They have an information desk, but provide [online information](#) as well.

2. FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING (FSE)

2.1. Faculty organization

The [Faculty of Science and Engineering](#) (FSE) of the University of Groningen is one of the largest natural sciences faculties in the Netherlands. The [School of Science and Engineering](#) (SSE) is responsible for organizing and running the 38 [Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes](#) of the faculty. The majority of these programmes are organized into six disciplinary clusters. Each of the clusters is supervised by a programme board and supported by a cluster team.

Research at FSE is divided into 11 [research institutes](#). The lecturers of the programmes are in general researchers in one of the research institutes.

2.2. Locations

Most of the [buildings](#) are located on the Zernike Campus. The degree programmes Biomedical Sciences, Medical Pharmaceutical Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Pharmacy and the Neuroscience-track of Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences are located at the University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG). Depending on the degree programme, some lectures or exams may be scheduled in other [buildings of the University of Groningen](#) as well.

3. STUDYING AT THE FSE

3.1. Academic year

The [academic year](#) is divided into a winter and a summer semester. Within these semesters, course units and examinations are scheduled in various ways, depending on the specific degree programme. There will be no classes on these [holidays](#) (note that the university buildings may also be closed on these days): Christmas and New Year's day (including two weeks of Christmas holidays), Good Friday and Easter (including easter Monday), King's day (April 27), Liberation Day (May 5), Ascension day, Pentecost (including Whit Monday) and the summer holidays.

3.2. Timetables

[Timetables](#) for the next academic year are usually published from July 15 onwards. They may change during the year.

3.3. Credit system

University degree programmes consist of modules that are, when completed successfully, awarded with a number of ECTS credit points. ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, which is the EU standardized system for measuring student workload. One ECTS credit point represents 28 hours of full-time study (including contact hours, reading, independent study, preparation for exams, etc.). 60 ECTS credit points represent one academic year.

3.4. Grading system

In general, each course unit is examined by an examination (written or oral), a written assignment, or a presentation. The [Dutch marking scale](#) ranges from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), but marks of 10 or lower than 3 are exceptional. To pass a course unit, you need a final mark of 6 at minimum. Final marks are given in steps of 0.5; 5.5 is however never given as a final mark. A grade below 6 requires the course unit to be repeated until a 6 or higher is achieved. The cumulative grade for the whole programme is the weighted average of the individual grades for each of the units, taking into account the student workload. Some course units can be passed with either pass or fail. Hence, they are not calculated into the weighted average.

3.5. Board of Examiners

Each degree programme has a [Board of Examiners](#), which determines the rules related to the practical aspects of examinations. The Board of Examiners is also responsible for individual matters such as approval of individual study programmes, granting exemptions, admission to course units to which you would normally not be admitted, assessing force majeure in situations related to registration and examinations and investigating potential fraud cases.

3.6. Programme Committee

Each degree programme has a [Programme Committee](#), which advises the programme director on the Teaching and Examination Regulations. It is also responsible for the evaluation of course units and the evaluation of the degree programme. A Programme Committee consists of both staff members and students. You may become a member as well.

4. STUDENT SUPPORT

4.1 Student Administration Desk (SSE)

The staff of the SSE provides support to the teaching organization and the students. SSE staff includes academic advisors, programme coordinators, exchange coordinators, time tablers and the student administration. The front office of the SSE, is located at the [Bernoulliborg](#) and at the [UMCG](#) (ADL). Both locations can be visited by students to (for example):

- receive information about educational programmes;
- receive help with study-related problems
- deliver relevant forms;
- obtain a certified academic transcript;
- ask about the administration of grades and degree certificates;
- discuss problems with enrollments in ProgressWWW;
- obtain information about studying abroad.

4.2 Academic advisor

[Academic advisors](#) assist students in finding solutions to any problem encountered while studying. This includes matters like the choice of degree programme, study pace or an

improvement in study methods. The advisor will always try to help you, or else direct you to somebody who can, however it is up to the student to contact the Academic advisor. In case you encounter study delay due to extraordinary circumstances or personal problems, we strongly advise students to discuss these matters as soon as possible with an academic advisor; not only will you receive help from an independent expert, you may also be eligible for financial compensation from the Graduation Fund. Academic advisors are independent. Conversations with an academic advisor are always 100% confidential; an academic advisor will never talk about your personal issues with lecturers, parents, etc. For short questions, you can visit the open office hours of an academic advisor. If you believe you need more time than 10 minutes, you can [make an appointment](#) via an online booking website with the academic advisor of your degree programme.

4.3 Studying with a functional impairment or health issues

If you suffer from a physical or mental disability ([functional impairment](#)) or health problems, this may have consequences for your ability to study well. Examples are blindness, deafness, autism, dyslexia, AD(H)D, a chronic illness, psychological problems, acting as an informal caregiver, etc. If you have such an impairment, your studies may take more time and require greater effort but this need not bar you from completing a degree programme. The University of Groningen has various arrangements and [facilities](#) for students with a functional impairment. To make use of these facilities, **it is very important** that you [contact your academic advisor](#) first, to discuss the issue as soon as possible. He/she can direct you to the right people to arrange facilities, and assist you in applying for exam facilities to the Board of Examiners, which is necessary in order to have the facilities granted.

4.4 Student Service Centre (SSC)

The [Student Service Centre](#) is the student counseling expertise centre of the UG. The student counsellors, psychologists and trainers work together to provide an integrated package of student support with the aim of helping students with their studies. The Student Service Centre offers UG-students support on: study skills, study delay, psychological problems, studying with a functional impairment, financial matters and legislation and regulation. They can prevent or remove possible impediments to your study progress so that you can develop fully during your time at university.

5 FACILITIES

5.1 University card

You receive the [University card](#) after enrollment at the UG. The university card can be used at the tea/coffee machines, at the [printers](#), as proof of identity during exams, to make use of the [Sports Centre facilities](#) etc. Note that some of these services, such as printing, require that you put 'credit' on your University card. You can put credit on your card through [MyPrint](#).

5.2 Computer and printing facilities

You can use PCs at various university facilities by logging in with your [personal account](#). You will then have access to a broad range of applications, your own data on the home directory (X:\) and the internet.

Students can make use of [university printers](#) for printing, copying and scanning. Printing facilities are located close to the computer rooms. You can pay your printouts with [credit](#) on your [University Card](#). [Computer rooms](#) may sometimes be used for tutorials and lectures but when no teaching is scheduled you can use the room for self-study. Be aware that by using the university's computers you consent to an [Acceptable Use Policy](#) (AUP). The basic rule of this policy is similar to the basic rule of traffic regulations: users may not endanger these systems, nor may they hinder other users.

5.3 Libraries

The [library of the university](#) consists of the University Library (UB) and a number of faculty libraries. The UB serves as an information centre for the entire university and is located opposite of the Academy Building, in the city centre. The two faculty libraries associated with FSE are the Central Medical Library and the Zernike Library.

5.4 Career Services: Study and career advice

The University of Groningen wants to offer its students the best possible facilities to prepare and develop their careers. Within the framework of FSE [Career Services](#), various activities are organized to help students make choices and prepare them for the job market. In order to achieve this, FSE Career Services works actively with faculties, study associations, alumni organizations, etc, in the field of careers services. Announcements can be recognized by the Career Services logo.

5.5 International Office

The International Office of the Faculty of Science and Engineering assists FSE-students with studying abroad, and international students with studying at the FSE for short periods (outgoing and incoming exchange). For further information, please see the [Student portal](#).

5.6 Language Centre

The [Language Centre](#) of the University of Groningen offers elementary and advanced courses in several languages. Of particular interest to international students are the Dutch courses, which are taught at four levels. Regular courses are taught from early September to mid-December. These basic courses are offered for free to all international students.

If you do not have time to attend the above-mentioned course, the Language Centre also offers the free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) [“Introduction to Dutch”](#). The course introduces participants to the basics of the Dutch language, and gives background information on the city of Groningen, the University of Groningen and the region as a whole. The course takes 3 weeks and requires only 3 hours of study per week.

5.7 Cafeterias

The University of Groningen has a number of coffee rooms, restaurants and take-aways. There is one in almost every building.

6 DO'S AND DON'TS AT FSE

If you are an international student, you may have to get used to the manner of teaching and examination at the University of Groningen. This chapter is meant to give you an idea of the study culture at FSE. What do we consider to be appropriate 'academic conduct'?

6.1 Courses and communication with lecturers

As some course units have limited capacity, it is important that you deregister on time in case you decide to not participate in a course unit in which you initially enrolled. If you decide to drop a course unit with which you have already started you should inform the course coordinator. It's impolite to just stay away.

You are expected to arrive in class on time: seated and prepared to listen at the start time of the lecture as indicated in the schedule. . If you cannot be present at a mandatory lecture or practical due to extraordinary circumstances such as illness, you should inform the course coordinator by email. Every course unit has one course coordinator, which can be found via the online course unit description system '[Ocasys](#)'.

Dutch universities are generally not very hierarchical. Nevertheless, if you want to talk to a lecturer, please observe the office hours or make an appointment. Also make sure to be on time; in the Netherlands, 5 minutes late is considered to be *too* late. If you write an email to a lecturer or other staff member, bear in mind that he or she is not a fellow student, but should be addressed properly (for example, dear Professor X or dear Mr / Mrs X). If you communicate about your degree programme with for instance, the Academic advisor, lecturers, Student administration or Board of Examiners, do not forget to always mention your name and student number in each message.

6.2 Assignments and deadlines

The Dutch study environment may seem friendly and relaxed, but this certainly has its limits. Students are expected to fulfill all obligations with regard to their classes and hand in assignments and essays on time. A deadline is a deadline and is non-negotiable, except under exceptional circumstances. When you don't meet all the requirements for a course, fail to hand in your assignments in time or fail to cooperate with other students, you may not be admitted to the exam and may consequently fail the course.

6.3 Self-study

Self-study is a substantial part of the workload for courses in the Dutch university system. You are expected to come prepared to your classes. Consult the course guide on what you are expected to do week by week. You are in charge of your own time; no-one will tell you when to start studying for your exam or preparing your essay, but it is highly recommended to divide your workload evenly over the weeks and don't procrastinate. You are welcome to

study in one of the libraries rather than just in your own room if you find it more convenient. If you run into trouble you can consult the academic advisor for guidance. The [Student Service Centre](#) also offers study skills workshops, for example on effective studying.

6.4 Fraud and plagiarism

Over the past years more and more efforts have been done to detect plagiarism and fraud. Students sometimes commit this academic offense unintentionally. The consequences can however be serious: students may be expelled from classes or even from the university. It is very important that you understand what plagiarism is and what you should do to avoid it. Therefore, do take the time to read the following:

What is plagiarism? What is fraud? The main point is that you are not allowed to present someone else's work or ideas as your own.

Do's and don'ts:

1. Copy/paste. Don't copy text from books, articles or the Internet without acknowledging your source. Even if you only use a sentence or a couple of words you must mention the author and publication. If you copy a text literally, use quotation marks and mention the source. If you paraphrase other people's ideas or arguments (that is, represent them in your own words) you must also give the source. Note that the university has a plagiarism scanner, so plagiarism is likely to be detected.
2. Recycling. Don't self-plagiarize by re-using your own work (such as earlier assignments or essays).
3. You are responsible for your own work. Don't ask others to do your assignments for you.
4. Exams. Don't cheat during exams by using your mobile phone, concealed notes, consulting with others, copying your neighbour's answers, or by impersonating someone else.

7. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

7.1. Study associations within FSE

A study association is an organization of students who are studying the same degree programme. Study associations differ from the general student associations where the degree programme is irrelevant. In addition to that, study associations do not have hazing rituals. There are a number of [study associations](#) at FSE and each study association is run by a team of students from the respective bachelor's and master's degree programme(s). The FSE [study associations](#) organize many activities for students, including introductory camps and monthly "borrels" (informal social gatherings, often with drinks), but also more serious events such as company visits or conferences. During the Introduction period you will be informed about the study associations associated with your degree programme.

7.2. Bètastuf

Most degree programmes also have a student platform, in which students from all cohorts meet to discuss their degree programme. This way, problems can be identified at an early stage and possibly even resolved before the end of the course unit in question. [Bètastuf](#) is the overarching organisation for all student-representation in FSE.

7.3. International students' association ESN-Groningen

[ESN-Groningen](#) coordinates and stimulates the activities of the international student community in Groningen. ESN-Groningen is part of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and works closely with the University of Groningen. One of the functions of ESN-Groningen is to support international students. During your stay in Groningen, ESN-Groningen will organize various activities to make you feel at home, such as an introductory weekend, trips to the island of Schiermonnikoog and to Amsterdam, ice-skating, sailing, theme parties and much more.