

## **SOME BASICS TO UNDERSTAND**

As a service to students, International Education (IE) at Richmond compiles and updates immigration requirements and procedures for the countries where we commonly send students on study abroad. Be aware that the steps required can change, sometimes with very little notice. *If you find that some part of this information is out-of-date, please inform your study abroad advisor immediately.*

Officials who process visa applications have considerable authority in how they do their work. Different consulates representing the same country may follow different procedures; different officials at the same consulate may require different documents; the same official may treat two applicants in very different ways. For these reasons, the immigration information we provide represents the common experiences of most applicants but cannot cover every experience.

Obtaining permission to visit another country is a process of an individual interacting directly with the government of that country. IE can provide instructions but cannot make immigration applications on behalf of students or intervene in the application process. It is very important to do every step correctly, and to start the process as early as possible.

### **In the months before study abroad**

If you need a visa to take part in study abroad, IE recommends that you do *not* plan to travel outside the U.S. (or your home country, if you are not a U.S. citizen) for two or three months preceding your program. This is when the consulate of the country where you want to study will need to process your visa. If you and/or your passport are not dedicated to obtaining your study abroad visa during this critical time, you may find that your visa application process is expensive, stressful, or even unsuccessful.

If you decide to go against this advice, be aware that you are taking a risk, and that it is still your responsibility to apply for your visa correctly and far enough in advance that you will get it on time.

### **Programs back-to-back**

If you are taking part in a study abroad program in the fall followed by a different one on the spring, or one in the summer followed by a different one in the fall, and need a visa for the second program, be aware that some students in your situation have found it quite demanding to obtain the visa for the second program.

- Different rules may come into play if you apply for a visa when you are not in your home country.
- You may need documentation from your parents, your local government records office, or UR.
- You may find that approaching the end of your first study abroad experience makes it easy to let details slip for the second.

If you are in this situation, be aware that you will need to be *extra conscientious* about your visa application process, and that you may need to pay for expedited processing or shipping, if those services are available.

## **IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NETHERLANDS**

*IE has compiled this information as a service to students, but be aware that the government of the Netherlands is the only official source on what you need to do to be allowed to spend time in that country.*

### **Begin here.**

The immigration web pages of the Dutch government are not as helpful as those of UR's Dutch partner institution; look at the university website first.

Maastricht's immigration page:

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/your-studies-begin/coming-maastricht-university-abroad/visa-and-residence-permit>

The Dutch government's immigration page:

<https://ind.nl/en/study/Pages/study-at-university.aspx>

### **Do you need a visa?**

You need a residence permit, and possibly also a visa, unless you are a citizen of the Netherlands or another of the European Union countries. To see whether you need a visa or whether you may enter the Netherlands without a visa, you should check this [overview](#) page. Answer the questions about your nationality and purpose of visiting the Netherlands (to study) for the result.

### **What kind of visa do you need?**

**PLEASE NOTE that UR's instructions about Dutch immigration requirements are for U.S. citizens who want to be in the Netherlands for one semester, as that is the situation of the majority of UR's participants in our programs. If you are not a U.S. citizen, and/or if you want to be in the Netherlands for a year, you will need to do additional research to know what Dutch immigration requirements apply to you, and how to meet them.**

For one semester in the Netherlands, if you are a citizen of the United States, then you need a **VVR residence permit**, and do **not** need a visa.

If you are a citizen of another country, you may need a VVR residence permit **and** an MVV entry visa. See the [overview](#) page and answer the questions to find out.

Please note that requirements for citizens of some countries will be very different and considerably more demanding than for citizens of the U.S. You may need a chest x-ray, a medical exam, etc.

### **How demanding is the process?**

**If there were a 10-point scale for the difficulty of obtaining immigration documents (1 = easiest and 10 = most difficult):** For citizens of the U.S., obtaining a VVR residence permit is 3 out of 10. For citizens of other countries who also need a visa, getting the MVV entry visa (as well as the VVR residence permit) can be 8 out of 10 and may include medical examinations, chest x-rays, etc. Begin educating yourself on the requirements that apply to you **now**.

### **When to apply**

You should start looking into the process and requirements now, especially if you are not a citizen of the United States.

After you are accepted to study with them, your Dutch host university will email you to request that you send them scanned documentation and payment required for your VVR residence permit application. Students going abroad for the fall should get this email in May. Those going abroad in the spring should get it in

## IMMIGRATION INSTRUCTIONS – NETHERLANDS

November. The deadlines for you to submit the documentation vary but are usually as follows:

- 1 July for fall abroad
- 1 December for spring abroad

After Maastricht has ensured the scanned documentation is correct, you may be asked to send certain original hard copy documents to Maastricht by courier mail at your expense (IE cannot assist students with mailing costs).

### **How long does it take to get the VVR residence permit?**

The review of your application usually takes four to six weeks (and no longer than 60 days).

### **Items required to apply**

The list of documents below is a general summary. For a complete and official list of items required for your application, please consult the immigration page of your Dutch host university.

A. Copy of your passport. It must be valid until at least six months after your program abroad starts. Maastricht will provide further guidance as to what pages must be copied.

B. Proof of sufficient financial means. You need to show that you have access to at least €1,000 for every month that you will be in the Netherlands. You can do this by providing bank statements, proof of scholarship awards, or depositing the required amount into an account at your Dutch host university's visa office. Note there are very specific requirements for the format of any bank statements and letters used for financial proof – please consult the relevant information online.

Note: If you receive financial aid in excess of Richmond tuition (meaning you receive aid to help with your living expenses), then you should request a Fund Certification Letter (FCL) from the Financial Aid Office. Please allow them 5-7 business days to produce this letter and be sure to communicate to the Financial Aid Office the very specific requirements for the Dutch residence permit letter wording, as this may differ from the standard FCL wording.

C. Completed Consent Form – authorizes your Dutch host university's visa office to act on your behalf concerning residence issues.

D. Completed Antecedents Certificate – will be explained by your Dutch host university, but is a statement that you have not committed any criminal offenses.

E. Fee of €210 (as of May 2023; Maastricht will guide you regarding how to make the wire transfer).

\*Note: Citizens of the United States are exempt from the requirement to submit the Declaration of Intent to Take a Tuberculosis (TB) Test, so you may disregard that requirement listed on the Maastricht instructions.

### **How to apply**

After you have been accepted to study with them, your Dutch host university will email you to request that you send them scanned documentation (followed by originals) and payment required for your VVR residence permit application. Wait to receive the instructions from Maastricht before acting. Once they have verified/received your forms, they will submit your residence permit application to the Dutch Immigration

Department (IND) on your behalf. For more information and exact details, see <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/file/visa-ssc-j3refexchpdf>.

### **How to make the payment**

You will likely need to pay the fee via wire transfer, which will be processed via your bank or a wire transfer company. Maastricht will provide you with specific information regarding when to make the payment and where the funds need to be sent (they will provide the appropriate account number). You will likely need to ensure that your full name, Maastricht student ID #, and note regarding the purpose of the payment be included so that Maastricht can identify which wire transfer is from you. Be aware that there is typically a fee to send a wire transfer, so you must ensure that the amount you send is sufficient after the fee is taken from the amount. You should also take into consideration that currency exchange rates can fluctuate, so be sure to send enough that you do not have a shortfall.

### **Costs**

As of May 2023, the cost for a Dutch VVR residence permit is €210.

See payment instructions above.

### **What does the residence permit look like?**

It looks like a credit card.

### **How is the residence permit sent to me?**

It will be given to you in person at the IND immigration office in the Netherlands.

### **Follow-up steps abroad**

Within two weeks of your arrival in the Netherlands you are required to visit your nearest IND immigration office by appointment to have your fingerprints and digital photo taken. Your residence permit will be issued about two weeks after that.

You will also need to sign up for an appointment at the city hall to be registered in the BRP municipal records database to get a BSN (citizen service number). This number is needed for many administrative purposes in the Netherlands, for instance opening a bank account and arranging a mobile phone number. For this you must have a legalized copy of your birth certificate, so be sure to take this with you.

### **Common problems**

- If you do not send the required documents & fee to your Dutch host university by their deadline, your residence permit application will be delayed.
- If you do not go to the IND immigration office within two weeks of your arrival in the Netherlands, you will be in violation of Dutch immigration rules and the issuing of your residence permit will be delayed, which could cause you trouble with the Dutch police or immigration authorities.

### **Working**

Having a VVR residence permit does not allow you to work in the Netherlands. If you want to work, you would need to convince a potential employer to apply for a work permit on your behalf. This is something that you would need to research and pay for yourself.

### **Things to note**

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- You must maintain a full-time course load and may not drop out of school or you will be in violation of the conditions of your residence permit and will need to leave the country immediately or risk criminal penalties.
- If you have not used your residence permit to study (for example, if it is found that you stopped attending classes or did not make a serious effort in your classes), your immigration status will be in jeopardy.