



**Utrecht
University**

**Graduate School of
Natural Sciences**



GSNS Welcome booklet

**Information for all first year Master's students of the
Graduate School of Natural Sciences**

Photo: Kees Gort

February 2024

Preface

Welcome to the Graduate School of Natural Sciences!

We are very pleased that you have chosen a Master in our Graduate School to continue your education.

Research and education in our Faculty of Science are characterized by three qualities. Firstly, our education, and definitely our Master's education, is strongly intertwined with our research. Secondly, international assessments show that our research is world class. Thirdly, as a student, you get the opportunity to excel and develop your personal skills.

Winning a Nobel Prize is only reserved for a very few. But we would like to encourage you to dare try and reach for what you want to achieve. Because, as you will learn during your Master's Introduction, our study programmes offer many possibilities and you will be able to choose your own path.

So, share your ambitions and ask for support, if you need some! Ask the questions you want to ask. Speak your mind if you have an idea. Argue when you don't agree. To become a Master of Science, you have to be an independent thinker!

With this information booklet we want to make sure you get off to a good start. If you have any questions or suggestions for improvement, please let us know at intro-gsns@uu.nl

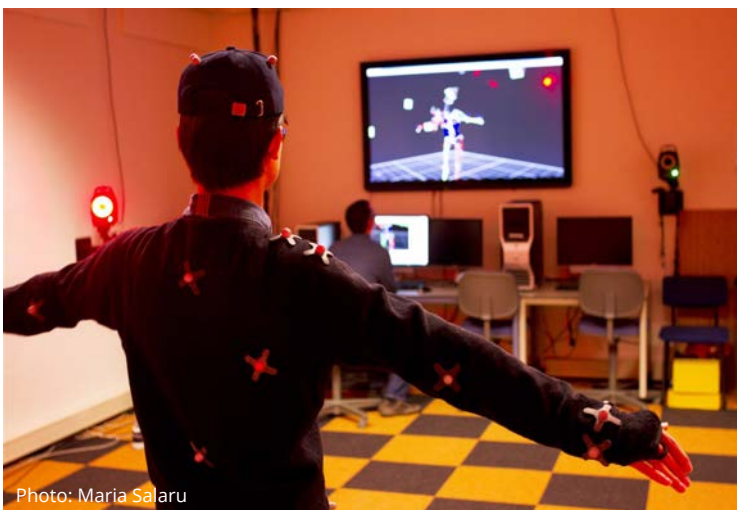


Photo: Maria Salaru



Photo: Ivar Pel

Table of contents

Find the information you are looking for by clicking on the **dark red** links below and throughout the document. Is there any information missing? Please let us know!

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

[The Graduate School of Natural Sciences](#)

YOUR STUDY PROGRAMME

[Profiles](#)

[Honours programmes](#)

[Course registration](#)

[Course evaluations](#)

[Rules and regulations](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

[Student desk](#)

[Programme coordinators](#)

[Study advisors](#)

[Board of Examiners](#)

[Career services](#)

[International office](#)

[IT facilities](#)

[Student government and participation](#)

[Study Associations](#)

[Others](#)

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW TO UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

[The Buddy programme](#)

[Campus overview](#)

[IT facilities](#)

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

[Practical guide for international students](#)

[Getting to know \(the\) Dutch](#)

[Health and safety](#)

[UU grades abroad](#)

[Public holidays](#)

EMERGENCIES

* Disclaimer: For the most up to date information, please make sure to always check the Students website of your own programme or contact your programme coordinator.



Photo: Dick Boetekees

Utrecht University



**Utrecht
University**

Utrecht University was founded in 1636. The founders chose 'Sol Iustitiae Illustra Nos' (May the Sun of Righteousness Enlighten Us) as its motto and a sun (Sol) as its symbol. At the foundation the city gave the university the Treaty of Utrecht Hall, now called the University Hall. The University motto can be observed on the solar globe in the Dom Square and in one of the sculptured reliefs on the University Hall's facade.

Education and research at Utrecht University are strongly linked and students and staff work together in tight communities. We believe diversity is important and we strive to operate as sustainably as possible.

All this provides us with a solid base from which to work with others around the globe on the societal issues of the future.



Photo: Bart Weerdenburg

Did you know...

...our **Utrecht University Store** offers a nice collection of sustainable/fairtrade UU clothing and bags? Have a look!

Did you know...

... you can charge your phone with solar energy while sitting on a bench on campus?

Read about it in [this article](#).



The Graduate School of Natural Sciences

The Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS) provides all of the Master's and PhD programmes of Utrecht University in the fields of:

*Nanomaterials
Science*

Physics

*Information
and Computing
Sciences*

Mathematics

*History and
Philosophy of
Science*

All 13 Master's and PhD programmes are firmly embedded in Utrecht University **research institutes**, which encompass world-renowned research expertise and modern educational facilities.



Photo: Kees Rutten

Prof. Bert Weckhuysen of the Debye institute with staff members and students of his group

ON-CAMPUS:

Most of our on-campus education takes place in the Koningsberger Building (KBG), the Minnaert Building (MIN) and the Buys Ballot Building (BBG). These three buildings are all connected. Note that you can only enter the Buys Ballot building through the entrance of the Koningsberger and Minnaert building.



Your Study programme

More information on your specific study programme can be found on the UU Student website. Find the link for your programme below:

Applied Data Science



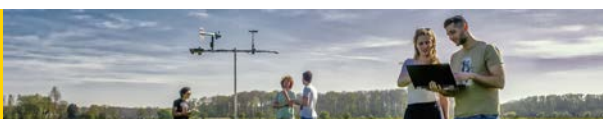
Artificial Intelligence



Business Informatics



Climate Physics



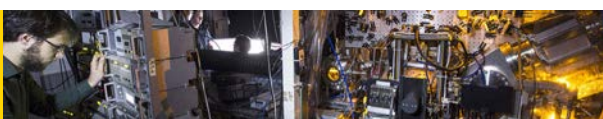
Computing Science



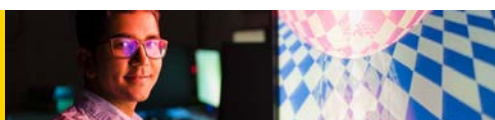
Data Science



Experimental Physics



Game and Media Technology



History and Philosophy of Science



Human Computer Interaction



Mathematical Sciences



Nanomaterials Science



Theoretical Physics



Profiles

The Graduate School of Natural Sciences offers her Master's students six profiles:

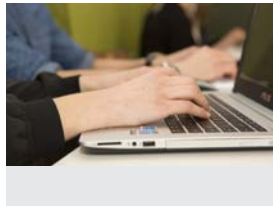
Complex systems



Educational (in Dutch only)



Applied Data Science



Science-based Entrepreneurship



Da Vinci profile



Communication (download PDF flyer)



A profile is a coherent set of courses totalling 30 study points that can be chosen as part of the total of 120 study points of your Master's programme. Profile courses are on a single theme that is usually not a standard part of your Master's programme.

Students are free to choose a profile as a part of every GSNS Master's programme, but not every programme offers all profile options. Therefore, always check to see if your programme offers the profile you are interested in. You can see which profiles you can choose from at the uu.nl/students website of your programme under Academics > Profiles.

Note: Students of the Nanomaterials Science programme can also choose the 'Management' profile. For more information, please see the [profiles page for Nanomaterials Science](#).

Note: Students of the one-year Applied Data Science programme do not follow a profile.

Special admissions conditions may also apply. **If you consider choosing a profile, always discuss this with your programme coordinator.** In addition, you will need to request **approval from the Board of Examiners**. You can find instructions for this on [this webpage](#).

You can find all information about profiles on the [GSNS profiles webpage](#).

Note: During the Introduction Programme (note: September only) there is an information session about every profile. **See the [GSNS Intro webpage](#)** for more information.

Honours programmes

The following Honours programmes are available for students of the Graduate School of Natural Sciences:

Young Innovators

This 15 EC Honours programme challenges ambitious Master's students to employ their creative abilities on complex national and international social issues. You can take part in this programme alongside every Utrecht University Master's programme, but there is a selection procedure.

Quantitative Biology

This programme offers you extra challenges in the field of Quantitative Biology and Computational Life Sciences. Discoveries in the biological and biomedical sciences increasingly require combining sophisticated technologies, quantitative measurements, and theoretical approaches such as bioinformatics, mathematical modelling and computer simulations.

Graduate Honours Interdisciplinary Seminars (GHIS)

This 7.5 EC extracurricular Honours programme offers Master's students an intellectual challenge by means of a series of interdisciplinary seminars. These seminars can be attended next to any Master's programme of Utrecht University, but there is a selection procedure.

TWIN programme (double degree)

Combining two Master's programmes is also possible, and this counts as an Honours *TWIN* programme. For more information, contact one of the two involved Master's programme coordinators and/or your study advisor.

Leadership Programme

In the UU Honours Leadership programme you learn all about leadership models and what makes effective leaders. The programme is 10 EC and taught in Dutch and English.

Course registration

As a student at Utrecht University you need to organise many matters on your own. Every year, you need to re-enrol as a student for your programme. Vice versa, you need to personally terminate your enrolment in the national Studielink student registry upon graduation or in the event of a premature termination of your studies with us.

Depending on which programme you are following and/or which course you want to take, you also need to personally register for your courses. For more information on the course registration and (re-)enrolment for your programme, click on the links below:

- **Applied Data Science**
- **Artificial Intelligence**
- **Business Informatics**
- **Climate Physics**
- **Computing Science**
- **Data Science**
- **Experimental Physics**
- **Game and Media Technology**
- **History and Philosophy of Science**
- **Human Computer Interaction**
- **Mathematical Sciences**
- **Nanomaterials Science**
- **Theoretical Physics**



Course evaluations

The quality of our courses is very important to us. To guarantee this, your feedback on the course is very valuable. Therefore you will receive an invitation by email at the end of each block to evaluate the courses you have taken.

For these course evaluations we use Caracal. After logging in with your Solis ID, you will then see the course evaluations that you can complete. All answers are processed anonymously.

You will also receive an invitation to evaluate the GSNS Introduction Programme. We appreciate it very much if you take the time to complete this evaluation.

Rules and regulations

Below you find links to the Rules and Regulations regarding your studies.

Education and Examinations Regulations (OER)

In this document you can find all the regulations about your education and examinations. For example the rules concerning cum laude, calling in sick for an exam, your exam programme etc.

The OER consists of a **general** section that applies to all Master's programmes of the Graduate School of Natural Sciences, and an **annex per programme**. The annexes are listed in a single document in alphabetical order.



You can find the OER by going to **this web page** and navigating to your study programme.

Note: Your programme might have specific regulations regarding topics like cum laude, so make sure to always check the annex of your own programme.

Contact information

During your study period at the GSNS you may want to contact or may be contacted by different staff members of the GSNS. The following paragraphs give an overview of the most important contactpersons of the School.

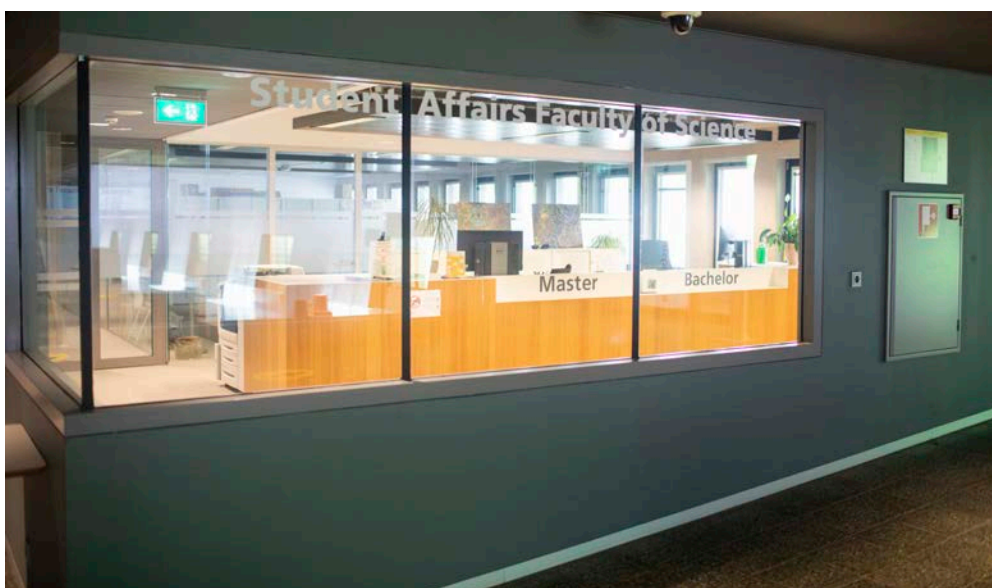
You can also always check the contact page of your programme on www.students.uu.nl to see which specific person you need.



Student Desk

The **Student Desk** is the first port of call for all Master's students of the Faculty of Science. Key tasks of the Student Desk are course registration, result registration in OSIRIS, administration of application and assessment forms for research projects, graduation and the organisation of graduation ceremonies.

Do you have a question regarding one of these topics? Please send an e-mail to science.gsns@uu.nl or contact them by phone: +31 30 253 5555 (Mon-Fri: 10.00-12.00 hrs). You can also visit the Student Desk (Mon-Fri 10.00-12.00 hrs), which is located on the first floor of the Minnaert building, room **1.20**.



Programme coordinators

Your programme coordinator can advise you on all practical matters concerning your Master's programme. For instance, how to plan your research projects and which elective courses you should choose. Find the information about your own programme coordinator in the links below.

- **Applied Data Science:** Evanthia Dimara
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Brian Logan
- **Business Informatics:** Inge van de Weerd and Gerard Wagenaar
- **Climate Physics:** Rupert Holtzinger
- **Computing Science:** Ioanna Lykourantzou and Erik-Jan van Leeuwen
- **Data Science:** Michael Behrisch
- **Experimental Physics:** Gerhard Blab
- **Game and Media Technology:** Zerrin Yumak
- **History and Philosophy of Science:** David Baneke
- **Human Computer Interaction:** Christof van Nimwegen and Maartje de Graaf
- **Mathematical Sciences:** Wilfred de Graaf
- **Nanomaterials Science:** Egbert Mulder and Shauni Keller
- **Theoretical Physics:** Lars Fritz

Study advisors

Study advisors can help you when you need advice with regard to your study programme, planning, and regulations concerning examinations. The Study advisor is also available for consultations concerning personal matters, such as disabilities and family circumstances, which may affect your academic progress. Students who have special learning needs are strongly advised to contact the Study Advisor as soon as possible to discuss the options possible.

You can find the Study advisor of your Master's programme at the uu.nl/students page of your programme, under 'Contact'. Here, you can also find the online planner to easily make an appointment.



Photo: Ivar Pel

Extra time on exams

In some cases, for example with dyslexia, students can be granted extra time on exams. Requests for extra time can be done by starting a "case" in Osiris.

Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is mandated by law to uphold the quality of tests and exams within the School. Many practical issues of the Board of Examiners are delegated to executive panels. In most cases, the executive panel is the first to contact. Examples are: receiving permission to change a student's exam programme, to follow courses abroad that are not mentioned in the student's exam programme and to have an additional test moment in case of illness or other special circumstances.

All requests to the Board of Examiners should be filed via Osiris Case. For instructions, go to uu.nl/students > your programme > Practical Information > Academic policies and procedures > Education and Examinations Regulations > Board of Examiners. For direct contact, you can email science.boardofexaminers.gsns@uu.nl.

Career services

Career Services supports students in preparing for their career after graduation. Through the academic year, we offer several events to meet and greet with alumni from our programmes. In addition we offer various workshops, from LinkedIn to Preparing a job interview. But you can also have an individual appointment with one of the career officers about any career topic.



Your first step in networking during your Master's? Find our **Career Services Faculty of Science group on LinkedIn** and become a member! Also check out **students.uu.nl/en/careerservices**

Career officer of the Faculty of Science
Simone Kastelein, **s.kastelein@uu.nl**, Minnaert building

International office



For questions about exchange programmes, and other possibilities of studying abroad, you can seek assistance from the Science International Office. You can make an (online) appointment with the international officer **here**. The International Exchange Officer at the Faculty of Science is Noor Weelink, **science.internatoff@uu.nl**.



IT facilities

If you have computer or IT related problems, you can visit the ICT-Bèta Servicepoints at the Victor J. Koningsberger building and the David de Wied building. For more information and frequently asked questions, please go to the **IT-Services website**. You can also find guides and supporting information on most of the IT-facilities on the **[UU-support page](#)**.

New at Utrecht University?

Make sure to also check the information about IT facilities on uu.nl/students of your programme under > Practical Information > IT facilities.

Student Government and Participation

At every level of Utrecht University, students and staff help develop policy and give advice to the **different governing bodies**. A well-organized student and staff representation system is very important to the functioning of the University. Also if you are not part of a consultative body, you can give your opinion on the education, facilities and other study related issues in various ways.

Voicing your opinion

Your opinion is very important to us! Constructive and critical feedback motivates us to improve our educational standards and our facilities.

Do you want to offer us feedback on our performance, or would you like to participate in educational policy making and represent the students of the Faculty of Science? You can!

- Fill out our regular course evaluations (Caracal).
- Contact your student representative in one of the (Faculty) consultative bodies
- Become a member of one of the (Faculty) consultative bodies

The (Faculty) consultative bodies are:

Board of Studies: The Board of Studies (BoS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the School and the quality of the Master's and PhD programmes. Every year one or two students participate in this board. This academic year (until september 2024) they are Melissa Kragten (m.kragten@students.uu.nl) and Tanne Bloks (t.m.j.bloks@students.uu.nl)

The Education Committee (*Opleidingscommissie, OC*) independently advises the Board of Studies of the GSNS on the quality of the Master's programmes of the School. The OC oversees the quality of programmes, raises any items of concern and provides advice on the development and delivery of education policies.

The Education Committee is composed of both a staff member and a student of the eight Degree Committees (*Opleidingsadviescommissies*). The Degree Committees advise the Education Committee on the specific Master's programmes of the degree.

Faculty Council: The Faculty Council represents the staff and students in the Faculty. The Faculty Council has approval and advisory rights on a range of faculty matters, including education. It has the power to influence very important decisions. Want to become a member? You can run for one of seven available seats for students during the annual Faculty Council student elections in May.

You can also contact the residing student member of the Faculty Board by sending an email to: science.sb@uu.nl.

Study Associations

The Graduate School of Natural Sciences collaborates closely with several Student Associations. Each Study Association has its own Board and website.

Study Associations are responsible for the sale of textbooks, syllabi and lecture notes, the organization of the Science+ Career day and workshops. Board members of Study Associations are often also active participants in departmental and/or faculty committees.

In addition to these official responsibilities, Study Associations also organize a variety of informal and fun activities for you to participate in. You can still become a member of a Study Association if you are currently enrolled in a Master's programme. You will get a chance to meet them during the introduction days.

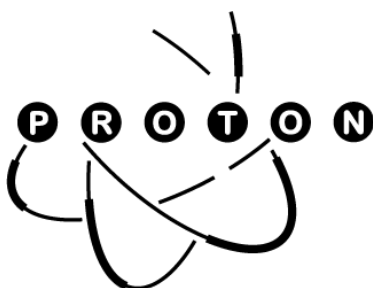
Would you like some more information? Check their websites or pay them a visit. They each have their own room, where you can always find free coffee and cookies!



Sticky is the study association for Computing Science and Information Science.
Buy's Ballot Building, room 2.81.



A-Eskwadraat is the study association for Mathematics and Physics.
Buy's Ballot Building, room 2.69.



Proton is the study association for Chemistry.
Victor J. Koningsberger Building, room 2.04.



Incognito is the study association for Artificial Intelligence.
*Drift 21, room 1.03
& Buy's Ballot building, room 2.61.*

Help around every corner

Yes, you're starting a Master's degree, the next chapter in your academic career! Probably you will experience more personal freedom and more personal responsibility than during your Bachelor's degree. This can be great, but it may also raise questions and cause stress. Fortunately, there are several people who can help you with this. On these pages you find information and advice in case of study-related or personal problems. **Help is around every corner!**

Stress and mental health

Stress is one way your body protects itself in threatening situations. It prepares and allows you to react more quickly, which can be lifesaving.

However, when you're constantly in a state of stress, this may become harmful. Chronic stress can have (serious) health implications, such as an impaired immune system and thus higher chances of becoming ill.

Additionally, chronic stress can result in mental health issues (e.g. fatigue, failure to concentrate, anxiety and possibly a burnout). This may lead to study delay or even dropping out. Thus it is very important that you try to prevent chronic stress as much as you can, by finding a healthy balance between study, work and relaxation.

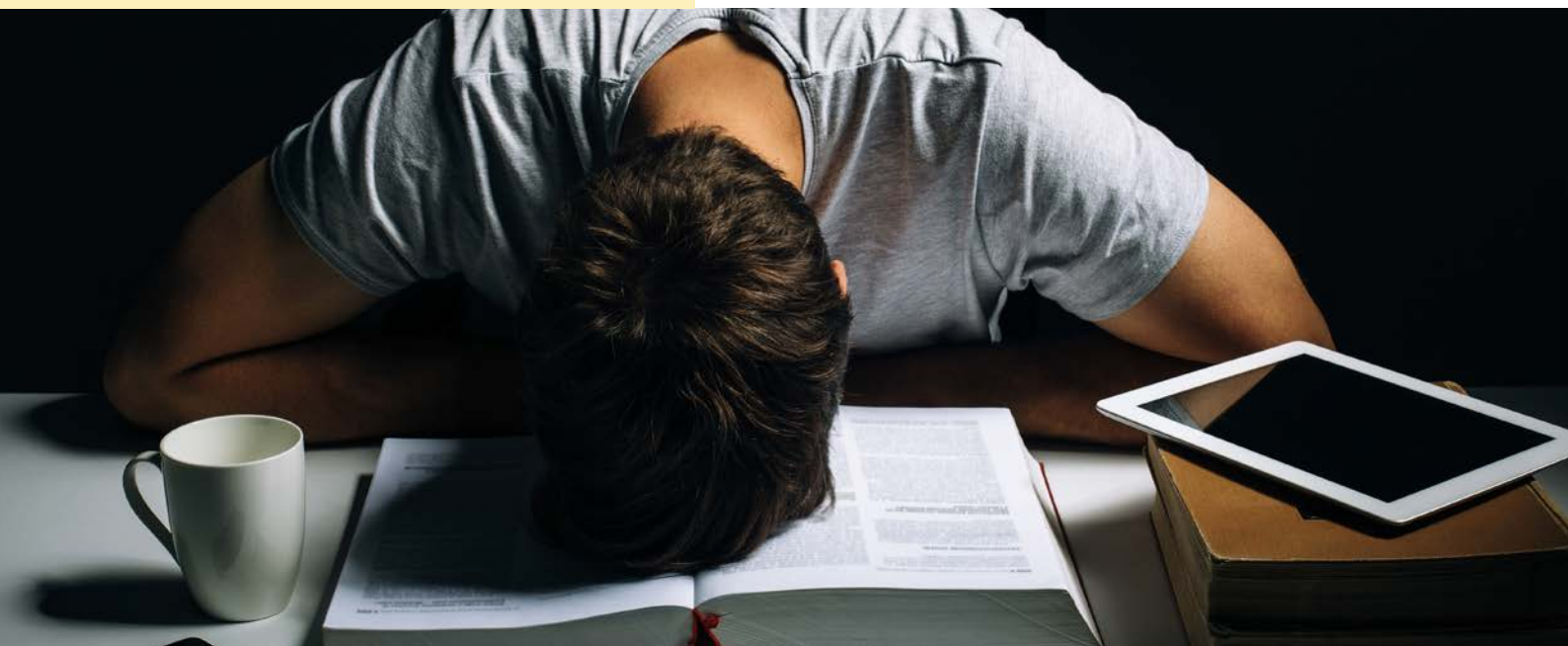


RELAXATION

- Allow yourself time to relax
- Invest in activities that you find relaxing (working out, making music, drawing, meeting up with others, etc.)
- Reduce screen time (social media, Netflix and gaming)
- Allow your brain to wind down by doing activities that are low in stimulus
- Go outside!

STRESSORS

- Put away your phone while studying.
- Highly intensive activities before going to sleep make it harder to fall asleep quickly
- Worrying too much, especially during the night, prevents having a good night's rest



Help offered by Utrecht University

- **Study advisor**

The study advisor can give you support and recommendations if you have questions about the programme's curriculum. They can also help you with personal problems that affect your ability to study effectively, such as illness, family issues and problems with study skills. If necessary, they can refer you to the right person or organisation, who can help you with specific problems. Every Master's degree has its own study advisor. On students.uu.nl/en you can search for your own programme, find out who your study advisor is and easily make an appointment.

- **Student counsellor**

Student counsellors support and advice students who are dealing with a serious study delay or are threatening to fall behind. For example, because of personal issues (chronic illness, disability), participating in sports at an international level or membership of a board of a student organisation. You can also contact the student counsellor if you're having financial problems or wish to use financial support offered by the university. If you wish to make an appointment, you need to contact the Student Services (studentservices@uu.nl).

- **Student psychologist**

The student psychologists offer help and treatment to all students who are dealing with study-related and/or personal problems. After a preliminary meeting with the psychologist, a tailored-made plan that fits your needs will be set up, whether that is a series of individual meetings, group-training sessions or a referral to another professional or institution for further assistance. You can make an appointment online via [this link](#).

- **Guidance**

Please check the complete overview in [the link](#) to see the available guidance options for your problem. For example study delay, disabilities or elite sport student options.

- **Complaints, objections and appeals**

If you feel you have not been treated properly by someone employed by Utrecht University, or if you disagree with a decision that affects you personally, please check the information on [this webpage](#).

- **Improve your skills**

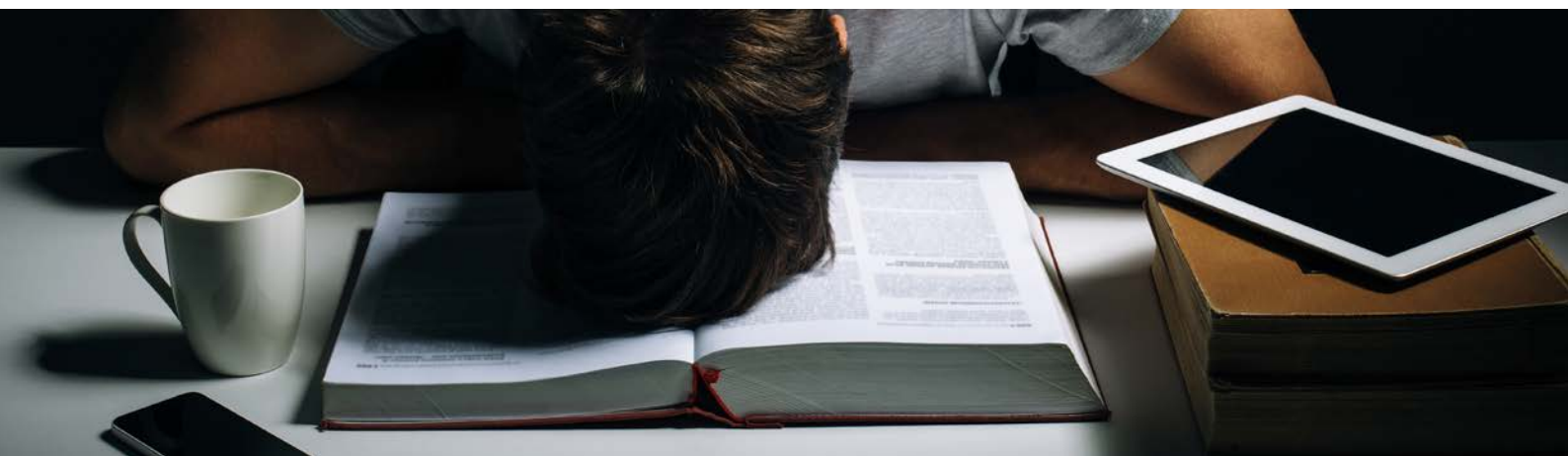
The UU Skills Lab offers a multitude of workshops, courses and guidance to help you improve your academical skills, such as writing studying and presenting. They can also partner you up with a study coach. You can contact them if you wish to improve specific skills and need help finding the right resources. [Check out their website](#).

- **Student Services**

You can contact [Student Services](#) for information on a wide range of issues relating to studying and student life. However, it is advised to always first contact the Faculty [Student Desk](#).

- **General practitioners**

If you are dealing with physical or mental health issues and you can't find the help you need at the UU, a general practitioner can directly help you. They can also refer you to a psychologist or other organisations who are experienced in dealing with specific kinds of mental problems. If you have moved to The Netherlands make sure to register with a new practice!



Others

Below an overview of information on other topics you can find on our website:

- **Academic integrity:** Everyone involved in academic teaching and research at Utrecht University shares in the responsibility to maintain academic integrity. Check the web page for resources and details of main points of contact.
- Can't find the person you are looking for? Search for an employee via **www.uu.nl/staff**
- Still can't find what you're looking for? Try searching the **A-Z Facilities List** which contains an overview of all Utrecht University's facilities.



Information for students who are new to Utrecht University

In this chapter you will find some information concerning typical Utrecht University services and regulations, like the IT facilities we use, campus card, the Wi-Fi, the semesters for courses etc.



The Buddy programme

The Buddy Programme of the GSNS is a programme developed to help new international GSNS Master's students, and students that performed their Bachelor's outside the UU, to integrate quickly and easily.

To make sure that you feel more at home in Utrecht, at our university and our academic culture, we pair you with a current student within your Master's programme. They will provide you with a helping hand before and after your arrival.

Your buddy can offer support in all sorts of ways, helping you out with questions like: "How can I open a bank account?", "Where can I buy a bike?" or "How can I view my study progress?". They can also show you around the city centre and our campus, explain the public transport system, help you locate housing services, provide information about education and administration or simply have a chat over a cup of coffee.

Participation in the Buddy Programme is completely free of charge. If you want to sign up or want more information, you can contact Melissa Kragten and Tanne Bloks through GSNSbuddy@uu.nl.



Campus overview

The education of the Graduate School of Natural Sciences mainly takes places in the following buildings on the Utrecht Science Park:



Photo: Pieter van Dorp van Vliet

Bolognalaan (BOL)
Buys Ballot Building (BBG)
Caroline Bleeker building (CBB)
David de Wied building (DDW)
Educatorium
Hans Freudenthal building (HFG)
Hugo R. Kruyt building (KRUYT)
Leonard S. Ornstein building (OL)
Marinus Ruppert building (RUP)
Minnaert Building (MIN)
Victor J. Koningsberger Building (KBG)

ON THE CAMPUS YOU CAN ALSO FIND:



Photo: Bert Spiertz

The University Library – Staff members of the University Library are happy to help you find the scientific information you are looking for. The Library also offers a significant number of study places.



Photo: Maria Salaru

The Spar University UU supermarket



Photo: Steven Snoep

The Olympos Sports Centre



Photo: Bert Spiertz

There are multiple places to get some food on campus, such as **Café Minnaert**, **Pizzeria Tricolore** or one of the **foodtrucks**.

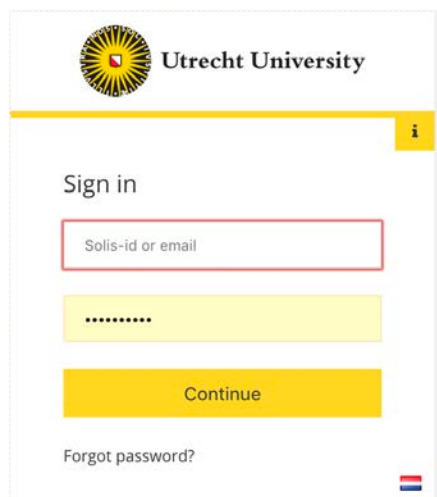
IT facilities

Wi-Fi

Before you can use any of these IT-facilities, you will of course need Wi-Fi. At the university, you can make use of the Utrecht University wireless network. Connect by using your credentials;

- Username: your UU email address (e.g. j.a.smith@students.uu.nl). Does this not work? Try studentnumber@soliscom.uu.nl instead.
- Password: your Solis password

Looking for instructions about how to configure Wi-Fi on your smartphone, tablet or laptop? Visit [the manuals webpage](#).

Utrecht University

Sign in

Solis-id or email

.....

Continue

Forgot password?

Solis-id and password

Your Solis-id is your username for most university services. You also use it to log on to university computers. It is the same as the 7-digit student number you have received after your enrolment application in Studielink. You can find this in your messages in Studielink.

Password: As a new student, you will receive your Solis-id via e-mail. In that same e-mail, you will find a link to the password portal where you are able to create your password.

Did you forget your password or would you like to change or create a new one? Use the [password portal](#).

UU mail

Every student has a Solis-mail address (@students.uu.nl). This address has been sent to your private email address (during your registration).

Log on via <https://outlook.office.com>

Use your university e-mail address (for example j.doe@students.uu.nl), your Solis-password, and (if needed) 2FA to log on

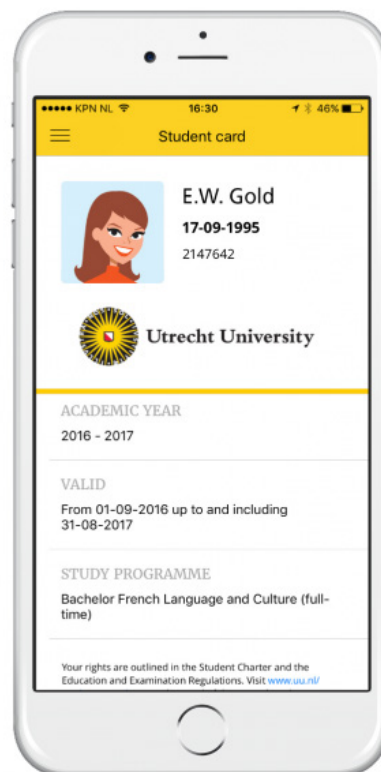
For manuals (for example mail on your smartphone), visit the [manuals website](#).



Digital Student Card

As a student registered at Utrecht University, you receive a digital student card stating the degree programme in which you are enrolled and the period of enrolment. You will find your student card in the **MyUU app**. You can log in to the app with your Solis-id.

If you prefer a paper version or cannot use the app, you can print your Declaration of Enrolment from **Osiris**.



Working Online

To access your personal files on your U drive from another location (off-campus), please follow the instructions you find **here**.

You can find the software you need for your studies (using whatever device you want) at **MyWorkplace**.

Printing, scanning and photocopying

Would you like to know how to make sure you have enough credit to print? How to install a printer on your laptop? Or how the scanner works?

Please visit **this website**.



My courses: Info, planning and booking

OSIRIS: Booking, information and results

The progress of your study will be monitored via **OSIRIS**. Through Osiris you can register for courses and tests and see your results. You can also change your personal information, like your address and contact information.

Course schedule

In the **MyUU app** for students you will find your grades from Osiris, your student card and your personal timetable. Download the app from the app stores of Android and Apple.



My Timetable

MyTimetable is the timetable website of Utrecht University and provides a better view on your long term schedule.

It also provides a feed url to import your schedule into your own calendar. More information can be found on the **MyTimetable page**.

Planning/Course information

The **Courseplanner** helps you to plan your Science courses throughout the year and consists of all the information about Science courses.

For the information on all UU-courses, please look at the **course catalog** in OSIRIS.

Blackboard

Most courses use the digital learning environment Blackboard. On the **website** you can log in with your Solis ID.

You can also use the Blackboard Mobile Learn app to access Blackboard information on your mobile devices. This app is suitable for Android, Blackberry, iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

Need help? In Blackboard, under 'Support' > 'Support students', you will find a Quick Start Guide to help you get started.

Information for students who are new to the Netherlands

WELCOME TO THE NETHERLANDS!

We are pleased that you chose to study in our beautiful country and hope you feel most welcome. In this chapter you will find some extra information about studying in the Netherlands.

We also advise you to participate in the **Welcome Week** for international students. You will receive a separate invitation for the Welcome Week.



Photo: Maria Salaru



Photo: Bas van Hattum

Practical guide for international students

Below you will find a step by step plan you can follow once you arrive in the Netherlands.

Looking for more personalized advice? Contact our **Student Desk**.

Also, as mentioned before, you can contact **Student Services** for information on a wide range of issues relating to studying and student life.

1

Find Accommodation

First of all, you need to find an accommodation for your stay in Utrecht. For more information on this topic, please visit [this website](#). Hopefully this will help you to find a place where you feel at home!

2a

Register as a resident within the municipality where you live

If you are staying in the Netherlands for more than 4 months, you will need to go to the city hall and register as a new resident of the town where you are living, within 5 days after your arrival. This register is called the Municipality Personal Records Database (BRP).

Registration regulations may vary from one council to another. It is best to contact your council directly. They can tell you the exact registration procedure, including which documents you need to hand in (such as a valid passport, your rental contract and so on).

For more information about registration in the city of Utrecht, check [this webpage](#).

2b

Get a Burgerservicenummer (BSN) number (a Citizen Service Number)

The citizen service number (BSN) is a unique number for everyone who has dealings with the Dutch government. You can and must use the citizen service number more and more often, for example in dealings with your municipality, the hospital and with an employer.

Everyone who registers as a resident with a municipality for the first time is issued a BSN.

3

Get a DigiD

Your DigiD allows you to identify yourself when making arrangements on the internet, such as with the government, educational institutes, healthcare institutions or your pension fund. Your DigiD allows you to log in anywhere easily and securely. This ensures that your personal data are always protected.

To get a DigiD (www.digid.nl/en/), you need a citizen service number (*Burgerservicenummer*, BSN)

Visit digid.nl/en/ for more information about applying for a DigiD. The application process involves a number of steps:

- Fill in your details and choose your username and password. You will need your cell phone and your Dutch Citizens Service Number (Dutch: *burgerservicenummer*).
- You will receive an activation code within 5 days by mail.
- You can activate your DigiD with the activation code, your username and password.

From the second academic year onwards, you will need a DigiD for Studielink!

4

Get a Dutch bank account (strongly advised e.g. required for Dutch phone providers and iDEAL)

It is practical to have a Dutch IBAN bank account while studying in the Netherlands. You may need it to pay the tuition fees by bank transfer or to receive your scholarship, but a Dutch bank account is also very useful for everyday payments and for matters such as getting a cell phone subscription. In shops and supermarkets credit cards are not commonly accepted.

If you open a Dutch bank account, you will receive a debit card with which you can pay at shops and restaurants, but also at the printers and copiers and the coffee, soft drinks and snack vending machines at the university (where you cannot pay in cash!). Moreover, with a Dutch bank account you can withdraw cash from ATM's without paying a fee.

Note that if you have an IBAN bank account with a Maestro card, you may not need to open a Dutch account.

There are many banks to choose from, but the major ones are ABN AMRO, ASN Bank, ING, Rabobank, SNS-bank and Triodos. Most banks offer free accounts for international students. Banks offer package deals which include a variety of services and means of payment. >>



It might differ which documents you need to bring when opening a bank account, but most often you need:

- Proof of ID (passport or identity card)
- Official proof of address, such as a tenancy agreement
- **Citizen service number** (burgerservicenummer, BSN)
- If you are from a country outside the EU: your residence permit
- Proof of study at a Dutch university (when applying for a student account)

Most banks charge an annual fee dependent on the type of account and the method of payment you choose. Annual costs vary, with sometimes less expensive options for students. If you would like a credit card with your Dutch account, the bank charges additional costs.

iDEAL is an online payment method that enables **consumers** to pay online through their own bank. In addition to webshops, other organizations that are not part of the e-commerce market also offer iDEAL. iDEAL is increasingly used to pay energy bills, make donations to charities, buy mobile credits, pay local taxes, traffic fines, etc.

5

Get an OV-chip card

The OV-chipkaart is the means of payment for the entire public transport system throughout the country (bus, train, tramway and subway). The card is the size of a bank card and contains an invisible chip. The OV-chipkaart can be loaded with credit in euros with which you can travel anywhere within The Netherlands. You can **click here** for more information about the OV-chipcard.

More information about public transport in general? Or looking for a bicycle crash course? **Visit this website.**

Looking for even more information? Visit the link below:

www.uu.nl/en/education/welcome-to-utrecht

Getting to know (the) Dutch

As admitted students of Utrecht, you are entitled to a **free Dutch language course** provided by UU. This course is designed to give you an idea of what it's like to be an international student in the Netherlands, specifically one studying in Utrecht. Also, it will run you through the basic vocabulary needed to survive during your time here, such as navigating the transport in Utrecht and the rest of the Netherlands, and how to find your way around the city on a bicycle.

So not only will you learn enough Dutch needed to impress the locals, but you can also gain an idea of what student life in Utrecht is like, and familiarize yourself with the best places to see, eat, and drink before you arrive.

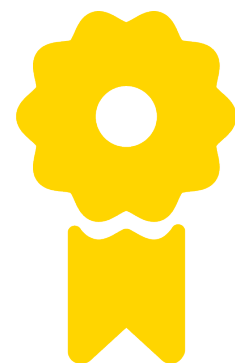


Health and safety

Hopefully your stay in the Netherlands will be without any health or safety problems. Most likely this will be the case. However, should you need any medical assistance or emergency services, **here** you can find some useful information.

UU Grades abroad

To help foreign universities to interpret the values of your grades, Utrecht University provides Grading tables. More information can be found **here**, at the page: Your UU grades abroad: Grading Tables.





Public Holidays

The Netherlands has two unique official public holidays, being the King's Birthday on the 27th of April and the Liberation Day on the 5th of May each year.

Apart from that, there are a number of holidays generally recognized and provided to students like New Year's day, Easter Monday etc. The complete overview of 2023-2024 can be found in the table below.

25-26 December	Christmas
1 January	New Year's Day
29 March	Good Friday
31 March - 1 April	Easter Sunday & Monday
27 April	King's Day
5 May	Liberation Day
9 May	Ascension Day
19 - 20 May	Whit Sunday & Monday

King's Day

King's Day celebrates the birthday of the King of the Netherlands. Each year the royal family visits one city and enjoys the festivities there. However, all around the Netherlands festivities take place. Most cities already start the evening before with King's Night. Both King's Night and King's Day are filled with all kinds of activities like an open-air market, boat parades, concerts, festivals etc.



Photo: Jan Lankveld



Liberation Day

On the 5th of May the Liberation of the Netherlands after the Second World War is celebrated. Everyone celebrates this in a different way, but many students visit a festival. There are festivals in many cities, make sure to check one of them out if you are interested!

On the evening before, on the 4th of May, all war victims are honoured. Two minutes of silence are held at 20:00 and all Dutch flags are at half-mast until sunset.

Sinterklaas

Although this is **not** a public holiday most Dutch families celebrate Sinterklaas around the 5th of December. Sinterklaas (or the Sint) is a legendary figure based on Saint Nicholas, patron saint of children.



Would you like some more information? Read [this page](#) or ask your fellow students or teachers!

Emergencies

In case of an emergency in a building or **on the site of Utrecht University** always call the Control Room (**030 253 44 44**) and **112**.

No emergency but you want to report something? Please call: **030 253 13 00**.

For life-threatening situations **outside the site of Utrecht University** call: **112**.

Please save these numbers in your phone and check the [website](#) for more information.

NL-Alert: Immediate information in an emergency situation

In the Netherlands the government uses **NL-Alert** to alarm and inform you when disaster strikes in your vicinity. All phones made by big name brands are automatically set up to receive NL-Alert.

NL-Alert is based on cell broadcast technology. This technology is used to send text messages via the phone masts of all providers. It works in a similar way to a radio signal. You also receive NL-Alert if the network is overloaded. NL-Alert is free and anonymous. Your name and telephone number are not required and thus remain unknown.

Also NL-Alert can be seen on a growing number of digital advertising displays and digital signage at bus, tram and metro stops. Wherever you see NL-Alert, the text message always states what is going on and what you should do.



COLOPHON -DECEMBER 2023

COORDINATORS MASTER'S INTRO GSNS: Björn Scheenstra,
Lisanne de Jong & Linde de Wiljes

EDITORS: Björn Scheenstra, Lisanne de Jong & Linde de Wiljes

LAY-OUT: Catholijn Luteijn

COPYRIGHT: Utrecht University

This guide has been compiled with the utmost care, but is intended for informational purposes only. No rights can be derived from its contents.