Expat Essentials: Your Start in the Leiden Region
Expat Essentials: Your Start in the Leiden Region
Leiden has 88 bridges, 3,000 monuments, 35 Almshouse courtyards, 35,000 students (including 3,500 international students), 28 km of canals, 13 museums. The region has 12,000 international employees, of which 3,600 are expats.
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Who Are We?
The Expat Centre Leiden (ECL) offers government services and information, and provides a network for internationals living or working in the Leiden region. Internationals can make an appointment for registration and receive a Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer – BSN), as well as detailed information about living in the Netherlands. Our helpdesk staff are happy to answer your questions, and we recommend you visit our website expatcentreleiden.nl, which is a great source of information. Stay updated about events, subscribe for newsletters and contribute to building an active community. Expat Centre Leiden is the place where you connect to each other, to society and to our partners.

For Whom?
The Expat Centre Leiden carries out registrations for internationals living or working in Leiden, Leiderdorp, Oegstgeest, Voorschoten and Zoeterwoude. Our clients are companies, highly skilled migrants, intra-corporate transferees, scientific researchers, entrepreneurs, recent graduates in their orientation year and EU citizens who fall under these categories, as well as their families (no students).

Services in the Leiden Region
We offer services in the Leiden Region for all stages of expat life: coming to, settling in, living in and leaving. Depending on your country of origin, you may need an entry visa, a work permit, or a residence permit. You will also need to register with the Municipal Personal Records Database to obtain a Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer - BSN). It is important to know what you need to arrange during the coming to (before arrival), settling-in (just arrived), living in and leaving phases.

The Expat Essentials booklet provides you with a good start in the Leiden region. It contains all the information you need for everyday life as an international in the Netherlands. A listing of our partners can be found in the last section of this book.

Please contact us if you have any further questions or require more information. We are happy to assist you so that you will feel at home in the Leiden region as soon as possible. Stay updated via one of our social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, or sign up for our monthly e-newsletter. This way, you’ll always get the latest news on activities and events.

Welcome to the Leiden Region!
First Things First
A move is always hectic, and it involves many formalities that must be taken care of. The full list of things to do depends on your nationality, place of birth, family, and sometimes on your employer’s choice of work permit. Whichever route you choose, thorough preparation is essential.

Once you are here, you’ll need to know how to make your settling in phase as smooth as possible. What are ‘must do’s’ and what are the ‘good to knows’?

Must Do’s:
• Within five days of arrival, make an appointment via expatcentreleiden.nl to register with the Municipal Personal Records Database and obtain your Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer – BSN)
• Open a Dutch bank account
• Arrange Dutch health insurance within four months of obtaining your BSN
• Register with a local doctor and dentist
• Register with your local Embassy or consulate

Good to Know:
• Register imported vehicles with the Dutch authorities, people registered as living in the Netherlands cannot own/drive a ‘foreign’ vehicle
• It is compulsory for children between the age of 5 and 16 to attend full-time education
• Consider additional insurance, such as personal liability insurance and travel insurance. This is not compulsory
• Ask your HR department to apply for the 30% ruling (if applicable)
As an expat or international in the Leiden region, there are several things you need to know. What makes life here different to where you come from? You will probably have loads of questions about housing, the healthcare system, your driving licence, and so on.

If you have children and a job, you will want to arrange childcare facilities. But how will you get your kids there? By bike, car or public transportation? As you will discover, the start of your stay can be a bit of a challenge...

This booklet provides you with essential information on living, working, education and social life in the Netherlands.

**Essential Numbers**

The most important number to remember in case of an emergency is 112 (It would be wise to save this in your mobile phone). This number can be called for free in any kind of serious emergency (to request the police, fire service or an ambulance) and they will be able to help you in English.

- **Police, Ambulance, Fire (Emergency)** 112
- National Police (non-emergency) 0900 8844
- Outage Gas, Electricity 0800 9009
- Sea Rescue / Coast Guard (Kustwacht) 0900 0111
- Breakdown Service (Car) (ANWB)* 088 2692 888

* This may require a subscription.

On the first Monday of every month at 12:00 noon emergency sirens are tested nationwide. Do not be alarmed. In the event of hearing the emergency siren at any other time, turn on your television or radio and tune in to a local station for further information.
Once you are in the Netherlands, you will want to arrange your banking affairs. You can open a bank account, which will allow you to use services such as iDEAL. The Dutch government, local municipalities and most employers prefer a Dutch bank account for financial transactions.

**Opening a Bank Account**

In order to open a bank account in the Netherlands, you will need to visit a bank and bring along the following documents:

- Valid ID
- Proof of address (your rental agreement or a recent utility bill should be sufficient).
- Some banks also require proof of regular income such as a payslip or contract.

**Bank Services**

All Dutch banks provide a similar range of services to their customers and have online banking services. Unlike in some countries, cheques are not commonly used in the Netherlands. Cash machines (ATMs) are widespread. Credit/debit cards are not accepted everywhere. Dutch supermarkets generally do not accept credit cards.

Most banks offer a variety of account types. The most easily acquired accounts are:

- current accounts (Betaalrekening)
- savings accounts (Spaarrekening).

Current (checking) accounts (Betaalrekening) come with a debit card which enables you to withdraw money from ATMs and to pay in shops and restaurants.

**ATMs**

ATMs are called geldautomaten or pinautomaten in Dutch. Every reasonably sized town in the Netherlands has a few ATMs, and larger cities have many. It is possible to use any bank card in most ATMs in the Netherlands, regardless which bank issued the card. For example, if you have a Rabobank card, you may also use it at an ING pinautomaat at no extra charge. This is called guest use (gastgebruik), you can only do this once a day.

**Credit Cards**

In order to qualify for a credit card, you will require sufficient income. You will pay an annual fee and possibly an additional monthly fee for the card. The Dutch tend to use credit cards for purposes such as renting a car and online purchases, or when travelling abroad. Whichever bank you choose, it is recommendable to obtain a bank card which can be used abroad. Look for the Maestro and Cirrus logos on bank cards, as these networks allow you to withdraw money in most countries.

**Lost or Stolen Cards**

All lost or stolen bank and credit cards should be reported to the police as soon as possible. In the event of loss or theft, it is also advisable to contact your bank to have your card blocked.

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The Dutch healthcare system is referred to as a ‘gatekeeper system’: the general practitioner/family doctor (huisarts) being the main link to any specialist or hospital. In order to see a medical specialist at a hospital, you will need to make an appointment with your GP to get a referral. Without exception, health insurance is compulsory for every person who lives or works in the Netherlands. Insurance reimburses part of your medical expenses, depending on the level of cover you have chosen. You may also opt to take out additional insurance to cover costs not included in the basic package.

The General Practitioner (huisarts)
When you first arrive in the Netherlands it is important to register with a nearby GP/family doctor (huisarts) as soon as possible. In case of an emergency or home visit, a doctor must be able to get to your home within fifteen minutes.

Need to Knows:
- It is customary to see your new GP for an initial interview before registering with their practice.
- In the Netherlands, you require an appointment to see a doctor.
- If possible, provide your new GP with your medical records to inform him/her of your health situation.
- If you require medicine, your GP will write a prescription which you can take to the nearest pharmacy (apotheek) to collect your medicine.
- The general practitioner/family doctor (huisarts) should be the first person you call for any medical problems, with the exception of emergencies (call 112).
- You will always need a referral in order to see a specialist, except for appointments with a physiotherapist or midwife.
- Outside office hours, a special out-of-hours GP service (huisartsenpost) can be contacted.

Health Insurance
According to the Healthcare Insurance Act (Zorgverzekeringswet), anyone who resides or works in the Netherlands is required to take out insurance with a health insurer of their choice to cover medical expenses, within four months of arrival. Please be aware that international health insurances are generally not accepted as a substitute for Dutch health insurance.

Everyone is entitled to a basic health insurance package. The government determines the cover level of this basic package, a standard package offered by all insurers. Healthcare insurers are obliged to accept anyone who applies for the standard insurance package and must charge all policyholders the same premium, regardless of their age or state of health. You pay a fixed, nominal premium to your insurance company for the standard health insurance package.

If you have an income or receive a social security benefit, you are also due to pay an income-related premium, which will be automatically deducted from your salary. The level of this premium depends on your situation.
Additional Insurance
The standard package does not cover all medical expenses. You can opt to take out additional insurance to cover, for example, physiotherapy or dental care. Additional insurance is not obligatory, and you are not obliged to take out both the standard package and additional insurance with the same insurance company.

More Information
- Extensive independent information provided by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport about Health Care Insurance in English, German, Spanish, French and Polish can be found at the Zorgverzekeringslijn website: zorgverzekeringslijn.nl/jouw-situatie or via 0800-6464644 from within the Netherlands or +31-88-9006960 from abroad (9am to 5pm).
- Read more on the government and health insurance: government.nl/topics/health-insurance
- ACCESS offers more information about the health care system in the Netherlands: access-nl.org/healthcare-netherlands

Municipal Health Service (GGD)
Vaccinations for people planning to visit the tropics can be obtained at the municipal health service (Gemeentelijke Gezondheids Dienst - GGD). Foreigners who come to the Netherlands generally do not have to get vaccinated at the GGD. However, people with certain nationalities are required to get tested for tuberculosis upon arrival in the Netherlands. More information about tuberculosis testing can be found here: ind.nl/en/Pages/General_conditions.aspx

Finding a Dentist
The best way to find a dentist is by personal recommendation from friends, colleagues, neighbours or family. Simply phone and ask to register with the dentist of your choice. The municipality may also provide you with information of dentists who speak your language. Once you have registered with a dental practice they may send you reminders to attend biannual check-ups (this may be a requirement of your insurance company).

Coverage of Dental Care
The cost of dental care is usually not included in a basic health insurance package (basispakket). You may want to take out additional insurance. For information about your coverage, check your policy terms or contact your insurer.
Internationals often start their assignment in the Leiden region in a temporary accommodation such as a hotel or serviced apartment. Depending on your expected length of stay, family size, personal preferences, budget and the availability of suitable accommodation, you will choose either to rent or buy a property.

You will probably need to do some research, but with the right advice and the assistance of the partners in our partner listing, you will succeed in finding your home.

**Renting a House**

If you are planning to stay less than three years, renting is probably your best option. You are spared the inconvenience of arranging major repairs or maintenance, and the risk of not being able to sell the property before your departure back home. There are many options for renting a property in the private sector in the Leiden area, fully furnished and unfurnished. If you plan to rent a property, it may be useful to note the following facts:

- You will pay rent in advance on a monthly basis.
- A month’s worth of rent as a deposit is common. Some landlords require two months’ rent. The deposit will be refunded after the lease has been ended.
- Major maintenance is the property owner’s responsibility, minor repairs are your own responsibility.

**Buying a House**

When you intend to stay in the Netherlands for a longer period of time, it might be beneficial to buy a house. There are some things you need to know when you are considering buying a house:

- When you become a property owner in the Netherlands, you are entitled to claim certain tax benefits. If the house which you have bought is your primary residence, your mortgage (hypotheek) interest payments will be tax-deductible, as will many other expenses incurred during the purchase (notarial deed etc.).
- It is advisable to consult with a mortgage advisor at your bank or an agency first, in order to calculate a realistic estimate of the price range suitable to your situation.
- You can contact an estate agent (makelaar) to keep you informed of suitable properties for sale, to arrange house viewings and for practical advice. An estate agent will require a commission, usually between 1 and 2 percent of the purchase price, plus VAT (BTW).

The best way to get a ‘feel’ for the market is by looking at websites like Funda (available in English). For professional advice and assistance with your property search and negotiation, mortgages or legal matters, please check our partners list via expatcentreleiden.nl/en/partners.
The Leiden region is ideally located within short travelling distance of various large cities, such as Amsterdam and The Hague. It is very easily accessible via public transport (train and bus), car, taxi, boat and by bike! Leiden to Schiphol Airport is only 20 minutes by train and Rotterdam-The Hague airport is 25 minutes away.

**Public Transport**

The Netherlands is a small and densely populated country with an excellent public transport system. Wherever you want to go in the Netherlands, you can get there easily and in comfort by train, bus, tram, ferry, and more.

Most people buy an OV-chipcard: a transportation card that can be used on all different forms of public transportation throughout the entire country.

You need to check in and check out with your OV-chipcard when travelling. Sometimes the card reader is in the bus or the tram and sometimes on the platform. It is important to note that travelling without paying a travel fee through using an OV-chipcard or buying a ticket is illegal, and passengers are constantly checked on this.

Sometimes, in order to get a specific location, you will need to transfer from one form of transportation to another. A practical site where you can plan your travel by public transportation is [9292.nl](http://9292.nl) (there is also an app).

You can add credit to your OV-chipcard at the Tourist Information or any train station. Alternatively, you can buy a subscription and pay via monthly direct debits. Visit ns.nl to find out more.

**Cycling**

Cycling is a very common method of transport in the Netherlands. Dutch people use their bike for everything: such as a way to commute, for recreation and transportation. It is very popular because of the good infrastructure, with a well maintained network of cycle paths and clear signposts. Wearing a biking helmet is not compulsory.

This makes cycling in the Netherlands safe, convenient and pleasant. In the Leiden region the infrastructure is very good. You can easily cycle from the city to the coast. Within only 20-30 minutes of cycling you can enjoy the wide, sandy beaches.

Rules and Regulations
Whether your driving licence needs to be exchanged for a Dutch licence depends on the issuing country and the validity of your foreign licence.

For more detailed information, please visit our helpdesk or look at our website: expatcentreleiden.nl/en/essentials/essential-info/transportation/motor-vehicles-and-driving-license/driving-license

Driving in The Netherlands
In order to drive a car in the Netherlands, you must own a valid driving licence and you must be aged 18 or over. It is also compulsory to have third party insurance and the vehicle you are driving must be registered. If you are a resident of the Netherlands, it is prohibited for you to drive a car which is registered in another country. Holders of a foreign driving licence issued by an EU country may drive in the Netherlands for a period of 10 years or (in the case that the licence expires at an earlier date) until the expiry date of the licence. When the foreign driving licence expires, it can be exchanged for a Dutch licence at the town hall. If you hold a driving licence which was issued in a country outside the EU, you are required to exchange this licence for a Dutch one within six months after registering in the Netherlands. For holders of driving licences from certain countries it is compulsory to take a driving test before they receive a Dutch driving licence.

30% Ruling
If the 30% ruling applies to you, you and your family may exchange your foreign driving licences for Dutch licences, regardless of which country you are from.

Exchanging a Driving Licence
Are you not allowed to drive a car in the Netherlands? Then you will have to exchange your driving licence. You will be able to use your foreign driving licence for 185 days after the date of your arrival, after which you are required to pass the regular Dutch CBR theory and driving tests. You may take the theory exam in Dutch, English or Turkish. More information on what you can expect: driveright.nl/theory/theory-test.

Dutch licences are generally issued for 10 years. If you have a licence which was issued in an EU country, it will also be valid for 10 years from the date of issue. However, you may wish to exchange a foreign driving licence for a Dutch one since the Dutch driving licence is accepted as valid proof of identity in many cases.
Working in the Leiden Region
The Netherlands offers many opportunities to start a career. Many internationals decide to stay in the country after they graduate. In the Netherlands you can expect good working conditions, a high quality of life and an attractive living and social environment.

Leiden Bio Science Park
There are plenty of job opportunities in the Leiden region. Leiden is a true knowledge city where ample scientific research takes place in areas such as Life Sciences & Health. The Leiden Bio Science Park is the leading life sciences and health cluster in the Netherlands. It is a mature science cluster with over 130 companies, home to drug development companies in all phases of the value chain, and to a number of renowned academic R&D institutes of Leiden University and Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC).

LUMC, Centre of Medical Innovation
The LUMC is a modern university medical centre for research, education and patient care with a high quality profile and a strong scientific orientation. Its unique research practice, ranging from pure fundamental medical research to applied clinical research, places LUMC among the world’s best.

The LUMC acts as a knowledge centre for topics in the field of public health with an impact on society. It has a directive function in the region and is a centre for continuing education and further training for medical professionals. The collaboration between LUMC, Leiden University and the Leiden Bio Science Park creates unique possibilities for medical innovation in Leiden and the surrounding area.

Leiden University
The university of Leiden is an important international player, as well as an employer. It was founded in 1575 and is one of Europe’s leading international research universities. It has seven faculties in the arts, sciences and social sciences, spread over locations in Leiden and The Hague. The University has over 6,500 staff members and 26,900 students. The University has set up the Service Centre International Staff (SCIS). A specialized team at SCIS will serve as a guide for foreign university employees throughout the entire process of moving to and staying in the Netherlands. The team can assist in matters such as immigration, housing, formalities and all things required for an easy landing.

More information:
- leidenbiosciencepark.nl
- lumc.nl
- universiteitleiden.nl/en
- universiteitleiden.nl/scis
- scis@leidenuniv.nl
Entrepreneurs
It is also possible to set up your own business within the Leiden region. The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst - IND) has dedicated webpages for start-up businesses and self-employed persons.

Entrepreneurs can make an appointment to get registered and obtain a Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer - BSN) at the Expat Centre Leiden after receiving their residency permit.

Important links:
ind.nl/en/work/working_in_the_Netherlands/Pages/Start-up.aspx
ind.nl/en/work/working_in_the_netherlands/pages/self-employed-person.aspx
kvk.nl/english/

Recruitment Agencies
You will find many recruitment agencies in Leiden, offering permanent and temporary positions. These recruitment agencies are frequently looking for employment specialists and native speakers. Many agencies offer access to large networks for international companies. Search the internet for ‘uitzendbureau’ or ‘werving- en selectiebureau’ meaning Recruitment Agencies.
30% ruling
The 30% -ruling allows employers to grant certain employees with special skills or expertise which is scarce or absent on the Dutch labour market a maximum tax-free allowance of (approximately) 30% of their salary as far as it exceeds the minimum taxable salary criterion given below. To qualify, the employee must -amongst others- be hired from abroad and meet the following salary criterion:

- For employees older than 30, the required taxable salary for 2021 must be more than € 38,961.
- For employees younger than 30 and holding a qualifying master title, the required taxable salary for 2021 must be more than € 29,616.
- For certain scientific researchers/teachers, no salary criterion applies.

This tax-free allowance is meant to compensate for additional expenses incurred during a temporary stay outside the country of origin (extra-territorial costs). These expenses cannot be reimbursed separately tax free on top of the 30% tax free reimbursement except for moving expenses and international school fees.

As of 1st January 2021, the ruling is only applicable for a maximum period of 5 years.
The 30%-ruling has certain consequences in terms of social security. Social security rights and premiums may also be affected as these will be based on salary only, thus excluding the 30% allowance. Please contact our partners in Taxes for most updated details.

Another important feature of the 30%-ruling is that investment income will -in general- not be subject to Dutch taxation (“box 3”).

Important
The 30% ruling is only applicable if approved by the Tax Administration Authority (Belastingdienst) or a certified tax advisory firm. The employer and employee need to file a joint request to apply for the ruling. The request for the 30% ruling must be filed within 4 months after the start of employment. Requests that have not been filed within 4 months, will not have a retroactive effect from the start date of the employment. In that case, the 30%-ruling will only be applicable as of the month following the date of the request.

More information
- expatcentreleiden.nl or via 071 516 6005
- belastingdienst.nl or via 088-154 2955 or 088-154 2862
- hbk.nl or via 071 542 27 20
Daycare

The Netherlands has no formal educational provision for children under the age of four: the age at which they can start primary school.

However, outside the formal education system, there are childcare facilities for young children, such as babysitters, nurseries and childminders. Childcare facilities, in the shape of out-of-school care, are also available for children of school age.

Childcare policy was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (het Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid) to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (het Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap - OCW).

For more information on childcare and childcare allowance, visit: belastingdienst.nl/english/benefits/moving_to_the_netherlands/my_child_goes_to_a_childcare_centre

In the ACCESS guide ‘Your Child’ you will find more information about regulations and the different types of childcare: access-nl.org/living-netherlands/childcare
The philosophy behind the Dutch education system reflects the mentality of Dutch society as a whole and aims to encourage students to live and learn in an open-minded and creative manner. Generally, schools in the Netherlands offer high-quality education. Compulsory education (leerplicht) in the Netherlands applies to all children aged 5 to 16, or until they have a diploma. Due to this obligation, schools will not give permission to parents to take children out of school outside of official school holidays.

The Education System
Education in the Netherlands consists of the following levels:

- Nursery school (not compulsory)
- Primary education/Elementary education (basisschool)
- Secondary education/(VMBO, HAVO, VWO)
- Tertiary education
  - Senior Secondary Vocational Education (MBO)
  - Higher Vocational Education (HBO)
  - University (WO)

How to Choose a Dutch School?
In order to find a Dutch primary or secondary school, your municipality’s website is probably the good place to start. Unfortunately, these websites are likely to be in Dutch only.

On the following websites you can find more information about regular schools in the Netherlands: scholenopdekaart.nl and 10000scholen.nl. On expatcentreleiden.nl you will find a guide on how to choose a school. It gives you a lot of detailed information about the options for primary education in Leiden.

Visit several schools so that you can get a feel for each school – it is a very personal decision.

Primary Education
Although by law children are not required to start school until the age of 5, most start on the day after their fourth birthday. This means that everyone starts school on a different day throughout the year. At age 4, a child starts in group 1. Group 8 (age 11 or 12) is the last grade of primary school, after which pupils proceed to secondary school.

Most schools combine groups 1 & 2. The children in this group are called ‘kleuters’, and the group is known as ‘kleuterklas.’ In the ‘kleuterklas’ the focus is on learning through play, social skills, fine and gross motor skills, structure, and gradual preparation for reading and writing. Formal reading and writing starts in group 3 (age 6).
Good to know:

- All schools are funded by the government.
- In the Netherlands you have regular (openbare) and special schools. Regular schools are both funded and run by the Dutch government. Special schools have their own board, which usually consists of parents or the foundation that set up the school. Special schools receive equal state funding to regular schools.
- On almost all schools parents pay a ‘voluntary parental contribution’ with which schools pay for extras. The amount varies from 50 – 800 euro.

Secondary Education

Once children leave primary school (basisschool) at age 12, they enter secondary education which generally continues until the age of 16 - 18, depending on the type of education chosen. All secondary schools start with a basic curriculum. Every student takes a wide variety of classes that are more or less the same, regardless of which school is attended. In the Netherlands, there are different levels of secondary education:

1. **Lower secondary professional education (VMBO):** children are prepared for a practical internship followed by employment or vocational education. It generally takes 4 years.
2. **General senior secondary education (HAVO):** This course takes 5 years and prepares children for Higher Vocational Education/College/University of Applied Sciences (HBO)
3. **Pre-University education (VWO):** This course takes 6 years and is the admission level for universities.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a dedicated list of all primary and secondary schools. The Expat Centre and the Municipality of Leiden organize seminars about Dutch education in general, covering which schools offer English language from group 1, international schools and how to find a school in Leiden, Leiderdorp, Oegstgeest, Voorschoten and Zoeterwoude. Visit expatcentreleiden.nl for more information.

International Education

In the Netherlands, there are four types of international schools:

- government-funded Dutch schools with an international education department;
- private international schools;
- foreign national schools;
- schools associated with embassies.

An international school follows either an international curriculum, or a curriculum that is in line with the educational system and legislation of a specific country other than the Netherlands. These schools are mainly attended by foreign children. Visit expatcentreleiden.nl for the checklist of International Schools and an overview of international schools in the region.
Social Essentials

Social Behaviour
Like any culture, the Dutch have their own form of social behaviour. What is the best way to behave in and out of work?

Working Life
The Dutch business world is not a high power distance culture. Relations are often based on trust, and during a decision-making process everyone’s views are heard. Often a compromise is reached that is agreeable to all parties. In the Netherlands, many meetings take place during office hours. It is a much-used method for exchanging views in the run-up to a decision. This process can take a great deal of time before a decision is made. By contrast, in the Netherlands people like to come straight to the point during an appointment or meeting. In other cultures, it is often customary to get well-acquainted with new business partners, or to spend more time on ‘small talk’ before discussing business.

Practical Tips
- The Dutch do not use titles when they talk to people. In writing, you can state a title, but this is only done in official letters.
- In Dutch business it is important to know how to handle a phone call. The Dutch always state their name (and if necessary the company name) first.
- Typical working hours in the Netherlands are between 9 AM and 5 PM (office jobs). Most organizations cannot be contacted outside these working hours. Other working hours apply to industries such as hospitality and construction.
- There are major differences in how people dress in various business settings. The nature of an organization is a determining factor when it comes to a dress code. Banks are known for a ‘suit culture’ whereas casual clothing is usually the standard for organizations in the cultural sector.
- The Dutch speak directly and use ample eye contact.
- When the Dutch introduce you to someone it is common to shake hands and state your name. Upon leaving you shake hands again and thank the person for the visit/meeting.
- If it is your birthday your colleagues/class mates expect you to bring your own cake or other treats to share.
**Going Dutch**

The Dutch are modest, tolerant and independent people. They like to be self-sustaining and enterprising. In the Netherlands, education, ambition and competence are regarded as important, valuable traits. ‘Doe normaal’ (*just act normally*) is a frequently used phrase.

The Dutch are very open-minded people and they are not easily offended if you do not behave according to the typically Dutch conventions. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes, Dutch people will understand that you are a foreigner. To help you understand the Dutch a little better, we will give you some examples of typically Dutch (*cultural*) behaviour:

- The Dutch generally avoid superlatives. Compliments are offered sparingly, and to say that something is ‘not bad’ is to praise it.

- The Dutch generally call in advance to make appointments with friends. It is not very common to just drop by.
The majority of Dutch people do speak English quite well and often are also fluent in one or two other languages on top of that, such as German and/or French. However, it might be very practical to know at least some phrases that are often used in daily life. The Dutch appreciate it when foreigners take the effort to speak their language and are more than willing to help you with your pronunciation.

### Useful Words and Sentences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Goedemorgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good afternoon</td>
<td>Goedemiddag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Goedenavond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May I ask you something?</td>
<td>Mag ik u iets vragen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you help me?</td>
<td>Kunt u mij helpen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice to meet you!</td>
<td>Leuk kennis te maken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasty</td>
<td>Lekker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosy</td>
<td>Gezellig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much</td>
<td>Dank u wel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Alstublieft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me</td>
<td>Pardon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Dicht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Google Chrome

One of the first things that will be useful now that you’ve moved to the Netherlands is (if you’re not a native Dutch speaker) to install Google Chrome to your laptop, tablet and/or phone. Once downloaded, enable the Google Translate extension.

Using Google Chrome, you can translate many web pages automatically into English, or your chosen language. This also works for a variety of attachments, although for text within photos or images, the text will not translate on a web page.

When you open a webpage written in another language, you should see a pop-up asking to translate the page. You can customise Google Chrome to always translate the language without asking. The Chrome mobile app displays a language bar at the bottom of the screen, within settings, to let you quickly switch between English and the original language. You can turn this feature on or off – it is on by default.

Some Government sites and forms may not allow the text to be translated. You can use Google Translate directly to type in the text to help understand it.

Google Translate

Google Translate can be downloaded on its own to use on your phone and tablet, or accessed via the Google Translate webpage. Simply type in the text and select your language or allow it to detect the language for you. You can also import documents into Google Translate – a very handy function.

On the Google Translate App you can also instantly translate using the camera function, as well as importing images with text into the App. Try the different functions for a variety of options to convert to your chosen language.

Other social media sites also provide translation options – look for ‘translate’ at the bottom of messages to click and convert the text to your preferred language.
International Groups and Social Clubs

Below you will find an overview of internationally-oriented social and professional groups and networks in the Leiden region. You might find more specific groups and clubs on our website expatcentreleiden.nl

Local based International groups
We are Leiden organises various projects and events in Leiden, connecting all the city residents – internationals and locals: weareleiden.com

MeetupLeiden offers a large number of social and sport groups in the Leiden region: meetup.com/nl-NL/cities/nl/leiden

Leiden Toastmasters Club is an international organisation dedicated to improving the public speaking and leadership skills of its members: toastmasters.nl/en/tm-clubs/leiden-toastmasters

Social media sites Leiden

International
Leiden Expats: facebook.com/groups/leidenexpats
Leiden Friends: facebook.com/groups/1200657540009133
Leiden MIX (Meetup International Xperience): meetup.com/groups/leidenmix
Leiden mamas: facebook.com/groups/LeidenMamas
Leiden Language Exchange: facebook.com/groups/49893697570
Leiden International Community: facebook.com/groups/219095914886234
Little Friends Leiden: facebook.com/groups/2518112848479786
Oegstgeest Expats and locals: facebook.com/groups/1381439702119065
Voorschoten families: facebook.com/groups/115460755770282

By Language
Deutsch sprechende Mamas und Papas in Leiden: facebook.com/groups/542480646165502
Españoles en Leiden: facebook.com/groups/119552408120674
Españoles y Latinos en Leiden: facebook.com/groups/311840622216607
Filipinos in Leiden Netherlands: facebook.com/groups/578768819265140
Les Francophones à Leiden: facebook.com/groups/1155091627841266
Indians in Leiden: facebook.com/groups/68940717746874
Italiani in Leiden: facebook.com/groups/italianialeiden
Leiden Portugal: facebook.com/groups/146895075720462
Leideni szülők: facebook.com/groups/239917140215401

Social media sites - in the Netherlands
Americans in the Netherlands: facebook.com/groups/americansnl
British in the Netherlands: facebook.com/groups/BritishinTheNetherlands
Canadians in the Netherlands: facebook.com/groups/42020531482
荷兰华人 / Chinese in the Netherlands: facebook.com/groups/636840863061715
Japan Dutch オランダ語 Club JPNLBE: facebook.com/groups/837238466334271

For international students:
https://theleidener.com

For entrepreneurs & networking
Leiden entrepreneurs network: facebook.com/groups/294257924322441
Small Business Connections Leiden: facebook.com/groups/SBCLeiden
Wereldpraatjes: facebook.com/wereldpraatjes/

Social Essentials
Sports in the Leiden Region

Approximately 4.5 million out of a total of almost 17 million people (more than a quarter of the population) in the Netherlands are registered with one of the 24,669 (2015) sports clubs in the country. More information on sports can be found via: nocnsf.nl.

Whenever the national team takes part in international competitions, orange mania reigns. People dress in orange (in reference to the name of the royal family), raise the national flag, and decorate the houses and streets as a patriotic feeling of athletic superiority floods the nation.

Popular Sports
The following sports are very popular in the Netherlands:
- Football (Soccer): has the largest following in the Netherlands
- Field hockey: second most popular sport
- Volleyball: third most popular sport.

Tennis, gymnastics and golf are the three most widely played individual sports. Cricket is considered a growing sport in the Netherlands.

Another Dutch favourite is ice skating. Whenever the temperature drops below zero for several days in a row and the lakes start to freeze over, the Dutch become excited as it means there’s a possibility of an `Elfstedentocht`, a traditional ice skating tour which passes by eleven cities in the North of the Netherlands. The tour, almost 200 km in length, stretches over frozen canals, rivers and lakes between eleven historic Frisian cities, amongst which is Leeuwarden. Any time the weather allows it, this tour is held. The last editions of the Elfstedentocht were held in 1985, 1986 and 1997. The tour would typically feature about 15,000 amateur skaters taking part, and it requires high quality ice. The regulations state that the ice must be (and remain at) a minimum thickness of 15 centimetres during the entire tour, in order for the race to take place.

The Dutch also love to watch ice skating on television.

Children and Sports
In primary and secondary schools, physical education lessons (gymles) are provided to promote physical exercise. Children participate in different kinds of sports such as basketball, football, gymnastics or swimming at least once a week. They are expected to bring their own sportswear.

Extracurricular sports are not automatically part of the school system. The greater part of organised sports in the Netherlands takes place at the sport clubs at the local level. Most Dutch sport clubs are run by volunteers. Equally important, a sports club is a democratic organisation run by the members themselves. Most sports clubs are members of national sports federations.

Sports for Internationals
There are numerous expat-oriented and international-friendly sport associations in the Leiden region. You can find a list of these on expatcentreleiden.nl.

The Dutch also love to watch ice skating on television.
The Leiden region has a lot to offer. In your spare time, there’s always something to do! Make sure to make the best out of your stay and discover the different activities on offer in your area.

At expatcentreleiden.nl you will find an event calendar (in English) with various events, either specifically for expats, or expat-friendly. Expat Centre Leiden also organises a Meet and Mingle every month. This is a social event open to all internationals who want to meet and connect with other expats. See the event calendar on our website or our social media channels for details.
Public Holidays

National Holidays 2022

- New Year’s Day (Nieuwsjaarsdag): January 1st
- Good Friday (Goede Vrijdag): April 15th
- Easter Sunday (Eerste Paasdag): April 17th
- Easter Monday (Tweede Paasdag): April 18th
- King’s Day (Koningsdag): April 27th
- National Remembrance Day (Dodenherdenking): May 4th
- Liberation Day (Bewijdingsdag): May 5th
- Ascension Day (Hemelvaartsdag): May 26th
- Whitsun (Eerste Pinksterdag): June 5th
- Whit Monday (Tweede Pinksterdag): June 6th
- Christmas Day (Eerste Kerstdag): December 25th
- Boxing Day (Tweede Kerstdag): December 26th
- New Year’s Eve (Oudejaarsavond): December 31st

Other special days in 2022

- Carnival (Carnaval): February 27th, 28th, March 1st
- Labour Day (Dag van de Arbeid): May 1st
- Mother’s Day (Moederdag): May 8th
- Father’s Day (Vaderdag): June 19th
- Budget Day (Prinsjesdag): Opening day of the Dutch Parliament September 20st
- Liberation of Leiden (Leidens Ontzet): October 3rd
- World Animal Day (Werelddierendag): October 4th
- St Martin’s Day (Sint Maarten): November 11th
- Saint Nicholas (Sinterklaas): December 5th

Public school holidays 2022 (Leiden Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacation</th>
<th>Primary Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring break (Voorjaarsvakantie)</td>
<td>February 26th - March 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May vacation (Meivakantie)</td>
<td>April 30th - May 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer holiday (Zomervakantie)</td>
<td>July 9th - August 21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn break (Herfstvakantie)</td>
<td>October 22nd - 30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter break (Kerstvakantie)</td>
<td>December 24th 2022 - January 8th, 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please verify this information with the school. Schools are free to deviate from national guidelines.
What are the 10 most frequently asked questions by internationals?
And even more important, what are the answers?

Q. What should you do first when you arrive?
A. Make an appointment with Expat Centre Leiden to receive a so-called Burgerservicenummer (BSN), Citizen Service Number.

Q. Wow, so much water! How extensive are the canals in Leiden?
A. There are 28 kilometres of canals.

Q. Should I opt for an International or Dutch school?
A. In a Dutch school, your child will experience the language and culture of your new home. Are you only locating to the Netherlands for a short period of time? Then an international school might be better.

Q. Where should I go on a regular Saturday in the Leiden region?
A. To the Leiden market! Eat some fish or a syrup waffle and stroll around. In fine weather, explore the coastal area with the wide sandy beaches or discover Leiden and the region by bike.

Q. How many internationals are located in the Leiden region?
A. About 12,000 working internationals, amongst them approximately 3,600 working expats.

Q. Where do I learn to speak Dutch?
A. Follow a language course with one of our language school partners, or start with Dutch Studies at the University of Leiden.

Q. How do I get around like a local?
A. Use a bike! A racing bike, or a cargo bike with kids: as long as it is a two-wheeler you are fine!

Q. It is your birthday! How to act?
A. Make sure you bring a treat to the school or to work. Going the ‘Dutch way’? Invite your friends for coffee & cake.

Q. The best spot for a picnic?
A. Settle down in the Singelpark, a kilometres-long ring of canals around the inner city of Leiden, or just go to the beach!

Q. What Leiden festivals cannot be missed?
A. Leidens ontzet (Liberation of Leiden Festival) on October 3rd!
Leiden is ideally located within a short travelling distance of major cities such as The Hague and Amsterdam. The city can also be reached easily by international visitors, with Schiphol (Amsterdam Airport) just 20 minutes away and Rotterdam’s smaller airport at 25 minutes distance. Leiden lies within ten kilometres of Holland’s North Sea coast, and the Green Heart of the Netherlands is also close at hand. The city is the perfect starting point for exploring the beautiful natural surroundings and attractions of the area. The beaches and dunes of Katwijk are only a few kilometres away. Water sports enthusiasts will love the Kagerplassen recreational area. Other nearby attractions include the Duinrell water amusement park in Wassenaar, the famed Keukenhof gardens in Lisse, Space Expo in Noordwijk and Madurodam in The Hague. In Zuid-Holland you can find a rich and varied range of attractive cities and sights, all within a short distance.
Town Halls

Below you will find a listing of all town halls offering municipal services. If you live in Leiden, Leiderdorp, Oegstgeest, Voorschoten or Zoeterwoude you will have to visit your local City Hall for specific services such as:

- Change of address (can also be done online)
- Present birth certificate and/or marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Exchange of driving licence
- Obtain an extract (uittreksel) from the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP)
- Obtain a letter of invitation (guarantor’s declaration, garantverklaring) for tourist visas
- Register a birth, marriage or death
- De-register

**Leiden**
Bargelaan 190, Level building
Phone 14 071
Phone +31 71 516 516 5
leiden.nl

**Leiderdorp**
Willem-Alexanderlaan 1
Phone +31 71 54 58 500
leiderdorp.nl

**Voorschoten**
Leidseweg 25
Phone 14 071
Phone +31 88 654 9600
voorschoten.nl www

**Zoeterwoude**
Noordbuurtseweg 27
Phone +31 71 58 06 300
zoeterwoude.nl

**Oegstgeest**
Rhijngeesterstraatweg 13
Phone 14 071
Phone +31 71 51 91 793
oegstgeest.nl
Situated at what has traditionally been an important junction where waterways and roads meet, stands a city that will enchant you: Leiden. The city is famous for its almshouses, university, museums and its glorious history. The spirit of the Golden Age lives on here. It is the place where Rembrandt was born, and which inspired so many other influential painters. But even after this era, Leiden continued to attract scientists, artists and industry. The canals, the historic buildings, the alleyways, the treasuries of knowledge, the culture and the science: Leiden is definitely worth seeing.

City of Discoveries

There are many things to discover, to see and to experience in this city. With so much history, many museums and theatres, a vibrant inner city, monuments, shops, restaurants, cafés and a university, no one can become bored. It is a city of culture that offers a wide variety of festivities and festivals. But it also has plenty to choose from in music, dance and theatre entertainment.

Another good way to discover the city is from the water! Apart from Amsterdam, the city of Leiden has the largest number of city canals in the Netherlands, more than 28 kilometres of canals and waterways. To cross all these waterways, you obviously need bridges, and Leiden has no less than 88!

“In fact, Leiden with almost 3,000 monuments, is one large open-air museum, besides being a good place to live and work, an interesting place to visit!”

More information: leiden.nl
Leiderdorp is located ‘between city and countryside’, in the middle of the Randstad (the metropolitan area of the western part of the Netherlands). Leiden lies to the west, while Leiderdorp itself borders the Green Heart of the Netherlands.

The town provides a pleasant living environment for its 27,000 inhabitants. Leiderdorp offers plenty of opportunities for recreation and relaxation. A flourishing social climate, thriving business sector, make Leiderdorp a great place to visit.

Leiderdorp is as easily accessible by road as it is by water. City life and countryside, and everything they have to offer, are only a short bike ride away. Those wishing to visit museums are moments away from the historic centre of Leiden, and those seeking tranquil natural surroundings can find an abundance of nature in the Green Heart of Holland.

In short, Leiderdorp offers both dynamic and relaxed surroundings at the same time. Come and experience it yourself! You are always more than welcome.

More information: leiderdorp.nl
Oegstgeest

Oegstgeest is a green, picturesque town with a pleasant and dynamic social climate. Historically, Oegstgeest is part of the Duin- en Bollenstreek, though the bulb culture has become less important over the past 50 years. Oegstgeest is situated centrally in the Randstad and is easily accessible. It can be seen as a gateway to the city of Leiden, on one hand and on the other, it is a portal to the Duin- en Bollenstreek. Therefore, Oegstgeest is the natural link to the coast and the beach.

Oegstgeest has two high-quality shopping areas which attract shoppers from across the region. Hospitality is highly valued in Oegstgeest and it allows people ‘from outside’ to feel at home there quite easily. The town attracts people from all over the region, as well as commuters and many expats who are employed at the international Life Science companies and other businesses in the area. Many people are impressed by the green areas and pleasant social climate of Oegstgeest. Due to its countless beautiful, stately and green sites, Oegstgeest is also a very popular location for weddings and conferences. Many people from outside the town, are attracted to the historic locations such as the town hall, Oud-Poelgeest Castle and the Beukenhof.

More information: [oegstgeest.nl](http://oegstgeest.nl)
Voorschoten is an authentic and centuries old Dutch municipality that has a lot to offer as your place of residence or education. It is a typical family-friendly place which has many recreational facilities, sports associations and a wide variety of quality restaurants and bars. Voorschoten is also home to the British School in the Netherlands, with a British and international curriculum.

Furthermore, Voorschoten offers widespread opportunities to explore arts and culture, and to enjoy the lively shopping centre.

More information: [voorschoten.nl](http://voorschoten.nl)

Voorschoten has a rich history, which becomes evident when you are in the town. Both in the centre of Voorschoten and in the surrounding area you will find many historic buildings and places that tell the story of Voorschoten. Recently, a number of information panels describing the history of Voorschoten have been installed in the town centre.

Some must-sees in Voorschoten are:

- Duivenvoorde Castle: Visit the castle museum, stroll through the park and allow yourself to be amazed by the rich history of the castle and the estate.
- Museum Voorschoten: Situated in the Voorstraat, in the heart of the historic old town. The museum exhibits everything to do with Voorschoten, with a focus on the history of the town.
- Landgoed de Horsten (De Horsten Estate): a large contiguous green area of approximately 450 hectares, situated on the outskirts of Voorschoten. Prince Frederik of the Netherlands (1797-1881) founded De Horsten Estate. King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima live at the Eikenhorst, which is closed to the public. The other parts of the estate are accessible to pedestrians.

For more information about museums, restaurants and events in Voorschoten, please visit: [vorstelijkvrij.nl/en](http://vorstelijkvrij.nl/en).
Zoeterwoude, a municipality which offers a unique view of the typical Dutch ‘polder’, the flat and lush pastures with their extensive waterworks. Scout around the area by bike, on foot or in a canoe. Visit a farm where the age-old craft of cheesemaking is still carried out. Go birdwatching while enjoying the rural landscape with its monumental farms, its mills and the characteristic silhouette of distant church steeples.

More information: zoeterwoude.nl
The Expat Centre Leiden (ECL) expands its services for internationals in the Leiden region by means of a partnership programme. The Expat Centre Leiden offers services pertaining to each phase of expat life: coming to, settling in, living in and leaving. Our services contribute to simplifying and improving life and working conditions for internationals in the region.

The target group of the Expat Centre Leiden consists of internationals and expats in the region. We distinguish the following groups: highly skilled migrants, intra corporate transferees, scientific researchers, entrepreneurs, recent graduates, and EU citizens who fall within these categories. Our services are available for these groups and their families. Another significant target group are the companies that employ internationals.

Public-Private Cooperation
The Expat Centre Leiden was finalist in the election Public-Private Collaboration 2018 (PPS2018) organised by foundation CLOK.

Expat Centre Leiden is pleased to connect you to a diverse group of reliable service providers who offer high-quality services in English and who are familiar with your needs as an international living in the Leiden region. They can support you before you move to the Leiden region, at time of arrival, during your stay or if you are leaving the Netherlands after a temporary assignment. We are partnered with organisations in the following categories.

Partner Categories

- Business Support
- Career
- Childcare
- Education and Personal Development
- Expat Services
- Finance
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Immigration Services
- Legal Services
- Leisure
- Media
- Policy Advising
- Relocation Services
- Taxes
- Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Volunteering
Blue Ninja Business Support
Blue Ninja Business Support is an innovative company based in The Netherlands working internationally with English speaking businesses to apply the best practice to virtual business management. Our mission is to help businesses reach their growth and profit potential while simplifying their working lives. Using our expertise, we deliver bespoke services and aim to streamline your operations and improve time consuming tasks to optimise your working practices.

Blueninja.eu

Hello Expat!
Hello Expat! is an online stage for (entrepreneurial) expats and (international) startups, institutions and companies whose main target audience consists of Expats.

HelloExpat.nl

Career

Abroad at Your Best
Abroad at Your Best is founded and run by expats to support other expats in the Leiden area in building and enjoying their wished life and career here. Through workshops, support groups, job-seeking advice, job applications review services and/or coaching sessions it supports expats to:

• Enhance job/career opportunities and life-skills
• Achieve more balance, fulfilment and integration
• Get their wished job or career advancement/change
• Start or improve their freelancing or business activities

Coachforinternationals.com

Atentamente HR Consulting & Career Coaching
When you move abroad, you want to use your skills and potential to the fullest. Atentamente was founded by an HR professional who knows all about expatriation and understands the Dutch employment market. Expect a client-centred approach, good exploration of your talent and career options, as well as expert interview practice and CV advice.

atentamente.nl
Childcare

Nanny Nina
Babysitter or Nanny needed?
Find your reliable nanny or babysitter with Nanny Nina!
nannynina.nl

Education and Personal Development

New2NL
The Dutch education system is very different to that of many other countries, and international families often struggle to find the right school. This can result in a distressing mismatch, leading some families to give up and head home. New2NL will make sure this doesn’t happen to you. Schooling and the Dutch education system are our specialty.

Contact us for:
- Professional education services for international families
- Special offers with trusted partners
- Bespoke business packages
- Articles on life and education in the Netherlands

new2nl.com

The Square Mile
Develop your language skills with a business language training programme from The Square Mile. We offer all languages including Dutch and deliver private courses, in-company group courses and open enrolment Dutch courses at the Leiden Bio Science Park.

thesquaremile.nl/en/

BplusC
BplusC is a dynamic organization that offers a great, versatile and complete range of courses for everyone in Leiden, Leiderdorp, Oegstgeest, Voorschoten and Wassenaar. Under the motto of ‘Lifelong learning’, they offer a programme brimming with knowledge, contact, development, society, art and culture.

bplusc.nl
Education and Personal Development

**LeidenGlobal**
LeidenGlobal is a joint effort of Leiden University and seven Leiden-based museums and academic institutes all dedicated to collections and research on specific themes and cultures of the world. LeidenGlobal aims to demonstrate and present the knowledge that is available in Leiden to a broad public, such as the expats in Leiden and surroundings.

[LeidenGlobal.org](http://LeidenGlobal.org)

**Rooted in Calm**
Calm is a superpower. Calm brings peace of mind, greater satisfaction and mental clarity that can be elusive in Expat life. Let’s explore your map of the world to understand how you arrived in Leiden, literally and figuratively, then plot the next steps to cultivate your authentic expat life, *Rooted in Calm*.

[rootedincalm.com](http://rootedincalm.com)

**TaalAmor**
TaalAmor is a small language school conveniently located in Leiden in the Lage Morsweg 18. TaalAmor provides Spanish, Italian and Dutch language courses in small groups within a welcoming and a cozy environment.

[taalamor.nl](http://taalamor.nl)

**Webster Leiden Campus**
Expats study at Webster for its unique American Liberal Arts education that promotes global citizenship. The small class sizes, personal attention, and flexibility sets us apart from Dutch higher education. Flexibility is key for expats who are on the move with classes online and campuses in the US, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

[Webster.nl](http://Webster.nl)
Expat Services

ACCESS
ACCESS is a not-for-profit organization supporting the international community in the Netherlands. The professional volunteer staff at ACCESS can answer questions and provide information on important expatriation issues. In addition, its on-call Counselling Services Network consisting of experienced and qualified professionals who are aware of the challenges facing expatriates in need of support.

access-nl.org

Finance

Rabobank Leiden - Katwijk
Expats are welcome to open an account at Rabobank. You can also opt for a package deal for any insurance you may need in the Netherlands.

rabo.nl

Your Financials
Your Financials’ consultants bring the best personalized plan for your financial future, fully licenced, experienced and connected to deliver smooth execution as well. Income and estate planning across generations. Solutions for employees and entrepreneurs. Managing and establishing your future pension and responsible investment income, including home finance and investment finance.

yourfinancials.nl

Healthcare: Mental Health

BrightMind Practice
BrightMind Practice, led by registered psychologist Drs. Roy Kamienchik, provides therapy and coaching for international and Dutch clients. The service is warm, personal and follows an effective evidence-based integrative approach. First consultation is free and further insurance reimbursement is available. The sessions’ duration is generous as well as my continuous support between sessions.

brightmindpractice.nl
Housing: Mortgages

**Expat Mortgages**
Expat Mortgages is a team of independent mortgage brokers helping expats who want to buy a house in the Netherlands and need a mortgage for that. The company has existed for more than 10 years and provided mortgage advice to thousands of people. The exclusive work with expats only turned the company into a preferred choice by many internationals. [expatmortgages.nl](http://expatmortgages.nl)

**Hypothek Visie**
Hypothek Visie Leiden is a local independent mortgage agency that compares around 40 different mortgage providers. Maarten van Tongeren is an experienced mortgage advisor who can guide you through the process of getting a mortgage and can also help you with finding a local notary and real estate agency. [hypotheekvisie.nl/leiden](http://hypotheekvisie.nl/leiden)

Housing: Real Estate Agents

**De Raad Makelaars**
De Raad Makelaars offers rental houses in and around Leiden. Whether you are looking for a place to live at short notice or within a longer period of time, we have what you need! Our portfolio includes fully furnished short stay rentals to shell new-build rentals. We have residences you can move into straight away and residences that are yet to be built. [deraadmakelaars.nl](http://deraadmakelaars.nl)

**Tweelwonen**
Tweelwonen has been renting, letting and managing rental properties since 2003. With offices in Leiden, Noordwijk, The Hague, Utrecht and Rotterdam they are the largest non-franchise real estate broker in homes rentals in this area. [tweelwonen.nl/en-gb](http://tweelwonen.nl/en-gb)
De Leeuw Brokerage, Insurance and Mortgages
Whether you just moved to the Netherlands or you expect to be working here for several years, De Leeuw Makelaars will be happy to help you find a new home in Leiden or the surrounding area. With their many years of experience, they can offer you outstanding guidance through the Dutch house-buying process.

deleeuw.nl/makelaardij/welcome-expats

Eigen Haard Real Estate Agency
Eigen Haard Makelaars is an agency with over 75 years of experience in the local housing market. If you are looking for accommodation to rent or a house to buy, the Eigen Haard team will be standing by to assist you with their experience and expertise.
eigen-haard.nl

Mevrouw de Aankoopmakelaar
Looking for your dream house? Xandra Walburg is a specialized buying agent in the area of Leiden. She has many years of experience helping expats in the area of Leiden. As a buying agent Xandra works purely in the interest of the buyer. She knows the market and possess the necessary legal and technical knowledge to advise the buyer each step of the way. “It’s my goal to achieve the best deal for you without any risks. You don’t have to worry about a thing”. She has an extensive professional network from financial advisors to technical surveyors and helps the buyer throughout the process with personal and professional support.

mevrouwdeaankoopmakelaar.nl/Leiden

Kamerraad Housing Agency
Good to see you here! Are you still searching for a new house? You’re more than welcome to simply drop by our office for an exploratory chat. We’ve been here since 1985 and considered as one of the best renting and letting specialists for a diversity of residential premises in the Leiden area.
kamerraad.nl/en-gb
Immigration Services

Van den Heuvel Lawfirm
Our office specializes in Dutch immigration law and employment law. Van den Heuvel has years of experience working for the Dutch Immigration Service (IND) before starting immigration services independently. We further offer legal services to employers and employees in employment matters. Please visit our website for more information.

vandenheuveljuristen.nl

Legal Services

De Clercq Advocaten
Our notaries’ department has many years of experience in advising expats on the legal aspects of buying property and setting up a business in The Netherlands. We are experienced in family law and estate planning. We keep a high service level and we know what expats find important. Please contact our office if you have any questions or if you want to know the costs of our services.

declercq.com

Everaert Advocaten
Located in Amsterdam, Everaert Advocaten’s lawyers provide immigration services to companies and individuals since 1982. With specialists in global mobility, Dutch citizenship, permanent residence, family reunification and international adoption, we will guide you step-by-step through the bureaucratic maze and make sure your/your family’s stay in the Netherlands is compliant with Dutch law.

declercq.com

RWV Advocaten
RWV Advocaten has a 125 year reputation for reliability and supplies high-quality legal services to business and private individuals. The company is large enough to accommodate specialists in just about every area of the law, so they can deal with any legal problem you might have. At the same time, the team is relatively small who benefit from short lines of communication and take a close, personal interest in your case.

rww.nl/en
Leisure

**Leiden Cinemas**

All local cinematic offerings can be found at Bioscopen Leiden, or Leiden Cinemas. Whether it be Hollywood blockbusters, all-time classics or indie gems: you’ll find what you’re looking for at one of these three theatres, all located in the heart of the city.

Want to enjoy foreign films with English subtitles? Visit the weekly edition of Expat Cinema! Keep an eye out for these events on the Bioscopen Leiden Facebook page.

bioscopenleiden.nl

**Hilton Garden Inn Leiden**

Located on Leiden’s Bio Science Park, Hilton Garden Inn Leiden offers complimentary WiFi, flexible meeting and event space with natural light, a private dining suite and 6 meeting rooms for up to 112 people. The hotel offers free parking and A/V equipment. The adjacent CORPUS Congress Centre and Bio Science Park add unique components for a successful large meeting, product presentation or multi-day congress.

hiltonhotels.com/nl_NL/nederland/hilton-garden-inn-leiden

Media

**DutchNews**

Want to keep up with what’s going on in the Netherlands? DutchNews.nl is the leading provider of quality Dutch news and current affairs in English for an international audience. You can follow the news online, on your mobile phone, via the newsletter and social media – and it’s absolutely free.

dutchnews.nl

**Dutch Review**

DutchReview’s unique mix of high-energy content gives expats and internationals in the Netherlands news, culture, politics, history, opinion, and lifestyle. Want to know why the Dutch are so direct? Best destinations for a day trip? How to navigate the Dutch healthcare system? DutchReview has the blow-by-blow on anything Dutch.

dutchreview.com
Media

**Expat Republic**
Expat Republic is a leading media company aimed at improving and enriching the lives of expatriates living in The Netherlands. They frequently organise events and seminars as well as provide a myriad of useful and engaging information. Find out how they can help tell your story to a huge international, diverse and dynamic community.

[Expatrepublic.com](http://Expatrepublic.com)

**IamExpat**
IamExpat is a community-driven, online media platform aiming at covering the local needs of all English-speaking internationals currently residing in the Netherlands. Created by internationals, for internationals, IamExpat.nl has been providing up-to-date information, news, job listings, housing services and lifestyle tips for expats living and working in the Netherlands since 2009.

[iamexpat.nl](http://iamexpat.nl)

Policy Advising

**Blaauwberg**
Blaauwberg is a regional advisory firm settled in the inner city of Leiden. We host on demand masterclasses and courses with a regional touch. Blaauwberg is known for its courses ‘Leidenkunde’. A four day knowledge program about Leiden, seen from a global perspective.

[blaauwberg.nl](http://blaauwberg.nl)
Relocation Services

**Atlas International Movers**
Moving your household goods to the Netherlands from abroad is a major event. You need to place all your trust in an experienced partner who will perfectly organise your relocation for you. Atlas International Movers is such a partner.

atlas-movers.com

**PAS BMS Immigration & Relocation Services**
For many years PAS BMS Immigration & Relocation Services provides high quality, professional services with a personal touch. We offer full immigration services and can assist with all aspects of your move to the Netherlands such as housing, schooling, taxes, registration and full settling in service. We are dedicated to make your relocation a seamless process and to make you feel at home in our country.

pasbms.com

Taxes

**HBK Expat Consultants**
The specialists at HBK expat consultants provide expert advice on tax and social security matters relating to cross-border employment. Our consultants are highly experienced and know all the ins and outs of international mobility. Drawing on our international network and with our flexible approach we can provide support in any situation and with any problem, small or large, complex or straightforward. Our customer portfolio is varied and includes multinationals, SMEs, employees, independent professionals and private individuals all of whom are in some way affected by international tax and social security matters.

hbk.nl
Taxes

**LIMES International**
When it comes to international activities, everyone comes across fiscal issues, as well as related questions. An integrated approach is essential in coping with these issues. LIMES international advises companies and private individuals with their cross-border activities.

[limes-int.com](http://limes-int.com)

**The TaxSavers**
The TaxSavers is an all-round tax firm. We can assist you with all questions about Dutch taxes, the M-form, and the annual income tax return. Visit our website for more information or just give us a call on +31 (0)20 – 2170120.

[Taxsavers.nl](http://Taxsavers.nl)

Telecommunications

**Lebara**
Lebara is a telecommunication company, providing prepaid and postpaid services by using KPN’s reliable 4G network.

Transportation

**Bynco**
Buying a car made easy for expats. Bynco.com is the Dutch number 1 car-webshop for expats. No language barrier, 14-day trial period, foreign driving licence possible, home delivery, official RDW-registration, personal assistance. We have already welcomed many expats with their new occasion and we receive excellent reviews.


**Taxi Centrale ELTAX**
ELTAX was the first taxi service in Leiden, founded in 1933. Since then the company has not stood still, and even has a street named after it, the Eltaxhof. With four Tesla’s in the fleet, ELTAX also has sustainable travel options. 100% electric is 0% emission. We will be happy to offer you our highly personalized service. Do what the Leiden dweller does. Taxi? Eltax. Visit our website for more information.

[eltax.taxi/en](http://eltax.taxi/en)

Volunteering

**BuZz**
Volunteering with BuZz can help you build a network in your new home and is a great way to practice Dutch. BuZz believes that everyone has talents and can participate in their community.

[buzzleiden.nl](http://buzzleiden.nl)
ACCESS – Serving the International Community

ACCESS is an independent not-for-profit organisation serving internationals to successfully settle in the Netherlands. The ACCESS vision is to provide unique, comprehensive and essential services nationally, through the expertise and experience of its volunteer expatriate community.

Our organisational values

We provide guidance
We draw on our collective knowledge and experience to guide others. Offering empathy and helping to manage the expectations of people arriving to live and work in a new country and culture. Our supportive resources are objective, tested and trustworthy. Our support provided in confidence.

We foster cultural diversity
We respect the diversity of our community and appreciate that the guidance we provide must come from a place of creating understanding for the country of destination. English is the language which unites us, but does not define us. In dialogue and actions we practice respect for differences and recognise the need to build bridges. We are courteous and treat people with dignity.

We facilitate connections
Through the volunteers we recruit, train and respect with professional courtesy we provide a community within which, and from which connections are made. Our activities and the events we participate in contribute to extending our spirit of co-operation and collaboration. We welcome partnerships with others who share our vision. We work in teams and mentor one another.

We encourage growth
Personal development is at the core of what we do. For our volunteers, the community we serve and the organisations we are partners with. Our growth is defined not by more, but by improvement and extending the service we provide to individuals, civic organisations, government services and corporate employers.

access-nl.org
The Square Mile

The Square Mile is one of the market leaders for business language training in The Netherlands. Based in Leiden, we train around 1700 people a year in the Aerospace, Pharmaceuticals, ICT, Manufacturing, Finance and Accounting sectors.

We offer:

- Individual, tailored language courses, either intensive (1-2 weeks, 30 hours a week), semi-intensive (3-6 weeks, 10 hours a week) or extensive (30-40 hours spread over 3 months).
- In-company group programmes for teams or departments.
- Open Enrolment Dutch courses at the Leiden Bio Science Park, bringing international arrivals together in a friendly, convenient location to learn Dutch and build social and professional networks.

We provide a personal, friendly service and many of our clients have been with us for over 15 years.

If you would like more information, please give us a call.
You can call us on 071 532 3356 or mail info@thesquaremile.nl.

thesquaremile.nl/en/
De Raad Makelaars

De Raad Makelaars, a renowned real estate agency located in Katwijk, offers rental houses in and around Leiden. Whether you are looking for a place to live at short notice or a longer period of time, we have what you need! Our portfolio includes fully furnished short stay rentals and new-build rentals. We have residences you can move into straight away and residences that are yet to be built.

Apart from new-build projects, our portfolio also includes existing homes and commercial real estate such as Crown Business Center. Our office specializes in assisting our clients during the entire rental process.

Would you like to know more about De Raad Makelaars or about the properties we offer? Then please contact us and find out what we can do for you.

Contact details
T: 071 - 405 15 00
E: welkom@deraadmakelaars.nl

deraadmakelaars.nl
Tweelwonen

Tweelwonen is the most reputable brokerage office in Leiden and surroundings and has over 15 years of experience in all areas of leasing of living accommodations.

For years, Tweelwonen is the leading brokerage office of the Leiden region. Last year we won the National Rental Broker of the Year Award.

With our solid and trusted team of 20 employees, we are daily at your service! We have offices in Leiden, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Noordwijk.

Also, in the field of real estate (RE) management / property management you’ve come to the right place. Our Expat Package is unique in the housing market and we can assist you or your company with finding and managing your new home.

tweelwonen.nl/en-gb
RWV Advocaten

Welcome to the Netherlands! We understand that a move to a foreign country means immersing yourself in a new culture and dealing with new rules. These are exciting times, both for you and for your family. Naturally, you want to make sure that all the necessary arrangements are made before your move and that no legal complications await you. But just in case: the lawyers of RWV are experts 4 expats!

We have our own in-house ‘expat’ specialists, who can help you deal with any legal problems involving divorce, employment or property construction. We are pragmatic and creative. Our aim is to find a solution for the problem at hand. Whether it’s a question of mediating in a conflict, drafting a contract, producing a legal opinion or representing you in court, we are guided by your interests and wishes.

rwv.nl
Watch out, because HBK expat consultants is sharp and delivers what gets you ahead!

HBK expat consultants is part of HBK tax advisors, accountants & expat consultants. With over 20 years of experience and expertise in the field of global mobility, immigration and international social security, HBK advises and facilitates organizations and individuals that operate across national borders. Our services range from advising on complex international tax and social security issues to expatriate payroll services, the preparation of Dutch income tax returns, applications for a 30% ruling, applications for residence permits and other related services.

Saskia Hemmes is one of the partners at HBK who advises on cross-border employment. “My career started as an advisor at one of the Big-Four offices. I have been using my knowledge and experience for more than 10 years at HBK where we serve a wide range of clients, from multinationals to private individuals. With the size of this office and the freedom and flexibility that we have here, we can really free up time for our customers, large or small, whether they are experienced players or starters on the international playing field. “ Within HBK there are of course more professionals with knowledge and experience in global mobility. One of the advisers is Daniel van den Helder. Daniel has been working at HBK since 2019 and is also specialized in expat advice. “During my Master’s degree in Tax Law, I also started my working life at a Big-Four office where I worked for 12.5 years. In 2019 I switched to HBK in the position of Global Mobility specialist. I’m glad I took this step. As a small player within this niche, we can make a substantial difference. High in knowledge and yet the time for our customers. Our international network does help with that, of course. “

If you would like to discuss your cross border issues with us, or if you would just like to take a peek inside our beautiful building, don’t hesitate to contact us!

Stay sharp!

hbk.nl
Go for freedom with Lebara

To feel free, that’s the idea. We are here for anyone who finds happiness in real experiences. For enterprising spirits who do their own thing and go their own way. Just like us. Let us make your life a little bit easier. With flexible Sim Only, Prepaid and affordable extra bundles and add-ons. All on a superfast network with maximum coverage. Because if you got something to say, you should be able to share it. Always, everywhere and with everyone.

What’s keeping you? Lebara. Unstoppable.

Lebara.com/nl/en/expats
Bynco (Buy Your Next Car Online)

The first webshop where it is possible to buy a second-hand car 100% online, in the comfort of your own home. Our website does not refer you to other dealers. We are acknowledged by the RDW and use an independent third-party bank account with GoCredible to make sure your money is safely transferred when you accept the car. Buying a car online is as easy and safe as making a purchase with any other webshop. We have already welcomed many expats and we receive excellent reviews.

- 14 day trial period
- No haggling
- 180 day warranty
- Pay on delivery
- Free delivery within The Netherlands
- No questions asked money back guarantee
- Personal assistance 24/7
- Safe payment

Buying a car made easy for expats

Bynco is the Dutch number 1 car website for anyone that is new in the Netherlands. All cars that are being offered by Bynco are from selected partners. The collection of cars we offer therefore do not consist of randomly used cars, but of cars specially selected by our experts.

Do you live in the Netherlands and do you have a foreign driving licence? No problem, you can just buy a car from our webshop and we will guide you through every step. When placing an order you can indicate that you have a foreign driving licence. The only difference is that the registration of the car must take place at an official RDW location. These locations are located throughout the Netherlands and we’ll be there to assist. You also need an original certificate of registration in the Netherlands (BRP-extract, including BSN, not older than 3 months) and a valid driving licence.

Contact details
T: 030 - 207 42 20  Whatsapp: +31 30 808 0186  E: info@bynco.com  bynco.com/nl-en/
Stay Tuned!

Stay updated about events, subscribe for newsletters and contribute to building an active community. Expat Centre Leiden is the place where you connect to each other, to society and to our partners. There are many ways to stay updated on our activities!

Social Media

facebook @ExpatCentreLeiden
twitter @ExpatLeiden
linkedin Expat Centre Leiden

E-newsletters

At expatcentreleiden.nl you can subscribe for newsletters to stay updated on activities, events and relevant information in the Leiden region.

Website

At expatcentreleiden.nl you will find more information but also interesting, personal stories and blogs of other internationals.

Contact Details

The ECL is located on the ground floor at Stadskantoor Leiden in the LEVEL building

Email: info@expatcentreleiden.nl
Phone: +31 (0) 71 516 6005

For questions, please contact us by email or book a videocall via our website.
For registrations an appointment is required.

Visiting address

Bargelaan 190
2333 CW Leiden

Our current openings hours are:
Mondays 9.00-12.15 for registrations (appointment only)
Wednesdays 9.00-16.30 for registrations (appointment only)

How to Reach Expat Centre Leiden?

Expat Centre Leiden is located in Stadskantoor Leiden - LEVEL building, on the LUMC side of Leiden Central Station and is easy accessible with public transport. If you are coming by car, you can park in the parking garage LEVEL, just outside the building. Please note this is paid parking.

Appointments

Appointments can be made via expatcentreleiden.nl.