



### Program Information as of August 2015

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**Name of host institution:** Vrije Universiteit/VU University Amsterdam

**Location:** Amsterdam, Netherlands

**Accreditation/Recognition by:** Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education

**Number of international students:** in faculty: 200 exchange/year; in entire university 700 exchange  
**Home students:** 26,000

**Visa:** After arriving in the Netherlands, anyone who is not an EU/EEA resident and wishes to stay in the Netherlands for more than three months must apply for a residence permit. VU University Amsterdam will assist you with the application during orientation. The cost of a residence permit (VVR) is €350.

**Most convenient way to reach host country from Atlanta:** KLM flies direct to Amsterdam; refer to [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com) or [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com) for fares

**How students reach host institution from airport:** public transport and taxis are available from Schiphol airport. Students are picked up by central student organization (ESN-VU), students given range of dates to arrive in time for orientation. Student must request airport pickup.

**Point of contact in Visiting Students Office:** The **International Service Desk** is open Monday to Friday, 10:00-16:00 (room 0A-11 in the hall on the ground floor of the Main Building). You can also call us during opening hours at 020-5985029

**# of staff in Visiting Students Office:** 6 in central int'l office for visa, housing. Faculty: 2 student assistants, 1 for international master students, 1 for international bachelor, 1 Division for Education, 1 head of education bureau

**Terms of study:**

fall    spring    summer    other (explain)

There is an international summer school that runs separately from the exchange program; see <http://www.studyabroadinamsterdam.nl/en/summerschool/index.asp>. As an affiliate, Berry students receive a €250 discount.

**Approximate dates of terms:**

Fall: 1<sup>st</sup> week in September until December or January (student may complete 2 periods instead of 3)  
Spring: early February until early July (Periods 4, 5 & 6)

**Application Process**

**Application form** (online, paper, how to obtain):

Online, go through faculty

**Requirements for participation** (gpa, references): 3.0

**Time of registration**

The registration period runs from the 15th of June to the 31st of August. Your registration cannot be completed until VU Amsterdam has received both the requisite documents and the amount owed for tuition fee. If you do not register in time your registration will be turned down.

**Documents to be submitted:**

- ◆ the registration form, signed and completed in full;
- ◆ Learning agreement
- ◆ Official transcript
- ◆ 2 passport photographs

If you don't have the Dutch nationality, you must also submit:

- ◆ an extract from the municipal personal records database stating your residence status or
- ◆ a photocopy of both sides of your residence permit or
- ◆ a document stating that you are entitled to temporary residence or that you have requested an extension of your residence permit.

**Application fee:** N/A

**Deadlines:** late April for fall semester, late October for spring semester

**Academics**

**Credit system** (e.g. ECTS) & **US equivalent:** 1 ECTS = .6 US

Credits are listed according to the European Credits Transfer System (ECTS). The ECTS credits system is based on student workload, which includes contact hours and time spent completing papers and assignments and preparing for examinations. In this system 1 ECTS credit point represents 28 hours of study (including attendance at classes). A full-time student is expected to earn 60 ECTS credits in one academic year, and 30 credits in one semester.

**Academic advising** (how do students register for classes):

Students select courses before arriving in order to be enrolled; they can change in 1<sup>st</sup> week, work w/international office to make changes

**Course offerings** (relationship to Berry curriculum: gen ed fulfillments, major courses; classes especially for international students):

This exchange is intended for business students since the courses mesh well with the Berry curriculum. Classes are taught in English by professors who are well known in their fields.

Students may take classes in other faculties to fulfill other requirements.

Dutch as a Second Language courses are available.

**Average courseload** (# of courses & credits):

2/period = 4/semester, max. 6

**Instruction** (lecture, seminar, tutoring, online):

Lecture (2 hrs.) w/tutorial

**Form of course assessment:** written exam at end, paper, presentation of paper, case study papers

**Support** (“learning center,” etc.):

Study advisors and counselors available for learning disabilities, tutoring.  
Student general counselling service

**Resources** (library, IT): computers are available on campus til 10:00 pm.

The VU Library (UBVU) holds a collection of approximately 900,000 publications, including some 9100 periodicals.

The Multimedia Library of the VU Audiovisual Centre (AVC) contains more than 4000 scientific and academic videos for viewing on the premises.

The VU Bookshop in the Main Building is the place to buy both general literature and the textbooks for your course.

The VU's stationery shop is called Copy Centre. You will find it in the basement of the Main Building, next to the entrance to the restaurant. It sells a wide range of magazines, office supplies, gifts and postcards.

**Should student bring a computer?** Can use computers in university but there are none in guesthouse. 50 min. walk to computers from guesthouse (5 min. by public transport); All international students bring a laptop (check insurance carefully); students may access internet at the guesthouses w/their own computer. Students should bring if they want to use in their rooms, internet from all rooms. Campus has WIFI

**Major differences in educational system:**

Lecture/tutorial system, more independent study than usually required at US institutions

**Transcript & grading system** (explain US equivalents, avg. length of time between end of term and issuing of transcript)

The fall semester transcripts are generally sent out at the beginning of February; spring semester transcripts at the beginning of July. They are in English.

The Dutch grading system is generally based on a mark between 1 (minimum) and 10 (maximum). A grade of 5.5 or more stands for ‘pass’, a grade of less than 5.5 for ‘fail’.

ECTS %	Quality Assessment	ECTS grade	Dutch grade
10%	Excellent/Very good	A	8.0 - 10.0
25%	Good	B	7.5 - 7.9
30%	More than satisfactory	C	7.0 - 7.4
25%	Satisfactory	D	6.5 - 6.9
10%	Sufficient	E	6.0 - 6.4
	Fail	F	0.0 - 5.0

**Berry College Grading Scale**

9-10 = A 8 = A- 7 = B 6 = C 5.5 – 5.9 = D below 6 = F

**Student Support**

**On-site orientation** (length, items covered):

2 orientations: 3 day w/faculty (academic, administrative, tour of campus, lunch, excursions in Amsterdam);

extensive orientation for all international students in fall

Fall: two week orientation Spring: 1<sup>st</sup> week of February

For the residency card, biometrics (fingerprints) will be taken and cards will be issued on campus.

**Does institution have crisis management plan?**

Yes (it has been received by IP)

**Excursions/activities:** yes, during orientation (windmill park, flower canal tour) student parties, football matches, museums. During year by student organizations (central & faculty). Joining faculty student organizations results in book discounts.

**Health/counseling facilities:**

Psychological Counselling Service  
International Student Chaplaincy

All students of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam can register with the University General Practitioner Office. The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has made special arrangements with this office for its students so that they can all be registered there. NB: If you are not registered, you cannot turn to the GP in case of need. Dentist available on campus.

**Student societies:**

ESN-VUuniverse is an international student organization, based at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Originally founded by a handful of Dutch students in 1992, it has since grown into one of the primary caretakers of foreign exchange students at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. At the beginning of each semester, we organize the ISI Days (International Student Introduction Days), a 2-day long introduction through Amsterdam. Other activities can be as little as bowling nights and ice-skating trips, or as big as city trips and full-fledged weekends into the great outdoors (of the Netherlands).

Our board consists of 5 enthusiastic Dutch students. An Activities and PR committee helps us with organizing activities and promoting them. The majority of our Dutch members also acts as mentor to a small group of exchangers. Of course, members are also free to come by our weekly happy hour borrel once in a while.

ISMA stands for International Student's Meetingpoint Amsterdam. It is an organisation run by Christian students who think it is important that international students feel at home in Amsterdam and have a place to meet. They organise intercultural evenings, during which Dutch and international students can meet. An interesting programme is offered, for example about the Dutch culture or a country where international students come from. These evenings, taking place at Admiraal de Ruyterweg 148, are free and always start with a meal.

Small group activities are held at students' homes, which are two-weekly Bible studies, monthly social events and a number of excursions. All activities are open to all students, no matter their cultural or religious background. At a national and international level, ISMA is part of IFES.

**Other:**

Botanical Garden; 3 restaurants (mensas) on campus, 3 cafés

There is an attractive programme of sports for foreign students. All sports are offered at locations in the vicinity of the university. The main centre is at Uilenstede, which is within walking distance of the VU Guesthouse. Most of the sports can be tried out free of charge in early September. Anyone can become a member of the ASVU, but it does have a differentiated pricing structure.

**Housing**

**Application process:** Students arrange accommodation via the online system VUnet once they have been accepted by the university. VU works with two housing corporations, and each student is assigned to a corporation based on their housing budget. (See FAQs at [http://www.vu.nl/en/Images/FAQ%202015%20students\\_tcm12-370690.pdf](http://www.vu.nl/en/Images/FAQ%202015%20students_tcm12-370690.pdf)) The deadline for fall housing is June 1; the spring deadline is December 1. It is recommended that students apply early to reserve a space. There is a €200 non-refundable fee per semester to the housing office that must be wired to VU's bank by the application deadline.

**Deposit:** students receive an email from the housing corporation prompting them to pay the first and last month's rent; price depends on type of accommodation

**Options:** Accommodation consists of furnished (single) rooms with private or shared facilities. Some rooms can be reserved in one of the dorms with shared shower and toilet. Students usually have their own bedroom. In most cases, bathroom, kitchen and living room must be shared with other students. Housing is mixed-gender.

**If residence hall, are intl. & host country students mixed?** In the building but not on the floor

**Furnishings** (linens, pillow, etc.): provided towel and kitchen utensils, sheets available for a fee

**Avg. distance between institution and student housing:** 25-30 min. walk or 5 min. tram (runs every 5 min.); many students buy a bike (5 min.)

**Financials – estimated and subject to change; see <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>**

**Tuition:** Students pay Berry College tuition

**Room:** €350 - €700 per month (Note: the rental periods are August-January for Semester 1 and late January-mid August for Semester 2)

**Meals:** €350/mo. = \$500, self-catered

**Other (lab, materials computing fees):** Ss buy a print card, no computing fees, most activities in orientation are subsidized (students pay, for example \$10 for dinner).

Optional social excursions are subsidized (50% paid - \$30/weekend).

€350 resident card

**Personal expenses** (books, spending money, etc. – approximate):

Experience shows that to live and study in the Netherlands for one year costs a student €700-1,000 a month (including room and board). Some students manage to spend less, but this of course depends on your own lifestyle. An indication of likely expenses is given below.

*Monthly expenses without food* (@ 1€ = \$1.33)

Insurance: €35 (Dutch insurance), \$107 for iNext study abroad insurance

Public transport: €50

Books: €50

Other costs: €60