

Country Profile - Netherlands

Job market

What are my chances of getting a job?

UK graduates stand a good chance of finding a job in the Netherlands, especially if they speak Dutch and/or other languages. And especially with one of the many large, international companies with offices in the country.

Generally, Dutch companies do not recruit graduates for permanent positions. The vast majority of first job offers to graduates are temporary one-year contracts. Graduates are expected to have a degree in a related discipline. Temping agencies (uitzendbureaus) are significant players in the job market, and companies frequently use them in the pre-selection of new employees.

- **Typical problems encountered:** very competitive job market as available jobs have decreased.
- **How to improve your chances:** network with international companies who have a branch in the Netherlands, write speculative applications and, above all, get some work experience.
- **Language requirements:** to work in the Netherlands, a basic level of Dutch is an advantage, even when employed in companies where English is the working language. [Learn Dutch](#) provides distance learning courses at various levels.

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** food processing, chemicals, petroleum refining and electrical machinery.
- **Major companies:** ING Group, Royal Dutch/Shell Group, ABN-Amro Holding, Unilever, Aegon, Philips, Heineken and Amstel, Rabobank, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, KPN, Getronics.
- **Search for more companies:** there are various sources of information to help you find out about companies that operate in the Netherlands. The [Dutch Chamber of Commerce](#) has a searchable trade register of member companies (in Dutch). The [Dutch Yellow Pages \(Gouden Gids\)](#) has details of companies based in the Netherlands. [Kompas](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service. The [Netherlands British Chamber of Commerce](#) has a list of member companies operating in the Netherlands.
- **Major cities:** Amsterdam (capital and largest), Rotterdam (largest seaport in Europe), The Hague (Den Haag's Gravenhage - seat of government and residence of the royal family), Utrecht and Eindhoven.

What's it like working in the Netherlands?

- **Average working hours:** by law, people cannot work more than nine hours a day and 45 hours a week. The average working week is between 36-40 hours. In business sectors it is becoming common for people to choose a four-day week, for example, working four nine hour days.
 - **Holidays:** a minimum of 20 days' holiday with most companies offering between 20-25 days per year. Public holidays include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Monday, Queen's Day (30 April), Ascension Day, Whit Monday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
 - **Tax rates:** information about the current tax rates in the Netherlands can be found on [Tax and Customs Administration \(Belastingdienst\)](#), [New to Holland](#) and [Expatax](#).
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Applying for jobs

Sending a CV and a letter of application is the most common method of application. It can also be a good idea to phone beforehand with a list of questions. With application letters, it is appreciated if they are written in Dutch, typed out, and are no longer than one A4 page.

To apply for a job in the Netherlands, a CV based on the UK/Irish model is suitable. It is important to include contact details, education, work experience, hobbies and voluntary work. It should be professional, to the point, and normally be a maximum of two A4 pages.

Visit [Undutchables](#) (a recruitment agency for internationals) and [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) for CV and covering letter tips.

A great deal of significance is assigned to work placements and other extracurricular activities that display commitment, initiative and experience, so these things can be important in a CV.

The interview process is generally lengthier in the Netherlands, with two or three interviews involved. Referees are usually contacted at the first interview stage, and assessment centres and psychological tests are often part of the selection process. Interviews focus on personality and motivation.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

Visit the [ENIC-NARIC](#) website for information on comparability of your academic or vocational qualifications.

You may also want to visit the [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](#) website for information on how to make your skills and qualifications easily understood in the Netherlands.

[New to Holland](#) also has general information about employment in the Netherlands, along with useful links.

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in the Netherlands, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

- [Academic Transfer](#)
- [Career Builder Netherlands](#)
- [Carp*](#)
- [English Language Jobs](#)
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#)
- [Job News Netherlands](#)
- [Jobline](#)
- [Med Web Netherlands](#)
- [Medicare Jobs Netherlands](#)
- [Monsterboard Netherlands](#)
- [Search hidden jobs](#)
- [Stepstone Netherlands](#)
- [Teach Abroad Netherlands](#)
- [Together Abroad](#)
- [Vacature Bank Netherlands](#)
- Company websites are also good sources of vacancies.

Recruitment agencies

- Search the [Dutch Yellow Pages \(Gouden Gids\)](#) for recruitment agencies.
- [Adams' Multilingual Recruitment](#)
- [Blue Lynx](#)
- [Expatica](#)
- [Kelly Services Netherlands](#)
- [Manpower Worldwide](#)
- [Octagon](#)
- [Undutchables](#)
- [Unique Multilingual Services](#)

Comprehensive listings are available from the [International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies \(CIETT\)](#).

Newspapers

- [Algemeen Dagblad](#) - Saturday edition.
- [De Telegraaf](#) - Saturday edition.
- [De Volkskrant](#) - Saturday edition.
- [Intermediair](#) - targeted at students and graduates.
- [NRC Handelsblad](#) - Saturday edition.
- [Kidon Media-Link](#) has further links to Dutch newspapers and news sources.

Other sources

- The [Dutch Chamber of Commerce](#) is a useful resource for individuals hoping to start a business in the Netherlands. It provides information on the logistics of starting a business, diplomas required for your specific line of business, how to write a solid business plan to finance your ideas, and what plans your municipality has within the area in which you want to establish your firm.
- Job fairs, or banenmarkten, are getting more popular but not on the same scale as in the UK. They are only occasionally used for recruitment and are organised by recruitment agencies or universities. A well-known one aimed at graduates is the annual fair, *intermediair carrieredag*, held in Amsterdam at the end of February or beginning of March.
- The Dutch public employment service, CWI - Centre for Work and Income (Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen), is responsible for providing advice and information to jobseekers in the Netherlands. If you are a citizen of the [European Union \(EU\)](#), you are entitled to make use of any CWI services free of charge, see the CWI website [Werk Netherlands](#) for more information.
- [ACCESS](#) is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the international community in the Netherlands. The organisation provides advice and information for people wanting to settle and work in the Netherlands.
- You can also get contact details for the European Employment Services advisers (Euro-advisers) in the Netherlands through [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#). Euro-advisers are trained specialists who provide information and guidance to jobseekers interested in working in the Netherlands.

Hidden vacancies

Many new graduates get their first job by speculative application or networking. It is customary to telephone the company in advance of a speculative application. If an employer has no vacancies, they will usually keep speculative applications on file. Create a profile on [LinkedIn](#) and network online.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

Work experience is highly regarded in the Netherlands. Well-developed structures are in place, particularly in the areas of IT, business and engineering. To find a placement, speculative applications are normal, but it is necessary to have a working knowledge of the language.

Exchange programmes

Formal exchange organisations are useful ways of getting work experience.

[IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) organises course-related placements for engineering, science and technology students.

The student-run organisation [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) offers placements for business and economic students.

Your institution may also be involved in the [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#), through which vocational training exchanges and work placements are arranged with partner organisations in other countries. Contact your institution's international office or your careers service for more information.

Teaching schemes

If you want to teach in a Dutch school you may be required to speak Dutch, depending on the relevant school authorities. Detailed information on working as a teacher in the Netherlands can be found on [DUO \(Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs\) Dutch Education Executive Agency](#) in the Diploma assessment section. [Learn Dutch](#) also provides distance learning courses at various levels. Teaching information and jobs can also be found on [Teach Abroad Netherlands](#).

Volunteering

Volunteering is a good way to gain experience. The [Youth in Action](#) programme is funded by the [European Commission](#) and has various opportunities to experience Europe. [The European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#) is part of this programme and young people (18-30) can volunteer in a range of countries, including the Netherlands, for 2-12 months.

Voluntary opportunities in the Netherlands can also be found on [Volunteer Abroad](#).

Casual work

There are a lot of opportunities for casual work in the Netherlands, especially temporary seasonal work in agriculture, horticulture and the hotel sector. Jobs are widely advertised in the media and with recruitment agencies.

Gap year opportunities

There are various gap year opportunities available in the Netherlands including working at campsites or in the tourism industry. Options can be explored on [iGapyear](#).

Childcare and au pair opportunities with local families are also available. Look at agencies like [Childcare International](#) and [Au Pairs by Avalon](#) for more information.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

The Netherlands has two types of higher educational institutions:

- research universities - university education (wetenschappelijk onderwijs or WO) offered by 13 universities and the Open University, which combines teaching with academic research;
- universities of applied sciences - professional education (hoger beroepsonderwijs or HBO) and geared towards the acquisition of vocational qualifications and training.

There are also institutions of international education, which offer postgraduate courses in English in a wide range of fields.

Postgraduate degrees are awarded by universities, universities of professional education, institutions of international education and private institutions.

What courses are available?

Almost 900 postgraduate courses are on offer - most normally lasting one or two years.

There are currently more than 1,500 international study programs and courses taught entirely in English. This ranges from seminars to full Masters degrees. More information on programmes and courses can be found on [NUFFIC \(Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation in Higher Education\)](#) and [Association of Universities in the Netherlands](#).

Where can I study?

Useful listings can be found on the Association of Universities in the Netherlands website.

World university rankings, as well as information on universities in the Netherlands, may be found on [Top Universities](#).

Applying for postgraduate study

For entry into a Masters programme or other postgraduate study, a foreign student must have a Bachelors degree or equivalent. Educational institutions in the Netherlands all have their own rules for admission, so it is important to contact the institution of your choice to learn how to apply.

All state-funded institutions now also have an online application system at [Studielink](#). The application process usually includes an institutional application form and personal statement which is similar to the UK process.

Fees and scholarships

While higher education is not free in the Netherlands, costs are fairly reasonable compared to many countries. For EU citizens, fees start at 1,771 Euros per year. For non-EU citizens, the costs may be considerably higher at around 8,000 Euros a year or more.

The NUFFIC website has information on the cost of living in the Netherlands.

In some cases, foreign students are eligible for student grants, based on their nationality or residence permit. NUFFIC provides accurate, up-to-date information about Dutch higher education. It is responsible for the [Netherlands Student Grantfinder](#), an online search engine for those who want to study in the Netherlands and are looking for financial aid. The Grantfinder contains information on a range of Dutch scholarships for foreign students. Also consult [DUO \(Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs\) Dutch Education Executive Agency](#) for more information on studying in the Netherlands and grants.

Are there any exchange programmes?

UK students on undergraduate degree programmes, postgraduate Masters and some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in the Netherlands through [Erasmus](#). This programme is open to all subject areas, but check with your institution's Erasmus coordinator to see which countries they have links with and in what subject areas.

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

The Netherlands is a member of [ENIC-NARIC](#), a network of national centres that aims to improve academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in [European Union \(EU\)](#)

member states, EEA countries and associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The website includes information on current issues in international academic and professional mobility, and on procedures for the recognition of UK and other European qualifications.

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

EU/EEA nationals do not need to have a visa or work permit in order to live and work in the Netherlands. However, Bulgaria and Romania nationals are still required to have a residence and work permit in order to live and work in this country. Bulgaria and Romania nationals do not need visas for trips to the Netherlands lasting less than three months.

If you are working in the Netherlands, you will need a Citizen Service Number (Burger Servicenummer or BSN, also known as a Sofi (social and fiscal) number) which indicates you have been registered in the tax and social security system. You can obtain a Citizen Service Number at your local office of the [Tax and Customs Administration \(Belastingdienst\)](#).

[New to Holland](#) is a useful source for visa, employment and tax information, and more. Once you have resided in the Netherlands for more than three months, you should also register with the [Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service \(Imigratie-en Naturalisatiedienst, or IND\)](#).

EU citizens do not have to find a job before moving to the Netherlands. However, with the cost of living being relatively expensive (particularly rented accommodation) it may be beneficial to organise work prior to moving to the Netherlands.

If you are from a non-EU country, applications may be made the IND. Check with your Embassy about whether you need a visa or work permit to work in the Netherlands.

All non-EU nationals applying for a Netherlands visa while in the UK should do so in person through the [Royal Netherlands Embassy](#) in London or the Netherlands consulate in your area.

Permanent residency

If your employment is longer than three months, you should register with the IND. There is a 'residence wizard' on the website where you can learn rules of residency in the Netherlands and how to apply.

If you are applying from a non-EU country, the 'residence wizard' will also help you learn how to apply for permanent residency.

Help in an emergency

The [British Embassy Netherlands](#) will be able to help with a wide variety of emergencies. The 'Help for British nationals' section of the website gives further details of what help you can expect.

Healthcare treatment is usually free for UK nationals. You should make sure and obtain a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) or Dutch insurance card if you are living in the Netherlands. It is important to be treated by a state healthcare provider, as private healthcare is not covered.

The emergency police and ambulance number is 112.

Travel advice

Find the latest travel advice and a travellers' checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Kingdom of the Netherlands or the Netherlands (Nederland).
- **Population:** 16.7 million (UN 2011 estimate).
- **Border countries:** Belgium and Germany.
- **Climate:** winters tend to be cool, and summers mild.
- **Terrain:** the Netherlands is renowned for being flat. Mostly coastal lowland and reclaimed land (polders) with some hills in the southeast of the country. Lies along the North Sea and along several major rivers making it an important transportation hub of Europe.
- **Natural hazards:** flooding.

Living in the Netherlands

- **Cost of living:** the Netherlands is not a cheap country to live in, and most people spend a very substantial part of their income on fixed living expenses. The standard of living is higher than the UK. The social welfare system is generous.
- **Internet domain:** .nl
- **Health:** private health suppliers manage the Dutch healthcare system. If you are paying income tax in the Netherlands, you are required to purchase a basic health insurance with a Dutch insurance company. The length of your stay is important in determining if you need this insurance or not. If you are visiting or staying for less than four months, you do not need to purchase insurance. If you are a long-term resident or earn a salary, you do.
- **Laws and customs:** the Netherlands has a reputation for being tolerant on the use of so-called 'soft drugs'. In reality, drugs are prohibited, and this tolerance exists only for designated premises. A recent change in the law is banning non-Dutch visitors from entering coffee shops. In the future, only Dutch members bearing weed passes will be allowed in these private clubs. Possession of prohibited

substances or the purchase of them outside these designated areas can carry a prison sentence. Tobacco smoking has been banned in restaurants, cafes, pubs, clubs and hotels. Smoking zones are permitted, although food and drink can't be served in them. Dutch culture is very open to gay relationships, and the law recognises these relationships. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Euro.
- **Type of economy:** Western, capitalist. The internationally renowned 'polder model' is often seen as the secret behind the success of Dutch socio-economic policy, with agreement between employers, unions, the government and the main political parties on wage moderation.
- **Health of economy:** usually known for its low inflation, stable industrial relations and a sizeable current account surplus. Today, the country's government is in flux as the Prime Minister has just stepped down after a split over budget cut demands from the EU. In order to maintain the country's triple-A rating austerity measures need to be first agreed upon, and then implemented.
- **Unemployment rate:** 5.9% (March 2012).
- **Main exports:** metal manufacturing, chemicals and food.

Culture

- **People:** the ethnic composition of the country is 81% Dutch, 5% from EU countries and 14% other (including Turkish, Surinamese, Indonesian, Moroccan and Caribbean).
- **Major religion:** Christianity.
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline - The Netherlands](#)

Politics

- **Type of government:** constitutional monarchy.
- **Major political parties:** Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labour Party (PvdA), Socialist Party (SP), People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD).

More information

- [British Embassy Netherlands](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - The Netherlands](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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