

*For international students.*

*We’ve largely based this document on the Law degrees’ version by the Educational Committee ‘Crash Course: Studying at Utrecht University 101’, made relevant for the History Bachelor by the Utrechtse Historische Studentenkring (UHSK, the study association).*

*This is the second version of this document, based on the version made by chair of the 96th board, Beau Visser.*

[*Introduction*](#_tyjcwt)

Dear Reader,

First of all, welcome to the Netherlands, welcome to Utrecht and most of all welcome to the UHSK. A few years ago this document was created by chair of the 96th Board, Beau, to help all starting (international) students, with finding their way in this country and city. The world has changed over the last years, so this document also needed some change or updating. This document contains a lot of information about how to settle, how to get things started and information about the UHSK to start your way. Think of logistics like how to set up a bank account and where to get a bike, but also information about what a Cantus is or who leads the association.

Finding your way here can be difficult. My hope is that this document will make it easier, even if it’s only a bit. If you have any questions, you can always come to me or the board. If you are missing information or something is incorrect, please let me know.

For now, enjoy reading this.

Noa Hermans

Chair of the 98th board of the UHSK

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# 1. UHSK

The Utrechtse Historische Studentenkring (UHSK) was founded in 1926 and has since been the home for a lot of history students in Utrecht. As the largest History association in the Netherlands and one of the biggest study associations in Utrecht, the UHSK has a lot of members and thus a lot of committees, activities, etc. In this part of the International Document I’ll explain to you the workings of the UHSK. To know more about the history of the association, check the [website](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/about-us/history).

## 1.1 What is a study association?

The UHSK is the study association connected to the study of History at the University of Utrecht. Aside from study associations, there are also other type of associations. For example sport associations, like Triton (rowing) or Odysseus (football/soccer) or student associations such as USC/UVSV and Veritas. The difference between these types of associations and study associations, is that you can only join a study association if you study the bachelor and/or Master connected to it. For the other types of association you just need to be a student in Utrecht.

## 1.2 Organisational structure

*The Board*

An association could be compared to a business, and like a business the association has a board of people that directs it. The Board consists of 6 people, who all have their own position. The Chair leads the board and is the face of the association. The Secretary is the person responsible for the organisation of the association, the mail contact and writing the minutes during meetings. The Treasurer is responsible for all the finances within the association. The Commissioner of Education is responsible for contact with the university and the educational role of the association. The Commissioner Internal Affairs is responsible for the inner workings and the socials of the association, such as the committees, committee battle, the website etc. The Commissioner of External Affairs is responsible for the outside contacts and getting sponsor deals.

Check the [website](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/organisation/board/current-board) to see who your current board members are.

*Committees*

The UHSK has at the moment 22 different committees, all with their own unique tasks and goals. For example organising our parties and trips. These committees consist mostly of 6-8 people also with their own functions, reflective of those of the board. While the board is responsible for the whole association, committees are only responsible for the events they’re organising. Committees are mostly centred around fun and “gezelligheid”. Through committees people are able to make a lot of friends and find their own way within the association. There are two moments where people are able to sign-up for committees: At the start of the academic year and at the start of the second semester. Go check the [website](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/committees/committees) to see all the committees the UHSK has to offer!

1. Committee Battle

Every year all the committees “fight” against each other to win the committee battle. To win you have to gather as many points as possible, which are obtained through different tasks you have to accomplish. For example “Go on a committee outing” or “ These tasks change every month or few months. People want to win for the honour and bragging rights, but your committee also gets put on the trophy that gets passed on from winning committee to winning committee.

*Societies (“Gezelschappen”)*

A scale lower than the committees on the commitment scale are [societies](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/societies). Societies can be created by collecting a minimum of five signatures and are centred around a common interest. For example “Makers van de Nacht”, which is centred around clubbing, and “Valorum Verborum”, which is centred around books and reading. In practice these societies have their own group chat where people can talk and organise events with each other.

*Guild (“Gildes”)*

Aside from these, there are also [guilds](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/guilds). This is a bit like a society, but then centred around a certain skill. There are for example the photography guild and the DJ guild. People in these guilds can be asked to help at certain events, for example djing at the UHSK parties.

*General Assembly*

The General Assembly (“Algemene Ledenvergadering” in Dutch) happens a few times a year. Assemblies are organised by the board, but members can also ask for a GA to be held. During these assembly members can vote on motions or policy (points) and can also ask questions or point out problems related to the board.

*Stuurgroep*

The steering group (['stuurgroep'](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/organisation/steering-group) in Dutch) is the weekly consultative body of the UHSK between the board and the various committees. Each committee sends a delegate to report on the progress within the committee and the plans for new events. In this way, the stuurgroep tries to coordinate all activities and besides that committees can ask each other and the board for help or advice. In practice, at the stuurgroep is the place where the current state of affairs in the association is discussed every week. The steering group is therefore an excellent way to keep abreast of what is happening within the association in addition to the website and the newsletter. Even if you are not in a committee you are most welcome!

This is only the tip of the iceberg. If you want to know more about the organisation of the UHSK, check the [website](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/association/organisation/steering-group)!

## 1.3 Typical UHSK Events

*Trips*

Every year the UHSK goes on several trips:

* Small Trip

This trip is only for a weekend and goes mostly to places closeby in the Benelux, Germany and North-France

* Student-Teacher trip

This trip is a bit like the Small trip, but is organised in cooperation with a few teachers. They also come on the trip and are able to give a perspective you might not have on the Small trip. This trip mostly lasts a few days and also often goes to neighbouring countries.

* Big Trip

This trip is in the weeks between block 3 and 4 and covers 8-10 days. These trips usually go to further places, such as Spain or East-Europe.

* Ameland trip

Every year around Ascension Day, the UHSK goes to the lovely island of Ameland. Instead of the other trips, the trip to Ameland doesn’t have a very strict schedule. So a lot of the time we’re there, consists of drinking, chilling and biking. It is definitely a good way to end the year.

*Parties and other beer related activities*

* Feco

The feco’s are the parties that the UHSK organises all year round. The name refers to the committee that is in charge of organising these parties: The Party Committee (Feest commissie = Feco). Every feco has it’s own theme and is always in the club called K-sjot.

* Weekly Drinks

Every week the Weekly Drinks are being held in the Stadsgenoot. During these drinks members and the board come together to drink a nice beverage and talk about their week, life and more. Sometimes location reveals or other events are linked to the drinks.

* Cantus

A classic UHSK beer event is the Cantus, organised by the Activity Committee (the Accie). The Cantus is about drinking and a lot of singing. During the cantus everybody is sitting on picnic benches and is dressed in a nice jacket and tie. The Cantus is led by two “procantoren”, who’ll tell you which song to sing. when to drink and make sure you obey the rules. There are a few rules:

* You stay seated, unless you need to sing or are being called up front.
* You don’t drink and sing at the same time.
* Songbook always in your right hand, Drinks always in your left hand.
* The cantors and the Board are always right
* Before we drink we say: **Prosit corona, prosit preasidium, ad fundum**

All these rules and more get explained during a video that is sent out before the cantus. They try to play it of as really scary, but it is mostly a lot of fun.

* Zwarte piste

Another classic beer event is the Zwarte Piste. The Zwarte Piste is in the essence like a pub crawl. You go to different bars and at every bar you get a drink.

Fun student culture facts: Sometimes people have a Zwarte Piste in their student home. With this version you go from room to room and at every room you get a drink and play a game.

*Educational*

Aside from fun activities, the UHSK also has a lot of educational activities. Here are a few examples:

* Research Parade

The Research Parade is one of the annual events of the UHSK for Better Education (UBO). It consists of multiple lectures given by teaching staff, where they present their research. The Research Parade often has a theme that matches the lectures that are given. At the end is a discussion between the lecturers and the attendees.

* Von der Dunk lecture

This is a lecture organised by the Secretary of the Board, in honour of honorary member Herman von der Dunk. Just like with the Research Parade, a theme is chosen and then multiple people are invited to hold a lecture surrounding this topic. Normally the Von der Dunk lecture is held in the Academy Building near the Dom church.

* Holocaust Memorial Day

The Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is the name of the series of lectures held to commemorate the Holocaust and shed light on its history. It’s organised by a committee with the same name. Different people are invited to give a lecture about their research or their experience with the Holocaust.

These are only a few of the many events the UHSK organises. Go to the [website](https://www.uhsk.nl/en/events/events) to see everything the UHSK has to offer and the events that will be held in the near future.

# 2. Lifestyle

## 2.1 Housing

First things first: start looking for housing as soon as possible. The Netherlands is a tiny, densely populated country with lots of people looking for a place to live, preferably close to town. Within the student accommodation culture, the word ‘hospiteeravond’ will pop up a lot. This term refers to an evening in which the current residents of the house will invite prospective roommates, so they can choose the best fit for their home. Here are some options:

*SSH*

The first place that you should look is [SSH](https://www.sshxl.nl/en), the student housing organisation of Utrecht. To register there, you pay a one-time fee. It should be noted, however, that the waiting period is terribly long. Nevertheless, it is good to get a spot on the waiting list as soon as possible. The longer you’ve been on the list, the more rooms become available to you! The estimated time you need for a room at this moment is around two years, so be sure to sign-up! There is also a [“Short Stay”](https://www.sshxl.nl/en/shortstay) option. This is only for a year, but you don’t have to be registered to use these accommodations.

*Facebook*

A lot of people find their rooms through Facebook. Be sure to follow the [‘Kamer in Utrecht’](https://www.facebook.com/groups/234214686628695/) Facebook group, the [‘Utrecht Rooms’](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1478347729072078) Facebook group and the [‘Find a room(mate) or house in Utrecht’](https://www.facebook.com/groups/504419736297703) Facebook group. These are but a few examples of Facebook groups that can help you in your search, but there are many more.

*Other options*

Another great way to find a room is through word of mouth. This is applicable to students who have made some friends that live in Utrecht, as other students can vouch for you and make you aware of vacant rooms.

Also, the University has some tips (see link below), which you should try. Finding a house is not impossible, but no matter how good you are at procrastinating, start searching early. Lots of people sublet their place over the summer until the end of August, which is practical if you want to arrive earlier to start looking and go to hospiteeravonden. Or you could start from an AirBnB. Whatever you do, never pay before you’ve seen a room. The UU also has some tips on their [website](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/welcome-to-utrecht/prepare-your-stay/arrange-housing/ways-to-find-housing).

## 2.2 OV-Chipkaart

To be able to travel by public transport (trains, buses, everything!) you need an ‘OV-chipkaart’. You will maybe hear about the yellow or the blue cards. [The yellow OV-chipkaart](https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/en/personal-ov-chipkaart) is a personal one with your name and picture on it (you can only buy this if you have registered with the municipality and received your BSN number). Only you can use this. [The blue one](https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/en/anonymous-ov-chipkaart) is anonymous and anyone can use it. You need to put money on your card to be able to travel with it. Either online or at one of the machines at the station or in the supermarket or automatically from your bank account. On [this website](https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/en), everything is explained in English. The minimum amount you need on the card to travel is 20 euros. It is also possible to buy a single ticket, but most of the time you cannot pay with cash. Also, on for example the bus, the fares are more expensive when you don’t have an OV. [This website gives the train schedule](https://www.ns.nl/en) and [this website helps you plan your trip with buses, trams, metros and trains](https://9292.nl/en).

Since recently it is also possible to use a debit card to check-in if you want to travel with public transport.

## 2.3 Nederlands

Even though a lot of people speak English in The Netherlands, it could come in handy to know a bit of Dutch. If you’re interested, then here are some options:

The [University has an online language course](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/welcome-to-utrecht/student-life/learning-dutch) and there are also language schools in Utrecht. For example, this [language school](https://www.babel.nl/en/) offers a 25% discount to UU employees. [ESN](https://www.esn-utrecht.nl/dutch-language-course) also offers Dutch language courses.

Important sentences:

“De treinen rijden niet!” The trains are cancelled. *This happens more often than not*

“Het regent.” It’s raining. *This happens more often than not*

Dutch people really love to complain either about the weather or trains, and they bond over it too, so remember these phrases. Check out [www.buienradar.nl](http://www.buienradar.nl/) to see the rain forecast!

## 2.4 No Campus

Dutch Universities do not have a campus and are usually scattered around the city. Make sure you know [where the most-used locations are](https://students.uu.nl/en/contact/buildings). Here are all the locations you might come across in the city centre:

* Drift (D..)
* Janskerkhof (JK..)
* Kromme Nieuwe Gracht (KNG)
* UCU Campus
  + Spinoza Hall
  + Newton Hall
  + Descartes Hall
  + Locke Hall
  + Dining Hall
* Israelslaan

Exams will almost always be on the ‘Uithof’ (Utrecht Science Park), which is not in the city centre.

## 2.5 Introduction Week

The International Office organizes an introduction week at the beginning of September, so sign up for it! Meet other people, feel less lost, or connect with people who feel lost as well. Find more information [here on the International Office.](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/exchange-and-visiting-students) The UHSK also has an introduction week and an introduction camp. During this week you specifically meet a lot of History students, while the introduction week offered by the International Office is focused on getting to know Utrecht and meeting students outside of your own study.

## 2.6 Holidays

The UU has different holiday periods. Check the [academic calendar](https://students.uu.nl/gw/academische-jaarkalender-gw) to see when all these periods and free days are. After every block is a “reflection week”. During this week there are no classes, but it is possible that resits for exams are planned during this week. Notable “Dutch”free days are: Kingsday, where we celebrate the King's birthday. It sure is a crazy day, and “Bevrijdingsdag” or Liberation Day, where we celebrate the liberation of the Netherlands from the Germans in WW2. Some courses might finish earlier, so also always check [MyTimetable](https://mytimetable.uu.nl/schedule).

## 2.7 Money, money, money

In a lot of places in The Netherlands your visa, MasterCard or American Express card will not be accepted. That’s why opening a Dutch bank account might be handy. The Dutch love using debit cards as frequently as possible and preferably contactless. So bring enough cash with you for the first days, as getting a Dutch bank account takes a while. The [University](https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/international-staff-and-guests/visiting-utrecht-university/prepare-for-your-stay/opening-a-bank-account) has listed some requirements.

Most international students open a bank account at ING or ABN AMRO, because it has the least amount of formal requirements.

For [ING](https://www.ing.nl/particulier/student/acties/student-english/appointment.html), make an appointment on their website. Make an appointment ASAP because at the start of the academic year they can get booked out quickly. When you have the appointment at one of their branches, don’t forget to bring:

* a valid form of ID (passport, ID card, official residence document)
* proof of registration at a Dutch educational establishment
* (if you live at a Dutch address:) proof of registration in the Personal Records Database (BRP)
* your ‘burgerservicenummer’ (BSN) or, if you do not have a BSN, your Tax Identification Number (TIN).

For [ABN AMRO](https://www.abnamro.nl/en/personal/payments/packages/student-package/index.html), all necessary information can be found on their website. Make an appointment by phone, and visit one of their branches in Utrecht.

## 2.8 I want to ride my bicycle

In the Netherlands a bike is THE vehicle to get around the city. It’s cheaper and easier than public transportation and is faster than walking. If you want to buy a bike there are a few options:

You could buy a new one, but buying a second-hand bike is also a good option. It is both cheaper and more sustainable. An example of a store close to Drift that sells second hand bikes is [030 Bikes.](https://030-fietsen.nl/tweedehands-fietsen/)

Another option is to get a [Swapfiets](https://swapfiets.nl/en-NL), a bike you rent per month. It’s a bit more expensive, but they deliver it to your house and repair any damages when necessary.

If you need a bike for only a day or two, you can rent a bike from the NS, all train stations offer NS bikes (‘[OV-fietsen](https://www.ns.nl/en/door-to-door/ov-fiets)’) to rent. But beware, these bikes can get really expensive really quickly! Plus, if your bike gets stolen with the keys inside (it happens), you will have to pay 250 euros compensation.

If your tire needs some air, you can just go to a bike shop, they will usually have a pump (‘fietspomp’) outside their shop that you can use for free. If you become a more avid cyclist, however, you can also buy one at a store such as the [HEMA](https://www.hema.nl/).

The municipality has become very strict about bikes that are not parked in the designated areas, and they will regularly remove bikes that are not parked properly. They even saw through your chain lock! If that is the case, you can find your bike in the system [here](https://www.verlorenofgevonden.nl/) and will have to go all the way [here](https://www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/mobility/cycling/bicycle-gone/) to collect it. Keep in mind that you have to pay 23,50 euros when you collect it.

## 2.9 Registration

You must ‘register’ at an address and get a BSN number in order to be able to for example open a bank account, geta job, access DUO student financing and get insurance. You can register temporarily using an overseas address and get a BSN number, but this is only for 4 months. When looking for housing, pay attention to whether you can register at the address. The landlord has to pay more taxes for more registered people, and registration may not be allowed in certain properties. For information, call the [Gemeente](https://www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/) (wait on the line until an operator comes on, most of them speak English), they are very helpful.

## 2.10 Getting a Job

Once you have a BSN and a local bank account, you can get a job. Look for work around Oudegracht and the Dom square, where the cafés, restaurants and stores serve more tourists. They won’t mind that you don’t speak Dutch.

Most places will stick a sign with ‘collega’s gezocht’ in the window, so print out some CVs with your availability and hand them out. If you don’t have a BSN, babysitting for cash can be quite lucrative. Make a profile on [Sitly](https://www.sitly.nl/en) and contact some cashed-up, time-poor expats with small children. If you have a formal job, you may need to fill out a tax return before the end of April. This will likely be a paper M form (i.e. no Google Translate), so make sure you make some nice Dutch friends to help you at tax time. You can also ask for help from the board!

## 2.11 VISA

If you’re from outside of the EU, do not forget to apply for a visa in time. You can find all information [here](https://www.netherlandsandyou.nl/). Requirements differ depending on your home country. Just make sure you have it in time before September, get settled and participate in the introductory week.

## 2.12 Insurance

Everybody needs health insurance in the Netherlands. If you’re from the EU, in some cases your home country’s insurance is enough, but if you have a job you need local insurance. Zilveren Kruis has cheap basic insurance with a student discount, but you can compare the different ones [on this website](https://www.zorgwijzer.nl/zorgvergelijker/english#/search). Apply for the health insurance ‘zorgtoeslag’ (care allowance) from the [belastingdienst](https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontenten/belastingdienst/individuals/benefits/moving_to_the_netherlands/i_have_dutch_healthcare_insurance/i_have_dutch_healthcare_insurance) (tax office), which is €99 per month. Just make sure you report your yearly income through the online portal.

## 2.13 DUO Student Finance

As a non-Dutch citizen, you might still be [eligible to take out the same loan](https://duo.nl/particulier/student-finance/index.jsp) many other Dutch students are getting. European Union students who work 32 hours per month can qualify for a grant of 439 euros and/or a loan of up to 1000 euros per month plus free public transport, so it makes that €9/hr job worthwhile. You have to fill in a form and email it to [documenten@duo.nl](mailto:documenten@duo.nl) with your employment contract and a copy of your European passport attached. They will process your application in 1-2 months. After three months of receiving the loan, you have to prove how many hours you worked by sending in your payslips. Be careful, if you used free public transport but didn’t work enough, you may get a hefty fine. [Find more info on their website.](https://duo.nl/particulier/student-finance/apply.jsp)

## 2.14 Dutch Phone Number

Long live the EU where we have free roaming and free EU calls! There are many EU students that do keep their foreign number. Check with your provider if the free roaming and free EU calls aren’t only up to a certain limit, though. You might still need a Dutch phone number even if you have an EU number because some people (like real estate agents) will not call a foreign number, and some online forms will not accept a foreign number, you’ll find out soon enough. [Lebara](https://mobile.lebara.com/nl/en) and [Lyca Mobile](https://www.lycamobile.nl/en/) are cheap and easy to buy from shops like on the Voorstraat. With your BSN number, provider [Ben](https://www.ben.nl/student) will give you a cheapish monthly subscription (student discount!).

## 2.15 Coffee

Coffee enthusiasts will be more than happy with Utrecht. Here are some recommendations:

* Try The Village,
* Cupp,
* 30ML,
* Bagels&Beans,
* t’Koffieboontje,
* Koffie Leute,
* Brauhaus,
* Broei,
* De Ontdekking.

The University Library on the Drift also has a café with good coffee. If you have fewer euros to spare, the coffee machines throughout university buildings also do the job. To get through long days, sometimes caffeine (or a nice cup of tea or hot chocolate) is what you need!

# 3. University Life

## 3.1 Applications

Utrecht University is very modern and digital, meaning there are different applications for everything. This of course is very efficient, if you know where to look. Websites and apps Utrecht University uses are:

* Osiris;
* UU Gmail;
* Blackboard;
* My UU app.

These applications will be discussed below. [This link](https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/it-facilities) provides more information on the University’s other technological facilities.

## 3.2 My UU App

This is an application that you can download on your phone. It contains your schedule, grades and student card. Beware, you will not receive a hard-copy student card. So to prove you’re a student at the UU, you need this app. During exam weeks, the University library will only be available to UU students. You have to show your digital student card at the entrance together with your ID to prove it is really you. You will not be needing your ID if you upload a picture onto your Osiris. This will show on your online student card so that only showing this will suffice to get to class or a [study spot](https://students.uu.nl/en/study-spots).

## 3.3 Blackboard

This is either a [website](https://uu.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_tab_group_id=_25_1) or an application to download on your phone. Here you can find the required literature, assignments and additional information concerning the courses you’re taking and general information, such as events. All course manuals will also be available through blackboard, and this is the platform that teachers can use to get in touch with your entire class before classes start.

## 3.4 UU Gmail account

The way of communicating with teachers is through your UU-Gmail account or your [Solis-mail](https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/information-and-technology-services-its/solis-id-and-password). You will receive an e-mail in your private e-mail account about it, so keep an eye out for that. Your email address will consist of the letters of your first names, followed by a point, last name, @students.uu.nl. So for example, [a.b.c.jansen@students.uu.nl](mailto:a.b.c.jansen@students.uu.nl).

## 3.5 Osiris

[Osiris](https://osiris.uu.nl/osiris_student_uuprd/StartPagina.do) has your personal information. In the bachelor, a student can sign up for courses there. Exchange students are also enrolled for courses by the university. On Osiris, grades are published (most of the time after announcing grades on Blackboard or through email). The grades on Osiris, however, are leading. So always check if it is correct. A quick guide to Osiris:

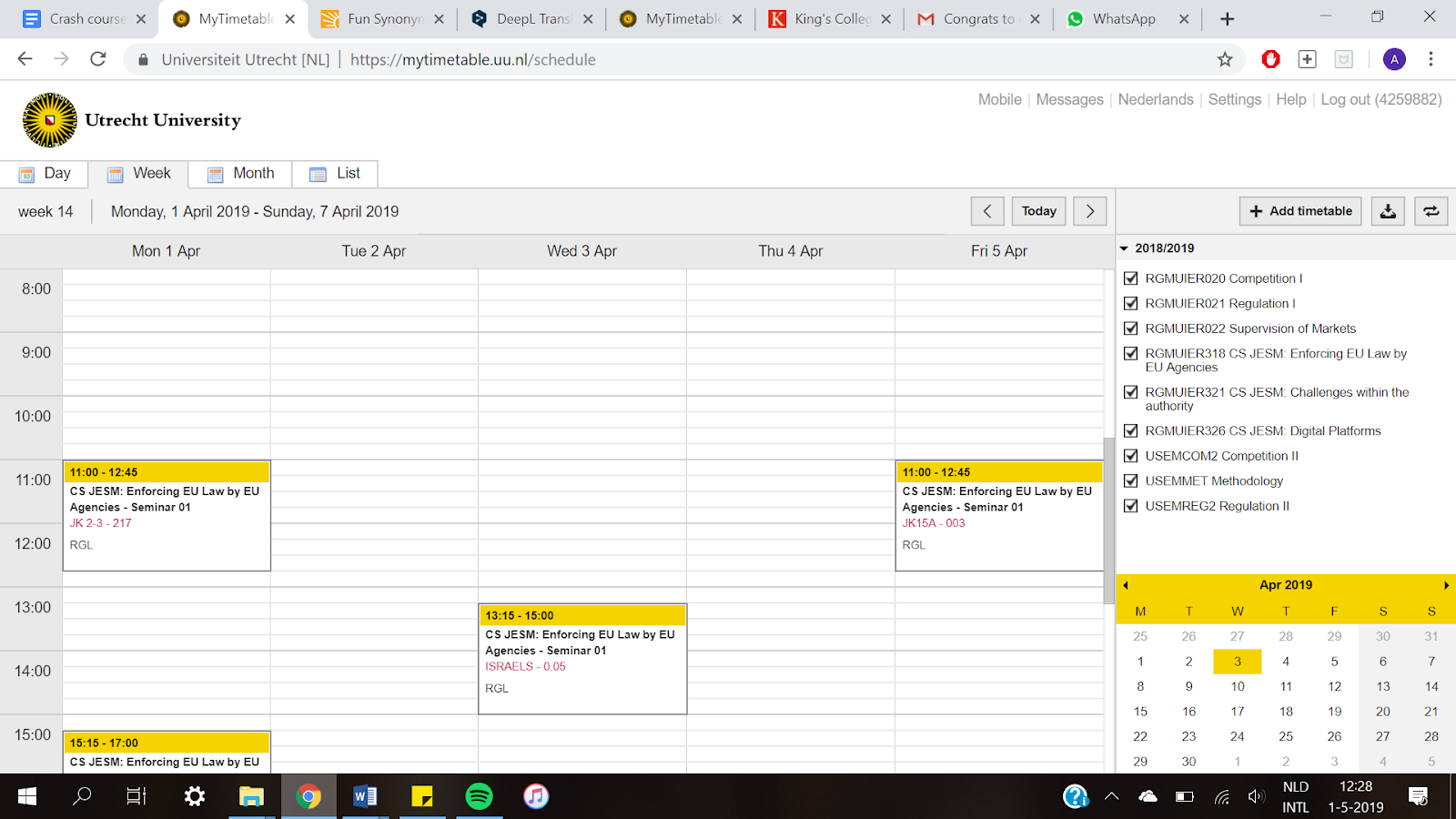
You log in to Osiris with your student number and password, you use for all other UU applications too. When you are logged on, the first screen you see is the one with your personal information. A student can update their address here manually and add a photo. If you add a photo, it will appear on your digital student card.

In the tab ‘Register’ you can see the courses with the corresponding course codes that you are enrolled in.

In the ‘Deregister’ tab, you can deregister from a course. In ‘Results’ you can find your grades for the different exams you have had. On the right side of the grade, you can find a hyperlink to the statistics of the exam. You can see how well you did, compared to other students (only if you want to know, of course :)). In ‘Progress’ you can find your study progress overview. You can see how many EC ([European Credits](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/exchange-students-social-and-behavioural-sciences/courses)) you have already obtained and how many are still to go before you graduate.

The tab ‘Courses’ is quite important, although it is not often mentioned. This tab will lead you to [the Course Catalogue](https://osiris.uu.nl/osiris_student_uuprd/OnderwijsCatalogus.do). When you type in either the name or code of the course, you can click on the course that you’re interested in. There, you will find what kinds of exams you will have for that subject, the test weights, the aims and content and most importantly: the prescribed readings. You will know what books to buy (if any). It could, namely, be the case that the obligatory readings will be published on Blackboard or that they will be available through the [UU library](https://www.uu.nl/en/university-library).

## 3.6 My Timetable

The website [mytimetable.uu.nl/schedule](https://mytimetable.uu.nl/schedule) (no www.) shows your schedule for all your courses. In the far right upper corner, you can log in with your UU-student credentials. Of course, you do not want to open your web browser every time you want to see your schedule. For the old-school students who still use a diary, this is not a problem. For the high-tech students who use a digital agenda, MyTimetable comes with a crafty feature. The left button is used to download your timetable in several formats, to use it on another device. The right button is used when you are on mytimetable.uu.nl on the device where you also use your calendar. It will sync with the desired type of calendar (e.g. Apple, Google, Microsoft). 

## 3.7 Teaching

Teaching in Utrecht is less hierarchical than in some countries. Obviously, you should respect teachers. The ‘lectures’ are often the moments where the teacher speaks, and you take notes in silence - although you can of course ask questions. But, in ‘seminars’ teachers tend to appreciate you participating and sharing your opinions. There’s nothing worse for a teacher than an unresponsive class where you can hear a needle drop and crickets awkwardly chirp when the teacher asks a question. So come prepared, ask questions and provide input during class, and don’t be afraid to make a mistake.

## 3.8 Books

You will need books to study. Most of these books are mentioned in the syllabus of the class. The library always has a copy of every prescribed book, but you cannot borrow it. You can only read it in the library itself and copy pages.The UU has also made online versions of books available on [Worldcat](https://utrechtuniversity-on-worldcat-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/v2), which you can access with your Solis-id.

If you are a member of the UHSK you get a 10% on your books for year 1 and 2 (buying books for block 1 saves you usually more money than the €20,- yearly contribution) when ordering from Wo4you, see [www.uhsk.nl](http://www.uhsk.nl) or [WO4YOU](https://wo4you.nl/) for more information.

If you are daring enough, scouring the internet might provide you with an illicit .pdf version of the book, however these are usually not the correct version used in the course.

You can buy second-hand textbooks on [Marktplaats](https://www.marktplaats.nl/) or new ones at [Bol.com](http://www.bol.com), [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/) or any other online warehouse. Be aware of the shipping dates though.

## 3.09 Exams and Assignments

Typically, you have exams every eight weeks (in your first year). These exams will often cover all the materials you have learnt in your eight-week course. Whatever happens, don’t panic! If you’ve actively participated in the seminars and paid attention in the lectures, you’ll be okay. So, our golden tip is to pay attention and participate, because the exam will be on the topics covered there. In lectures and seminars, the teachers emphasise what are important issues, or where there are interesting tensions, and this is where your exam alarm bells should start ringing. In fact, it is highly unlikely, although it can still happen, that teachers will ever ask you something that hasn’t been discussed in either the lectures or seminars. So study efficiently, and use the lectures and seminars as your guide through the exam materials. We cannot overstate just how important the lectures and seminars are, so really, they are key.

Unlike at some universities, it is not necessary to research extra materials or use extra non-prescribed reading on the exam or in your exam essay questions. Just make sure you are on top of the prescribed materials, and you’ll be just fine. For writing papers throughout the course, however, further reading outside the prescribed materials is very much appreciated and even essential, because you are required to do your own research.

From your second year on a lot of your exams will turn into Take-home exams. Some take-homes are in essay-form, where you get a limited amount of time to answer an essay question. Other take-homes consist of multiple, smaller essay questions. The time you get also fluctuates. Some courses give you five days to write it, others only a couple of hours. All of this can be found in the specific course syllabi.

## 3.11 Grading System

The [grading system](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/exchange-and-visiting-students/utrecht-university/our-education/grading-system) in the Netherlands might differ significantly from the grading system you are used to. Our university uses a 10-point grading system: 1 is the lowest grade and 10 the highest. The lowest passing grade is a 5.5. So it does not have to be a 6.0: a 5.5 is enough.

Just to be clear, if you come from a country that gives A+’s on a daily basis, that is not the case here. In the Netherlands, grades 1-3 and 9-10 are rarely awarded. Just as a reference, Honours students, the most excellent students, need a 7.3 average. So that is already excellent! I have heard people being disappointed with a 8 and it is okay to always want to improve. But it is not normal to obtain a 9 or 10 at a Dutch University, that is just not how our system works. 10 means perfect, and that is just fiction. There is a saying in Dutch that perfectly illustrates this point: a 9 is for the teacher, a 10 for God.

Also, teachers have 10 working days to grade your exams/assignments.

If you need any study tips by the UU (such as “try to avoid distractions”), [visit this website.](https://students.uu.nl/en/homepage/guidance-and-development/skills-lab/tips-tools-for-studying-and-writing/study-tips)

Another interesting thing to know is that your final grade for a course is rounded up (or down). So for example a 6.2 final grade will become a 6.0. A 6.3 however, will become a 6.5. And a 6.8 will become a 7.0 on your list of final grades.

## 3.12 Rules and Regulations

All of the rules and regulations can be found on this [page](https://students.uu.nl/en/leg/law-and-economics-llm/practical-information/academic-policies-and-procedures). These documents are reviewed each year by the Educational Committee. So if you have any suggestions for improvements, let the board know, and we’ll see what we can do!

## 3.13 Cum Laude

As mentioned above, getting high grades in the Netherlands is different to getting high grades in other countries. In case you are interested. here are the requirements to graduate Cum laude (with honour):

* an average mark of at least 8.0 (before rounding-off);
* for each separate course, at least the final mark 7.0;
* for the thesis, at least the final mark 8.0;
* no course has resulted in an unsatisfactory grade and a satisfactory grade has never been retaken; and
* the study programme has been completed within 1,5 year.

You can find the more detailed requirements in article 6.2 of the [Rules and Regulations](https://students.uu.nl/en/leg/law-and-economics-llm/practical-information/academic-policies-and-procedures).

## 3.14 Honours

If you want a challenge next to your normal studies, the honours program could be a good option. The Humanities Honours Programme starts in the 2nd academic year and consists of a total of 45 credits (EC). These credits are partly on top of your regular programme. In March, students who qualify for the Honours programme will receive a personal invitation for the information meetings. You can also sign up for the information meetings via [humanitieshonours@uu.nl](https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/curriculum/challenge-yourself/humanitieshonours@uu.nl). For more information on this program go to the [website](https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/curriculum/challenge-yourself/humanities-honours-programme-ba).

## 3.15 Retaking your exams

The retake regime at the University of Utrecht is rather strict. You can only retake your exam if you scored between 4,0 and 5,0 and then the maximum grade you can obtain with your retake is a 6,0. If you retake an exam with a grade between a 5,0 and a 5,5, your retake exam can bring you a maximum of a 7,0. But don’t forget: in case of demonstrable force majeure situations which prevent you from participating in the written exam you need to unsubscribe yourself prior to the test. Also, when partaking in a substitute exam, so after cancelling the original one, students no longer have the right to do a resit! So you can either go for a substitute exam OR a resit. If you’re in doubt about whether these rules apply, call the study services or the study advisor, see their contact details under 3.2.18 “HELP”.

## 3.16 Referencing and Plagiarism

**Plagiarism** is a big scary word, and can have some serious consequences, but once you get your head around what you need to do it’s actually quite easy to follow the rules. Here are some things to keep in mind when writing a paper, thesis or **any** written work (no matter how small), even outside of university:

* Any time you (a) paraphrase someone else’s words without giving them credit, or (b) copy and paste words that someone else has written without using quotation marks and giving the person credit, you are essentially **stealing an idea and pretending that it is your own** (even if you don’t mean to). This is what the university is trying to prevent with its plagiarism rules, because it’s not fair to the person who came up with the idea or the words and it’s not fair to give you credit for something you didn’t write yourself.
* To avoid doing this, all you have to do is (a) re-write someone else’s idea in your own words **and** insert a reference to where that idea came from, and (b) always use quotation marks when copying and pasting words, plus insert a reference to where that text came from. Option (a) is the better option 90% of the time, because professors want to see how **you** write, not someone else.
* Therefore, **nearly** **every sentence** in your paper should have a reference at the end, and sometimes you even need to make multiple references in one sentence where you are taking inspiration from more than one text.
* You do not need to reference your own opinion, though of course in academic writing we do not say “I think”, so your own opinion may be phrased as though it is a fact, e.g. “human rights would be better protected in Australia if a Bill of Rights were enacted”.
* Generally, introductions and conclusions do not need to contain many references (unless they are relevant quotes) because they are general summaries of what is going to be said in the paper. However, they must be entirely your own words and not copied/pasted from anywhere else.

*Chatgpt*

Since the introduction of Chatgpt, the UU has been working on surveying what the possibilities and risks are. The UU made a few guidelines:

* The use of an AI tool (such as ChatGPT or a similar tool) is regarded as fraud if a student generates texts with it and presents them as his/her own work for the purpose of a summative or formative assessment such as an examination, an essay, thesis or dissertation (or parts thereof), cf. art. 5.15 section 1 OER (BA/ art. 5.16 section 1 MA).
* The obligation to be active in and be prepared for classes (art. 4.5 OER-BA/4.3 OER-MA) is considered not to have been met if a student has only (or to a predominant extent) used an AI tool (such as ChatGPT or a similar tool) for preparation and presents the preparations as his own work.

So be mindful of how and when you use chatgpt.

## 3.17 Exam Review

Grades can sometimes surprise or disappoint. Oftentimes, there will be an opportunity to review your answers. At an exam review, you can ask your teacher questions related to your exam. Therefore, if you have an additional question regarding your exam, if you would like to better understand what you could have improved, or you have questions about the way it was graded, go to the exam review. Go to the exam review especially if you are disappointed with your grade, as it can provide you with a moment to reflect on and learn how to improve for next time. Make sure you come prepared, though, so you can ask questions efficiently, because you won’t be the only one there.

## 3.18 Library Card

So no student card, because that is sustainable. You can open your UU-app and just scan the library card (‘bibliotheekpas’) under the category cards (‘kaarten’) to check out books. If you fail to return a book in time, however, your card will have a fine on it. You can pay that fine at the same spot that you return books in the University Library at the Drift. I would suggest bringing your debit card!

## 3.19 Printing

Printing at the UU can be quite confusing: all is explained [on this website](https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/information-and-technology-services-its/websites/printing-photocopying-and-scanning). Printing at UU is done via a follow-me system. This means that you can print the print jobs you have sent at any printer of your choice. If you want to print a document, you have four options:

1. You log in on a UU-computer with your student number and password and print through the computer;
2. You can also upload your files via <https://www.uu.nl/myprintportal> and then print them
3. You can send an email to [mail2print@uu.nl](mailto:mail2print@uu.nl) from your UU gmail account with the documents you want printed;
4. You can install the UU\_printer on your laptop.
   * 1. For Windows, see [this manual](https://manuals.uu.nl/en/manual/printers-nieuw-printen-via-eigen-windows/).
     2. For Mac, see [this manual.](https://manuals.uu.nl/en/manual/printers-uublack-uucolour-printing-via-macos/)

If you have completed one of these options, your document has been sent to one of the UU printers. Then you can log in to the printer to start printing your document. It is easiest if you have an ov-chipkaart**.** You can link your chipkaart to your UU account, so you only have to hold your card in front of the printer and you will be logged in.

Keep in mind that you need to pay for printing. Please be aware that having money on your OV-chipkaart is not the same as having money to print. You can top up your print credit via <https://www.uu.nl/myprintportal> by way of iDeal or paypal. This print credit is linked to your UU account (student number).

If you don’t want (or can’t) link your UU account to your chipkaart, you can log in to the printer with your student number and password. When you are in front of the printer, there is a button on the upper right of the touchscreen that will allow you to log in. The costs for printing are the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Format (A4/A3)** | **Rate** | **Format (A4/A3)** | **Rate** |
| Black and white - Single sided | 3,5/4,5 cent | Colour - Single sided | 6.5/7,5 cents |
| Black and white - Double sided | 6,0/7,0 cents | Colour - Double sided | 12/13 cents |

## 3.20 Wi-Fi

Connecting to Wi-Fi at the University can be somewhat challenging but once you’ve connected to Eduroam, you’re set – until you change your password, then you can start all over again. There are two networks, the University Utrecht network, specifically for visitors, but easier to use since you only need to accept the terms of agreement in your browser. Better is to connect to Eduroam which is a worldwide network that will also connect to Wi-Fi at other universities. There are manuals on how to connect to Eduroam for all kinds of operating systems which can be found [here](https://manuals.uu.nl/en/a-z/?_categorie=wifi-en).

Use the following to connect to Eduroam:

Username: your UU email address. Does this not work? Try [studentnumber@soliscom.uu.nl](mailto:studentnumber@soliscom.uu.nl)

Password: your Solis password

## 3.21 Digital Exams

Most History exams will be digital exams, which is great if you have a terrible handwriting, but be aware that the keyboards are Dutch. This means a QWERTY keyboard! For some reason, this leads to a lot of confusion concerning the ‘apostrophe’, so make sure you have checked out the keyboard before the digital exam! The University is currently finding a solution to this problem, by either making it possible to bring your own keyboard (not laptop) or providing them.

## 3.22 ‘In my opinion, I think this document is amazing’

Writing papers and written exams is very important in The Netherlands. So if you come from a country where the focus is on presentations and oral exams, it might be good to prepare for this. The UU has a [skills lab which offers writing sessions](https://students.uu.nl/en/student-life/workshops/improve-your-writing-skills/skills-lab-writing-centre).

Whenever there is a maximum amount of words for a paper, chances are that the margin of exceeding that is 10%. As always, **check with the teacher**.

Some of you will have been taught in your previous university that your opinion does not matter when doing assignments. This will probably be different at the UU. Analysing is important and your own reflections will lead to a higher grade.

## 3.23 Help

Are you having problems with or related to your studies? Do you need advice or counselling for personal problems? There are a number of counsellors within your study programme who can give educational guidance.

[Student services](https://students.uu.nl/en/contact/student-services) provide information about studying and student life, such as information about admissions, registration, tuition fees, student finance, administrative grants, career orientation, student organisations and studying abroad.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Email | studentservices@uu.nl | Mention your student number in the email |
| Telephone hours | +31 30 2537000 | Monday to Friday 10-12 AM and 1-3 PM |
| Visiting hours | Heidelberglaan 6, De Uithof | Monday to Friday 10 AM - 4 PM |

The [Student Information Desk Humanities](https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/history-ba/contact/student-desk-student-services) and the study point can respond to your questions about the programme and provide support or recommendations for your studies. For questions about programmes, courses, schedules, internships, exams, special facilities, approval for electives courses outside the Humanities programmes, exemptions, information about studying abroad and application for your diploma. You can also make appointments with the study advisor and internship coordinator.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Email | [studentdesk.hum@uu.nl](mailto:studentdesk.hum@uu.nl)  [studiepunt.gw@uu.nl](mailto:studiepunt.gw@uu.nl) | Mention your student number |
| Telephone hours | 030 253 6285 (study point) | Monday to Friday 9 AM - 5 PM |
| Visiting | Drift 10, 3512 BS Utrecht | Schedule an appointment |

The [study advisor](https://students.uu.nl/en/hum/history-ba/contact/study-advisor) can respond to your questions about the programme and provide support or recommendations for your studies. You should also consult the study advisor if you are having problems that are affecting progress in your studies, such as personal problems, illness, problems with study skills or if you are falling behind.

For most questions, you can come to the walk-in hours of the study advisor. For questions that take more time as study problems, study delay or other special circumstances, you can make a personal appointment at the Student Information Desk Humanities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Email | [studieadviesGKG.GW@uu.nl](mailto:studieadviesGKG.GW@uu.nl) | Mention your student number |
| Telephone hours | +31 (0)30-253 6990. | Monday to Friday 10 AM - 11:30 AM |
| Complex Questions | Drift 6, 3512 BS Utrecht | Schedule an appointment |
| Library walk-in consultation | Hall library Drift 27 | Monday to Friday 12:30-1:30 PM |
| Walk in consultation | Drift 6 | Tuesdays and Thursdays 3 PM - 4 PM |

Do you need IT assistance?

* Check the [manuals website](http://manuals.uu.nl/its) for all IT manuals;
* Check the [status of IT systems](https://its-dashboard.sites.uu.nl/en/) to see current outages and scheduled maintenance.

Still need help? The contact info of the IT-heroes can be found below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Email | <https://topdesk.ictsc.uu.nl/tas/public/login/form> | Self-service desk |
| Telephone hours | +31 30 253 4500  You can also Whatsapp them: +31 6 10034493. Please mention your SolisID. | Monday - Friday: 7:15 AM - 10:30 PM  Saturday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM  Sunday: 10:00 AM - 10:30 PM |
| Visitor hours | UITHOF – EDUCATORIUM  Leuvenlaan 19 (entrance Heidelberglaan 3) | Monday to Friday: 8:30 AM - 4 PM |
|  | UITHOF - UNIVERSITY LIBRARY Heidelberglaan 3 | Monday to Friday: 5:30 PM - 10:30 PM  Saturday: 10 AM - 6 PM  Sunday: 10 AM - 10:30 PM |
|  | CITY CENTRE - UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  Drift 27 | Monday to Friday, 10 AM - 3 PM |