







Dear student,

If you are reading this guide, you are probably one of the various international students who has joined our master's programme at the Graduate School of Natural Sciences. Although a lot of information is provided on all the different websites, I thought it would be nice if you would have some first information combined in this booklet. Utrecht is a very nice city, and since my first day at Utrecht University I felt at home. Last year I choose to spend a year as the student board member within the department of chemistry and also as commissioner of educational affairs in the board of our students association for all Chemistry and Molecular Life Science students, Proton. I would really recommend to become a member of Proton for only €10,-, since it is the best place to meet your other master students from Nanomaterials Science and other natural science master programmes and as a bonus get discounts on your books. I will probably see you during the introduction. So, do not hesitate to ask any questions. As will be clear from this guide, our students and teachers are generally very open, so ask anything during your stay. Our master programme is internationally oriented as well, with international research groups, international professors, PhDs and from September on, a batch of new international master students, of which you are one. Make the best of your stay and read on. Hopefully you become inspired by Utrecht. I hope this little guide will help you get by in the early months of your stay.

Best wishes and enjoy your stay,

Ties Bakker,

Student board member Department of Chemistry 2017-2018

Help Guide: Studying at UU

Just like different countries, also universities all over the world have their own culture and customs. Our Dutch education system may be different from what you are used to. This guide gives an overview of the Dutch education system and all the information you need to know to successfully complete your master's degree.

Participation during lectures and tutorials

Speak up! It is important in our master's programme that you ask questions if you do not understand something and have comments or remarks. Our education system is quite interactive, because we believe that this way you learn the most. You are challenged to look at things critically and constructively. So **do not feel afraid to ask questions** or make a comment, because most of the time, your fellow students want to ask the same thing but don't dare to do so. Just raise your hand and wait for the lecturer to give you permission to speak.

Lectures and tutorials (work classes)

The lectures usually take one hour and 45 minutes. After approximately 45 minutes, there often is a 15 minute break. During lectures as well, if you have a question or a need for clarification, raise your hand! The lecturers usually like to answer questions because that shows that you actively participate. It could also lead to interesting discussions that the lecturers had not even thought of beforehand. After almost every lecture there are tutorials. In these work classes you get the time to make the assignments provided by the teacher. Assistants will be there to help you if there are any questions.

Teacher – student relationship

At Utrecht, the teacher-student relationship is rather informal. The tutorial-teachers often know their students by name, and some students address the teachers with their first name. However, this is not a must, so if you are not comfortable by it, you can address your teacher by his or hers last name. Written communication does proceed formally. This means that the opening of your email should be something like "Dear *name*" instead of "hey there".

Communication system in the Netherlands

Communication – apart from a lack of a shared mother language – can be difficult in an international environment. Your culture highly influences the way you speak and answer questions. A distinction can be made between high-context cultures and low-context cultures (Hall, 1990). Of course, this is only a generalization that does not take individual variation in account, so please do not take this information too literally (but rather see it as free advice).

In the Netherlands, we have a low-context culture, meaning that information is communicated explicitly. Therefore, when your university professors ask a question, they expect their students to answer to the point and concise. When you give an answer coming from a high-context culture, your teacher could think that you don't know the answer and are just blathering around. Please keep this in mind when you are taking an exam or writing a paper during your master's, because it could help you avoid a low mark due to miscommunication. See the table for the characteristics of low- and high-context cultures.

Low context communication (The Netherlands)	High context communication
Information is structured in different "compartments"	Information is not structured and comes across easy and flexible
Communication is direct	Communication is indirect, thereby avoiding the risk to hurt someone's feelings
Information is almost always literally	Sometimes figuratively
Non-verbal information is of minor importance	Emphasis on non-verbal communication
An answer starts with its core, and you tell secondary matters later.	An answer starts with its context, and leads up to the core

Grading system

An important matter about the education system at Utrecht University is our grading system. In the Netherlands, the traditional grading system is from 1 to 10, where 1 is the lowest grade and 10 is the highest. One thing in which the Netherlands differ from for example the United Kingdom or the United States is that 9's and 10's are very rarely awarded in oral examinations or open question testing, such as essays, presentations, project reports or dissertations. At UU, a grade of 7 means you have performed well, a 7.5 means you have done very well and everything above an 8 means you have performed exceptionally well. A 9 or a 10 is only awarded for (near) perfection, and not to encourage the students (as they tend to do in North America; Nuffic, 2013). A comparison table is shown below. So please, do not feel disappointed if you received a 7.5, because that is actually a very nice grade for Dutch standards.

NL	US	UK
10	A+	A*
9.5	A+	A*
9	A+	A*
8.5	A+	A*
8	A	A*
7.5	A	A
7	B+	A-
6.5	B	B
6	C	C
5.5	C	D
5	F	F
4	F	F

The Department

The Department of Chemistry covers the whole range of chemistry.

Research is performed in the Debye Institute for Nanomaterials Science and the Bijvoet Center for Biomolecular Research. The Debye Institute focuses on three themes: Catalysis, Colloid Science and Nanophotonics. The Bijvoet Center studies life at the smallest possible scale.

The Department is lead by prof. dr. Bert Klein Gebbink and has approximately 50 scientific staff members. The Department of Chemistry is part of the Faculty of Science, which is lead by our Dean prof. dr. Isabel Arends. The master Nanomaterials and the other masters programmes concerning the natural sciences are clustered in the Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS), lead by the Educational Board (BoS) of the GSNS.

Student Participation

At every level of Utrecht University, students and staff help develop policy and give advice to the different governing bodies. A well-organised student and staff representation system is very important to the functioning of the University. The student representation of the GSNS is organised in the Educational Committee (OC-GSNS). This committee consists of employees and student representatives of each master programme. It oversees the quality of the programmes, points out subjects of concern and provides advice on the development and implementation of



education policies. They control the BoS of the GSNS. An important topic is the Education and Examination Regulations (OER in Dutch).

The OC-GSNS member from Nanomaterials Science gets input from the Educational Advisory Committee of the master (OAC-Nano). This committee consists of two employees and students from every research group within the Debye Institute of Nanomaterials Science. Every remark on the master programme can be reported to the members of this committee, since they discuss the overall structure of the master and all the course evaluations. You can find the members of the committee [here](#).

The Faculty Council is the consultative body for all staff and students of the Faculty of Science. The Faculty Council is authorised to consult with the Dean about all faculty-related matters. The Council has right of consent in a number of important decisions of the Dean, such as the adoption of the faculty regulations and the Education and Examination Regulations.

The student member from Chemistry in the Faculty Council is also the chair of the Departmental Committee. This committee controls the policy making and finances of the department of Chemistry and gives input to the Faculty Council. All questions related to your master, student representation, course evaluations, time schedules, etc. can be asked to the student board member of the Department of Chemistry, Winnie Henderson (onderwijs@ussproton.nl). He is also the commissioner of educational affairs of the students association Proton.



Winnie Henderson

Student board member Department of Chemistry

Telephone number: +3130 253 1631

Address

Koningsberger building, Room 2.04
Budapestlaan 4b
3584CD Utrecht

Advising and Counselling

If you run into difficulties in your academic progress or of a more personal nature, you do not have to tackle these problems on your own: you can turn to various staff members at the UU who are happy to help.

Student Affairs Faculty of Science – Master Student Desk

[This desk](#) is the first port of call for all Master's students of the Faculty of Science.

Practical details

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| - Opening times | Monday through Friday: 10.00-13.30 hrs or make an appointment. |
| - Telephone | +31 30 253 5555 |
| - Email /telephone | science.gsns@uu.nl / +31 30 253 1420 / 1501 / 8743 |
| - Location | Buy's Ballot building, room 1.84a/186 |

Key tasks of the Master Student Desk are:

- Course registration
- Course planning (classes and exam dates and locations)
- Result registration in OSIRIS
- Administration of Application and Assessment Forms for Research Projects
- Student Academic Progress Report
- Graduation
- Organisation of Graduation Ceremonies

Study Advisor



The Study Advisor, Marije de Jong, can advise you with regard to your study programme, planning, and regulations concerning examinations. The Study Advisor is also available for consultations concerning personal matters, such as disability and family circumstances, which may affect your academic progress.

dr. L.J. (Lauw) Klaassen



Study Advisor

Telephone number: +3130 253 3794

Address

Minnaert Building, Room 1.06
Leuvenlaan 4
3584CE Utrecht

Lauw is present on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. More information and the possibility to book an appointment online can be found [here](#).

Students Association

The U.S.S. Proton is the students association for all Chemistry and Molecular Life Science Students in Utrecht, for both bachelor and master students. Proton organises recreational and study-oriented activities. There is an activity every Thursday, organised by our many committee members. Apart from recreational activities where members can relax, Proton also organises study- and career-oriented events, like a career day, lectures and excursions to companies. Proton is also responsible for the book and reader sale. As a member you can order your study books at a discount at the webshop. Readers for certain courses can be bought at the Proton Room. All information on what Proton has to offer and how you can become a member, will be provided during the introduction in September.

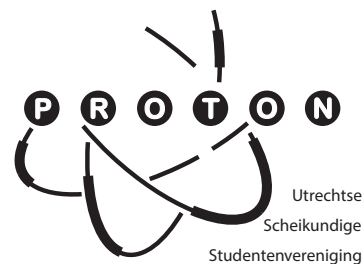
For more information, look at the website [here](#).

Additional information on studying at UU

See this [link](#) for all the additional information that you need as a student (about counselling, enrolment, graduation, financial matters, academic policies and more).

Literature

Hall, E. & Reed Hall, M. (1990). Understanding Cultural Differences. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press. Nuffic (2013). Grading systems in the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom. Retrieved from: www.nuffic.nl.



Proton Room

Victor J. Koningsberger building,
Room 2.04
Budapestlaan 4b
3584 CD Utrecht

Tel: +3130 253 1631
bestuur@ussproton.nl

Help Guide: The Campus

The major part of your study will take place at Utrecht Science Park, better known as the Uithof. Other faculties have locations in the city centre or at the International University College Campus, but the Faculty of Science is located on the Uithof only. On the right page, you can see a map with the most relevant buildings of the Faculty of Science and the Department of Chemistry. You will also find a short description of other relevant buildings that you may use during your stay in The Netherlands. For further information about the Uithof (including shops and restaurants), look [here](#).

PLEASE NOTE: This document is a mere impression of the usual situation. The Uithof is currently under heavy construction, which causes multiple buildings to (temporarily) be closed. The past years, the lectures and tutorials usually took place in the buildings mentioned here. However, by the start of September, this could be entirely different. It is therefore important that you regularly check Osiris (for your online schedule) and Blackboard.

Research groups

The various research groups of the Department of Chemistry can be found in the buildings indicated with green on the map, along with the offices of the professors of that research group. Below, you will find the research groups within the Debye Institute of Nanomaterials Science.



Leonard S. Ornstein Laboratory

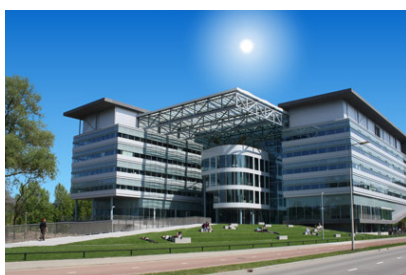
- [Condensed Matter & Interfaces](#) (CMI)

- [Soft Condensed Matter & Biophysics](#) (SCM, Department of Physics)



Hugo R. Kruyt building

- [Physical & Colloid Chemistry](#) (PCC)



David de Wied building

- [Inorganic Chemistry & Catalysis](#) (ICC)

- [Organic Chemistry & Catalysis](#) (OCC)



- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ Research Groups | 1. Leonard S. Ornstein Laboratory | 8. Educatorium |
| ■ Education buildings | 2. Hugo R. Kruyt building | 9. Marinus Ruppert building |
| ■ University Library | 3. Nicolaas Bloembergen building | 10. Bestuursgebouw |
| ■ General UU buildings | 4. David de Wied building | 11. University Library Uithof |
| | 5. Buys Ballot building | 12. Spar City Store Uithof |
| | 6. Victor J. Koningsberger building | 13. University Medical Center Utrecht |
| | 7. Minnaert building | 14. Botanical Gardens |



Education buildings

Lectures and tutorials of the Department of Chemistry mostly take place in the following buildings. It may, however, happen that the lectures will take place in one of the other buildings at the Uithof. The Koningsberger building also has computer rooms and nice places where you can study. The Minnaert building is currently under construction for renovation and will probably open in 2018.

Utrecht has many students and not enough computers, so it can be difficult to find an unoccupied computer (especially during the examination weeks). You can use the website [studyspot](http://studyspot.nl) to see which computers are unoccupied per building.

Buys Ballot building



Princetonplein 5
3584 CC Utrecht
Tel: +31 30 253 2294
Opening hours: 8:00-19:30

Victor J. Koningsberger building



Budapestlaan 4a-b
3584 CD Utrecht
Tel: +31 30 253 7540
Opening hours: 8:00-19:30

Minnaert building



Leuvenlaan 4
3584 CE Utrecht



University Library

The University Library (Heidelberglaan 3) has been named one of the best libraries in the world. It has six floors that all contain study-tables and computer spaces. Opening hours are:

Monday to Friday: 8 am. - 10.30 pm.
Saturday & Sunday: 10 am. - 10.30 pm.

The opening hours change during exam periods. When you want to study in the library during exam periods, you'll need to be there on time to be certain of a spot. The library also has personal study cabins, their keys can be acquired at the desk. Look [here](#) for more information about the library and its facilities.



Universiteit Utrecht

Help Guide: Survival in Utrecht

Introduction to Utrecht

Utrecht is the fourth largest city in The Netherlands. It is known for its art and culture, and general cosy vibe. The symbol of our city is the Dom tower, which is almost seven hundred years old. Utrecht also has its own weapon (or flag) that you will also notice on the clothing and memorabilia of Utrecht University. But the only important thing you need to know is Utrecht's own song *Utrek me stadsie*. Memorize it so when it is played in a bar, you can wow all your new friends with a performance!

Starting Tips

Transportation

Buy a bike! A bicycle is the main transportation method in Utrecht (and in the rest of the Netherlands). Taxis are too expensive and buses don't take you everywhere (especially in the early mornings – or late nights). You can buy a (second-hand) bike from bike shops, and you will see that it will bring you much joy.

During the day, Utrecht has a vast bus network as well. From the city centre to the campus (and vice versa) you can take buses 27 and 28, and from the railway station and the soccer stadium to the campus you can take bus 12. For a more detailed traveling schedule, please install the '9292ov' app. You only have to fill in your destination, present location and preferred time of departure or arrival, and the app will tell you which public transportation to take!

Relevant shops

- Groceries:



Albert Heijn



Jumbo



Aldi



Lidl

Before you read about Albert Heijn, watch [this video](#). The Netherlands are overflowed with Albert Heijn shops and for good reason, because it is a good grocery store. The Jumbo is slightly cheaper, but the Aldi and Lidl are the cheapest: Aldi is 10% cheaper than Albert Heijn. The Lidl has an especially nice fruit and vegetable department.

NOTE: If you are staying at the Uithof (University Campus), please be aware that the little Spar-grocery store (in front of the University Library) has a small amount of products and is a little more expensive than the grocery stores in the city centre.

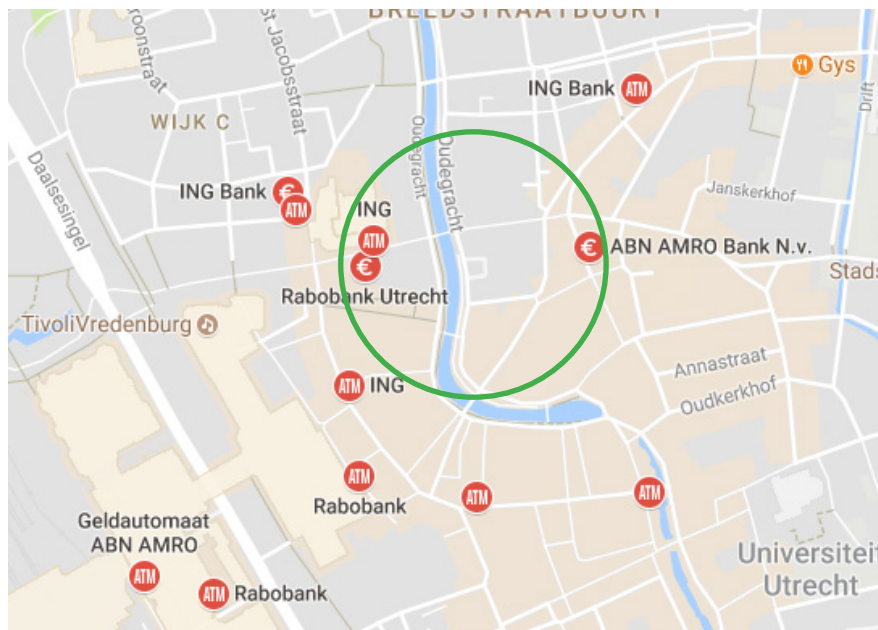
Grocery stores are generally open from 8 am until 9 pm, but on Sundays, the opening times can be different, so be sure to check that before you head out.

- Toiletries: Etos or Kruidvat. These shops have everything from toothpaste, shampoo to tampons, condoms, medication and make-up.

- Furniture: IKEA. Students love IKEA. It is a cheap shop for all the large (and smaller) furniture. And additionally, they serve good breakfast, lunch or dinner for a nice price!

- Small/useful stuff: Blokker, Hema and Action. These three shops are all meccas of the smaller household goods. You can visit them if you need a washing sack, mouse traps, but also cutlery, dvd's and even clothes. Of the three, the Action is the cheapest. At HEMA, you can buy a raincoat and umbrella. Both may be very usefull during your stay in the Netherlands. Breakfast here is also really cheap.

- ATMs: Below you will find an overview of the ATMs in the city center. Very convenient are the ING and the ABN AMRO Bank close to the Neude (emphasized by the green circle).



General Practitioner (GP)

We recommended that you register with a General Practitioner (GP) within the first month of staying here, as they serve a gate-keeping function within the medical system and must be consulted first to receive a referral to a specialist. If you are looking for a GP, you can go to:

- Galgenwaard clinic. This practice is located near the Uithof, and offers a broad range of medical services.

- Campus de Uithof GP office. They have two locations, one in the Uithof in the Casa Confetti building at Leuvenplein 10-11 (at the Heidelberglaan) and one in the city centre at Nobelstraat 2A (near Janskerkhof).

Fun things to do in Utrecht

The tourist information center (called the VVV) is located opposite the Dom Tower. Here, you can get all the information on sightseeing trips that you will need! To inspire you in advance, below



are our favorite activities to do in Utrecht:

1. DOMunder, the perfect opportunity to learn about the history of your new city! DOMunder is a unique and exciting underground journey below the Dom. Travel beneath the Utrecht Dom square to see the 2000 years of history buried below. If you want to grab a drink or a quick bite afterwards, the Domsquare offers many great places like Walden or Lebowski.

2. At night, Utrecht transforms into a work of light art. Trajectum Lumen is a light art route through the historical city centre of Utrecht. The works of art are created by national and international renowned light artists. Buildings, bridges and even alleys are transformed into a spectacle of light. Trajectum lumen can be enjoyed 365 nights a year, as soon as the street lighting is switched on until midnight. The walk takes about an hour and a half. You can get a map online to [guide](#) you.

3. Take a boat ride on Utrecht's famous canals. They sail daily from 11 to 17, costs are €10,50. One boat ride takes one hour. The Schuttevaer organization has boats leaving near the Ekko and 'stadskasteel Oudaen'. For the exact location, see [this](#) link.

4. Climb the Domtower. The Dom tower is more than 600 years old and is the symbol of the city of Utrecht. It is also the tallest church tower in our country. You can climb the medieval tower in an hour for nine Euros with a guide. During the climb you will learn all about the bell chime and the largest bells in the Netherlands. Once you have climbed the tower, which has 465 steps, your sporting performance is rewarded with a magnificent view!

5. Bike route: The Netherlands are famous for their usage of bicycles. To really experience the Dutch way of living, try something different and follow a bike route through the best bits of Utrecht. Bike maps are available at the VVV or online.

Drinking and dancing

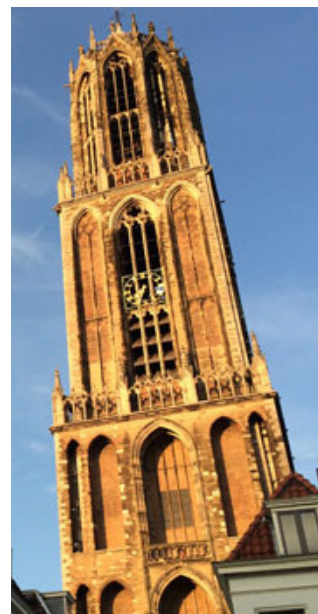
To make you Utrecht-experience complete, you have to visit one of Utrecht's charming bars and clubs. Starting at the city's theatre (the "Stadsschouwburg") and ending at the railway station, there are numerous of fun bars. You should know that in Utrecht, the "party" nights for students are mainly Thursdays and Fridays, and occasionally a Tuesday or Saturday. You should definitely see for yourself and find out which ones you like. Also ask your fellow students or people at Proton, but to help you out, here are a few of recommendations:

1. Tivoli Vredenburg

By far the best opportunity to go "clubbing": Tivoli has a large dance club, and every Thursday it is free for students! You should also definitely visit one of Tivoli's special parties like "singles party" (where you can choose a song and hand it to the DJ) or "zero's heroes" (where only music from the year 2000 is played). You can find the program [here](#), and their Facebook page [here](#).

2. Club Poema.

Club Poema is located at the famous restaurant street (DrieHaringenstraat) and it is the club to visit on a Tuesday. The lights are dimmed and the floor is sticky from all the beer but the people are nice and the music is good! Proton organises a party here twice a year. So come on September 7th 2017 and March 30th 2018!



3. Neude The Neude is Utrecht's most famous square, and a lot of cafés are there. Le Journal has great wine and (special) beers, and the Beurs is good for dancing.

4. Mick O'Connells

This is an Irish Pub at the Jansdam, near Janskerkhof.

5. Kafé België

Kafé België on the Oudegracht, near the Dom, is especially famous for their large selection of Belgian specialty beers. Come here if you really like beer and also like to try new and different kind of beers.

6. Chupitos

Chupitos is the shots bar in Utrecht. If you download the app, you get the second shot free on Tuesday nights.



Restaurants

The most famous restaurant street is called the "Drieharingenstraat" between the Vredenburgsquare and the Oude Gracht. This small street is filled with wonderful restaurants from hamburgers and Italian food to tapas and Japanese cuisine, so whatever you're looking for, it is here. Another nice place to grab a bite is the square called Mariaplaats. Dine in the midst of a jard in restaurant Le Jardin, or enjoy an international meal at Se7en (inspired by the Seven Wonders of the world). Most cafés also have a small selection of food and at the Uithof you can have an Italian sandwich or pizza at Tricolore.

For chicken, go to KLOEK (opposite the Tivoli building), they serve amazing chicken for amazing prices, accompanied by special beers that are brewed in Utrecht! Another very nice restaurant is [Gys](#), very trendy and fairly cheap.

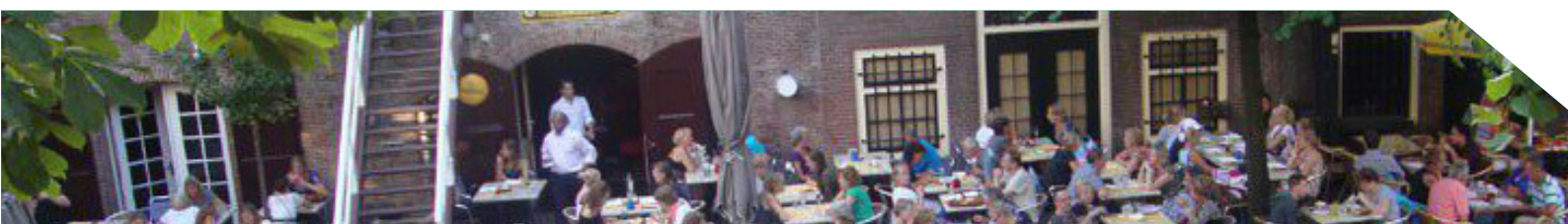


If you enjoy eating a hamburger, you should definitely grab one at the burgerbar "Meneer Smakers" (translated to Mister Tasty in English). This burgerbar has three locations: on the Nobelstraat, the Twijnstraat and the Oudegracht. They serve amazing burgers, and very creative ones as well. You can order burgers of beef, lamb, chicken, vegetarian, salmon and even a vegan burger. See [this](#) link for their entire menu and opening hours.

NOTE: You can drink the tap water in the Netherlands, it has a very high quality. It is possible to buy re-usable water bottles and fill them at some places in the city center and at the University of course. Also in restaurants you can order tap water for free, although restaurants may refuse to serve it.

Sports

There are many opportunities to engage in sports. The University Campus has its own sport facility called "Olympos". Olympos has a gym as well, but you can also register unlimitedly for group workout sessions like Spinning, Zumba, Karate, Pilates, you name it! You have to buy an





access-card called the Olympas that costs around €130, but it does give you unlimited exercise opportunities. Visit their [website](#) or drop by at the facility to ask for more information.

Olympos is also the base for 30(!) student-sport associations like soccer, basketball, volleyball, hockey, dance, handball and rugby (see [this](#) link for a complete view of the associations. Joining an association can be really fun and a great way to engage in the student life – as the associations organise parties and drinks almost every Friday! Team sports are therefore also a great way to meet new friends.

In addition, the city centre has many gyms that offer student-deals. For example, there is a “basic fit” at the JansKerkhof-square, at the corner of the street. You can also join one of the fitness-groups that work out together in the parks of Utrecht. Another really cool thing is the Utrecht’s Skate Parade, that is held every Friday (May-September) at 8 o’clock. It is enormously popular, and with good cause because you can roller-blade behind a truck with a DJ in it, through the streets of Utrecht, what’s not to like?! See [this](#) link for more information.

Glossary

This is a list of words and sentences that help you get by in the daily life. People from Utrecht (‘Utrechters’) generally speak English as well, so if you are not in a very Dutch mood, you can manage yourself by solely talking English.

Your first words

Hallo! = Hallo! Hi! = Hoi!
Good morning! = Goedemorgen!
Good afternoon! = Goedemiddag!
Good evening! = Goedenavond!
See you later! Bye! = Tot ziens! / Dag!
Here you are! = Alstublieft
Please? = Alsjeblieft?
Thanks! = Bedankt!
I am sorry! = Neem me niet kwalijk / sorry!
Cheers = Proost

Your first sentences

Do you speak English? = Spreekt u Engels?
Would you help me please? = Kunt u mij helpen?
Where are the toilets? = Waar is het toilet?
How much is that? = Hoeveel kost dat ?
Where can I find . . . = Waar kan ik de . . . vinden
At what time do you open? = Hoe laat gaat u open?
What time do you close? = Hoe laat gaat u dicht?
Could you talk a bit slower? = Kunt u wat langzamer praten?
Could you repeat that please? = Kunt u dat herhalen?

Emergency number

The emergency number in the Netherlands is **112**
The emergency number on the Uithof is +3130 253 4444
The number of the regular police is +31900 8844

Hopefully this guide helps you finding your way in Utrecht. Dutch people are in general very open, so you’ll see that you will easily find someone who is more than happy to tell you even more about living in The Netherlands and show you around in the city. Discovering the city together with someone else is definitely the best way to do so.