



BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS

University of Amsterdam
Academic Year 2012-2013
Program Guide

University of Amsterdam

http://www.studeren.uva.nl/exchange/home_exchange.cfm

Preparing for Study Abroad

- Students can maximize their study abroad experience by learning about their host country, its history, and culture. Students may want to go to Encyclopedia Britannica <http://www.britannica.com/> for a summary of Amsterdam and the Netherlands. Another useful site is: www.economist.com/countries. Please refer to the suggested readings and websites provided at the end of this document for additional information
- Students should know what is happening in the news in their host country: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/>
- Encountering and adapting to a different culture is an intricate component of studying abroad. Students are strongly encouraged to use the following websites to learn about intercultural communication before you leave home: <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>.
- Customs and traditions in the Netherlands will be different than the ones found in the United States and at Boston College. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions you may want to consider the following questions: What type of government does the Netherlands have; what are the national sports; what are some of the popular TV shows; who are some of the biggest celebrities in the Netherlands; what music is currently popular; how do you order food in a restaurant; what is the policy regarding tipping? In addition, students should review the below site for information regarding the Netherlands customs and traditions: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/netherlands.html>
- Students and their parents/legal guardian should refer to the Office of International Programs website for more information regarding the abroad experience: www.bc.edu/international. In addition, all students will be given the Boston College Study Abroad Handbook prior to departure. Students are expected to attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation held at Boston College. At the orientation, students will have a chance to learn more about their host country/city from their advisor and former study abroad students. Finally, additional student and parent information can be found at: <http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/index.html>

Contact Information

- International Office
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Binnengasthuisstraat 9
1012 ZA Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 525 2819
Fax: +31 20 525 6613
E-mail: exchange.sts@uva.nl

Travel Information

- Students enrolled in Boston College programs make their own flight arrangements, often using student travel agencies such as STA Travel (www.statravel.com). The student agencies generally offer competitive rates.

Amsterdam will provide additional details regarding arrival.

- Passport: Students must have a US passport valid at least six months beyond your estimated return date. Students may apply for a passport at any major US post office. For more information regarding passports, please visit: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
- Students will also need appropriate immigration documentation when they enter the Netherlands. Appropriate immigration documentation includes: 1) original acceptance letter from Amsterdam; 2) Evidence of sufficient funds to maintain yourself for the duration of your stay (such as a bank statement); and 3) Round-trip airline ticket.
- Residence Permit: Citizens of European Union member states, Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and the USA do not need a visa to enter the Netherlands. All other students must apply for a visa, called “Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf” (MVV) in order to enter the Netherlands. Chinese nationals who wish to attend the UvA will be required to register with Nuffic, the Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education in order to obtain a “Nuffic Certificate” (formerly known as the NESO certificate) before applying for the visa.

All students (except citizens of European Union member states) need to apply for a residence permit in order to study in The Netherlands for a period longer than three months.

Student Services (UvAStudentServices@uva.nl) within International Student Affairs will inform students about their personal immigration procedure and guide them through the online process of obtaining a visa and residence permit. The residence permit (including a visa if applicable) costs 600 Euro. www.uva.nl/visa

Amsterdam will provide students with details in their acceptance package.

- There are no immunizations required for students studying in Amsterdam.

Academics

- Term dates
First semester: Monday 3 September 2012 - Friday 1 February 2013*
Second Semester: Monday 4 February 2013 - Friday 28 June 2013
*Students must make alternative exam arrangements with their professors in Amsterdam.
The International Student Network - Amsterdam (ISN) organizes an orientation prior to the start of each semester. More details to be supplied by Amsterdam.
- Course information for Amsterdam is available at:
<http://www.studeren.uva.nl/exchange/programmes.cfm>
- The academic system at Amsterdam is different than what students find at Boston College. Students will take a total of 30 ECTS (credits) per semester. Courses are less structured than courses at Boston College. Students are expected to do much more independent reading. Student's grades will be based on a limited number of assignments.
- Boston College course approval information will be found at:
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/advisingservices/academics/courseapproval.html>
- Information about transcripts and grades is available at:
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/advisingservices/academics/transcripts.html>

Housing

- Housing fees will be paid directly to UvA and costs will vary according to the type of accommodation. Since the university does not have a campus, student housing is scattered throughout the city. Exchange students at UvA usually reside in student rooms/apartments. For information on housing options please go to:
<http://www.studeren.uva.nl/housing>. BC students will be contacted by UvA prior to their arrival with details of their housing assignment.

Fall/year students who attend the ISN Orientation program in late August must book accommodation in a hotel/hostel at their own expense for a few nights since UvA dormitories will not open before September.

- Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at:
<http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/2012-2013%20estimated%20student%20budget%20w%20housing%20June%202012.pdf>
- Most student accommodations will be equipped with a kitchen, and a meal plan is not provided. Students who wish to cook for themselves will have access to many markets or supermarkets in the area. UvA also has food facilities that are available for a very good and cheap meal.
- Local Transportation: Bicycles are the most popular form of transport in Amsterdam. Students might consider purchasing a bike on your own. Second-hand bikes vary in price from €100 to €200 with decent locks costing approximately €50. Amsterdam is accessible by bus, tram or metro. For more information on timetables and ticket prices, see the Amsterdam Public Transportation Company website at
<http://www.iamsterdam.com/en-GB/Experience/Plan-your-trip/Getting-Around/Public-Transport>

- Throughout the year, extra-curricular activities are organized by the university. The International Student Network is a fantastic outlet for international students searching for cultural activities. The ISN organizes an introduction for international students, a student mentor program, and other various events during the semesters. A flyer entitled “The Amsterdam Monthly” is also issued throughout the term to announce activities to students. For more information, please see www.isn-amsterdam.nl/.
- Cell Phones: Students may purchase pre-paid cell phones upon arrival (these do not require a contract).

Wellness, Health and Safety

- Make sure that you have had any required or recommended vaccinations for your travel destinations by consulting the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.
- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services is an emergency health and emergency services provider. All registered BC students are covered by our blanket policy while living and traveling outside of the United States. For more information, visit the following website: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- Students are advised to visit the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov/> for important travel information including travel advisories.
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. Students will have a smoother transition by making sure that they prepare to remain healthy. The following are some websites that provide important information and advice about how to have a healthy and safe experience abroad:
http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/culture_shock.html
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html>
<http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2007/11/20/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-and-how-to-beat-them/>
- Be sure to visit the OIP website for additional information about Health and Safety: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- BC emergency contact information:
 - Office of International Programs: (617) 552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
 - Boston College Police Department: (617) 552-4444 (outside of normal business hours)
- Alcohol and Drugs: In many cultures, alcohol consumption is an acceptable part of the culture and people are taught to drink in moderation at home. Many countries have a lower drinking age than the U.S. while other countries have drinking and drug abuse laws that may be more severe. Students are subject to the laws of their host country, so if you choose to drink alcohol abroad, always drink responsibly and be knowledgeable about your host country’s laws by visiting:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses

Finances

- The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad: <http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/2012-2013%20estimated%20student%20budget%20w%20housing%20June%202012.pdf>
- Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/financesawards/Scholarship_Opportunities.html
- The best way to access funds from the US is with an ATM, credit, and debit cards (also give the best exchange rate). Students who use an ATM, credit and/or debit card abroad, should contact the appropriate bank before leaving United States. Please inform the bank that you will be overseas for an extended amount of time as some banks may question foreign transactions. In addition, banks may have additional fees if a card is used overseas. It is advisable to have some funds in traveler's checks as a back-up method as well as a small amount of local currency on hand when students arrive.

Returning to BC

- Complete a Program Evaluation. Upon completion of your program OIP will e-mail the link to the evaluation.
- Mentor an exchange student from abroad by e-mailing: oiexchange@bc.edu
- Volunteer for Discovery Night, Pre-departure Orientation, Re-entry seminar by contacting Larry Pickener (Pickener@bc.edu).

References

- The *Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet* series on The Netherlands and Amsterdam
- University of Amsterdam web site: www.studeren.uva.nl/exchange/
- Netherlands Board of Tourism: www.holland.com
- "I Amsterdam" website: www.iamsterdam.com/
- *Time Out* for Amsterdam: www.timeout.com/amsterdam/