We are happy to hear you have chosen to study IE, welcome to the group! As you all know, this Master studies is a joint degree between Leiden University and Delft University of Technology, and therefore your fellow students will be living in different cities. We have students living mostly in Delft, The Hague, and Leiden, but also some in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and cities in between. As Shift, we have created this living guide, to help you with all kinds of practical things you should arrange before starting your studies. This guide is applicable for both international students, but also Dutch students that are not familiar (yet) with some of these cities.
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IESA Shift is the Study Association for the Master of Science in Industrial Ecology at Leiden University and TU Delft. Shift aims to bring IE students closer to the academic and professional field by organizing workshops, excursions and other events with various firms and professionals, and provides study support and additional course materials for all members to aid them in their studies. Besides these career and study-based activities, Shift also organizes various social events and gatherings throughout the year. Becoming a member of Shift will definitely help you mingle in better with your fellow students!

Next to organizing events for you, you yourself can also get involved. Currently, we have 5 committees which you can join:

**CAREER COMMITTEE**
Explore your own career possibilities, organize workshops, company visits, and anything you can think of. Help your fellow students prepare for their career.

**EVENTS COMMITTEE**
Organize anything to help students bond on a social level. Great opportunity to have fun, network with other Shift members, and party as much as we are allowed to.

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**
Opportunity to work on recording the IE podcast with fellow students, you can also be in charge of the newsletters and our social media.

**STUDY TRIP COMMITTEE**
Take charge in organizing an unforgettable trip which gives students an opportunity to explore a city outside of the Netherlands while learning and bonding with fellow IE’ers.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**
Help providing additional support and information for your successful academic student life in IE. Organise events to further critical thinking among students and staff.

Curious to know more? Send us an email on communication@iesashift.nl, or wait for the committee recruitment that we will get out again in September.

For now, don’t hesitate and get your lifetime membership via the Shift website. Also, if you have any questions after reading this document, shoot any of us a message in the IE 2025 WhatsApp group (or see your newsletter for the link).

See you in September!
To Do List

- Find an accommodation where you can register
- Get your BSN at the municipality
- NON EU: Collect residence permit at the IND
- Obtain a DigiD
- Open a bank account
- Get a bike and the OV card
- Pick a Dutch health insurance
- Register with a GP, a pharmacy and a dentist
- NON EU: Take the first TBH test at GDD
- Get a part time job and earn big €€€

JOIN SHIFT
1

GENERAL PRACTICALITIES
If you are staying in the Netherlands for longer than 4 months, you have to register with your municipality. When you are registered in the Personal Records Database (BRP), you will receive a citizen service number or Burgerservicenummer (BSN). You need a BSN to arrange a lot of formalities:

- Opening a bank account;
- Taking out health insurance;
- Choosing a general practitioner (GP);
- Get a Dutch sim card;
- Work and pay income taxes;
- Get a DigiD, digital identification that let you set practicalities with the dutch government online.
- Access social security and DUO benefits (see State benefits section)

**How to get a BSN?**

Each municipality has slightly different rules which are also subject to changes over the years, but you can check out their website. The following are for: Rotterdam, Delft, Leiden and The Hague. The municipality of The Hague organizes student registration together with the educational institutes in the city. Here's what you need to know (according to the booklet of the Den Haag International Centre):

**Making an Appointment**

You will need to schedule an appointment for student registration at the municipality or through Den Haag International Centre.

**Required Documents**

- **Valid identification:** Passport or ID card (bring the original and a copy of both sides)
- **Proof of address:** Rental contract clearly stating the address (including house number and room number, if applicable) OR written permission from the main occupant (including a copy of their valid ID) → This means that if in your house there are vacant positions for registration then even with a sublet you can get the BSN.
- (For students requiring a residence permit) **A copy of the acknowledgement of receipt from the IND** (your school will provide this)
You’ll see this written everywhere but just in case it was not clear enough: HOUSING IN THE NETHERLANDS IS MESSED UP. This will be the most stressful task you’ll have to undertake and you want it to happen before the start of your studies. In the following paragraphs you will find the most common ways and some tips for finding your love nest in the rainy low countries. However, before diving into that, bear in mind that when looking for a house you must be sure that municipal registration is available, for all the reasons above. A sublet that doesn’t provide registration is fine only if the alternative is a cardbox next to Gorlaeus building in Leiden. For more information you can also visit the dedicated pages of TU Delft and Leiden.

FACEBOOK
Searching for accommodation via Facebook is a standard procedure in the Netherlands. Always search “Housing Your City Name ” and many groups will appear.

SCAM - Facebook is an unofficial tool where any sort of person can publish. Scams are common and even when you don’t lose money, for sure time gets flushed away. If it sounds too good to be true (eg 20 sqm room in downtown Leiden for 500 €/month all inclusive) it is because it is probably not. Here are some groups where people before you had enough luck.

Delft
Find a room(mate) in Delft Find room / roommate in Delft Housing Delft - Apartments & Housing in Delft

Den Haag (The Hague)
Den Haag Housing Den Haag (the Hague)

Leiden
Student Housing Leiden Leiden Housing

ORGANIZATIONS

Room.nl is a platform through which housing corporations like DUWO offer students accommodation. Priority is given to students coming to the Netherlands from far away and operate on a first-come-first- serve basis. DUWO is the provider of Leiden university which means by now you should have already applied to it through the Leiden University Usis website. Consider that all the rooms provided are studios where you’ll live alone and you won’t be entitled to change furniture and contract rules are quite stringent.
COMMERCIAL PLATFORMS

- Commercial platforms and housing providers such as www.huurwoning.nl, www.kamernet.nl, www.funda.nl, and www.huurstunt.nl. Keep in mind that you need to pay for a subscription in order to react to housing opportunities. The most common condition for these houses is that you are “dutch speaker”, so you better get your DuoLingo going.

- HousingAnywhere and RoomPlaza are booking websites for student accommodation. Mostly student to student rentals and subletting (this is only a short-term solution, you need to be able to register).

- The Social Hub, Holland2Stay, Xior, Student Housing The Hague, Homey Housing and Student Experience Leiden offer student accommodation. Usually these studios crawl up to 900 €/month.

- Hospi Housing is the biggest platform for homestay in the Netherlands. They offer a free-to-use platform with hundreds of verified hosts and guest families. Hospi Housing does not charge any registration fees, you only pay a one-time fee if you find a room.

best of LUCK
Having a Dutch bank account and a debit card can be important because the main payment standard for transactions is Maestro, which is not very common outside of Europe; other common payment standards such as Mastercard, VISA, American Express, Alipay etc are not widely accepted at many places such as supermarkets and local shops.

There are several different banks in the Netherlands. The biggest banks are Rabobank, ING, and ABN Amro, and they provide information in English as well. You could also decide to go for a more sustainable bank. The 2 banks that do only sustainable investments are Triodos bank and ASN bank. They are providing more and more information and communication in English, but this is still a bit more limited. Remember to look out for Student bank accounts and see if you fit the criteria, these have less bank administration costs. To create a bank account, you might need to set-up an appointment with the bank - make an appointment to ensure that you don’t have to wait too long before setting up your bank account.

More information on ASN bank can be found here: https://www.asnbank.nl/over-asn-bank/organisatie/about-asn-bank.html
More information on Triodos bank here: https://www.triodos.com/

“Send me a tikkie!”
In the Netherlands it is common that one person pays a bill at a restaurant, bar, etc. and later opens up a “Tikkie”, using the app of the same name and sending it to the other members of the group to share the bill (PayPal is not really a thing amongst Dutch).

Wondering how to select a sustainable bank? Check out the EerlijkeBankwijzer website! You can find out how Dutch banks score on seven indicators (Human Rights, Weapons, Animal Welfare, Climate Change, Taxes, Gender Equality, and Nature)
If you decide to work or do a paid internship in the Netherlands, you will need to get Dutch basic health insurance. Many employers will not let you start working unless you provide proof that you have a Dutch health insurance policy. This usually costs around 130-140€ per month. If you have a lower income, you can receive health insurance benefit to help with the monthly costs. See the State Benefit section for more.

Your local GP is your first point of contact in the Dutch healthcare system. Before you can seek specialised help, you need a referral from your GP. The Dutch healthcare system tries to avoid prescribing antibiotics, and so you may be asked to come back a second time before your GP will give them to you. The Hague has two special student general practitioners: StudentDoc and Biking Doctors The Hague. They offer specialised services for students around the city centre. Many of us are under their care, approved!

Other types of healthcare, such as dentist, physiotherapy and optician, are not generally covered by your health insurance, though policies do differ. On the other hand, mental health is always part of the policies even though sometime the description can appear shady.

Overall, Dutch winters are quite harsh on both your physical and mental state. Remember to listen to your body and give it the time to recover. For the assignments there is always a resit and your work buddies will understand, as they will be likely in the same boat.

Shift also organises meditation and yoga sessions throughout the winter so come and join us to cure the blue mood!
The Netherlands is not a cheap country, especially if you have to pay for tuition fee, rent, grocery, and other basic needs (like the Saturday afternoon techno raves or the morning coffee in your personal Billi cup). You might therefore consider working part time to lower the toll on your savings. First of all, check the minimum wage of the Netherlands: as of 2024 it is 13,27 € for all the 21+. Secondly, the most common side hustle is waiting in bars and restaurants. The usual contract for students is the Zero hours one: you get to work part-time, on the call of your boss and with no need to send letters in case you don’t want to work there anymore. Read well the contract before signing and if in doubt contact “Het Juridisch Loket” which offer legal advice for free to all students.

Coming to the benefits: if you are set with your BSN, you have a dutch bank account, you have a job and you work for 32 hours a month then you are entitled to the DUO grant. DUO provides finances for all worker students which consist in:

1. *Monthly allowance* based on your income (usually around 300 € and 600 €)
2. *Travel product*, you can use it on your personal OV-Chipkaart and travel for free on buses and trains either during the week or in the weekends.
3. BONUS: *Supplementary grant*, depending on the income of your parents you can apply for further funding.

Note that all of these funds will be displayed as debt on your personal page, but will turn into a gift once you’ll graduate following the rules of the government.

In order to work, the health insurance is mandatory. However, on Mijn Toeslagen you can upload your policy and based on your income you’ll receive a reimbursement. Finally, on Mijn Belastingdienst you can check your personal taxes and further benefits, such as the *housing allowance*. 
LEISURE IN DELFT, THE HAGUE, LEIDEN
Leiden (USC University sports facilities)

Similarly to X, Leiden university also provides a wide range of activities, see all of them [here](https://www.uscleiden.com/)

Again, you have also the chance to go and use their facilities for your friends (football, basketball…) or to go to the gym.

For more information about subscription you can take a look [here](https://www.uscleiden.com/) at its webpage or contact them at sportcentrum@usc.leidenuniv.nl.

https://www.uscleiden.com/

Delft X (student sports and culture building)

XTU provide a more than 130 activities to do, from Ballet to drawing or fencing, check here all the options they have! Besides that, with the monthly subscription you can also use their facilities to practice the sport you love (volleyball, tennis…) or you can also join the gym. Something to remember is that they differentiate between courses, activities and the gym:

**Courses:** Classes that you have to enroll yourself for a whole Q, e.g.: Latin dancing

**Activities:** When you become a member of X, you have the right to attend to certain classes that they give for all the members. To do that you will have to enroll yourself for a specific day and hour, e.g.: Pilates.

**Gym:** To have access to the gym you need a specific permit that allows you to do so, is just a different membership.

More information about the subscriptions here, also you can email them at hosts-x@tudelft.nl.

Sport Facilities

The Hague
https://www.thehagueuniversity.com/practical-matters/facilities/sports

(The Hague University is not a part of Leiden Uni, but any student can pay and use the facilities at the Hague university. Note: there are offers for Leiden Uni students)

Other Gyms and Sports facilities (Not University Related)
https://www.basic-fit.com/en-nl

Bouldering
https://www.revoltclimbing.com/
https://www.boulderhalkunststof.nl/
https://www.delftsbleau.nl/en/
https://www.deklimmuur.nl/bouderen/
Need a break after classes? Or a nice spot to read the book that has been sitting on your shelf for months? Here are a few recommendations, the rest is for you to discover!

**Cafés and Bars**

**Leiden**
- **Cafés**
  - Vrij
  - Paco Ciao
  - Chummy coffee
- **Bars**
  - De Twee Spieghels
  - Café de Uyl van Hoogland
  - Bar Lokaal

**Delft**
- **Cafés**
  - Flow Foodbar
  - Vakwerkhuis
  - Cortado Café
- **Bars**
  - Jazz Café Bebop
  - Café de Oude Jan
  - Café de Klok

**The Hague**
- **Cafés**
  - The Bookstore Café
  - Caffè Almondo
  - Perron X Coffee
- **Bars**
  - Gekke Geit
  - Grote Markt
  - Café Le Duc

Check out the universities study spaces if you *reeeally* want to study:
- Leiden University
- TU Delft
STUDIES AND EXTRACURRICULARS
Schedule

At this moment, a timetable is not yet available. As soon as it is, you can access it following the steps below. We use both the Leiden Brightspace and the TU Delft brightspace, depending on the courses. For most core IE courses you will use the Leiden Brightspace, and when following more electives in Delft you will use your Delft Brightspace.

Steps to access your timetable on Brightspace:

1. Log in to your Brightspace account with your Credentials
2. Click on My Timetable, this should lead you to a new page
3. On the top right of your Timetable page, click on Login
4. Login with your Credential if asked again
5. On the right side Click on Add Timetable
6. Choose Other Timetable > 2024/2025 Concept > Programme of Study
7. Under Search for a Programme of Study > Search for Industrial Ecology
8. Choose the Option “TPM-Msc IE 1st Year”
9. Click on Add Timetables
10. You should be able to see your timetable from September onwards

You can also export the timetable to your preferred calendar service e.g. Google Calendar, Apple Calendar etc.

Extracurriculars and Professional clubs

TU Delft
Technical clubs / Dream teams

Leiden University
Student and Sports associations
Other associations

Green associations
A list of most associations can be found here.
GETTING AROUND IN THE NETHERLANDS
**Trains Subscription**
Trains are run by one company called the NS. The subscription you can purchase is called a season ticket. See [here](#).

Use the [travel planner](#) or download the NS app to check for train fares and train timings.

It is useful to order a [personalized OV chipkaart](#) (yellow card, 7,50 € one-time without subscription). With this card, you are able to purchase subscriptions and load these to your card. You can order the card and have it sent to your Dutch home address. If you are currently a resident of Belgium, Germany or Luxembourg, you can already apply for the card now (leave enough time until your departure to the Netherlands!) and have it sent to your address there. In the initial days when you don't have a Personalised OV Chipkaart (yellow) you have to always pay full fare. You can either buy a normal OV Chipkaart (blue) or buy tickets at the station. However, you can always obtain a Group travel discount of 40% when you travel with a person with a season ticket subscription or a Dutch student. Just ask your fellow Dutchie for a [SAMENREISKORTING](#) (available in the app). You can do this to save a lot of money in the initial days of your study.

You can always buy a Normal OV Chipkaart (blue) for 7,50 Euros. This is a card where you can load money on and travel. It is also recommended to buy this at the airport or any station. It's just a load and go card (otherwise you have to buy a single ticket every time you go somewhere). PS: for the season ticket subscription you need a Personalised OV Chipkaart (yellow).

Fares vary in accordance with “peak” and “off-peak” hours. Also, check on the homepage whether there is an option suitable for you if you intend to travel a lot on the weekends, weekdays etc.

**Trams/Buses**
Trams and buses are run by various companies like HTM and R-net depending where you live. You do actually pay less on the Tram, even with a BLUE OV card! Check out more: [https://www.htm.nl/reisproducten/abonnementen-en-korting/](https://www.htm.nl/reisproducten/abonnementen-en-korting/)

You can use the [9292](#) app to check for travel times and Fares on buses, trains, trams.

If you arrive by bike at the station, make sure to park it in an area allocated to bikes! For example, there are many (free) bike parking areas “fietsenstalling” around all stations, some of which are inside, and/or underground. At some of these there are employees which are in general very friendly and helpful. In any case, also make sure, that you are back to get your bike during the opening hours of your chosen fietsenstalling!
Bikes (your new best friend)

Bike rentals
Swapfiets - For long term rental (You need a Dutch bank account)

For daily rentals, OV Fiets are available at most of the major train stations. To use these bikes you need a Personalised OV chipkaart, and upload the free OV Fiets subscription to it. The daily cost of renting is around 4 Euros for 24 Hours.

2nd Hand Bikes
Facebook Marketplace or kringloopwinkels
Also the website of Marktplaats is very useful to go 2nd hand shopping!

New Bikes
While we don’t recommend getting a new bike, there are numerous stores in the Netherlands. Decathlon offers cheap bikes you can check them out as well

Bikes do get stolen here, so don’t invest too much into a nice one, or also invest in a good lock (or two, ask your future housemate)

SIM Cards

There are many options for phone plans. For example, Lebara charges 17 Euros for unlimited calling/texting, unlimited international calling to 44 countries, and 5GB Internet (this is a postpaid plan where you need a Dutch bank account). There are other prepaid plans with instant activation. If you are not looking to buy a phone with your phone plan, you can look at SIM-only plans. There are also other mobile companies in the Netherlands, you can find the list here.

A comparison site that you can use for checking the prices of different SIM-only plans is PriceWise. You will need a Dutch bank account for almost all of these, but you can pick up a prepaid SIM card from Lebara at Kruidvat if you need something to tide you over when you first arrive.
Learn Dutch – it helps a lot, people appreciate you more.
Be on time – or 5 mins early to any appointment or meeting, the Dutch are punctual ;).

By law, no alcohol consumption is allowed in the streets, even though it is sometimes handled more loosely. “Handhaving” is a body of the executive which is not the police, but also is doing rounds in the urban space to control general rules.

Some useful websites:

Dutch Classes
You can register for Dutch classes at both Universities. Make sure you check for fares and sign-up times (If you want to join a certain course in a Quarter, you might need to sign up a long timeframe ahead!).

TU Delft
As a Master student, you have the opportunity to register in the less intensive courses for free, for the levels Elementary I & II and, Intermediate. These levels correspond to the CEF levels of A0, A1 and A2. These ‘less intensive’ courses are of 10h per week, and you will really spend 10h in it, so be sure you have time and motivation to do it before enrolling.
To enroll you have to do it as if it was an elective, from the ‘Catalog’ in the TU Delft Brightspace. Depending on the level of the course they will be held in Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4. Most importantly to know for you is that these courses are SUPER DEMANDED among the international students.

For that reason, check the dates to enroll in TU Delft webpage, and/or send an email to DelftseMethode-ITC-TBM@tudelft.nl, they are quite efficient answering emails and will provide you with all the information you need.

Dutch courses in Leiden: Leiden University
Dutch courses in Delft: TU Delft
Supermarkets

Major Dutch Supermarket chains

Albert Heijn - https://www.ah.nl/
Jumbo - https://www.jumbo.com/
Lidl - https://www.lidl.nl/
Hoogvliet - https://www.hoogvliet.com/
Aldi - https://www.aldi.nl/
ZamZam XL (Leiden)
Polat International Supermarket (Delft)

Foodsharing Delft & Too Good to Go
(App for food pickup before closing or expiration date at reduced prices)

Open markets

Open markets where you can buy fresh veggies and other stuff. Beware, they happen only once or twice a week (only de Haagse Markt is there most of the week)

Delft
https://www.delft.nl/vrije-tijd/recreatie/marke
ten

Leiden
https://www.visitleiden.nl/en/see-do/experience/shopping/market

The Hague
https://dehaagsemarkt.nl/
Thrift Stores & Second Hand Shops

Thrift stores or 2nd hand stores are called *kringloopwinkel* in Dutch, you can google them and search for one close to you.

One famous kringloopwinkel chain is called *RataPlan*. You can also check out the website *Marktplaats* where people sell second hand items (beware of scammers).

Rataplan is one of the biggest kringloopwinkels in the area:  
*Rataplan Delft* (kringloopwinkel)  
*Rataplan Den Haag* (The Hague) (kringloopwinkel)

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**STAY UP TO DATE**

- Shift LinkedIn  
- Shift Website  
- Shift Instagram

**WhatsApp group chats**

**Locations**

- **Leiden**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/BkqDHFxluLtB2xtKVhbs7f  
- **Delft**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/Fm2kIcjhmDZGKvg73jbhG  
- **The Hague**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/KFuMrjQsz3CWpyOsCmMq1  
- **Amsterdam**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/CG2yO5dr10FEUXn8s0eUx9  
- **Rotterdam**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/LMUeBWAN9g02gqtW4P5o4

**Interests**

- **Climbing/bouldering**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/EKzHEYxqzc0ltfZrPtX3T2  
- **Board games**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/LHB0qU5L2DY2pB08kJloR8  
- **Surfing**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/EDB07Jawzs7CkhSI6i6U  
- **Reading**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/Eeaw3CLRiNdlOvajOZdjW

**Beyond Growth**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/JhSnO3jeBNE03bMop0av4  
**Climate Justice**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/F87wCccK4CSNAU9iVelixvP  
**Jazz and live concerts**: https://chat.whatsapp.com/JrUYcUsH663L2RqjVrb0s

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