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STUDENT HOUSING

IN THE NETHERLANDS

ULTIMATE GUIDE

**STEP-BY-STEP ROADMAP
TO STUDENT HOUSING**

allaboutstudenthousing.nl

PROLOGUE

Dear student,

Congratulations! If you're reading this, you've been accepted to a university in the Netherlands. You are excited about your new journey—until you start looking for a place to live. Suddenly, you realize that finding housing as a student is not as easy as you anticipated.

Fortunately, you are not the first to experience this, and sadly, you won't be the last. We, students who have already gone down the rabbit hole that is housing information in the Netherlands, have decided to put together the information you would usually gather across many Chrome tabs—and not always actually read—into one place. We aim to feature only the most important steps, back them up with research, and answer all questions that have pestered us and many others during the housing search.

In all fields, in order to solve a problem, its source must first be identified. So, before delving into what you should do, we have to explain what has caused the issue you are faced with. By understanding the current housing shortage and its systemic issues, you will be better prepared to tackle the challenges head-on. Whether you are renting for the first time or just ending your temporary student accommodation contract, our guide aims to empower you with the knowledge you need to secure a safe, comfortable, and affordable home in the Netherlands.

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PART 1

UNDERSTANDING THE HOUSING MARKET

CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Housing Crisis

The Netherlands faces a significant housing crisis primarily due to its high population density and the concentrated urbanization in major cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague. These cities attract the majority of the population because of their universities, job opportunities, and vibrant cultures. Unfortunately, the pace at which housing is constructed does not match the rapid growth of the population. Housing projects are slowed by strict zoning laws, environmental regulations, and a shortage of skilled construction workers. Furthermore, a large portion of available housing is purchased by investors, who then rent these properties at high prices or keep them empty for speculation, worsening the shortage for regular residents and students alike. Government policy decisions, including the abolition of the Ministry of Housing in 2010, have also contributed to the crisis by fragmenting the national housing strategy and slowing down proactive measures to increase the housing supply.

The Dutch rental market is divided into two main sectors: social housing and private rentals. Social housing offers government-regulated rentals intended for lower-income individuals, with rents set according to a points system that evaluates factors such as size and amenities. Due to high demand, waiting lists in popular cities like Amsterdam or Utrecht can extend over five years. Eligibility for social housing is restricted by income limits, with prospective tenants required to register with housing associations. Conversely, private housing operates with market-driven rents, offering more flexibility but typically at a higher

cost. Private tenants often have fewer protections against rent increases and fewer opportunities for rent subsidies, though they may access rent tribunals if disputes arise within the first six months of the tenancy.

Over recent years, rental prices in the Netherlands have consistently increased, driven by severe housing shortages. Between 2022 and 2024 alone, average rents in the private sector rose significantly, reflecting continuous upward pressure due to limited availability. Currently, the country faces a deficit of around 350,000 homes, fueling intense competition among renters and contributing to escalating rental costs. To address this, the government introduced legislation such as the Affordable Rent Act and the Good Landlordship Act, which aim to stabilize rent hikes and curb exploitative landlord practices.

As you can imagine, many international students find themselves competing for limited choices, often spending up to six months searching for suitable housing. International students typically have limited knowledge of the Dutch housing market, making navigating housing websites, understanding rental procedures, and recognizing potential scams challenging. Language barriers can also complicate communication with landlords and housemates, leading to misunderstandings or missed opportunities. Due to limited housing stock, affordable options have nearly vanished, with the average price for student rooms rising more than 7% since last year. In cities like Amsterdam, students can expect to pay nearly €1000 per month for a single room. In addition, real estate agencies advertise search programs, asking for a monthly fee to find students' desired apartments. More frequently than not, students find themselves with poor options from agencies, being forced to either take up an inconvenient offer or pay the cost of the search without having any results. Moreover, international students frequently face exploitation through housing scams, illegal clauses in rental

contracts, and discriminatory practices from landlords favoring local tenants, older applicants, or longer-term residents. Landlords, aware of students' unfamiliarity with the housing market, often take advantage of tenants by including unlawful, hidden clauses in contracts or by withholding information about tenant rights. Students should also be aware of the mental toll of housing insecurity. Having to constantly deal with precarious living conditions is guaranteed to lead to anxiety, which will, in turn, impact academic performance.

Fortunately for incoming students, the Dutch government has implemented several initiatives. Financial incentives have been provided to municipalities to expedite housing construction, with €1 billion allocated in recent years. Additionally, the new Affordable Rent Act (April 2024) introduces rent controls aimed at protecting tenants from excessive rental costs in the mid-range housing market. Another significant regulation is the Good Landlordship Act (2023), which establishes mandatory standards for landlords to prevent exploitative rental practices and ensure responsible renting. Furthermore, the government has proposed expanding existing rent regulations to cover more housing units, though this policy faces criticism for potentially discouraging new housing production. Lastly, managing migration to balance housing demand with supply has become part of the government's broader strategic response to ease pressure on the housing market.

CHAPTER 2

Housing Types and Pricing

In the Netherlands, students typically choose from three main housing types: rooms (kamer), studios, and apartments. Renting a room in a shared house or student accommodation is the most common and affordable option, where the kitchen and bathroom are shared with housemates. Studios are self-contained units with a private kitchen and bathroom, offering greater privacy but at a higher cost. Apartments or houses (appartement/woning) provide the most space and independence but are the most expensive and usually require sharing costs with others to manage affordability.

Determining the right housing type depends on your budget and social preferences. If you're looking to save money, renting a room in a shared house is your best option. It also provides a social environment where you can easily make friends. However, be aware of the shared responsibilities you will have in such an environment. There is always a risk that some of your new flatmates will be less clean and organized than you, or even less respectful concerning privacy and quietness. All in all, this is a good option for first-year students, as it is affordable and provides the opportunity to make friends from the start, ensuring a good time during your first year. Room rentals generally range from €400 to €800 per month in smaller cities like Groningen or Tilburg, with higher prices in the bigger cities, such as Amsterdam's average of €991.

Studios are suitable if you value privacy and independence. If you are keen on doing everything your way and having a clean space, this is the choice for you. A studio is ideal if you want to

have a self-contained space with perfect studying conditions and no housemate conflicts. As you will be staying alone, this option will be significantly more expensive than a room. In addition, you will most likely have to pay utilities and internet bills individually, a cost which would be minimized if living with others. Lastly, studios can become isolating and lonely, especially for first-year students. These spaces are more often recommended to mature, later-year students who have formed strong living habits and desire a calm study environment. Studios, usually under 30m², can fetch close to €1300 monthly in Amsterdam, while their asking price in university cities such as Eindhoven and Groningen is closer to €900.

Apartments or houses are ideal if you already have friends you are comfortable moving in with. This housing option can also help you cut down on costs, as you can split the rent, as well as utilities and other costs, with your housemates. You can have full control over your living space, as you can customize it more, while also splitting chores with your friends to ensure a clean and organized space. Negative aspects of this type of housing include the landlord's need for proof of income or a guarantor. Higher costs can also be incurred from low energy scores, which drive up utilities, but also from the need to furnish in most cases. Apartments are the most expensive option, with rents ranging from €1,200 to €2,500 monthly, again varying significantly by city and size. Amsterdam consistently ranks highest in pricing, while cities such as Groningen, Eindhoven, Tilburg, and Nijmegen tend to offer more affordable alternatives.

Short-term rentals are normally available for less than six months and are suitable for those seeking temporary housing solutions or who are uncertain about their stay duration. These rentals often come furnished and include utilities, making them convenient but pricier. Long-term rentals exceed six months, typically one year or more, and provide greater security,

affordability, and tenant rights. These options often require additional responsibilities, such as setting up utilities and furnishing the property yourself. Student accommodation buildings also offer both short and long-term rentals. While these are pricier than studios in the city, their rent includes service and utility costs, and they come furnished. Furthermore, these are usually first come, first serve, which eliminates the misfortune of a discriminatory landlord. So, if you can afford them, and want to live comfortably during your studies, these options are your best friend.

Many of the student accommodations described above have co-living spaces, which offer a modern alternative to traditional renting, combining private bedrooms with shared communal areas. This setup promotes community engagement, offering social events and networking opportunities ideal for international students. There are such organizations in every university city, with DUWO, SSH, Xior, and The Social Hub being the most prominent in the Netherlands.

Beyond monthly rent, you may encounter hidden costs such as agency fees. It is illegal for agencies to charge tenants unless they have been hired, so you will only encounter these fees if you request their help in finding a property. Security deposits, typically one to two months' rent, are standard and refundable upon leaving if the property is well-maintained. Be aware that as of 2023, the maximum deposit that a landlord can charge you is 2 months' rent and that it is your right to receive the deposit at most 14 days after the end of the rental agreement. Municipal taxes such as waste disposal and sewerage charges are generally your responsibilities. Utilities and internet, service charges for communal areas, furnishing costs for unfurnished rentals, and personal contents insurance are additional expenses to consider when budgeting.

CHAPTER 3

Rental Contracts & Legal Aspects

The last step between you and your new property is the rental contract. While these are meant to protect you as a tenant from future disagreements and inconveniences, some landlords cut corners and hide information, leading to you incurring unfair costs in the future. In the Netherlands, a contract should always contain the following:

- Both you and your landlord's names and signatures
- An agreed monthly rent and method of payment
- Security deposit information
- Address and description of the property
- Start and end dates for the rental period
- House-specific rules (pets, smoking policy, etc.)
- Extra costs or utilities
- Landlord's duties
- The notice period for contract termination
- An inventory list
- The date on which the rent will be increased each year

When signing a housing contract in the Netherlands, you typically need valid identification (passport or ID card), proof of enrollment at a Dutch educational institution, and evidence of financial stability (bank statements or scholarship documents) or a guarantor who can vouch financially for you if you're unable to pay rent. Some landlords may also request references from previous landlords.

Common scams include landlords requesting deposits before offering a viewing, ads that seem too good to be true (very low

rent in popular areas), landlords who refuse face-to-face meetings, or requests for payment through untraceable methods. If you are not renting from an agency, try to verify the landlord's identity. You can request a copy of their ID and check for the ownership of their property, as landlord records are public in the Netherlands. Consequently, you can verify property legitimacy by visiting in person or checking official registrations through the Kadaster. Be cautious of incomplete or unclear contracts, and always seek clarification before signing.

As a tenant, you have significant rights protected by Dutch law. If something breaks in the apartment due to normal wear and tear, the landlord is required to repair it promptly. If the fixtures look old and faulty, it is also the landlord's responsibility to replace or repair them. Rent increases are legally regulated and can only occur once a year, usually aligned with inflation rates set by the government. Regarding contract termination, your landlord cannot abruptly end your contract without justified reasons specified in Dutch law and adequate notice periods.

A fixed-term rental contract has a defined end date, providing clarity but limited flexibility. Upon expiration, landlords will end the tenancy unless both parties have agreed on an extension. Indefinite contracts offer greater security, as landlords require legally recognized reasons to terminate the tenancy, ensuring longer-term stability for the tenant.

The Huurcommissie (Dutch Rental Tribunal) is an impartial organization that resolves disputes between tenants and landlords regarding rent prices, service charges, maintenance issues, and deposits. If you believe your landlord is not complying with Dutch tenancy laws, you can approach the Huurcommissie for assistance, typically within the first six months of a contract or after receiving notice of a rent increase. For example, you can request a review from the Rent Tribunal if

your landlord does not return your deposit fully without clear reasons, but also if you believe that your property's rent is too high. In the Netherlands, rental points are used by the government to determine the maximum rent for a property based on its size, energy rating, and amenities. Using this system, the Rent Tribunal can reassess the apartment you are staying in to determine if you are paying fair rent.

Lastly, to officially settle in the Netherlands, you must register your address with the local municipality. This process is mandatory and crucial for obtaining your Citizen Service Number (Burgerservicenummer or BSN), which is necessary for various services like opening a bank account, healthcare, and employment. First of all, ensure your rental agreement explicitly allows registration at the address. Some landlords do not acquire a renting permit, meaning that in properties such as houses where rooms are rented out, a maximum of 2 students can register there.

To register your residence, schedule an appointment with your local municipality. Their website will usually be "Gemeente" followed by your city's name. Bring your passport, statement of enrollment, housing contract, and a copy of your birth certificate. Some municipalities do not request a birth certificate, while others might want additional documents. Make sure to always check the details on the confirmation of your appointment. It is always recommended to register at the municipality within 5 days of your arrival in the Netherlands. However, as an EU national, you can reside in the Netherlands for 4 months without having to register. This is a good safety net if you are not having luck finding housing or if your current situation is precarious.

CHAPTER 4

Financial Aspects of Renting

Besides your rent, you must budget for additional monthly expenses such as utilities (electricity, water, gas), internet services, and possibly TV subscriptions. Additionally, many properties come with service fees, which cover shared amenities such as elevators, cleaning, or maintenance of communal areas. If your accommodation isn't furnished, you'll need to allocate funds for furniture and appliances as well. It's also wise to consider personal insurance and municipal taxes, such as waste disposal charges, which tenants typically cover. Always clarify with your landlord exactly what your rent includes to avoid surprises.

You should generally budget between €150 and €250 for monthly utilities and municipal taxes. Additionally, if you are staying in an apartment, you may receive a yearly tax assessment. This comprises water, purification, and waste taxes. This tax assessment is usually just north of €400, but it is not uncommon to reach €700. However, don't get scared by this, as the letter that you receive comes with an option to waive this cost. Students can do so, as long as they do not:

- Own a bank account with more than €3,350 deposited
- Have a net income exceeding €1,345

Setting up utilities requires contacting individual providers for electricity and gas, which you can select based on rates and services that best fit your needs. The most widespread providers in the Netherlands are Essent, Engie, Budgethuis, Greenchoice, and Vattenfall. Regional water suppliers typically manage water,

and setting this up involves contacting the local company directly. Internet providers vary, with popular choices including KPN, Ziggo, and T-Mobile. It's advisable to arrange these services as soon as you have your address confirmed to avoid delays. Providers typically require proof of residency, a bank account (IBAN), and identification.

You should note that most landlords prefer rent payments via bank transfer using an IBAN from a Dutch bank. Opening a Dutch bank account is, therefore, essential. Financial stability, demonstrated through bank statements or student loans, often strengthens rental applications. If you receive student loans from DUO (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs), landlords might view you as a stable tenant. Having a local IBAN simplifies transactions, ensuring timely payments and compliance with financial expectations from landlords and utility providers.

Most students can also benefit from the rental allowance the Dutch government grants. Eligibility criteria include being 18 or older, renting an independent housing unit (private kitchen, bathroom, and entrance), and meeting specific income and rent limits. As of 2024, the monthly rent must be between approximately €250 and €808.06, and your annual income must be below the threshold set by the government: €30,000 for a single person. You must also have legal residence and registration at the municipality to apply for a rental allowance through the Belastingdienst (Dutch tax office). Additionally, for tenants between 18 and 23 years old, to qualify for rent allowance, the basic rent, along with service costs, must not exceed €477.20. For those above 23 years old, the sum goes up to €900.07.

CHAPTER 5

The Searching Process

In the Netherlands, students commonly find housing through online platforms like Kamernet, Pararius, Funda, or Facebook groups dedicated to student housing. Universities often partner with housing agencies or offer their housing databases. Additionally, the websites of specialized student housing providers offer dedicated student accommodations. It's beneficial to diversify your approach—combine online searches with networking through student groups or university channels.

Popular student housing complexes include organizations like DUWO, SSH, and The Social Hub, which offer various amenities tailored for students. Universities typically have agreements with these complexes, providing a certain number of reserved rooms for first-year international students. Check your university's international office website for partner complexes and application procedures.

If you are conducting your search on listing platforms such as Funda, Kamernet, and Pararius, we recommend setting your preferred filters and signing up for notifications. This way, every morning, you can receive an email as soon as new listings have been posted and schedule a viewing ahead of other applicants. There are plenty of aspects you should take into consideration while searching for places to live. Other than the price range, number of rooms, and location, you should verify the energy rating. Most apartments listed for rent in the Netherlands are situated in old buildings with poor insulation. During the winter, this can cause heating the property to be extremely hard, leading to energy costs only to maintain a decent temperature. You

should also be careful with properties labeled as “shell”. Many landlords post photos of unfurnished apartments to attract tenants, however, shell apartments will also have unfinished walls and concrete floors.

You can improve your chances by applying early, being flexible with your preferred location, preparing your documentation thoroughly, and being proactive and responsive during communication with potential landlords. Having a well-prepared rental application, including financial documentation and references, significantly improves your chances. Almost as important as it is to apply for viewings as soon as possible, you should also have a motivational letter, personal documents, a statement of enrollment, and proof of income/guarantor ready to send immediately after viewings. Note that landlords choose tenants only hours after the viewing, so be speedy with sending your documents over.

In general, when looking at apartments, you should only reach out to properties through real estate agencies. Agencies offer professional guidance and extensive property databases and reduce the risk of scams. Consider your situation and urgency when choosing your method. If looking at renting rooms, then you should contact landlords to avoid time delays and extra costs. If you are looking to rent an apartment, communicate through the agency, as it will be your mediator with the landlord, ensuring fair agreements and reducing chances of exploitation.

CHAPTER 6

The Viewings

How can I schedule a property viewing in the Netherlands?

Usually, you can schedule a viewing on the property's listing page. On large housing platforms such as Pararius, Funda, and Kamernet, we recommend requesting a viewing through the button which is usually on the right side of the page. If you are looking at agency listings, it might be better to call them to demonstrate greater interest than other applicants.

What questions should I ask the landlord or agent during a viewing?

While viewing a property, you should make sure to clarify the rent and its conditions. Ask about the sum, what is included in it, additional fees, the contract duration, and if there is a possibility of renewal. Remember to take photos of the rooms, bathrooms, and kitchen. Enquire about nearby shops and bicycle parking. Discuss which, if any, of the furniture present at the viewing will remain during your tenancy. Ask about the insulation and energy label of the property. Many older Dutch apartments have single-pane windows instead of thermopanes, driving the heating costs up during the winter. Lastly, ask the landlord if municipal registration is possible at the address.

How can I tell if a property is well-maintained?

When viewing any sort of property, you should carefully look at its general condition. You should look for visible damage such as wall cracks, mold, and water damage. Check if the amenities are well-maintained so that rust or limestone deposits do not impact the condition of taps, showerheads, and toilet bowls. Another

recurring issue in properties in the Netherlands is the presence of silverfish. These small insects thrive in high humidity, and while not dangerous, they can indicate water build-ups or leaks. If you are looking at shared housing or student accommodations, inspect the communal areas, ask current tenants about cleanliness and shared responsibilities, and clarify how expenses are divided and managed.

What are common red flags to look out for during viewings?

The most common red flag is the apartment's cleanliness at the time of the viewing. If the landlord cannot take the time to clean and organize the property for viewing, the chances of them wanting to help with regular maintenance are usually low. If the landlord or agent tries to avoid certain questions or answers them vaguely, especially ones regarding costs and maintenance responsibilities, you might want to pass on the property.

How do virtual viewings work, and are they reliable?

Virtual viewings involve video tours via platforms like Zoom or Skype. They can be useful for preliminary assessment but always aim for a physical visit before committing.

What steps should I take after a successful viewing?

Express your continued interest clearly and provide the requested documentation promptly. If you feel that the landlord pushes you to make a decision too soon, politely request more time to think over the offer. Lastly, clarify the next steps and ensure all agreements are put into writing.

Is it normal to pay a deposit immediately after a viewing?

Typically, deposits should only be paid after reviewing and signing a formal rental contract. Immediate deposit requests at the viewing can be a warning sign.

CHAPTER 7

Dealing with Housing Scams

Common scams targeting students include fake property listings on popular housing websites and social media, where scammers advertise non-existent apartments at attractive prices. Scammers often ask for advance payments or deposits without allowing property viewings, or they claim they are currently abroad and cannot meet in person. Additionally, some scammers pose as landlords, asking for a deposit before viewing or signing a rental agreement. Always remain cautious of landlords demanding immediate payment or requesting cash payments. Verify properties and landlords through legitimate channels, and always visit a property in person before transferring any funds.

To verify if a landlord or agency is legitimate, start by checking if they are registered with the local Chamber of Commerce (KvK), or check the Kadaster for a small fee. Legitimate landlords and reputable agencies will never hesitate to provide registration numbers on request. Trusted housing agencies or landlords typically use secure payment methods like bank transfers rather than cash or wire services. Reading reviews and asking previous tenants for references can also provide valuable insights into their credibility.

We cannot stress enough that you should never pay a deposit before visiting the apartment. Reputable landlords and agencies in the Netherlands will always allow you to view the property before asking for any financial commitment. Deposits should only be paid after viewing the apartment, signing a legally binding rental agreement, and, if needed, verifying the landlord's identity. Any landlord requesting a deposit before a viewing is

trying to scam you. If you suspect you've been scammed, immediately contact your bank to halt any transactions and report the incident to the local police. Gather all documentation, including correspondence, payment proofs, and the original listing, to support your claim. We also encourage you to announce the scam on housing groups so that others are aware of the risk and will be more careful during their search.

CHAPTER 8

Moving In & Settling Down

After signing your rental contract, the first step is to register your new address at the municipality, which is crucial for obtaining your BSN (Citizen Service Number). Arrange utilities, including electricity, water, gas, and internet, if they are not included in your rent. Make sure to ask about garbage disposal and a garbage pass. Additionally, thoroughly inspect the property for existing damage or issues and document them clearly with photographs. Inform your landlord immediately to ensure you won't be responsible for pre-existing damages. If you haven't looked into it yet, now is a good time to familiarize yourself with local shops, facilities, and public transportation routes in your new neighborhood.

You should thoroughly inspect your new home for existing damage and potential issues. Some common problems with apartments are broken appliances, rusty heaters, bad window sills, and damage to floors and doors. In the Netherlands, you should be especially wary of water damage, mold in the corners, and silverfish infestations. These issues come from the humid environment of the Netherlands, so if they are pointed out to the landlord early on, you avoid taking the blame for them at the end of the contract. You should discuss who is responsible for repairs as early as possible. If you are signaling these findings through the agency, the landlord might be too lazy to act due to indirect communication. In this case, you can request their contact details to ensure a faster and more efficient resolution to the problems.

In some cases, you also have to purchase furniture for the new

apartment. If you are planning to stay for more than a year, IKEA is a good place for quality furniture that will give you your money's worth. If you are undertaking a shorter stay or are under a tighter budget, you can look to online platforms for good second-hand options. Facebook marketplace, or the Dutch Marktplaats, is bound to have any furniture piece you may need. These two are also a student favorite option for appliances, as fridges and washing machines can be found for a fraction of their original price.

PART 2

THE SEARCH PROCESS ROUTINE

CHAPTER 1

The Most Common Housing Questions

When should I start my housing search?

If you're starting university in September, begin your search in mid-April. Student housing platforms like SSH, DUWO, and XIOR open new listings around this time. If you're starting in February, apply around October. If you're reading this in June, July, or August, apply aggressively to all types of housing and consider short-term options while continuing the search.

What is the very first step I should take before starting my housing search?

Before you begin searching for listings, the most important thing is to get your documents ready. Most landlords, agencies, and housing platforms won't even consider your application if you can't immediately provide a valid ID, proof of university enrollment, and proof of income (or a guarantor letter from your parents). You should also create a folder — digital and physical — that contains your documents so you can respond quickly when a good listing appears. Also, define your housing goals and priorities. This means determining your budget, understanding your must-have amenities, and deciding which areas or neighborhoods suit your lifestyle.

How do I define my housing goals and priorities?

Start by writing two lists: one for your non-negotiables (budget limit, furnished/unfurnished, location, private room) and one for your "nice-to-haves" (balcony, modern kitchen, city center). This allows you to focus only on listings that make sense for your

situation and avoid wasting time on options that don't meet your needs.

What type of housing should I focus on?

- Student housing (SSH, DUWO, Xior): Affordable, often furnished, built for students
- Studios: Private, self-contained units. Great for privacy, but often expensive
- Shared apartments/rooms: The most common option. You rent a private room and share facilities
- Private apartments: Hard to access unless you have income or a guarantor

What are the factors to consider when setting my housing budget?

- Monthly rent
- Utilities
- One-time deposit
- Online platform subscriptions/agency fees

Is it a good idea to live in a nearby town instead of your university city?

Yes, and it is often the best financial move. The Netherlands has a pretty good train system, and cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht have many affordable neighboring towns. You could live in Almere and study in Amsterdam, or in The Hague while studying in Rotterdam, or study in Utrecht and live in Amersfoort or Zeist. Make sure to consider commuting time and monthly transport costs, but for many students, this is the key to affordable housing.

What if I'm late? How late is too late to find a place?

As your time to find housing shortens, your flexibility regarding housing has to grow. It's never too late — but you'll need to be

fast, flexible, and persistent. Focus on volume: apply to as many listings as possible (20+ per day). Don't wait for the "perfect" listing. Accept temporary contracts, broaden your search area, and stay consistent with follow-ups.

How many listings should I apply to per day?

Depending on how much time you have left to search for housing, the number of applications per day should grow. If you are more than 2 months away from the date of moving, applying for 10-20 listings per day should be your goal. If you have less time than that, the truth is that you need to send as many applications as you can. The most important factor for you to succeed is to be among the first applicants for viewings. Landlords don't waste time going over hundreds of applications. The quality of your message matters. Personalized applications have much better chances of getting a response than generic copy-pastes.

What are some red flags indicating a scam?

- Extremely low rent for a central location
- Requests for payment before viewing
- Landlord refusing to give online viewings
- Poorly written messages exerting pressure to pay

CHAPTER 2

The Practical Guide

Assuming that you've now defined your goals, it's time to focus on where to search and how to do it effectively. In this chapter, we'll guide you through the three primary paths students take when looking for accommodation in the Netherlands: student housing, rental agencies, and housing platforms.

Each approach has its own strengths, weaknesses, and application process. The truth is, most students will find themselves delving in all three. The goal here isn't to pick and choose, it is to understand how each one works, and how to integrate them into a strategic search plan aimed at maximizing your chances of success.

CHAPTER 2.1

Student Housing

Student housing is designed for university students and offers a secure, affordable, and convenient place to live. These buildings come furnished, include the cost of utilities, and are usually well-maintained. While this option is cheaper and more reliable than the private rental market, it is also highly competitive and follows a strict application timeline.

An Overview

Student housing providers generally offer rooms in student buildings, in the form of studio apartments or small shared units. The rooms usually come with a private bedroom, and shared or private bathrooms, a kitchen, and laundry rooms.

Most student housing providers work closely with the university, reserving spots for registered incoming students. Some housing organizations operate on a first-come, first-served basis, while others use a waiting list hierarchy based on how long you've been registered. This should emphasize why registering as early as possible is essential.

When to Start

If you're starting university in September, the ideal time to start applying is mid-April. This is when most major student housing providers begin publishing listings for the fall semester. If you're an exchange student starting in February, aim to begin in October or November of the previous year. While the competition is lighter in the second semester, there are also fewer listings.

Main Providers

1. SSH

SSH is one of the biggest providers of student housing in the Netherlands, active in cities like Utrecht, Rotterdam, Groningen, Tilburg, Maastricht, and Amersfoort.

To apply:

- Go to their website
- Create an account as soon as you're accepted into university
- Upload your proof of enrollment and ID
- Pay the one-time registration fee
- Browse available listings and apply for rooms

Important: Some cities, such as Utrecht, use a “waiting time” system that prioritizes students who registered earlier. The earlier you register, the better your chances.

2. DUWO

DUWO serves cities like Amsterdam, Delft, The Hague, Leiden, and Deventer. Their listings can be accessed via ROOM.nl, so be sure to make an account there.

To apply:

- Register on their website and pay the one-time registration fee
- Choose your city and preferred building
- Submit applications regularly, keep an eye on notifications, and accept offers quickly

3. XIOR

Xior is more of a commercial provider, but still student-focused. They have rooms in Amsterdam, Tilburg, Groningen, Eindhoven, Breda, and Maastricht.

To apply:

- Go to their website and choose your city
- Listings are published continuously throughout the year and updated regularly
- Request a booking upon finding a room
- If the room is available, you will receive a contract
- Once approved, pay the deposit and sign the lease

Important: Xior operates on a first-come, first-served basis, so speed matters more than waiting time here.

Other options

The Social Hub is a stylish, fully furnished option for international students. It is more expensive, but rooms can be booked very close to the start of the academic year, as well as during it.

CHAPTER 2.2

Renting Through Agencies

If student housing doesn't seem to work out, private rental agencies are the next best option. These companies manage rental properties on behalf of landlords and help connect tenants with available housing.

Agencies offer studios, apartments, and shared flats. They also tend to be more professional and transparent than random landlords. This reduces the risk of being scammed. However, this comes at a cost. Some agencies charge registration fees, and competition can still be intense in university cities.

The Process

Agencies have their sites, which allow you to browse the listings freely. Some sites charge a fee to apply for viewings for apartments. You'll also need a set of standard documents (ID, proof of income/guarantor, enrollment letter) and fill out a personal profile.

After applying to a listing, you may be invited for a viewing, either in person or online. If the agency likes your application, they'll ask you after the viewing to submit final documents.

Before joining a viewing or signing something with them, ask about costs that are not mentioned at first, such as fees per viewing or success-based fees. Watch out for agencies that charge fees for finding you a property, as this can usually amount to one rent's worth.

A simple way to get an idea of the agencies in your city is to search "rental agency [city]" to find the most important agencies.

Pros

- Professional, regulated
- Good quality listings
- Clear contracts
- Support from agents
- Communicate in English

Cons

- Subscription fee
- Still competitive
- Many listings require a Dutch income or a working guarantor
- Less student-specific

CHAPTER 2.3

Searching the Open Market

Finally, you can search the open market. Websites like Kamernet, Pararius, Funda, Huurwoningen, and Facebook groups are the best gateways to such listings. These are very flexible and immediate options, but come with the highest risk of scams and require the most persistence and effort to succeed.

Still, many students adopt this method, both those who start searching late, and those who want short-term flexible housing.

The Concept

You can create an account, set your search preferences, and manually browse listings multiple times a day. Once you find something you like, you can send a personalized message or fill out a short form requesting a viewing. After this, you can be selected for a viewing and will be contacted by email.

Best Platforms

- Kamernet.nl - For any type of housing. Requires a monthly subscription to contact landlords
- Pararius.nl and Funda.nl - Professional rental listings. Often managed by agencies
- Huurwoningen.nl - Similar to Pararius
- Facebook groups - Search “[City] student housing” or “[City] kamers”
- Marktplaats.nl - Local marketplace, beware of scams

Pros

- Huge volume of listings
- More flexible terms
- Often faster than agencies

Cons

- Scams are common
- Very high competition
- Some listings are fake or already rented out
- Mentally exhausting

CHAPTER 3

How to Structure Your Daily Routine

Morning (09:00 - 10:30)

Start your day in full force. This is the most important search window, as both open market and agency websites post the day's new listings after 9. Some landlords and agencies answer only the first 5-10 applicants, some choose randomly. In any case, it is important to be one of the first.

- Open your core platforms
- Filter by preference
- Review the newly listed properties
- Apply immediately
- Send a personalized message or motivation letter

Midday (13:00 - 14:00)

- Revisit the same platforms. Some listings are posted during lunch breaks
- Follow up on any responses from the morning
- Send polite reminders to landlords or agencies if you haven't heard back in 2 days
- Check your email alerts and Facebook posts

Late Afternoon (16:00 - 17:30)

- Catch any last-minute posts before the day ends
- Confirm viewing appointments
- Draft your messages for the next morning's applications

Mindset reminder: Housing burnout is real, but consistency matters more than intensity. Even if you only send 5 applications

a day, sticking to it day by day will be more impactful than sending a couple of dozen in one day and never again.

Send Smart, Personalized Messages

You're competing with dozens of other applicants. The difference between getting ignored and getting a reply is determined by how fast you send your message and your message's content.

Instead of "Is this room still available?", consider following this template:

"Hi [Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I'm a [your age]-year-old student starting [your study program] at [University] this [Month]. I'm interested in your listing on [Platform]. The location, size, and setup are exactly what I've been looking for.

I am tidy, responsible, and currently living in [City/Country]. I'll be studying full-time, and my parents are supporting me financially (they can act as guarantors if needed). I'm quiet, don't smoke, and treat my space with respect.

I'd love the chance to schedule a viewing or send more details if needed. Thank you for considering my message, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Phone Number, if safe to share]"

PART 3

THE 30-DAY SEARCH STRATEGY

Your step-by-step, no-fluff action plan. Finding housing is a numbers game, the only thing that matters is to always be between the first 10-15 people who apply. In general, you need to be there in under 1 hour or even less.

STEP 0

Before You Start - Set Your Area & Budget

Area of Search

Unrelated to the University and city you are going to, widen your area of search to also contain cities and villages in the city of the university.

- **Recommended:** no further than 45-minutes by train.
- **Advantages:** less competitive markets, and paying less per m2 than in the city.
- **NS Seasonal Subscription:** through this you can save up to 40% on all your commuting.
 - Link: <https://www.ns.nl/en/season-tickets/>

Budget

Raise your original budget by a couple hundred euros. Keep in mind that when arriving in the Netherlands, you can start working part-time and earn a good income and apply for DUO student financing.

- **Benefits:** Any student can work part-time in the Netherlands, at clothing stores, fast food chains, for good pay.
 - Link: <https://www.government.nl/topics/minimum-wage/minimum-wage-amounts>
- **DUO Student Financing:** If you are from the European Union (and some other countries), you are eligible to receive a free student grant for 32-hours per month that can go up to €789.
 - Link for requirements: <https://duo.nl/particulier/student-finance/>

- From Personal Experience: By raising the area of search and your budget, you can look for short-stay rentals or sublets. This way you can leverage this time to find housing later in the fall when the competitive market goes down.

STEP 1

Register on These Platforms Immediately

Some of the platforms are free, some offer free trials, and for some you need to pay a subscription. You need to search on all of these at the same time, as they all fill a separate part of the rental market.

Kamernet

Create an account and purchase a 1-month subscription.

- **Why?** Kamernet is the largest housing website in the Netherlands with privately owned rentals. Mostly private landlords, or students post listings here.
- **Link:** <https://kamernet.nl/en/premium-account-payment>
- **How to use:** Check out this YouTube video at 03:10 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijweZXBqhG8>)

Pararius

Create a free account and start searching for places.

- **Why?** Pararius holds the most number of listings in the Netherlands from private rental agencies.
- **Link:** <https://www.pararius.com/english>
- **How to use:** Check out this YouTube video at 02:22 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijweZXBqhG8>)
- **Additional use case:** When looking at listings, check for the agency contact information. After finding the personal contact email, send it a message based on the template down below showing interest in wanting to either use their services or join their email/waiting list. That is where they post the listings first.

- **Template:**

Subject: Interested in Renting & Joining Email List

Dear **[Agency Name / Contact Person]**,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is **[Your Full Name]**, and I am currently looking for a **[room/apartment]** in **[City or Area]** with a budget of **[Your Budget]** per month, available from **[Preferred Start Date]**.

I came across your agency while searching for listings and would like to express my interest in working with you to find a place. If possible, I would be grateful if you could add me to your email or waiting list for new properties, so I can be among the first to apply when a suitable place becomes available.

Please let me know if you require any documents or additional information from me to register. Looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

[Your Full Name]

Huurwoningen

Create an account and join a 14-day free trial.

- **Why?** Similar to Pararius, Huurwoningen has a large number of listings in the Netherlands from private rental agencies.
- **Link:** https://www.huurwoningen.nl/account/inloggen/?target_path=/
- **How to get a Free Trial:** Create an account, search for a listing, click on “Respond to Property”, and then a pop-up appears with the trial. Pay €0.01 to get it, and immediately cancel the subscription.

Airbnb & Booking

Create a free account for both and search for cheap leases.

- **Why?** No competition. If you want a place, it is yours.
- **When?** Use it in case you have no other options available. Lease for 30 days to give yourself more time to find a place. From September, the number of people searching will drop drastically, so your chances will be way better.
- **Link:** <https://www.airbnb.com/> & <https://www.booking.com/>
- **Cheat Code:** Send a message to the owner based on the contact on the website. Landlords would be happy to drop the nightly rate because you will be there for a longer period than the usual customer. Ask for 25% off!

SSH

Register and pay the one-time €35 fee to search for rentals.

- **Available Cities:** Utrecht, Rotterdam, Tilburg, Zwolle, Amersfoort and Groningen
- **Why?** Most rooms are given out in early May, but a lot of students cancel their rooms at the end of the Summer. Reason for why daily random rooms pop-up.
- **Link:** <https://www.sshxl.nl/en/inschrijven>
- **How to use:** Check out this YouTube video at 04:42 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijweZXBqhG8>)
- **Advantage:** Great housing with mostly only studios. The offering is both for short-stay and long-stay rentals.

XIOR

Register for free and look for rentals.

- **Available Cities:** Amsterdam, Breda, Delft, Eindhoven, Enschede, Groningen, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Maastricht,

Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Venlo, Wageningen.

- **Why?** Similar to SSH, this is social housing, where there are many listings that keep popping up from people who refuse them. The price range does go higher than SSH.
- **Promo Code (Groningen):** €100 off SUMMER2025
- **Link:** <https://www.xior.be/en/land/the%20netherlands>
(here are all available housings)

Social Hub

Create an account for free.

- **Cities Available:** Amsterdam City, Amsterdam West, The Hague, Delft, Eindhoven, Groningen, Rotterdam, Maastricht.
- **Why?** Similar to XIOR and SSH, this is social housing, which is on the expensive end of the spectrum but still can be a viable option for someone who can afford it for 6 months.
- **Link:** <https://www.thesocialhub.co/>

STEP 2

Join Facebook Housing Groups

Either create an account (if you don't have one), or use your personal account to join groups by searching for: "housing [city]". Join all groups with at least 7 listings per day. (some ask questions to be able to join, it might take a day or two to be accepted).

- **Link:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/feed/>
- **How to Use:** Check out this YouTube video at 05:44 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijweZXBqhG8>)

How to Apply for a Listing

- Add instant notifications for all groups;
- When interested, comment: "PM sent 😊";
- Then send a message privately to the account using the message template from Page 38;
- Important: On Facebook, you need to be extremely early, under 30 minutes after the listing is posted.

What signs show a listing is a SCAM

- Bad use of english;
- Very cheap compared to market or Very good looking rental;
- New Facebook account, under 1 year;
- Weird name or Profile picture;
- Very Low or Very High number of friends;
- Requesting money or personal documents before a viewing;
- Urgency.

STEP 3

Daily Routine

Your only goal is to be in the first 10-15 applicants for every listing you like.

How to Accomplish this?

- Refresh all platforms every 30 minutes, from 8AM - 6PM daily.
- Use the message template from Part 2 for initial contact.

What to do at a Viewing?

Go in person if possible. If not, ask friends or our Instagram community to attend for you (payment required). Worst case go for an online viewing.

STEP 4

At the Viewing

Landlords and realtors always mention that the future tenants to send a letter of interest to a specific email account. Your job is to try to be first and always send the message as early as possible by having it ready before going for the viewing.

Letter of Interest Template

Subject: Thank you for the viewing - I'm very interested in the place

Dear **[Landlord's Name / Sir or Madam]**,

Thank you again for showing me the [room/apartment] in **[City or Address]** earlier. It was great to see the place in person and get a feel for the environment.

I wanted to let you know that I am very interested in renting the place. It fits what I'm looking for perfectly, and I believe I would be a reliable and respectful tenant.

Please let me know if there's anything else you need from me, such as documents or references. I would be happy to provide them right away.

Kind regards,

[Your Full Name]

DM us on Instagram anytime - we can connect you with community members, give feedback on your application, or guide you through the process. 24/7 help.

CONCLUSION

Congratulations!

Once again on embarking on this exciting new chapter of your life! Finding housing in the Netherlands can feel overwhelming. But know that with the right information, preparation, and consistency, you can successfully secure a place to call home.

Remember

patience, organization, and vigilance are your strongest allies during this process. Start early, stay proactive, and don't be discouraged by setbacks. Every application, every viewing, and even every rejection brings you closer to the right fit.

You are not alone in this journey. Thousands of students have faced the same hurdles and have gone on to build wonderful, memorable lives during their studies. With the tips, strategies, and knowledge provided in this guide, you now have a clear roadmap to navigate the Dutch housing market confidently and safely.

Wishing you the very best in your housing search and an incredible academic adventure ahead. Welcome to the Netherlands, your new home away from home!