

Information Sheet for the 2026–2027 Academic Year
Incoming Exchange Students

Life at UCU



Utrecht University

University College Utrecht



About UCU

University College Utrecht has a Liberal Arts and Sciences model, consisting of 20+ disciplines. UCU offers around 230 courses annually. Every student at UCU has a personalized and unique curriculum crafted along with your “tutor”. UCU also has 43 committees and teams that organize campus events, parties, international trips, prom, musical show, fashion show, and more!

Why Choose UCU

University College Utrecht has a different set-up than most universities because of its small-scale environment and residential campus. At UCU, students and professors have close interactions due to small class sizes. There are many committees on campus which creates a strong community and makes UCU a social and engaging place to study and live. Utrecht itself is also a beautiful city, with its Oudegracht canal and lively atmosphere, and is home to the famous icon Miffy (Nijntje). It is a centrally located city in the Netherlands, making it easy to explore and travel. Utrecht is a very biking-friendly city, and even has the largest bicycle parking facility in the world!

Differences between UCU and UU

University College Utrecht (UCU)	Utrecht University (UU)
Honors college of UU with 750 students and a Liberal Arts and Sciences model and a residential campus.	Large public university with 35,000 students and multiple faculties that is located across the city center.
American style Liberal Arts and Sciences system where students design their own curriculum within Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences. Small classes of 15-25 students.	European degree structure where students apply to a specific bachelor's programme with not much curriculum flexibility and large class/lectures sizes.
Mandatory on-campus residence (close-knit community) and very international student body (around 50% international students).	Students live independently across the city (or in other cities or with their parents). Broader student population and traditional Dutch experience.
Selective admissions process with a programme designed for highly academically motivated students.	Generally accessible programmes, depending on the field
Obtain a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences.	Obtain a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in a specific discipline.



Academic Calendar of AY 26-27

Fall 2026 (semester 1)

Move-in August 20 & 21, 2026
Intro week August 24-30, 2026
Move-out January 3, 2027

Start Semester August 31, 2026
End Semester December 18, 2026

Fall break October 19 – 23, 2026

Spring 2027 (semester 2)

Move-in January 18, 2027
Intro week January 19-24, 2027
Move-out June 25, 2027

Start Semester January 25, 2027*
End Semester May 14, 2027

Spring break March 15 – 19, 2027

*Orientation week ("Introweek") starts one week prior to the start of the semester. Participation is obligatory for exchange students.

Catch up exams will take place after the end of the semester. This date is 23 December 2026 for Fall 2026 students, and 19 May 2027 for Spring 2027 students.

Introweek

This is the orientation week at UCU, it runs from 19 January until 24 January 2027. It is the week before the start of the semester. Participation for exchange students is **mandatory** and aims to facilitate settling into campus life.

Students are divided into "families", and exchange students will be mixed with degree students. Introweek activities include practical matters but also fun events organized by the "parents" of each family.



There are also some infosessions by the Student Association (UCSA) and events (such as Sports Day!) planned for all students to attend. The first week is also there to deal with practical matters such as: registering in the city, registering for insurances, registering for a general practitioner, starting a phone plan, activating Solis ID/Osiris/BrightSpace, buying a bike, buying a public transport card, order textbooks, and more.



Holidays in the Netherlands

26 and 29 March	Good Friday and Easter Monday
27 April	King's Day ("Koningsdag")
5 May	Liberation day ("Bevrijdingsdag")
6 and 7 May	Ascension Day ("Hemelvaartsdag") and Bridge Day
16 and 17 May	White Sunday and Pentecost Monday ("Pinksteren")

*On these days, there will be no classes.



Unique Things To Do

- Tulip Day in Amsterdam
- Keukenhof and nearby tulip fields
- Bloemencorso
- Alkmaar cheese market
- Veluwe National Park
- Wadden Islands
- Blue pottery in Delft
- Canal cruises

Housing and Meals

All students at UCU, including incoming exchange students, have the right to on-campus housing on the UCU campus. Students live in "units" of 6 to 12 people of mixed nationalities and genders with which they share a living room, toilets and a kitchen. Utilities (water and electricity), WiFi, access to campus facilities, and UCSA membership are included in the campus fee.

As for personal rooms, each room is furnished with a bed, desk, chair, and closet. Students can express a preference for a single (individual) or double (shared with one other person) room. Accommodation of this preference is subject to demand and can vary from year to year. The move-out date can be found in the academic calendar.

As for meals, all units at UCU are equipped with kitchens that include a stove, a freezer, an oven and a fridge. UCU does not offer a meal plan so students are expected to cook their own meals, but there is a Dining Hall on campus where students can purchase meals.



Campus Facilities at UCU

The following facilities are available for use on the UCU campus for all students and exchange students.

- UCSA bar (student-led)
- Sports field (possible to play basketball, tennis, etc)
- Arts Room with art supplies (via ArtCo)
- Music Room with instruments (via MusiCo)
- Drama/dance studio (via DanceCo)
- Silent prayer and meditation room
- Volleyball court
- Gym
- Table tennis
- Chess
- Auditorium
- Barbecue area

Facilities nearby

- University libraries
- Olympos sports center





Getting Around

Public Transportation and Biking

To use public transportation in the Netherlands, most people use an OV-chipkaart which is a personal travel card that can be used nationwide on trains, busses, trams, and metros. However, payment via debit or credit card is also possible. Within Utrecht, the biking culture is very strong, and biking is one of the main modes of transport in the city. Buying a secondhand bike or renting a Swapfiets is common.

Shopping 101: Where to Buy What

What To Buy	Where
Groceries	Albert Heijn, Jumbo, Plus (all at walking/biking distance)
Toiletries, medicine, cosmetics	Etos, Kruidvat, Normal
Room decor, bedding, stationary	Hema
Bikes and accessories	Fietspunt, Fietsenwinkel Laag Catharijne To rent a bike (monthly subscription), Swapfiets
Books, office supplies, postal service	Bruna, Broese, Hema, Lorjé
Sim cards, phone plans	Belsimpel
Furniture and homeware	IKEA, Flying Tiger, Action, Hema
Textbooks	UCU Groupchats, or online on bol.com

Some Recommendations: Where to Eat Out in Utrecht

Occasion	Price range	Restaurants
On or close to campus		Dine-Inn café in Dining Hall, Noen, Chris District Bakery
Breakfast		KEEK, Vlaamsch Broodhuys 30ML Coffee & Food, Teds Meneer Potter
Lunch		Broodje Mario, Broodje Ben, FLFL Rabarber, Little World Kitchen BROEI, Graaf Floris, Tijn
Dinner with your parents		Restaurant Saigon, De Utrechter Stadsbrasserie FICO, KOENRAAD
Dinner with your friends		ANAN Saigon, Pizza Beppe The Streetfood Club, Umami Asian Cuisine
Vegetarian & Vegan		Life's a Peach, Kluts, FLFL, Last Vegas Vegitalian, GYS, SLA, De Werfkring Kasvio, BROEI
Study Cafes		Coffee Company, Blackbird Coffee & Vintage De Ontdekking, Bakkerswinkel, Cafe Keet