



Gemeente Amsterdam  
Dienst Wonen

## Studying in the leading city of Amsterdam Looking for somewhere to live!

Each year, thousands of students from every continent flock to Amsterdam for their studies. We believe that international students are very important to the city, as they give it international allure, new impulses and energy. It's great that you, too, have chosen to come to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam has plenty to offer, both historically and culturally. There are also many student pubs and associations. Amsterdam is therefore a favourite city to live in for many people.

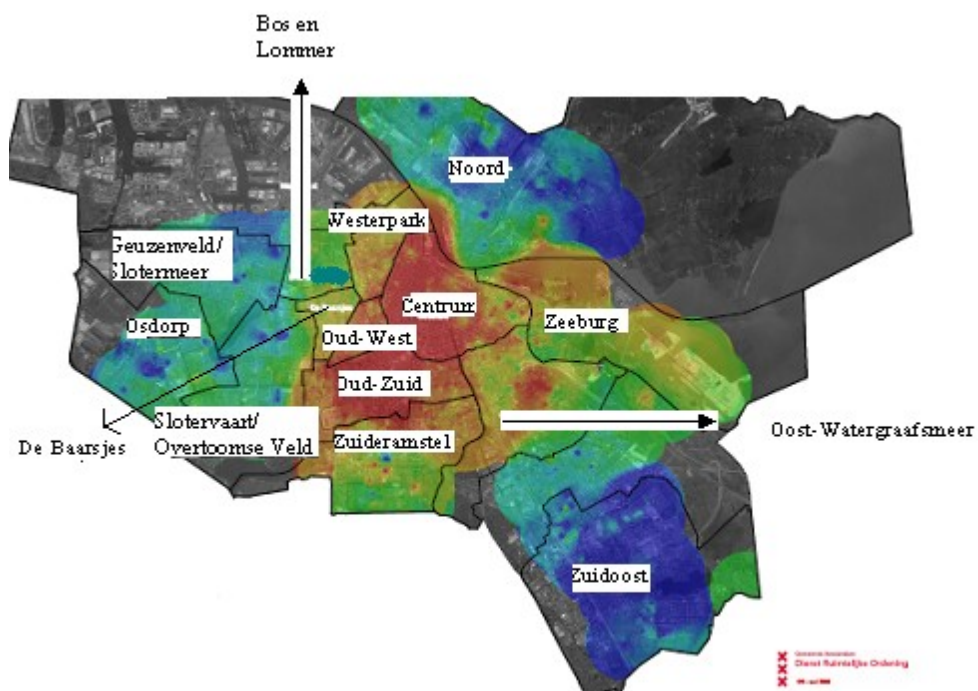
By far the majority of international students are provided with accommodation through the educational establishment where they will be studying. You are very likely to have found accommodation already in this way. This information sheet has been compiled for international students who are *not* eligible for such accommodation or who have to leave their accommodation shortly. In it, we give you an overview of various providers of accommodation and some practical tips for finding somewhere to live in Amsterdam. You can find further information on the website [www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english](http://www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english).

We wish you a pleasant stay in Amsterdam!

Hans Gerson  
Alderman for Public Housing

## In which district of Amsterdam would you like to live?

Amsterdam is divided up into districts. The most sought-after districts in Amsterdam are the Centrum, Oud-Zuid and Oud-West, and these districts have the highest rents on average. There is therefore a much greater chance of finding (affordable) accommodation in the districts further from the centre; e.g. the western districts of Osdorp, Geuzenveld/Slotermeer and Slotervaart. Or in Noord, which is situated to the north of the river IJ. From these districts, you can reach the city centre in twenty minutes by metro, tram or bus. From Noord, you can even get there in five minutes with the free ferry service.



Biking is also a good alternative. You can reach most places in the city within half an hour by bike, which is why it is the most popular form of transport for Amsterdam residents. The district of Zuidoost is situated a bit further away from the city centre, but is also easily reached by metro and bus. And it has the advantage of being close to Schiphol airport.

You will find it easier to find accommodation in all these districts than in or around the centre of Amsterdam. The same applies to some of the neighbouring districts, such as Zaanstad, Almere, Haarlem, Hoofddorp and Amstelveen, which you can reach within thirty minutes by train or bus from the centre of Amsterdam. So you could also look for accommodation in these areas.

*Sara (a 21-year-old first-year student of international economics at VU University Amsterdam): I come from Hong Kong and I wanted to study in the Netherlands. My parents were worried when I told them I wanted to study in Amsterdam for four years. They let me go on condition that I would live in with my best friend and her family. She had been living for three years in Almere; a district near to Amsterdam. I hadn't expected to be able to reach VU University so quickly from there. You can be at the university in a flash by train and metro. The Netherlands is nothing like Hong Kong. Here, everything is relatively close together. After a year, however, I did want to find my own accommodation in Amsterdam, so I signed up to [studentenwoningweb.nl](http://studentenwoningweb.nl) and within a year I had found a room in student accommodation .*

## How do you arrange accommodation in Amsterdam?

By far the majority of international students are provided with accommodation through the educational establishment where they study. The lease is for a maximum of one year. If you stay in Amsterdam for longer, you have to find your own accommodation. The same applies to a small group of students who are not eligible for accommodation through their school in their first year. Below you will find an overview of the ways you can find somewhere to live in that case.

### Accommodation through the educational establishment: student housing

85 per cent of international students are allocated accommodation through the educational establishment where they study. In order to be eligible for this short-stay housing for students, you have to meet certain conditions. You can get more information about this from your own educational establishment. When you hear that you have been accepted for a course or study, it is best to apply for accommodation through the educational establishment as soon as possible, as the school allocates the housing in order of application. So those who apply first have the most chance of finding accommodation in this way.

#### *Completely equipped and furnished*

In the case of short-stay housing for students, the educational establishment arranges everything for you. When you arrive in Amsterdam, first of all you have to sign a lease. Then you can move straight into your completely equipped and furnished room. There is nearly always an internet connection as well. There is independent housing and shared housing. Independent housing has its own front door and own facilities, such as kitchen, shower and toilet. In the case of shared housing, you will share the kitchen, living room (if there is one) and often the shower and toilet with your fellow residents. There is usually no choice between independent and shared housing, as the educational establishment allocates the available accommodation.

#### *Monthly costs*



Several housing associations in Amsterdam have short-stay housing for students. These non-profit organizations provide affordable housing in Amsterdam and are responsible for running these properties (rent, management and maintenance). The rent is between 300 and 1000 euros per month, including service costs (for cleaning on arrival and departure, and small repairs), fittings and furniture, and reservation costs. In addition, tenants often have to pay local taxes, such as charges for refuse collection and sewerage.

*Maximum lease: 1 year*

The maximum lease for short-stay housing for students is one year. The rent cannot be terminated in the interim. If you want to stay in Amsterdam for longer than a year, you will therefore have to find other accommodation yourself after this period. Tip: start looking well in advance!

### **Social housing in Amsterdam**

*The position of private non-profit social housing and its providers in Amsterdam is an exceptional one. Amsterdam has the highest percentage of social housing (60%) in Europe. There are nine Housing Associations in Amsterdam, which own 49% of the total stock and have a share of almost 80% of the construction of new housing. The Housing Associations are independent not-for-profit organizations, and are not owned by the state or local government. They are therefore referred to as social housing rather than public housing.*

*The social rented housing sector in Amsterdam has always been intended for broad segments of the population. In addition, the quality and standard of social housing is reasonably high.*

### **Looking for accommodation yourself**

Amsterdam does not have an abundance of available rooms. Dutch students often have to search for a while before they find a good room. If your educational establishment does not arrange accommodation for you, it is therefore important to begin your search for somewhere to live as soon as possible. You should also take into account that (affordable) accommodation is not usually equipped and furnished, so you will also have to provide your own curtains, carpets, chairs, table and bed, etc. You will also usually have to arrange gas, water, lighting, internet and television connections and pay for them yourself.

Here is a list of the various rental organizations.

#### *Private landlords*

Private landlords often rent out only a few properties. They often put their own advertisements for accommodation in local papers, such as *Amsterdams Stadsblad* or *Echo*. There are also agencies and estate agents who mediate in renting out private properties and rooms. They are only allowed to do so if they have a permit from the municipality. For an overview of the legal mediation agencies, see:

[www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english](http://www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english)

The only estate agents exempt from this regulation and who can thus rent out accommodation to private individuals without a permit are: the Nederlandse Vereniging van Makelaars, the Amsterdamse Makelaarsvereniging, housing associations, and private owners or managers of property.

The rent of private accommodation is often somewhat higher than that of social rented housing leased by the housing associations. However, there is a maximum

permitted rent, which is determined by law. The amount depends on the quality, size, location and facilities of the dwelling in question.

You can only rent private accommodation if you have a housing permit. The landlord or estate agent has to apply to the Housing Department for a housing permit for you.



NB! Do not sign a lease, pay anything or move in before you and the landlord have both signed a form for this and the landlord has received notification that the housing permit has been granted. If you move into accommodation without having a housing permit, you risk being turned out of the accommodation. If you are in doubt or have questions, you can always contact the Housing Department on tel: 020 6241111, [www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english](http://www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english)

### *Commercial landlords*

Commercial landlords are, for example, insurance companies and pension funds that have invested in property with the long-term goal of selling it. They are professional parties that usually have experience in leasing properties. Like the housing associations, they also offer short-stay housing, though not exclusively to students. The maximum lease period for short-stay housing is six months. Rates depend on the market and are generally considerably higher than short-stay housing for students arranged through educational establishments. Rents include service costs (for cleaning on arrival and departure, and small repairs), fittings and furniture, and reservation costs.

Investors that lease accommodation in Amsterdam are:

- Dutch Association of Real Estate Brokers and Real Estate Experts: [www.nvm.nl](http://www.nvm.nl)
- Vesteda: [www.vesteda.nl](http://www.vesteda.nl)

NB! If you are looking for accommodation yourself, watch out for landlords that:

- can only be contacted through one source, e.g. only a mobile number or e-mail address;
- do not offer a lease contract and/or want to receive the rent in cash;
- put pressure on you by saying that there are lots of other candidates;
- do not give you a receipt;
- want to give you the keys at another address. Do not take receipt of keys (and pay for them) if you are not at the address to which the keys belong (even if you have previously seen the accommodation).

### Tip!

If you are in doubt about the reliability of a landlord or mediation agency, always contact the Housing Department of the City of Amsterdam: [wkb@wonen.amsterdam.nl](mailto:wkb@wonen.amsterdam.nl) or telephone 020-552 7170. It is also possible to make an anonymous report of a complaint.

*John (25-year-old fourth-year sociology student at the University of Amsterdam):  
Before I came to the Netherlands, I tried to find accommodation from New York through the University of Amsterdam. Unfortunately, I wasn't eligible for accommodation as I applied too late. So I registered from the US with Vesteda; a commercial landlord that provides accommodation. Within six months, I was offered suitable accommodation in Zeeburg, a district to the east of Amsterdam city centre. I live in a house with another student, which is really great, and we often cook together. I'm glad I chose to study here. People in Amsterdam are open and hospitable and I think the city is beautiful. The old city centre is full of canals and historic buildings with wonderful architecture .*

### *Regular student accommodation through housing associations*

The main housing associations in Amsterdam that provide student accommodation are De Key and Duwo, which both lease around 8,000 dwellings to students in Amsterdam and the vicinity. The housing associations Ymere and Stadgenoot are also important providers of student accommodation. These four associations also supply the major part of the short-stay housing for students, which is leased through the educational establishments. They also provide regular student accommodation, for which you are only eligible if you can produce proof of full-time registration at a higher education establishment in the Amsterdam region. When leasing this type of accommodation, the housing association offers a campus contract, which states that you must leave the accommodation within six months of completing your studies. If the housing association has a room available, you can only pay by credit card or bank card.

For the accommodation provided by De Key, Duwo and Ymere, and for registration, conditions, procedure and allocation of student accommodation, see:

- [www.studentenwoningweb.nl](http://www.studentenwoningweb.nl):  
The one-off registration fee for this site costs around 30 euros and is valid for an unlimited period. You can then respond to all the student rooms that are on offer in Amsterdam. There are long waiting lists, so register as soon as you arrive in Amsterdam. This will increase your chances of finding accommodation if, for example, you decide to stay on after a year of short-stay housing for students.



### *Free sector through housing associations*

Sometimes, the housing associations also have a small part of their accommodation in the free sector. Accommodation in the free sector has rents that exceed 647.53 euros (as of 1-7-2009). In order to share the costs, you might like to consider renting

accommodation with friends. All inhabitants of Amsterdam can register. For more information, contact the housing associations concerned:

- De Key: [www.shortstay.dekey.nl](http://www.shortstay.dekey.nl)
- Duwo: [www.duwo.nl](http://www.duwo.nl)
- Ymere: [www.ymere.nl/uploads/englishversion.pdf](http://www.ymere.nl/uploads/englishversion.pdf)

Websites only in Dutch:

- Stadgenoot: [www.stadgenoot.nl](http://www.stadgenoot.nl)
- De Alliantie: [www.de-alliantie.nl](http://www.de-alliantie.nl)
- Eigen Haard: [www.eigenhaard.nl](http://www.eigenhaard.nl)
- Rochdale: [www.rochdale.nl](http://www.rochdale.nl)

#### *Student associations ASVA and SRVU*

Both these associations mediate between landlords and tenants, using a lottery system rather than a waiting list. In order to respond, you must first become a member. This costs 15 euros a year for ASVA and 15 euros for four years with the SRVU. These associations can also answer any questions you may have about studying in Amsterdam.

- ASVA: <http://www.asva.nl/>
- SRVU: [www.srvu.org](http://www.srvu.org)

#### *Hostels*

If, however, you cannot find accommodation, you can stay temporarily in a hostel at relatively low cost. From here, you can keep searching for suitable accommodation. There are shared rooms, and some hostels also have single rooms. The shared rooms have separate beds and a communal shower, toilet and washbasin. Also see:

- Stay Okay: [www.stayokay.com](http://www.stayokay.com)
- Meeting Point Youth Hostel: [www.hostel-meetingpoint.nl](http://www.hostel-meetingpoint.nl)

#### *Casa400 (open from October to May)*

In the summer months, Casa400 is a hotel. But from October to May, it shuts its hotel doors and offers temporary accommodation to students. The rooms are equipped and furnished, with a shower, toilet, washbasin and a private telephone connection. There is a communal kitchen for every eleven residents. When the summer months come around again, the students have to leave and Casa400 becomes a hotel again. The waiting time for a room is around one year.

- Casa400: [www.studentencasa400.nl](http://www.studentencasa400.nl)

#### *Anti-squatting*

There are also organizations active in Amsterdam that lease empty accommodation on a temporary basis, in order to prevent squatters breaking into these buildings. Housing associations offer anti-squatting accommodation, for instance, in urban modernization areas. The accommodation is empty while waiting to be demolished, renovated or sold. Anti-squatting accommodation may be in office premises, a house, a school, a church, a flat or a houseboat. Living in anti-squatting accommodation is relatively cheap, but it is only temporary. The facilities are also different in each property. The rooms are provided in the state they were left in by the last occupant. One condition is that you furnish the property so that it appears to be occupied. Some anti-squatting agencies operate through a recommendation system, so you need to know someone who lives in an anti-squatting property who will recommend you. Other agencies, however, work with waiting lists.

- Ad Hoc Beheer: [www.adhocbeheer.nl](http://www.adhocbeheer.nl)
- Zwerfkei Bewaring B.V.: [www.zwerfkeibewaring.nl](http://www.zwerfkeibewaring.nl) (Dutch only)
- Bureau Tijdelijke Bewoning: [www.kraakwacht.nl](http://www.kraakwacht.nl) (Dutch only)



## I've found accommodation - what next?

If you've found accommodation you like, you must make agreements with the landlord. These should always be set out in a written lease, which must include at least the following:

- the name of the landlord;
- the name of the owner of the accommodation;
- the name of the tenant;
- a description of the accommodation (address, surface area, which floor, front or back of the building);
- the commencement date of the lease period (in the case of a temporary contract: the legal grounds on which a temporary contract has been concluded and the ending date);
- the rent per term of payment (a term of payment can be a maximum of three months);
- the sum owed for additional facilities and services per month.

The contract must be signed by yourself and the landlord, including the date and place of signature. This should be done in duplicate, so that you and the landlord each have a copy. If you have a disagreement with your landlord, are in doubt about something, or you want advice or support, you should contact:

- Dienst Wonen (Housing Department): [www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english](http://www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english)
- Amsterdams Steunpunt Wonen: [www.huurnietteduur.net](http://www.huurnietteduur.net)

## Checklist for finding accommodation

In this information sheet, we have given an overview of the different providers of accommodation and some practical tips for finding accommodation in Amsterdam. Here is a list of the tips:

1. Start looking for accommodation as soon as possible. You can do so from your home country through the internet. You can also get information and advice from acquaintances and other students who are living or have lived in Amsterdam.  
Make use of the period when not many students are looking for accommodation. For instance, if you are arriving in January, get ahead of the stream of new students in April. Also take into account the fact that many first-year students start looking for accommodation in the summer months.
2. Always take along a valid passport or driving licence when you are going to sign a lease, as you will need to provide identification.
3. Open a Dutch bank account before you start looking for accommodation in or around Amsterdam. This account can be used for transferring the rent and costs for gas, water, lighting and internet, etc.
4. Register as soon as possible with [www.studentenwoningweb.nl](http://www.studentenwoningweb.nl). On this site, you can find the accommodation available from the biggest providers of student accommodation: De Key, DUWO and Ymere.
5. Check the local papers for advertisements for available accommodation. Examples of papers are *Amsterdams Stadsblad* and *Echo*.
6. Post advertisements on notice boards of colleges and universities, libraries, supermarkets or shops in the area in which you would like to live.
7. Tell everyone you are looking for a room. You often find accommodation fastest through friends, fellow students, acquaintances and family. Becoming a member of an association can help expand your network, and many student associations manage their own student housing.
8. Don't get fixated on one location, but spread your chances over the city. Of course you can have a preference for a particular district, but you should realize that it is possible to reach the centre in 20 minutes from every district and that it is often easier to find accommodation in districts that are further afield.
9. Don't be too critical. The accommodation you find may not be exactly what you'd expected, but it is a start, and you can continue your search from there.
10. Once you have found accommodation, don't forget to register as a resident at the registry office of the district you are living in.
11. If you are planning to stay in the Netherlands after your studies, register with Woningnet [www.woningnet.nl](http://www.woningnet.nl). If you have put your name down, you can find accommodation through them in the long term. But do take into account that the waiting time is around eight years.
12. If you can't find accommodation, you can put up temporarily in a budget hotel or hostel. From there, it will be easier to look for accommodation and to build up a network.

We have tried to give you an overview of various providers of accommodation and some practical tips. The main thing is not to get discouraged by the dynamic housing market. If you have any questions about renting and accommodation, please contact:

- **De Dienst Wonen (Housing Department), telephone 020 552 7551, [www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english](http://www.wonen.amsterdam.nl/english)**
- **Het Amsterdam Steunpunt Wonen 020 - 5230130, [info@steunpuntwonen.nl](mailto:info@steunpuntwonen.nl).**

