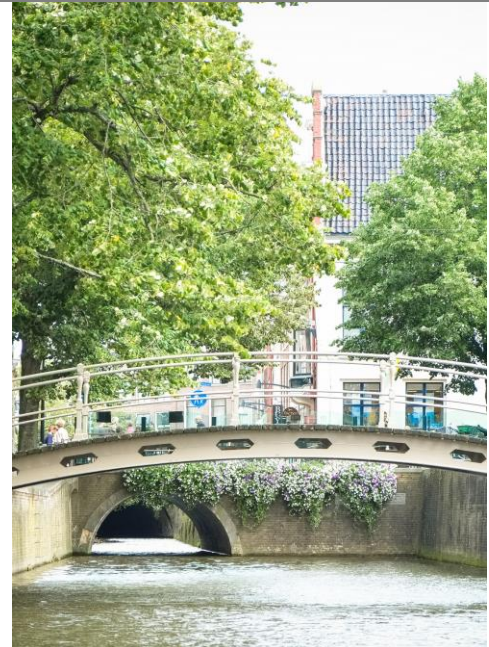


Dear student,

Welcome to the MEEM programme!

The moment your study career at the University of Twente starts is approaching. In this information letter you'll find answers to some frequently asked questions. We will inform you about how to travel to Leeuwarden, how to prepare for your stay in the Netherlands, what are the accommodation options for students etcetera. Extra information will be provided about the Coronavirus and what influence the virus has on education. Even though we live in extraordinary times, we will do our best to offer you the same study experience as we did in previous years. We look forward to welcoming you in Leeuwarden!



✓ Important information

- The course will start on August 31st 2020
- The MEEM introduction day will be on August 26th, 2020
- Location of the MEEM programme is the city of Leeuwarden.
- Teaching takes place physically, unless that is impossible in which case teaching takes place online
- For students arriving at Schiphol airport: we can inform you in detail how to travel by train to Leeuwarden

✓ Your first homework

First of all, we suggest you already orientate on the following:

1. Information on environmental law, environmental regulations and environmental policies of your country.
2. Information on organisations that are involved in environmental matters i.e. environmental actors such as governmental environmental organisations (ministries, departments, regional and local), semi-governmental organizations (water board, etc), NGOs, environmental companies and groups, and others.
3. General overviews about the environmental situation in your country; what are the main problems, etc.
4. Key existing environmental measures in your country or considered to be taken.

This information will be used by yourself and is useful in the discussions and assignments of several courses.

Contact details

Questions?

For any questions please don't hesitate to contact us:

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✓ The introduction day

The introduction day will be held on August 26th. Due to the Corona measures, the MEEM introduction week will look different than usual, instead of a whole week we offer one day.

Just like in previous years, this week is the opportunity to get to know each other and the city of Leeuwarden. We will help you to arrange formalities (such as opening a bank account and registration at the municipality) and we will offer a tour through the city of Leeuwarden.

✓ About opening a Dutch bank account / money matters

During your first week here we will inform you about how to open a Dutch bank account (ABN AMRO). Unfortunately, it can sometimes take a while (about one or two weeks) before you actually have access to your new bank account. Therefore, we advise you to bring sufficient money for the first few weeks of your stay.

Normally the rent for your room needs to be paid on the first of each month. However, if you reserve a room in one of the designated MEEM houses through StudentStay, we can arrange an agreement with the housing company concerning the payment of your first rent and deposit invoices. This means you can pay the rent at the end of September, so you do not need to worry about paying beginning of September.

Note: Non-Dutch nationals are not entitled to hold a Dutch credit card. Students are not allowed any credit at the ABN AMRO bank. You will receive a regular bankcard that allows you to withdraw money from ATM's throughout Europe.

✓ Covid-19 (Corona)

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) leads to many questions about the consequences for the Netherlands and the University of Twente. The Netherlands is slowly easing itself out of a lockdown. What will education look like after September 2020? Health & safety is our most important starting point. Therefore, we operate according to government guidelines (see: <https://www.rivm.nl/en>). We also feel it is very important for you to meet and being a part of the UT community, so we're striving for a balance between the desire to be together in the classroom and maximum safety.

Students who are able to travel to Leeuwarden are expected to be in the MEEM classroom from 31st of August. Students who aren't able to travel to Leeuwarden due to COVID-19 related circumstances, will be facilitated in a tailor made online alternative as long as those circumstances apply, to the best of the ability of the programme and its staff members. The MEEM programme will offer hybrid education: both offline (in the classroom) and online (from home) - see: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/products-services/product/p1112937/corona-faq-novel-coronavirus>

✓ Arrival in Leeuwarden

For international students arriving at Schiphol airport: Unfortunately, unlike previous years we cannot offer you a taxi service to Leeuwarden. One of the basic rules during the Corona crisis is that people need to stay 1.5 metres away from other people. This rule also applies for taxi's and thus only one person is allowed per taxi (if not from the same household) making this an unsustainable and very expensive option.

The best way to travel to Leeuwarden is therefore by train. If you are traveling through Schiphol airport and would like us to give you the best train schedule for travelling to Leeuwarden, please send us your flight itinerary at least one week before you arrive (flight number and arrival date & time at Schiphol airport). Please not that it is obligatory to wear a face mask in the train, you can either take one from your home country or buy at the airport.

✓ Student Accommodation

Student Stay (<https://studentstay.roomeo.com/#/>) is our partnering agency and holds accommodation available for MEEM students. But you may also book your rooms through other organisations and/or contacts. However, it is important to know that StudentStay has a cancellation policy in place due to the Coronavirus. The StudentStay cancellation policy for Corona reads as follows:

- 1) All room reservations that are made now, can be canceled 24 hours before the start of the rental contract, but only if due to the Coronavirus you cannot travel to the Netherlands. When you reserve a room, you need to pay 185 Euro administration costs, these costs are non-refundable should you cancel the room.
- 2) If and when you cancel the reserved room due to the Coronavirus after the rental contract has already started, you need to pay 1 month of rent + the administration costs of 185, - Euro.
- 3) Should you become aware that you'll be able to travel to the Netherlands within the next two months after canceling the rental contract, StudentStay can offer you a so called 'moving contract'. They will then keep the room reserved for you, allowing you to commence the rental contract two months later. The costs for a moving contract are 65 Euro per month.

As mentioned, you may also look for other options to arrange a room. Be aware that not all organisations have a cancellation policy like they do at StudentStay. There are several platforms which publish vacant rooms, apartments and/or studio's in Leeuwarden. Some of these are free to join, others ask a registration fee or a monthly fee. Options you can look at are:

<https://www.markt058.com/en/>
<https://www.xior.nl/nl/stad/leeuwarden>
<https://www.kamers-leeuwarden.nl/en/>

A standard contract in the Netherlands is in most cases for one year; during this period, it is not possible to cancel the rent.

Dutch student housing is expensive compared to the size of the room and the facilities you may be accustomed to. This is the same for Dutch and International students. General information about housing for students in the Netherlands can be found here: <https://www.studyinholland.nl/practical-matters/housing>

✓ Want to learn Dutch?

An online introductory Dutch course is offered by the University of Twente. The course is available world-wide. Please check for more information <https://www.utwente.nl/en/ces/language-centre/courses/709482/dutch-a1-getting-started-with-dutch/>

✓ Why Leeuwarden

Because, should you not know this, Leeuwarden is the capital and the economic and cultural centre of the greenest and probably most beautiful Dutch province of Friesland! The responsibilities that this brings make Friesland one of the most challenging provinces of the Netherlands with respect to environment, energy and water. This challenge fits exactly with the MEEM mission and so, from its inception, the MEEM program is offered in Friesland.

Because, consequently, MEEM has always been able to closely cooperate with governments, businesses and societal organizations of and within Friesland and Leeuwarden. For example, on the implementation of sustainability goals that were set by the Province of Friesland, but also in relation to Leeuwarden in living up to its title of the UN Innovating City for Water Technology. MEEM has also engaged with Friesland's (green) businesses, offering interesting opportunities for sustainability excursions and real life case-study subjects, and involvement in joint research projects. Further, MEEM closely cooperates with other higher education programmes in Leeuwarden, such as the two-year master on Water technology, and with the University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân which, alike MEEM, are dedicated to finding local solutions for real-world global challenges. In all, being part of the sustainability (business) innovations

ecosystems of Leeuwarden and beyond is beneficial to the quality of our program and also to the knowledge that MEEM can share with partners in these networks.

Because meanwhile, let's not forget, Leeuwarden is an attractive place to be, also as a student. It is no coincidence that Leeuwarden was the European capital of culture in 2018! The city is clearly gaining popularity, particularly among students, which makes sense given what its historical centre has to offer. Further, in cooperation with Campus Fryslân and with the master Water Technology we organize several social and academic events to make sure you can experience the Dutch student life you are looking for – make sure to join before all the others do ☺!

The city of Leeuwarden is located in "Friesland" (referred to as Fryslân in the Frisian language) in the North-western part of the Netherlands and is one out of the twelve Dutch provinces with its own language and culture. Information about your new 'habitat' can be found on:

<https://www.mooileeuwarden.nl/en/>

www.vvveeuwarden.nl

<https://www.leeuwardenstudentcity.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjklGydhBQc>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_1cQsOz47U

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h700QV18FIM>

<https://northerntimes.nl/leeuwarden-is-the-best-city-trip-destination-in-the-netherlands/>

