

Middle Eastern Studies (research) (MA)

Master



Universiteit
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

Designed for high-achieving students, Leiden University's master's in Middle Eastern Studies (Research) offers you unmatched resources and expertise.

Why study Middle Eastern Studies (research) at Leiden University?

Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Leiden University has a reputation for a breadth and depth of expertise that is unmatched in Europe. You can explore subjects that span virtually the entire Middle East both in time and geography. This two-year research master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies allows you to freely combine subjects from seven focus areas: Turkish Studies; Arabic Studies; North African Studies; Persian Studies; Islam; and Modern Middle Eastern Studies. You can decide to focus on a region such as the Arab world, North Africa or the Persian world, or on a discipline such as history, politics, literature or languages. A key feature is our comparative approach to learning, which includes intra-Middle Eastern comparisons, as well as comparisons of the Middle East with other regions in the world.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

What are your career prospects?

Our graduates have pursued successful careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Graduates have also gone on to pursue a PhD and a career in academia. If you wish to pursue an academic career, your Master's is excellent preparation for a PhD programme or a career in a research agency or the research department of a company or government organisation. Your strong analytical and problem-solving skills can also be applied in a wide range of other vocations.

[Find out more about your career prospects](#)

Is Middle Eastern Studies (research) the programme for you?

Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's programme?

[Check the admission requirements](#)

A centre of expertise on languages and cultures of the world

If you're interested in languages and cultures, Leiden University is the best place to study. The university's global expertise places our programmes at the top. In Leiden and The Hague, we study languages and cultures from all regions of the world and from prehistory to the present day. In this way, we create a broad view of the world; the key to mutual understanding.

Video: Our experts on Languages and Cultures explain

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[Learn more about the study programme](#)

Why Leiden University

Leiden University offers ambitious students the latest knowledge and the freedom to develop their own area of expertise.

World-class education

Leiden University's Humanities department consistently ranks in the top 30 Humanities faculties worldwide. At Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands, learning incorporates the latest research and resources found nowhere else in the world, such as those of the famous Leiden University Library and its collections of original manuscripts, periodicals, and photos.

Unique courses and small classes

At Leiden University, you will be able to choose subjects from an expansive curriculum, including specialised subjects not available elsewhere. All classes are taught by accomplished scholars. Small classes give students valuable time interacting with instructors.

Spend a semester in Morocco

The Middle Eastern Studies department has close links with the Netherlands Institute in Morocco (NIMAR) and offers students of the Middle Eastern Studies (Research) programme the opportunity to spend one semester at the institute in Rabat for study or research.

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Use the facilities of the Humanities Hub

The Humanities Hub in Leiden houses some great facilities to support your studies—like the AI Lab, Digital Lab, MediaLab, Translation Lab, Journalism Lab, Editorial Room, podcast studio, and film studio. Whether you're into AI, media, or storytelling, you'll find plenty of opportunities to build hands-on skills. Best of all, these are exactly the kind of skills that stand out on the job market after you graduate. Want to find out more? Take a look [here!](#)

A head-start to your career

Your qualification from Leiden University is respected by organisations worldwide. But that's not the only advantage of studying at Leiden. We challenge you to think harder, analyse more deeply, and devise new, creative solutions. Our graduates are equipped to solve the challenges facing society now and in the future.

Diversity and inclusion

We are convinced that our education can only flourish if everyone within the programme feels supported, respected and empowered to do their best work. We find it important to offer a learning environment that allows for different perspectives and points of view that students bring with them, depending on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health, religion, age or socio-economic background. Every new generation sees the world from a new perspective – and our students are the newest generation. [We look forward to hearing more about your perspective.](#) Leiden University has been pursuing diversity policy since 2014, with the aim of creating a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for all staff and students.

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About the programme

The two-year research master in Middle Eastern Studies equips you with advanced and in-depth knowledge of a region and discipline within the field of Middle Eastern Studies. You are expected to spend the third semester of the programme doing research, either in the Netherlands or abroad. Blended and virtual research-based options are also available.

First year

Core courses

Throughout the programme, you will, together with students of the MA Asian Studies (research), participate in two core courses. These include:

- **Critical Area Studies: Placing Your Research** – which covers theories and issues central to the field of area studies and examines key writings on the challenges of studying and writing about “other” cultures and societies.
- **Methodology in the Social Sciences and Humanities** - which critically explores the multitude of methodologies in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Electives

In addition to the core courses you will choose core elective and elective courses specific to either Asian Studies or Middle Eastern Studies. You can also combine courses from each of these two master's programmes, from other (Research) MA programmes and/or courses from national Research Schools.

Research and thesis supervisor

To assist you in making your choices, you are coupled with your research and thesis supervisor, one of the professors involved in the programme who (preferably) works on a topic of interest to you, during the first weeks of your study. Together with your supervisor and the study coordinator you compose a programme which caters to your immediate and future interest.

Second year and thesis

Research

You are expected to spend the third semester of the programme doing research, either in the Netherlands or abroad. Blended and virtual research-based options are also available.

Thesis

After you have finished your research project, you work on your MA Thesis. The process of writing is supported by a “Thesis Seminar” which is offered bi-weekly. During this seminar, you discuss relevant issues with your peers and present your research and writings to them and to the convenor of the seminar. Once you have finished your thesis and have received a passing grade, you will defend your thesis publicly.

Master's or research master's?

We also offer a one-year Middle Eastern Studies programme.

Apart from the contents, there can be other arguments to choose for either a master's or a research master's programme. Have a look at [the table in pdf for a quick overview of the differences](#). For more details on the contents, also visit the [master's in Middle Eastern Studies'](#) pages.

Objectives

The aim of the two-year master's in Middle Eastern Studies (Research) is to provide you with in-depth and specialised knowledge within the field of Middle Eastern Studies with the added value provided by a comparative, area studies approach.

The acquisition of advanced academic skills in the interpretation of texts, the analysis and solution of conceptual problems, and the ability to independently conduct scientific research are other key goals of the programme. Opportunities are provided for students to broaden their academic skills by conducting field research, in archives and/or special collections, occasionally combined with studying subjects at another university.

Course overview

For a detailed programme, see the [Prospectus](#).

Please note that this guide applies to the current academic year, which means that the curriculum for next year may slightly differ.

Tsolin Nalbantian

Senior University Lecturer



“Students of this master's programme are surrounded by faculty who are as diverse in their backgrounds as they are in their teaching and research interests. This diverse academic environment encourages students to pursue their own interests; all while being exposed to a wide variety of new experiences and ideas.”

Many career paths

“When it comes to the careers of our graduates, the sky is the limit. Our alumni go on to become journalists, NGO workers, teachers, academics, consultants, and diplomats, to name a few of their many career paths.”

Long-term commitment

“We aim to nurture in our students a long-term commitment to the region and its people. The training our students receive at Leiden provides them with the skills to connect with the people, customs, experiences, and history of the Middle East: skills that are of increasing importance in a great many organisations today.”

Admission and Application

Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's Programme?

[Check the entry requirements](#)

Extracurricular

Get the most out of your studies at Leiden University by taking part in our extracurricular activities.

Community building

Throughout the year activities are organised by both the Middle Eastern Studies department and the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS). This includes for example the LUCIS *What's New!?* lecture series which focuses on current research on Islam and the Middle East.

Coordinator of studies

During the first weeks of their study, students are expected to meet with their coordinator of studies to discuss their programme. The coordinator of studies can help you if you have specific questions relating to the academic content of the programme, exam regulations, courses and study scheduling (and delay) of your studies.

Uhlenbeck scholarship programme

For research master's students, the Faculty of Humanities has set up the Uhlenbeck scholarship programme. If you would like to spend a period of time abroad for field work, research or a study exchange, you can apply for a (supplementary) scholarship.

Leiden Leadership Programme

If you're interested in developing your leadership potential, the [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) offers training sessions, seminars, and a Personal Leadership Roadmap to help you grow.

Study at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts

The Academy of the Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) is a research institute and part of the Faculty of Humanities. The ACPA offers education such as electives, and talent programmes such as the Practicum Artium (PA), which gives you the opportunity to study photography, graphic design or drawing, and the Practicum Musicae at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, where you can study classical music, singing, early music or jazz.

[Find out more about ACPA.](#)

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Meet our staff



Dr. J. Bruning

Jelle Bruning is a University Lecturer at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies. Jelle Bruning specializes in the social and intellectual history of early-Islamic Egypt (ca. 640-1000 CE). He works extensively with documentary sources in Arabic, Coptic, and Greek and contemporary literary texts. View his full profile [here](#).



Prof. dr. L.P.H.M. Buskens

Léon Buskens is an anthropologist studying law and culture in Muslim societies. One of his main research interests is how Muslims shape Islam in everyday life, in relation to other practices and to religious teachings. He has a longstanding interest in Morocco, and has more recently also started to do some research in Indonesia (focusing on Maluku and Papua) for comparative purposes. View his full profile [here](#).



Prof.dr. P.M. Sijpesteijn

Petra Sijpesteijn is professor of Arabic. Her research concentrates on recovering the experiences of Muslims and non-Muslims living under Islamic rule, using the vast stores of radically under-used documents surviving from the early Islamic world. Starting in 2017, she manages an international research project entitled "Embedding Conquest: Naturalising Muslim Rule in the Early Islamic Empire (600-1000)", funded by the European Research Council. View her full profile [here](#).

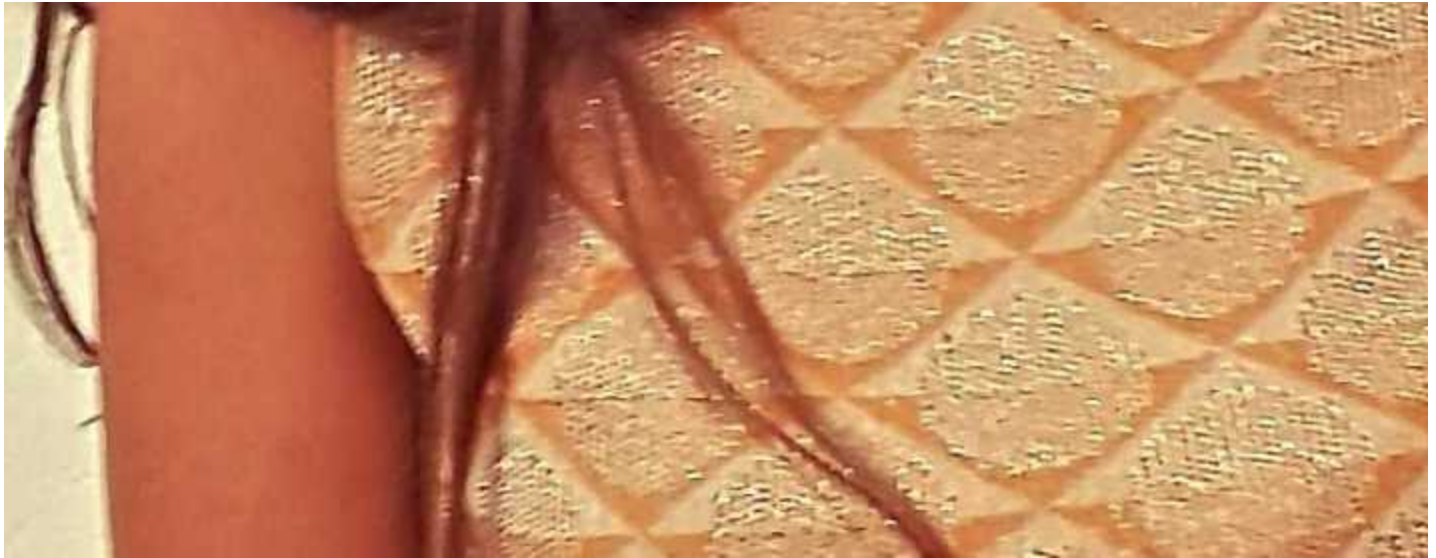




Dr. Alp Yenen

Alp Yenen is University Lecturer. He works primarily on the political history of modern Turkey and the Middle East. He is specialised on the turn of the 20th century, First World War, Interwar period, and the Cold War period. He also comments and consults on contemporary politics in Turkey. View his full profile [here](#).





Dr. Marina Calculli

Marina Calculli is a university lecturer. Her research sits at the intersection of International Relations, History, Law and Political Theory. She concentrates on Middle East security, political violence, and the role of religious and secular ideas in world politics. View her full profile [here](#).

[Meet more staff here](#)

Career prospects

Where do our graduates work?

The MA in Middle Eastern Studies (Research) prepares students for a wide number of careers in which in-depth knowledge and advanced conceptual, analytical and interpretative skills are essential. Our graduates have pursued successful careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Graduates have also gone on to pursue a PhD and a career in academia. If you wish to pursue an academic career, your Master's is excellent preparation for a PhD programme or a career in a research agency or the research department of a company or government organisation. Your strong analytical and problem-solving skills can also be applied in a wide range of other vocations.

Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- Freelance writer/translator/project coordinator at a translation centre
- Lecturer at a Dutch university
- Translator and executive secretary at an embassy in the Netherlands
- Policy officer for education and funding at a national student union
- PhD candidate at a university in Spain
- PhD candidate at Leiden University
- Policy officer for Sahel region at a ministry
- Production assistant at a Swedish museum
- Teacher of English/Islamic religion at an educational institute in Saudi Arabia
- Middle East representative at a shipping and forwarding company.

Brigitte van de Pas

Graduated in Research MA Middle Eastern Studies



"I enrolled in the research master's programme Middle Eastern Studies because I wanted to do a second degree that had a bit more immediate relevance for today's world than my first degree, History. I am fascinated by other peoples and cultures, and this programme allowed me to study the Middle East as a whole, without having to choose one particular country to specialise in."

Research skills

"I am currently working as a researcher for the Benelux markets at the market research company Statista in Hamburg, Germany. Although the research I am doing now has little to do with the Middle East, the research skills learned at university are applicable to other types of research as well. Critical thinking, analysing information and presenting it the way non-experts would also understand it is vital to my job."

Prepared to work in an international environment

"The international atmosphere of the Leiden Institute of Area Studies as well as my study abroad period in Turkey and my internships in Kuwait and Egypt furthermore prepared me to work in an international environment, with people from all over the world. During my studies I never once considered the possibility of working with statistics, but as the saying goes: life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans!"

In which sector do students find jobs?

The graphs below are based on alumni data from the Research Master Middle Eastern Studies 2020 through 2024.

- 38 % Education
- 25 % Government and semi-government
- 13 % Non-profit
- 13 % Research
- 13 % Communication and marketing

Career preparation

Find out how this programme exactly prepares you for your future career and check our career preparation activities.

Knowledge and skills

Launch your career with a master's degree

Continuing your studies after your bachelor's degree pays off. Graduates with a master's degree are more likely to find higher-level positions: 77% start at a university of applied sciences (hbo) or university level, compared to 63% of graduates who only hold a bachelor's degree. This difference remains visible in the long term. After more than two years of work experience, 87% of master's alumni work at a university of applied sciences or university level, compared to 76% of bachelor's alumni.

A unique strength on the job market

The development of in-depth knowledge in the field, and the ability to think critically and analytically, are key goals of this programme. The Middle Eastern Studies (Research) programme will introduce you to the concepts and academic approaches current in Middle Eastern Studies, including disciplines such as: linguistics, history and social sciences.

You will learn to use these concepts and approaches in researching and analysing source material. Your thesis work will give you the opportunity to apply these methods in your own research.

Internships

Do you consider to put your knowledge into practice during your studies? Determine whether an internship could be an option for you. Start orientating your possibilities by visiting an internship information session. This way you can receive information about the internship procedure and listen to tips of former interns. Notice that you will search for an internship yourself to find a place of your interest. Do you need some help with this or the application process? Do not hesitate to contact the [Career Service](#). When you have found an internship, inform us. Then, the internship coordinator advises you how to proceed and provides your internship plan with feedback so it can be submitted for approval to the board of examiners.

Humanities Career Service

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Our staff can help you identify both the career that is right for you, and the necessary steps to get you there. Our team at the [Humanities Career Service](#) provides all Leiden University Humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. The Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV. Check our video and hear from our alumni how they have benefited from our services!

Workshops and courses

The Humanities Career Service offers you various (online) workshops, webinars and info sessions. [Check our overview of career activities.](#)

LU Career Zone

The [Leiden University Career Zone](#) is an online career portal that helps you to prepare for the job market. Here you can find information, tools and tips to help you gain more personal insight, learn about the job market, develop your application skills, plan your academic and professional career, find job vacancies and discover what the [Career Service](#) can do for you.

Ask Alumni: Leiden University Mentor Network

Join the [Mentor Network](#) to contact alumni with experience on the labour market and ask them for advice. More than 1200 alumni are happy to help you!

Jelle on finding an internship via Leiden University's Mentor Network

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Admission and Application

Find out how to apply for Middle Eastern Studies (research) at Leiden University by following our step-by-step guide.

Step-by step guide

This guide clearly explains the steps you need to take to apply, and the subsequent admission process.

- Step 1: [Check the admission requirements](#)
- Step 2: [Check the application deadlines](#)
- Step 3: [Collect the required documents](#)
- Step 4: [Start your application](#)
- Step 5: [Pay your tuition fees](#)
- Step 6: [Prepare for your studies at Leiden University](#)

Admission requirements

To be eligible for Middle Eastern Studies (research) at Leiden University, you must meet the following admission requirements.

Diploma requirements

General diploma requirements

You are eligible to apply for the MA Middle Eastern Studies (research) if you have:

- A bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic Bachelor's degree, including general Academic Skills; and
- Knowledge about Middle Eastern Studies in terms of the themes and topics you propose to study, the relevant disciplinary approaches in the humanities and/or the social sciences, and you should possess linguistic and cultural knowledge as appropriate to your project.

Qualitative admission requirements

In addition, you must also meet the following qualitative admission requirements:

- Good grades comparable with an average mark of at least 7.5 (Dutch grading system) for your entire bachelor's programme; and
- Affinity with and suitability for scholarly research; and
- Demonstrable motivation to study and suitability for the particular Research MA programme.

How to meet the qualitative admission requirements

The qualitative admission requirements will be implemented as follows:

- You are asked to provide a transcript of records and diploma of the relevant obtained academic degree.
- Affinity with the field should be demonstrated by a "Research Proposal". All applicants are required to submit a research proposal that demonstrates their insight into the proposed subject matter and the relevant scholarship. This should open with an introductory paragraph for the non-specialist; name the research questions and/or objectives and the key primary source material; outline the state of the field and the contribution they expect to make; reflect on theory and methodology; identify any challenges and limitations; and reflect on any ethical issues raised by the research. The proposal is about 2,000 words in length (+/- 10%, including references) and it is advised to use subheadings. The proposal is accompanied by an annotated bibliography that lists five key scholarly books or articles and explains the relevance and significance of each item. Applicants should also list one or two [faculty members from the Leiden Institute for Area Studies](#) as potential project supervisors (depending on availability).
- Your motivation and suitability for the Research MA programme should be demonstrated by a well-argued and structured motivation letter in which you indicate why you want to follow the programme and convincingly discuss what makes you a good candidate for the research MA programme. The statement should be between 700 and 1,500 words.
- You are required to submit [two letters of recommendation](#) of which at least one by an academic member of staff.

Language requirements

English language proficiency

In order to successfully participate in this programme, you must be proficient in English. The following requirements apply:

IELTS: 7.0 (A minimum score of 6.5 is required for each of the four components)

- We do **not** accept [IELTS Academic online](#).
- We do **not** accept IELTS General Training or IELTS Indicator.

TOEFL: 100; with at least 4.5 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 22 (old 0-30 scale) for each separate component.

- We are **not** able to accept The TOEFL IBT Home Edition™, except in the following situations only: You took the test before 1 Sept 2022 (and it is not more than 2 years old), or you are unable to take an in-person test on location because test centres are inaccessible or closed due to unsafe conditions in a country.
- We do **not** accept the following types of test: TOEFL My Best™ scores (multiple test scores combined), TOEFL Essentials™ or institutional tests such as ITP.

Cambridge English C2 Proficiency, or C1 Advanced with overall score 185, where each separate component score must be at least 176.

See also the [English test score equivalency table](#) of Leiden University.

Note that English test results may **not** be more than two years old.

*** New TOEFL grading scale 2026**

In January 2026, TOEFL introduced a new grading scale. Test certificates issued in 2026 and 2027 will show overall scores in both the old grading scale (0-120) and the new grading scale (1-6). Component or band scores will only be shown in the new grading scale.

Leiden University's 2026-2027 overall score requirements will continue to be based on the old grading scale. If you took your test on or after 21 January 2026, you must meet the overall score requirement shown on our website in the old grading scale (0-120), and the component score requirements shown on our website in the new grading scale (1-6).

*You do not have to submit an English proficiency test if you have completed your education in the USA, UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada (except French-taught programmes in Canada) Singapore, South-Africa or Malta; or if you have completed an English-taught bachelor at a Dutch research university.

Note that for this research master programme you cannot be granted an exemption for the English proficiency test based on a Dutch pre-university (vwo) diploma.

According to Dutch law, Leiden University is required to reimburse students with a Dutch pre-university (VWO) diploma for any extra costs they make for meeting the English language requirements. You can be reimbursed for the costs of the English language test if you meet the following conditions:

- *You have obtained a Dutch VWO-diploma; and*
- *You have successfully completed the English language test; and*
- *You are admitted unconditionally to the research master programme; and*
- *You are enrolled in the research master programme.*

After admission to the programme, you will be informed on how to submit the request for reimbursement of the test costs.

For detailed information, including exemption criteria and methods of submission, refer to [English language proficiency](#).

Please note that Leiden University does not offer a pre-master's programme for Middle Eastern Studies (research).

[>> Go to the next step: Check the application deadlines](#)

Application deadlines

Starting in September

- Applicants who need a visa or residence permit or need to extend their residence permit must apply for admission before **1 April**.
- All other applicants must apply for admission before **15 May**.

Please note: You must submit your application via [Studielink](#) and Leiden University's application system (uSis), before the deadlines mentioned above.

Apply early!

We advise you to apply as soon as possible. The earlier you apply, the more time there is for us to help you if your application file is not complete.

If you do not have a Dutch diploma that grants direct admission or you need to meet additional admission criteria, you'll have to complete a two-part application procedure:

- First register your application(s) in the national system Studielink.
- A day later you will receive log-in details for Leiden University's application system (uSis), where you can complete your application.

You must submit your application via Leiden University's application system (uSis), before the deadlines mentioned above. So don't delay; if you haven't registered in Studielink and activated your uSis account in time to apply by the deadline, you'll miss out!

Other deadlines

Housing deadlines

Leiden University reserves a limited number of rooms each year for international students. However, as the number of housing requests always greatly exceeds the number of rooms available, we strongly recommend that you also look into other housing options at the same time. [Read more about how and when to arrange housing](#). If you want to request accommodation via Leiden University, submit both your application for admission and your housing request well before the deadlines! Accommodation is offered on a first-come first-served basis and is not guaranteed. You don't have to await admission before requesting housing.

Scholarship deadlines

If you want to apply for a scholarship, grant or loan, please bear in mind that different deadlines apply, and these deadlines can often be earlier. Deadlines vary per scholarship. Visit the [scholarship website](#) for more details.

[>> Go to the next step: Collect the required documents](#)

Required documents

When you apply for admission, you'll be asked to submit several documents.

Note: If you have a Dutch diploma that grants direct admission, you will generally *not* be asked to submit additional documents.

Required application documents

You'll need to submit the following documents:

Language proficiency (if applicable)

You can apply for admission before receiving the results of your English language test. However, a sufficient result will then be a condition of your eventual admission. Of course, if you already have your English language test results, you can upload them directly.

Copies of diplomas and transcripts

- Digital copies of diplomas and transcripts are initially required. Once you have been admitted, we will inform you how to submit certified copies.
- The documents must be in the original language. If they are not in English, Dutch, German or French, they must be accompanied by official translations into one of these languages.
- If you have not yet completed your current programme, state your expected graduation date and submit copies of all transcripts obtained to date plus a list of subjects still to be completed.

Additional requirements specific to Middle Eastern Studies (research)

Research Proposal

Applicants are requested to include in their application a "Research Proposal" of approximately 2,000 words outlining the topic or field of research that interests them most and that they wish to pursue at Leiden University, combined with an annotated bibliography of at least five (5) works.

Letters of recommendation

This programme requires two letters of recommendation. At least one letter must be from an academic member of staff.

Requirements for and how to submit letters of recommendation

- Letters of recommendation must be written on letterhead paper, signed and (for verification purposes) they must bear the full contact details of the applicable referee.
- Your referee should describe your skills, qualities and competencies.

Option 1. Uploading the letter yourself

You can upload the letter(s) of recommendation in the online application portal (uSis).

Option 2. Sent by your referee

Your referee can send the letter directly to the university, as follows:

1. Your referee must clearly state your name and student number in the letter.
2. He or she should send the letter to us, either:
 - digitally, by uploading the letter in our [contact form](#)
 - by posting it to:

*Leiden University
Admissions Office
Rapenburg 70
2311 EZ Leiden
The Netherlands*

3. Complete [this form](#) and upload it in the online application system (uSis), instead of your letter of recommendation.

Motivation Letter

Your motivation and suitability for your chosen specialization should be demonstrated by a well-argued and structured motivation letter in which you indicate why you want to follow the programme and convincingly discusses what makes you a good candidate for the research MA programme. The statement should be between 700 and 1,500 words.

CV

Your CV (curriculum vitae) must be written in English and should contain your basic personal data, as well as a clear overview of your educational and professional history to date.

[>> Go to the next step: Step 4: Start your application](#)

Application procedure

The application procedure is broken down into three parts.

Part 1. Application in Studielink

All students applying for a degree programme at Leiden University must start the application process in Studielink, the national online registration system for students wishing to follow a degree programme at a Dutch university. Studielink is open for applications from 1 October in the year preceding the academic year in which you wish to start.

Apply in Studielink

1. Go to [Studielink](#) and enter your details according to the instructions provided. For this step you will need:
 - a copy of your valid passport or European ID card, or
 - if you are a Dutch resident, your [DigiD](#).

Be aware! If you wish to apply for a specialisation of a master's programme: first select the master's programme in Studielink, then select the specialisation for which you wish to apply in Step 4 (Institutional Questions) in Studielink.

2. Within two days you will receive:

- an email with information on the next steps you'll need to take;
- your university ULCN student account details (unless, of course, you already have a ULCN account)
- the link to Leiden University's online application portal (uSis)

Directly admitted?

After receiving your ULCN student account details, log into Leiden University's online application portal (uSis), using the link provided. Here you can view the status of your application, which will be one of two possibilities.

1. You can be directly admitted

If your (Dutch) diploma grants you direct admission, Leiden University's online application portal (uSis) will let you know. The portal provides an overview of what you have to do to complete your application, for example arranging housing, scholarships, applying for a visa/residence permit and insurances. Please follow the instructions carefully and proceed to step 3 Student registration.

2. You cannot be directly admitted: additional action is required

If you do not have a (Dutch) diploma that grants you direct admission, we will require additional documents to allow us to decide about your application. The online application portal (uSis) will tell you this and explain how to do so. See also Part 2: Admission to Leiden University.

Part 2. Admission to Leiden University

If you cannot be directly admitted, you must apply for admission via Leiden University's online application portal (uSis). Please follow all steps below.

Submit your online application

In our online application portal (uSis) you can finalise your application by uploading the necessary documents and answering a few questions. This portal provides an overview of what you need to do to complete your admission application. Please follow the instructions carefully and make sure to include all the items that are asked for. We strongly recommend that you complete your application well in advance of the application deadline.

Pay the application fee (if applicable)

All applicants with an international degree must pay a **non-refundable** €100 application fee, which entitles you to apply for up to three programmes/specialisations in the same academic year. We cannot start processing your application until we receive this application fee, so please pay it as soon as possible. The online application system explains how you can pay it.

Can I be exempted from paying the application fee?

You do *not* have to pay the application fee if:

- You are following, or have completed, a bachelor's degree at a Dutch university (of applied sciences).
- You have previously registered as an exchange, bachelor's, master's or pre-master's student at Leiden University.

- You have previously been admitted to **the same** degree programme at Leiden University, but you decided to postpone your studies. This does *not* apply if you are applying for a different study programme or specialisation.
- You have refugee status in the Netherlands (with a residence permit for asylum).

Exemptions cannot be granted for any other reasons.

Other things to arrange

After you have submitted your application, the online application portal (uSis) will, if applicable, ask you if you want to apply for student housing, a visa/residence permit or a scholarship. Be sure to make a careful note of the relevant deadlines for these options.

Your application will be assessed

After receiving your application fee payment (if applicable), the Admissions Office will check whether all the necessary documents have been uploaded and they will inform you by email whether any further items are required. The Board of Admissions of the faculty will then:

- decide whether you meet the admission requirements for the programme;
- strive to issue a decision on your completed application within four to six weeks of the University receiving it.

Receiving the decision

Once a decision has been reached you will be informed by email. You can view your admission status in the online application portal (uSis).

There are three possible outcomes:

1. **You are admitted**

You have met all conditions for admission.

2. **You are conditionally admitted**

You will be admitted, provided that you meet certain conditions. These conditions will be specified in the online application portal (uSis).

3. **You are not admitted**

The reason(s) for non-admission will be clearly stated in the online application portal (uSis). If you are informed that you have been (conditionally) admitted, you will have to take a number of additional steps.

Confirm attendance

If you are (conditionally) admitted, the Admissions Office will ask you to confirm whether you will join the study programme. You can do so in the online application portal (uSis).

1. Go to '[Application study programme](#)' in the online application portal (uSis).
2. Open the 'Confirm' screen. Here you will see three options:
 - Yes, I want to study at Leiden University.
 - No, I no longer wish to study at Leiden University and hereby withdraw my application.
 - Maybe later; I do not wish to start this semester/academic year. I would like to receive further instructions by email.

The sooner the better

Confirm attendance as soon as possible, to avoid missing other important deadlines and information about your study programme.

Changing your mind

You can still change your mind if necessary, either in uSis or by contacting the Admissions Office [master team](#).

Deadline final decision

Do you need a student visa or residence permit? You can only request one after confirming attendance. So make sure to confirm attendance before the [visa/residence permit deadline](#).

If you don't need a visa or residence permit, the latest deadline for confirming attendance is before the start date of your study programme.

Part 3. Student registration

If you've been (conditionally) admitted, follow these steps to register as a student at Leiden University:

Meet all conditions

Check in the online application portal (uSis) whether you need to submit any documents to meet the conditions of your admission. Instructions on how to do so will be provided in uSis.

Arrange the payment of your tuition fee

Arrange the payment of your [tuition fee](#) before the official start date of your programme. You will receive instructions and information on the available payment methods by email.

Practical matters for international students

If you are an international student, go to the [Prepare your stay](#) page of our website for information about the practical matters you should take care of before and upon arrival. These include, for example, arranging housing, scholarships, applying for a visa/residence permit and insurances.

[>> Go to the next step. Step 5: Pay your tuition fees](#)

Tuition fees

Your tuition fee depends on a number of factors, such as your nationality and your previous Dutch higher-education qualifications.

The tuition fees for the academic year **2026-2027** are:

- Dutch, EU/EEA, Swiss and Surinamese students: €2,694 per year
- Non-EU/EEA students €22,300 per year
- Second Dutch master's programme: €17,200 per year

Are you unsure which tuition fee applies to you? Consult our [Tuition Fee Calculator](#).

More information about tuition fees

Dutch, EU/EEA, Swiss and Surinamese nationals

The tuition fee for this programme is €2,694 for the academic year 2026-2027 (statutory fee).

This tuition fee applies if this is your first master's programme and you are a national of one of the following countries:

Austria	Latvia
Belgium	Liechtenstein
Bulgaria	Lithuania
Croatia	Luxembourg
Cyprus	Malta
Czech Republic	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	Slovakia
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Suriname
Iceland	Sweden

Ireland	Switzerland
Italy	

The fee applies for both full-time and part-time study.

Other nationalities

The tuition fee for this programme is €22,300 for the academic year 2026-2027 (institutional tuition fee).

If you are not a national of an EEA country, Suriname or Switzerland, generally speaking you will have to pay an institutional tuition fee. This fee applies for both full-time and part-time study.

However, if, on the basis of your Dutch residence permit, you are eligible for student finance from the Dutch education agency (DUO) you are entitled to pay the statutory tuition fee. Information on qualifying residence permits can be found at the [DUO website](#).

Second Dutch master's programme

Only applicable to EU/EEA, Swiss and Surinamese nationals.

The tuition fee for this programme is €17,200 for the academic year 2026-2027 (institutional tuition fee).

If you are following a second Dutch master's programme you will generally have to pay an institutional tuition fee that is higher than the statutory tuition fee.

Exceptions

In some cases, nationals of EEA countries, Suriname or Switzerland may be permitted to pay tuition fees set at the same amount as the statutory tuition fee for their second degree programme.

- Legal transitional arrangement for second bachelor's or master's degree: student pays the statutory tuition fee when:
 - Student has already obtained a bachelor's or master's degree but is starting a programme in the field of education or healthcare for the first time.
 - The student has already started a second bachelor's or master's programme before the first programme was completed and remains registered for it uninterruptedly.
- Institutional transitional arrangement for a second bachelor's or master's degree: student pays the institutional tuition fee equal to the statutory rate) when:
 - Student has already obtained a bachelor's or master's degree, but is starting a teacher training programme.
 - After completing a bachelor's or master's degree at Leiden University, a student will subsequently start a second programme (in academic years).

Are you unsure which tuition fee applies to you? Consult our [Tuition Fee Calculator](#).

Pre-master or conversion programmes

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Tuition fee if the pre-master's or conversion programme has less than 60 study credits (EC)	2026-2027
	€44,91 per EC

If the pre-master's or conversion programme has 60 study credits or more, you pay the statutory tuition fee of that college year.

Scholarships, grants and loans

Scholarships, grants and loans

Leiden University offers a wide range of scholarships for students from specific regions of the world, or for specific programmes. Leiden University also offers the Leiden University Excellence Scholarship (LExS), a programme specifically designed for non-EU/EEA students enrolling in a master's programme. [Find out more about scholarships, grants, loans and deadlines](#)

If you are an EU/EEA or Swiss national and under 30, you may be eligible for a [loan from the Dutch government](#) to cover your tuition fees.

[>> Go to the next step. Step 6: Prepare for your studies at Leiden University](#)

Prepare for your studies

You've been accepted! Leiden University looks forward to welcoming you as a new student. Your next step is to prepare for your studies. Below you can find some tips to help you get a head start as you embark on your studies at Leiden University.

For international students

If you are an international student, a wealth of information can be found on the '[Prepare your stay](#)' page of our website. This includes information about visas, housing, financial matters, what to arrange upon arrival, and much more.

For Dutch students

Student website

- The '[student website](#)' page on Leiden University's student website contains information about practical aspects, introduction weeks and student associations. It's also a handy source of study-related information and advice.

- For detailed information about courses, schedules and reading materials, check out the [Prospectus](#).

Introduction programme

Sign up for the introduction week in [Leiden \(OWL\)](#) or [The Hague \(HOP\)](#)! It's the best way to get acquainted with student life and the student cities of Leiden and The Hague.

Digital student card

Three days after you receive a digital proof of enrolment, you will get access to your digital student card. You will receive the proof of enrolment by email, so make sure to check your inbox. You can find your digital student card in the Universiteit Leiden app. Read more about your student card [here](#).

LU-Card

As soon as you receive notification that your student registration has been finalised you should apply for a Leiden University ID card, or LU-Card. It also serves as your library card, print & copy card and access pass. Read more about applying for an LU-card [here](#).

Student life

Your time at Leiden is about more than just studying. Some of your best experiences will stem from being a part of our lively and diverse student community, as well as from life in the beautiful city of Leiden.

The study association related to Middle Eastern Studies is [Sheherazade](#). You may contact the study association via info@sheherazadeleiden.nl.

Humanities Master's Buddy Programme

The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme has been set up by the Faculty of Humanities to help all students who are new to the university to integrate quickly and easily into university life. You will be matched to a buddy who can help you out with your academic and practical questions. Additionally you will be able to attend fun monthly activities and make friends from all over the world.

For more information about the Buddy Programme, please visit the [Humanities Buddy Programme page](#).

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International Student Associations

Leiden has several student organisations that specifically cater for international students. These associations organise regular social events and activities that help create the strong sense of community that exists within our international student body. The main two organisations are:

Erasmus Student Network Leiden (ESN)

[ESN Leiden](#) is an international student organisation which hosts a range of activities and programmes. They also have a buddy programme which provides new students with the right support to assimilate into Leiden and the university.

AEGEE Leiden

[AEGEE](#) is a leading European student association with sister organisations in over 40 countries across Europe. AEGEE organises many activities in Leiden, from dinners and pool nights to boat trips and guest lectures.

For an overview of all of our student associations, please visit our [Student associations page](#).

Welcome and orientation programme

In August and February each year, Leiden University hosts the English-language [Orientation Week Leiden \(OWL\)](#), which welcomes both international and Dutch students. The OWL is an excellent way to get to know Leiden University, the city, and other students.

Life in Leiden

Picturesque and the perfect size, Leiden is the ideal place to spend your university days. The Faculty of Humanities is located within the heart of the city, where dozens of cafes, shops and bars line its historic laneways and leafy canals. Small enough to run into familiar faces, but big enough to keep offering surprises – you will treasure your time at Leiden. And for adventures further afield, the major cities of The Hague and Amsterdam are a short train ride away, along with Schiphol Airport, which is just half an hour away by train.

Our study and student associations organise a huge variety of social, cultural, and study events to keep you busy all year round. You can also join the University Sports Centre, which offers scheduled group sports and fitness classes, amongst other activities.

Information activities

Get to know us through our online and in-person events for prospective students!



Two speakers at the open day

Are you thinking about joining this Master's programme, and want to determine if it will be the right fit for you? Below, you can browse the events that we have coming up, and sign up to experience Leiden University and the programme for yourself. Alternatively, take a look at the Master Talks videos to find out more about the programme or check out our virtual campus tours!

Upcoming events

Master's Open Days

Master's Open Days

During the Master's Open Days you'll have the opportunity to learn all about Leiden University's master's programmes. Attend presentations about your chosen programme(s) or practical matters such as admissions and housing. Get real insight into the content of your preferred master's, along with the career opportunities it will bring.

When are the next Open Days?

- [15 & 16 October 2026: Master's Online Open Days](#)

Master Talks: Programme videos

On the [Master Talks: programme videos platform](#) you can find videos for each master's programme. This includes a video which gives a short introduction to the programme. You can also find the recording of the previous Master's Online Open Days and watch the programme presentation on the platform.

Get to know the campus

Check out our virtual campus tours, filmed in 360 degrees – by dragging the video, you can look around at the surroundings yourself. Below is the video recorded at the Humanities faculty, where most of your lectures will take place; you can also view other 360 campus tours of the various university faculties [here](#).

360 Campus tour: the Humanities faculty

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[Watch the video on the original website or](#)

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Contact

If you have a question, there are various ways to get in touch with us.

This website and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are the quickest ways to find an answer to many of your questions.

Questions about the Programme

Coordinator of studies

Dr. Nicole van Os

Phone: +31 71 527 2937

Email: stuco-resma-as-mes@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Questions about the application procedure, tuition fees and scholarships

Student Affairs Front Office

Phone: +31 (0)71 527 80 11

Email: [Contact form](#)

Or visit their [website](#)

Visiting address

Leiden: Plexus Student Centre

Kaiserstraat 25, ground floor

2311 GN Leiden

Monday to Thursday, between 13:00 and 16:00