

# Religious Studies (MA)

Master



Universiteit  
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

The MA Religious Studies at Leiden University is designed to equip students with the tools and knowledge required for studying, interpreting, and analysing religion as a diverse (human) phenomenon. With its world-class scholars and access to exceptional research collections, the programme offers the opportunity to explore a broad spectrum of religions and their manifestations from a comparative, multidisciplinary perspective.

## Start in September 2024

The deadline for applications for September 2023 is closed. The next starting date will be September 2024. We also offer the [MA Religie en Levensbeschouwing \(120 EC\)](#). This programme is specifically targeted at the educational sector and is taught in both English and Dutch.

## Why study Religious Studies at Leiden University?

Religion permeates our world and remains highly influential across all domains of human society, including politics, culture, and economics. Religion also plays a critical role in everyday life as it provides meaning,

motivation, and social support for billions of people. Despite trends of secularisation in some areas, on a global level religious identification is actually growing and a majority of people around the world continue to be affiliated with religious organisations and communities. It is not a stretch to claim that no matter the region, the issue, or the historical period, knowledge of religion is essential for understanding the world.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

## **What are your career prospects?**

Our graduates have pursued successful careers in research and in the public, private and non-profit sectors as editors, journalists, policy advisors, counsellors, and teachers of religion or philosophy.

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

## **Is Religious Studies the programme for you?**

This one-year MA programme offers you the best of Leiden University, from outstanding and dedicated lecturers to its library's famous collections. Our generalist approach towards the study of religion focuses on skills, tools, methods, and theories, with students being taught how to collect data using a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods and how to analyse and apply concepts and theories to real-world empirical findings. By the end of the programme, you will be equipped with everything needed to critically analyse complex situations around the globe and tackle problems in society at large. Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's programme?

[Check the admission requirements](#)

## **Staff Expertise and Approaches**

The programme relies heavily on the research of staff members who bring together expertise in specific religions with a comparative approach that draws on a variety of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. The staff of the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion (LUCSoR) brings expertise in a broad spectrum of religions, including: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Japanese Religions, New Religions, Ancient Religions, and African Indigenous Religions.

They also bring a range of disciplinary expertise, including Anthropology, Sociology, History, Psychology, Cognitive Studies, Law, International Relations, Political Science, Public Policy and Governance, Diaspora Studies, and Science and Religion.

[Check out the LUCSoR staff profiles](#)

## **Markus Davidsen**

University Lecturer



"The vast majority of people in the world are religious and that is not going to change. To understand the world, both past and present, one therefore has to understand religion. In pluralistic societies, such as the Dutch, moreover, there is a growing need for religion experts in education, municipalities, NGOs, and various ministries. The Religious Studies programme in Leiden aims to educate those religion experts. The programme combines an emphasis on theory and research skills with the opportunity to build up familiarity with the job market through workshops and internships."

## Why Leiden University

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

### Choose Religious Studies at Leiden University

- Leiden University is famous for its wide range of specialisms and outstanding scholarship, providing you with an excellent basis for the study of religion from a comparative perspective.
- Courses consist both of theory and applied practice, offering you hands-on experience; all the necessary research skills, tools and historical sources are made available.
- A variety of alternating electives gives you freedom of choice. You can specialize in one of many religious traditions, or opt for a methodological approach.
- The approach.department offers a wide-scope of regional expertise, including scholars who focus on Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.
- The relatively small size of our department allows for an informal atmosphere and approachable staff members. You'll be provided with individual, personalized guidance.

Additionally, Leiden University houses a wealth of scholars working in area studies, history and the social sciences, fostering conversations and the exchange of ideas. Its collections are world-famous. Our generalist toolbox, specialized knowledge and the university's broader setting offer you a programme that is unlike any other in the Netherlands or beyond.

### A top-ranked university

Leiden University's Faculty of Humanities is consistently ranked among the top 30 Humanities faculties worldwide in the THE World University Ranking. At Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands, you can access resources found nowhere else in the world, such as those of the famous Leiden University Library and its collections of original manuscripts and periodicals.

### Flexibility to construct your own programme

Our Religious Studies programme gives you considerable freedom to tailor your degree to reflect your interests. You can choose from three areas of specialisation, do an internship or an independent project in place of an elective, and pursue specific areas of interest not available elsewhere. All classes are taught by accomplished scholars at Leiden. Small classes ensure that you get the most out of your education.

### Benefit from our unique expertise

Leiden University is famous for its wide range of specialisms and outstanding scholarship, providing you with an excellent basis for the study of religion from a comparative, multidisciplinary perspective. Additionally, Leiden University houses a wealth of scholars working in area studies, history, and the social sciences, fostering conversations and the exchange of ideas.

## An excellent 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 vigorously, consider new perspectives, and apply what you learn to real-world situations. Our students learn how to become critical thinkers – a quality that will ensure they stand out in any future career.

## 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

## Programme structure

Semester 1	Tools and Theories in the Study of Religion: Historical, Cognitive, and Social-Scientific Approaches (10 EC)	Religion on the Move: From Local Origins to Global Networks (10 EC)	Elective (10 EC) <i>Choose a Specialisation</i>
Semester 2	Elective (10 EC) <i>Continue a Specialisation</i> OR	Thesis Seminar and Job Market Orientation (5 EC)	Thesis

Internship (10 EC)  OR  Independent Project (10 EC)	(15 EC)
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For the 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.*

## About the Compulsory Courses

In this course, students are introduced to a range of contemporary tools for analysing religious narratives and discourses, religious thinking and belief, as well as religious traditions, identities, and fields. These tools are drawn from a wide range of humanistic and social-scientific disciplines, including literary studies, cognitive science, sociology, and history. The theoretical foundations of the analytical tools are discussed and students practice how to use these tools to analyse concrete empirical material.

At its heart, Religion on the Move is a study of how religion more generally has changed due to increasingly expanding global encounters. By combining research from religious studies, history, area studies, anthropology, sociology, and political science, this course shows that the complex processes of globalisation, modernisation, and migration have not only contributed to the movement and expansion of religions, but that religions have been crucial in constructing and confronting these processes. We will consider the success and /or failure of religions in relation to how they move and adapt, and how this relationship corresponds to the iterative process of moving between local origins and global networks. In this context, we will examine the various ways in which religions have adapted when up-rooted and re-rooted in new contexts.

The module Thesis Seminar supports the thesis writing process. It consists of six sessions in which we discuss how to formulate a good research question, how to manage the work process, and how to structure the argument of the thesis. The module also includes an advanced library workshop.

The module Job Market Orientation offers students an overview of the job and career prospects of Religious Studies alumni and stimulates students to reflect on their own skills and ambitions. It consists of three class sessions and two job market workshops which include Religious Studies alumni. Students workshop ideas about their academic skills and virtues, professional trajectories, their C.V.s, their cover letters, their “elevator pitches,” their interview skills, their job offer negotiation skills, their reasoning for getting a PhD and their professional social media profiles while also sharing their job/internship search experiences with their colleagues.

## Specialisations

In addition to the compulsory courses, students are able to choose a specialisation. These include:

This specialisation emphasizes religion in historical context, from the ancient world to the present, and with special attention to the development of religion across time. Examples of electives in this specialisation include:

- Christianity, Nationhood, and Citizenship: Historical Perspectives on the Dutch Case (16th Century-Present)
- Coping with Versnel: Debating Ancient Religions
- From Inkwell to Internet: Text and Transmission in the Muslim World
- Jerusalem – City of Grief and Glory
- Early Christianity: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Roman Asia Minor
- Democratizing Histories

This specialisation emphasises religion in relation to politics, law, political-legal systems, international relations, and education. Examples of electives in this specialisation include:

- Religion and Law
- Rethinking Secularism in International Relations
- Philosophy of International Law: Globalisation and Democracy
- Religion, Philosophy and Citizenship in Education
- The Politics of Destruction: Targeting World Heritage
- China and Global Cyberspace

This specialisation emphasizes religion in an area studies perspective, with special attention to the movement of ideas and peoples across places, spaces, and contexts. Examples of electives in this specialisation include:

- Pilgrimage and Holy Places
- Confucianism in Context
- Material Culture, Memory and Commemoration Along the Silk Roads in Central Asia
- 'Ulamâ' in the Modern Muslim World
- Muslims in a Global Context: Anthropological Perspectives
- Hands-on Museum Research Experience

## **Customise your degree**

In addition to two foundational 'core courses', which focus on methodology and introduce important themes such as modernisation, globalisation, migration, and religious diversity, you are able to choose a specialisation : (1) Religion, History, and Society; (2) Religion, Politics, and Governance; or (3) Religion and Area Studies. Within these specialisations, you can tailor course assignments to focus on specific religions, historical periods, regions, and political situations, as well as more global and theoretical comparisons. Additionally, there is also space in the programme to take an internship or conduct an independent project alongside a member of staff.

## **Guest lectures**

Our emphasis is on preparing you to make a difference in your future career, which is why relevant outside issues are constantly shaping what you are studying. External speakers from all sectors regularly give

lectures on topical issues. This strong connection to important events, people, and debates happening around us is what helps our students move seamlessly from their degrees into their careers.

## **Admission and Application**

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

[Check the admission requirements](#)

## **Extra-curricular**

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

## **Community building**

Throughout the year activities including lectures, excursions and social gatherings are organised by the programme, the T.F.L.S. Religious Studies Student Association, and the S.S.S. Leiden Society for Christianity and Culture. There also is an annual excursion to the Teylers Museum in Haarlem and the Catherijne Convent Museum in Utrecht as well as trips to current exhibitions relevant to the programme.

The teaching generally takes the form of small-scale seminars and tutorials, in which lively and engaging discussions are encouraged. The small class sizes give you a high degree of contact with both your lecturers and fellow students.

## **Leiden Leadership Programme**

Are you interested in developing your leadership potential? The [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) (LLP) is an Honours Programme specifically developed for ambitious master's students at Leiden University and the Delft University of Technology who recognise the importance of leadership abilities. The LLP offers in-depth training sessions, assessments, seminars, and the creation of a Personal Leadership Roadmap – a five-year plan for reaching and developing your leadership potential.

## **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.](#)

## **Meet our staff**









### **Prof.dr. M.P.A. de Baar**

Mirjam de Baar is Vice Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Professor of Cultural History of Early Modern Christianity. She specialises in Early Modern History, Religious dissenters and the Reformation. View her full profile [here](#).



### **Prof.dr.mr. M.S. Berger**

Maurits Berger's fields of research include Islamic law, political Islam and freedom of religion. His current research project is called *The Future of Islam in Europe*. It asks what Muslims in Europe consider important to live as Muslims in Europe, what role Islam plays therein, and how that contributes to shaping a future for both Muslims and the European societies they live in. View his full profile [here](#).





**Dr. N.M. Dessing**

Nathal Dessing is a scholar of religion whose research focuses on everyday lived Islam in Europe. She is the director of the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS). View her full profile [here](#).



## **Prof.dr. A.F. de Jong**

Ab de Jong is a Professor of Comparative Religion and Religions of Antiquity at the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion. The main focus of his research is the religious history of Iran, from the earliest period to the present. View his full profile [here](#).



## **Prof.dr. J.A. Silk**

Jonathan Silk is Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies. He specializes in Buddhism in its Asian contexts, primarily from a historical point of view. He has a special interest in Buddhist scriptures. View his full profile [here](#).

[Meet more staff](#)

# **Career prospects**

## **Where do our graduates work?**

Our graduates have pursued successful careers in research and in the public, private and non-profit sectors as editors, journalists, policy advisors, counsellors, and teachers of religion or philosophy. The MA programme in Religious Studies offers excellent preparation for students seeking a profession that requires advanced analytical skills and specialised knowledge of religion and its cultural, geographic, and historic context.

Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- Teacher of religion and society at a secondary school
- PhD candidate at an international university
- Political party officer
- Consultant at McKinsey & Company
- Member of staff at the Dutch Ministry of Defence
- Traineeship for the Municipality of The Hague
- Policy officer in Diversity and Inclusion

If you are interested in a career in the educational sector or if you want to work with communication or knowledge utilisation in relation to religion, you may want to consider the two-year variant of our programme, the [MA Religie en Levensbeschouwing](#).

## Josine Heijnen

Graduated in MA Religious Studies



"I'm an entrepreneur, which means that I am able to do many different things. Currently I am working at Museum Naturalis Biodiversity Center, I have my own Dutch Organic Gin brand 'Goeie Mie' and I am a councillor at the Leiden city council."

### Valuable combination

"I chose my MA because I found the subject fascinating and knew that it was taught by great lecturers from whom I could learn a lot. I would make the same choice again: I had a fantastic time! In addition to my studies, I was active in many extra activities, from a student society to freelance journalism. The combination was very valuable: not only did it help me combine practical things with brainwork, but I learned to multitask and keep my cool. The work I do is very versatile and I have to be ready for anything. You have to be stress-proof: also something I learned."

The graphs below are based on alumni data from the MA in Religious Studies 2016-2020.

## In which sectors do students find jobs?

- 33 % Education
- 22 % Research
- 22 % Government and semi-government organisations
- 11 % Healthcare and welfare
- 12 % Other

## Career preparation

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



The master in Religious Studies will equip you with a range of important skills and knowledge that will help you stand out in any future career. Our students' specialised knowledge is complemented by a broad and contextual understanding as well as critical-thinking skills that can be applied to the most complex conceptual problem.

Many of our students choose to do an internship during their study. Internships are a great way to gain indispensable firsthand experience in your area of interest before you decide on making it a career. In recent years students from the Religious Studies programme have been doing internships at the following organisations:

- Representative Office of the Netherlands in Ramallah
- The Meertens Institute
- Centre of Learning and Dialogue (CLD), a NGO based in Nes Ammim
- Kids4Peace, Jerusalem

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 [Humanities Career Service](#) provide all Leiden University humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV.

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

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.

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 Religious Studies at Leiden University by following our step-by step guide.

If you would like to apply to this programme please select the MA Religious Studies (CROHO code: 60824) in Studielink.

## Step-by step guide

The guide will give you the necessary help and guidance in submitting your application.

- 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

On this page you will find the admission requirements for this programme.

## Diploma requirements

You are eligible to apply for the MA Religious Studies if you have:

- A bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university (in the specialisation): Bachelor programme Religious Studies; or
- a bachelor's degree from a Dutch or foreign research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic bachelor's degree, in the field of humanities or social sciences; and
- completed at least 30 EC (or equivalent) of relevant courses, demonstrating the following knowledge, understanding and skills:
  - knowledge of topics, theories and methods relevant to the study of religion from an academic perspective; and
  - knowledge of the academic study of one or more religious traditions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, ancient religions, new religions).

The Board of Admissions will assess whether your degree and background are sufficiently related to the level and content of a bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in Religious Studies on the basis of the requirements specified above.

If you have a Bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in Humanities or Social Sciences, and have successfully completed the **minor 'Religion in a changing World'**, you are considered to have fulfilled these requirements.

*Students with a Bachelor in Religious Studies from Leiden University are directly eligible for admission. Students can apply in [Studielink](#). There is no need to submit an application for admission using the online application portal.*

If you have a bachelor's degree from a research university that does *not* meet the requirements specified above, you may be eligible for a pre-master's programme tailored to your individual background. After submitting your application in Studielink, the Board of Admissions will decide whether you can be directly admitted to the master's programme, whether you will first need to complete a pre-master's programme, or whether your deficiencies are considered too extensive and you can therefore not be admitted at all. It is not possible to directly apply for a pre-master's programme.

The language requirements for a pre-master's programme are identical to the language requirements for the master's programme for which admission has been requested. These requirements must be met before the start of the premaster.

Once you have completed the imposed pre-master's programme, you will be admitted to the master's programme. For more information about the individual pre-master's programme, please contact the [Coordinator of Studies](#).

If you have a bachelor's degree Docent Godsdienst/Levensbeschouwing from a university of applied sciences (HBO), you will be expected to fulfil a tailor-made premaster's programme consisting of a maximum of 60 EC.

After completion of the imposed pre-master programme, you will be admitted to the Master's programme. For questions about the pre-master's programme you can contact the [Coordinator of Studies](#).

## Language requirements

The following requirements apply:

- [IELTS](#) Academic modules only, on paper or on computer: 6.5 overall, with at least 6.0 for each separate component score.
  - We do **not** accept [IELTS Academic online](#).
  - We do **not** accept IELTS General Training or IELTS Indicator.
- [TOEFL](#) internet based: 90 overall, with at least 20 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 Exam](#) C2 Proficiency, or C1 Advanced (180), with a minimum score of 169 for each separate component.

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

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 obtained an English-taught International Baccalaureate™; or if you have completed a Dutch VWO diploma or an English-taught bachelor at a Dutch research university.

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

[>> Go to the next step: Step 2: 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.

### Other 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.

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: Step 3: 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:

Please upload a copy of the page(s) in your passport containing your personal details and photograph. If you are from the EU/EEA, you can submit a copy of your identity card instead. Please upload copies of both sides.

If you are a non-EU/EEA national already living in the Netherlands, upload copies of both sides of your Dutch residence permit.

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.

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.

- 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 documents specific to Religious Studies

You are required to upload additional information: 1) about your acquired knowledge, understanding and skills in the field of the Master's programme you are applying for and 2) about your acquired general academic skills. You can upload this [format Questionnaire Master Application](#).

- You can check the programme specific requirements regarding knowledge, understanding and skills on the [Admission Requirements](#) page.
- The format includes the list of general academic skills which the candidate must possess in order to be admitted to the Master's programme at the Faculty of Humanities.
- You can [contact the coordinator of studies](#) for further questions about the questionnaire.

[>> 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.

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)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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:

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

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](#)

## Pre-master's programme

The pre-master's is a bridging programme for students who have applied for the MA Religious Studies, but who, according to the Board of Admissions, still have deficiencies in their educational background. Once you have completed the pre-master's programme, you will be admitted to the Master's programme.

### Diploma requirements

- applicants with a bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic bachelor's degree, in the field of humanities or social sciences, but who have not yet obtained at least 30 EC worth of courses relevant to the MA Religious Studies;
- applicants with a bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic bachelor's degree, not in the field of humanities or social sciences;
- applicants with a bachelor's degree Docent Godsdienst/Levensbeschouwing from a university of applied sciences.

Applicants with a Dutch university of applied sciences bachelor's degree (HBO) or those with a comparable degree, can expect, if considered eligible, to be assigned the full 60 EC pre-master programme.

### English language requirements

The English language requirements for a pre-master's programme are identical to the language requirements for the master's programme for which admission has been requested. These requirements must be met before the start of the pre-master.

### Application procedure pre-master programme

In order to apply for the pre-master programme, you must first apply for the master's programme.

After submitting your application for the master programme in Studielink, the Board of Admissions will decide whether you can be directly admitted to the master's programme, whether you will first need to complete a pre-master's programme, or if you're not eligible for either programme because the deficiencies are too extensive.

Students who have been offered a pre-master programme, will find the procedure for the registration into the pre-master programme stated on their admission statement.

### Start date

This pre-master offers 1 intake: September.

## More information

This pre-master is tailor-made. The Board of Admissions will decide based on your educational background what the pre-master should look like. The pre-master consists of bachelor-level courses and may include an academic skills course and/or a final assignment comparable to a bachelor's thesis.

The premaster is taught in English. It is possible to follow some courses in Dutch.

[Read more about tuition fees for pre-master programmes here.](#)

## Tuition fees

The tuition fee for a programme depends on a number of factors. Your nationality, study programme and previous Dutch higher education qualifications determine the tuition fees you are required to pay.

The tuition fees for the academic year **2023-2024** are:

- Dutch, EU/EEA, Swiss and Surinamese students: €2,314 per year
- Non-EU/EEA students €19,300 per year
- Second Dutch master's programme: €15,400 per year

The tuition fees for the academic year **2024-2025** are:

- Dutch, EU/EEA, Swiss and Surinamese students: €2,530 per year
- Non-EU/EEA students €20,900 per year
- Second Dutch master's programme: €16,300 per year

## More information about tuition fees

**The tuition fee for this programme is €2,314 for the academic year 2023-2024 (statutory fee) and €2,530 for the academic year 2024-2025 (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.

**The tuition fee for this programme is €19,300 for the academic year 2023-2024 (institutional tuition fee) and €20,900 for the academic year 2024-2025 (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 in the [DUO nationality chart](#).

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

**The tuition fee for this programme is €15,400 for the academic year 2023-2024 (institutional tuition fee) and €16,300 for the academic year 2024-2025 (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. Some exceptions apply.

Consult the [tuition fee flowchart for second master's programmes](#) to find out how much tuition fee you will have to pay.

Tuition fee if the pre-master's or conversion programme has less than 60 study credits (EC)	2023-2024	2024-2025
	€39,- per EC	€42,- 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

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

- 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](#).

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.

Your student card is your proof of registration as a student of Leiden University. You can find your digital student card in the Leiden University app three days after your student registration is finalised. Read more about your student card [here](#).

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.

## 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.

The study association related to Religious Studies is [TFLS](#). You may contact the study association via [tfls@tfls.nl](mailto:tfls@tfls.nl).

## 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](#).

## 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](#).

## 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

The next [Master's Open Day](#) will take place on 16 February 2024. You can also still watch the recordings of all the presentations from the last Online Open Days. The videos can be found on the [Master Talks page](#).

### 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 Master's Online Open Days of 5-6 October 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

Due to the selected cookie settings, we cannot show this video here.

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

Accept cookies

## 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

Noortje van Swieten

Phone: +31 71 527 2584

Email: [stuco-ma-religion@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:stuco-ma-religion@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 Friday between 11.00 and 16.00, Tuesday between 11.00 and 17.30.