

- 1. How much time do I have to apply for the orientation year after my graduation or my scientific research in the Netherlands?*

You can apply for the orientation year until 3 years after your graduation date or the end date of your residence permit for scientific research. If you want to prevent a residence gap (an interruption in your lawful residency), you will have to apply before your residence permit for study purposes or scientific research expires.
- 2. Is my residence permit for study purposes still valid after my graduation in the Netherlands?*

A residence permit for study purposes is always issued for the duration of the study programme plus 3 months. When you graduate, your residence permit for study purposes will remain valid until 3 months after you are deregistered from your educational institution, or until the starting date of your residence permit for the orientation year.
- 3. Can I do an internship or work as a freelancer or start my own company during the orientation year?*

Yes, you are allowed to accept any (temporary) job, including internships (paid or unpaid), during the orientation year. You are also allowed to work as a freelancer or to start your own company during the orientation year. You have free access to the Dutch labour market during the orientation year, without restrictions.
- 4. What are the benefits of an orientation year?*

You are granted free access to the Dutch labour market during the orientation year. This means that there is no salary criterion and that an employer does not have to apply for a work permit for you. Furthermore, the [reduced salary criterion](#) applies to you when you find a job as a highly skilled migrant. This may encourage an employer to hire you.
- 5. If I already found a job as a highly skilled migrant without needing an orientation year first, am I still eligible for the reduced salary criterion?*

Yes, you are. If you qualify for the orientation year, but you do not apply for it because you already found a job as a highly skilled migrant, your employer can still make use of the [reduced salary criterion](#).

The reduced salary criterion does not apply to you if you previously had a residence permit for the orientation year on the basis of the same study programme or the same scientific research, and no application for a residence permit for 'work as highly skilled migrant' was submitted for you during or directly following this orientation year.
- 6. Will my employer have to apply for a new residence permit for me, immediately after I have found a job as a highly skilled migrant during the orientation year?*

No, that is not necessary. You have free access to the Dutch labour market during the orientation year, so your employer can wait until the end of your orientation year before he applies for a new residence permit for you.
- 7. If my contract ends, but I did find another job / employer, will the reduced salary criterion remain?*

Yes, if you change jobs or employers, your new employer can still make use of the reduced salary criterion. This reduced salary criterion applies to you for as long as you keep working as a highly skilled migrant continuously, even if you turn 30 or change employers.

Make sure that you avoid a residence gap. This means your new employer should apply for an extension of the validity of your residence permit before your current one expires (the starting and end date of your contract are similar to those of your residence permit for working as a highly skilled migrant).
- 8. How can I see if I have obtained a master's degree on the basis of an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course?*

If you have completed an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course, you must have obtained a joint degree or multiple degrees, issued by at least two participating higher educational institutions. You can find all Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses here: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_action_1_master_courses_en.php.
- 9. How can I apply for the orientation year while I am abroad?*

Depending on your nationality, you may need a provisional residence permit (in Dutch: 'machtiging tot voorlopig verblijf' or 'MVV') if you want to settle in the Netherlands. An MVV is an entry visa that is required if you want to stay in the Netherlands for more than 90 days and your nationality or circumstances do not exempt you from the MVV requirement. You can start the Entry and Residence Procedure (TEV procedure) by applying for an MVV at a Dutch embassy or consulate in your country of origin or continuous residence, or, if that is not possible, in a country nearby. The TEV procedure combines the application for an MVV and the application for a residence permit.

10. *Can I apply online?*

You can apply online at <http://www.ind.nl/searchyear>, but you need to have DigiD with sms-code to do this. You pay the costs of the application immediately with iDEAL. This is mostly the fastest way to apply for the orientation year. It is not possible to apply for a DigiD and to apply for the orientation year online if you do not have a Dutch citizen service number ('burgerservicenummer' or 'BSN').

11. *Am I exempt from the obligation to apply for an MVV if I have a valid residence permit in another member state of the European Union (EU) or in another Schengen member state?*

That depends on the kind of residence permit you have. If you have an EU long-term residence permit in another member state of the EU, or if you resided in another member state of the EU for a period of 18 months as a holder of a European blue card, you are exempt from the obligation to apply for an MVV and you can apply for a residence permit directly in the Netherlands. This exemption from the MVV requirement also applies to you if you have a residence permit for scientific researchers under Directive 2005/71/EC in another EU member state.

The exemption from the MVV requirement can apply to family members as well, but it does not apply to you if you have a different residence permit issued in another Schengen member state.

12. *Do I have to show that I have sufficient means of existence when I apply for the orientation year?*

No, you do not have to submit proof of your financial situation to be eligible for the orientation year. You will have to sustain yourself during the orientation year, but you do not have to show how you can or will do that. During the orientation year you are not allowed to use public funds (like welfare benefits). However, you may request rent and/or healthcare allowances.

13. *Am I eligible to apply for a second orientation year if I have completed another study or doctoral programme or if I have performed another scientific research?*

Yes, to students completing various study or doctoral programmes or performing various scientific researches, a residence permit for the orientation year can be granted after each completed study programme or doctoral programme, or after each performed scientific research. You can therefore apply for another orientation year if you do that on the basis of another completed study or doctoral programme or another performed scientific research. This study programme, doctoral programme or scientific research must have been completed or performed after your previous orientation year.

14. *Am I obliged to take out Dutch public health insurance once I have found a job or internship during the orientation year?*

Yes, you are obliged to take out Dutch public health care insurance once you have found a job or when your internship allowance is €150 or more. If it is established that you are obliged to take out Dutch health insurance, you have three months to find one. Keep in mind: the starting date of this insurance is the first day you became obliged to take out health insurance. In other words: the starting date of your job or internship. You can find more information on the website [Zorgverzekeringslijn](http://www.zorgverzekeringslijn.nl).

15. *Can my spouse, partner, and/or minor child stay with me during the orientation year?*

Yes, that is possible. If they already have a Dutch residence permit, they can apply for a change of purpose of stay or for an extension of the validity of their residence permit. You do not have to show that you have sufficient means of existence to be able to support your family members in the Netherlands during the orientation year, but you and your family members are not allowed to use public funds, like welfare benefits. However, you are allowed to request rent and/or healthcare allowances. If your family members do not have a Dutch residence permit yet, you will have to show that you have sufficient means of existence to be able to support your family members in the Netherlands during the orientation year. You have sufficient means of existence, if:

- Your income is independent, sufficient and long-term. You can find information about independent, sufficient and long-term income [here](#); or
- The balance of your bank account equals at least 12 times (or less, depending on how long your residence permit for the orientation year is still valid) the monthly amount of welfare benefits for families in the Netherlands, including holiday allowance. You can find information about welfare benefits [here](#).

Your family members will also have free access to the Dutch labour market during your orientation year, without restrictions.

If you still have specific questions regarding the orientation year, you can email these directly to hemse@ind.minvenj.nl.