

Practical guide for going abroad - for PhD candidates

Going abroad is fun, informative and may offer you experiences that you carry with you for the rest of your life. The Radboudumc is a great proponent for acquiring international experience, especially in the case of PhD candidates. Yet, arranging such an experience is often something that takes planning and effort before you go.

1. First things first:

There are several issues that you need to consider:

- What is the reason of my trip?
 - Improve studies, PhD track or experiments
 - Improve CV
 - For the experience of living abroad
 - Improve language skills
- Where will I go to?
 - To an English speaking country?
 - A Western or developing country?
 - How far away will I go?
- How long will I go?
 - Short stay for a conference, or a long stay e.g. 6 months?
- What will I gain from this experience?
 - Will it help me gain invaluable knowledge?
 - Will it help me finish with an article?
 - Is it a place I may want to do a postdoc or residency?
- What will my supervision team gain from this experience?
 - How will they also benefit from my trip?
 - Will they have a more experienced lab member when I return?

With the answers to these questions, you can start planning your stay abroad.

2. Where to go for more information?

- a. Firstly, talk with your supervisors about your idea's / plans.
- b. Go to the [Radboud International office](#) where you can be advised concerning outgoing mobility.
- c. Look at the Radboud University website for [international mobility](#) and funds. You can also visit the RU International [Office](#), or send an [email](#).
- d. There are already many collaborations with foreign institutions, that you can find [here](#). There, you can select the faculty of Medical Sciences for better insights.
- e. If you have specific questions, it may be worthwhile to have a conversation with the Graduate School coordinators of your institute. [RIHS – Marieke de Visser](#); [RIMLS – Dov Ballak](#); [Donders – Femke Maij](#)
- f. And last, but not least: do not forget to ask your direct colleagues. Many of our PhD candidates already have international experience and can share their insights with you. Moreover, via the International Office and HR you may be brought into contact with colleagues that have the nationality of the country you're traveling to.

3. How will you pay for it?

When you're lucky, your department will simply pay for everything. However, even if they have funds, they will ask you to look for additional funds. In most cases, you will have to finance your trip yourself. Don't worry, you can learn a lot from the experience of acquiring money and additionally, it may be good for your CV too.

- a) The best overview for grants, and “low-hanging fruit” is available on the RU international office website: [Financing international mobility](#).
- b) Some foundations in The Netherlands, such as the Diabetes foundation, Heart Foundation, Kidney Foundation, offer specific travel grants for young researchers. Please check the foundations that are most appropriate for you.
- c) The KNAW offers an [overview](#) of grants with specific purposes. Such as the Fulbright Scholarship, for a stay in the USA.
- d) Also, check [this website](#) with many other grants for possibilities (only in Dutch).
- e) Don't forget to ask your senior colleagues what grants they have used in the past.

4. Do you need extra arrangements for your stay?

- a. Will you be needing vaccinations? Are you actually 100% sure? Check here: [Radboud Travel Clinic](#) (information only available in Dutch). You can also get your travel counselling and vaccinations here.
- b. For Dutch Nationals, you can [check here](#) if you need a visa for your travels. However, always make sure to double check this information.
- c. For housing options, it is difficult to advise you, as the best course of actions often differ per region and sometimes per city. Ask people that you may know there, use local popular website, do you know anyone that has travelled there before? Don't forget to check your potential housing - and its location - with locals before you formally agree.
- d. For some countries or areas, you may want to consider extra insurances? Are you going to an area where you may get sick? Are you medically well insured? Or do you have the luxury that you're going to a lab in proximity of a ski-resort? Then don't forget to get a ski-travel insurance. Or do you simply want to insure your laptop, iPad and photo camera properly? Please make sure you are well-insured before you leave the Netherlands. There are many different insurance companies that you can use, but here is [one](#) of them.

5. Last advises

Going abroad is exciting, and a great experience that you remember for the rest of your life. However, before you go make sure you have arranged all the necessities, so that you will not be surprised.

In this overview, you can find a lot of information that may help you plan and prepare your stay abroad. Do not forget that the best advisors may sit right next to you in your office, or at the bench. Also, if you have the opportunity, make sure to use the network of your lab and supervisors!