

**CHANGING COUNTRIES**

Karen Jochems Dick Poelen

**FINDING HOUSING WAS RELATIVELY EASY**  
but opening a bank account proved to be a major headache for Tariq Haddad during his move from California to Nijmegen



**A taste of Europe**

"During my Bachelor's at Berkeley I participated in an Erasmus exchange program and spent some time in Prague. I traveled a lot, which really opened up Europe for me. I did my Master's in Barcelona and was eager to do my PhD abroad too."



**First purchase: a bike**

"One of the first things I bought was a bicycle. Nijmegen is a really bike-friendly city so it's the ideal form of transport for getting around."



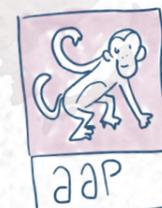
**Shopping blues**

"It took a while to get used to life in a smaller city. Basic things are different, like the opening hours of shops. In the US you can shop almost whenever you like. In Nijmegen most shops have limited opening hours. I really had to adapt to that."



**Learning Dutch**

"Everyone speaks English so there was no language barrier for me. But next year I want to start learning Dutch. I should be fully settled in by then."



**Finding digs**

"I had had a hard time finding housing in Barcelona so I used all the resources I had to find accommodation before I traveled to Nijmegen. I spent a week in an Airbnb and then the International Office phoned to say there was an apartment in a housing unit for international students. That was a huge relief!"

**My application**

"I applied via the Academic Transfer website. The first interview with Iris Nagtegaal and the team was by Skype. For the second round I flew from Spain to Nijmegen. I was very excited about the project and after meeting the group and seeing the city, everything felt right. That's why I chose Nijmegen over my other options of Stockholm and Milan."



**Paperwork**

"Both the International Office and the HR representatives in the Pathology department were very helpful in organizing the paperwork for me. I did not have to travel to the Netherlands beforehand to set anything up – and that was ideal."



**Red tape**

"As a US national I didn't have to apply for residency before coming to the Netherlands. However, it did take multiple trips to the IND in Den Bosch to actually arrange a residence permit. And I had to go Nijmegen city hall several times too, for temporary and then full registration."



**Bank account nightmare**

"The greatest challenge was opening a bank account; most banks required a citizen service number (BSN) but I only had a temporary registration. No bank account meant no Internet, no OV-chip card and, most importantly, no salary! In the end, I managed to arrange it by going to a main branch of ING Bank and simply waiting there until it was all fixed."



**Be open**

"Don't be afraid to ask other people for tips on how things work or other issues. Most people are really happy to help and you might make new friends at the same time. Living in an Airbnb was really handy in that respect."



**Use the resources**

"Radboudumc, Radboud University and the city of Nijmegen offer a lot of resources for people moving here from abroad. Make full use of them – they can really make a huge difference. It helped me sort out a lot of the paperwork and accommodation issues beforehand."