

THE COMBINED VISA

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This document is intended for foreign students and researchers who plan to stay in the Netherlands for more than three months and who need an entry visa (an *MVV*). If this applies to you, we advise that you ask the embassy for a special type of combined visa as this will give you additional travel options.

Different types of entry visas

There are two main types of visa: the short-stay visa and the *MVV* (stands for *Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf*: 'Provisional residence permit').

- **Short-stay visa:**
This is an entry visa valid for a stay of less than 90 days. It can be issued for entering the Netherlands once ('single entry') or several times ('multiple entry'). With a multiple entry short-stay visa, you can travel freely through all the countries that are signatory to the Schengen agreement. Consequently, this type of visa is also known as a 'Schengen visa'.
- **MVV:**
An *MVV* is an entry visa valid for a stay of more than 90 days. After picking up the *MVV*, you must travel to the Netherlands within six months. An *MVV* gives you the right to enter the Netherlands only once: it is a 'single-entry' visa. After arriving in the Netherlands, you will need to apply for a residence permit. An *MVV* is a Dutch national visa. This means that it is valid only for a stay in the Netherlands and not in any other Schengen country. Transit through another Schengen country on your way to the Netherlands is allowed, however.
- **Combined visa:**
This is an *MVV* with the travel freedoms of the multiple entry short-stay visa. This means you can travel freely through any of the Schengen countries or back and forth to your home country. The combined visa is valid for a period of ninety days upon issue.

Travel options during the residence permit application process

After arriving, it will take several weeks for you to receive your residence permit. During that period, you are not allowed to travel outside the Netherlands. In other words, if you leave the Netherlands, you may not be allowed to reenter the country. The *MVV* is valid for one entry only and you cannot use it a second time to gain entry to the Netherlands.

You can solve this problem by obtaining a combined visa instead of a simple *MVV*. The combined visa allows you to enter the Netherlands and travel in and out of the country for 90 days following the date of issue. The combined visa is meant to bridge the period during which applicants are waiting for their residence permits.

If you have a combined visa but are still waiting for your residence permit after three months (90 days) have elapsed, you will face the same travel restrictions as holders of a simple *MVV*. If you need to travel for an emergency situation, you might be able to obtain a 'return visa'.

How to get a combined visa

Unlike the *MVV* and the short-stay visa, the combined visa is not something that you apply for in advance. The procedure is as follows: your future Dutch host institution or the embassy will notify you

that you can go to the embassy to collect your MVV. Tell the embassy that, instead of a simple MVV, you would like a combined visa. Officially this is called a “D+C visa”. We recommend using this term at the embassy. There are no additional costs involved.

Requirements for the combined visa

There are two extra requirements for a combined visa:

1. You need to have medical (travel) insurance and present proof of this at the embassy. The insurance must be valid for at least the first 90 days and it must cover the entire Schengen area. Your insurance must at least cover urgent medical care, emergency hospital treatment, and repatriation (i.e. flying you home) on medical grounds. Minimum coverage must be at least 30,000 euros.
2. You may have to wait two more weeks before you receive your visa. For certain nationalities, the embassy must ask the other Schengen countries whether they object to your being issued a combined visa. This is because the combined visa is valid for all Schengen countries, while the simple MVV is a Dutch national entry visa only. If you want to know beforehand whether this consultation procedure is required in your case, call the embassy and ask.

If you are eligible for an MVV and if you have the required medical insurance, you should automatically receive a combined visa. However, this does not always happen in practice. Therefore, we advise that you ask explicitly for a combined visa. Also, while you are not obliged to explain why you want a combined visa, the embassy may ask you anyway. In that case a study trip to Germany, a weekend of shopping in Paris, or a visit to friends in Italy are all perfectly acceptable reasons.

How to recognize an MVV, a short-stay visa and a combined visa

An MVV, a short-stay visa and a combined visa all look much the same. They are all stickers that are affixed in your passport that look like this:



The difference is in the text on the sticker.

Look at the text in the “type of visa” field.

If it says:

- ‘D’, the sticker is an MVV
- ‘C’, the sticker is a short-stay visa
- ‘D+C’, the sticker is a combined visa.

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