

OECD THEMATIC REVIEW OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

UPDATE OF COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR THE NETHERLANDS

20 March 2008

OECD thematic review of tertiary education



The Netherlands' Higher Education

Update March 20, 2008, in relation to the country background report published in 2006

Chapter 1 The national context of tertiary education

Social and economic trends and the tertiary education sector, the system Table 1.4

As from February 2008 the HBO or “hogeschole” are entitled to present themselves in the English language as Universities of Applied Science (rather than universities of professional education, as the English name was supposed to be up to then). This indication is allowed, provided the institute offers a comprehensive range of study subjects including beta-technical ones, and is not specialized in performing arts or teacher education.

Furthermore, the Associate degree is introduced in higher education, as a short cycle degree (see chapter 2)

Chapter 2 General description of the tertiary education system

Section 2.1 introduction - participation

§ 17

The participation figures presented on page 11 and 12 have increased considerably since 2002. The more recent figures (2006-2007) show that 366.400 HBO students and 207.700 WO students participate in higher education (i.e. an increase of 12 % in a 4-year period).

Section 2.2 The system elements and 2.6 Changes over the last decade for students (and follow up of section 3.2 Policy short courses - associate degree

§ 20

In 2006-2007 Associate-degree programmes were introduced in the Dutch system. These two year-programmes are imbedded in HBO-bachelor programmes, consist of 120 ECTS and lead to a new degree: the Associate degree (Ad). After having finished an Ad-programme students can either enter the labour market or continue to study. The Ad-programmes are embedded in the bachelor programmes in such a way that students with an Associate degree, who enter a bachelor programme can finish as a Bachelor after another 120 ECTS. With the introduction of Ad-programmes the Netherlands hope to attract more employees and more students who have finished mbo4 to higher education. A second important reason for the introduction is that within the Small and Medium

Enterprises in Holland there's a growing need for employees who are both professionals and higher educated. Thus an educational level at higher education level, between mbo4 and Bachelor is created.

The Ad-programmes which started in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 are pilot programmes. After the evaluation of these pilot programmes in 2008 and 2010 the Netherlands will decide how exactly the Ad-programmes will be fully implemented in the Dutch system.

Since 2007 the Ad-programmes are regulated by law (WHW).

Chapter 3 The tertiary education system and the labour market.

Section 3.1 The situation - labour market for Science & Engineering graduates

§ 58

Recent research by the SEO (University of Amsterdam) provides new insights and data about the relation between the salaries paid for Science & Engineering graduates and shortages in Science & Engineering jobs. SEO shows amongst others a faster growing number of Science & Technology vacancies that are difficult to fill in the period 2003-2006, indicating growing shortages. It also provides explanations why salaries of higher educated Science & Engineering personnel haven't increased with growing shortages in recent years. One explanation is that higher educated Science & Engineering personnel are less sensitive to pay levels than other personnel. Science & Engineering personnel focus more on the content of their work than on the pay level. Secondly the job market for higher educated Science & Engineering personnel is more international than it is for non-Science & Engineering personnel. The international supply of Science & Engineering personnel is higher, resulting in more domestic competition keeping wages low.

For the full report, *De arbeidsmarkt voor hoger opgeleide beta's*, containing an English summary on page ix, [see http://www.seo.nl/nl/publicaties/rapporten/2007/992.html](http://www.seo.nl/nl/publicaties/rapporten/2007/992.html)

Section 3.2, 4.2 and 6.2 Lifelong learning policy

In 2005 the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social affairs and Employment started an interdepartmental Project unit for Learning & Working (PLW). The goal of PLW is to stimulate lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is seen as an important instrument to strengthen the relationship between higher education (especially *hogeschole*) and the labour market, which is necessary given the need of a highly educated workforce. A few major programme lines have been set up:

- Stimulating work-based learning and accreditation of prior learning, especially by stimulating the development of collaboration agreements concerning these issues between employers, education providers and local governments in regions.
- Providing information on lifelong learning-possibilities to citizens and employers by means of an internet portal, a campaign aiming at reaching the general public, etc.
- Trying to find innovative initiatives concerning LLL and to apply them on a larger scale.

Originally the special Project unit PLW was meant to stop by the end of 2007, but because of the positive results, the new administration decided to continue the project unit until 2011.

For further reading see:

- Reinforcing Learning & Working: Action programme 2005-2007 <http://www.leren-werken.nl/html/documenten/ReinforcingLearning&Working.pdf>
- Doorpakken met Leren & Werken: Plan van aanpak 2008 – 2011 http://www.leren-werken.nl/html/cmsdata/documenten/20071206_lerenenwerken_planvanaanpak2008-2011.pdf

Section 3.2 Policy - knowledge networks, innovation and incubation

§ 69 The relationship between higher education and society is expressed *inter alia* in so-called lectorates at *hogeschoolen*. Lectors are specialists that devise clever and innovative solutions to demands from society. They have won their spurs in their specialist field and put their knowledge and experience to use in professional practice and education. In September 2007 the total number of lecturers at universities of applied science was 293. Many of them work in the sectors of Economics (16%), Education (14%) and Technology (13%); art, health care, and social and community work, follow with 10%, 9% and 7% respectively; 3% feature in Agriculture. 28% of the lecturers work in more than one sector. For further information see Kennis in Kaart 2007, The facts and figures behind the Strategic Agenda, figure 68 (page 106) and Table 22 (page 152), available at <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/KennisInKaart2007.pdf>

Chapter 4 The regional role of tertiary education

Situation and Policy

§ 81 Another example of knowledge networks, innovation and incubation, is the co-operation of the three technical universities, distributed over the Netherlands, co-operating jointly and regionally. The federation of the three Dutch technical universities (Delft, Eindhoven and Twente), which is known as 3TU, is a concentration of strength, which improves their national and international position. These universities cooperate in the educational field. Five general master courses were developed: 1) embedded systems, 2) sustainable energy and technology, 3) Construction and management, 4) system & control, 5) science education & communication. Also they cooperate in other areas such as the development of a “throughput matrix”. Such a matrix explains the possibilities of bachelor students, e.g. when it comes to labour market or master courses. The education part of the 3TU is narrowly connected to the “innovation lab”. For businesses this innovation lab is the entrance to (academic) knowledge and expertise. (For further information, see www.3tu.nl)

§ 86 and § 87

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science stimulate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour since their partnership in 2005. This Partnership for Entrepreneurship and Education aims to stimulate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour in the educational system. Actions focus on the students, the teachers and all levels of education (from primary school to university). In 2007, temporarily, a budget of €20 million was made available for educational institutes. With this budget 24 projects were initiated from primary school to vocational training and in field of higher education 6 centres of entrepreneurship were granted. Also in the Strategic Agenda on Higher Education, Research and Science”, published in 2007, attention is paid to the importance of entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurship of students. The ambition for the next few years is to professionalize and embed education and entrepreneurship in the educational system. For further information, see <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/StrategicAgenda.pdf>

Chapter 5 The role of tertiary education in research and innovation

5.2 Policy, Education policy – “Strategic agenda”

§ 105

November 2007 a “Strategic Agenda on Higher Education, Research and Science” (national policy document) is published. It aims at an ambitious culture of learning and an excellent research climate. For an ambitious learning culture additional budget is made available to improve success rate of students, in particular also of students from foreign origin, for excellent learning paths and for the relation between education, research and the labour market, also in perspective of Life Long Learning.

The programme of *'Ruim baan voor talent'*, to facilitate experiments regarding selection of students and differentiation in tuition fees, ended in 2007. It is followed by a programme oriented towards fostering excellence in higher education.

Next to this, the Strategic agenda promotes to differentiate between students. It states: Many students wish for a greater challenge. 25-30% of the students desire excellent education. More differentiation is therefore required between and within courses: demanding for excellent students, inspiring for good students and providing structure for those students who are now dropping out. In addition to excellence in education and research, a broad quality basis is required.

The full text including more ambitions, also regarding the lecturers is available at:

<http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/StrategicAgenda.pdf>

Chapter 6 Achieving equity in and through tertiary education

§ 138 Diversity Policy

Central government stimulates the development of talents with a migrant background in various ways:

- The ministry has made agreements with 21 HE institutions in order to raise the number of students with a migrant background and their study success. A total budget of € 4.5 million has been made available over a period of three years (2006-2008).
- Furthermore, the ministry has the ambition to increase the study success of students with a migrant background, to the level of other Dutch students. For the year 2008 the amount of € 4 million is made available by the ministry and this amount will rise to € 20 million a year in 2011. The focus will be on the four big cities (G4), because most migrant students enroll in the higher education institutions in the four big cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht). The ministry is planning to make direct agreements with the institutions about targets and ambitions for the coming six years (2008-2012).
- The ministry has asked the center for diversity policy ECHO (www.echo-net.nl) to develop a network for successful migrant students and graduates. They are called ECHO ambassadors and they will act as role models for other migrant students.
- Moreover, the ministry subsidizes the organization for refugee students (UAF) with € 2.6 million per year. UAF provides counseling, grants and guidance to refugee students.
- At several locations Imam training has started to strengthen integration of Muslims in the Netherlands.

- Finally, the Mozaiek programme stimulates immigrant research talent. It comprises a total budget of € 4 million, of which € 2 million directly from government and € 2 million indirectly from NWO, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research. The programme will be evaluated in 2008, and will be continued in case the result of the evaluation is positive.

The *law on higher education* ensures the right to access higher education without discrimination of students with disabilities; it entitles them to extra (financial) support. The *law on equal treatment with respect to disabilities and chronic illness* enforces the accessibility of higher education by giving students with disabilities the entitlement to necessary and suitable support and adjustments in all aspects of accessibility of vocational/professional education (and labour). The government supports the implementation of this law by temporarily subsidizing the institutions of higher education to organize their educational services to disabled students, an information campaign, and the national centre of expertise “handicap + study”. This centre stimulates awareness in society and in the higher education institutions of rights, obligations and the problems to be met, it supports higher education institutions and students by information and training, and develops and spreads knowledge on solutions. Some data on the situation of disabled students are gathered annually in the so-called *Studentenmonitor* (a random sample survey among students). Moreover, currently research is going on (1) to monitor the effect of measures taken at institutional level, (2) to identify positive and negative factors influencing success during the transition and progression from the secondary level of education to the first two years of higher education, and (3) to make an inventory of the institutional costs of adjustments and facilities for disabled students. Results are expected in 2010.

Female professors

The European target figure for female professors is 25 percent, while the Netherlands has adopted a target of 15 percent. Opportunities for women are increasing, but progress is still too slow. In order to encourage progression to leading positions, including that of professor, a sum of € 1 million (rising to € 2 million from 2011 onward) will be added to the Aspasia programme.

Policy; social economic status

§ 142

Regarding access to education, the student support system takes into consideration the income of parents and family situation (number of children). Income of parents below a certain level entitles the student to supplementary grants from the government. In 2008 the student is entitled to a maximum additional allowance of € 2736 per year in the case of a parental gross income below € 32.000. Policies on diversity do imply policy on social mobility. Ethnic diversity within society is reflected in the social structure. Ethnic groups in general tend to be in relative low positions in terms of education and income. Successful policy on diversity therefore implies social mobility. (See for further details chapter 7)

Chapter 7 Resourcing the tertiary education system

Academic staff Career structure /effectiveness of academics tenure tracks

§ 148 - 155

Tenure *tracks* are a recent trend in Dutch higher education. More and more Dutch institutes are providing these tracks as a means to attract and develop talent. These tenure tracks aren't

synonymous with a fixed appointment and job security. The appointment decision is based on an assessment on research and educational achievements within the track.

Student grants

§ 168

The budget for student support (grants and loans) (Universities, *hogescholen* and vocational education at secondary level) amounts to € 3,560 million in 2007, which is an increase of 25% compared to two years earlier (2005). The grant system itself comprises 4 elements:

- The basic grant is for all students. It differentiates between students who live with their parents and those who live on their own. In 2008 the monthly grant is € 92 for students living at home with their parents and € 256 for students living independently. On the total Student Financing budget the basic grant paragraph is 31% (for both tertiary and secondary level students).
- Travelling costs. All students receive a season ticket for free public transport (train, metro, bus). This is 20% of the total Student Financing budget.
- Supplementary grant. This supplement is available for students with low- income parents. This supplement is a maximum monthly amount of € 209 for students living at home with their parents and € 225 for students living independently. In the total system it amounts to 18%.
- Loans. Students can take out a loan from the government up to € 280 per month. Loans are 31% of the total expenditure. This is a loan with a low interest rate; it has to be repaid within a period of 15 years, starting two years after graduation. An ex-student with a low income can apply for the monthly amount due to be reduced. After 15 years the ex-student is exempt from the repayment of any remaining debt. The entire system of grants is based on results (*prestatiebeurs*). This means that the total amount including travelling expenses should be paid back (with interest) if the student does not graduate within 10 years. The same mild repayment conditions apply.
- Tuition fee loans (*collegegeldkrediet*). Since 2007 the loan facilities are extended with a new possibility to take a loan for payment of the tuition fees up to an amount of € 7500 in total per person. This is expected to enable students to study more efficiently and invest more time in their studies.

§ 169 Entitlement to grants and loans is valid for a period of ten years. Along with this goes the right for student grants for the period of the normative study length. Loans can be obtained during the normative study length and for another 3 years. During these three years a student is entitled to a loan of maximum € 819 per month and to free public transport. This facilitates both quicker and slower students.

Student grant system amended

§ 178

The newly adopted elements of the student support system will give more flexibility to the student as well as more efficiency in the system itself. Rules and regulation for repaying study loans will, for all ex-students, be dependent on the actual benefit an ex-student gains from his or her qualifications. Above a certain income level (120% minimum wage level for couples) the ex-student has to repay a fixed rate of his annual income, as long as necessary to repay the total debt, but during a maximum period of years. Below that income level, there is no repayment required. A possibility of a break in refunding will also be introduced. This break enlarges the repayment period. Once the maximum period of repayment has expired the ex-student is exempted from any remaining debt.

Financing policy, Learning entitlements (leerrechten)

§ 171

The legislative proposal for a new Act on higher education has been withdrawn by the current government, when it took office in 2007. This included the introduction of learning entitlements. At present the development regarding the funding systems is geared towards integrating the up to the present separate funding systems for the *hogescholen* (universities of applied science) and research universities into one system.

Chapter 8 Planning, governing and regulating the system

Situation and policies – legislation and strategic agenda

§ 189, 191, 192

As stated earlier, legislation envisaged in 2006 concerning the new law on higher education and learning entitlements is withdrawn following decisions of the new government which took office in 2007 and which resulted in changes in policies. However some aspects of the new law are in the process of being implemented.

Legislation facilitating joint degrees and “horizontal” accountability, which includes the duty to care for students and to be accountable to the general public (next to accountability to the government because of public funding) is in preparation as intended.

Aspects of quality of education, also in relation to the continuously increasing participation, are incorporated in the Strategic agenda which can be found at

<http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/StrategicAgenda.pdf>

Chapter 9 Assuring and improving the quality of higher education

9.1 Situation and policies, Organisations

§ 221

The supranational independent accreditation organisation, NVAO (Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation) has the legal authority to award (and withhold) accreditations.

Regarding the quality of this organisation the following update is to be made:

In 2005 the Bologna ministers have agreed upon the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher education Area. A European Register of quality assurance agencies will be established; only quality agencies that comply with these standards and guidelines can be registered.

In 2007, an international review committee concluded that NVAO fully complies with the European Standards and Guidelines. Granting of “full” membership of ENQA and membership of the Register of Quality assurance agencies (EQAR), which just has been established, is envisaged on the basis of the review.

Chapter 10 Internationalisation and globalisation of tertiary education

International mobility

§ 231

There are no reliable and comparable data on mobility of students. Considering the situation in the Netherlands, the total number of foreign students has increased to a percentage of 8.7% by the end of the academic year 2007/2008. This percentage is estimated by combining figures of Nuffic in 2007 (www.nuffic.nl) and Key figures 2002-2006, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

There are clear indications that the number of foreign PhD students is 20% in the academic year 2007/2008.

Implementation of the Bologna process

§ 232

Further update of the implementation of the Bologna process in The Netherlands can be found in the report made for the London ministerial conference

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/National-reports-2007/National_Report_NL_Feb07.pdf.

Those figures, but in international perspective, can also be found in the Stocktaking report made for the London ministerial conference (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/6909-BolognaProcessST.pdf>)

International orientation of institutes in tertiary education

§ 235

More than 1,150 international study programmes are available in the English language.

The website made for students to choose a study programme on the basis of a variety of selection criteria which the student can choose, is available in the English language from January 2007 onward (www.studychoice123.nl)

Policy evidence based

§ 236, 237

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New figures are made available, which are at the basis of policies: Kennis in Kaart, 2007 (<http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/KennisInKaart2007.pdf>)

Facilitating internationalisation

§ 240

The Netherlands is currently working on the development of a modern migration policy document. Over the past years immigration requirements (visa, residence and work permits) for students and knowledge workers have improved and still have attention. Widening possibilities for student work permits are under discussion.

§ 242, 244

The situation regarding the NESOs (Netherlands Educational Support Offices) by February 2008 is as follows:

At this moment five NESOs are operational: in Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Indonesia and Mexico. Offices in Russia and Thailand are expected to be officially opened, in the course of this year 2008.

Three more offices are under consideration.

In general promotion activities for attracting foreign students to the Netherlands are realised by Nuffic (www.studyin.nl).

§ 243

As per 2009 the earmarked budget “Kennisbeurzen (knowledge grants)” will be made available to universities. It is an amount of money out of the lump sum budget that universities can use for implementing international policy activities according to their own choice. Per university the budget can be used as diverse as for instance for scholarships or for improvement of facilities or policies within the institution.

The Huygens Scholarship Programme budget has increased from € 5 million to € 10 million per year as of 2008.

§ 244

Further policy development, evidence based, is taken up in the Strategic Agenda, See chapter 5 § 105

§ 246

The international mobility to and from the Netherlands is monitored; what was called the *BISON monitor* in 2006, is currently known under the name mobility monitor “mobiliteitsmonitor”. The latest version: International Mobility in Education in the Netherlands 2006, published June 2007, is available at: www.nuffic.nl/nederlandse-organisaties/docs/kerncijfers/Mobmon%202006%20ENG.pdf

Annex 5 Summary of the Explanatory memorandum on the Wet Hoger onderwijs en Onderzoek (WHOO), Higher Education and Research Act.

The legislative proposal for a new Act on higher education has been withdrawn by the current government, when it took office in 2007.

The Hague, March 20, 2008

Ministry of Education Culture and Science,
The Netherlands

Contact: m.e.leegwater@minocw.nl