



Key Figures Education



The Dutch education system

Freedom of education

One of the key features of the Dutch education system, the freedom of education, is safeguarded by Article 23 of the Constitution. It covers the freedom to set up schools, organise teaching systems at schools and determine the founding principles. Any citizen has the right to set up a school and provide education based on religious, ideological or educational beliefs. Under the Constitution, private and public schools are guaranteed equal public funding.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs is responsible for all agricultural education, which must adhere to the same principles set out in the general education policy and as defined in the general educational legislation, as the schools funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

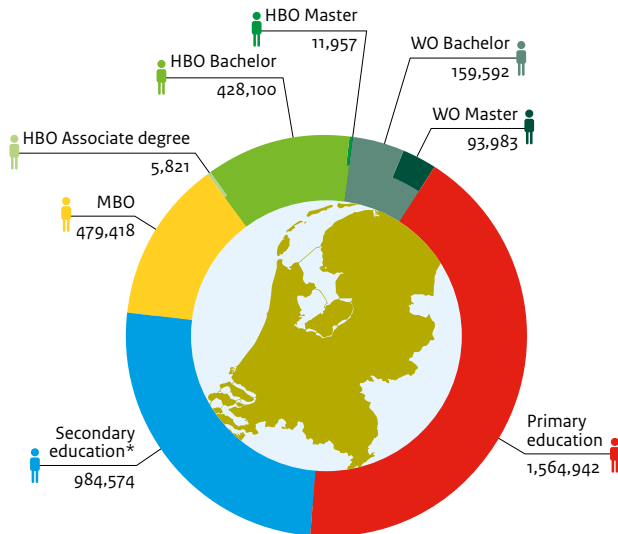
Schools have great autonomy

Private schools can be based on a particular denomination, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Antroposophy or educational models, such as Montessori, Dalton, Freinet or Jenaplan. Public and private may also be based on combinations of denominational and educational ideas (e.g., Catholic Montessori school or Public Dalton School). 'Freedom to organise teaching systems' means that both public and private schools are free to determine what is taught at schools and how this is taught, within legal boundaries. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, however, sets the quality standards to which both public and government-funded private schools must adhere. These standards prescribe the subjects to be studied, the attainment levels or examination syllabuses and the content of national examinations, the number of teaching periods per year, which qualifications teachers must have, giving parents and pupils a say in school matters, planning and reporting obligations.

Very few schools privately funded

Although most private schools are funded by the government, a small number of schools is privately funded. The number of students in private, not government-funded primary education (ISCED 1) is marginal (0.3%). In general secondary education (ISCED 2/3), a small number of students is enrolled in not government-funded, private education (3.4%).

Number of students in 2014

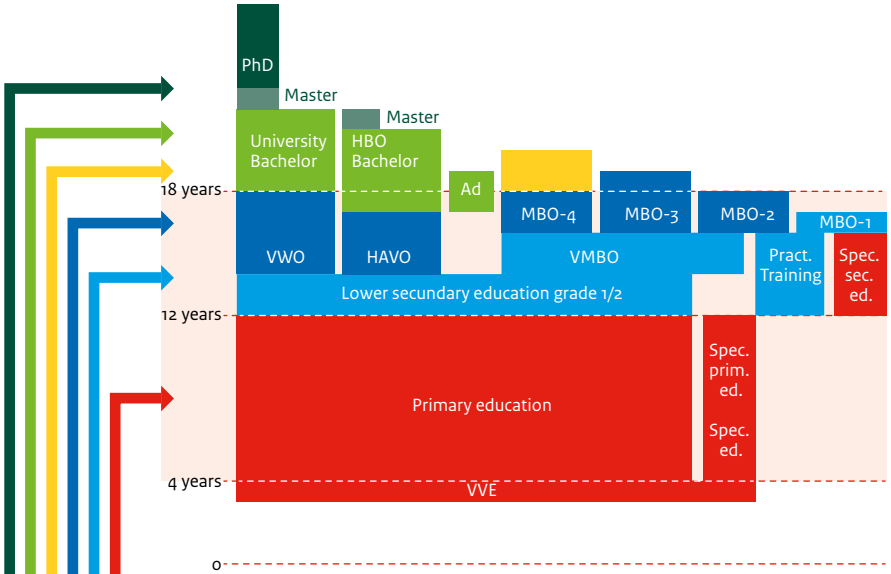


* Secondary education is excluding upper secondary vocational education (MBO).
 Source: OCW (DUO, 1 October 2014)

Compulsory education

The obligation to attend school is laid down in the Compulsory Education Act 1969. Every child must attend school full-time from the first school day of the month following its fifth birthday. However, parents have the right to send their child to school even earlier, at the age of four (98% of all four-year-olds attend school). Under the basic qualification requirement that came into effect in September 2007, all young people up to 18 years must attend school until they attain a basic qualification. A basic qualification is a HAVO, VWO or MBO level 2 certificate.

The system



ISCED 0	Early childhood education	Early childhood education; class 1 and 2 of special-needs and regular primary education
ISCED 1	Primary education	Class 3 to 8 of primary education and special-needs education; pupils of 6 years and up
ISCED 2	Lower secondary education	Vocational: WEB assistants training (MBO-1), practical training, VMBO class 3-4. General: VMBO class 1-2-3-4. HAVO/VWO class 1-3, VAVO (VMBO level), special-needs secondary education
ISCED 3	Upper secondary education	Vocational: WEB assistants training (MBO-2/3); WEB vocational training (MBO-2/3); WEB middle management training (MBO-4); General: HAVO/VWO class 4-6, VAVO (HAVO/VWO level).
ISCED 4	Post-secondary, non-tertiary education	WEB specialists training (MBO-4)
ISCED 5	Short-cycle tertiary education	Associate degree programmes (2-3 years of HBO education)
ISCED 6	Tertiary education (Bachelor's programme)	University Bachelor, HBO Bachelor, post-HBO Bachelor
ISCED 7	Tertiary education (Master's programme)	University Master, HBO Master
ISCED 8	Doctorate	Research fellow, trainee research assistant, PhD candidate, university doctor

There are several forms of early childhood education

Up until the age of 4, children can attend day nurseries (*kinderdagverblijf*) or go to a childminder under the regulated home-based childminding scheme (*gastouderopvang*). In addition to private day nurseries and childminders, children between the ages of 2 and 4 can attend publicly funded playgroups (*peuterspeelzalen*). The playgroups mostly provide half-day Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

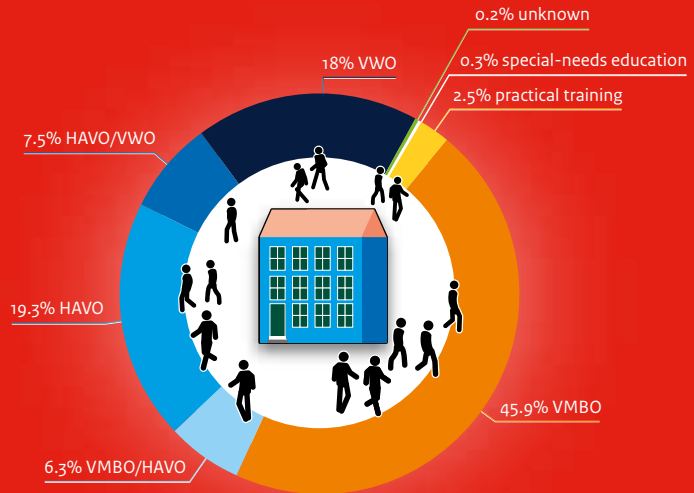
Children with a language disadvantage aged 2½ to 4 are offered support through targeted early childhood education programmes (*voorschoolse educatie*), which reaches around 45,000 children. These programmes are offered in both private day nurseries (*kinderdagverblijf*) and publicly funded playgroups (*peuterspeelzalen*). Care and education for children younger than 4 is a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and local government authorities.

Primary education

Primary education is spread over eight years/classes. Most children start school at the age of 4. While schools are free to determine the teaching content and methods, their work must be based on national attainment and reference levels for literacy and numeracy.

At the end of their eight years of schooling, primary school leavers receive a report describing their attainment level and potential. Since the school year 2014-2015, all schools must apply an objective primary school leavers attainment test approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to assess the educational potential of their pupils. Based on the capabilities of pupils, teachers give a recommendation on the type of secondary school that would be appropriate for the student. This recommendation is decisive for students' transfers to different types of secondary education.

Recommendations after primary education in 2014 (in %)



Source: OCW (DUO), 2014

Three levels of secondary education

Upon leaving primary school at the age of 12 approximately, children have a choice between three major types of secondary education, mainly dependent on their potential and capacities: VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education; four years), HAVO (senior general secondary education; five years) and VWO (pre-university education; six years). VMBO comprises four programmes: a basic vocational programme (b), a middle management programme (k), a combined programme (g) and a theoretical programme (t).

Students who are not expected to obtain a diploma are provided practical training programmes, in which they may obtain certificates (*praktijkonderwijs, pro*). These students are prepared for a variety of important skills that will enable them to participate in society.

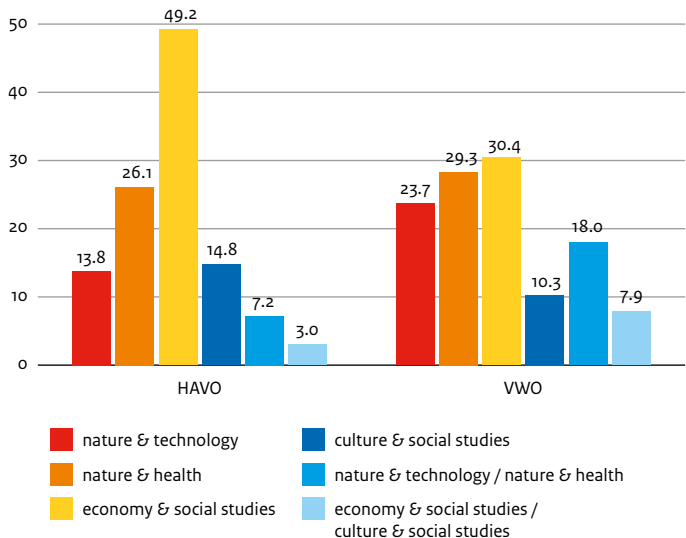
All three types of secondary education start with a period of basic secondary education, during which all students study a broad range of subjects which in theory is the same for all school types. The actual programme and content, however, may vary to cater to differences in learning abilities.

After completing VMBO at the age of about 16, students may enrol in upper secondary vocational education (MBO). Students who have obtained their VMBO-t diploma may also proceed to HAVO, which will give them access to universities of applied sciences (HBO). A VWO diploma grants access to all universities, including research universities.

In the second phase of their curriculum, HAVO and VWO students choose between four profiles:

- nature and technology
- nature and health
- economy and social studies
- culture and social studies

Profile choices (2014-2015, number of students x 1000)



Source: DUO 1 Cijfer VO 2014

Dutch pupils score high in international assessments of skills in primary and secondary education (PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS).

TIMMS / PIRLS / PISA

	NL	FI	DE	BE	UK	JP	Average
Primary education (TIMSS / PIRLS)							
mathematics	540	545	515	549	542	585	500
reading	546	568	541	506*	552		500
science	531	570	528	509	529	559	500
Secondary education (PISA)							
mathematics	523	519	514	515	494	536	494
reading	511	524	508	509	499	538	496
science	522	545	524	505	514	547	501

* only Wallonia

Source: IEA Timss 2011, IEA Pirls 2011, OECD Pisa 2012

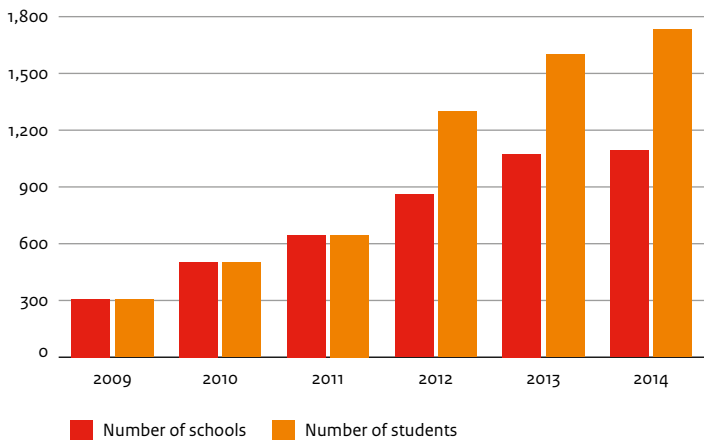
Discussion on the curriculum in the 21st century

In 2015, the Platform Onderwijs2032 project was launched. Onderwijs2032 (in English: Education2032) is an initiative by the Dutch government to stimulate and facilitate a public dialogue on the future of Dutch education between students, teachers, parents, school representatives, but also other stakeholders outside the direct sphere of education. As a result of this dialogue, adjustments to the curriculum in primary and secondary education will be proposed.

Importance of English language acquisition

Although the English language skills of Dutch students leaving lower secondary education is above-average compared to other non-English speaking countries, one of the preliminary conclusions from the Platform Onderwijs2032 discussion is that English should be taught starting earlier. English lessons are currently only compulsory in the last two years of primary school and throughout secondary education. Many schools have already anticipated the importance of second language acquisition at a young age and, as a result, most primary schools teach English (in a few schools also German, French or Spanish), usually starting at the age of 4. Both the number of schools and the number of pupils in primary education engaged in early second language acquisition has increased over the last few years.

Early foreign language education (number of students x 100)



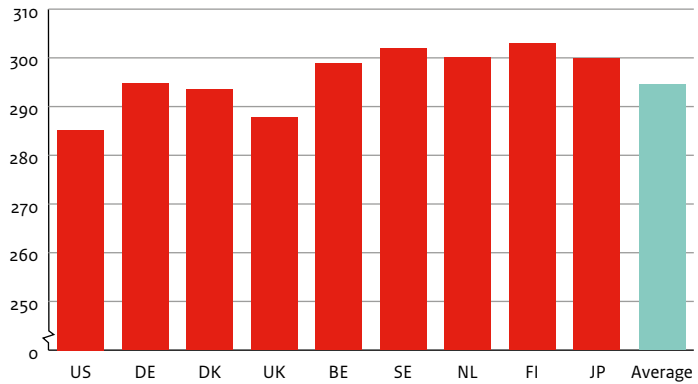
Source: European Platform 2014

Problem solving skills are also important

Another skill that is important to have in the 21st century is the ability to solve problems in a technology-rich environment. This ability is assessed in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

The group of Dutch 16-24-year-olds has done well in the test, compared to other countries.

Problem-solving ability (average score of 16-24-year-olds per country)



Source: OECD PIAAC 2012

Education for pupils with special needs

In the Netherlands we have an inclusive school system. Almost all pupils attend a school. Pupils with special needs attend either a mainstream school or a school for (secondary) special education. The schools for (secondary) special education fall under the Expertise Centres Act and are divided into four categories:

- Category 1: schools for the visually impaired or for children with multiple disabilities including visual impairment. Most visually impaired pupils attend mainstream schools, with special facilities and support.
- Category 2: schools for hearing impaired children and children with communication disorders (due to hearing, language or speech difficulties or autism) or for children with multiple disabilities including hearing, language or speech impairment.
- Category 3: schools for physically and/or intellectually impaired children and children with a chronic physical illness, such as epilepsy.
- Category 4: schools for children with mental or behavioural disorders, including schools attached to paedological institutes.

Education that fits the needs of a pupil

On 1 August 2014, the Appropriate Education Act entered into force for pupils with special educational needs. Under this act, both mainstream schools and (secondary) special schools are working together in regional school alliances for either primary or secondary education. The school alliances are responsible for organising and (partially) funding the extra educational support in their schools. There are 152 school alliances.

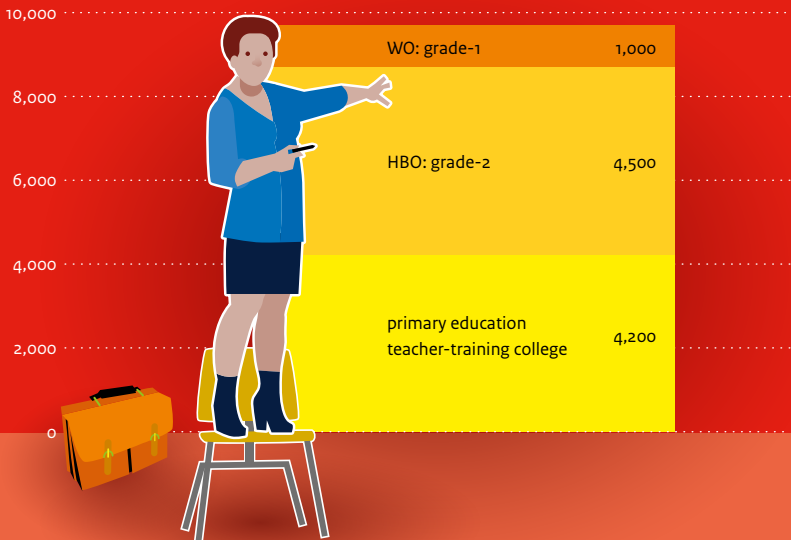
In accordance with this act, individual schools have the obligation to provide students who require extra support with the most appropriate schooling. If a school cannot offer the necessary support, there is an obligation for that school to find a school that can offer the necessary support. In order to fulfil this obligation, school authorities must offer tailor-made educational solutions in the framework of the school alliances. Those solutions can be offered in mainstream or (secondary) special education. Schools for special education are obliged to prepare their pupils for either a mainstream school for secondary education or one of the three pathways in secondary special education. These three pathways are connected with the outflow destination of the pupils after secondary special education:

- centres for daycare activities
- labour market
- (mainstream) vocational or higher education.

Teachers in primary and secondary education must have a teaching qualification

Teachers in primary, secondary and upper secondary vocational education must have specific teaching qualifications. In primary education, teachers must have a diploma from a primary education teacher-training college (bachelor diploma) or higher. In lower secondary and upper secondary vocational education, teachers have to have at least a so-called grade-2 teaching qualification, which is a Bachelor-level teacher training qualification. In upper secondary general education (highest HAVO/VWO classes), teachers must have a grade-1 teaching qualification, which they can obtain by completing an educational Master's programme.

Number of graduates from a teacher-training programme



Source: OCW (DUO) 2014

The Netherlands sets great store by having well-trained teachers provide education. The government strives to have teachers with a Master's degree in the classes. In 2014, a little over 10% of students graduating from a teacher-training programme held a grade-1 teacher qualification. Teachers are furthermore encouraged to continue to develop their skills. A 'teacher development grant' has been made available to support those working towards obtaining an additional Bachelor's or Master's degree, and a 'PhD grant' for university doctoral research for two days a week over a four-year period with full salary entitlement.

Adult and upper secondary vocational education

The Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB) covers two types of education: upper secondary vocational education (MBO) and adult education.

Upper secondary vocational education in close proximity to labour market

MBO comprises school-bound vocational training (BOL) and block or apprenticeship programmes with work components (BBL). MBO courses are offered in four subject fields (economics, technology, agriculture and personal and social care/health care) and the courses can be taken at four different qualification levels:

- assistant worker (entrance level/ level 1);
- basic vocational training (level 2);
- professional training (level 3);
- middle management or specialist training (level 4).

Of all Dutch education branches, the MBO division is in closest proximity to the labour market. MBO colleges have frequent contact with companies and organisations where students work or obtain their work experience. Regional trade organisations and the industry communicate with the colleges about the quality and content of the courses on offer. This relationship between colleges and companies is extremely important to ensure that the education provided at the colleges meets the demands of the labour market.

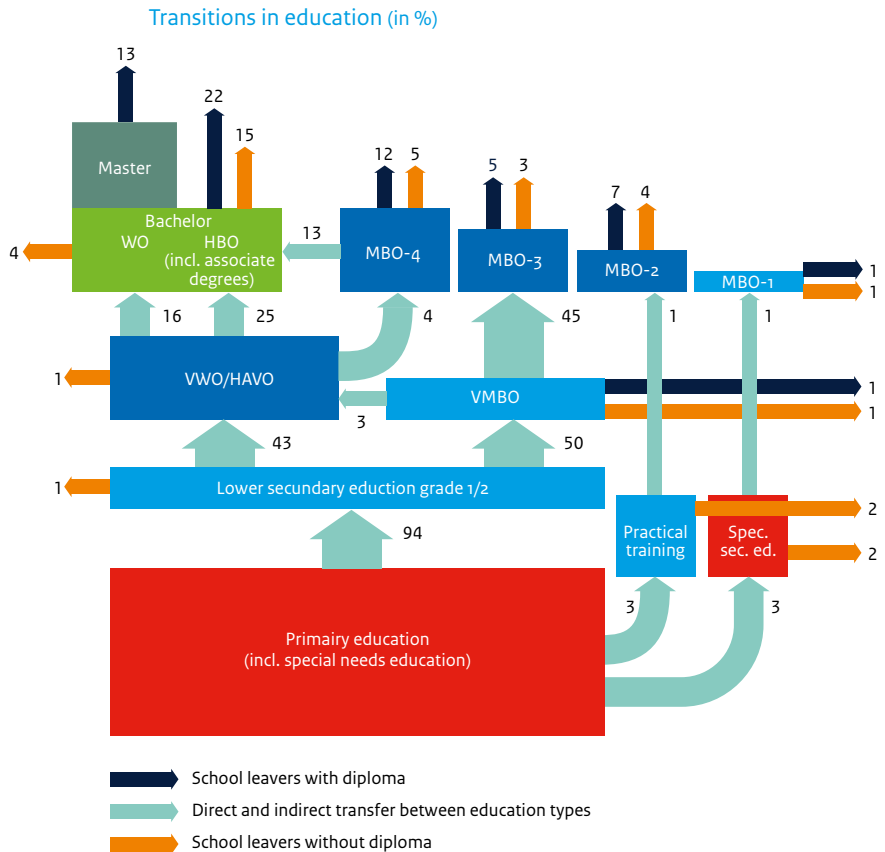
Adult education offers a second chance

Adult education is accessible to adults over the age of 18 and offers various programmes for their development:

- Adult general secondary education (VAVO). VAVO is regarded as 'second chance education' (VMBO-theoretical programme, HAVO and VWO);
- Dutch as a second language (NT2) I and II, leading to the Dutch as a second language certificate, as referred to in the Decree on State Examinations in Dutch as a Second Language. NT2 plays an important role in the integration of immigrants;
- Dutch language and arithmetic, aimed at basic literacy and the starting level for vocational education.

There are many roads to educational success

Upper secondary vocational education offers a good basis for entering the workforce, but students may also choose to continue their educational career in higher education. Forty-one out of 100 pupils leaving primary education end up entering higher education directly from HAVO/VWO, while 13 will enter higher education after finishing an upper secondary vocational track (MBO-4).



The diagram illustrates transitions of students in the Dutch education system. It shows a number of main routes as well as alternative tracks.

Source: OCW (DUO), 2014

Higher education is a binary system

The Netherlands has a binary higher education system, which means there are two types of programme: research-oriented programmes (WO), which are offered at research universities, and practical-oriented programmes (HBO), offered at universities of applied sciences. The distinction between the two types is important as it determines the admission requirements, content and length of degree programmes, as well as the degrees awarded.

Admission to HBO requires a HAVO or MBO-4 diploma. Admission to WO requires a VWO diploma. A HBO Bachelor's programme lasts four years, while a WO Bachelor's programme lasts three years. The Dutch higher education system offers the following degree programmes: Associate degree, Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree. The Associate degree programme is a relatively new form (2006). The two-year Associate degree programmes initially were part of HBO Bachelor's programmes, but from 2013 onward have acquired a more independent status within Bachelor's programmes.

Investments in quality of higher education and quality agreements

The new student finance system will result in a release of government funding from 2018 onwards, which will be allocated to higher education. These investments will be linked to quality agreements concluded between the government and higher education institutions. The evaluation of the current system of performance agreements and performance-based funding over 2012-2016, which has an experimental status, will generate important lessons learned for designing and developing quality agreements to improve educational quality.

More international students in the Netherlands than Dutch students abroad

Dutch higher education, especially Master’s programmes, are increasingly taught in English, which has made Dutch education more appealing to international students. More than 8% of students in Dutch higher education come from abroad whereas only 1.4% of Dutch students study abroad. Germany is the main country of origin of international students in Dutch higher education, comprising about one third of all international students.

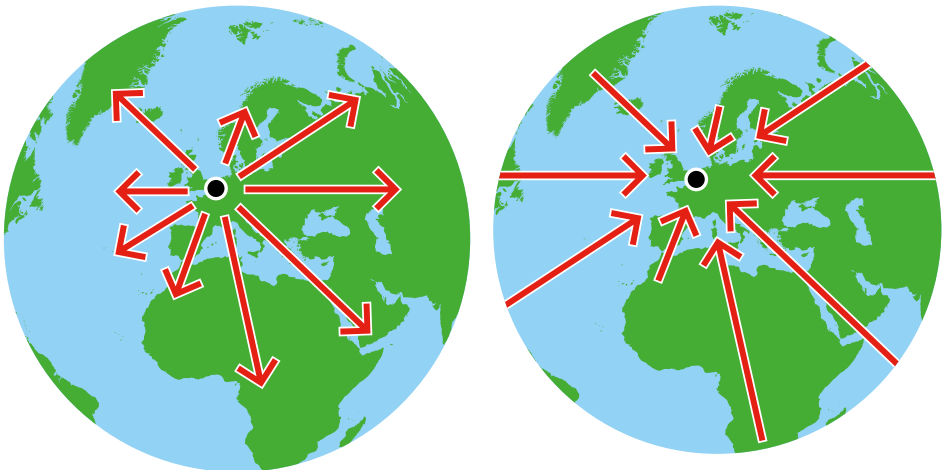
The most popular country of destination for Dutch students who study abroad is Belgium.

International mobility students higher education

As % of total enrolment in the Netherlands

	Dutch students studying abroad	Foreign students in the Netherlands in subsidised programmes
2008-2009	1.1%	
2009-2010	1.2%	7.8%
2010-2011	1.2%	8.3%
2011-2012	1.3%	8.7%
2012-2013	1.3%	8.8%
2013-2014	1.4%	8.8%

Source: Statistics Netherlands

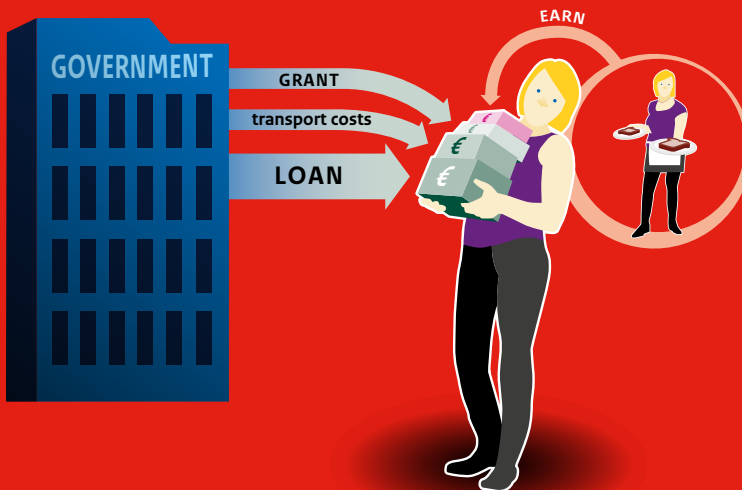


Students in upper secondary vocational and higher education are eligible for student support

A student support system is in place for students in higher and vocational education.

Eligible full-time students in higher education can receive income dependent grant to a maximum of € 382 per month, if their parents' income is below a certain threshold. All students in higher education can take out student loans to cover their tuition fees and living costs, to a maximum of about € 1,000 per month. Loan conditions are social: a low interest rate applies and repayment is income-contingent. Furthermore, all students receive a student public transport pass, which gives them free travel on public transport in the Netherlands.

The student financial aid system for eligible students in vocational education is similar, but there is a difference in the level of aid. In this type of education, students receive a maximum of about € 350 per month, depending on their parents' income. In addition, every student over the age of 18 receives a basic grant, which ranges from € 82 per month for students living with their parents to € 267 per month for students living on their own. In addition to these grants, they may take out student loans and travel for free in Dutch public transport.



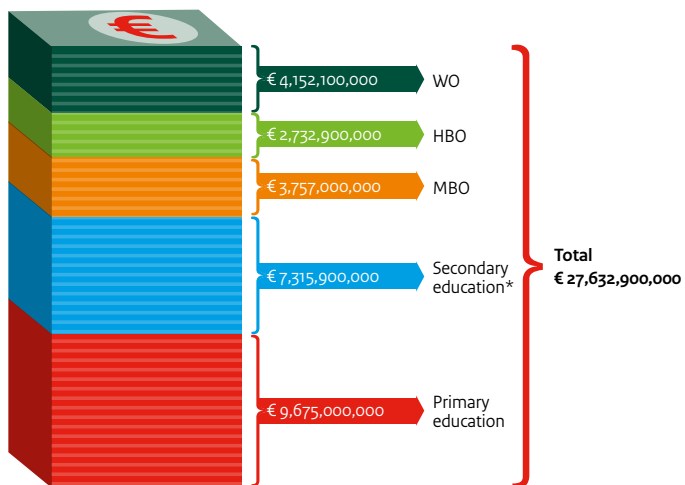
Various parties contribute to education expenditure

Various parties, public and private, contribute to education expenses. Education is not only financed through funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science but also by such parties. For instance, the Ministry of Economic Affairs pays for agricultural education, local authorities contribute to educational facilities and parents and students pay a fee for their education. Companies also contribute financially to vocational training programmes and work placement positions.

OCW expenditure over EUR 27 billion

In 2014, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science spent over 27.5 billion on education.

OCW expenditure to education in 2014



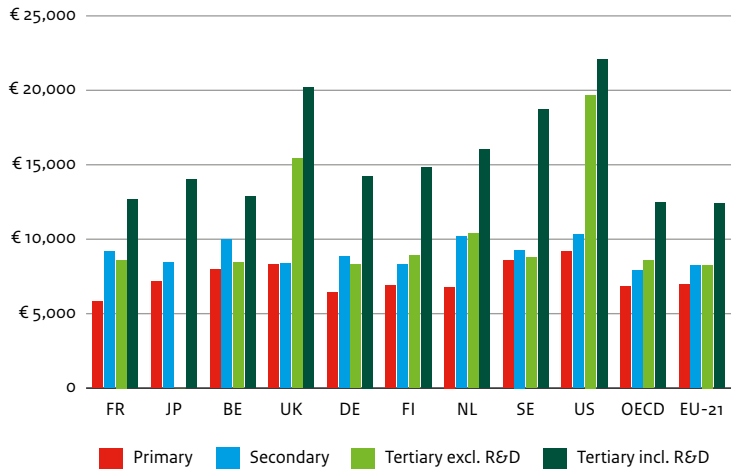
* excluding upper secondary vocational education

Source: OCW annual report 2014

Expenditure on education per student is above-average from secondary education onward

Expenditure on primary education per child is a little under the EU and OECD average. In secondary and tertiary education, expenditure is well above the international mean.

Public and private expenditure on education institutions per student/pupil (in Euros, converted with purchasing power parity (2012))

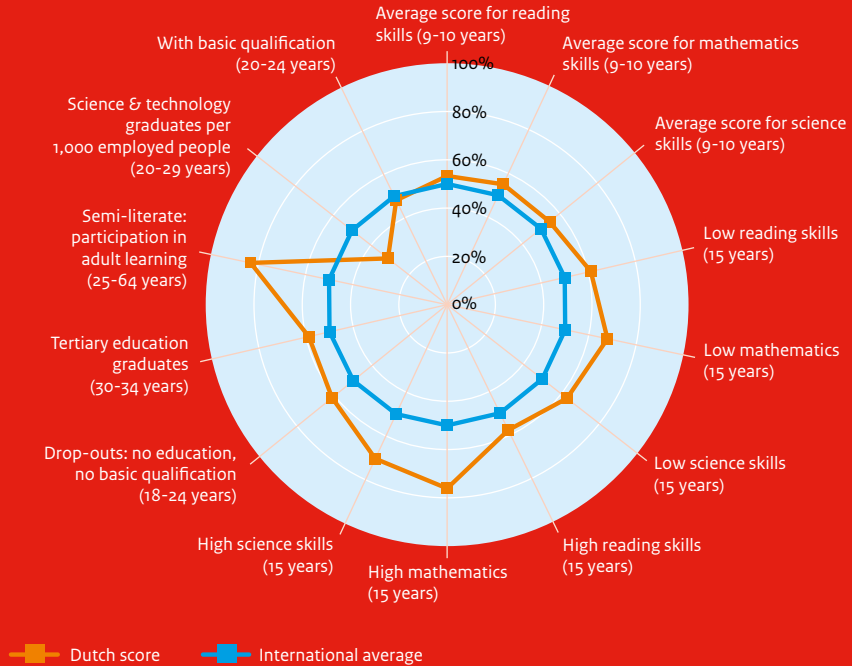


Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2015

Educational output in the Netherlands strong

The Netherlands has a high tertiary education attainment rate. The number of drop-outs has decreased considerably over the last ten years, thanks to an intensive strategy. Adult participation in lifelong learning is well above the EU average. The results of international assessments indicate that educational performance in the Netherlands is good.

Performance of Dutch students/pupils
(compared to the international average)



Sources: Timss, Pirls, Pisa, CBS, OCW (DUO)

The values have been converted to be able to compare the indicators.

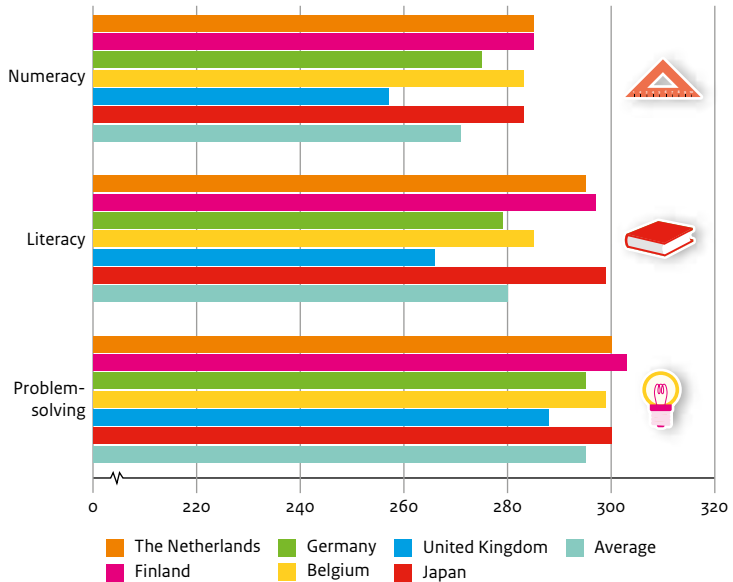
A point outside the ring 'international average' indicates that the Netherlands performs better, while a point inside it means that the country score is below the international average.

The goal of education is to prepare young people for participation in society. Whether this goal has been met can be measured by studying the working population's skills and the number of employed people.

Skills of working population are above international mean of average

The OECD-PIAAC study shows that the Dutch working population delivers an above-average performance with regard to the measured basic skills.

PIAAC performance (skills of people between the ages of 16 and 65, regardless of prior education)



Source: OECD PIAAC 2012

Participation in lifelong learning is high in the Netherlands

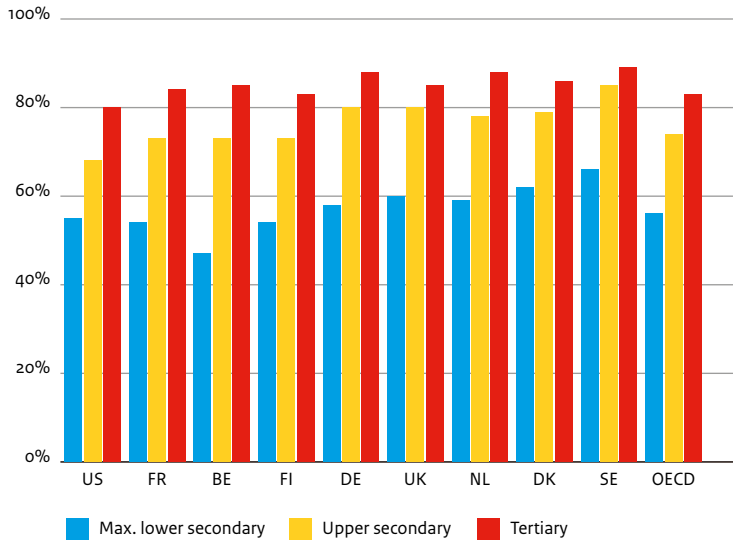
Lifelong learning includes anything from on-the-job training to continuing VET or a return to formal education to obtain a doctoral degree. The participation of Dutch adults in formal and non-formal learning (17.8%) is above the EU average of 10.7%. Young adults (27.3%) as well as higher

educated adults (24.9%) show higher participation rates. Recent policy measures to stimulate adult learning focus on, for example, adults with low levels of basic skills, adults in formal part-time education (i.e. courses leading to a diploma), and employees in sectors for which employers' organisations have indicated to have a high demand for highly educated employees (health care and technology).

The higher the educational level, the higher the portion of employed people

Figures on employment show that the higher the educational level, the more often people are employed. The figure below also shows that the percentage of employed persons in the Netherlands is above the OECD average for all education levels.

Percentage of employed persons aged 25-64 by education level



Source: OECD, EaG 2015

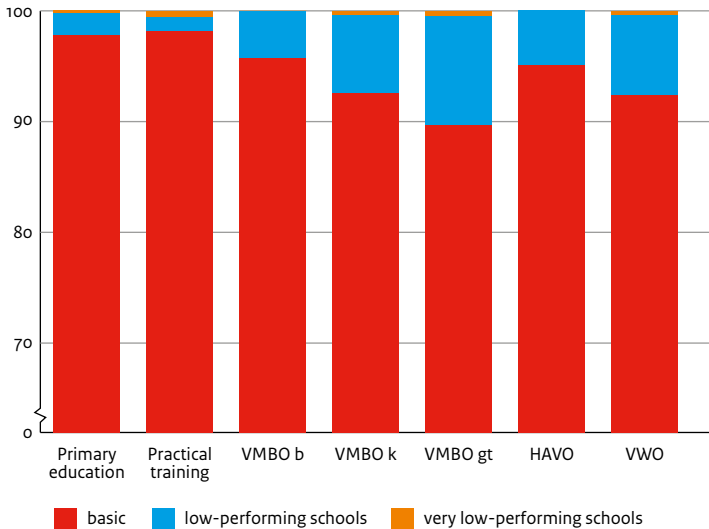
The quality of education is assured by two organisations

The Inspectorate of Education monitors the quality of primary and secondary education

The inspectorate conducts school inspections in primary, secondary, MBO as well as in special-needs education. Since 2008, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education has worked with a risk-based model of inspection in order to identify schools which pose a risk in terms of their level of quality. On the one hand, this system is intended to limit the inconvenience of inspections of schools with satisfactory results, while on the other hand it is aimed at increasing the impact of inspections. Schools that appear to provide good educational quality (no risks detected) and deliver good student results are 'rewarded' by a reduction of the intensity and frequency of inspections. The inspectorate aims to swiftly improve the quality at schools which deliver poor education (risks detected) and unsatisfactory results.

Changes to the inspection of schools will be introduced as of August 2017. In addition to safeguarding a basic quality, the inspectorate will also encourage school administrations to work on their own quality improvement, in cooperation with their schools and programmes. A good climate for improvement is the key to maximising the potential of students and pupils. Instead of meeting the basic requirements, the standard will be to strive for better education.

Quality of schools



Source: Inspectorate of Education 2014

The quality of higher education is monitored by NVAO

In higher education, inspection is different from that in other educational divisions, because the Dutch higher education system applies a peer review-based accreditation system, like many other countries in Europe. NVAO, the Dutch-Flemish accreditation organisation, is responsible for the accreditation of study programmes in higher education. The NVAO is a member of both the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

Its main task is to monitor the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders. It does this on the basis of the tasks described in the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) and in accordance with current international accreditation practice. The NVAO's task description includes monitoring the quality of existing higher education study programmes and assessing the quality of new study programmes.



Colophon

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