

NETHERLANDS

Summary

Country Report on the Vocational Education and Training system, REFERNET Cedefop

and

Summary report on Vocational Education and Training (VET) for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)



CONTENTS

1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM	4
1.1 Definitions.....	4
1.2 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET.....	4
1.3 Diagram of the education and training system.....	5
1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET	7
1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET	8
1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs	8
1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs	8
1.8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET.....	9
1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training	9
1.10 References	9
2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.....	10
2.1 Population	10
2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes.....	10
2.2.1 <i>IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.</i>	10
2.2.2 <i>Different types of educational/VET settings</i>	11
2.2.3 <i>The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)</i>	11
2.3 VET programmes and employment.....	12
2.3.1 <i>Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes</i>	12
2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment) 12	
2.4.1 <i>Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.</i>	12
2.4.2 <i>Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.</i>	12
2.4.3 <i>Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.</i>	12
2.4.4 <i>Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.</i>	13



2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level	13
2.5 Legislation and policy	13
2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation	13
2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment	14
2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework.....	14
2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market.....	14
2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals	15
2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)	15
2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes	15
2.7 Funding	15



1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

1.1 Definitions

Primary education (ISCED level 1; U: *PO – primair onderwijs*): for pupils aged 4-12; for eight consecutive years.

Special education at primary and secondary level (U *SO/VSO – special onderwijs/voortgezet speciaal onderwijs*): for pupils aged 3-20 with learning or behavioural difficulties and/or with mental, sensory or physical handicaps.

General secondary education (ISCED levels 2 and 3; U *AVO – algemeen voortgezet onderwijs*)

Pre-vocational secondary education (*VMBO – voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*) lasts 4 years. The first two years consist of general subjects only and years 3 and 4 are characterised by three system elements:

1. pupils can receive extra support in the different programmes;
2. pupils choose a 'learning path' characterised by 'level differentiation', programmatic orientation and different transfer possibilities in the education system.
3. Pupils choose a sector in the pre-vocational oriented pathways (agriculture, technology, economics, health and welfare) and further specialities within a sector

Lower general secondary and pre-vocational education (ISCED level 2; U(*VMBO – voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*))

Labour-oriented programme for pupils who are not able to attain a lower secondary/pre-vocational education (*PRO = praktijkonderwijs*) diploma.

Senior secondary vocational education

a) Two learning pathways: school-based full-time or part-time programmes with practical periods in enterprises (*BOL – beroepsopleidende leerweg*) and a dual pathway (apprenticeship training) in which learning and working are combined (*BBL beroepsbegeleidende leerweg*). Normally, apprentices conclude two contracts, an educational agreement with the VET school (*onderwijsovereenkomst*) and an employment contract (*arbeidscontract*) with an organisation/enterprise. At least 60% of the study time is spent at the workplace. In practice, this means that students also conclude a 'practical learning agreement' (*praktijkovereenkomst*) with a company (and with their school) for four days a week and attend school one day a week, though this varies.

b) Programmes at four levels with different access criteria and transfer possibilities for further learning: at four levels with different duration (U *MBO – middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*).

1.2 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

The main objectives to which the VET system has to contribute are: to raise the educational level of the population; to embed the VET system in a lifelong learning strategy; and to make the VET system more attractive for participants and stakeholders in the labour market and in society.

In relation to raising the educational level of the (future) labour force population and also to promoting a lifelong learning strategy, these priorities include:

- reducing the number of early school leavers by 50% between 2002 and 2012;



- aligning different types and levels of IVET by realising a ‘vocational education column’ which includes pre-vocational education (ISCED level 2), senior secondary vocational education (ISCED levels 3 and 4) and a more differentiated higher professional education (ISCED level 5)

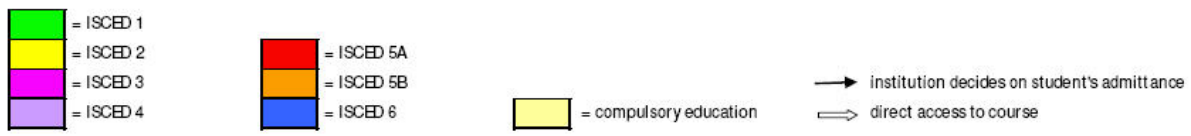
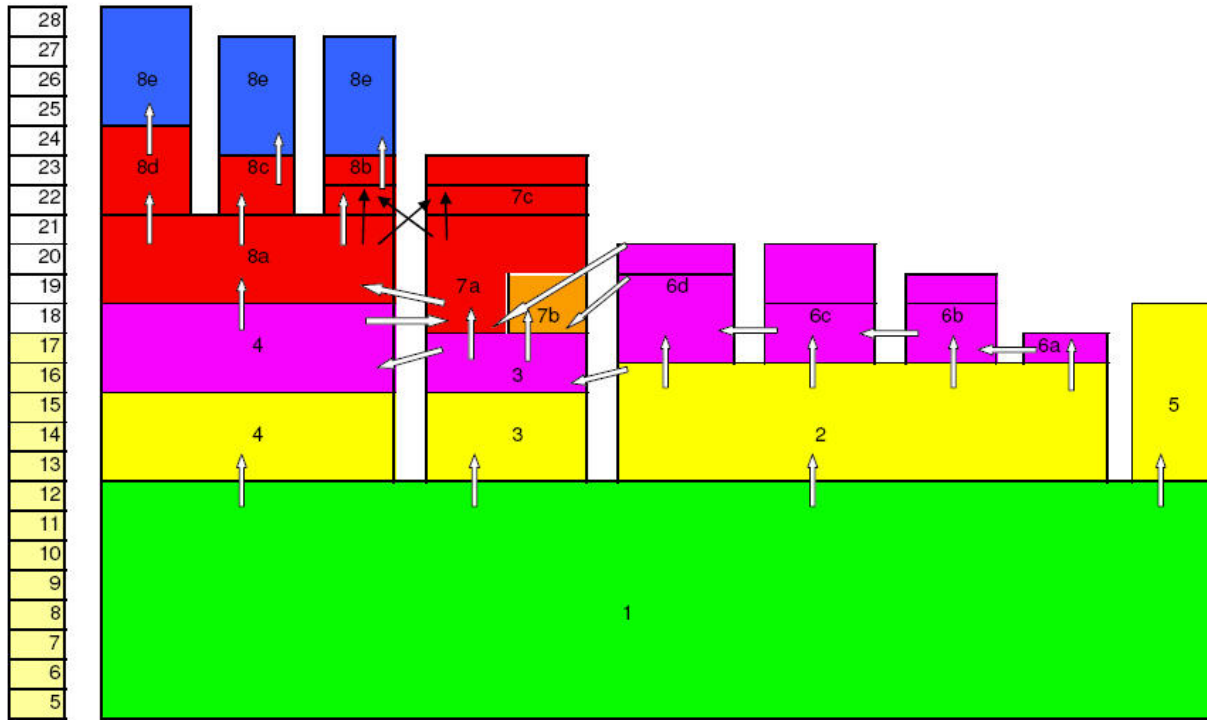
In relation to enhancing the attractiveness of VET, for instance:

- implementing a competence-based qualification structure for senior secondary vocational education. This new qualification structure contains a description of competences for work, (further) learning and citizenship as central issues for preparing future employees for the requirements of modern society. This structure gives educational institutions more freedom to adopt innovative pedagogical and didactical methods.
- introducing innovative learning arrangements in VET schools at different levels and improving regional cooperation with different stakeholders (including those in the labour market);
- promoting science and technology education throughout the education system to enhance the attractiveness of technical programmes and the quantitative growth of the number of science graduates.

A further key priority is to prevent a shortage of VET teachers in the near future. Many of these teachers belong to the ‘baby boom’ generation born after 1945 and are set to retire before 2015. An important debate is now being conducted with a view to raising the quality of teacher training and finding a new balance in curricula between subject oriented knowledge and pedagogical/didactical skills.

1.3 Diagram of the education and training system

Figure 1: Diagram Of The Dutch Education System (Incl. Progression And Transfer Routes). Eurydice – the Netherlands (2007).



	Legend
1	primary education (PO)
2	pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO)
3	senior general secondary education (HAVO)
4	pre-university education (VWO)
5	practical training (PRO)
6a	secondary vocational education - training to assistant level (MBO – level 1): ½-1 yr
6b	secondary vocational education - basic vocational training (MBO – level 2): 2-3 yrs
6c	secondary vocational education - professional training (MBO – level 3): 2-4 yrs
6d	secondary vocational education - middle management training (MBO – level 4): 3-4 yrs
7a	higher professional education (HBO-bachelor)
7b	associate degree (HBO)
7c	higher professional education (HBO-master): 1-2 yrs
8a	university (WO-bachelor)
8b	university (WO-master): 1-2 yrs
8c	university (WO-dentistry): 2 yrs (total: 5 yrs)
8d	university (WO-medicine/veterinary/pharmacy): 3 yrs (total: 6 yrs)
8e	PhD: 4 yrs

1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

TABLE 7: ORGANISATIONAL LEVELS AND FUNCTIONS/ROLES WITHIN INITIAL VOCATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Function	VMBO (ISCED-2)	MBO (ISCED-3/4)	HBO (ISCED-5)
Legislation/financing (par. 3.1 and chapter 9)	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science/ Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality	The same	The same
Development of qualifications	Design: national level Validity: national	Design: sectoral level by Knowledge Centres VET – Trade and Industry (social partners & VET). Validity: national	Design: school level Validity: national
Development of curricula (chapter 7)	School level	School level	School level
Examination (chapter 7)	Partly central/national; partly school exams	School exams; external contribution of trainers in enterprises	School exams
Quality assurance	Internal External: Inspectorate	Internal External: Inspectorate; special attention: exams	Internal: self-evaluation. External: accreditation of HBO-programmes by NVAO*. European level: use of Dublin level descriptors.
Promotion of interests by associations of schools**	VO Council	MBO Council (schools); Colo (association of sectoral knowledge centres)	HBO Council

**NVAO = Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie).*

***PAEPON promotes the interests of private, non-subsidised VET providers that have been legally recognised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to offer regulated VET courses at upper secondary and tertiary level.*

IVET Policies:

for lower secondary general and pre-vocational education (VMBO – voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs) as part of general secondary education the Secondary Education Act (WVO – Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs; 1968 with later amendments).

- for senior secondary vocational education (MBO – middelbaar beroepsonderwijs; the General Adult Education and Vocational Education Act (WEB – Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs; 1996 with later amendments).

- for higher professional education (HBO – hoger beroepsonderwijs; the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW – Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek; 1993 with later amendments).

The following laws are also important for IVET:

- Regional Registration Act (early school leavers) and Coordination (RMC: Regionale Meld- en Coördinatiewet, 2001). Goal: reduction of early school leaving.

- Student Finance Act (WSF – Wet op de Studiefinanciering; for students over the age of 18 and in full-time education).

- The Reduction of Wage Tax Contributions Act (WVA – Wet Vermindering Afdracht Loonbelasting). Goal: financial support of enterprises that provide places for apprentices and interns.



- The Professions in Education Act (*Wet BIO – Wet op Beroepen in het Onderwijs*; 2006).

Valid for primary, secondary and general adult education and for IVET at senior secondary level: regulates the minimum requirements for teachers.

1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

- teachers in IVET as a regulated, publicly financed part of VET ;
- trainers in enterprises fulfilling a role within the school-based and/or dual pathways in IVET;

1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

- The labour market and vocational education and training constitute the foundation for the Co-operation Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB). They work together on themes such as the VET qualifications structure, examination, work placement and the offer of training programs.
- Social partners have an explicit task to take the initiative to incorporate new occupations or qualifications into the national qualification structure in senior secondary vocational education
- The centres for work and income (*Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen - CWI*), the social security agency (*UWV*) and the Council for Work and Income (*RWI*) are also involved in the cooperation between the ROA and SBB to match information on demand and supply in the labour market, at sectoral and regional level.
- The Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (*ROA*) is the institute in the Netherlands that specialises in labour market forecasting and skills anticipation.

1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs

Modernisation of vocational education curricula : (1) a turn towards competence based learning in multiple forms; (2) more active forms of work, which call for greater levels of independence and self-regulation amongst participants in vocational education programmes; (3) the introduction of a greater variety in practical learning with the emphasis on the practical applicability of knowledge: workplace learning; simulation companies; carrying out assignments for companies, etc.; (4) the development of longitudinal learning strands that transcend the different types of vocational education; (5) the introduction of different forms of supporting participants: coaching, mentoring (also peer mentoring), career guidance, etc.; and (6) the introduction of more varied means of assessment, including the simulation of an aptitude test.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science determines the macro-effectiveness and efficiency provision (learning departments for broad fields related to the labour market) in lower secondary pre-vocational education. Schools in senior secondary vocational education decide which qualifications to provide. While efficiency and effectiveness exist at a regional level, no effectiveness tests are in place at national level. In higher professional education, schools develop their programmes themselves (in cooperation with partners in the labour market). These programmes are accredited by a competent authority. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decides whether an accredited programme is to be publicly funded or not (macro-effectiveness test).



1.8. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET

Career guidance is an integral part of schools and training centres in general secondary education and senior secondary vocational education. It is a special task for teachers who are known in this context as student counsellors/coaches. In this case, career guidance is a task of the school. Information about study programmes and work, more active forms such as visits to schools and enterprises, and 'participatory learning' can be integrated into or organised alongside the curriculum. Schools decide how they organise career orientation and counselling. Private agencies for career guidance, e.g. Advice Centres for Training and Employment, can be contacted by schools or individuals for general or special advice.

1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training

The Financing Services Institute (*Centrale Financiering Instellingen - CFI*) within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science plays a key role in the administration and financing of IVET.

Lower secondary vocational education

The funding principle is block grant funding. It gives the competent authority considerable freedom in deciding how to spend the available resources. Schools receive a fixed amount per pupil plus a fixed amount per school

Senior secondary vocational education and general adult education

There are various sources of funding in this sector:

- **Government funding** Block grant funding of schools is within the macro budget at national level
- **Students.** Students in vocational education and training programmes pay fees to the government and qualify for student grants from the age of 18

1.10 References

Visser, K, ECBO (Expertisecentrum Beroepsonderwijs) and Cedefop Refernet Netherlands (2009) Netherlands: VET in Europe. Country Report Thessaloniki: Cedefop.



2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1 Population

This definition is also related to the target group of the VET-project.

2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

On average, children are 12 years of age when they enter secondary education. Secondary education encompasses schools providing pre-university education (vwo), general secondary education (havo), pre-vocational secondary education (vmbo) and practical training (pro).

Practical training is intended for youngsters for whom a qualification at the lowest vmbo-level is out of reach. For them, preparation for transition to employment is the most important aim. Practical education also aims at preparing these pupils to be able to take part in society as independently as possible. Besides academic development (meeting the needs and possibilities of the individual learners), personal development and social competences are important learning domains.

Vmbo is divided into four learning pathways:

- the basic pre-vocational programme (BB);
- the middle-management pre-vocational programme (KB);
- the combined theoretical and vocational programme (GL);
- the theoretical programme (TL).

Vmbo students can receive additional support through learning support programmes (lwoo). After vmbo, at an average age of 16, students may transfer to vocational education (mbo).

Vocational education institutes have been incorporated in regional centres (ROCs). MBO comprises a vocational training programme (BOL) and a block or day release programme (BBL). There are four qualification levels:

- assistant worker (level 1)
- basic vocational training (level 2)
- professional training (level 3)
- middle-management and specialised training (level 4)

The programmes last a maximum of 4 years.

Youngsters with SEN can also take part in secondary special education. These special schools can offer different learning pathways: the same regular pathways as mainstream secondary schools (the programmes of vmbo included), a programme for practical training (with a strong focus on transition towards the labourmarket) or a programme aimed at daycare.

Data 2011:

Number of pupils with SEN in special secondary schools: 35.900

Number of pupils with SEN in mainstream secondary schools: 18.500



2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

See above. Within the Netherlands there are several possibilities ranging from full inclusion to special schools.

2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)

(Special) Secondary education prepares pupils for their future in society. Vmbo is intended as preparation for vocational education (mbo), and practical training is intended for youngsters for whom a qualification at the lowest vmbo-level is out of reach. For them, preparation for transition to employment is the most important aim.

In 2006 the new set of 58 attainment targets was introduced in schools for lower secondary education. The targets offer broad guidelines on the core content which should be offered. Schools are encouraged to offer this content in broad learning areas, but this is not prescribed. Schools have the freedom to determine their own curriculum, within the framework of these targets.

Upon completion of the basic secondary education, students move on to the upper stage of secondary education. At this stage they choose certain areas of specialisation. Within the context of vmbo, youngsters enter the specialisation stage. At this stage students specialise by choosing:

- a particular sector: this is a group of subjects which lays the foundation for further education;
- vocational stream within that sector: each pathway comprises distinctive groups of subjects and vocationally oriented programmes that are more theoretical or more practically oriented. The choice of a pathway has implications for the options open to pupils after vmbo;
- a vocational-oriented programme within the chosen stream: pupils can opt to specialise within one particular department (this programme leads on to vocational education in a specific occupation) or they can delay choosing a specialisation by opting for a broad-based programme.

The specialisation stage lasts two years.

The secondary school examination consists of two components: (i) a school examination, and (ii) a national examination. The school exams are set and administrated by the school, and usually consist of two or more tests or practical assignments per subject during the last two years. Schools decide when to set the examinations. The national examination takes place at a fixed time at the end of the final school year (May). The elements of both the school examination and the national examination are described in an examination syllabus which is approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. A school examination syllabus, in which schools specify what will be tested, how and when, has to be submitted to the Inspectorate.

Practical education aims at preparing youngsters to be able to take part in society as independently as possible. Besides academic development (meeting the needs and possibilities of the individual learners), personal development and social competences are important learning domains. There are no national standards. Schools for practical training can adapt the core objectives for lower secondary education towards the needs of the learners. In addition to these objectives, there is a lot of attention for transition to the labour market. There is no central examination.



Recently, three new sets of attainment targets have been developed for special schools for secondary education:

1. for schools that offer mainstream programmes (vmbo, havo or vwo),
2. for schools that offer programmes for transition to the labour market;
3. for schools that offer programmes for transition to day care.

For the first target group, examination is the same as for mainstream schools. There are several possibilities for enhancing the accessibility of examinations for youngsters with SEN.

There are no national examinations for the other two target groups. All the pupils get a diploma or certificate.

Vocational education (mbo) focuses on preparing pupils for their future employment. The national vocational education bodies are responsible for developing a clear qualification structure setting out the knowledge, skills and attitude required by employers.

2.3 VET programmes and employment

2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes

The national vocational education bodies are responsible for developing a clear qualification structure setting out the knowledge, skills and attitude required by employers. Therefore cooperation with the labour market is important.

Schools for practical training and special secondary schools have close connections with the local labour market. It is very important to find a match between the competences of a youngster and what is required in a specific workplace. Job carving is an interesting phenomenon - adapting a job, adjusted to the possibilities and the needs of a youngster.

2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)

2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.

We do not have specific data yet.

Secondary Special Education: approx. 11.000;

Practical Training (= mainstream education): approx. 26.000

Vocational Education (= tertiary mainstream education): approx. 6000

2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.

See above

2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level

Secondary special education: total population approx. 35.000, so 1/3 is involved in VET;



Practical Training = mainstream secondary education, but the total population has special needs, so approx 26.000 pupils

Vocational Education = total number of students: 484.900. Students with SEN: 6000

2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.

In the Netherlands there is compulsory Education up until the age of 18. Our national policy is aimed at getting a so-called basic qualification for all pupils. A basic or initial qualification is HAVO/VWO or MBO 2,3,4. Some pupils who leave school with a VMBO of MBO 1 diploma do not have an initial qualification. They are encouraged to attend further education

Pupils who leave school early and who do not have an initial-qualification are called ‘early school leavers’. In 2010-2011 there were approx. 38.000 early school leavers (pupils in secondary special education are not included)’. The number of these early school leavers (pupils without an initial qualification in tertiary vocational education) is 28.000. In secondary education (pathway to the labour market) it is 380.

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level

About 80 % of VET students find a job. The average unemployment rate of workers (15-22) with an initial qualification is 20%. For workers without an initial qualification it is 35%

2.5 Legislation and policy

2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation

The Dutch educational system is governed by different acts. Each type of education has its own legislation. For VET the following acts are important:

- Special education: Expertise Centres Act (WEC)
- Secondary education: Secondary Education Act (WVO)
- Adult and Vocational Education : Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB)

Another important act is the Compulsory Education Act. In this Act the obligation to attend school is laid down. Every child must attend school full time from the first school day of the month following its fifth birthday; in practice, however, nearly all children attend school from the age of four. Children must attend school full time for 12 full school years and, at least, until the end of the school year in which they turn 16. Those who have a practical training contract in a particular sector of employment attend classes one day a week and work the rest of the week. Since August 2007, the obligation to continue education in order to obtain a basic qualification is applicable to youngsters under the age of 18 who have finished compulsory education but have not yet obtained a basic qualification certificate. They need to achieve at least a certificate at havo, vwo or mbo 2 level. The Compulsory Education Act is implemented by municipal authorities. A municipal executive checks that children below school-leaving age, who are registered as resident in the area, are enrolled as pupils at an educational institute. The municipal authorities ensure compliance with the Act in both public and private schools through the school attendance officer appointed for this purpose. The Act requires each municipality to have one sworn attendance officer with specific responsibility for this matter, although in smaller local authorities such officials



frequently carry out other additional duties. Since 1995, the municipal authorities have been responsible for registering early school-leavers under the age of 23 and coordinating a regional policy on this matter. In 2001 the Regional Registration and Coordination (Early School Leavers) Bill was adopted by parliament. This bill contains amendments designed to prevent and tackle early school leaving in ordinary and special secondary schools, secondary vocational education and adult general secondary education. The main aim is for all young people to leave school with a basic qualification.

2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment

- The provision of ‘appropriate education’, the policy that gives responsibility to the school boards to provide each pupil with the care that he or she needs, through collaboration at regional level
- To qualify youngsters with SEN as high as possible.
- To integrate more youngsters with SEN on the labour market.
- Fewer subsidised jobs and sheltered workplaces - only for those people who really need them.
- New legislation for secondary special schools to enhance the quality of education towards youngsters with SEN
- Another financial system:

The funding of special needs education was modified in 2003. The system changed from supply-oriented financing to a system in which means are forwarded to the person requiring the services in more demand-oriented financing. The policy is known as the ‘back-pack’ policy. We are currently changing this funding system.

- Policies aimed at reducing the number of early school leavers.

2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework

There is cooperation between schools, regional government and social partners in guiding students with VET to the labour market, but the exact roles of the stakeholders and the extent of the cooperation differ according to the region. Educational providers are responsible for quality education and preparation for the labour market, but not for the actual placement in the labour market. Employment mediation and reintegration is the responsibility of the regional government. This is also a job of the UWV, which is a government institution that implements employee insurance and provides labour market services. In many regions there is still a gap between education and labour market. Several projects have been designed to reduce this gap, with varying results.

2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)
- National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO)
- National Institute for Assessment (CITO)
- National board for Examination (CVE)
- Board for Secondary Education
- Board for Vocational Education



- National vocational education bodies
- Schools (directors, teachers, other specialists)
- Inspectorate

2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals

2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)

The staff at schools for VET can be very diverse: teachers, career counsellors, craftsman, assistants, etc.

For secondary education, two forms of teaching qualification exist:

- lower secondary qualification: this so called grade two qualification qualifies teachers for the first three years of havo and vwo and all years of secondary vocational education (vmbo/mbo). Courses for this level are provided at higher education institutes.

- full qualification: this 'grade one' qualification qualifies teachers for all levels of secondary education. The grade one qualification courses are provided at higher education (hbo) institutes and at universities. The hbo courses are available for general subjects, art subjects, technical subjects and agricultural subjects. Students specialise in one subject and the course prepares them to meet the required standards of competence. At university, courses are offered for university graduates with a masters' degree. Students can take a postgraduate teacher training course or begin while they are still undergraduates. Courses are available for all subjects in the secondary curriculum.

Although supplementary training for teachers in special education is optional, the majority of special teachers take part in two year, part-time training. The course assumes that the student teachers are already working in education and focuses upon both theory and practice. There are several specialist fields, including the visually disabled, behavioural problems, the mentally disabled, peripatetic teaching and practical training.

There are teachers in VET who do not have a teachers degree but rather work experience in the field together with a pedagogical course.

2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

The employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN varies per school. Most of them offer internships to these learners, guided by a mentor. Schools also often make use of labour experts for labour orientation, and job coaches. Furthermore, assessments and practical training are offered to these children.

2.7 Funding

- a) Financial support and/or incentives for learners with SEN and families
- b) Financial support and/or incentives for companies to employ young people with SEN

a) Primary and secondary Education in the Netherlands is free of charge and vocational education (MBO) is free of charge up until the age of 18. There are different financial support programmes to support the parents (depending on the income);

From the age of 18, pupils with special needs can receive a so-called Wajong (a grant for pupils with SEN) from UWV. They can also receive support in finding a job

b)



-
- *Wage dispensation* for young people who, because of their disabilities, are incapable of performing labour that justifies payment according to the collectively agreed wage or the statutory minimum wage. In these cases, the UWV determines the wage level, which can be less than the minimum wage.
 - Employers are eligible for subsidies when they have to install ‘non-transportable facilities’
 - for example, elevators for wheelchairs, to enable a disabled person to work – if the costs exceed a certain threshold.