

# NETHERLANDS

**Source:** Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union, EURYDICE/CEDEFOP, 1995.

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# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

## 1.1 Background

The Netherlands is a Constitutional Monarchy with a parliamentary system. The Parliament (States General) together with the Sovereign and Government Ministers forms the legislature and the Sovereign and Ministers form the executive. There are two Houses of Parliament. The main political parties are the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and the Liberals. Until 1994, the Government was formed by a coalition of the first two; in 1994, a coalition of Socialists and Liberals has been formed.

The Dutch Constitution guarantees freedom of religion; the Roman Catholics form the largest single group (33%). 39% of the Dutch population practise no religion (1992).

The national language is Dutch. In the province of Friesland, Frisian is spoken and is the official language of the provincial and local councils (schools teach both in Dutch and in Frisian).

In 1993, the population of the Netherlands was over 15 million, living in an area of some 41,000 square kilometres. The birthrate has dropped by about 25% since the end of the sixties. 5% of the Dutch population consists of immigrants of other nationalities.

Of the 6½ million workforce (1993), 415,000 were registered as unemployed. 50% of GNP comes from the export of products and services. In 1992, the division of employment sectors was: agriculture (5%), industry/utilities (19%), construction industry (7%), commercial service industry (27%), government/defence/education (13%), other sectors (29%).

## 1.2 Basic principles: education

One of the key features of the Dutch education system, laid down in Article 23 of the Constitution, is freedom of education, which includes:

- the freedom to set up schools in accordance with religious or ideological principles;
- financial equality between public and private education;
- the requirement for municipal authorities to provide a suitable form of public education.

The freedom to set up schools in accordance with religious or ideological principles has led to a wide variety of education establishments, in particular, the parallel existence of public (*openbare scholen*) and private (*bijzondere scholen*) schools, to which all statutes apply equally. Some 70% of pupils attend private schools.

Freedom of education is restricted by the requirements laid down in the Compulsory Education Act. This law stipulates that children must attend an education establishment full-time until the end of the year in which they reach the age of 16 or have completed at least 12 full years. After full-time compulsory education it is compulsory to attend school at least part-time until the age of 18.

The freedom of privately run schools is also constrained by funding conditions.

## 1.3 Distribution of responsibilities

The Dutch education system combines a unified education system, regulated by central laws, with the decentralized administration and management of schools. Overall responsibility for the public-private education system lies with the State, represented by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, and the

legislative power of the Dutch Parliament. The administration and management of schools of primary and secondary general and vocational education is locally organized. The municipal authorities are the local authorities for all schools in the area. The municipal authorities are the competent authority for publicly run schools, while foundations or associations are the competent authorities for private schools.

The apprenticeship system is coordinated by 31 national independent professional/sectorial associations or foundations. The theoretical part of the apprenticeship is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, while the practical part is the responsibility of the employer.

There are around 70 colleges for higher professional education. Furthermore, there are ten publicly run universities and three private ones.

Organized pre-school child care facilities are funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

## **1.4 Administration**

### **Central authorities**

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is headed by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. One or two State Secretaries (junior ministers) of Education, Culture and Science may also be appointed.

Central Government controls education by means of laws and regulations in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Constitution. The prime responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science relate to the structuring and funding of the system, the management of publicly run institutions, inspection and examination procedures and financial aid to students. Control may be exercised by imposing qualitative or quantitative standards for the educational process in schools and/or for the results they produce, and by means of arrangements for the allocation of financial and other resources, and the imposition of conditions to be met by schools.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science lays down conditions, especially in primary and secondary education, relating to the types of schools that can exist, the length of courses, compulsory and optional school subjects, the minimum and maximum number of lessons to be given and their length, the norms for class division, the examination syllabus and national examinations, and standards of competence, salaries, status and teaching hours of teaching staff. The Ministry does not set up schools, but does determine norms for their establishment. These conditions apply to both public and private education.

### **Provinces**

The provinces have a limited role to play when it comes to managing education and its content. They are required to perform supervisory and jurisdictional duties. This includes tasks relating to supervising the sufficient provision of public and private primary and secondary education, and organizing training and adult education activities.

### **Local authorities (municipalities)**

The municipal authorities have a dual role: they are both the local authorities for all schools in the area (whether publicly or privately run) and at the same time the competent authorities - in effect the school boards - for the publicly run schools. They also ensure compliance with the Compulsory Education Act.

At primary level, their tasks include planning and coordinating accommodation, facilities and material provision, and appointing additional staff. At secondary level, the municipalities have a statutory responsibility to ensure maximum use of buildings; furthermore, they act in this area almost exclusively as competent authorities.

The Municipal Council sets up public schools and approves the establishment of private schools.

### **Competent authority**

The competent authority (or school board) assumes the responsibilities involved in running a **school** insofar as based on statutory provisions; the day-to-day management of primary and secondary schools may be delegated to the head teacher (rector in schools providing pre-university education, central management team in *MBO* schools), but ultimate responsibility still rests with the competent authority itself.

As mentioned above, the municipal authorities act as the competent authority for public education, whereas the competent authorities for private schools are the administration boards, associations or institutions responsible for setting up the schools. There are approximately 6,300 competent authorities in the Dutch education system.

The tasks and responsibilities of the boards of public and private schools are very similar. They include decisions with regard to the curriculum, the choice of teaching materials, the establishment of the school plan, timetable (lessons per compulsory or optional subject), the appointment and dismissal of head teachers, teachers and non-teaching staff, the admission and expulsion of pupils, the use of school buildings, school hours and the management of financial resources and arrangements for their administration.

Linked to the specific function of public-authority education, in addition, the boards of publicly run schools have to ensure the provision of enough schools, comply with statutory rules (as well as with funding provisions), ensure that pupils are not refused admission because of their beliefs, and be accountable to the Municipal Council for management activities.

The Government lays down a framework within which **HBO institutions** have to operate, but it is the responsibility of the competent authority to expand on the Government framework within the teaching and examination regulations. In their education and examination regulation, *HBO* colleges are required to specify the teaching programme, the main subjects and the content and form of the different examinations.

For the **universities** the same legal framework is applied as for the *HBO* institutions. The day-to-day management of a university is handled by the Executive Board and the University Council. The Executive Boards, comprising three members, including the rector, is accountable to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and to the University Council. The University Council comprises up to thirty representatives of the academic staff, students and the support and administrative staff.

### **National Apprenticeship Agencies**

Each business sector has its own national agency (a total of 31), whose board includes representatives from employer's associations, trade union organizations and schools. As part of general efforts to scale up activities (as is taking place in the *MBO* sector), plans are under way to consolidate the 31 national agencies into 13 specialized national centres.

The duties of the agencies are to advise on attainment targets, to organize examinations and to provide support for apprentices in the workplace. This is carried out by a counsellor who is the contact person between school and work, and provides guidance to pupils.

The final attainment levels for the *MBO* system are established by the Business Sector Consultation between Education and Industry (*BOOB*), an advisory body, and approved by the Ministry.

## 1.5 Inspection

The monitoring of both **public and private education** systems is performed by the Inspectorate for Education, as defined in Article 23 of the Constitution. The inspection procedure is set out in detail in education Acts. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science provides the funding for the inspectorate, whose staff members enjoy the status of civil servants. The Minister is entitled to issue instructions as regards the implementation of the inspectorate's tasks, be kept fully informed about the inspectorate's activities, and assess the inspectorate's annual workplan.

The Inspectorate Council is in charge of the inspectorate and is responsible for the management of the organization. Members of the Inspectorate Council include the Inspector General. In addition to the management headquarters, there are 13 regional offices.

Agricultural training is supervised by the Minister of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries through six regional offices.

The responsibilities of the inspectorate are:

- to ensure compliance with statutory regulations;
- to keep up to date with the educational situation by visiting schools;
- to promote the development of consultations on education with the competent authorities, the staff of schools and the regional or local authorities;
- to report to and advise the Minister.

The inspectorate reports on the impressions gained during school visits and publishes a yearly report on its findings.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science aims to turn the inspectorate into an independent body, within the terms of existing legislation and with funding by the Ministry.

In **higher education** (*HBO* institutions as well as universities), a system of internal quality control is coupled with periodical external quality controls by so-called visiting committees.

## 1.6 Financing

Funding for all levels and types of education comes, in principle, entirely out of central government funds. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science administers almost all central government expenditure on education, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries funds agricultural education. Funding is provided to public and private establishments according to the same criteria.

**Primary schools and schools for special education** (primary and secondary) receive funding to cover staffing costs, operation and accommodation. Within this government funding several funding systems exist to create a large measure of institutional autonomy:

- the Londo system, which is designed as a way of funding the provision of buildings, teaching materials and maintenance on the basis of pre-determined norms;
- the staff establishment budget system, which gives a great amount of autonomy with regard to the use of staff resources;
- lump-sum funding, which gives schools a degree of discretion as to how the annual budget is spent on staffing and operation costs.

While the Londo system and the staff establishment budget system are for specified items, the lump-sum funding provides budgets for all forms of expenditure.

Public and private **secondary schools** receive government funding to cover the costs of staffing, operation, establishment and equipment. Like primary and special education, the staff establishment budget system and lump-sum funding are used in secondary education as systems of funding.

Most costs are paid directly to the competent authority; primary accommodation costs are paid to the local authority.

The Central Government provides lump-sum grants to the **MBO schools** to spend as they see fit on staff costs or on upgrading facilities. The schools are free to choose between these two items. Under the funding rules, schools are required to keep accounts. The schools are entitled to keep any revenue earned from activities contracted with third parties. Members of school staff may also perform activities on a contractual basis within their regular terms of employment.

The national bodies coordinating the **apprenticeship system** receive central government funding (28 from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and 3 from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries) and there may be additional funding from the particular industry concerned. Funding is based to a large extent on the number of apprenticeship contracts concluded. The cost of the theoretical part of apprenticeships is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the cost of the practical part is borne by the employers, who receive contributions from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

In August 1993, the Higher Education and Research Act granted institutions of **higher education** considerable autonomy regarding financial policy.

New funding systems have been introduced for university and higher professional education. With the exception of the Open University, this comprises lump-sum funding based on criteria for the number of students and study performance, with only two prices for courses. Central Government pays up to 90% of higher education costs.

Education is free for all pupils up to the age of 16, although there may be costs to cover the purchase of books and teaching materials and travel. Pupils of 16 and over have to pay annual tuition fees (including apprentices). All students from 18 to 27 enrolled in full-time secondary or higher education are entitled to a basic grant and, depending on parental income, a supplementary grant or interest-bearing loan. Pupils aged 12 to 17 attending mainstream education may be entitled to study costs allowances, depending on parental income.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport funds organized child care via the municipalities. The latter decide whether and how to devote the resources to child care.

## 1.7 Private schools

Private schools are established upon private initiative and are run by a board of governors, an association or foundation. Under the terms of the Constitution, all schools - public and private - are funded on an equal basis. In other words, the Government funds both public and private schools in the same way. Central Government pays teachers in public and private schools; they have the same salary scales and terms of employment and enjoy the status of public servants.

In order to receive state financing, schools must observe certain conditions set out in specific government laws and regulations.

Private schools are free to establish curricular content according to their own principles, to choose their

own teaching methods and appoint members of staff who agree with the school's religious or ideological tenets. The private education system consists of different types of schools: Roman Catholic schools, Protestant schools and general private schools, the latter being based on specific ideological or pedagogical principles.

## 1.8 Advisory and consultative bodies

A great many advisory and consultative bodies exist in the Netherlands and they are entitled to make recommendations on education policy.

### Advisory bodies

The **Education Council** (*Onderwijsraad - OR*) is a permanent advisory body established in 1919, whose task is to ensure continuing equal financial treatment for public and private education, the coherence of education policy and legislation and continuing freedom of education.

The **Advisory Council for Education** (*Adviesraad voor Onderwijs - ARO*), set up in 1991 reports on any social trends of importance to education and gives advice on how education policy can respond to these trends.

The Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen - KNAW*) and the Advisory Council on Science and Technology Policy (*Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid - AWT*) give advice on science and science policy respectively. Advisory bodies that offer advice not only on education are the Socio-Economic Council (*Sociaal Economische Raad - SER*), the Advisory Council on Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid - WRR*), the Equal Opportunities Council (*Emancipatieraad*) and the Youth Policy Council (*Raad voor het Jeugdbeleid*).

### Consultative bodies

With regard to primary and secondary education the Minister of Education, Culture and Science consults within the Central Committee for Educational Consultation with representatives of parents, teachers and school boards. There is also a Secondary Education Consultative Committee whose membership includes, in addition, representatives of employers and trade unions. For matters relating to higher education, the Minister consults within the Higher Education Consultative Body with the administrations of higher professional education institutions and universities and student organizations.

On matters concerning working conditions for staff in the education sector, the Minister consults with the Boards Organizations Committee, representing school boards, and the Consultative Committee for Education and Science, representing civil servants and teachers unions.

### Support structure

Support services for schools are either general support services, for example, the school counselling services, or specialized support organizations. The three specialized support organizations are the national education advisory centres: the Foundation for Educational Research (*SVO*), the National Institute for Educational Measurement (examinations) (*CITO*), and the National Institute for Curriculum Development (*SLO*).

## Participation councils

Every primary and secondary school is required to set up a participation council representing staff and parents/pupils.

Parental participation can also take place through the parents' council. Staff can set up staff councils. Pupils can set up a pupils' council. The latter can all make recommendations to the participation council and/or head teacher.

Participation in higher education is defined in the Higher Education and Research Act (*WHW*). Every institution of higher professional education has a participation council representing staff and students. Its powers vary from one college to another. At universities students participate in the University Council and in subject committees.

## 2. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Separate nursery schools no longer exist in the Netherlands, as primary education has been extended to cover 4- to 6-year-olds. For 4- and 5-year-olds who do not attend a primary school the most common child care facilities are coeducational playgroups (*Peuterspeelzaal*) and day care centres (*Kinderdagverblijven*). Their aim is to stimulate the cognitive, social and emotional development of children through play.

Playgroups are for children aged 2 to 4, and are usually open three days a week for two-and-a-half to four hours a day. They are partly funded by the State through the local authorities, but may also be privately funded. Parents are required to make a contribution. Group size is limited to a maximum of 12 to 14 children. Some 35% of all children aged 2 and 3 go to a playgroup (50% of all 3-year-olds). Only some playgroups employ professional staff.

Day care centres are for children aged from six weeks to four or five years old. Children may go to day care centres five days a week, from about 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., or for just part of the week. Funding for these types of child care facilities is channelled through the local authorities by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Parents are required to pay an income-related contribution. Day care centres may also be funded by private resources. There must be two full-time or three part-time monitors per group. There is no statutory limit on the number of children in a group, but it normally has 8 to 16 children. Roughly 1% of children in the 0 to 4 age bracket go to a day care centre.

Monitors are required to hold an *MBO* certificate at the very least, or an *HBO* certificate.

At the end of 1992, 3,766 playgroups accommodated some 191,000 children. There were 1,155 full-time day care facilities (56,700 children) and 153 part-time ones (3,600 children).

## 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education is laid down in the Compulsory Education Act. Every child must attend school full-time from the first school day of the month following his/her fifth birthday; however, nearly all children attend school from the age of four.

Compulsory schooling lasts either 12 years full-time (5 to 17), or full-time from five until the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16 followed by part-time compulsory schooling until the age of 18 (majority).

## 4. PRIMARY EDUCATION (*Basisonderwijs*)

Primary education lasts for eight years, for children aged four to 12. It is provided in primary schools (*Basisschool*) which are subject to the Primary Education Act. This Act sets out the educational objectives, the rules on organizing education and the position of teaching staff, pupils and parents.

The Primary Education Act came into operation in 1985, replacing both the Nursery Education Act of 1956 and the Primary Education Act of 1920. Up to 1985, there were separate nursery schools for 4- to 6-year-olds with old-style primary schools catering for 6- to 12-year-olds.

As mentioned above, although children are obliged by law to attend school when they are five years old, almost all children start primary school at four (i.e. the first year is optional). For subsequent years, there is a 100% attendance rate.

The aim of primary education is to provide eight years of uninterrupted education as a foundation for secondary education. Primary education is oriented towards the emotional and intellectual development of the child, the development of creativity, the learning of knowledge and the acquisition of social, cultural and physical skills.

Primary education is provided in public and private schools. Some 65% of primary schools belong to the private education system. Parents can choose between publicly or privately run schools. For the purposes of public authority education, most municipalities are divided into catchment areas in order to ensure an efficient spread of pupils. Pupils must attend a publicly run school in the catchment area designated by the local authority (usually that in which the pupil lives), although exemption from this rule is possible. The rule does not apply to private education. Primary education is free of charge. School books are supplied by the school.

Primary schools are coeducational, separate school units. The establishment and closure of schools is based on the pupil density within a municipality: the number of children aged 4 to 12 per square kilometre. The minimum school size varies with the size of the municipality and is established by the Government.

Most primary schools are divided into eight classes, each containing one age-group. However, as schools are free to decide on organizational matters themselves, it is possible for classes to contain more than one age-group. The first four years are referred to as the junior classes and the last four as senior classes. Pupils may also be grouped by different levels of achievement, with possible mobility between the groups.

The same teacher is responsible for teaching a class all subjects during a school year. A specialized teacher may take certain subjects such as physical education. It is up to the schools to decide whether to assign a different teacher to a class at the end of each year.

The number of teachers allocated to a school depends on the number of pupils. Pupils with a mental or physical handicap and/or from low socio-economic background count for more than 1 pupil; their "weight" is established in accordance with regulations from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Primary schools may make use of the facilities of school **guidance** services, most of which are organized at local and regional level. The school counselling services provide support to schools as a whole and give guidance to individual pupils.

The school year runs from 1 August to 31 July. The date for the six-week summer holiday and its duration are laid down by government authorities. They are staggered over the three large regions into which the country is divided for this purpose. Other holidays are determined by the competent authorities.

The minimum number of hours that a pupil must attend school during each academic year is established by law. Pupils receive at least 3,520 hours of teaching over the first four school years and at least 4,000 hours over the last four school years. During the first four years, there are at least 22 hours of lessons per week and after that at least 25 hours of lessons per week. Pupils receive a maximum of 5.5 hours of lessons a day. No rules are applied as regards the length of lessons, but in general they last for 60 minutes. The minimum number of school days per year is 200 and a school week is made up of five days. The school day lasts from 8.30/9.00 a.m. to 3.00/3.30 p.m. with a lunch break lasting an average of an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Wednesday afternoon is usually free. The competent authorities are responsible for determining school hours.

Children are allowed to remain at school during the break at midday. The Primary Education Act imposes a duty on the competent authority of the school to enable pupils to stay in the school buildings and grounds, if the parents so wish. The competent authority may organize the necessary supervision or this may be left up to the parents, who are required to pay for the supervisory services.

## Curriculum

The Primary Education Act lists subjects that must always be taught to all pupils in primary school, if possible in an interdisciplinary form:

- sensory coordination and physical exercise;
- Dutch;
- arithmetic and mathematics;
- English;
- a number of factual subject areas: geography, history, science (including biology), social studies (including civics), intellectual and religious movements;
- expressive activities: developing the use of language, drawing, music, handicrafts, play and movement;
- social and life skills, such as road safety;
- health education.

Schools in the province of Friesland must also teach Frisian, and may conduct some lessons in that language.

The curriculum for each school is drawn up in a school plan featuring teaching and development objectives, the subjects, teaching methods, school organization and the means used to assess pupils' achievement. Provision may be made for pupils without a Dutch background. Each year, the two-year school plan is developed into a plan of activities which sets out the pupils' activities for the year in question, the duties of the teaching staff as well as the teaching time, holidays and other free days. The school plan and the activity plan must be submitted to the inspectorate for approval.

In January 1994, the Primary Education Evaluation Committee (*CEB*) published its report on the state of primary education. The Committee concludes that there are too many subjects included in the curriculum, which leads to an overloaded programme within the teaching time available. There is currently an investigation into which measures are to be taken.

Primary schools are free to choose their **teaching methods** and curricular content. Primary schools are also free to choose which **teaching materials** to use. They are not prescribed by Central Government but are the subject of commercial activity.

## Assessment

The assessment of pupils' academic performance in all subjects is continuous; it is carried out at regular

intervals (usually twice during the year and once at the end of it) by the teacher on the basis of all (oral and written) work accomplished during the school year. A scale of 1-10 is used for awarding marks. A score of 1 is extremely poor, while 10 is given for excellence. Pupils' individual progress is recorded in school reports.

Each school decides on measures to accommodate weaker pupils (different groups, support teachers or repeating). The teacher(s) and the school authority decide on whether a pupil moves up to the next class. Although it is possible for pupils to repeat every year, it is rare for a pupil to have to repeat a class or a year (1 to 2% do so each year). In principle, all pupils complete primary education.

No certificates or diplomas are awarded to primary school leavers, but pupils do receive a school report, which the head teacher draws up in consultation with the teachers. This describes their individual level of achievement and potential and advises on further study. Parents receive a copy of the report, but are not obliged to follow the advice on further study.

However, national tests organized by *CITO* (Central Institute for Test Development) have been developed for the final year of primary education and are used in some 60% of schools. These are aimed at gauging pupils' knowledge and understanding with regard to entry to the different types of secondary education, and may be taken into consideration in the school report.

## Teachers

Primary school teachers have a primary school teacher diploma (*diploma leraar basisonderwijs*), obtained on completion of a primary teacher training course at an *HBO* (higher professional education) institution. They are fully qualified to teach all primary school subjects to all age groups. Full-time training courses last for four years and part-time courses from four to six years.

In addition to general subjects, students training to be a primary school teacher are also taught a specialist subject, chosen from among such subjects as physical education, drawing, music, handicrafts and Frisian. Specialist teachers working in primary schools sometimes teach nothing but their specialist subject. One-quarter of the training is made up of teaching practice.

Teachers in public and private schools enjoy the status of civil servants and may work full-time or part-time.

In-service teacher training is regulated by law, but no in-service training is compulsory. When completed successfully, it leads to a certificate.

### Statistics 1991/92

|          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Pupils   | 1,519,800 | 1,484,400 |
| Teachers | 89,300    | 90,900    |
| Schools  | 9,420     | 9,370     |

## 5. SECONDARY EDUCATION (*Voortgezet onderwijs*)

After completing primary education, pupils move on to secondary education. Secondary education is attended by 12- to 16/18-year-olds and is governed by the Secondary Education Act (*Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs*), in force since 1968.

Secondary education is divided into the following types:

- pre-university education (*Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs - VWO*) for 12- to 18-year-olds;
- senior general secondary education (*Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs - HAVO*) for 12- to 17-year-olds;
- junior general secondary education (*Middelbaar Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs - MAVO*) for 12- to 16-year-olds;
- pre-vocational education (*Voorbereidend Beroepsonderwijs - VBO*) for 12- to 16-year-olds.

In *VBO* schools, lessons are given in general and vocational subjects. In *VWO*, *HAVO* and *MAVO* schools, education is primarily of a general nature.

According to the Basic Education 1993-1998 Decree, as from the 1993/94 school year, all types of secondary education begin with a three-year period of **basic education** (*basisvorming*), offering broad-based general teaching in which no strict distinction is made between general and technical subjects. The aim is to delay the choice of studies and modernize the curricula.

There had previously been a one-year transition class at the beginning of secondary education which facilitated progression to the second year of more than one type of school.

Pre-university education (*VWO*) lasts six years (including basic education) and prepares pupils for university education. However, pupils who have completed *VWO* can also go on to higher professional education. *VWO* is provided at three types of schools: the *Atheneum* (no classical languages), the *Gymnasium* (classical languages are compulsory) and the *Lyceum* (classical languages are optional).

Senior general secondary education (*HAVO*) lasts five years (including basic education) and prepares pupils for higher professional education, but many pupils go on to a *VWO* or a senior secondary vocational school (*MBO*).

Junior general secondary education (*MAVO*) lasts four years (including basic education). On completion of a *MAVO* school, pupils may go on to senior secondary vocational education (*MBO*), or they may decide to attend *HAVO* courses or enter the apprenticeship system.

Pre-vocational education (*VBO*) lasts four years (including basic education) and leads to senior secondary vocational education (*MBO*) and the apprenticeship system. *VBO* covers technical courses, home economics and domestic science, tradespeople's courses, commercial and administration courses, and agricultural courses. It is not a final stage in education but provides the basis for further vocational courses. *VBO* was begun in 1992 for pupils in the first year.

Up to that date, initial vocational education was provided in the form of junior secondary vocational education (*Lager Beroepsonderwijs - LBO*). Pupils already in *LBO* will continue until the end of their courses.

Secondary education is provided in both public and private schools. Roughly 70% of general secondary schools are private and some 90% of *VBO* (and *MBO*) schools are private. Tuition is free for all pupils up to 16, although books and teaching materials may have to be purchased. Pupils aged 16 and over must pay annual tuition fees, but parents can apply for allowances.

Secondary schools are coeducational. The type and name of a school is determined by the type of secondary education it provides. Some secondary schools may form part of a combined school embracing a number of different types of secondary education. Sizes vary greatly, from less than 300 to over 1,000. According to ministerial policy, the intention is to increase the number of secondary schools offering *VWO*, *HAVO*, *MAVO* and *VBO* courses within the same institution.

Pupils are admitted to secondary education if they have completed primary education (at an average age of 12 years old). Entry is decided by an admissions committee on the basis of the report from the pupil's primary school. For admission to *MAVO*, *HAVO* and *VWO*, pupils must have been assessed to establish

their suitability. Where a *MAVO* school shares a common first year with a *VBO* school, there are no conditions for admission; there are no conditions for admission to *VBO*.

It is common for classes to be arranged according to age groups. Classes may, however, contain pupils of one level or school type, or of mixed levels/school types (for example *VBO/MAVO*, *MAVO/HAVO*, *HAVO/VWO*). Within combined schools the pupils are sometimes all mixed during the first year (a transition period).

The number of teachers allocated to a school is established every year, based on the number of pupils. If a school has different kinds of teachers (full qualification, qualification for lower secondary education, physical education), the number of teachers is established for each level separately.

The school year runs from 1 August to 31 July. There were 195 school days per year; there are now 200 during basic education (as from the 1993/94 school year). The maximum time which may be allocated to pupil holidays is 60 school days. The summer holidays last for 7 weeks in July and August, staggered over the three large regions into which the country is divided for this purpose. The dates and length of the summer holidays are prescribed by Central Government, (except in the case of *MBO* courses). The dates of the Christmas and the May holidays are the same throughout the country. The competent authority decides on the dates and length of the remaining holidays, although Central Government does recommend two periods for the autumn and spring breaks. Schools operate five days per week.

The school board and the competent authority are required to establish a school plan giving an overview of the organization and content of teaching and a lesson timetable, and submit it for approval by the inspectorate. No requirements are laid down for subject matter, methodology or teaching methods, but examinations are subject to certain conditions.

## Curriculum

The recommended timetable for basic education contains 15 compulsory subjects: Dutch, English, second foreign language (French, German), mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry, computer and information literacy, history and civics, geography, economics, technology, social and life skills, visual arts/ music/ dance/ drama (at least two of these), physical education. In addition, 20% of the total curriculum is made up of optional subjects (Latin, religious instruction, mother tongue teaching, pre-vocational subjects, subjects from the basic curriculum, individual lessons or study or careers **guidance**). The time need not be used in the same way for every pupil and its extent may vary from one course year to the next.

National attainment targets are being set for the subjects in the basic curriculum. They are compulsory minimum standards for schools to achieve by the end of the period of basic education. There are two different achievement levels for basic education and pupils are grouped by level of achievement in such a way that it is possible for certain pupils to finish basic education in two years instead of three, while others may take four years.

The timetable gives a guide for the minimum number of lessons per subject. There is no obligation to adhere to the timetable except in the case of the number of hours set for social and life skills, physical education and art subjects. For *VBO* there is also a prescribed minimum number of hours for directly vocational subjects. During the first three years of *VWO* and *HAVO* courses, it is compulsory to take a third modern language (French, German, sometimes Spanish), and the curriculum for *Gymnasium* pupils must also include Latin or Greek during the first three years.

After the second year of the course, *VBO* schools can provide fewer than 1,000 lessons in the subjects prescribed for the basic curriculum, and replace these with vocationally oriented subjects. This is on condition that a total of at least 3,000 lessons are provided in the subjects of the basic curriculum over the three years.

Timetables also exist for the years following the basic education period. The recommended timetable for the whole period of all types of secondary education includes: Dutch, English, French and German language, history and civics, geography, mathematics, physics and chemistry, biology, music, drawing, handicrafts, dance, drama, physical education, technology, social and life skills, computer and information literacy, economics, and individual lessons. The main difference between the different types of secondary education is the level at which the subjects are studied and the number of lessons devoted to different subjects over the whole period of a particular type of education.

The recommended timetable for *VWO* and *HAVO* also includes literature in the languages already mentioned. In addition, pupils in the *Gymnasium* must also study Latin and Greek language and literature. A good deal of the recommended timetable for *VBO* is also devoted to vocationally oriented subjects.

Optional subjects for *VWO*, *HAVO* and *MAVO* are: Frisian, other modern foreign languages, Esperanto, biblical studies, history of Christianity, religious knowledge, astronomy, philosophy, film, theatre, performing arts, history of art, health care and care of the home, nutrition and clothing. In addition, pupils in *VWO* can study Hebrew language, those in the *Gymnasium* can study economic science and law, and those in the *Atheneum* can study Latin and an introduction to the culture of the ancient world. There are to be more detailed rules for individualized *VBO*.

There is one achievement level for each type of secondary education after basic education, and mobility between the different types is possible.

The minimum number of lessons to be provided per year is given in the recommended timetables for each type of school. During the first three years of secondary education, pupils receive a minimum of 1,280 lessons of 50 minutes per year. During the period of basic education, a minimum of 1,000 lessons are in the subjects of the basic curriculum. Tuition can be provided in periods longer or shorter than 50 minutes.

This means that the average school week will consist of 32 lessons of 50 minutes each. All schools will be required to devote 25 hours to the compulsory subjects making up basic education. The remaining seven hours may be devoted to subjects of the schools own choosing.

The Ministry does not prescribe **textbooks**; teachers are free to choose teaching materials.

Schools are not legally bound to provide educational and vocational **guidance**, but there is often a teacher who does so.

## Assessment and qualifications

As at primary level, the assessment of pupils' academic performance in all subjects is continuous; it is carried out at regular intervals (usually twice during the year and once at the end of it) by the teacher, and is recorded in school reports. In the final year, the last assessment before the final examinations is made at Christmas. Marks are awarded on a scale of 1 to 10; a score of 1 is extremely poor, 10 is given for excellence, and 6 is the pass mark.

Pupils move up to the next class if they have received the mark "sufficient" (6) at the end of the year for the majority of subjects. Pupils can repeat the year once; if their marks are not deemed sufficient at the end of this year, they must change to another type of education. The 15 compulsory subjects studied during the basic education period culminate in final tests for each subject, with the exception of physical education. The tests will be determined by the attainment targets and will be taken in each subject or combination of subjects. Interim testing may also take place where subjects are not taught throughout the entire period of basic education. The final test may not, however, be completed before the end of the second year of the course. Schools may supplement the tests with their own examinations and can decide when and in what order tests are taken. The first final tests will be taken in the 1994/95 school year. Pupils successfully completing basic education will be awarded a certificate (*getuigschrift basisvorming*).

At the end of the second year, the competent authority will provide pupils with a recommendation as to their further course of study. Pupils unable to achieve all the core attainment targets may qualify for exemption from the attainment targets or from one or more subjects in the basic curriculum. A committee appointed by the school board will decide on such exemptions.

The maximum period pupils may take to complete the first stage of secondary education (the 4-year courses of *VBO* and *MAVO*, the first three years of *HAVO* and *VWO*) is five years.

*VWO*, *HAVO*, *MAVO* and *VBO* courses culminate in a final examination comprising a school examination and a national examination. The school examination is prepared by the individual school and is taken in the final school year. It consists of two or more oral and/or written tests (per subject). The national examination is the same for all schools of a certain type and is taken at the same time. The final grade is the average of the marks for the school and national examinations.

The *VWO* final examination contains seven subjects. Dutch and one other modern language (French, German or English) are compulsory subjects. At a *Gymnasium*, Latin and Greek are also compulsory subjects. The other subjects are of the candidate's own choice. Physical education is not an examination subject. It is possible to sit examinations in more than seven subjects. The *VWO* certificate distinguishes between an *Atheneum* and a *Gymnasium* certificate.

The *HAVO* final examination features six subjects. Dutch and one other modern language (French, German, English or Spanish) are compulsory subjects. The other examination subjects are of the candidate's own choice. Physical education is not an examination subject. It is possible to sit the examination in seven subjects.

The *MAVO* leaving examination covers six subjects. Dutch and one other modern language (French, German, English or Spanish) are compulsory subjects. The other subjects are of the candidate's own choice. Physical education is not an examination subject. Examinations may be sat at C or D level. At least three subjects must be done at D level, which is the most demanding.

The *VBO* leaving examination is composed of six or seven subjects, both general and vocational subjects. At least two vocational subjects must be chosen for the examinations. The general subjects are taken at A, B, C, or D level, whilst the vocational subjects are taken at A, B or C level. For subjects taken at A or B level, examinations will consist entirely of internal school tests set by the competent authority. Physical education is not an examination subject. New C and D level examination syllabuses for the vocationally oriented *VBO* subjects will be in operation from 1994.

Pupils who pass one of the different leaving examinations are awarded a certificate (*Diploma*) which takes the same form throughout the country for the different types of school.

## Teachers

Teachers are subject specialists. Those trained under the previous teacher training system were specialized in two subjects; those under the present system specialize in one subject, but may teach two. It is up to the schools to decide whether teachers change classes at the end of each year.

Teachers in **secondary schools** are of two kinds: those with a full teaching qualification (*leraar voortgezet onderwijs eerstegraads*) and those with a lower secondary teaching qualification (*leraar voortgezet onderwijs tweedegraads*). Fully qualified teachers are entitled to give lessons in all secondary schools, whereas teachers with a lower secondary qualification may only give lessons in the first three years of *VWO* and *HAVO* schools and in all years of *MAVO*, *VBO* and *MBO* schools. These qualifications are obtained through teacher training courses provided by universities (*WO*) and institutions of higher professional education (*HBO*).

*HBO* provides teacher training courses leading to a qualification in one subject. Courses last four years

full-time or part-time for a lower secondary teaching qualification and three successive years part-time for a full teaching qualification in general subjects.

Courses for a full teaching qualification in physical education (*leraar voortgezet onderwijs eerstegraads*) last four years full-time.

Universities provide teacher training courses (one year full-time) leading to a full teaching qualification in one of the *HAVO* and *VWO* examination subjects. This training may be followed upon completion of *HBO* or university studies.

Teaching practice is a vital component of all teacher training courses. All teacher training leads to a certificate indicating the field of study and the level of attainment.

All teaching staff in public and private schools enjoy the status of civil servants and may work full-time or part-time.

In-service teacher training is regulated by law, but is not compulsory. When completed successfully, it leads to a certificate.

## Statistics 1990/91

|          | Full-time | Part-time |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Pupils   | 683,662   | 87,817    |
| Teachers | 89,370*   |           |
| Schools  | 1,242     | 78        |

\* *VWO, HAVO, MAVO, LBO and MBO*

## Pupils and schools by type of course, 1991/92

|                                  | Pupils  | Schools |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Mixed class <i>AVO</i>           | 154,122 | 1,189   |
| <i>Middenschool/basisvorming</i> | 11,599  | 28      |
| <i>MAVO</i>                      | 203,805 | 974     |
| <i>HAVO</i>                      | 141,377 | 488     |
| <i>VWO</i>                       | 162,689 | 504     |

## 6. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education covers the following:

- Senior secondary vocational education (*MBO*);
- Apprenticeship;
- Training provided in the context of schemes for the unemployed.

Vocational education is at present undergoing significant changes. Reform began in 1987 with the Sector Restructuring and Modernization Act (*Wet Sectorvorming en Vernieuwing - SVM-wet*) for senior secondary vocational education (*MBO*). The two fixed requirements (*MBO* schools must have at least 600 pupils and no separate schools for short *MBO* courses) led to the 382 old *MBO* schools being transformed

into about 140 new-style schools. Some included mergers with establishments for apprentices and part-time *MBO* courses. The reform was completed for the *MBO* in 1991.

On 1 August 1993, the Part-time Vocational Courses Act (*Wet op het Cursorisch Beroepsonderwijs - WCBO*) came into effect, establishing regulations for the apprenticeship system, part-time senior secondary vocational education and training for specific occupations.

The aim of the Act is to introduce a flexible system of retraining and refresher courses, to align education with the labour market and to utilize the educational infrastructure for the benefit of the employed and unemployed. The *WCBO* forms the legal premise for implementing and funding training activities through the regional employment services (*Regionale Bureaus Arbeidsvoorziening*). At the same time, steps have been taken to broaden the tasks and field of action for secondary schools. In addition to the regular funding from Central Government, they are also entitled to resources from the employment service organization responsible for running vocational courses for job-seekers. Schools may also become involved in self-financing courses, for example, in response to requests from companies.

A new law on vocational education and adult education should come into effect in 1996 (*Wet educatie beroepsonderwijs - WEB*). This Bill replaces existing legislation: *SVM-wet*, *WCBO*, *KVE* and *VAVO*. The aim of the Bill is to make vocational education and adult education more effective.

The decision to create regional bodies for the apprenticeship system (*Regionale Opleidingscentra - ROC*), for vocational education and adult education represents a major step towards the integration of the various sorts of vocational training, as intended in the *WEB*. The *ROCs* provide the following types of training: adult basic education, general secondary adult education, apprenticeship system, senior secondary vocational education (*MBO*) and local non-formal education.

28 Regional Service Centres (*RDC*) were set up in 1993, amalgamating the Regional Bodies for the apprenticeship system, the subsidized private agencies for educational and vocational guidance and the contact centres for education and the labour market. The *RDC* are independent organizations providing educational and vocational guidance and acting as an interface between education and the labour market. They are funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Efforts are also being made to create a national structure of qualifications for each sector of industry: a system of training with related final attainment levels, certification units, examinations and diplomas and the rights that go with them. A major step in this direction is the decision to integrate the Business Sector Consultations between Education and Industry (*Bedrijfstakgewijs Overleg Onderwijs Bedrijfsleven - BOOB*), which sets the final attainment level(s) for *MBO* courses, and the national training agencies, which set the level(s) for the apprenticeship system.

## **6.1 Senior secondary vocational education (*Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs - MBO*)**

Depending on the course chosen, *MBO* may last up to 4 years. It is designed for pupils aged around 16 to 19.

Part-time *MBO* comes under the Part-time Vocational Courses Act while full-time courses come under the Secondary Education Act. Part-time *MBO* courses are taught in the evening and sometimes partially during the day. They last two to three years, depending on the type of course. For some courses, pupils have to be in relevant employment. There are tuition fees for full-time and part-time *MBO* courses.

There are 144 *MBO* schools providing full-time education and 459 offering training on a part-time basis (1991/92).

*MBO* covers four training sectors:

- technical (technical, laboratory and nautical education);
- social services and health care (nine options);
- economics and administration (including tourism and leisure);
- agriculture.

*MBO* is provided at schools specifically designed for this type of education; every school has at least one sector and these sectors are divided into sections in which there are a number of different training courses. A good many *MBO* schools spread their activities over several sectors. Agricultural education is alone in being sector specific. It falls within the competence of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries and is undergoing a merger process between *MBO* courses, short *MBO* courses and secondary-level agricultural education. There are 25 agricultural training centres (*AOC*). *MBO* schools offer education for middle management activities in industry, the social services and the civil service.

The various alternative requirements for admission to senior secondary vocational education are: a *VBO* qualification; a *MAVO* qualification; proof of promotion to the fourth year of *HAVO* or *VWO*; a qualification from a short course; any other qualification designated by the Minister. These requirements apply to short, intermediate or long courses; for admission to the first year of the intermediate and full-length courses, however, additional requirements may be set as to the number of examination subjects taken at B or C level. In addition to the minimum requirements, schools may themselves have additional preferences with regard to such matters as combinations of subjects studied, the level of achievement in final examination subjects and the applicant's aptitude and motivation for the particular course of study. Admission to the one-year guidance and transition programmes is not dependent on previous qualifications. For each type of training, the prior training is indicated, as well as the level of attainment.

**Long courses**, lasting three to four years, are directly accessible to pupils who have completed *MAVO* or *LBO* (*VBO*) courses with at least three subjects at C level, or the first three years of *HAVO*. Pupils with a certificate from an intermediate course, a short course or a guidance or transition programme can also move on to the full-length course. They lead to middle-management activities (EC level I). Pupils may also move on from the long courses to higher professional training (*HBO*).

**Intermediate courses** are directly accessible to pupils who have completed *MAVO* or *VBO* (*LBO*) courses with at least three subjects at B level. Training provides the skills needed for the exercise of an independent profession or trade (EC level III). Intermediate courses are for the time being run on an experimental basis and are limited to three options: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and the hotel and catering trade; and last at most three years.

**Short courses** are directly accessible to pupils who have completed *VBO* (*LBO*) and *MAVO* courses (no requirements as to levels). Training provides the skills necessary for the exercise of a trade or occupation at starting level (EC level II), or to move on to a full-length *MBO* course (the final level of short *MBO* courses is comparable to the elementary level of the apprenticeship system).

One year **guidance and transition programmes** are aimed at providing guidance for pupils in their choice of vocational training and providing opportunities for progressing towards long and intermediate training courses.

## Curriculum

All *MBO* schools offer general and vocational training. Compulsory on-the-job training occupies an important place in *MBO* courses. A formal contract is signed between the competent authority, the pupil and the provider of the placement. No provision is made for a minimum timetable of lessons.

*MBO* schools have the opportunity to draw up the curricula themselves in accordance with the final attainment levels established by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Final attainment levels stipulate the sort of knowledge, understanding, skills and professional attitudes that pupils must acquire. The levels of attainment are integrated into vocational training profiles which themselves are based on job

profiles.

Each year, *MBO* schools are required to set down in a school plan a description and justification of education provision. They establish an examination syllabus (based on the attainment levels) for each section and decide on the leaving examination. In the case of components where the leaving examinations are set nationally, it is the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science which sets the examination syllabus.

All of the new *MBO* courses have a modular structure. They are made up of a certain number of certificate units, some compulsory others optional. Each certificate unit comprises one or more modules. Most courses include two compulsory on-the-job training periods: 100 days during the course and 100 days at the end of it. A certificate is also awarded for the on-the-job training.

### **Assessment and qualifications**

At present, the examinations are governed by a large number of institutional decisions, but in future the *MBO* schools will to a large extent set the examinations themselves. Work is being done on harmonizing the different examination regulations so as to form one regulation for the entire reformed *MBO* system. There are two types of examinations: an internal examination and a national examination. The national examination applies solely to subjects/examination components/certificate units that are covered by statutory regulations. Each year the Minister establishes for every sector a national examination board which prepares the nationwide examination syllabus on the basis of advice offered by education and business associations. The Minister makes the final decision. The competent authorities of *MBO* schools present the inspectorate with an examination regulation and an annual programme of testing and assessment. The national examination and the internal examination procedures are prepared under the responsibility of the competent authority. The form of standard diplomas and lists of grades are decided by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and are identical throughout the country.

In the new *MBO* courses assessment takes place at the end of each module. On completion of a certain number of modules trainees are awarded a certificate. If they obtain all the compulsory certificates they are awarded a diploma.

### **Teachers**

In order to teach all classes at *MBO* schools, teachers need a full or lower secondary teaching qualification, obtained through a course of higher professional training at an *HBO* college. The trainee teachers are taught general subjects, technical subjects and physical education.

All teaching staff in public and private schools enjoy the status of civil servants and may work full-time or part-time.

## **6.2 Apprenticeship**

The apprenticeship system is governed by the Part-time Vocational Courses Act. Up to August 1993, the apprenticeship system had its own separate legislation. The apprenticeship system development plan (1990) contains plans for the reform of the training courses.

Apprenticeship takes the form of a two-tier system, whereby on-the-job training is linked with theoretical training, which means that the apprentice enjoys both trainee and employee status. There are tuition fees for the theoretical training.

The theoretical aspects of the chosen occupation are taught on a day-release basis at a regional apprenticeship training institute (*Streekscholen*) or other school, while the practical work is done either in

industry or in trainee workshops. In the first case an apprenticeship contract is entered into with the employer, whereby the firm undertakes to give the pupil a sound training. In the second, pupils practise skills under the supervision of a practical teacher in trainee workshops set up by firms. Sometimes these workshops are used in addition to training in industry, and sometimes they take its place.

The responsibility for organizing the practical training lies with the employer, who appoints a training instructor for this purpose. Support is given by a consultant from the national agency responsible for the apprenticeship system.

The company provides the trainee-cum-employee with the opportunity of attending additional day-release courses, two-thirds of which consist of vocationally oriented instruction and one-third of general subjects. Training is given at a variety of levels:

- transition courses for trainees who have too low a level of training (for example, immigrants, the long-term unemployed and women returning to a career after having a family);
- training providing skills to become a craftsman/woman at beginner's level;
- training to become a fully-qualified craftsman/woman;
- specialized training for self-employed entrepreneurs.

The apprenticeship system is available to young people over 16 who have completed their full-time compulsory schooling. It lasts between one and three years, depending on the level. Where previous education is inadequate, training is usually one year longer.

There are three different levels of apprenticeship training:

**Elementary courses** (comparable with short *MBO* courses), lasting two or three years, and leading to the exercise of an occupation or trade at beginner's level (basic training, EC level II). Applicants must have *LBO* (*VBO*) or *MAVO* certificates or three years of *HAVO/VWO* training.

**Advanced courses** (comparable with intermediate *MBO* courses), lasting one or two years, and leading to the exercise of an independent trade or profession (middle-level training, EC level III). Applicants must have completed basic training or a short *MBO* course.

**Tertiary courses** (comparable with but narrower than full-length *MBO* courses), lasting one or two years, and leading to the exercise of a specialized profession or trade (higher-level training, EC level IV). Applicants must have completed intermediate training or an intermediate *MBO* course.

## Curriculum

The content of practical training depends on the employer. The day-release course (*beroepsbegeleidend onderwijs*) comprises general and vocationally-oriented training and is intended to complement the practical training. There are roughly 400 training courses available.

Apprentices attend day-release courses at an apprenticeship training institute on one or two days a week and for the rest of the week are employed in companies. Each day at the training institute consists of 8 or 9 lessons, 6 of which are theoretical vocational education and 3 are general education.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for establishing the overall curriculum (*totaal programma*), which is broken down into two parts: an indicative teaching programme and a practical programme. There are also entry requirements, conditions governing the amount of practical training and requirements to be met as regards the practical and theoretical parts of the examination.

## Assessment and qualifications

The examination syllabus is established by the national agency for the apprenticeship system. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science confines itself to establishing the final attainment levels and the related breakdown into certificate units. At the end of practical training, the national agency allows an examination to be taken. This examination, made up of practical and theoretical parts, is administered by a committee constituted by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, acting on the proposal of the national agency. Courses lead to a nationally recognized vocational diploma awarded by the national body for the particular field.

## Teachers

See *MBO* with regard to teachers of theoretical training.

The practical training sessions are given by a trainer, who, depending on the size of the firm, will be either the head of the firm or a qualified employee. Larger firms usually have a separate department where training is provided by instructors appointed for this purpose. These trainers enjoy the same rights as other employees, not those of teachers in the apprenticeship system.

## 6.3 Training in the context of employment policy

Training in the context of employment policy lies within the competence of the Central Manpower Services Board (*Centraal Bestuur voor de Arbeidsvoorziening - CBA*), which is a division of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. With the introduction of the Employment Policy Act of 1991, this matter became the joint responsibility of Central Government, employers' associations and trade union organizations. The *CBA* prepares a long-term national policy framework that acts as a guide for the 28 Regional Manpower Services Boards (*Regionale Besturen Arbeidsvoorziening - RBA*). Their task is to establish the number of unemployed people who need training as well as the training institutions and training initiatives required. The most significant of these are:

1. Vocational Training Centres
2. Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training Centres
3. Vocational Schools for Women
4. Basic Vocationally-Oriented Education for Adults
5. Training Framework Branch Training.

1, 2 and 3 are training establishments, whilst 4 and 5 are training initiatives.

### Statistics 1991/92

#### *VBO* and *MBO*

|            | Pupils  | Schools                            |
|------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| <i>VBO</i> | 220,935 | 445 (34 combined with <i>MBO</i> ) |
| <i>MBO</i> | 284,404 | 110                                |

## 7. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education includes higher (non-university) professional education (*Hoger beroepsonderwijs* -

*HBO*), university education (*Wetenschappelijk onderwijs - WO*) and the Open University (OU, distance learning at higher education level). Higher education caters for students roughly 18 years old and over and comes under the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act of 1993. This new law replaces some 16 laws and orders in Council, including the University Education Act and the Open University Act. Until 1986, higher professional education was covered by the provisions of the Secondary Education Act and since then by separate legislation, the Higher Vocational Education Act. As from 1984, the level of *HBO* was scaled up from secondary to higher education and many institutions were merged.

Both higher professional education and university education provide teacher training.

Institutions have a tradition of academic freedom and autonomy. They assume responsibility for the content of degree programmes. They receive an annual budget from the State, dependent, among other factors, on the number of students registered. In higher education a system of internal quality control is coupled with periodical external quality controls by so-called visiting committees.

## **7.1 Higher professional education**

Higher professional education (*HBO*) provides both theoretical and practical training for occupations which require a higher professional qualification. *HBO* courses are almost always closely linked to a particular field of employment and most include a compulsory work placement.

This type of education is available in 70 *HBO* colleges of which roughly 30% are public and some 70% are private.

*HBO* covers seven training sectors: agriculture, education (teacher training), technology, economics, social and cultural welfare, health care and art. *HBO* establishments generally encompass several different sectors.

There are both short and full-length courses. The normal courses last four years, with a maximum enrolment period of six years. For part-time courses, there is a maximum enrolment period (i.e. to complete the course) of nine years.

### **Admission**

In order to enrol on an *HBO* course, pupils must hold either the *HAVO*, *VWO* or *MBO* certificate (three or four-year course). In addition to these admission requirements, the institutions may themselves impose further requirements and standards with regard to the combination of subjects studied.

The Government has the power to impose an admissions quota (*numerus clausus*), depending on the labour market.

### **Fees/Student finance**

Students in the *HBO* system pay an annual fee. All students receive a basic higher education grant and may apply for a supplementary grant and interest-bearing loan in addition.

### **Academic year**

Each academic year comprises 42 weeks. Lectures start in the first week of September.

## Courses

Each course comprises 168 credits (four years). One credit is equivalent to one week of study (40 hours), made up of lectures, laboratory work (where applicable) and independent study. The first part of the course is called the "propaedeutic stage" and covers general topics. Of the maximum total length of six years, two may be spent on this stage. In each course year, there is a period of up to ten weeks in which no teaching is provided and no examinations set. Following the propaedeutic stage, students specialize in a specific field. They also undertake practical exercises outside the institution itself. The time spent on these depends on the course and varies between several months and one year. The final section of training mostly consists of a written paper in the student's subject area.

As from 1992, a number of *HBO* institutions have been providing an experimental form of education termed "cooperative education", whereby periods of study alternate regularly with periods of work in a relevant full-time job. During the work periods the student is not regarded as formally enrolled and these periods do not count towards the maximum permitted duration of study.

## Assessment/Qualifications

At the end of the first year, a "propaedeutic" or foundation course examination is set that has to be passed within two years. The final examination is taken after the fourth year. There are interim examinations (*tentamens*) in each subject, usually every two or three months.

Pupils abandoning the course before the final examination receive a declaration of how far they have got in the course and what interim examinations they have sat.

Pupils who pass the examination are awarded a higher education degree (*getuigschrift van HBO*) listing the subjects examined, and may be given a title, such as *ingenieur* (graduate engineer) for graduates of technology and agriculture and natural environment courses or *baccalaureus* (bachelor) for graduates of other types of courses.

## 7.2 University education

University education (*WO*) is provided in 13 universities and the Open University system for distance learning at higher education level. Nine universities provide teaching over a broad range of disciplines, while the three technical universities and the agricultural university concentrate on subjects within their particular specialized fields. In all, there are almost 100 different courses available.

There are ten public universities and three private ones.

### Admission

Those seeking to enter university must possess a *VWO* certificate, sit an *HBO* foundation course examination or take an entrance examination (*colloquium doctum*).

There is a centralized admissions system for distributing places at the various universities.

Decisions are made annually by the institutions or the Minister of Education, Culture and Science as to which courses are to be subject to an admissions' quota (*numerus clausus*).

## Fees/Student finance

University students pay an annual fee equal to that paid by *HBO* students. All students receive a basic higher education grant and may apply for a supplementary grant and interest-bearing loan in addition.

## Academic year

Each academic year comprises 42 weeks. Lectures start in the first week of September.

## Courses

University education covers both theoretical studies and specialized training, such as for the legal and medical professions. Degree courses (*doctoraalprogrammas*) officially last four years (168 credits), but because many students do not manage to complete them in four years, they may take up to six years. Medical studies can take 5 to 6 years. Every university course includes a propaedeutic or foundation stage which gives the student a general introduction to the subject with specialization increasing throughout the course.

The study load of courses is expressed in terms of credits (one credit equals one week's work - 40 hours), made up of lectures, laboratory work (where applicable) and independent study. There are also courses with a lighter study load.

On completion of the degree course, a training course may be followed for a period ranging from one to four years, for example, a teacher training course or a medical training course. It is also possible to become a trainee researcher at a university.

## Assessment/Qualifications

At the end of the first year, a "propaedeutic" or foundation course examination is set that has to be passed within two years. The final examination is taken after the fourth year. There are interim examinations (*tentamens*) in each subject, usually every two or three months.

Students abandoning the course before the final examination receive an official declaration of how far they have got in the course and what interim examinations they have sat.

When the student passes the final examination, he or she is awarded a certificate listing the different parts of the examination and mentioning the degree obtained, and granted the title of *doctorandus*, *meester* or *ingenieur* (Master, M.). The latter is used by graduates from the technical universities and the agricultural university.

## Statistics 1992/93

|   | Students      |
|---|---------------|
| Higher professional training ( <i>HBO</i> ) | 261,000 *     |
| University education ( <i>WO</i> )          | 162,000       |
| Open University                             | 67,900 (1992) |
| * including part-time students              |               |

Source: Facts and Figures 1993 - 's-Gravenhage, SDU/DOP, 1993