

THE DUTCH EDUCATION SYSTEM

In general

The higher education system in the Netherlands is based on a three-cycle degree system, consisting of a bachelor, master and PhD degree. The three-cycle system was officially introduced in the Netherlands at the beginning of the academic year 2002-2003.



Higher education in the Netherlands is offered at two types of institutions: research universities and universities of applied sciences (hogescholen). Hogeschool Utrecht is a university of applied sciences.

Universities of applied sciences are primarily responsible for offering programmes of higher professional education, which prepare you for particular professions. These tend to be more practically oriented than programmes offered by research universities. In addition to lectures, seminars, projects and independent study, you are required to complete an internship or work placement which normally takes up part of the third year of study, as well as a final project or a major paper in the fourth year.

Bachelor's programme

A Bachelor's programme at a university of applied sciences requires the completion of 240 credits (4 years), and graduates obtain a degree indicating the field of study (for example, Bachelor of Engineering, B. Eng., or Bachelor of Business Administration, BBA).

Major and Minor

The main stage of the Bachelor programme consists of the major degree subject (worth a minimum of 120 credits and a maximum of 150) and the free choice component (worth a minimum of 30 credits and a maximum of 60). The major is the compulsory component of the study and examination programme for your chosen degree. The free choice component, which is also called a minor, is designed to give you the opportunity to personalize your study programme by taking an optional programme of your choice, worth 30 credits or more.

Master's programme

After finishing your Bachelor's programme it is possible to continue your studies by following a Master's programme. If you have done a Pre-Master you can continue at most institutions without any problems. A Pre-Master is a bridging course that prepares students for a Master's programme. If you haven't done a Pre-Master's course, you may need to take a transitional year into consideration.

ACCREDITED EDUCATION

A guaranteed standard of higher education is maintained through a national system of legal regulation and quality assurance. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for legislation pertaining to education. As of 2002, responsibility for accreditation lies with the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO). All degree programmes offered by research universities and universities of applied sciences will be evaluated according to established criteria, and programmes that meet those criteria will be accredited. Only accredited programmes will be eligible for government funding.

Besides the accreditation of degree programmes, the Netherlands has a system by which the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science recognizes higher education institutions by conferring on them the status of either funded or approved. Funded indicates that the institution is financed by the government. Approved indicates that the institution does not receive funds from the government

and has to rely on its own sources of funding. All Bachelor programmes of Hogeschool Utrecht University of Applied Sciences are funded.