



Statement

Pre-university education in the Netherlands (vwo, from 2007)

The Dutch pre-university education (**voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs - vwo**) is covered by the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and is funded entirely by central government. It is governed by the Secondary Education Act (Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs – WVO).

The course has a nominal duration of six years (age 12 to 18), after eight years of primary education (age 4 to 12), and is part of the system of general secondary education. At the end of the third year pupils choose a profile for the last three years.

The aim is to provide pupils with a general secondary education and to prepare them for entrance to university education.

Holders of the vwo diploma are entitled to be admitted directly to the first year of any course in higher professional education and university education (section 7.24 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek – WHW).

Though vwo diploma holders are entitled to admission to universities and colleges of higher professional education, applicants may be required by ministerial order to have passed the final examination in one or two specified subjects in order to be admitted to certain courses.

Persons who do not meet these requirements may be asked by the faculty concerned to sit a preparatory examination in the subject or subjects in question. The board of the chosen institution decides how to fulfil these requirements, during the first year of the study or preceding the study (section 7.25 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act).

Profiles are introduced to improve with reference to further education. A profile consists of a coherent programme preparing pupils for a course in higher education.

There are four profiles:

- Nature and technology
- Nature and health
- Economics and society
- Culture and society

Vwo		Nature and Technology (NT)	Nature and Health (NH)	Economics and Society (ES)	Culture and Society (CS)
Common component	Dutch	480	480	480	480
	English	400	400	400	400
ATHENEUM	Second modern lang.	480	480	480	480
	Social science	120	120	120	120
	Physical education	160	160	160	160
	Cult./Art (Ckv or Kcv)	160	160	160	160
	Natural science (Anw)	120	120	120	120
Common component	Dutch	480	480	480	480
	English	400	400	400	400
GYMNASIUM	Classic language	600	600	600	600
	Social science	120	120	120	120
	Physical education	160	160	160	160
	Ckv	160	160	160	160
	Anw	120	120	120	120
Compulsory profile subjects	Mathematics B	600			
	Physics	480			
	Chemistry	440			
	Mathematics A(or B) (1)		520		
	Biology		480		
	Chemistry		440		
	Mathematics A(or B) (2)			520 (600)	
	Economics			440	
	History			480	
	Math. C (or A, B) (1)				480
History				480	
Free profile	NLT	440			
	NT: 1 subject	Mathematics D	440		
		Computer science	440		
		Biology	480		
	NH: 1 subject	NLT		440	
		Geography		440	
		Physics		480	
	ES: 1 subject	M&O			440
		Geography			440
		Social science			440
		Modern language			480
	CS: 1 s- subject	Geography (s)			440
		Social science (s)			440
		Economics (s)			480
	1 c- subject	Art(c)			480
		Philosophy (c)			480
		Modern/classic lang. (c)			480/600
Profile paper Free component	Profile paper	80	80	80	80
	Optional subject	440	440	440	440
	completely free part	400	480	480	480
Total # hours		4800	4800	4800	4800

Explanation of the diploma/list of marks:

Pupils who complete their studies successfully receive a vwo diploma. On the list of marks is mentioned:

- School examination marks,
- for which profile each subject has been examined,
- final examination marks,
- the subjects related to and the title of the profile paper,
- evaluation of the profile paper,
- evaluation of the subjects arts and physical education,
- final marks of de examination subjects,
- final examination result.

The vwo diploma encompasses the gymnasium diploma and the atheneum diploma. Holders of the diploma are admitted to higher professional education and universities.

To enable a comparison with the marking system in another country, here is an explanation of the marks 1 to 10 in the Dutch system:

10 - excellent	5 - almost satisfactory
9 - very good	4 - unsatisfactory
8 - good	3 - very unsatisfactory
7 - very satisfactory	2 - poor
6 - satisfactory (pass)	1 - very poor