



Statement

Senior general secondary education in the Netherlands (havo, 1999-2007)

Havo (hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs) 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 normal duration of five years (age 12 to 17), 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 have to choose a profile for the last two years.

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

Holders of the havo diploma are entitled to admission to any course in higher professional education (section 7.24 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act) (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW). Pupils holding a havo diploma may also be admitted to the fifth year of pre-university education (vwo) to prepare them for entrance to university education. They can also be admitted to the secondary professional education.

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

Each profile has a common component, a specific component and a free component. The common component contains in any case the subjects Dutch and English.

The specific component contains in any case the following subjects:

- Nature and technology: mathematics, physics and chemistry,
- Nature and health: mathematics, biology and chemistry,
- Economics and society: mathematics, economics and, optional, geography, social science or history,
- Culture and society: a second modern language, cultural and artistic education (ckv2 or ckv3), or history or philosophy.

The free component contains two exam subjects, which pupils have to choose, often a second modern language or subjects of another profile.

Next to it a part of the course is completely free. This is for example meant for religion. But pupils may also choose an extra exam subject.

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