



Statement

Pre-vocational education in the Netherlands (vbo)

In 1999 the Dutch pre-vocational education (**voorbereidend beroepsonderwijs – vbo**) merged with junior general secondary education (middelbaar algemeen voortgezet onderwijs - mavo) into the pre-vocational secondary education (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs - vmbo). Vbo was covered by the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and was funded entirely by central government. It was governed by the Secondary Education Act (Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs – WVO).

The course had a nominal duration of four years (age 12 to 16), after eight years of primary education (age 4 to 12), and was part of the system of general secondary education.

Vbo had a varied form of education, in which both general and vocational subjects were taught. Pupils received initial vocational training (on junior secondary level).

Vbo should be regarded principally as a preparatory course for various forms of further education, including upper secondary vocational education (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs - mbo).

Within the vbo various educational sectors were found: construction, electrical engineering, printing technology, fitting technology, mechanics, motor mechanics, courses for occupations in transport and logistics, clerical work, catering, retail trade, fashion and clothing, commercial functions, beauty care and hairdressing, social services, agriculture and environment, food industry.

Pupils sat their vbo examinations in at least six subjects, of which at least two had to be vocational, the rest being general subjects. Pupils could take their examinations at different levels: A,B,C and D, depending on their abilities and school progress, 'A' being the easiest curriculum, 'D' the most difficult.

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