



Statement

preparatory secondary vocational education (‘VMBO’) -theoretical pathway-

period: 1999-2015

Preparatory secondary vocational education (known in the Netherlands by the abbreviation ‘VMBO’) is a general programme of secondary education which prepares pupils for basic vocational training (level 2), vocational training (level 3) and management training (level 4), as part of the wider system of senior secondary vocational education and training (‘MBO’). After the core phase (which makes up the first two years of study), or at the very start of the programme of education, pupils choose one of the four learning pathways. The four learning pathways available are:

- the basic vocational pathway (‘BB’)
- the advanced vocational pathway (‘KB’)
- the combined pathway (‘GL’)
- the theoretical pathway (‘TL’)

The theoretical pathway prepares pupils for MBO or for senior general secondary education (HAVO). Pupils in the theoretical pathway can choose between four sectors. These sectors are:

- technology
- care and welfare
- economics
- agriculture

This programme has been categorized at level 2 within the Dutch Qualification Framework (NLQF). The NLQF level is comparable to level 2 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

NLQF/EQF level: 2

The package of education and examinations in the theoretical pathway consists of:

- one component which is common to all sectors: the common component;
- a sector-specific component, which is only for that specific sector; and
- a free-choice component, consisting of subjects, vocational programmes, intra-sectoral programmes or inter-sectoral programmes, which can be chosen by the pupil.

In order to enable a comparison between the Dutch system of assessment and the systems of assessment that are in place in other countries, each grade between 1 and 10 is described below:

10 - outstanding	5 - almost satisfactory
9 - very good	4 - unsatisfactory
8 - good	3 - very unsatisfactory
7 - more than satisfactory	2 - poor
6 - satisfactory	1 - very poor

The final examination consists of two parts: the school examination and the central examination. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science determines the programme of examinations for the entire final examination. This includes a decision regarding which material must be examined and how this material is to be divided between the school examination and the central examination.

The programme has a nominal duration of four years (ages 12 to 16 years). It begins after eight years of primary education (ages 4 to 12 years), and is part of the Dutch system of general secondary education. VMBO was introduced in 1999, replacing two previous systems known as preparatory vocational education ('VBO') and junior general secondary education ('MAVO'). VMBO is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and is fully funded by national government. This type of education is regulated by the Secondary Education Act ('WVO').