



Statement

Pre-vocational secondary education in the Netherlands (vmbo)

The **vmbo 'voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs'** (pre-vocational secondary education) was introduced in 1999 to replace vbo (preparatory vocational education) and mavo (junior general secondary education). The nominal length of study for the vmbo is 4 years. Fully financed from central government, the vmbo is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Culture and Science. This form of education is subject to the Secondary Education Act (WVO).

The vmbo is not a vocational education, but does prepare pupils for basic vocational education (level 2), specific vocational education and middle management education (levels 3 and 4) in the mbo (senior secondary vocational education). After the first two years or immediately upon starting the vmbo, pupils can choose one of four learning programmes. These are:

- the basic vocational programme (bb)
- the middle management vocational programme (kb)
- the combined programme (gl)
- the theoretical programme (tl)

Each learning programme offers four sectors to choose from; a sector includes subjects which link in with the advanced and vocational forms of education. These sectors are:

- Technology
- Care and Welfare
- Economics
- Agriculture

Programmes focusing on specific vocations are to be found within the majority of these sectors. With the theoretical programme however, only general subjects are taught.

Sector	Technology	Care and welfare	Economy	Agriculture
Programmes focused on professions	Construction Metal technology Electronics Car mechanics Installation techn. Printing technology	Care Hair & Beauty care	Administration Trade and sales Fashion and commerce Consumer	Agriculture and the natural environment
Intra-sectoral programmes	Construction-wide Metal/electronics Installn electronics Technology-wide	Care and welfare-wide	Trade and administration Consumer-wide	Agriculture-wide
Inter-sectoral programmes (sector exceeding)	ICT-Route Technology in the mixed learning route Intra-sectoral Sports, Service and Security			

Possibilities for progress:

- The theoretical programme (tl) and the combined programme (gl) give access to specific vocational education (level 3) and middle management education (level 4) in senior secondary vocational education. In addition, these learning programmes offer the possibility of progressing on to havo (senior general secondary education). However, in this case the pupil is obliged to include mathematics and French or German among the chosen subjects.
- The middle management vocational programme (kb) focuses on the practical and prepares pupils for specific vocational and middle management education (education on level 3 and 4) in senior secondary vocational education.
- The basic vocational programme (bb) prepares pupils solely for basic vocational education (level 2) in senior secondary vocational education.

The vmbo examination package consists of three parts:

- A general part. The general part, obligatory for all pupil, consists of: Dutch, English, social studies (1), physical education and art (1),
- a sector part. The sector part entails sector specific subjects,
- the free part. Depending on the programme selected, pupils can choose an additional one or two subjects.

The final examination. In general, the final examination consists of two parts: the school examination and the central examination. The Department of ECS determines the examination programmes for the complete final examination, detailing the examination subject and how this is to be divided between the school examination and the central examination.

The school examinations in the combined programme and the theoretical programme also include a sector related project. This entails a practical assignment and is related to a theme based on the educational sector which the pupil follows.

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

NLQF-level of the basic vocational programme (bb):

This degree is classified at level 1 of the Netherlands Qualifications Framework (NLQF). This NLQF level is comparable with level 1 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

NLQF-level of the middle management vocational programme (kb), the combined programme (gl) and the theoretical programme (tl)

This degree is classified at level 2 of the Netherlands Qualifications Framework (NLQF). This NLQF level is comparable with level 2 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).