

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Netherlands

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Introduction

Several years of cutbacks, decentralisation and market-oriented reform processes have had a noticeable impact on career guidance policy and provision in the country. This has resulted in a situation in which career guidance is dispersed across a scattered landscape with an enormous variety of provisions.

Career guidance as part of lifelong guidance is offered on national and regional level by various institutions, both public and private, within four main domains:

- the education system;
- the public employment sector;
- employers and trade unions;
- private-sector organisations, with private, combined with government, financing.

Recently the government invested in a [strategy and policy measurements](#) to improve lifelong learning and career education/career guidance in the education and public employment sectors. With a coalition agreement in 2022, this momentum will continue with the aim of greater coherence and clarity for all stakeholders in the area of career guidance and lifelong learning. An [action plan](#) on lifelong learning was presented on September 23 2022.

The government has invested in improving learning culture in small and medium enterprises, regional infrastructure with 'Regional service centres on education and work and pilots 'plus' ([Leerwerkloketten Plus](#)), in support for schools by the [Expertise Point LOB](#) (Expertisepunt LOB), the Knowledge centre in lifelong learning and Knowledge centre of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion, and a new website '[Kies MBO](#)' (See [Career information, ICT in guidance](#)) by SBB for study choice information on VET. The [STAP subsidy](#) was initiated to support individuals in lifelong learning.

On several topics stakeholders work together in different compositions. Due to the new policy on [Lifelong learning and career guidance](#) more intensive coordination and collaboration is observed between the Ministries (Ministry of Education and Culture (OCW), Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ), social partners, schools, and other relevant organisations.

During Covid-19 the government created a package 'Crisis measure with regards to lifelong learning'. The subsidy scheme [The Netherlands continues learning](#) is part of these measures and offers free training for everyone between the age of 18 and the pensionable age.

The government has asked the Social Economic Council ([Sociaal-Economische Raad](#) - SER) to draw up an [Action Agenda](#) for Lifelong Learning. Using a bottom-up approach, the SER shares best practices, organises events and issues advice on relevant laws and regulations.

The government funds are used for limited career guidance within the public employment sector and education sector. Extra financial inputs are made mostly through pilot projects and other measures and subsidies. The education sector (schools) get a lump sum and are autonomous in their decisions about how much money they invest in career guidance and in the aims of improvement (See).

Sources

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

The education system

Guidance in the education system is coordinated by the [Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science](#) (Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschappen - OCW). Most important stakeholders for implementation are the schools, given that they have a threefold task: providing qualifications, fostering socialisation and enabling student's personal development. Through education students prepare for qualification/transition to higher levels of education, participation in society (citizenship), and exercising a profession. By law (See [Access to guidance](#)), general secondary and VET schools are obliged to invest in the development of career guidance competences of pupils and students. Career development is part of the examination and certification. The schools in each education sector are organised in an association. For VET the [MBO Raad](#) (VET council) represents all public financed VET schools and the [NRTO](#) (Dutch council for private training and education in VET and HE). For the primary sector, the [PO Raad](#) (Association for school organisations in primary education), for the secondary general sector the [VO Raad](#) (Secondary Education Council) and for higher vocational education, the [Vereniging Hogescholen](#) (Association of Universities of Applied Sciences) and [Vereniging Universiteiten van Nederland](#) (Association of cooperating Universities in the Netherlands) represent their schools respectively. The schools receive budgets (lump sum) for education and improvements in which they can prioritise the topics. Together with municipalities schools organise, for example, 'carousels' for career orientation for students and in cooperation with private companies and publishers 'career tests' are organised. Other important stakeholders are:

As required by [WEB](#) (Dutch Act on Adult and Vocational Education, 1995), [SBB](#) works together with VET schools and the labour market on the following legal tasks:

- accredit and supervise work placement companies;
- maintain the vocational education and training qualification structure;
- provide information on the labour market, practice placements and apprenticeships, and the efficiency of training programmes.

SBB also advises the minister of OCW on linking vocational education with the job market. SBB is also the administrator of the new study choice website for VET ‘Kies MBO’ (See section [Career information, ICT in guidance](#)).

Inspectorate of Education

The [Dutch Inspectorate of Education](#) is responsible for inspecting and reviewing schools and education institutions. The Inspectorate stimulates schools and other education institutions to maintain and improve the quality of education offered, while also assessing the quality of career education and guidance in general primary and secondary education and in vocational education.

Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) The Expertise Point LOB (supports schools in secondary education and VET and the first year of higher vocational education, in improving career education and orientation. The centre informs, organises, and facilitates in specific ways. It develops and shares relevant information and tools about career guidance on its website and organises knowledge-sharing meetings both nationally and regionally. Schools can also contact the centre with questions about the implementation of guidance, quality assurance, and professionalisation.

The approach is partly national, as in the collection and dissemination of as many good practices as possible, proven products and methods, and the organisation of knowledge-sharing meetings; it is also partly regional, with advisors in the region for the guidance of schools and supporting school partnerships. The Expertise Point is project-based and is financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) (see section [Quality assurance](#)). They work closely together with the new Expertise centre for Diversity and Equal opportunities (GKDI) in supporting schools and students in career education and guidance.

Euroguidance Netherlands

[Euroguidance](#) supports OCW and other stakeholders in promoting guidance and shaping policy. As part of the Dutch policy plans, Euroguidance developed an overview of education and training opportunities for (future) career guidance professionals. It also produced the [Dutch framework for career professionals](#), resulting from extensive consultation where representatives of all relevant stakeholders were involved. The framework is now used by the Expertisepunt LOB in order to to strengthen career education and guidance.

Working group ICCDPP

In 2019 the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and Euroguidance took part in the [ICCDPP](#) conference (International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy) in Tromsø Norway with a Dutch country team of experts. The team drafted a country paper for the event on the topic “[Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation](#)”. The conference inspired the team to stay active as a working group and they produced a position paper ‘Career support for all citizens: a proposal for a more coherent career guidance policy to support lifelong development of citizens’ (‘[Loopbaanbegeleiding voor alle burgers](#)’). The paper mentions five quality criteria for regional service centres for career guidance, , also based on several European best practices and in line : (i) recognizable services, (ii) accessible advice and support,, (iii) independent services, (iv) with a clear offer of (holistic and tailored) services and (v) improved and sustainable quality. The paper has been published in March 2022 and is available at the website of [Euroguidance](#). The working group will continue to forward suggestions for improving career guidance policy.

National reference group

As a voluntary informal platform for collaboration in the field, a national reference group was organised in March 2022 and agreed to meet regularly and share information on recent developments. It includes relevant stakeholders, including the CareersNet core expert and Euroguidance NL. The cooperation helps provide support to the independent core expert in revising the LLG Inventory record. [[HVCM2](#)]

Skills competitions

[Skills Heroes](#) are professional competitions for vocational education, which also include a career education component, and promote VET and craftsmanship. They are funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In a programme with competitions in some 50 disciplines, vocational education students can demonstrate their skills. These competitions help inspire young people in decisions regarding career choices that challenge their intellectual and manual skills, enabling their confidence where and how their competences are used.

The Knowledge Centre for Lifelong Development in VET

The Knowledge Centre for Lifelong Development in VET ([Kennispunt MBO Leven Lang Ontwikkelen](#)) is financed by Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and executed by the VET council in order to support public and private VET-schools in their activities to stimulate lifelong learning.

The Knowledge Centre of Equal Chances, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Knowledge Centre of Equal Chances, Diversity and Inclusion ([Kennispunt Gelijke Kansen, Diversiteit en Inclusie, GKDI](#)) is financed by the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs, and executed by the VET council in order to support VET-schools to ensure that VET students with specific needs are served through career guidance.

Knowledge Centre of tailored MBO (Kennispunt MBO Passend Onderwijs)

[Kennispunt MBO Passend Onderwijs](#) knowledge centre focusses on support for individuals needing physical or mental health services, including chronic diseases.

Student and youth organisations

There are four major youth and student associations in the Netherlands that provide career guidance oriented activities, and contribute to relevant policy documents: National Pupils Action Committee ([Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren](#), LAKS), Youth Organisation for Vocational Education ([Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs](#), JOB), the National Student Trade Union, ([Landelijke Studentenvakbond](#), LSVb), and Interurban Student Consultation ([Interstedelijk Studentenoverleg](#), ISO). All are organisations of and for students.

The public employment sector

Guidance in the public sector is coordinated by The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment ([SZW](#)). SZW finances improvement programmes for career education and guidance within schools for preventing early school leaving, for creating better positions for migrants, for enabling lifelong learning (e.g. the individual learning and development budget) and for sustainable employability (e.g. mobility and reintegration). In 2016, cooperation between the social partners, PES, municipalities, and the education and development funds of the industries was prompted by SZW (the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) to support adequate services for the unemployed and to prevent unemployment. In collaboration with other Ministries and social partners the Lifelong learning policy and career support is intensified.

The Ministry commissions the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) – an autonomous administrative authority – to implement employee insurance programmes (referring to both unemployment and disability benefits). Employee insurances are provided through laws such as:

- the **WW** (Unemployment Insurance Act);
- the **WIA** (Work and Income according to Labour Capacity Act), which contains the IVA (Full Invalidation Benefit Regulations) and the WGA (Return to Work (Persons with partial disabilities) Regulations);
- the **Wajong** (Disability Assistance Act for Handicapped Young Persons);
- the **WAO** (Invalidity Insurance Act);
- the **WAZ** (Self-employed Persons Disability Benefits Act);
- the **Wazo** (Work and Care Act);
- the **Sickness Benefits Act**.

The UWV organisation is structured around five divisions and two main departments (further information can be found [here](#)). One division of the UWV is **UWV WERKbedrijf**, the public employment service of the Employee Insurance Agency, which is engaged in job placement and reintegration. The UWV also provides labour market and data services for the Ministry and publishes national and regional labour market forecasts each year on their website.

Dutch policy increasingly focuses on the self-reliance and responsibility of all job seekers within the Netherlands. The resulting services are increasingly based on online self-service. UWV online services are available to all job seekers through www.werk.nl (see section [Career information, ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

Regional service centres on education and work (Leerwerkloketten)

The **Regional service centres** on education and work ('Leerwerkloketten') have existed since 2009 and are partnerships between municipalities, educational institutions and public employment services. They are commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment (SZW) and regional partners. There are 35 Regional service centres on education and work, one in every labour market sector. A national support team facilitates and supports the 35 Regional service centres within the fields of communication, finance, strategy, policy, and services.

The Regional service centres are independent service centres with an expansive network. They offer independent and free information and career advice including on education, to support clients in making career decisions in order to find and keep a job. The centres are open to everyone looking for free advice on learning and working opportunities: employees, employers, students, and job seekers with or without social welfare support.

Leerwerkloketten offer lifelong career guidance following four steps: Discover-Choose-Learn-Work. They stimulate clients to discover their competences and interests and to choose a profession that suits them and has good labour market opportunities. They discuss learning needs and show ways of finding an apprenticeship or job.

The centres also discuss educational needs / the need for lifelong learning with employers, offer personal educational advice and assist in building apprenticeships. The policies and action plans of Regional service centres differ per region, depending on the wishes and goals of partner organisations.

Regional service centres on education and work stimulate people to participate in lifelong learning, which contributes to their sustainable employability.

Social Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad - SER)

The government has asked the Social Economic Council (**Sociaal-Economische Raad - SER**) to draw up an action agenda for 'Life-long development'. The **SER** pursues a bottom-up approach for this purpose, collecting and highlighting best practices from learning environments, including career guidance. They also issue advice on legal opportunities, and promote contacts between people to facilitate knowledge sharing. The SER promotes an infrastructure with access to career guidance services and schooling.

VNG/Divosa

Since 2015, the **Participatiewet** (Participation Act) is in place. This act has replaced acts such as the Act on work and assistance Act and a part of the Wajong (see above). This has consequences for those entitled to social assistance, people with a Wajong-benefit and people in the social employment system. Anyone who is able to work but faces barriers and needs added support in order to participate in the labour market, falls under the Participation Act. The law aims to ensure access to the labour market for all, including persons with disabilities. Municipalities who are responsible for implementation of this, and who are united in the The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten - **VNG**) are expected to offer support to this growing target group for better labour market integration. **Divosa** is the organisation for municipality directors of social services; they support municipalities by developing and exchanging knowledge with the aim of enabling people to participate actively in society.

Employers and trade unions

There are several important stakeholders among employers and trade unions, beginning with Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (**SBB**) described above. Other stakeholders directly involved with employers and trade unions are described below.

VNO-NCW (Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers)

VNO-NCW is the largest employers' organisation in the Netherlands. VNO-NCW represents the interests of Dutch business and industry and provides a range of services to its members.

MKB Nederland (SME Netherlands)

The **Royal Association MKB-Nederland** is the largest entrepreneurs' organisation in the Netherlands and represents the interests of Dutch SMEs.

They all work closely together on the agenda for growth and promote a learning culture within the companies and communicate about the possibilities of a career advice (development advice) and subsidies and schooling. They also are members of AWWN and make use of the HR development tools for Lifelong development.

General Employers' Association of the Netherlands (AWVN)

AWVN facilitates the employers in human resource management, with lifelong learning and career guidance. The organisation develops and implements HR tools with focus on Lifelong development, career guidance, a better learning culture in the member companies and activities to improve a sustainable labour market and better connection between labour market and education.

Trade Unions

There are three major trade unions in the Netherlands: the Christian-democratic **Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond** (CNV), the social-democratically oriented **Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging** (FNV) and the union for professional and managerial staff **Vakcentrale voor professionals** (VCP). All are federations of sector-based trade unions. Trade-unions offer career guidance services for their members and

sometimes other target groups. FNV, for example, has an extensive careers service and programmes for career guidance. FNV and CNV also have youth divisions which are involved in career guidance and contribute to policy documents. Since November 2020 the trade unions work together in Regional Mobility Teams; a policy initiative with extra funding to facilitate work-to-work transitions.

Private sector organisations (combined private and public financing)

Foundations in the Netherlands offer career guidance or similar services, mostly for dedicated target groups; and are (co)funded by the government. In addition, private companies and private counsellors offer career guidance to individuals, schools, and for reintegration programmes. A few important examples are listed below.

As of August 1st 2021, the NVS-NVL (Dutch Association of Student and Career Counsellors) and the VvSL have formally merged and will continue together as one new association for educational supervisors: **BiOND**. **NVS-NVL** is the former association for career professionals involved in developing career guidance in schools, IVET and CVET. It also includes all the organisations involved in providing placements and career guidance. Most of them are teachers with a specialisation in career guidance. **VvSL** (Association of School Deans and Career Counsellors) is the former association for career professionals in secondary education (mostly senior general and pre-university), but also private counsellors, professional and study choice agencies and coordinators from the universities (of applied sciences). BiOND has about 2400 members comprising deans, student counsellors, career guidance counsellors and student counsellors. The association acts as an advocate and for these counsellors at all relevant government and educational organisations. In addition, BiOND is the expertise centre and point of contact in the field of expert (career) guidance of young people in education.

The **National Association of Study Advisers** (LVSA) is a professional association for, and represents the interests of, Dutch university study advisors. The LVSA informs its members about developments in CGE (career guidance and education), stimulates the professionalisation of its members by offering courses and professionalisation days, promotes knowledge and information sharing via various platforms, invests in its (international) network, and looks after the interests of its members. The association also stimulates its members to conduct their own research on guidance.

The Association for Career professionals (**Noloc**) is the Dutch association for career professionals and job coaches in the private market, with about 3000 members, who are employed as career coaches, outplacement consultants, job coaches, reintegration specialists or vocational counsellors. More than 50% of them are independent workers or entrepreneurs, while the other members are employed in-house in company career centres, (semi-) public organisations (e.g. schools) or in consulting firms. Members must abide by the Noloc code of ethics and submit themselves to an independent complaints council in the event of a client complaint.

On January 1st 2021, the Certificate Registered Career Professional was introduced. This is a recognised quality mark that is accessible to all qualified career professionals. Both Noloc members and non-members can obtain certification in accordance with the guidelines of the hallmark Mark Register Loopbaanprofessional. In addition, Noloc has a separate quality mark for job coaches who want to obtain their accreditation.

Noloc believes it is important that expert career professionals and job coaches are recognisable to both clients and customers. That is why it stimulates professional recognition.

OVAL is an organisation for vitality, activation, and career (merger of NOBOL and BoaBorea). Oval is involved in reintegration after unemployment, job coaching, guidance in the workplace, making people fit for work and guiding them to work, reintegration in case of illness, outplacement and integration.

Register BKA (Stichting Register Beroepskeuzeadviseurs) registers qualified career professionals, promotes quality and integrity, and strives for optimal communication with professionals and users of vocational guidance.

A special chair (occupied by professor dr. Marinka Kuijpers) on Lifelong learning and Career Guidance (leerstoel Leeromgeving & loopbanen), connected to the Open University Maastricht has been active for 10 years and will continue for at least 4 years until 2025. This chair is funded by several stakeholders in the public (e.g., Ministry of Education) and private sectors. It supports the development and improvement of career guidance in the Netherlands by doing research and bringing this expertise to other stakeholders. www.leerloopbanen.nl

Diverse cooperation between the career development services and stakeholders like employers, trade unions, the media, NGOs, and professional organisations exists both at national and regional levels. In certain areas, there is close cooperation between stakeholders at both national and regional levels, for example within the technology and health sectors.

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Access to guidance

The career guidance system is decentralised and involves diverse public and private career providers. Relevant information on studies, quality aspects, professions and labour market information can be found at many different organisations and ICT-based platforms. Access to guidance is governed according to each domain (see Introduction), both the education system and the labour market sector including in public employment services, and in terms of the activities of employers and trade unions as well as private-sector organisations, with private, and government financing (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)).

In the public employment service sector, self-help digital services and information relating to career development is accessible for free for every citizen, however in-person individual career support is limited mainly to unemployed people through referrals. Career support is free of charge for those who visit the regional service centres on education and work (Leerwerkloketten). It is also free of charge for people who seek career guidance in the Regional Mobility Centres. (Regionale mobiliteitsteams).

Students have access to a certain level of career support within their schools. For extra professional career advice students/parents can purchase commercial advice and support.

Some large companies offer their employees career guidance for free and also some trade unions offer career guidance for free for their members.

Guidance activities within the education system

Career guidance and education (CGE) is partly enshrined in laws and regulations, but differently for different educational sectors. Career guidance in secondary education is regulated by the '[Regulations on Examination Programmes for Secondary Education](#)' (Regeling examenprogramma's voortgezet onderwijs) and in VET by the Examination and qualification decisions within the Dutch [Act on Adult and Vocational Education](#) (Examen- en kwalificatiebesluit beroepsopleidingen WEB). Supervision by the [Inspectorate](#) follows established regulations. Career guidance in higher education is not regulated by law but only by regulation, and supervision is done by the [Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders](#) (NVAO).

In November 2017, institutions engaged in secondary education and VET committed themselves to ambitious goals to improve career guidance by establishing [official Career guidance agendas](#) for secondary and VET-education (LOB Ambitieagenda mbo and Kwaliteitsagenda vo).

Guidance in secondary education, vocational, and higher education is organised according to different lines of support provided by:

1. teachers/mentors (first line support);
2. career teachers/coordinator (second line support);
3. remedial teachers (second/third line support);
4. external private parties (third line support).

Education institutions are required by law and regulations to deliver support in career guidance to students, to develop career competences and to prepare students for the labour market or further education. However, laws and regulations vary per educational sector. Moreover, schools are free to implement CGE within the scope of these laws and regulations in accordance with the vision and policy of their own school. Contents vary substantially in terms of the objectives and aims each school formulates. These objectives can cover a wide spectrum, such as socio-emotional guidance, tutoring, reflection on students' own abilities and motivation, training and work exploration programmes. Some schools design activities to allow students to experience how well they fit into different professional cultures, for example by interviewing parents or organising 'speed-dating' with companies. The guiding methodological principle is based on concrete experiences with work, whereby pupils draw on these experiences to enter into dialogue with their mentor or their parents. There is a variety of school approaches to CGE, and quality can also differ since there are no clearly defined standards at present.

The project [CGE Equal Opportunities](#) of VET services (VET Council) prepares students – those in need, especially minority groups – for their future internship, work or follow-up study by training teachers and students, and guiding them in the use of specific assignments. The project supports VET schools in improving their CGE policy, with the aim of making a positive contribution to the equity of young people. This involves working with all career competences but focusing on work exploration, networking, and career guidance. The ultimate goal is to embed the activities in the school's regular CGE policy and work towards upscaling and sustainability. The project ended by December 31st 2019, was evaluated (see [Opbrengsten LOB-Gelijke kansen](#)). As result guidelines were developed for the career management skill 'work exploration' during several days in companies, for teachers 'how to deal with stereotyping and discrimination in school and workbased learning' and is continued by the Knowledge Centre for E (Kennispunt GKDI).

Guidance activities of public employment sector

Public employment sector guidance activities are targeted at adults and youngsters at risk. Services are provided by the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and [service centres on education and work](#) (Leerwerkloketten) (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)), commissioned by the [Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment](#) at national and regional levels, and by municipalities at regional and local levels. Learners can use portals with independent career information on vocational and higher education (see [section ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

Since 2021, the UWV has a broader profile in line with their [strategic memorandum 2021-2025](#), in which two elements have been put central. Firstly, the improvement of services, with more attention for the direct relation with participants. Secondly, a stronger focus on prevention, aimed at preventing unemployment and incapacity to work. The ambition of UWV is to have more of a guiding function in supporting people in a Lifelong Learning process (LLO), together with (social) partners.

Guidance activities of employers and trade unions

Guidance activities are provided to employees by employers and trade unions; private-sector organisations provide services targeting practically all groups.

Guidance activities of private sector organisations

Most activities of the private sector organisations offer career guidance support in a few sessions paid by the clients themselves. Costs are on average between € 85 - € 135 per hour.

Certain activities and services arranged by private-sector organisations are supported by combined private and government financing, such as the work of many foundations offering career guidance or similar services, mostly for dedicated target groups. Example projects, measures and services are:

1. the guidance services of the UWV public employment service (division of Employee Insurance Agency, [UWV Werkbedrijf](#)) focus on targeting at risk students and unemployed adults;
2. mobility centres of big companies or labour-market sectors where employees have their competences assessed and the opportunity to be promoted or change position inside the company or be placed in a different company.
3. The [Arbodienst](#) is a certified health and safety service provider in the field of absenteeism, vitality and working conditions and is there to support employers in their working conditions policy and absenteeism policy.

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Quality assurance

Due to the decentralised structure of the system, including the provision of services and systems of career guidance, it is not possible to present an overall view of policy on quality assurance in this area. It is more helpful to focus on quality assurance instruments in education and in other sectors.

The government has limited general regulations on the quality of the provision of Career Guidance. There is no certification system on a national level. At national level, Noloc and the Register BKA can be seen as certifying bodies for professional career guidance (for more information see below). The registered members of these organisations are working both in the commercial/private, and in the public sectors. In education, the Inspectorate supervises elements of career guidance in the levels up to VET education.

School counsellors/mentors can obtain certificates after following training modules via BiOND and in the public employment sector career guidance training. For example, certificates are offered for employees who work in the regional service centres.

According to law (see section [Access to guidance](#)), the quality of CGE in secondary education and VET sectors is primarily part of the quality assurance system of schools and monitored by the [Inspectorate of Education](#) by distance (see [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#) and [Quality Assurance](#)). The results of the annual reports are published. The monitoring can sometimes include thematic research. Apart from these quality-assurance activities, schools have their own independent methods of monitoring.

Within Higher Education the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders ([NVAO](#)) assures the quality of career guidance. One of the criteria on which existing and new programmes in higher education are assessed is whether tutoring and provision of information for students are conducive to study progress and respond to their needs.

Quality assurance is specifically addressed in the improvement policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science ([OCW](#)) for CGE (2016 and 2017) and the ambition agenda of the MBO Raad/JOB and Quality agenda of the VO-Raad/Laks. The agenda and development of improvements are monitored by an independent organisation ([AO Consult](#)). The initial measurement took place in 2018 (further information can be found [here](#)). A second measurement was carried out in spring 2020 and the results were published in the report [Monitor LOB Tweede Meting](#).

Higher education institutes do not offer dedicated degrees in career counselling at bachelor level, but offer more general studies related to career guidance education such as human resource development (HRD) and Applied Psychology (Toegepaste psychologie) and where career guidance is part of the bachelor study. There are no specific national requirements by law for career guidance practitioners but there are occupational profiles which can be certified by the professional associations. The occupational categories of career guidance professional, counsellor or career practitioner are regulated and quality assured by professional associations like [Noloc](#) (Association of Career Professionals and Job Coaches) with quality labels for career guidance and job coaching, [Register BKA](#) (Stichting Register Beroepskeuzeadviseurs), with quality labels for career guidance and Netherlands Instituut voor Psychologen (NIP) with quality requirements for a variation of psychologists (see section [Training and qualifications](#)).

Some career guidance providers offer dedicated (in-service) training. These commercial or public organisations are characterised by open registrations for training, which determine whether or not training is offered.

In 2017, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science ([OCW](#)), Euroguidance drafted a competence framework (CGE framework) for different categories of career practitioners working in the education sector. The framework provides information on expected professional knowledge, skills, and competences at different school levels (secondary and VET schools), in four focus areas: vision and policy, orientation and guidance, organisation and cooperation. The centre has developed this framework further into a scan. The framework and scan can be found at the [website](#) of the Expertise Point LOB.

Commissioned by the VET Council, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the VET Citizenship Knowledge Centre and the Expertise Point LOB, Oberon carried out a design study between April and December 2021. In this study, many stakeholders from the sector worked on concrete tools for quality improvement of career development (CGE) and citizenship education in VET. As part of this study a [quality framework](#) was developed for VET institutions (Expertisepunt LOB, LOB Kennisbank) which is connected with the competence framework of Euroguidance. The report provides a teacher profile for citizenship education and an overview of the perceived expertise and training needs of VET teachers with respect to CGE and citizenship.

Validation of informal and non-formal learning is also quality assured and connects to the use of career guidance services. In VET schools the intake and validation procedures can be coordinated with career guidance provided by trained teachers and/or career guidance professionals. These schemes play an important role in supporting the transition from work to education and back, as adults between 25 to 45 years are the main users of validation services. In the dual system of recognition of prior learning operational since 2016, two pathways exist, aimed at either employability, the labour market route or qualification, the education route. This dual system has broadened the possibilities for validation and has linked it more strongly to the policy ideal of lifelong learning, which also implies a role for career guidance. For workers, the recognition of their learning has been enhanced by the links to The NLQF and EQF (Dutch/European Qualifications Framework). Numerous measures have been taken to improve the quality assurance of RPL providers including greater transparency in the recognition and value of RPL- results.

There are several well-known professional associations and certification bodies in the Netherlands. [Noloc](#) (Association of Career Professionals and Job Coaches) is the Dutch association for career professionals and job coaches, with about 3.500 members, who are employed as career coaches, outplacement consultants, reintegration specialists or vocational counsellors (see [Coordination and](#) [Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Netherlands](#)

collaboration among stakeholders). More than 75% of them are independent workers or entrepreneurs, while the other members are employed in-house in company career centres, (semi-) public organisations (e.g. schools) or in consulting firms. Members must abide by the Noloc code of ethics and submit themselves to an independent complaints council where relevant.

On January 1st, 2021, the hallmark **Register Loopbaanprofessional** (RL) was introduced. This is a recognised quality mark that is accessible to all qualified career professionals. Both Noloc members and non-members can obtain certification in accordance with the guidelines of the hallmark Mark Register Loopbaanprofessional. In addition, Noloc has a separate quality mark for job coaches who want to obtain their accreditation.

For Noloc, recognition of professional competences is important so that career professionals and job coaches are recognisable to clients and society. Noloc participates in think tanks and advises the government on the policy on development advice, and in relation to the STAP scheme.

In July 2020 Noloc merged with the **Career Management Institute** (CMI). CMI aimed to promote and increase professionalism in career guidance; this implies guaranteeing formal recognition for Dutch career professionals.

NOBCO (Dutch organisation of professional coaches) is a general association of several types of coaches with about 4500 members. 1710 of them are career coaches. NOBCO puts a lot of effort in professionalisation of members by offering permanent educational opportunities and requiring well defined quality of the work of the member-coaches led by the **European Mentoring & Coaching Council | EMCC** which is working with four European Accreditations

Register BKA (Stichting Register Beroepskeuzeadviseurs) registers qualified career professionals, promotes quality and integrity, and strives for optimal communication with professionals and users of vocational guidance.

OVAL is an organisation for vitality, activation and career (merger of NOBOL and BoaBorea). Oval is involved in reintegration after unemployment, job coaching, guidance in the workplace, making people fit for work and guiding them to work, reintegration in case of illness, outplacement and integration.

Some other quality assurance monitoring instruments and activities are relevant to CGE:

1. Employee Insurance Agency (**UWV**) service emphasises quality and outcomes. Various instruments are used to measure and improve the services, such as a customer panels;
2. the **Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market** (ROA), Maastricht University School of Business and Economics, aims to improve understanding of the relationship between education and the labour market. The overarching research theme of ROA is the acquisition and depreciation of human capital over the life course in relation to the dynamics of the labour market, with one line of research dedicated to education and occupational career. The focus of this programme is twofold, consisting of published studies on the development of competences during education and the transition from school to work, as well as subsequent occupational careers;
3. The **JOB-Monitor** is a biannual publication of the **VET Student Interest Organisation** (JOB), measuring student satisfaction; CGE is one of the focus areas;
4. **Expertise Point** LOB supports schools in secondary and VET education in improving student career orientation and guidance. The expertise centre is financed through external projects as well as by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW). The centre focuses on quality development in three main areas of CGE: secondary education (prevocational and upper secondary), VET (all levels), and transitional periods, especially from prevocational to upper secondary education (VET).
5. In order to gain a structural insight into the causes, consequences and possible policy measures of early school leaving, **ROA** has been conducting the **VSV-Monitor** since 2007. Since 2016, the **VSV-Monitor** is conducted in cooperation with CBS.
6. In 2020-2021 **ResearchNed** carried out a **monitor** on policy measures in higher education. The report captures the potential impacts of policies in place since 2010. **ResearchNed** monitored transitions, switches and drop-outs of students in their first year and reasons for these drop out/switches (often uncertainty in choosing the right fit).
7. After two previous evaluations in 2011 and 2015, **Regioplan** and **ECBO** carried out a new **evaluation** in 2021 on **Regional service centres on education and work** (Leerwerkloketten). This included a series of case studies of regional service centres on education and work, a round of interviews with national stakeholders and a survey of the national team. The evaluation study is meant to create a clear picture of the current policy: to what extent does the policy suffice and what improvements might be desirable.
8. The **CGE Ambition Agenda** sets out the aspects that are fundamental to high-quality CGE in VET: vision and policy, activities and guidance, quality monitoring and professionalisation. Depending on the phase in its development, a school can use the CGE agendas as a start-up tool, a stock-taking tool and an evaluation tool.

Progress on aspects from the CGE agendas in VET is monitored. The Expertise Point LOB has been asked to guide the CGE Monitor process. The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the state of affairs regarding CGE in the education sector and to monitor progress. In 2018, 2020 and 2021/2022 the Expertise Point LOB commissioned educational research agency AO Consult to perform the Monitor. Measurements for the Monitor are based on data collected in three different years: 2018, 2020 and 2021-2022. For more details, see the **2020 LOB Monitor Report | Netherlands Association of VET schools**.

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Career management skills

There is a strong theoretical foundation supporting career management competences (loopbaancompetenties) in the Netherlands, as expressed in five competences identified by Marinka Kuijpers PhD. The competences are clarified in regulations governing secondary

education and VET institutes: reflection on capacities; reflection on motives; work exploration; career control; and networking. The research of Kuijpers led to the publication [Career compass](#) (2011).

At regional level, schools, VET institutions and higher education cooperate with companies in developing career guidance activities focused on career management skills. Some example practices and tools are described below.

At <https://www.leerwerkloket.nl> visitors are offered a four step model for career orientation and development: Discover-Choose-Learn-Work. It stimulates clients to discover their competences and interests and to choose a profession that suits them and has good labour market opportunities. It discusses what needs to be learned and shows ways of finding an apprenticeship or job.

[MentorProgramma Friesland](#) is a practice aiming to increase access to career guidance services for VET students through mentorship programmes. The services focus on career planning, self-understanding and self-awareness. The mentors are representatives from companies, both employers and employees.

The www.werk.nl website has been developed by the government with the aim of increasing access to online career information, labour market information, and education, training and working opportunities.

The [Expertise Point LOB](#) (Expertisepunt LOB) created a [database](#) with up-to-date materials, containing CGE assignments, methods, and examples.

[KiesMBO](#) (Choose VET) is a portal for study and career choice specifically aimed at the possibilities offered by secondary vocational education (VET). KiesMBO shows young people, their parents and teachers how VET works, the possibilities it offers, and helps them make a choice for their future. KiesMBO was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) to be developed by the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB), in collaboration with the VET and secondary education sectors, the organised business community and youth organisations.

[Studiekeuze 123](#) (Study choice 123) is a foundation established by students, the higher education sector and Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) to collect and disseminate objective information on studies in higher education. Studiekeuze123 manages information about the recognised study programmes at universities (of applied sciences) and carries out the annual national student survey.

The [service centres on education and work](#) (Leerwerkloketten) are currently building a new website containing various tools and services for jobseekers, employees, pupils, students, and employers.

The [Move21](#) research project aims to gain better understanding of various skills that are important for future citizens and employees: 21st century skills, career competences, and citizenship skills. For VET students, teachers and education developers alike, making development of these skills visible is essential. [KOMPAS21](#) (Knowledge of my personal attitudes and skills21) helps VET students to understand their 21st century skills and shows them where they can go (development) and where they are now (level). Like a real compass, KOMPAS21 will show the student both the direction they want to go in (development) and where they are now (level).

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Monitoring career guidance in the education system

The [Inspectorate for Education](#) monitors the quality of education: primary, general secondary and VET. They monitor at system level and provide a picture of the quality of the Dutch education system as a whole. They identify where things are going well and where not, prioritise themes and help to resolve bottlenecks by viewing the system as a whole. This enables better understanding on students' progress through the education system, bottlenecks around the transitions between education levels and the transition to the labour market and equality/inequality of opportunities. Trends and developments are monitored, analysed and main risks are identified by using the framework of the system-level quality descriptors. They look at how all school governing boards and educational programmes are fulfilling the three core functions: qualification, socialisation, and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities. They also look at the conditions that are essential to this: efficiency, as evidenced by the availability and spending of financial resources, staffing policy, quality assurance and administrative conduct. The Inspectorate combines the four-yearly inspection of the school governing board and the educational programmes with supervision on thematic themes. Every year, they publish the [Annual General Education Research](#) (Staat van het Onderwijs), the report on how the education system in the Netherlands is doing, what is going well, where are there bottlenecks, opportunities, and risks. The supervision is proportional and tailor-made (depending on the quality and quality assurance management of the school). The indicators relating to career education, career guidance/support and career information are monitored by the Inspectorate by distance and schools are only visited based on any specific signals indicated, taking a risk-based approach. The school board has primary responsibility and school reports are not detailed; they provide more general information and are not organised per indicator.

Legal requirements related to career education, career guidance and information on study choice are translated into basic standards and indicators in the [Supervisory Framework VET](#) of the Inspectorate. Basic standard, descriptors and indicators related to career guidance include the following:

1. TLP2. Developmental Support and Supervision: The educational programme ensures appropriate admission and placement procedures. The educational programme monitors the progress and development of the students and offers appropriate guidance and extra support where necessary. Basic standard of quality is focussing on: providing students with relevant information and advice on suitable educational programmes; supervision of the progress of students and their needs; attention for equal opportunities; support for students with specific needs.
2. TLP5. Practical vocational training is prepared, implemented, and supervised effectively. The basic standard of quality is focussing on: the content of the practical vocational training, helping the student to develop the required skills and competences; to choose and prepare for a vocational training placement and to ensure the quality and examination of the external practical training. Indicators used which relate career development support include: Preventing early school leaving (as it relates to the effectiveness of

career guidance and its quality); transitions to and within education and to the labour market (as it relates to the effectiveness of career guidance and its quality); student and alumni satisfaction level; study success; connection to the labour market; quality and inequality effects and; Covid-19 effects.

The [evaluation from 2015/16](#) shows a high level of quality in career guidance services and activities in primary, general secondary and VET education (Staat van het Onderwijs, 2017). According to the study, general schools inform students sufficiently on programmes and their own progress. CGE (Career guidance education) considers various guidance needs of students and assists them in making the right study choices, particular for students from vulnerable groups. CGE helps young people discover their qualities and passions and can contribute to reducing inequality of education opportunities. A critical comment is that CGE could be more versatile, for example in covering key curricular themes such as reflection on capacities and motives, work exploration and networking. The [2016/17 evaluation](#) states that at some VET schools, CGE has clearly gained a prominent place in education policy, but institutions can enhance the value of CGE by making it more visible (Staat van het Onderwijs, 2018).

More recent annual reports show no specific results regarding CGE. There are several reports regarding the wellbeing of students, their needs, and if there is sufficient support from schools in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic effects .

The evaluation of progress in the Ambition and Quality agendas on CGE/guidance in VET and General (vocational) education by AO consult (an educational research agency) are more informative when it comes to more recent school performance. In 2020 AO consult carried out the [CGE Monitor 2020](#). The conclusions are generally positive about the state of CGE. The topic attracts a growing amount of attention within the education sector. Most schools take account of CGE and more and more schools are establishing CGE in vision and policy. Schools offer a wide range of CGE activities, tailored to specific needs where possible. In pre-vocational education (vmbo) CGE is often a separate school subject, while in senior general secondary education (havo), pre-university education (vwo) and vocational education (mbo) CGE tends to be part of academic career counselling.

Despite the availability of provisions, the majority of school counsellors/deans and CGE coordinators indicate there is room for improvement when it comes to professionalisation. The interim evaluation also shows that not all schools have yet adopted a comprehensive approach; from vision and policy to concrete activities and systematic quality assurance. For both secondary education and VET, the evaluation of CGE policy remains in need of development.

Other examples of evaluation studies

Studies on VET student satisfaction with career guidance services and career management skills (CMS) are part of national surveys by Youth Organisation for Vocational Education ([Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs](#), JOB) and National Pupils Action Committee (Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren, LAKS), representing two student unions, and [ResearchNed](#) (from the private sector). A year after leaving school by a VET student, the school receives a report with data about the situation of early school leavers from education and training. These data are collected within the [School Leaver Survey](#) of the Research Centre on Education and the Labour Market.

The 2020 LAKS Monitor, the satisfaction survey among secondary school students, has shown that most (though not all) young people in secondary education have positive experiences with CGE and consider it to be a valuable part of their education. Elements of particular importance to them are a tailor-made approach, gaining practical experience to remain up to date, and more coherence in CGE.

Every two years JOB carries out the [JOB monitor](#) in VET, which is organised by VET students on the board of the Youth Organization for Vocational Education (JOB), and who aim to help all VET students in the country. The monitor consists of surveys which are filled out online by VET students and questions them about their school and education, and it features questions on career guidance. The last JOB monitor was carried out by ResearchNed in 2020 and received a subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). It revealed that over a quarter of students reported feeling that they are not well guided their decision-making and choices.

Then Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO) brings a lot of research into CGE together and answers questions of educational professionals regarding CGE based on scientific research. It also shows that available Dutch research (further information can be found [here](#)) focuses primarily on the design and organisation of CGE. Studies only partly focus on effects, mainly as reported by those involved in career guidance. The research also shows that the interpretation of CGE varies greatly and is still not fully developed, which makes it difficult to make statements about its effectiveness and about important factors.

Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) and NRO wrote a report - [Education Knowledge: Career Orientation and Guidance](#), which describes what is known about CGE from recent research in the education sector. They conclude based on several studies (Gelderblom et al., 2021, Hughes et al., 2016 & Korpershoek et al. 2021), that the following characteristics are important for effective CGE in pre-vocational education:

- A coherent CGE program as part of the whole curriculum
- Space for individual guided reflection and professionalisation of mentors, career guidance professionals, and teams
- An active role for pupils and students
- Information about courses and professions
- Involvement of parents

In 2015, two evaluation studies were carried out by Motivaction in connection with the termination of a specific CGE project in VET. This research (Eigenfeld, De Graaf & Aid Moha, 2015) shows that the basic principles of CGE in the programmes have great potential for students: CGE creates room for young people to reflect on their motives and qualities. Nevertheless, the studies found that for a number of reasons, CGE does not yet seem to have the desired impact.

The Expertisepunt LOB (<https://expertisepuntlob.nl>) mentions several evaluations and effective studies (under Menu>'tools'>lob-onderzoek). The 'Special Chair in career guidance' website presents evaluation reports on lifelong learning and career support: www.leerloopbanen.nl

The website of [Euroguidance Netherlands](#) lists numerous studies on career guidance in the country and in Europe.

Monitoring in the labour market sector

The knowledge centre of Employee Insurance Agency ([UWV](#)) (see section ICT in lifelong guidance) analysed the effectiveness of services for reintegration into the labour market during 2008-11. This study showed that the services provided by UWV led to a substantial increase in the chance of resuming work and a reduction of the period in which job seekers receive unemployment benefits. It is shown that the services provided by UWV are net-effective and cost-effective. This study also showed that face-to-face services increase the chance of resuming work significantly. The knowledge centre of UWV also showed that the [Work Profiler 2.0](#), an electronic diagnosis tools (see section ICT in lifelong guidance), forecasts correctly for 70% of the clients whether they will resume work within 1 year.

Since 2017, the government has structurally funded the 35 Regional service centres on education and work (Leerwerkloketten) in the Netherlands. Commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment (SZW), ECBO together with Regioplan conducted a [study](#) , 13-01-2022, publicationnumber 21069 to see how the regional service centres functioned in the past five years and what are the differences between the 32 regular learning-working desks and the 3 Plus desks The study shows that the service centres make an important contribution to the national LLO agenda from their own region. They distinguish themselves by their connecting function, knowledge of the educational field and access to funding opportunities for LLO activities. However, they are too small to serve all citizens in the region and must therefore (learn to) make choices. Recommendations for improvement are:

- more national vision creation and management is needed
- better embedding of the Regional Service Centres in the Lifelong Learning policy and more coordination between responsible and involved Ministries

- evaluation of the limited financing is needed. The financing is not in line with the needs

The Dutch government has funded so-called 'development advice' since 2020, due to the covid-crisis. The government monitored the experience with development advice for those aged 45+ and development advice for a broader group of people (see section [Career guidance for adult learners](#) and [older adults](#)).

In this programme, people in employment and jobseekers could apply for free development advice from a career adviser. The development advice aims to provide service users with insight into their current labour market opportunities, possibilities for retraining or tips for job searching. Development advice was popular, evidenced by the fact that the maximum number of registrations was reached after only one month. At the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Regioplan conducted a study ([Monitor ontwikkeladviezen Regioplan, November 2020, publicatienr. 20134](#)) among participants to investigate the reason and purpose for requesting development advice and the characteristics of the participants.

In the summer of 2020, 22.000 development advice offers were available and because of the observed success, the government offered again 50.000 (1-12-2020). Reasons reported for participation by service users, were loss of jobs during the COVID-19 crisis; feeling stress during employment/at work, and therefore seeking other learning/development opportunities, and finding more suitable work. The participants were often women. One third had qualifications below EQF level 2, and two thirds of them had higher education. One quarter had no work at the time of participating (ECBO & Regioplan, 2022).

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Career information, ICT in guidance

The Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) is a supplier of (public) labour market information. In March 2021 the [National UWV labour market information website](#) was renovated.

The UWV provides labour market information on a number of levels:

- national level, in particular employment development
- regional level, on the basis of the 35 labour market regions, focusing on the opportunities and bottlenecks for jobseekers and employers. There is also information on available jobs, vacancies, and unused labour potential.
- sector level: what are labour market developments for specific sectors, for example, health care or education?
- target user groups: VET and Higher education students. This concerns information about the labour market position of graduates, both at the start of labour market entry and after 10 years.
- occupational level: A distinction is made here between the so-called occupations with good employment prospects and occupations with promising transitional opportunities.

Since August 2021, [the Dashboard Skills and occupations](#) has been operational. This dashboard is based on Competent NL, the skills language and standard for the Dutch labour market. With this dashboard, users can make selections to find out which tasks and (soft) skills belong to certain occupations. In this way, jobseekers who want to switch to another profession are helped to find a job that fits their skills profile.

The [Work Profiler 2.0](#) is a diagnosis tool, supporting UWV, the national employment agency, in providing tailored advice to its clients on unemployment benefits. A client fills in a short questionnaire online. Based on this information and UWV administration data, the tool provides two results: one assesses the client's chance of resuming work within one year, and a second provides a brief diagnosis based on 11 predictive factors for work resumption (personal obstacles and opportunities). These factors need attention in supporting the client in increasing the chances of reintegration into the labour market.

Tools for students

An increasing amount of information and tools is available for students. For example, [Studiekeuze123](#) (studychoice 123) is financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and provides independent and reliable data on all higher education studies in the Netherlands. [KiesMBO](#) (Choose VET) is developed by Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training, and the Labour Market (SBB) in cooperation with the VET Council (MBO Raad) and commissioned by OCW. It is especially designed for young pupils in secondary education looking for information on VET. The website [KiesMBO](#) provides an overview of occupations and their requirements, information and orientation on VET skills and vocational education and training schools and pathways, on relevant indicators such as labour market opportunities, future salary, transition to higher education. The main content of KiesMBO consists of simple descriptions of courses and what you will learn as a student. In addition, for each profession there is a 2-minute video in which a student and a practical trainer show what the work entails.

[KiesMBO](#) has attracted over 600,000 visitors last calendar year (2021). Of which almost 60% are pre-vocational/vmbo students and almost 30% are vet/mbo students. [Studiekeuze123.nl](#) had more than 1 million visitors in 2021.

It is possible to also do some orientation on the personal interests and skills. Recently a 'game' is developed for orientation with a competition element on VET in the classroom (groups of pupils/students) (pre-vet and general education).

Information for career professionals in education

In addition, some online public websites are available for career professionals in education, such as:

1. Expertise Point LOB ([Expertisepunt LOB](#)) supports schools in secondary education, VET and higher vocational education in improving career orientation programmes and guidance, and career guidance of students during the study and, to support transitions between levels and between education and labour market. The approach is partly national, partly regional. The Expertise Point is project-based and is financed by Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) (see sections Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and Quality assurance);
2. [Knowledge Centre for Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (Kennispunt Gelijke kansen, Inclusie, en Diversiteit) is also project-based and financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment (SZW). It supports schools and professionals in enabling equal opportunities for students, enhancing the use of career guidance support and experience in practise. It works closely together with the Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) and organises knowledge sharing with experts. Some pilots with VET schools are in development.
3. [Agency for Education](#) (DUO) with information on access, student grants, education in VET and Higher Education

Other selected ICT guidance resources

In October 2022, the government launched a national portal to provide information on learning opportunities called '[Leeroverzicht.nl](#)'. The goal is to provide reliable and up-to-date information about eligible public and private training provision and training resources. This platform was also designed to provide information on the learning subsidies, such as STAP (lifelong development/training for adults) and on the career guidance advice for citizens who have completed second-level VET education (EQF level 2). The plan discussed is to further expand this platform with, among other things, information from CompetentNL on skills in demand on the labour market and the skills learners can acquire in VET.

The platform [NLwerktdeur](#) was developed during the Covid-19 crisis for better matching of job vacancies and individual jobseekers, which formed the basis for [Leeroverzicht.nl](#) (above).

The national support team of the [Regional service centres on education and work \(Leerwerkloketten\)](#) has an informative [portal](#) including on career orientation and career information, learning and working, based on a step-by-step plan starting from the situation or phase of the service user. [Tiptrack](#) is a digital platform, a personal and interactive online tool for workers and employers originally developed by the AWWN (General employers' association Netherlands). The tool is built on the five pillars of sustainable employability: work, development, health, finance, and work-life balance. Tiptrack encourages users to take control of their own careers and aims to give them insight into their own situation; now and in the future. They can immediately purchase products and services such as training, coaching, and testing. Achmea and Employers' Association AWWN reached agreement (2022) on the acquisition of Tiptrack BV by Achmea, a financial service provider. Employers can offer the services on the platform to their employees.

[Career compass](#) developed in 2011 by Euroguidance (van Deursen, P. And van de Wijdeven, F) is based on research and practical experiences and is a practical tool for career counsellors and managers in the education sector or in the business community. The Career compass reduces essential career questions to career competences as identified by career guidance expert Marinka Kuijpers. It consists of several tools and questionnaires.

The trade union CNV aims to stimulate self-sufficiency in career guidance and offers tools in [Loopbaan centraal](#). According to three themes: Test (who am I), Discover (professions) and Act (setting goals, networking, how to apply for a job), people can work independently on their career portfolio.

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Training and qualifications

There are no official national requirements by law or qualifications to enter the career guidance profession as an occupation, and there is no field-specific initial bachelor's degree focused on the career guidance profession or field (research, etc.). At the moment there are bachelor's (BA) and master's (MA) level qualifications/credentials in related fields such as Human Resource Management (HRM) and Applied Psychology, which offer modules and minors in career guidance. The relevant occupations in career guidance are quality assured by professional associations with quality requirements and labels for members (see section [Quality assurance](#)) but these are not regulated by law.

Initial BA programmes related to career guidance

In the initial training programmes at BA level generic programmes are offered such as Human Resource Management (HRM) and Applied Psychology. Both programmes are offered by different universities of Applied Sciences in the country. In the national consultation/meeting of these programmes agreements are made about the content and learning outcomes. Within this framework, each institution gives its own colour and focus to its programmes. A limited number of HRM programmes focus on guiding and coaching (young) adults on their way to or on the labour market. Applied Psychology is closely related to the profession of career guidance practitioner with diagnostic skills. Some institutions offer BA programmes with minors in career counselling.

MA programmes at university of Applied Science (hbo) level related to career guidance

An MA programme in Special Educational Needs is offered by various institutions. Sometimes in combination with practice-oriented research on this theme, a differentiation mentioning career guidance, employment guidance, on the certificate is possible.

The Knowledge Centre Talent Development at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences has a professorship (lectureship) in Parents in Rotterdam South, including proven methods for better collaboration with parents in CGE. It is intended for prospective, new, and experienced teachers and social professionals.

Research in career guidance

Within the research group Innovative and Effective Education at Saxion University of Applied Sciences there is an assistant professorship (lectureship) in the field of career guidance that covers the quality of career guidance, the quality of reflection in education, teacher professionalisation, study yield and intake. <https://www.saxion.nl/onderzoek/meer-onderzoek/innovatief-en-effectief-onderwijs/profielpagina-associate-lector>

MA programmes at university level related to career guidance

There are three master programmes at university level for career professionals who want more (substantial) depth and background, and/or want to carry out research or perform policy related tasks:

1. Master (University level) in Career Management at the Open University (to be discontinued)
2. Master in Psychology (university level), specialisation in work and organisational psychology;
3. Master in Psychology (university level), specialisation in life-course psychology.

Within the programme group [Work and Organisational Psychology](#) of the University of Amsterdam there is a research focus on determinants of people's fit perceptions, self-regulation during unemployment, career development, organisational justice and health, norm violation, leadership, and career coaching.

In-service and continuing training programmes (post-initial and -master) programmes related to career guidance

There are also various continuing education and training programmes and courses with a career component. These can be categorised by:

1. training provision from government-funded institutions: higher education accredited by NVAO offers various post-programmes, mostly private funding, such as Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HVA) offers a programme for career guidance practitioners acknowledged by Register BKA and provides students with scientific knowledge offering psychology, practical guidance skills and tools. The Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) offers various training programmes in the Education Sector.
2. courses offered by guidance professional associations; such as Noloc (Association of Guidance Counsellors), Register BKA, BiOND (Association of deans), NIP (Dutch Institute of Psychologists)
3. training offer from commercial institutions and parties: such as NCOI, De Loopbaangroep

After extensive stakeholder consultation, Euroguidance produced a [publication](#) containing an overview of education and training opportunities for career guidance practitioners and related fields, including some of the information listed above (Euroguidance, 2020). The Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) publishes and manages the overview, which can be found [here](#).

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Funding career guidance

Governmental funding for career guidance

Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), the public employment service, is commissioned by, and receives a budget from, the [Ministry of](#)

Social Affairs and Employment (SZW). The development and implementation of the **Work Profiler 2.0**, an electronic diagnosis tool supporting UWV (see sections Evidence, monitoring and assessment and ICT in lifelong guidance), is financed by their budget.

The **Regional service centres on education and work** (Leerwerkloketten) are jointly financed by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) and regional parties, such as municipalities and VET schools.

Citizens can use the digital career guidance services (mostly websites) and limited face to face career guidance services from the Regional service centres (Leerwerkloketten) on education and work for free.

As of 2020, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment funds initiatives aimed at stimulating learning and development in SMEs and in large companies in the agriculture, catering and recreation sector with the **SLIM-regeling**. Initiatives can range from research education and training needs in a company to development of career advice for employees.

Career guidance in the public schools is free of charge. Schools receive a lumpsum funding for education and guidance provisions and arrangements (under the conditions stipulated by law). Pupils/students and parents can supplement this with support/advice/coaching through purchased services offered by private providers.

Various funding mechanisms are in place in the education sector. Current and former programmes include Expertise Point LOB, which is funded by the **Ministry of Education, Culture and Science** (OCW) and Knowledge Centre Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion funded by OCW and Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW).

The better the cooperation with companies, the more VET students gain experience, and the greater the chance that they will find work quickly after their studies. Since 2014, the Dutch government has allocated € 25 million each year via the Regional investment fund for VET schools to improve this cooperation.

In September 2020 the government reserved a total of €195 million for the regional mobility teams for job-to-job guidance. Also in 2020, 63 million was reserved for the purpose of temporary extra resources in the labour market regions for short-term extra training and retraining via practical learning in secondary vocational education (VET), whereby work is combined with doing part of a VET course.

Governmental funding for lifelong development

The government developed a policy on lifelong development and career guidance to achieve a breakthrough in the field of **Lifelong Development (LLO)**, including a new way of funding learning opportunities and support.

The starting point is that the government wants to encourage people to take control of their own careers and their lives, so that they can continue to develop and make their own choices. Lifelong development plays an important role in this. People have access to resources that can be used for training and development so that they remain sustainably employable at the labour market. The government worked on a scheme aimed at a public learning and development budget, the so-called 'STAP budget', offering people the (financial) possibility to take steps in their learning and development, initiated in March 2022. Employees and unemployed people would have a personal, maximum budget (€1.000) every year for training or education. Also included in the plan is a visit to a registered career guide or coach for free (€ 700 budget).

Due to several factors as listed on its **dedicated webpage**, it is currently unclear if the STAP scheme will be continued past 2024.

STAP budget for training and development

Workers and job seekers can apply for a STAP budget of up to € 1,000 per year for training and development, where funding is available during a set period. This subsidy can be used for a training course or education. STAP stands for STimulerend Arbeidsmarkt Positie (stimulation of the labour market position).

The government wants workers or job seekers, to be able to decide on their own learning and development during a career to increase chances of maintaining a job (employability) or finding a new one.

Conditions of the STAP budget

There are a number of conditions and eligibility requirements. STAP targets people with a link to the Dutch labour market, who are 18 years or older, and who are not yet receiving a retirement pension (AOW). The training, course or education sought must be listed in the STAP training register and not yet have started at the time the STAP budget is applied for. If the application is approved, the amount is paid to the trainer. UWV administers and executes the applications.

STAP- development consult (advice)

Employees and unemployed adults, who have completed a training course of up to MBO 2 level, and are looking for a suitable training course, can get free advice from a career advisor.

Those seeking services can approach a careers advisor or careers company themselves: since April 1, 2022, careers advisors can register participants who will follow a development advice programme with them. As of 1 May 2022, the career advisors can apply for the subsidy for the development advice at UWV through the application portal of My Implementation of Policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In 2022 there are 15,000 development advice for € 700 per advice offer available.

In addition, there are regional pilots to provide starting points for improving support for those in work, jobseekers, and employers (pilots Leerwerkloketten).

A new website 'Leeroverzicht.nl' was launched from October 2022 to support and inform citizens about all learning opportunities private and public, financial arrangements and supportive intermediary advice resources. The website is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and steered by the Ministries of OCW and Ministry of Social Affairs and Work (SZW), the school councils of VET and Higher VET, the private school council NRTO, and the social partners. They guarantee independent, up to date, and reliable information.

The Netherlands Continues Learning (Nederland Leert Door)

The subsidy scheme 'The Netherlands Continues Learning' offers free training for everyone between the age of 18 and the pensionable age. This measure is also part of the package of crisis measures because of Covid-19. The scheme ended on December 31, 2022. In 2020 and 2021 more than 65,000 training trajectories became available. As of March 15, 2022, the supply grew by 54,000 pathways. It is unclear if these measures will continue.

Lifelong Learning Collective Low-educated & Low-literacy (LLO Collectief Laagopgeleiden & Laaggeletterden)

The plan 'LLO Collective Low-educated & Low-literate' will receive 7.6 million euros from the National Growth Fund in the coming years. The aim of the plan is to give the low educated and the low literate a better position on the labour market, by investing in a new training offer.

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Career guidance for school pupils

Guidance activities within the education system include career guidance in secondary schools, are regulated by the 'Regulations on Examination Programmes for Secondary Education' (Regeling examenprogramma's voortgezet onderwijs) and in VET by the Examination and qualification decisions within the Dutch Act on Adult and Vocational Education (Examen- en kwalificatiebesluit beroepsopleidingen WEB). Supervision by the Inspectorate follows established regulations. In higher education career guidance is regulated differently and supervision is done by the NVAO (Nederlands Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie – Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organisation).

In November 2017, institutions engaged in secondary education and VET committed themselves to ambitious goals to improve career guidance. Guidance in secondary, vocational, and higher education is organised according to different lines of support provided by:

1. teachers/mentors (first line support);
2. career teachers/coordinator/career guidance experts (second line support);
3. remedial teachers (second/third line support);
4. external private parties (third line support).

Education institutions are required by law and regulations to deliver support in career guidance to students, to develop career competences and to prepare students for the labour market or further education. Schools are given the power to determine how career orientation and guidance in education is organised, which depends largely on the governance of the schools and the school counsellors. Contents vary substantially in terms of the objectives and aims each school formulates. These objectives can cover a wide spectrum, such as socio-emotional guidance, tutoring, reflection on students' own abilities and motivation, training, and work exploration programmes. Some schools design activities to allow students to experience how well they fit into different professional cultures, for example by interviewing parents or organising 'speed-dating' with companies. The guiding methodological principle is based on 'experience', whereby pupils draw on these experiences to enter into dialogue with their mentor or their parents. There are a variety of school approaches to career orientation and guidance, and the quality of career guidance can also differ since there are no clearly defined standards at present.

ZAT's (Zorg Advies teams, The Care-Advice Teams) are established by and in schools following the law on 'adequate education' ([Wet Passend Onderwijs](#), August 2014). In this law the duty of care is put forward as a central focus point of schools. The care-advise teams are active in primary, secondary and VET school and include representatives from schools, health services, psychologists, and the police. The aim of the teams is to provide access to career guidance and preventive measures for at-risk students with behavioural difficulties.

The [Quality Agenda LOB](#) for secondary education sets out the aspects that are fundamental to high-quality LOB: policy, activities, guidance and quality monitoring. The agenda was established in 2018 to help schools develop a comprehensive approach: from vision and policy towards real-world activities and systematic quality monitoring. For VET an [Ambition agenda](#) CGE was also established in 2018 by the VET council and JOB. In 2021 an addendum to this ambition agenda was signed by both parties. The Expertise Point LOB monitors whether the points as described in the CGE ambition agenda are actually implemented by VET schools.

The Dutch Secondary Education Council, the LAKS association of secondary school students and two associations of school guidance practitioners (VvSL and NVS-NVL) have recently agreed to extend the 2018-2021 Quality Agenda LOB for secondary education until at least the end of 2022. These organisations use the agenda to assist schools in firmly embedding career education and guidance in their education practices. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) [policy letter on career education and guidance measures to the Parlement](#) in 2021 lists the following priorities that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science intends to address with increased emphasis in the coming years, in collaboration with the education sector:

1. Focus on LOB in the curriculum, professionalisation and assurance
2. Contribute to the further improvement of transitions
3. Strengthen labour market information and equal opportunities on the labour market.

In development for secondary education is a new national curriculum ([Curriculum.nu](#)) in which also career guidance is revised. Career guidance did not receive a distinct place in the curriculum but is integrated in the individual courses.

VHTO is the national expertise bureau for girls/women and STEM and is committed to increasing the participation of girls and women in STEM.

[LOB-scan VO](#) (CGE-scan for secondary education) was developed in 2010 and is intended for people who are involved in CGE in secondary schools. It provides professionals with a practical tool for self-assessment and the development of plans for improving CGE. In addition to supporting the student in the choice of sector/profile, subject package and further education, the focus is now more on guiding 'a flexible career throughout life', because careers in society are subject to change and unpredictability. The scan consists of four parts: vision and policy; orientation and guidance; organisation; and collaboration.

Furthermore, the Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB), Euroguidance and Regional service centres published the [Guide on Labour Market Information and CGE](#), which describes what labour market information entails, why the service is important for Expertise Point, how it can be used, and what this requires of education professionals.

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Guidance for VET participants

Career education and guidance is available in every VET school for young students and adults and services are offered in line with the requirements of the VET law. Schools are free in the way they offer services and therefore we can see different approaches also depending on the need of students and environment. Students always are offered an intake and advice before entering a VET school. During the education there is guidance offered by mentors and some schools offer specialised guidance such as Care-advise teams (ZAT) and student Career Centres such as Gilde Loopbaancentrum (Gilde Career Centre) and Studie Info Punt van Mondriaan.

Since 2010 a financial impulse is given to enhance the career guidance education and advice in VET. Several improvement programmes were initiated and financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and implemented by the VET council. In general education also stimulating programmes on career guidance took place in the same period and after an evaluation of these programmes the government installed the Expertise Point LOB (Expertisepunt LOB) as follow up. The results, products, instruments, and experiences are to be found on the [website](#).

A special programme was financed to improve the career guidance for students at risk and to improve equal chances and better inclusion. This programme was followed up by starting the Knowledge Centre for Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion (Kennispunt Gelijke Kansen, Diversiteit & Inclusie) financed by the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs and executed by the VET Council. They work closely with the Expertisecentre CGE.

The Care-advise teams (Zorg Advies teams, ZAT) (see section Career guidance for school pupils) are active in primary, secondary and VET schools and include representatives from schools, health services, psychologists, and the police. The aim of the teams is to provide access to career guidance and preventive measures for at-risk students with behavioural difficulties.

Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) provides information about the chance of an internship, apprenticeship and work for the various training courses and Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) labour market regions. Further information can be found [here](#).

Several regional and national initiatives and programmes include the following:

MentorProgramma Friesland is a practice aiming to increase access to career guidance services for VET students through mentorship programmes. The services focus on career planning, self-understanding, and self-awareness. The mentors are representatives from the companies, both employers and employees.

The **Gilde Loopbaancentrum** (Gilde Career Centre) is part of Gilde Opleidingen (VET) and stimulates and supports adults and young people in the Central and North Limburg region to determine the direction of their (study) careers themselves. They want to contribute to the 'knowledge economy' in which adults and young people continue to develop and are prepared for the future. To this end, they want to share their knowledge and offer specific services. The services of Gilde Career Centre are offered (usually free of charge) on location, online, via activities and via their networks. Examples of their services are career consultation hours, workshops and training, personal support, coaching, EVC. Several VET-schools offer specialised career guidance themselves or in cooperation with private professional CG organisations/counsellors (f.e. Summacollege, Mondriaan Info Punt).

LOB-scan mbo (CGE scan for VET) is a conversation tool that aims to investigate, together with employees of VET schools, the state of affairs regarding CGE at the time of completion. With the results of the scan, schools can discuss what the desired situation is for the renewal/improvement of CGE in the short and long term. By examining the current state of affairs within a programme, department or institution together, the desire or urgency for possible improvement of CGE becomes visible. The scan consists of four parts: vision and policy; orientation and guidance; organisation; and collaboration.

Loopbaancoach (career coach) is an app for pupils, students and professionals for an [online career file](#), developed by Prof. Dr. Marinka Kuijpers and consisting of:

1. building up an individual profile that helps with career choices (for education or work);
2. starting point for discussion with dean, mentor or family, through insight into career experiences;
3. creation of a CGE examination file and transfer document (e.g. to further and higher education).

Eigen dossier (My dossier) is a digital VET-related dossier in which a student, employee or job seeker can gather, manage, and share all learning and development outcomes that they accumulate during their career

The **National Programme for Rotterdam Zuid** offers an integrated approach to living, working, and learning in Rotterdam Zuid. Within the educational domain, the programme focuses on addressing educational disadvantages, promoting development opportunities for children, and equipping young people for the labour market, and for the technology and care sectors in particular. Notably, LOB now is a key theme from primary education through to vocational education, with employment guarantees being offered in the latter segment. A special website for schools in Rotterdam Zuid, [Gaan voor een baan](#) (Go for the job), contains a wealth of information about LOB-related learning opportunities. The programme receives ESF funding.

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Guidance for higher education students

The higher education law requires support of students in orientation and information. High schools provide this information for their students in preparation for HE, but in HE career guidance is less regulated than in General education and VET. There are no specific requirements, but improved career guidance can be beneficial. According to the [Monitor Beleidsmaatregelen hoger onderwijs 2020-2021](#) in the first year of studies, a quarter of all students drop out. A possible factor is that students are reported as expressing a need for better career guidance (ResearchNed, 2021).

All higher education institutions provide some activities and services for CGE, such as career centres, services and events, entrepreneurship centres and virtual business games. However, the amount and type of services vary substantially between the institutions. For example, the [Career Centre of the University of Delft](#) organises networking activities, meetings with employers, and career workshops. There are sometimes special services for specific target groups. The Radboud University Nijmegen, for example, offers a 'job finder' for students with a disability.

Examples of tools

[Studiekeuze 123](#) (Study choice 123) is a foundation established by students, the higher education sector and Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) to collect and disseminate objective information on studies in higher education, aiming to support their decision-making. The foundation manages information about recognised study programmes at universities (of applied sciences) and carries out the annual national student survey.

The [Kies Actief toolkit](#) started in 2009 and is meant to help people who want to study in higher education. It focuses primarily on those who want to move on to and within a bachelor degree programme. The use of the toolkit is most effective if it is embedded in a (study) career guidance programme for VET participants, pre-university students and higher professional education students. The aim of the toolkit is to provide the best possible support for the development of the student's competence in the (study) career process.

Sources

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Guidance for adult learners

In the Netherlands there is not a clear distinction between career guidance activities for adults and younger students in the education sector. In VET and higher education students can also be adults. However, in the public area there are certain services and subsidies especially for those who are 18+. These have received a growing amount of attention in the Netherlands over the past few years. The government has initiated several subsidy schemes such as the 'Development advice for all people aged 45+ (see Career guidance for older adults) which was replaced by 'The Netherlands Continues Learning' (Nederland Leert door) in 2020 and followed up by the STAP subsidy scheme for all citizens 18+ (not retired from the labour market), with free development consultation and website with learning opportunities. These opportunities are published on the online portal [Leeroverzicht.nl](#), launched in October 2022.

The Netherlands continues learning (Nederland Leert Door)

The subsidy scheme [The Netherlands continues learning](#) offers free training for everyone between the age of 18 and the pensionable age. This measure is also part of the package of crisis measures because of Covid-19. In 2020 the government invested 50 million in this subsidy scheme. The scheme ended on December 31, 2022. In 2020 and 2021 more than 65,000 training trajectories became available. As of March 15, 2022, this supply has grown by 54,000 pathways.

New free STAP- development consult

Following after the scheme 'The Netherlands Continues Learning', employees and unemployed adults who have completed a training course of up to MBO2 level, and are looking for a suitable training course, are eligible for [free advice](#) from a career advisor.

Service users can approach a careers advisor or careers company themselves: from April 1, 2022, career advisors can register participants who will follow a development advice program with them. As of 1 May 2022, the career advisors can apply for the subsidy for the development advice at Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) through the application portal 'My Implementation of Policy' of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In 2022 there are 15,000 development advice offers for € 700 per each available.

The STAP Development advice is expected to be followed up in 2023 by pilots of development advice offers (ontwikkeladviezen) with resources from the National Growth Fund. Focus of these pilots is the access for vulnerable groups that are less likely to find their way to available resources on their own.

Due to several factors as listed on its [dedicated webpage](#), it is currently unclear if the STAP scheme will be continued past 2024.

Lifelong learning collective (LLO Collectief)

One of the proposals of the National Growth Fund (Nationaal Groeifonds) that has been selected is the [Lifelong learning collective](#) (LLO Collectief). The objective is to develop a new sustainable regional training offer for low-educated and low-literacy residents that leads to a good transition to vocational education or the labour market.

A Lifelong learning collective for the low-educated and low-literacy residents will be established in the various labour market regions. Within the collective, UWV, municipalities, educators and employers will work together to develop suitable training arrangements based on the needs and opportunities of low-educated and low-literacy residents.

The budget for the Lifelong learning collective consists of a requested contribution from the National Growth Fund of €50,500,000 for 20 labour market regions (divided into several phases) in addition to €3,000,000 in co-financing from public and private partners.

Other public and private initiatives

This UWV site [www.werk.nl](#) contains links to various other websites with tests for people to discover what they are good at, what they want, what work suits them and how they should approach applying for jobs.

The government is developing a national portal on learning opportunities 'Leeroverzicht.nl', which will be launched in September 2022. The goal is to provide reliable and up-to-date information about the public and private training provision and training resources.

The platform [NLwerktdoor](#) was developed during the Covid-19 crisis for better matching of job vacancies and jobseekers.

[AWVN](#) facilitates the employers in human resource management and lifelong learning and guidance.

At the [Regional service centres on education and work](#) (Leerwerkloketten) students, workers, jobseekers, and employers are offered

independent advice about training, validation (EVC) and learning while working. For four years three of the centres are pilots to assess to what extent they could become more robust partners in the labour market regions.

House of Skills Amsterdam is a public-private partnership. Industry, sector organisations, employee and employer organisations, knowledge institutions, education and administrators from the region work closely together to transform the current labour market into a more skills-oriented labour variant, where inter-sectoral mobility is facilitated, and lifelong development is the norm. They develop/provide assessments and competence scans, career advice, skill training courses, matching based on skills and a platform where employers and employees can find each other. Products and services are meant for those with lower secondary education working in a sector threatened by job losses or who have been unemployed for less than a year. Specific attention is given to occupations in the technical and care sector.

LEO Loopbaan. Leo is a development programme, initiated by the Province of Limburg, with an open structure. This means that partners can continuously join, based on the objectives of the programme and possible projects and/or activities that contribute to those objectives. LEO Loopbaan is for everyone in the province of Limburg who is working on their career (ranging from just starting a training course, looking for work or already working for a long time). As of 2020, LEO Loopbaan is also part of the programme [Limburgleert](#).

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Guidance for the employed

Funding

In September 2020 in reaction to the Covid-19 crisis the government has reserved a total of €195 million for the regional mobility teams for job-to-job guidance. Trade unions, employers' organisations, the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and municipalities can make use of these funds for their participation in these teams. Social partners link their sectoral and regional initiatives to the work of the mobility teams and can receive subsidies for the organisation of these mobility teams. The budget is deployed in the 35 labour market regions.

A substantial part of these resources can be used for training and retraining from job to job in addition to the available resources from the development funds, among others. There are also reservations for the temporary extra resources in the labour market regions for short-term extra training and retraining via practical learning in secondary vocational education (VET), whereby work is combined with doing part of a VET course (gaining VET-certificates). 63 million has been reserved for this purpose. This is in addition to the possibility of doing a full diploma-oriented training via apprenticeships, which is paid for by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Both the second aid package and the aid and recovery package provide, as part of the approach to youth unemployment, for resources to create additional bbl jobs.

Examples

Big companies and labour-market sectors set up mobility centres where employers have their competences assessed and have the possibility to advance to another position inside or outside the company. Some examples are for instance [C3werkt](#), especially for employees and employers in the graphical and media sector. For the Health and care sector a partnership of regional services is gathered in [Regioplus](#). For the metal industry employees can find career guidance and support at [OOM-Hulp en Advies](#).

Most of these initiatives are funded by sectoral training and development funds (O&O-fondsen). These sectoral training and development funds are governed by sectoral trade-unions and employer organisations. For an overview of cooperating funds see this [link](#).

T'De Vakbeweging' offers a free career guidance service. This service, funded by the government, is offered by the trade unions, [FNV](#) and [CNV](#) in cooperation. c. De Vakbeweging is working together with the Regional mobility teams of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the UWV.

The [Trade union movement](#) offers services for those at risk of unemployment, as well as flex workers. Jobseekers who lost work and income after March 12, 2020 are also welcome. The Trade Union Movement has career coaches available to guide people from job to job. They describe the service as personal career guidance tailored to the individual's needs, aiming to find jobs that suits the individual and are future-proof. They offer career advice, workshops and/or a training course.

James Loopbaan was founded by the [trade union CNV](#) and aims to contribute to career awareness and competences of workers and jobseekers. It helps them to react in time when their work changes or when they change themselves. They do this through research, career guidance, awareness campaigns and training and by working with social partners to ensure agreement on development and careers. The services are accessible for employees and unemployed and are free of charge. It is financed by CNV.

Furthermore, at the [Regional service centres on education and work](#) (Leerwerkloketten) everybody, including people who have a job or work freelance, can get independent career and educational advice, including EVC and combining work and learning. The capacity to deliver services is however limited.

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- Regioplus <https://regioplus.nl/>

Guidance for unemployed adults

The guidance services of the [UWV public employment service](#) (division of Employee Insurance Agency, UWV Werkbedrijf), which focus on targeting at risk students and unemployed adults and services for jobseekers, are increasingly based online. On their service portal ([www.werk.nl](#)) every unemployed person has access to his/her own individual digital environment which is called Werkmap. This is a personal file of the jobseeker where he or she finds online modules that aid in the search for work such as webinars, an e-learning tool on how to write successful application letters, make a curriculum, how to prepare a job interview, and how to search vacancies matching their profile.

It also serves as a communication channel with the counsellors at the unemployment office. [Work Profiler 2.0](#), an online tool accessed through the site, offers a quick diagnosis of the most important obstacles in returning to work. An independent company guides practitioners in using the tool (see section ICT in lifelong guidance) and provides specific recommendations how to improve their services.

Regional service centres on education and work (Leerwerkloketten)

The [Regional service centres on education and work](#) ('Leerwerkloketten') have existed since 2009 and are partnerships between municipalities, educational institutions, and public employment services. They are independent service centres with an expansive network. They offer independent and free information and career and educational advice, to support clients in making career choices in order to find and keep a job. The centres are open to everyone looking for free advice (employed or unemployed) on learning and working opportunities. Because of limited subsidies they are limited in services.

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Guidance for older adults

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) piloted a temporary [subsidy scheme on development advice in 2019 and 2020, for all people over 45](#) where workers could apply for advice from a career advisor in the scheme. The Development advice was part of the Action plan 'Perspective for people over the age of fifty' where career advisors offered guidance to the employed. It was intended for workers who were at risk of losing their job and those who were satisfied with their current job. The aim of the programme was to encourage participants to take control of their own careers, where advice should provide insight into the future perspective on the participant's current work, their competencies and future career opportunities. Participants were enabled to actively reflect on how to reach retirement age while maintaining their employment, including how to prevent unemployment and absenteeism due to illness.

The programme was evaluated by Regioplan in 2020 (Regioplan, 2020). From December 5, 2017 through January 10, 2020 when the registration period closed, 28,268 Development counselling courses, 230 individual leadership training courses, and 661 group leadership trainings were registered and 90% of these registrations were accepted carried out and financed (Regioplan, 2020). The [evaluation](#) was predominantly positive. Participants reported having more positive attitudes towards their own careers, more self-knowledge and self-confidence and felt better equipped for the labour market.

Drawing on the experience, the development advice scheme for 45+ workers was replaced by another temporary subsidy scheme 'the Netherlands Continues Learning' on 1 August 2020 and was followed by the STAP subsidy scheme offering free (career) development advice to registered service users, accompanied by a new website on learning opportunities 'Leeroverzicht.nl'; The website is an independent initiative of the central government, the trade unions, employers' organisations and organisations of trainers. It promotes the continuation of career development throughout life (see section [Career information and ICT in career guidance](#)).

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Guidance for early leavers

The government, schools and municipalities try to prevent early school leaving and try to ensure that early leavers from education and training still obtain a basic qualification (EQF level 2). Schools and municipalities are responsible for reducing early school leaving. A [bill on regional cooperation on early school leaving and young people in vulnerable situations](#) was passed in June 2018 (amending, amongst others, [Act on Adult and Vocational Education](#)) making this cooperation compulsory. Together these institutions have to decide which measures to use. The agreements on this are laid down in a regional plan.

More information about this ELET approach that reaches out for young people between the age of 12 and 23 can be found in the [national VSV plan](#). The approach has three components: (i) general secondary schools and VET schools are to use preventative measures to the extent possible; (ii) municipalities approach young people at risk of school exclusion (e.g., high unexplained absenteeism) or who have dropped out. (iii) Schools and municipalities work together to develop a regional plan with the chosen measures and all regions are required to have a plan and a contact municipality for for the [Regional reporting and coordination Function \(RMC\)](#) for early school leaving. Measures can include using coaches for young people who have lost their jobs; dedicated classes for young people who are in doubt about their choice of study at the next stage; and warm transfer of students from secondary vocational education to VET.

ZAT's (Zorg Advice teams/ Care-Advice Teams) are active in primary, secondary and VET schools and include representatives from the schools, health services, psychologists, and the police. The aim of the teams is to provide access to career guidance and preventive measures for at-risk students with behavioural difficulties.

The government initiated a national [Youth Unemployment Approach](#) in 2021, to offer youngsters and early school leavers who are unemployed or at risk of being unemployed, extra support and guidance. Measures include also those mitigating problems related to COVID-19, such as shortage of internships. In 35 labour-market regions, each with its own regional project coordinator, networks are established consisting of mobility teams (UWV Werk), VET schools, municipalities, schools for pupils with specific needs and the SBB, the cooperating organisation of senior secondary vocational education and business together. (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs en bedrijfsleven <https://www.s-bb.nl>) A national program board supports the regions in their activities by organising seminars, a knowledge bank and a toolkit for regional cooperation.

Several larger companies and sectors offer targeted approaches or offers for early school leavers. An example is the [Philips employment scheme](#) (werkgelegenheidsplan WPG) which offers early school leavers work experience for a period of one year; those who successfully complete the company programme are provided with a nationally recognised certificate. Participants who follow the learning/working route (about half of those selected are initially unskilled with no VET education) receive counselling or coaching from the reintegration service (part of the company programme and cooperation with SBB due to apprenticeships) during the training programme.

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Guidance for NEET

The central government developed an approach for those at risk of becoming NEET. Local government and the municipalities are the main responsible for policy and funding for career guidance for eligible individuals older than 23 years old, who are not in education, employment, or training. Due to the decentralised nature of policy and funding, there is a great variety of arrangements and with several social partners in the labour market sector (regional employers or sectoral bodies).

There are different providers of services and programmes for NEET, including national and local Employee Insurance Agencies (UWV), regional service centres on education and work (Leerwerkloketten), local councils, trade unions FNV and CNV, businesses and schools, with some examples below.

At the [Regional service centres on education and work](#) (Leerwerkloketten) students, workers, jobseekers and employers can access independent advice about training, EVC, Erkenning verworven competenties (Prior accreditation of prior learning APL) and learning while working. The centres are open to everyone looking for free advice on learning and working opportunities and are an important service centre for those who are NEET, but service capacity is limited due to resources.

Three of them run a pilot 'Regional service centre 'plus' with initiatives taking place over a four-year period exploring to what extent the regional services centres could become more robust partners in the labour market regions.

The [Guidance services of the UWV Public Employment Service](#) (division of the Employee insurance Agency, UWV WERKbedrijf) target at-risk students and unemployed adults (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

The [VAKbeweging](#) is a collaboration of the FNV and CNV - two separate trade unions that put the interests of workers and job seekers first, so they join forces to support people in an uncertain situation and help them on their way to new or different work. They offer free career guidance services to NEET.

[James Loopbaan](#) was founded by the [trade union CNV](#) and aims to contribute to career awareness and competences of workers and jobseekers. It helps individuals to react in time when their work changes or when they consider other career choices. The services of James Loopbaan are free of charge and accessible for employees and the unemployed.

The [Buzinezzclub](#), introduced in 2013, is an organisation in the country, providing training in coaching for young people (17 to 35 years old) who are currently welfare beneficiaries. According to the website, their main goal is to lift 'members', guiding them towards financial self-sufficiency and growth. The programme description states that the club coaches young people who are out of work and school, including persons with disabilities and new migrants and motivates them to participate in, and complete their education, to start an internship, or find a suitable job or enable them towards entrepreneurship. There are workshops, personal coaching, and internships, as well as a network of volunteers. Some coaches are experienced employers or retired but with relevant experience. The website explains there are regional partners from the municipality, education and business and the programme is financed by the municipality and in partnership with several institutions and Credits (microfinance).

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Guidance for young people at risk

There is a measure to reduce the number of children and youngsters at home without participating in education or appropriate care nationwide through the law on 'adequate education' ([Wet Passend Onderwijs](#), August 2014). With this, every young person of compulsory education age (5 -16 years old) is obliged to complete an adequate education and those 16-18 years old should access education with the right support at the right time. The national [Thuiszitterspact](#) of 2016 also applies: ministries and other national parties agreed that in 2020 no young person under the age of 18 years will be at home without participating in education or offered appropriate care for more than three months. Guidance support is part of the initiative. Part of the pact is the 'perseverance force', with which partnerships (municipalities, regional education providers in primary, secondary general and vocational education, RMC and public healthcare (GGD) agree which party determines which education or care place and support is appropriate.

Schools and municipalities work together to combat youth unemployment with the [Youth Employment Approach](#) where schools and municipalities work together to guide youth to further education and work, targeting young people who are more vulnerable in the labour market. The focus is on unemployed young people, young people who are at risk of job loss and (early) school leavers at risk of further exclusion. From 2020 to 2023 the central government made funds available for this initiative, which includes support and guidance.

Each region has its own emphasis but the same goal: preventing and reducing youth unemployment applying the most suitable approaches, including added impulse through the EU support and recovery package. The [Guidance services of the UWV Public Employment Service](#) (division of Employee Insurance Agency, UWV WERKbedrijf) focus on targeting at-risk students and unemployed adults (see [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

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Guidance for persons with disabilities

Employment guidance for pupils with special needs

Since 2021 the Ministry of Social Affairs supports a national project for career guidance focused on employment for pupils with specific needs and disabilities who will leave their school ([VSO and Praktijkonderwijs](#)). A national quartermaster has been appointed to shape this project in the 35 labour market regions, in cooperation with the Sectorraad VO and the Sectorraad Praktijkonderwijs. An important goal of the project is to represent the schools in the regional cooperation with employers', municipalities and UWV and ESL coordinators.

On behalf of this target user group there are several national, regional, or local initiatives. Some examples are:

ECIO: in order to better inform students with specific needs or disabilities about financial resources available to them, the Expertise Centre Inclusive Education (ECIO) has developed the websites www.hogeronderwijstoegankelijk.nl and www.mbotogankelijk.nl in 2021. This was created in cooperation with youth organisations, and as developed on request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to improve the provision of information for students with specific needs. The resources are accessible to English-speaking students in the country, where specific information is provided for international students with specific needs.

Cozima (Competenties zichtbaar Maken - making competences visible) started in 2015 as an international project in the framework of the EU Erasmus+ Programme.. Participants are schools and expertise centres from Belgium, Germany, and The Netherlands. In this project, recommendations are developed for a lifelong digital portfolio and instruments and methods are developed, tested, and described. They assist young adults in a vulnerable position (facing learning and behavioural barriers) in collecting supporting material for entry to vocational education training and the labour market.

Boris is an approach that helps enable students from secondary special education including VET to find their place in the labour market. The approach is based on the system of working to learn from secondary vocational education. For approximately 10,000 young people per year this is a route towards work, and for the business community it is relevant for recruiting employees to increase workplace diversity.

In the often difficult transition from education to work when young people may lack support, in the project 'From education to work', nine VET institutions, together with [KBA Nijmegen](#) and the MBO Council, have worked on practical approaches and a new vision for a continuous and smooth transition from education to work. The project has led to practical examples and instruments: [The Transitieroute](#) is an example project that in 2021 was adapted into a project at universities of applied science. Together with Expertise Centre of Inclusive Education (ECIO), KBA Nijmegen sought to realise an effective and structured approach for the transition from education to work for young people with a disability in universities of applied science.

Support in case of illness

According to national [legislation](#), employers are responsible for the reintegration to work (in-company or outside work premises) and support for their employees with long-term illnesses, the first two years after their first day of illness. The employer is obliged to continue the payment of wages and to hire professional guidance or job placement support staff. After two years of illness this responsibility is taken over by the UWV (PES NL), if the employee has a right to disability insurance.

Participation in work and society

For persons at great distance from the labour market who face major barriers and who cannot find employment to earn a minimum wage in the open labour market, the local municipality is responsible for their participation in work and society, according to the [Participation law](#). Employers can obtain financial support or compensation if they offer jobs to young persons with disabilities or specific needs, who have reduced earning capacity.

Kinnes is an initiative of the [REA College](#). Based on their experience in coaching employees with disabilities, the programme assists employers and employees at difficult moments in their careers by offering support according to the needs of the employer or employee in relation to training, personal development, or career guidance.

CNV offers the [training](#) 'Ik ben Harrie'. Harrie is the personification of the ideal colleague-worker who gives guidance in the workplace to employees with extra support needs. Harrie stands for: Helpful; Alert; Realistic; Calm; Instructive and Honest. [Research](#) by [CNV Jongeren](#) and [Vilans](#) cited in the programme indicates that the chances of successful participation in the workplace increase significantly when the employee with a work-limiting disability is supported by a Harry. The 'Ik ben Harrie' concept has been further developed by CNV, and a module specifically aimed at status holders has been created. It consists of a 2-days training for employers who want to offer a job for an employee with a disability.

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Guidance for other groups

Civic Integration Act 2021

There are ongoing changes in the civic integration system, which is being revised and where municipalities now have an important role in assisting newcomers who are obliged to participate in a civic integration programme. The central organisation for newcomers and municipalities offer support services. Divosa, the executive office with regional coordinators in cooperation with regional public and private partners, offers services for integration/reintegration, including to the labour market. The PES offers digital work and guidance services. The [Civic Integration Act 2021](#) entered into force on 1 January 2022 and applies to everyone with a duty of civic integration. The objective of the revised Act is to expedite the integration process, including finding suitable employment, with some important changes for the relevant target user group:

- The municipality will assist newcomers who are obliged to participate in civic integration programmes. In the case of asylum status holders, this is done from the moment they are assigned to a municipality.
- Each eligible newcomer receives a civic integration programme tailored to their needs.
- Municipalities assist 'family migrants and other migrants' (those who are not obliged to integrate, depending on nationality). These family and other migrants contribute to the cost of the integration process.
- Access to learning the Dutch language at a level adequate for managing the lives of beneficiaries is ensured and free of charge. Family migrants and migrants who are not obliged to integrate must finance their own training.
- Promotion of a combination of learning the language and participating in Dutch society is an important part of the new integration system. Following an internship or (voluntary) work are examples of pathways to integration.

Other examples

In 2017, Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW), LECSO, DJI and Youth Care in the Netherlands developed a [guide](#) promoting continuous learning and development to support the realisation of future prospects for young people facing social exclusion. This provides tools for improving connections and strengthening local networks illustrated in three parts including those supporting career development:

1. the 'connection plan' that provides tools for shaping a good connection with the young person's subsequent place of work;
2. the 'life setting plan' that provides tools for a good connection between different life settings (work, leisure, housing, care) ;
3. the 'network plan' that provides tools for shaping cooperation with the network.

From 2017 to 2020 VluchtelingenWerk Nederland supported refugees with the project [Refugees invest in participation \(VIP\)](#) to make a good start in the Dutch labour market enabling full and sustainable participation. With VIP2, 2,000 participants learned skills that are necessary to find a job or training in the Netherlands.

In several regions also Leerwerkloketten (Regional service centres for education and work) are an active partner in guidance and support for refugees, often in cooperation with municipalities, employers and Vluchtelingenwerk and UAF ([Foundation for Refugee Students](#)).

The [Foundation for Refugee Students](#) (UAF) has existed since 1948. The UAF advises highly educated refugees on their choice of study and assists them during their studies and in finding a job that matches their capacities. In the initial phase, advisors help to develop language and study skills. In order to increase the chances of a job, the UAF offers a job application training course and network meetings at the end of the study. Throughout the entire course, a UAF student has the opportunity to receive additional guidance from a volunteer mentor in addition to the support he or she receives from the UAF. The UAF supports refugees with donations and loans for higher education. This money is intended exclusively for tuition fees, language courses, books, computers, travel expenses and other study costs. Since April 2017, the UAF also offers a number of services in VET for refugees who are able to obtain a diploma at VET level 3 or 4 or enter the labour market at that level; this has demonstrated that VET is a promising route to work for many refugees (middle and higher educated).

In collaboration between the Free University Amsterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Rotterdam university of applied sciences, the [Vidivers project](#) has developed videos for teacher training courses on cultural diversity responding to the lower outcomes reported for some international students in terms of study progress, results, and higher drop out rates. Outside of career supports, other measures in place, such as improvements in culturally sensitive lecturers and study programme leaders.

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Gender-based policies

In 2020, the Education Council published the [Exploration of Gender Differences in Education](#). In it, three major differences are found in school and professional careers of boys and girls in the Netherlands:

- Boys have less favourable school careers than girls. This starts in secondary education and is also visible in higher education: they drop out more often, fail more often and move on to lower levels.
- Women have less favourable working careers than men: they work part-time more often, earn less and are less likely to move on to management and top positions.
- Compared to other countries within the European Union, in the Netherlands education and occupational choice is strongly influenced by gender. In this way, boys and girls choose according to traditional patterns, which can lead to gendered professions where males and females make career decisions based on their gender.

In this report, the Education Council advises the Ministers of Education, Culture and Science, among other things:

- Increase awareness of cultural norms surrounding gender in education among both teachers and students, where if teachers' expectations follow gender stereotypes, it may also influence student decision-making.
- Prevent gender stereotypes through career orientation and guidance. Commit to a broad, gender-neutral orientation and encourage boys and girls to make less stereotypical choices.

Many other resources are available for career practitioners in helping to reducing gender differences in career decision-making of clients, such as public documents, studies and information on initiatives to reduce gender stereotyping and labour market barriers.

In its report entitled [Work and care in balance: Gender Diversity](#) (SER, 2017), the Social Economic Council ([Sociaal-Economische Raad](#), SER) points out that 73% of working women have a part-time job, compared with 21% of working men, which reduces equal opportunities for promotion. This prompted the government to make the emancipation policy a priority to stimulate women's economic independence.

Stereotypical sector, profile and study programme choices among students have resulted in a huge divide on the labour market. This is

also reflected in the Emancipation Monitor published by Statistics Netherlands in 2018. In that year, women accounted for 79.8% of the total workforce in the care and welfare sector. In the wider pedagogics sector (which includes education), too, a clear majority of workers are women (69.3%). Sectors that mainly attract men are technology, ICT and transport & logistics (86.0%, 83.5% and 80.7% male students respectively).

Various initiatives have been launched to address the huge gender differences in education and on the labour market. One of these is **VHTO**, the national expert organisation on girls/women and science/technology, which works to increase female participation in science and technology.

VHTO offers a **gender scan** and has extensive experience in using it, both in secondary and higher education. Information about working careers is one of the aspects included in the gender scan. The purpose of the gender scan is to produce a baseline measurement that reveals the extent to which policy and activities equally target male and female students and employees, and the extent to which equal opportunities play a role in policy formation and activities.

The **Werk.en.de Toekomst** alliance is a partnership between the Atria Institute on gender equality and women's history, **Emancipator**, the **Dutch Council of Women** (NVR) and **VHTO**, the national expert organisation on girls/women and science, technology and IT. The alliance receives support from the **Ministry of Education, Culture and Science**. These parties have joined forces to help young people make decisions on schooling free from gender stereotypes. In addition, they aim to eliminate gender stereotypes among employees and employers that obstruct equal opportunities on the labour market.

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