

Basic maths competences in VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE	 NETHERLANDS
--------------------	------------------------------	--

Timeline

2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Legislative process
2022 Completed		

ID number 28452

Description

The 2016 maths agenda, agreed by the education ministry, education providers and social partners, aims to improve maths education in secondary education and in VET. The agenda has introduced several initiatives to motivate, facilitate and stimulate teachers and learners to improve the quality of teaching, resulting in improvements in basic maths competence and language. In addition to EUR 52 million distributed to VET schools annually, the education ministry has provided extra funding for research on this topic. VET teachers can also use the maths teachers' platform (*Platform Rekendocenten*) to get support in teaching maths and raise the quality of the content for this subject.

2016 Implementation
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation
<p>2019 Implementation</p> <p>In 2019, it was decided that maths would not be centrally examined. It was also concluded that maths in upper secondary VET should be more oriented to occupational practices. In 2019, new requirements regarding basic maths competences in secondary VET started being developed, identifying four challenging but achievable levels in maths for each of the four levels in upper secondary VET, with appropriate and obligatory exams for each level conditional for obtaining a diploma. Experts worked on developing the new requirements and examination methods in close cooperation with the main stakeholders (Council for upper secondary VET schools, teacher organisations and JOB, the Youth VET Organisation).</p> <p>A VET language and maths knowledge point was launched in March 2019 to inform schools about developments in language and basic maths competences and to support them in clarifying any queries they may have. In addition, the knowledge point organises flash meetings for teachers, policy officers and school management.</p>
2020 Implementation
<p>In 2020, the new maths requirements were developed. A draft decree was submitted</p>

In 2020, the new maths requirements were developed. A draft decree was submitted for internet consultation.

The decree establishes that for VET levels 2, 3 and 4, the new basic maths requirements, on which education and examinations must be based, will apply. These maths requirements replace the current content of the maths reference levels. In addition, the decree regulates that the level of the result obtained in maths for MBO levels 2, 3 and 4 will count towards the pass/fail decision. It also suggests that maths is to become compulsory for obtaining a diploma. Maths examinations will take place at school, not national, level.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in the legislative process. The new requirements will be introduced in 2022/23. In the academic year 2021-22, the old regime will still apply.

2021 Legislative process

In 2021, the legislative process is still continuing. In February 2021, the draft decree on the new maths requirements for VET level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications was still under internet consultation. It is expected to enter into force on 1 August 2022.

2022 Completed

As of February 2022, a decree stipulates that recalibrated math requirements apply for VET at NQF levels two, three, and four.

The new approach means that students receive math education that is appropriate to their level, challenging but achievable, and consistent with their study programme. VET institutions provide math education and create exams based on the recalibrated requirements, making them more appropriate to the students' level and reflecting the specific character of VET.

This approach aims for students to master the math exam component to the extent that they are sufficiently equipped to participate in society, practising their profession on the labour market or progressing to their subsequent education. Students' and teachers' motivation for math is expected to increase because the examinations will align with students' perceptions and fully count towards the diploma.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)

Education professionals

Teachers

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional

development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Maths agenda](#)

[Knowledge point MBO, language and maths](#)

[MBO maths policy for 2019/20](#)

[News item on reassessment of maths requirements in VET and the VET knowledge point on language and maths](#)

[Amendment of the law on maths requirements, February 2022](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Basic skills of VET students

The Masterplan basic skills from 2022 focuses on enhancing education through five key pillars:

 NETHERLANDS

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Basic maths competences in VET: Netherlands. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28452>