



# The drive to reduce drop-out rates

**Date of creation:**  
**2008**

## Description

Based on data from a centralised database, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science provides monthly and yearly reports on Early School Leaving (ESL). Based on this data, new policies are developed at ministerial level to tackle ESL.

## Beneficiaries

Early leavers from education and training  
VET students (in work based learning schemes)

Secondary education students

VET students (school based)

Measures are aimed at new early school leavers (max. one year of school leaving) both in secondary education (primarily basic VMBO) and in VET.

## Countries

 Netherlands

## Education level and sector

Secondary education

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary vocational education and training (school-based)

Secondary education and basic vocational education, including also senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO) but primarily prevocational secondary education (VMBO).

Vocational Education and Training (VET).[1]

[1]After primary school, a youngster can enter basic vocational education (VMBO). After basic vocational education (VMBO), a student can make the transition to VET. Within VET there are 4 qualification levels. These Dutch levels are equivalent to levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

## Type of policy/initiative

Prevention Intervention Compensation

Prevention/Intervention/Compensation

## Level of implementation / Scope

Regional level

It is an integrated approach focusing on prevention with a close collaboration at regional level.

## Stage of implementation

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On-going

From 2008 until 2011, this policy was called 'the drive to reduce drop-out'.

In 2012, the policy was prolonged until 2020 and rebranded as the 'Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) approach' (*VSV-aanpak*).

## Aims of policy/initiative

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The Dutch Government's policy aims to reduce the number of early school leavers by 2020 to below 20,000 young people from 24,451 in the year 2014-2015.

## Features and types of activities implemented

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The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science was responsible for designing the measure. An overarching programme was developed in 2008-2011 to reduce ELET and consisted of the following specific objectives:

- transition from basic vocational education (VMBO) to Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- better career orientation, choice of study and guidance
- better care at school
- more attractive education
- better involvement of parents
- more places for basic vocational education (VMBO) students who learn best working hands-on
- more tailored programmes to prevent drop-outs

In 2012, the policy was prolonged until 2016 (and later to 2020) with an extra focus on the following points:

- measuring techniques - making ELET numbers more reliable
- regional 'covenants' (agreements) prolonged until 2016
- setting of a new norm (targets in percentages rather than absolute numbers)

The policy for subsidy applications by schools for addressing early school leaving at school level has been centralised (at regional level).

## Resources

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The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a total annual budget of approximately €110 million, including provision of regional resources like a performance early school leaving incentive for both secondary education and VET. For now, this budget is secured until the end of 2020.

## Evaluation of the measure

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The evaluation of the policy 'drive to reduce drop-outs' was conducted by external research organisations (Panteia and SEOR). The research investigated how the ELET policy was implemented at regional and institutional levels and what links or differences exist between the regional educational institution policy and the achieved ELET results across regions.

Furthermore, yearly surveys are held within schools (e.g. teachers, heads of schools) and municipalities with the following focus areas: collaboration, vision of ELET policy and view on achieved results.

## Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

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From 2008 until now, there has been a decrease in the number of early school leavers at national level both

in basic vocational education (VMBO) and Vocational Education and Training (VET).

More specifically, on 1 October 2013 there were 28,000 early school leavers.

A year later (1 October 2014), 6.3% of these young people have obtained a basic qualification.

Also in 2013, 27.1% early leavers went back to school (did not yet achieve a basic qualification) and 25.3% were still early leavers but found a job.

## Success factors

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The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. General awareness of the early school leaving issue and strong regional partnerships: in past years, several stakeholders (teachers, administrators and schools, as well as students' parents and local politicians) have increasingly recognised drop-outs as a problem. Regional cooperation (both municipalities and schools) based on the 'covenant' agreement has contributed to the sense of urgency and responsibility to jointly tackle early school leaving.
2. Valid systems for recording and analysing early school leaving: the Ministry of Culture, Education and Science gave numerical insights into the ELET problem (via yearly and monthly reports) to schools and municipalities. This led to increased awareness among schools and municipalities on the need to reduce ELET.
3. 'No cure, no pay' performance-related funding policy: 'No cure, no pay' performance-related funding policy (€2000 per year, per early school leaver less than the previous year) to stimulate the reduction of early school leaving. This created an extra drive/focus for schools to reduce ELET.

## Contact details for further information

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## Related intervention approaches

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### Monitoring early leavers

