

Online Guide to

# Educational Systems



Around the World—Netherlands



**NAFSA**

Association of  
International Educators

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# Instructions for Using the *Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*

Susan Whipple, Editor

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These documents are updates to those in the 1999 publication *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* (which was an update to *The Handbook on the Placement of Foreign Graduate Students*, published in 1990 and colloquially known as the "Graduate Handbook.")

**It is important to note that these documents do not replace either of the earlier publications, which should be used for credentials issued prior to 1999, the period those publications cover.**

Readers familiar with the original version of *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* will note that these updates use the same format:

1. Each of these publications provides lists of credentials and other data that can be used both for undergraduate and graduate admissions.
2. "Advice for admissions officers" is intentionally not provided. We have attempted to avoid all types of subjective interpretation, relying instead on objective data. Users of these updates should use the information provided in conjunction with other resources to determine their own placement recommendations and possibility of transfer credit. Questions about credentials can be posted on the Admission and Credential Evaluation discussion forum on the Recruitment, Admissions, and Preparation Knowledge Community: <http://www.nafsa.org/aceforums>. For information on how to subscribe to the network, please visit [www.nafsa.org/networksubscribe](http://www.nafsa.org/networksubscribe).

Please note that these updates should be supplemented by additional written materials that describe complete foreign educational systems, including data on specific institutions, and by professional training in the theory and practice of credential evaluation. Many of these resources are available from NAFSA, either as printed publications or on-line. The need for institution support for budgetary resources and training for undergraduate and graduate admissions personnel remains important, regardless of the increased availability of resources on the Web.

These publications were compiled by many authors using a standardized template and style. Although minor variations among entries do occur, the basic guidelines are explained as follows:

## Educational Ladder

1 - 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |  
A                    B    B

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The year or half-year at which a credential is awarded is the point at which the corresponding credential letter is placed. In the example above, credential A is awarded after the 9th year of education. Note that the corresponding letter is placed directly below the number 9.

All *normal* possibilities of the total number of years of education that a credential might require are indicated on the ladder. This occurs for credential B, in which the credential can be awarded after either 12 or 13 total years of education. An explanation is provided in the description of the credential whenever a letter appears on the ladder more than once. There are a few cases when this multiple-listing style was not used; in these cases, there are explanatory comments.

An arrow (→) is used after a credential letter in cases where no maximum length of study for a particular program is specified, or where the study time is open-ended. For example, a doctor of philosophy degree program may require a minimum of three years of enrollment. The corresponding credential letter with an arrow will appear under the minimum number of total years of education required to earn the Ph.D.

## Explanations About Documents

Credentials are divided into two categories: secondary and postsecondary. The decision to include the credential under one or the other category is not a subjective one—a credential is determined to be either secondary or postsecondary according to its designation by the country of origin, regardless of how individual institutions might perceive the level (and recommend transfer credit).

Numerical endnotes, placed directly after the complete list of credentials, are used when a lengthy explanation about a credential is necessary.

## Foreign Terms and Words

Foreign terms are used whenever possible, and are translated literally, in most cases. Literal translations are used to avoid subjectivity. We have attempted to be consistent with translations across languages, though readers may notice some differences between countries because of preferences indicated by the submitters. Credential evaluators and admissions personnel should always rely on official foreign language documents, using translations only as guides.

## Grading Information

Only the most common grading scales used in each country are listed. Evaluators understand that variations in grading are common and that one should always consult the grading information that may be provided on official transcripts. Rather than making grade equivalency statements, the submitter(s) of the update provided information regarding grading practices within the countries.

# NETHERLANDS

## YEARS OF EDUCATION →

1→6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24				
										A		B		C		D		D		E		F		H		H		J		J		K		K		L		L		L→
												D		D		E		E		F		H		I		I		K		K		L		L		L		L		L
														E		F		F		G		I		J		J		L		L		L		L		L		L		L
																				H		J		K		K		L		L		L		L		L		L		L

## CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

### Secondary

**NOTE:** Primary education in the Netherlands is represented as completion of 7-8 years of study, depending on the starting age. Education is available beginning at the age of 4 but is compulsory at the age of 5. Using the latter entry point, this country profile references primary education in the Netherlands as a total of 7 years of study.

- A** VMBO [*Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs*] (Preparatory Secondary Vocational Education): represents 4 years of study after primary education as well as the end of compulsory education. Implemented in 1999 when it replaced the *Voorbereidend Beroepsonderwijs*–VBO (Preparatory Vocational Education) and the *Middelbaar Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs*–MAVO (Junior General Secondary Education).
- B** HAVO [*Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs*] (Senior General Secondary Education): represents 5 years of study after primary education as well as the completion of secondary education in the academic track. Holders are eligible for admission into *hogescholen* (universities of applied sciences).
- C** VWO [*Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs*] (University Preparatory Education): represents 6 years of study after primary education as well as the completion of secondary education in the academic track. Holders are eligible for admission into all forms of university study.
- D** MBO [*Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs*] (Senior Secondary Vocational Education): 0.5-4 years, requiring credential **A** for admission. There are 4 levels.

### Postsecondary

**NOTE:** Dutch higher education follows a binary system and is composed of *Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs*–WO (research-oriented education) and *Hoger Beroepsonderwijs*–HBO (higher professional education). Research-oriented education is primarily offered at *universiteiten* (research universities) while higher professional education is offered at *hogescholen* (universities of applied sciences).

- E** *Propedeuse* (Propaedeutic Examination): represents 1 year of postsecondary education, requiring credentials **B**, **C** or **D** (level 4) for admission.
- F** Associate’s Degree: represents 2 years of study at *hogescholen* (universities of applied sciences), requiring, at minimum, credentials **B** or **D** (level 4) for admission. First implemented in 2006.
- G** Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science: represents 3 years of study at *universiteiten* (research universities), requiring credential **C** for admission.

- H** HBO [*Getuigschrift Hoger Beroepsonderwijs*] (Higher Professional Education Diploma)/Bachelor's degree: represents 4 years of study at *hogescholen* (universities of applied sciences), requiring, at minimum, credentials **B** or **D** (level 4) for admission. Referred to as Bachelor's degree since 2002. Graduates in engineering, agriculture and environmental science may use the title *ingenieur (ing.)* and *baccalaureus (bc)* (bachelor) for all others.
- I** Master of Arts/Master of Science: represents 1-3 years of study at *universiteiten* (research universities), requiring credential **G** for admission. Programs typically last 2 years in engineering and science and 3 years in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and veterinary medicine. Admission with credential **H** may also be possible.
- J** Master's degree: represents 1-2 years of study at *hogescholen* (universities of applied sciences), requiring, at minimum, credential **H** for admission.
- K** Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng): 2 years or research and completion of personal design assignment at Dutch universities of technology; credential **I** or **J** is required for admission.
- L** *Doctor/ dr.* (Doctorate): represents 4 years of research and completion of *proefschrift* (dissertation); credential **I** or **J** is required for admission.

## GRADING SCALE

### Secondary and Postsecondary

10	<i>Uitmuntend</i>	Excellent
9	<i>Zeer Goed</i>	Very Good
8	<i>Goed</i>	Good
7	<i>Ruim Voldoende</i>	Amplly Sufficient
6	<i>Voldoende</i>	Sufficient
5	<i>Bijna Voldoende</i>	Almost Sufficient
4	<i>Onvoldoende</i>	Insufficient
3	<i>Gering</i>	Low
2	<i>Slecht</i>	Bad
1	<i>Zeer Slecht</i>	Very Bad

## POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen* (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science): <http://english.minocw.nl>

*Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie* (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders): <http://www.nvao.net>

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Print

*Dutch Educational System. New in the Netherlands. An Update of the Educational system for Credential Evaluators, Admissions Officers and Other Professionals in the Field of International Education.* The Hague: Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC), 2000.

Mostert, John. *The Netherlands: A Guide to the Academic Placement of Students from the Netherlands in Educational Institutions in the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 1961.

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR). *The Netherlands: A Comparative Study*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Technology, 1992.

Schuler, Peter. *World Education Series: The Netherlands*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 1984.

Schuler, Peter et al. *PIER World Education Systems, Special Country Report 1996: The Education System of the Netherlands*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 1996.

Stannard, Jessica. "The Netherlands." *A Guide to Educational Systems around the World*. Feagles, Shelley. Ed. Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 1999.

## Online

*Country Module: the Netherlands*. NUFFIC. Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education, 2010: <http://www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/docs/diploma-recognition/country-modules/country-module-netherlands.pdf>

*Electronic Database for Global Education*. Version 1.0. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO): <http://aacraoedge.aacrao.org>

EURYDICE. *Organisation of the Education System in the Netherlands: 2008-09*: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase\\_full\\_reports/NL\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/NL_EN.pdf)

HBO-raad, Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences: <http://www.hbo-raad.nl>

International Association of Universities. *World Higher Education Database Online*. Palgrave MacMillan: <http://www.whed-online.com>

International Comparisons. *UK NARIC - National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom*: <http://www.naric.org.uk>

Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC): <http://www.nuffic.nl>

*Technische Universiteit Eindhoven* (Eindhoven Technical University): <http://w3.tue.nl>

*Universiteit Utrecht* (University of Utrecht): <http://www.uu.nl>

*Universiteit van Amsterdam* (University of Amsterdam): <http://www.uva.nl>

VSNU, Association of Universities in the Netherlands: <http://www.vsnu.nl>

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