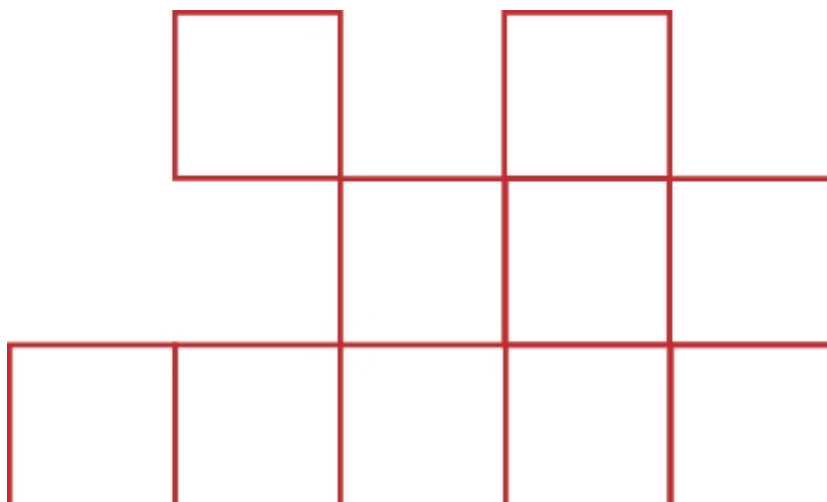




International Vision



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It is often said that the world is getting smaller. People are able to connect with others across the globe more quickly and easily than ever before, and are therefore better informed about current events. The same naturally applies to students. Students in higher education must be trained to operate in an international environment.

Internationalisation is receiving increasing attention at Dutch higher education institutions. Another consequence of a more globalised world is that there is greater cooperation between different countries. For example, the European Union plays an increasingly important role in Dutch education, partly through research funding, but also because it plays a major role in incoming and outgoing student mobility. Furthermore, the Netherlands is part of a pan-European partnership known as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which has given rise to major educational reforms.

In short, internationalisation and internationalisation policy are becoming increasingly important in higher education. That is why the ISO and the LSVb have decided to draw up a joint vision. This joint vision has come about because, in recent years, it has become clear that the ISO and the LSVb are always on the same page when it comes to the theme of internationalisation. In this way, we can work together on this portfolio in the coming years, and possibly also share the workload.

This vision discusses various topics. In doing so, we distinguish between issues at national level and those at European level.

National level

At national level, the ISO and the LSVb see several opportunities that can be realised to promote internationalisation. These are opportunities that will benefit students, provided that the quality of education does not suffer as a result. We have set the following priorities in the Netherlands: outgoing mobility, incoming mobility, the use of English in education, and transnational education.

Outgoing mobility

Anyone who wishes to study abroad should be given the opportunity to do so.

There are two different forms of mobility that require different approaches: degree mobility and credit mobility. Degree mobility concerns students who undertake a full degree programme abroad, whilst credit mobility concerns students who go abroad for a specific period. Both approaches will be explained below.

Degree mobility

Degree mobility in the Netherlands is currently low¹. There are several underlying reasons for this: there are too few scholarships, the loan options available through DUO are insufficient, useful information is difficult to find, and within Dutch society there is still too

¹ Research by the Dutch Worldwide Students (NWS) from 2015 shows that the Netherlands lags far behind in terms of outbound degree mobility.

little appreciation for studying abroad. This calls for action on the part of the ISO and the LSVb. Every (prospective) student should have access to fair and transparent information, enabling them to make an informed decision when choosing a course of study. This is particularly true given that Dutch secondary schools and higher education institutions do not regard it as a priority to inform these students about options abroad, as they have no vested interest in doing so. This means that students must turn to other sources of information to gather the knowledge needed to consider taking this step. Furthermore, this calls for greater flexibility in funding options: financial barriers must not stand in the way of access to education, whether in the Netherlands or abroad.

After all, Dutch students who have studied abroad can make a significant contribution to Dutch society: they possess strong intercultural skills that are required in the rapidly evolving labour market. Recognising their added value to Dutch society and maintaining contact with these Dutch students whilst they are studying abroad is therefore very important. They can inspire and encourage other students who have remained in the Netherlands to develop new insights.

Credit mobility

In recent years, student mobility has received a great deal of attention. Institutions have set very high targets regarding the percentage of students who study abroad for a period. Currently, only 22 per cent of students study abroad for a period. This percentage is low compared with other European countries and has not increased in recent years. Although we at the LSVb and ISO do not aim for a specific percentage, we do believe it is important that all students who wish to go abroad are able to do so. Unfortunately, we still hear far too many stories of students who would have liked to study abroad but did not do so. The 2016 report on bottlenecks by the ISO and the LSVb still shows that a large proportion of students consider going abroad, but that only a small percentage actually do so. Major barriers include: financial barriers, fear of the unknown and fear of falling behind in their studies.² 59 per cent of the students surveyed in the report on bottlenecks indicated that improvements are certainly possible, such as: better communication and greater awareness on the part of the institution, improved promotion, and greater freedom of choice in the curriculum. These areas for improvement present opportunities for institutions and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to take action.

Incoming mobility

International students studying in the Netherlands must be given the opportunity to participate actively in student life.

Within this vision, the ISO and the LSVb see many further opportunities for the active integration of international students. The ISO and the LSVb advocate the 'international classroom', where international and Dutch students can learn from one another. By forming study groups comprising students from different cultural backgrounds, students learn

² Report on Challenges in Outgoing Mobility (2016), LSVb & ISO

students learn more about each other's cultures and their own, and they can place the knowledge they have gained in an international context. Furthermore, this approach should be broadened: international students must also be given the opportunity to actively engage with Dutch student life. For example, they could become involved in student representation or take an active role in a study or student association. However, care must be taken to ensure that institutions do not focus solely on international students. The priority must remain with Dutch students.

The anglicisation of Dutch higher education

The ISO and the LSVb are not opposed to the anglicisation of education. English is becoming an increasingly important language and, as a result of globalisation, the labour market is also changing; students are increasingly working abroad. Nevertheless, it is important that teaching is conducted in English only when there is a pedagogical, practical or subject-specific reason for doing so.

It seems that courses are increasingly being taught in English because this attracts more international students. That is not a valid reason for 'anglicising' education, as it misses the point of teaching in English. Should there be substantive or practical reasons for teaching in English, it is first and foremost important that teachers have sufficient skills to teach in English. It is essential that they are at least able to explain concepts clearly, answer questions and lead discussions in English. For teachers who deliver or are set to deliver English-medium education, there must be sufficient courses or other training opportunities; these could, for example, be incorporated into the Basic Teaching Qualification (BKO) or the institution's evaluation cycle. The same course and training opportunities must also be available to students. Finally, it is important that the Dutch language is not neglected, as the Onze Taal society also points out. Even though the world is becoming increasingly globalised, a large proportion of students will still live and work in the Netherlands, and so the Dutch language remains incredibly important. Dutch students, in particular, must always have a good command of the Dutch language. Institutions must be aware of the added value that individual degree programmes and subjects bring to 'their own society' and how this can come under pressure as a result of anglicisation. After all, institutions receive public funding and are therefore accountable for how this money is used for the benefit of Dutch society.

Transnational education

In principle, the ISO and the LSVb do not support transnational education because there is a risk that institutions will be diverted from the core mission for which they were established. Transnational education involves offering full degree programmes abroad.

When institutions choose to establish transnational education programmes, they are obliged to focus on the institution abroad as well as their own institution in the Netherlands. This can lead to a reduced focus on education in the Netherlands, and the ISO and the LSVb see risks in this. Furthermore, the institutions are strongly advocating for a relaxation of the rules governing the funding of transnational education. As a result,

financial reporting becomes less transparent and there is a risk that not only private funds but also public funds will be invested in the branch abroad. This is undesirable: public funds must not be used for transnational education. Furthermore, it may indirectly hinder students' opportunities to study abroad, as they are encouraged to go on exchange programmes to the institution's 'branch'. The ISO and the LSVb therefore favour joint and double degrees, whereby Dutch institutions collaborate with institutions abroad to deliver a degree programme, ideally involving regular exchanges of teaching staff. In this way, the quality of a degree programme is guaranteed through fixed agreements, and no unnecessary funds – namely public funds – are spent on a 'separate' location abroad.

European level

At present, in line with the treaties, the European Union only has supporting competences in the field of education. Although cooperation on education at European level is beneficial, education must remain a national competence. Nevertheless, through these supporting competences, increasing influence is being exerted on higher education in the Netherlands. As the ISO and LSVb, we set the following three priorities: the ERASMUS+ programme, the Bologna Process and European funding.

ERASMUS+ programme

The Erasmus+ programme³ is one of the most successful EU programmes and, together with all its predecessors, has made an enormous contribution to credit mobility in Europe since the 1980s. However, the budget has proved insufficient, despite a 40 per cent increase compared with the previous period. An increasing number of institutions are facing a shortage of grants to award. As a result, institutions are attempting to find creative solutions in various ways, for example by awarding grants to all students for fewer months, adopting a 'first-come, first-served' policy, or implementing a selection process. This further exacerbates social inequality in the area of credit mobility. Furthermore, the regulatory burden surrounding all applications is unnecessarily high, both for students and for institutions. The ISO and the LSVb see this as a threat to access to studying abroad. It would also be beneficial if it were made easier for student organisations to participate in strategic partnerships.

Bologna

The Bologna Process⁴ aims to bring European higher education systems more closely into line with one another in order to increase mobility between the countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), improve the quality of education and present a unified 'knowledge bloc' to the outside world. To this end, 48 countries have now reached agreements which have led, amongst other things, to the introduction of the ECTS, the three-cycle structure (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD) and European frameworks for external quality assurance. The Netherlands is among the group of countries that have correctly implemented virtually all the agreements made within the Bologna Process. However, there is still a fair

³http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

⁴<http://www.ehea.info/>

large group of countries where this is not the case; this gives rise to a number of structural problems that hinder the progress of the Bologna Process.

To keep the process politically relevant, however, new agreements are continually being made, despite the fact that some of the agreements already reached have not yet been (fully) implemented in all participating countries. To provide clarity for students and to guarantee the quality of their education undertaken abroad, it is essential to focus on implementation now. New agreements should only be made between countries that have implemented everything almost in full, as has already happened in a number of pilot schemes, under the banner of 'Pathfinder Groups'. These pilot schemes make it easier for countries that are ready to do so at a given point in time to join. If this proves to have an insufficient impact, the option of continuing the process at EU level must be explored.

Developments in the European Union affecting Dutch higher education

The European Union (EU) has only supporting powers in the field of education. This means that the EU may support Member States, coordinate and supplement policy, but may not enact binding legislation to harmonise Member States' policies. However, a growing number of European policy initiatives are exerting an indirect influence on national education systems. It is important for the ISO and the LSVb to monitor the initiatives listed below and, where possible and appropriate, to provide input on them.

- ET2020 ⁵ : Education and Training 2020 is the EU partnership in the field of education; policy instruments are being developed to make progress towards the following common objectives: lifelong learning, the quality and efficiency of education, equal opportunities, social cohesion and citizenship, and innovation and creativity in education.
- Horizon 2020 ⁶: The European funding programme designed to stimulate science and innovation in industry and academia.
- Modernisation Agenda⁷ : The modernisation agenda contributes to the 2020 objectives and provides higher education institutions and public authorities with tools to achieve the following goals: increasing the number of graduates; improving the quality and relevance of teaching and learning; promoting the mobility of staff and students; strengthening the knowledge triangle; and developing effective models for the governance and funding of higher education.

⁵http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/index_nl.htm

⁶<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

⁷http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/index_en.htm

- Paris Agenda⁸ : The Paris Agenda aims to promote social inclusion and combat discrimination, including through education. This agenda was drawn up by EU ministers in response to the terrorist attacks.
- Skills Agenda: The Skills Agenda aims to tackle unemployment; one of its objectives relates directly to higher education: equipping people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

In addition, an increasing amount of research in the Netherlands is being funded by the EU, particularly through Horizon 2020. They award specific grants and scholarships, which are playing an ever-greater role for researchers. Research funding from the Dutch government, by contrast, is continuing to decline.

The EU funds research on the basis of its own priorities. If, for example, the EU considers sustainability to be a priority, it will be more likely to fund research on this topic. As research and education (primarily at universities) are closely linked, this may ultimately influence the education that students in the Netherlands receive. It is therefore important that the ISO and the LSVb monitor the priorities set by the EU from the sidelines.

In summary, the ISO and the LSVb advocate the following points:

Degree mobility

- Encourage more Dutch (prospective) students to consider undertaking a full degree programme abroad
- Clear information on undertaking a full degree programme abroad, available in a central location that is well-known to (prospective) students
- The expertise of Dutch alumni at foreign institutions should be utilised at national and institutional level – for example, via Nuffic or within their own institution – to streamline procedures relating to studying abroad and to share experiences
- Increase the availability of scholarships
- Expanding and making the loan options available through DUO more flexible

Credit transfer

- Strengthening the provision of information and communication regarding studying abroad
- A more flexible curriculum, creating more opportunities to study abroad
- A clear and comprehensive overview of grants so that students know they can receive financial support to enable them to study abroad

⁸http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf

Anglicisation of higher education

- Teaching may only be delivered in English if there is a pedagogical, substantive or practical reason for doing so.
- Lecturers who teach in English must possess sufficient skills to be able to teach in English; this could be included in the BKO.
- There must be sufficient (free) courses and training opportunities for students who wish to develop their English further for their degree programme. In addition, where possible, there must also be scope within the curriculum to receive feedback on English (for example, through feedback on the level of English in an essay).
- The Dutch language must not be overlooked in this context. It remains important that students are also able to express themselves effectively in Dutch (both orally and in writing).

Transnational education

- Institutions should prioritise the quality of education at their own institution
- Public funds must not be used for transnational education
- Students must always have the opportunity, should they wish, to study at a location of their choice abroad
- The ISO and the LSVb favour joint and double degrees in which Dutch institutions collaborate with institutions abroad to deliver a degree programme. Under the closed grants system, students would only be required (by law) to pay tuition fees to their own (Dutch) institution.

ERASMUS+ programme

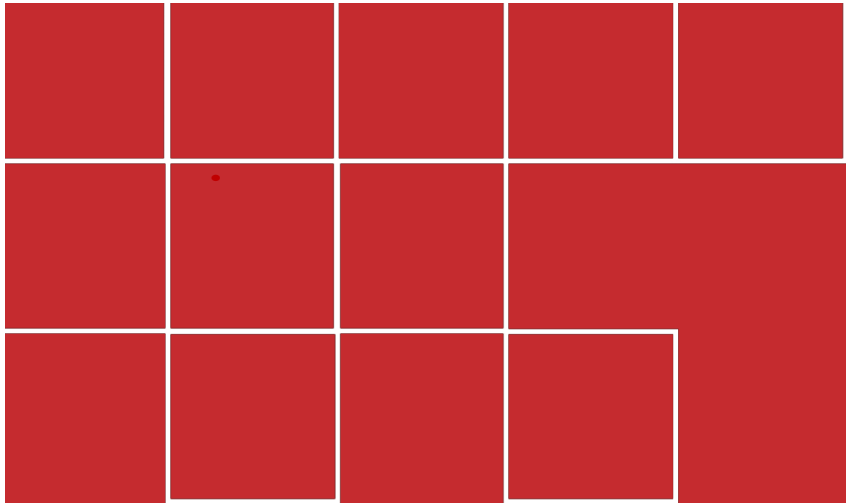
- Greater priority should be given to the ERASMUS+ programme
- More funding must be made available at European level to support students whilst studying abroad
- Every higher education institution should have an international office where students can seek help with issues relating to applying for grants and similar matters

Bologna

- The focus in the coming period should be on implementing the Bologna Process, thereby ensuring that quality is guaranteed for students wishing to study abroad.
- Pilot schemes could be introduced between countries that have finalised all agreements and wish to develop further.
- If implementation falls too far behind, consideration should be given to continuing to work with countries that are part of the European Union, rather than with the EHEA.

Developments in the European Union affecting Dutch higher education

- It is important for the ISO and the LSVb to monitor European policy initiatives and, where possible and appropriate, to provide input on them.
- We keep an eye (from the sidelines) on the priorities set by the European Union and examine how these affect Dutch education. In this way, we can monitor the extent to which students benefit – or do not benefit – from the European Union's priorities, so that we can refine our advocacy work.



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