OECD Initial Teacher Preparation study

Promising practices

Employment-based routes into senior secondary vocational education in the Netherlands
This case study describes a “Promising practice” drawn from an OECD review of Initial Teacher Preparation in the Netherlands on 6-10 March 2017.

The OECD review team – Hannah von Ahlefeld (OECD), Michael Day (University of Roehampton), Kjetil Helgeland (OECD) and Danielle Toon (Learning First) – identified a number of “Promising practices” in each country. These practices may not be widespread or representative, but seen in the context of other challenges, they represent a strength or opportunity to improve the country’s initial teacher preparation system – and for other countries to learn from them.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgement of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org.

Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d’exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.
Promising practice 1.
Employment-based routes into senior secondary vocational education in the Netherlands

Context

Vocational education and training in the Netherlands is among the world’s best, as it is a comprehensive and highly flexible system (Cedefop, 2016[1]). However, the Dutch VET system also faces the global challenge of maintaining a requirement for a graduate-level teaching profession while also recruiting teachers with strong vocational skills in areas such as engineering and construction (Fazekas and Litjens, 2014[1]).

In this regard, the Education Council of the Netherlands (Onderwijsraad), an independent governmental advisory body which advises the Parliament, Ministry of Education and Science and municipalities on education policy, has raised particular concerns about the capacity of existing routes into teaching to provide senior secondary vocational education with well-trained teachers for (MBO) (Brouwer et al., 2016[3]).

As in many OECD countries (OECD, 2010[4]), the shortage and ageing of VET teachers has been a growing issue in the Netherlands. This picture is further complicated by the regulatory restrictions that prevent industry to enter into teaching in VET schools, especially on a part-time basis. Uncertainties exist about what taxes should be levied on, or can be deducted by schools, knowledge centres and companies for the costs derived from part-time teaching staff from industry (Fazekas and Litjens, 2014[1]). Echoing global concerns about the need to promote the professional skills of VET teachers (Misra, 2011[5]), a recent OECD study on VET in the Netherlands identified the need for promoting “skills updating among existing teaching staff … through regular industry placements integrated into teachers’ careers and evaluation system” (Fazekas and Litjens, 2014, p. 10[1]).

In response to this challenge, the Ministry of Education and Sciences has developed alternative routes to teaching for vocational educators. The creation of lateral pathways for highly skilled professionals has allowed VET schools to recruit teachers with strong professional skills, including those without degree qualifications, and to provide them with the education training to become effective teachers and meet teaching standards.

What are the lateral entry routes to teaching in MBO?

The shortage of teachers in the Netherlands is not circumscribed only in Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO) but is also affecting primary and secondary education – although the attrition rates of early career VET teachers is particularly high, at 33% (Brouwer et al., 2016[3]). For this reason, the Ministry has created three types of incentives to attract more ITP candidates: creating alternative pathways, traineeships and financial incentives.

Among the diverse alternative pathways, lateral entry routes represent a flexible ITP programme for those graduates without teacher training and particularly for those post-secondary graduates with non-tertiary vocational degree.
**Route for graduates**

Teachers who have been trained through the conventional routes for secondary teaching – either an undergraduate second degree from an HBO or a postgraduate first degree from a research university – can teach in senior secondary vocational education.

Graduates without teaching licences can also teach in MBO if they enter via an internship programme that involves attending a higher education institution (HEI) three days a week and working in the school two days a week. This route leads to a second BA degree with a teaching licence. To be awarded an internship, students first apply to the HBO for a place, and then to the school for an internship. Although students pay the cost of the training, they are entitled to an extra year of government student funding to contribute to the cost of ITP training.

**Route for professionals with working experience**

MBOs can also recruit post-secondary graduates with non-tertiary vocational degree and graduates with a tertiary vocational degree but without teacher training. This is only possible if they have at least three years professional experience and are assessed as equivalent to graduate level. They furthermore have to participate in work-based internship programmes leading to a teaching certificate. This certificate only allows the teacher to teach in MBO (Visser, 2010[3]).

This internship programme lasts 18 months (60 EC) and covers both pedagogical and educational subjects. This initiative is the result of a partnership between an HBO and a Senior Secondary Vocational (SSV) school, in which the school pays a fee to the HBO for the training, which then counts as the third and fourth year of a BA degree. Teacher candidates attend the HBO one day per week and teach the rest of the time in the school.

The work-based element is jointly supervised by a school appointed mentor and an HBO tutor. Both observe teacher candidates, set learning goals and provide feedback. Teacher candidates are assessed against the national teacher competences both through observation and through a portfolio of evidence. They are required to record their teaching practices and submit videos as part of the final assessment.

Through this process of collaboration between HBOs and SSV schools, a variety of lateral entry pathways have been created within senior MBO. However, during the interviews with the ITP team, the Education Council of the Netherlands shows some concerns about the risk of these new pathways to create differences in the quality of VET teachers (Tomblin and Haring, 1999[8]).

**Why is it a strength?**

The OECD review team in its review of the Netherlands on 6-10 March 2017 considered that the internship route for non-graduates:

- *Attracts new teachers from a potentially large pool of experienced professionals.* This initiative facilitates the entry of industry practitioners into the teaching workforce, which in turn addresses the growing challenge of teacher shortages in VET schools. In particular, it provides a platform to support mid-career entries to teaching.

- *Provides a route to full teacher status and updates the capacity of VET schools.* These alternative pathways guarantee those with professional experience to
become teachers in vocational training, rather than restricting them to roles as instructors or support teachers. In addition, those coming from work environments can contribute to skills updating of fellow teachers.

**How could it be improved?**

The OECD review team noted that:

- *Internship places should be provided with further support to increase the attraction of candidates.* Although there are no formal limitations to internship places, until 2018 the amount of subsidies for MBOs was not sufficient to offer places for all candidates. While more funding has been allocated since 2018, the goal would be to reach all candidates in the future.

- *Alternative certification for vocational educators must be accompanied with quality assurance to warrant their performance.* For the Dutch Government it is important to ensure the same level of professionalisation for teachers from lateral routes as for those trained in traditional programmes. This is why both types of programmes use the same knowledge base. However, lateral routes need to continue providing further evidence that their teacher candidates are prepared to attend the increasing diversity of students.

**For more information**

Brouwer, P. et al. (2016), *OECD TALIS Initial Teacher Preparation Study Country Background Report The Netherlands*, The national Centre of Expertise of Vocational Education.,


