

Education system

Surinam

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Surinam. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Surinam for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

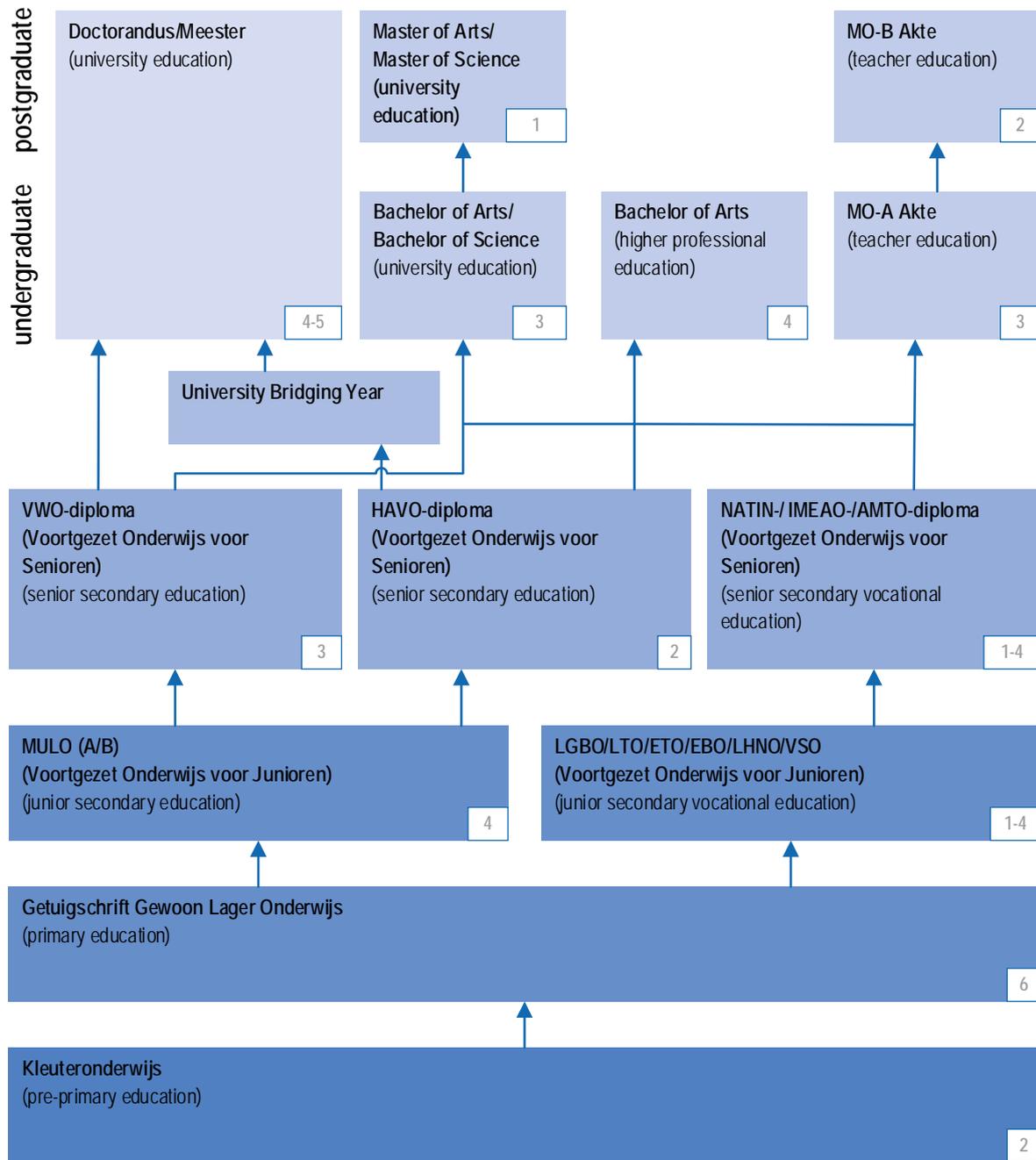
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We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



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 Duration of education

Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level	EQF level
<i>MULO-diploma</i>	VMBO-T diploma	2
<i>NATIN-diploma</i>	MBO-diploma (qualification level 3-4)	3/4
<i>HAVO-diploma</i>	HAVO diploma	4
Certificate for the <i>Algemeen Vormende Fase</i>	approximately HAVO diploma	4
<i>VWO-diploma</i>	VWO diploma	4+
<i>Bachelor of Arts (AHKCO)</i>	2 years of HBO	6
<i>Bachelor of Applied Technology (BTech) (Polytechnic College Suriname)</i>	2 years of HBO (higher technological education)	6
<i>Getuigschrift Jeugdandverzorger</i>	3 years of HBO (health care education)	6
<i>Akte van Bekwaamheid tot het geven van Gewoon Lager Onderwijs</i>	2 years of HBO in education (teaching)	6
<i>MO-A Akte</i>	2 years of HBO in education (teaching)	6
<i>MO-B Akte</i>	HBO bachelor's degree in education (teaching)	6
<i>Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts (Anton de Kom University)</i>	HBO or WO bachelor's degree	6
5-year (old style) <i>Doctoraal in maatschappijwetenschappen</i> (social sciences)	WO master's degree in a similar field of study	7

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Netherlands Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.

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- The EQF/[NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

■ Introduction

Surinam is situated on the northern coast of South America, sharing borders with Brazil, Guyana and French Guyana. It has a population of around 459,000. Surinam gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975. The official language is Dutch, and Sranan Tongo, Hindustani and Javanese are also spoken.

The Dutch education system served as a model for Surinam; even after independence, Surinam followed the trends in the Netherlands. The quality of education was regarded as equal to that in the Netherlands, at least until Surinam became independent.

The Ministry of Education and Community Development is responsible for education in Surinam.

In 2004 reforms had been announced by the Surinamese government. The central aim of the reforms is to introduce an 11-year basic education system, which consists of an integration of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school. With the integration, pupils can be provided a stronger general basis. Reforms will also be implemented gradually within secondary education. Secondary school will be divided into a 3-year general programme and a 4-year vocational programme subsequent to basic education. Teacher-training programmes will also take on the form of 3-year higher professional education programmes. So far, it is not clear yet when these reforms will be implemented. In anticipation of the reforms announced, university education, offered by the Anton de Kom University has been organized into 3-year bachelor's and 2-year master's programmes since 2004.

Education in Surinam is provided by both state-run and private schools. Education is compulsory for children aged 7-12. As part of the introduction of the 11-year primary education, the Surinamese government has proceeded to modify the duration of compulsory education. The language of instruction is Dutch.

The academic year runs from October until August.

■ Primary and secondary education

Basic education covers the 2 years of pre-primary school for children aged 4-5, and primary school, which has a duration of 6 years (for children aged 6-11). Following completion with a final test, pupils are awarded the certificate of *Gewoon Lager Onderwijs* (Primary Education, GLO). This certificate allows pupils to enter general junior secondary education (VOJ), which is split into a general programme with a nominal duration of 4 years (MULO), and a vocational programme with a nominal duration of 1 to 4 years.

The vocational programme comprises several tracks, such as *lager beroepsgericht onderwijs* (junior vocation-oriented education, LBGO), *lager technisch onderwijs* (junior technical school, LTO) and *lager huishoudelijk en nijverheidsonderwijs* (junior domestic science and technical education, LHNO) with a nominal duration of 4 years. Vocational education also contains programmes in *elementair technisch onderwijs* (elementary technical education, ETS) with a nominal duration of 3 years, *elementair beroepsonderwijs* (elementary vocational education, EBO) with a nominal duration of 18 months, and *voorbereidend speciaal onderwijs* (preparatory special education, VSO) with a nominal duration of 1 year. Graduates from all tracks are awarded a diploma.

In terms of level, the *MULO-diploma* is comparable to a VMBO-T diploma.

After graduating from the VOJ, pupils can move on to general senior secondary education (VOS). VOS is divided into general education with a nominal duration of either 3 years (VWO) or 2 years (HAVO), and vocational education with a nominal duration of 1 to 4 years.

Admission to VWO requires a *MULO diploma* (A and B) and an entrance examination; admission to HAVO also requires a *MULO diploma* and an entrance examination.

As in the Netherlands, these two types of senior secondary education are distinguished according to difficulty. VWO examinations contain 7 subjects, and HAVO examinations 6 subjects (NB: English and Dutch are for both VWO and HAVO examinations compulsory subjects). Surinam has national final examinations. VWO schools include the *Algemeen Middelbare School (AMS)*, *Miranda Liceum (Lyceum I)*, *Ewald Meye (Lyceum II)*, *VWO-Scholengemeenschap Nickerie*, *VWO-IV*, *VWO-scholengemeenschap Lelydorp* and *Hoogendoorn Atheneum*.

In terms of level, the *HAVO-diploma* is comparable to a HAVO diploma in the Netherlands.

In terms of level, the *VWO-diploma* is comparable to a VWO diploma in the Netherlands.

Over the last few years, secondary schools based on the American model have been established in Surinam. Provided the schools are accredited in the United States, these programmes are evaluated in accordance with the American system.

There are also schools offering VWO education that haven't been accredited by NOVA (yet), but award a final diploma that actually grants admission to higher education programmes in Surinam, for instance programmes offered by the Anton de Kom University. Examples of these schools are: Alphamax Academy, Christian Liberty Academy and the IAS.

Senior secondary vocational education

There is a range of vocational programmes available, some of which can grant admission to higher education or to a university bridging programme (*universitair schakeljaar*), such as the *IMEAO diploma*.

One example of a senior secondary vocational programme is the *natuurtechnische beroepsopleiding* (programme in natural resources and engineering studies), which has a nominal duration of 4 years. The entrance requirements are a *MULO-B diploma* plus entrance examination, or an LTS-C certificate and a NATIN test at the LTS (junior technical school) (NB: the LTS-C direction is for those who would like to continue with senior secondary vocational education (MBO). The B-direction prepares for the labour market). Pupils who complete this programme are awarded a *NATIN diploma* (NATIN = Institute for middle-level natural resources and engineering studies).

In terms of level, the *NATIN-diploma* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the specialisation.

Another example of programmes in senior secondary vocational education are the evening programmes in senior secondary technical education (AMTO) with a nominal duration of 4 years. Admission requires an *LTS diploma*, and graduates are awarded an *AMTO diploma*.

Here we also mention the most commonly occurring Surinamese teaching qualification in the Netherlands, for *gewoon lager onderwijs* (primary teacher). This programme is available at the *Surinaams Pedagogisch Instituut*, the *Christelijk Pedagogisch Instituut* and the *V.H.K. Scholengemeenschap Nickerie*.

The primary teaching programme consists of a 2-year general component and a 2-year practical component. Admission requires a *MULO diploma*. The certificate for the *Algemeen Vormende Fase* (general component) is awarded after 2 years.

In terms of level, the certificate for the *Algemeen Vormende Fase* of the teacher-training programme is approximately comparable to a HAVO diploma.

The programme takes 4 years part-time, and graduates are awarded the *Akte van Bekwaamheid tot het geven van Gewoon Lager Onderwijs* (certificate of competency in the provision of primary education).

In terms of level, the *Akte van Bekwaamheid tot het geven van Gewoon Lager Onderwijs* (daytime programme) is comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO) in education (teaching).

Within the framework of the reforms, the primary teaching programme will be altered. It has been announced that from 2013/2014 the admission requirements to the programme will be the *MULO diploma* in combination with the HAVO matriculation. In 2014/2015 the requirement will be sharpened to the *HAVO diploma*. The teaching programme will then be reformed to a 4-years higher professional education. It is expected that the first batch of bachelor students will complete their program in 2020.

■ Admission to higher education

VWO, HAVO, NATIN, IMEO and *AVF diplomas* grant admission to higher education. A *VWO diploma* provides direct admission to all forms of higher education; a *HAVO diploma* provides admission to Surinamese higher professional education (HBO). Admission to bachelor's programmes offered by the Anton de Kom University, is usually granted on the basis of the *VWO diploma*. In some cases, a 1-year bridging programme (*schakeljaar*), offered by the university itself, is also accepted for admission. Those eligible for the bridging programme are: holders of a *HAVO/NATIN/IMEAO diploma*, graduates of the *Algemeen Vormende Fase (AVF)* of a teacher-training programme, and *VWO* graduates who are deficient in prerequisite subjects.

■ Higher education

Surinam has a binary higher education system. Surinam has 1 university, i.e. the *Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname*, which has 4 faculties and a number of research institutes. Surinam has a number of higher professional education institutes and an institute offering higher professional bachelor programmes, (higher professional) master- and postgraduate programmes (FHR Institute for Social Studies).

■ University education

Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname

Until 2002, the Anton de Kom University of Surinam (*Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname*, ADEKUS) provided 2 types of university programmes – nominal 5-year *doctorandus* or *meester* programmes, and nominal 4-year *Bachelor of Science* programmes. Since then the university has gradually introduced the bachelor's-master's degree structure, and has also introduced study loads in accordance with the ECTS. Students who have started their studies in the old system can still be awarded the old titles of *drs.* and *mr.* until 2009. The entrance requirement for bachelor's programmes at the Anton de Kom University is usually the *VWO diploma*, often with additional requirements concerning relevant subjects. For a large number of bachelor's programmes the *Certificaat van het Universitair Schakeljaar* (Certificate of the University Bridging Programme) is also considered as sufficient for admission to bachelor's programmes.

The university has the following faculties:

Medical Sciences

The faculty of medical sciences offers two specialisations: medicine (4-year *doctorandus* and 7-year MD degree: 4 years bachelor, 2 years clinical phase and 1 year internship) and physiotherapy (4-year *Bachelor of Science*). The entry requirement is a *VWO diploma* with biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics (total of 24 points).

Social Sciences

This faculty offers the following study programmes: law, economics, business administration, public administration, agogic sciences and pedagogy, sociology and psychology. After the introduction of the bachelor-master system in 2004, the previous 5-year doctoral courses were replaced by 3-year Bachelor of Science programmes and 2-year Master of Science programmes. Since 2010, the Faculty of Social Sciences offers the following master's programmes: Education for sustainable development, Surinamese law and accountancy.

Engineering

The old programmes had a nominal duration of 4 years and graduates were awarded a *Bachelor of Science* upon completion. These programmes have been shortened to 3-year BSc programmes.

In October 2013, the renewed bachelor's programme infrastructure was launched. The nominal duration is 3 years and the admission requirement is the *VWO diploma*.

The following specialisations are offered: Agricultural Production (Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry, Fishery and Aquaculture, Soil Science and

Horticulture), Mineral Production (Geology and Mining), Electrical Engineering (Energy and Computer Technology), Infrastructure (Architecture, Civil Engineering and Land/Water Management), Mechanical Engineering and Environmental Science (Environmental and Nature Management, Aquatic Resources Management).

Graduate Studies and Research (IGSR)

The Institute of Graduate Studies and Research (IGSR) was founded in March 2006 as a forerunner of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). The IGSR (later FGS) offers master's programmes and has the role of monitoring all the master's programmes that are offered by the university. Currently, the following master's programmes are offered: development and policy, international relations (in collaboration with the University of the West Indies), macro-economic analysis and policy and public health.

In terms of level, the 5-year (old-style) *Doctoraal* in social sciences (*maatschappijwetenschappen*) is comparable to a WO master's degree in a similar programme of study.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts*, awarded by the Anton de Kom University is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or a WO bachelor's degree, depending on the programme of study.

FHR Institute for Social Studies

The FHR Institute for Social Studies consists of the following schools: FHR School of Business, FHR School of Management, FHR School of Law and the School of Governance. The institute has cooperation with among other the Maastricht School of Management, the Erasmus University Rotterdam/International Institute of Social Studies and the University of the West Indies.

In 2014, the *Nationaal Orgaan Voor Accreditatie* (NOVA, the national accreditation organization in Surinam) has accredited 2 of FHR master's programmes: the Master in International and Comparative Law Program and the Master of Public Administration in Governance Program.

Higher professional education

A Surinamese *AMTO*, *HAVO*, *NATIN* or *IMEAO diploma* generally grants entry into higher professional education (HBO) in Surinam. Surinam has the following institutions for higher professional education:

Instituut voor de Opleiding van Leraren/Institute for Advanced Teacher Training (IOL)

This is a teacher-training institute for secondary school teachers. Additionally, IOL offers programmes in the service sector for instance Health Education, Remedial Teaching and Speech Therapy.

The *Pedagogisch Getuigschrift* (Certificate of Education) is awarded following a 1-year course in educational studies, and is valid as a teaching qualification for all age categories. The programme is intended for those who wish to work as teachers with a university or HBO qualification.

Conservatorium van Suriname

In October 2011, the Conservatory of Surinam was established. The conservatory is housed in the Institute for Advanced Teacher Training and offers higher professional education programs in a particular instrument or musical discipline. Upon completion of 4 years of study the degree of *Bachelor of Music* is awarded, after an additional 1 to 2 years postgraduate education the degree of *Master of Music* is awarded.

VOJ (voortgezet onderwijs junioren)/teacher-training course

The new *MO-Akte* programme incorporates the professional training component, so that a separate *Pedagogisch Getuigschrift* is no longer awarded. The first certificates (*Aktes*) from this programme were awarded in 2005. The admission requirement is a *HAVO* or *VWO diploma*, or the former *LO-Akte*. The *LO-Akte* was withdrawn in 2002; students who had started the programme were still given the opportunity to obtain the *Akte*, a few of which still needed to finish in 2008.

The programme is offered part-time, and has a nominal duration of 4 years. Graduates are awarded the *MO-A Akte* (age category 12-15 in the *VOJ* programmes).

In terms of level, the *MO-A Akte* is comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO) in education (teaching).

VOS (voortgezet onderwijs senioren)/teacher-training course

The admission requirement is an *MO-A Akte*. The programme is offered part-time, and has a nominal duration of 2 years. Graduates are awarded the *MO-B Akte* (age category 12-18 in the *VOS* programmes).

In terms of level, the *MO-B Akte* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in education (teaching).

Akademie voor Hoger Kunst en Cultuur Onderwijs/Academy for Higher Education in Arts and Culture (AHKCO)

The admission requirement is a HAVO or MEAO diploma or an AVF certificate from a teacher-training programme. The AHKCO offers a 4-year evening programme, in the following specialisations: Social/Cultural Work, Journalism and Art Education (Visual Arts). Graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Arts* is comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO).

Polytechnic College Suriname (PTC)

The PTC provides professional programmes for employment in industry and commerce. The entrance requirement is a *HAVO diploma* with mathematics and physics, and an *AMTO* or *NATIN diploma*. The college offers a modular evening programme with a nominal duration of 5 years, in the following specialisations: Infrastructure (Architecture and Civil Engineering), Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering (Energy Engineering and Computer Technology). Graduates are awarded a *Bachelor of Applied Technology*, Btech.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Applied Technology* is comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO) in engineering and technology.

LOBO: Lerarenopleiding voor Beroepsonderwijs/Teacher-training programme for professional education

The entrance requirement is a *HAVO diploma* with mathematics and physics, and the *NATIN* and *AMTO diploma*. This is a nominal 3-year evening programme, and offers the following specialisations: Architecture, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Mathematics and Physics. Graduates are awarded a *LOBO diploma*.

In terms of level, the *LOBO-diploma* is comparable to 1 year of higher professional education (HBO) in education (teaching).

Stichting Centrale Opleiding voor Verpleegkundigen en Beoefenaren van Aanverwante Beroepen/Foundation for Central Training for Nurses and Practitioners of Related Occupations (COVAB)

COVAB provides several *HBO-V* programmes (training for nurses) for which the admission requirement is the *Diploma A-Verpleging* or the *MBO-V diploma*.

FHR Institute for Social Studies

Since September 2012 the FHR School of Business offers the higher professional bachelor programmes, which used to be offered by Inholland.

■ Assessment systems

All levels of the education system use marks ranging from 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent). The distinctions *cum laude* (honours), *met genoegen* (clear pass) and *met goed gevolg* (pass) are also used in higher education.

Numerical grade	Description
10	excellent
9	very good
8	good
7	more than satisfactory
6	satisfactory
5	nearly satisfactory
4	unsatisfactory
3	most unsatisfactory
2	poor
1	very poor

■ Quality assurance and accreditation

In 2007, the Law concerning the establishment of a national accreditation body (*Nationaal Orgaan Voor Accreditatie*, abbrev. NOVA) and a Central Register for Education was ratified by the government of Surinam. The aim of NOVA is to stimulate the quality and to guarantee the regional and international comparability of higher education programmes. Concerning the Central Register it was mentioned that it should provide an overview of existing, accredited and new programmes.

In 2012 NOVA, consisting of a Accreditation Council (*Accreditatieraad*, ACR) and an Accreditation Office (for administrative and organisational activities) opened its doors officially. From then on it became possible to apply for formal accreditation for higher education programmes.

■ Composition of file

The university and secondary schools do not issue transcripts set out by year and subject. Only the exam subjects and results are stated on the reverse side of the diploma.

■ List of higher education institutions

- [Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname](#)
- [Academie voor Hoger Kunst en Cultuuronderwijs \(AHKCO\)](#)
- [Polytechnic College \(PTC\)](#)
- [Instituut voor de Opleiding van Leraren \(IOL\)](#)
- [Stichting Jeugd tandverzorging](#)
- [Stichting Centrale Opleiding voor Verpleegkundigen en Beoefenaren van Aanverwante Beroepen](#)
- [FHR Institute for Social Studies](#)

■ Useful links

- [Website](#) van het Ministerie van Onderwijs en Volksontwikkeling (MINOV), Ministry of Education and Community Development.
- [Website](#) of NOVA (Nationaal Orgaan Voor Accreditatie/National Body for Accreditation) with the [central register](#) with institutions and study programmes.