The Dutch education system

The higher education system in the Netherlands is based on a three-cycle degree system, consisting of a bachelor, master and PhD. Two types of programmes are offered: research-oriented degree programmes offered by research universities, and professional higher education programmes offered by universities of applied sciences.

Third cycle higher education

Research universities

- Doctorate (PhD)
- PDEng (120 credits)

Universities of applied sciences

- Medicine, dentistry, veterinary med., pharmacy (180 credits)
- MA/MSc (120 credits)
- MA/MSc (60-90 credits)

Second cycle higher education

- Master’s degree (120 credits)
- Master’s degree (60-90 credits)

First cycle higher education, including short cycle

- Bachelor’s degree (240 credits)
- Associate’s degree (120 credits)

Secondary education

- University preparatory education (vwo)
  6 years
- Senior general secondary education (havo)
  5 years
- Preparatory vocational secondary education (vmbo)
  4 years

Primary education

- Primary education 7/8 years

A solid arrow (---) indicates a right to access.
A dotted arrow (-----) indicates that some form of selection or bridging requirement may be applied.