

Status Quo Report on Student Engagement with Society

Qual-AI-ty Engagement Country Report: The Netherlands



Fostering Student Engagement through AI-driven Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices
A Project Developed by:



UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.



MCAST



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Project: Fostering Student Engagement through AI-driven Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices

Consortium Partners

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INTRODUCTION

Background and Current State

Netherlands has 21 higher education institutions (universities) enrolling more than 320K¹ students (CBS 2021, DUO 2021). The majority of the student population is enrolled in undergraduate studies (206K), followed by graduate studies (120K) and 1.5K in post-graduate studies (DUO 2021). The total international student population in the Netherlands is growing since 2016 at an average rate of 8% YoY (94K students in 2020). Behavioural and social sciences are the most attractive studies (60.3%) followed by Economics, Technology, Nature and Health (51.3%, 47.4%, 37% and 37% respectively). Education sciences are the least among the preferences for higher education, accounting for only 1.6% (DUO, 2021). The general government expenditure on education in the Netherlands is stable around the 5.5% of GDP, accounting for 12.6% share of the total government expenditures.

Context

Individual

- Age – Students in the Netherlands are encouraged to participate in various voluntary activities early on in their educational journey. There is a clear separation in the educational pathway for students which is typically established right after the primary school (age 12) based on the student academic level and interests:
 1. Vocational pathways – VMBO, a four-year vocational stream focused on practical skills and competences (this ends at age of 16). Students can continue their professional education in the vocational training track MBO.
 2. Higher vocational pathways – HAVO, a five-year stream focused on higher professional education. Students complete this track at the age of 17 and then can continue

¹ Data according to Netherlands National Statistics bureau (CBS) and Dutch Education Implementation department (DUO) ; data are covering the year 2020 partially and can be subjected to updates once the final report for 2020 is published (Q3 2021)

education at universities of applied sciences where they can get their bachelor degree in applied sciences (HBO).

3. University preparatory pathways – VWO, a six-year stream focused on theoretical knowledge; students complete this at age of 18 and then can continue with bachelor and master of science education at research universities (WO).

Participation in non-formal learning activities is relatively common in the Netherlands. Participation is particularly high among adults with higher education, with 80% of adults reporting participation in various life-long learning activities, community related activities and voluntary participation in associations and communities.

- Gender – In the Netherlands students get equal opportunities for enrolment at HEI. According to the national statistics bureau (CBS) nearly 31% of both men and women in the Netherlands have a higher professional (HBO) or university (WO) qualification. However, the share of higher-education (WO and HBO) is higher among women (52% of all women in the age group of 25-34 years old have a higher education degree) while for men it is lower by 10%. Generally, the most common disciplines for women are Healthcare and Welfare education while for men are law, administrative, trade-related and business studies. University of Twente is proud to support various student associations and initiatives focused on gender neutrality and gender equality. In 2020 University of Twente has initiated a fund for supporting initiatives on gender diversity, equality and inclusion (see Diversity Of Twente - <https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/careers/top-employer/index/>)
- Areas of knowledge - students following subjects oriented towards community services, healthcare and social-work studies are encouraged by their course to be involved in the local community through internships and voluntary activities.

- Education level of university students – the Netherlands has a high-performing higher education research and development (R&D) sector and also highly internationalized. The Netherlands has one of the more internationalized higher education systems in the OECD. For example, 9% of bachelor's students are international or foreign, compared to the OECD total share of 4%. A particularly high share of doctoral students in the Netherlands come from abroad, making up 43% of students at this level, the fourth highest proportion in the OECD².

Tertiary education qualification provides substantial benefits in the labour market in the Netherlands. The employment advantage for 25-34-year-olds with a tertiary education was 4 percentage points over the employment rate for their peers with upper secondary education. In the Netherlands 13% of the student population has a master qualification and 0.9% of the population (25-64) has a doctoral degree. University of Twente is a technical research university, member of the 4TU alliance (together with Universities of Delft, Wageningen, and Eindhoven). However, it includes also a faculty for Social Sciences, Business and Management studies. University of Twente, despite the massive technical focus, is nominated as the most entrepreneurial university in the Netherlands (in 2020, fourth times in a row). Its bachelor³ and master⁴ programs are constantly rated among the top in the Netherlands. The University is ranked in the top 17% in the world⁵, position 189 in 2020.

- Relevant expertise of university teachers – The Netherlands appears to be more successful than many OECD countries in attracting new teachers into the profession (OECD, 2018). The law regulating the quality of the teaching profession in the Netherlands (Education Professions Act 2006)

² Data according to OECD Education at a Glance 2019 Report (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_NLD.pdf)

³ <https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/bachelor/study-orientation/top-rated-programmes/>

⁴ <https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/master/events/top-rated-programmes/>

⁵ <https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/university-twente>

prescribes that teachers have to meet competence requirements and that schools must facilitate teachers' continuing professional development⁶.

- Interest of community member in higher education – University of Twente has direct and indirect connections with the business community and the overall public, both regionally and at the national level. This is a common situation in the Netherlands; higher education institutions are constantly involved in various community activities. For example, the Pre-U initiative brings young pupils in contact with technology, advanced physics and natural sciences. In the North-Eastern part of the country (Friesland) there are several initiatives in which universities partner with local businesses and organizations to develop educational and vocational programs for lifelong learning at all levels of age (e.g. four-language programs – Dutch, Fries, English, and Coding, sustainable village program, etc.). University of Twente, via the Kennislab Twente, is supporting innovations and research & development and has one of the most successful start-up supporting programmes in the Netherlands.

Organizational

Types and focus of HEI – The Dutch education system (VMBO, MBO, HAVIO, HBO, VWO, WO) offers a complete palette of education opportunities, from vocational to research and theoretical education. See the NLQF Report, 2019 for more information about the educational system (NLQF-EQF Report, EC, 2019)

- Size of HEI - Netherlands has 21 higher education institutions (universities) enrolling more than 320K⁷ students (CBS 2021, DUO 2021).
- Activities of student union or student body - Each HEI entity offers broad possibilities and opportunities for development

⁶ https://ec-europa-eu.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/teacher/teachercomp_en.pdf

⁷ Data according to Netherlands National Statistics bureau (CBS) and Dutch Education Implementation department (DUO) ; data are covering the year 2020 partially and can be subjected to updates once the final report for 2020 is published (Q3 2021)

of student unions, associations, and communities. Among these are Erasmus Student Network, ESN, ASVA, Aureus, Marketing Association Amsterdam, R Ladies, AIESEC, LSVb. and many others.

National

- Political – The Netherlands recognizes the importance of education as a driver for development. Schools in the Netherlands are characterised by great autonomy. The Dutch education system combines a centralised framework and policies with decentralised administration and school management. This framework provides standards with broadly-formulated attainment targets and supervision, while schools are highly autonomous on matters related to resource allocation, curriculum and assessment as compared to other OECD countries. School boards are responsible for governance of schools and implementation of national education policy. (Education Policy Outlook, 2019)
- Economic - The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science provides funding to all levels of education. Public and private schools are funded on an equal basis through a lump sum allocation. Students pay tuition fees in secondary vocational and higher education institutions. Targeted funding for schools with specific student needs is available through the government or municipalities. Most of the students are working during their studies. In the bachelor programs typically, students are involved in part-time jobs (max 54 hours/month on average). During their master degree students in some programs are expected to attend a full year internship which is typically paid internship. Students are encouraged to become involved in the economic sector early on from their secondary or tertiary education. Students enrolled in university, higher professional education, or secondary vocational education can apply for student finance benefits from the government⁸.

⁸ <https://duo.nl/particulier/student-finance/>

- Social – Netherlands has a highly vibrant social and cultural sector. Student engagement and contribution of voluntary services is encouraged and highly appreciated by both the educational institutions and employers. An University example is the ‘Green Campus movement’ from the University of Twente in which students from the university are responsible for the development of the circular campus and to impact the circular movement in the region of Enschede (<https://www.utwente.nl/en/sustainability/green-hub-twente/>). Another example is the NGO Oranjefonds. This organization brings together students and seniors, students work as volunteers on ‘senior situations. (<https://www.oranjefonds.nl/project/stichting-seniorstudent>). Most Universities and NGO’s have such services to strengthen students engagement in the societal and cultural sector.
- Technological – The Netherlands is among the technologized countries in Europe. Virtually everybody has access to broadband internet connections (97.9% of the whole population) and most of the public services are also available in a digital form.
- Geographical –Netherlands is a small country (41865 Km²) located in the Western Europe and with territories in the Caribbean. It has the 16th highest population density (423 inhabitants/Km²). The capital is in Amsterdam and the Government seat in The Hague.
- Legal – In line with the national act on Education, (<https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-education-culture-and-science/documents/publications/2018/04/09/sector-agreements-higher-education>) the Dutch government is taking proactive measures and actions in building a legal framework for supporting high quality education. For UAS the quality measure related to student engagement is: The expansion of applied research concerning societal challenges facing universities of applied sciences with other knowledge institutes, the business sector, and social

organisations. For research universities the ‘student engagement measure’ is: As a means of increasing social impact, the presence of a strong knowledge transfer office (KTO) with expertise about academic start-ups in an institute is essential.

IMPLEMENTATION

Activities

Teaching and Learning

- 1) There are several courses and study programs available across all universities in the Netherlands (applied sciences and research universities) targeting the involvement in societal problems, from sustainable development and circular economy to healthcare and social work. Students are not specific encouraged to become involve with NGOs during their study programmes. They can choose to get involved by taking internships, graduating projects, or education credits. In the professional applied sciences education programs students have the possibility to attend various elective community related courses (e.g. corporate social responsibility, elderly care, etc).
- 2) Students in the Netherlands have the possibility to take one-year off their regular studies and join either community related associations or apprenticeship/internship programs. These activities are recognized as education activities and most universities grant credits for these activities.
- 3) Course programs rely heavily on guest lecturers from the business community, public sector and NGO sector. At both bachelor and master level students can learn from specialists in their domains.
- 4) Higher education institutions in the Netherlands are striving for a closer bond with the market sector. This is done primarily by involving various community members to take part in the course development process, setting up different practical scenarios and assignments.

Research

- 1) Students from both research and applied sciences universities in the Netherlands are encouraged in their graduation projects to tackle research projects focused on societal need and challenges. Currently, challenge-based learning programs are developed. For example, sustainable energy transition theme has a high popularity among the bachelor and master theses projects. The last 10 years, the applied science universities have developed applied science research communities in which students participate curriculum-based and also as student assistants. The focus is on the development of start-ups. Examples are:

<https://www.hva.nl/ondernemerschap/onderzoeks/smart-city-academy/smart-city-academy.html>. and <https://centerforentrepreneurship.frl/ons-team/>.

- 2) Collaborative/participatory research in cooperation with the university's external communities.

Dutch universities are highly active in the EIT research projects and offer various research study programs in close cooperation with external communities of practice. University of Twente, together with Delft, Eindhoven and Wageningen, are offering master programs embedded in the EIT Digital Academy and in various other EIT KICs.

Student-Driven Initiatives

- 1) Students deliver community-engagement activities independently through student organizations or initiatives.

There are numerous student associations on all levels of the Dutch higher education ecosystem with more than 10 very large student associations (>10000 members). Due to the fact that the Netherlands has a high level of internationalization, there are 2 large student associations focused on international students. Moreover, different nationalities have their own student organizations and associations. Students are encouraged to be proactive and to take the initiative and the universities are providing extensive support for these associations.

Inputs

There are several resources employed for increasing the student involvement and participation with society. First, the financial resources – most universities offer support and funding for student initiatives. This is also true at both regional and national level – the Dutch government has specific financial aids schemes for supporting student initiatives in the communities. Second, the human resources – universities focus on strengthening the cooperation between teachers, researchers, academic and non-academic staff and the communities. The Dutch valorisation program started in 2010 aims to strengthen the student engagement in societal challenges and increasing the impact of universities on society <https://stip.oecd.org/assets/TKKT/CaseStudies/12.pdf>. Examples of activities are: entrepreneurship education, screening and scouting of students, networking events, pre-seed funding, and proof of concept funding. Clearly, developing entrepreneurship and innovativeness drives this program. Currently, Universities use the Sustainable

Development Goals to strengthen challenge-based learning and research programs to increase societal impact. The national voluntary work bureau is also a service for students, it mentions in November 2021 for instance more than 5000 opportunities for students to do voluntary work (<https://www.nationalevacaturebank.nl/vacatures/functie/student/dienstverband-vrijwilliger>).

Outputs

Among the tangible results we consider the level of voluntary activities and involvement of students, workforce specialization and human resource development, research projects and research output (publications, conferences, etc) and a more closer cooperation with the market. From a Rathenau report from 2018, we learn that impact is difficult to measure, but that most often impact is underestimated (<https://www.rathenau.nl/en/knowledge-policy/valorisation-researchers-already-do-much-more-they-realise>). Although this report refers to researchers, in most Dutch universities researchers work highly together with students on valorisation projects by means of course activities, internships, and bachelor and master theses projects.

On the medium and long-term horizon we see improvements in the overall quality of life, achievements in sustainability and energy transition, health care, sustainable development and lifelong learning. For the Netherlands we are not aware of specific facts and figures related to outputs and impacts. The indicator often referred to is 'valorisation'. Here is an overview of facts and figures related to outputs and impacts: https://www.vsnu.nl/en_GB/f_c_valorisatie.html. Almost all Universities have budgets for valorisation, but there are no clear guidelines or facts. Here is an example in the field of health care: <https://www.nfu.nl/themas/randvoorwaarden-wetenschappelijk-onderzoek/valorisatie>.

Impacts

Individual – Students have opportunities for development, both as professionals but also as human beings. Most organisations mention impacts like: increasing your competences, developing your network, help society, improve your cv, and build social relationships (<https://nijmegenstudentenstad.nl/nieuws/vrijwilligerswerk-doen-als-student-waarom-wel-of-niet/2019-06-26>, <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/nieuws+en+blogs/1515364.aspx?t=waarom+vrijwilligerswe>

[rk+tijdens+je+studententijd%3F,](#) <https://www.voedselbank.nl/waarom-vrijwilliger-worden/>) .There are several initiatives for monitoring the impact of the student's engagement with various activities and their involvement in the society. These are mostly conducted at various levels in the universities and at the national level via interviews and questionnaires and other means.

Organisational - Educational intuitions benefit from student engagement with society – mainly because of the increased cooperation with society and the local communities. Higher education institutions in the Netherlands do not have formal procedures to recognize the value of having engaged and integrated students – both in terms of achievements and research output, and in terms of quality of the educational programs.

Regional and National - On a regional level, student engagement is a key factor in strengthening the bonds within the local community. Likewise, the country as a whole is expected to benefit from increased participation in society - in the development of the social fabric, the establishing of a vibrant cultural environments and from the experience sharing between students, communities, and universities. Current projects try to estimate impact of valorisation projects, but we have not found clear figures yet (<https://www.kwrwater.nl/projecten/meten-van-impact-en-maatschappelijke-waarde/>).

Barriers

In general, time is among the most important factors that affects the student engagement in community developing activities. Sometimes, especially during the bachelor degree, the study load is significant and therefore some students report a lack of time for other activities. We note that, however most of the students are involved in other activities in parallel with their studies – either in associations, either in voluntary activities (which sometimes are part of their study programmes). Alongside time, proper communication and information can be also considered a barrier. In the Netherlands there are typically so many activities and opportunities that most of the times students miss them because of the lack of information. Students are also trying to engage in part-time jobs (70 % of all students, <https://www.nibud.nl/wp-content/uploads/Nibud-Studentenonderzoek-2021.pdf>) during their studies and this is also in close connection with their available time for other activities.

FURTHER INSIGHTS

Incentives

Students in the Netherlands have great opportunities and access to various incentives both financial and non-financial if they engage in community development activities. There are several support subsidies available at all levels, local, regional and even national; students, via student associations and unions can apply for such subsidies and develop specific interventions and actions. Moreover, their involvement in various extra-curricular –with societal focus- activities are expected to have impact on their later employability (<https://recruitastudent.nl/studenten/vrijwilligerswerk-op-cv/>, <https://www.studentjob.nl/weblog/691-vijf-redenen-waarom-je-aan-de-slag-moet-gaan-als-vrijwilliger>). In terms of non-financial incentives, students can receive course credits, professional recognition and certifications for their activities. Additionally, they get the opportunities to increase their network, and maybe even to speak up about their interests, needs and activities with high-office officials, government members and other officials (<https://students.uu.nl/naast-de-studie/community-engagement/vrijwilligerswerk>) .

Opportunities

1. Visibility – in terms of opportunity for increasing the student engagement with society, visibility of the programs (<https://www.worldsupporter.org/en>) and successful stories is key (<https://www.markant.org/thema/verhalen/vrijwilliger-in-beeld-in-het-creatieve-hebben-we-elkaar-echt-gevonden/>). There are several initiatives in the Netherlands for this but more can be done. Of course students add their engagement activities to their cv's. Next step could be to issue for instance EU-certificates or badges based on these activities.
2. Connection with local small and medium businesses is a great opportunity for stimulating student's involvement. Examples are: <https://www.hva.nl/venture-centre/programmas/explore-entrepreneurship/explore-entrepreneurship.html>, <https://novelt.com/en/>, https://www.novi.nl/full-stack-developer/?utm_term=code%20bootcamp&utm_campaign=%5BNEW%5D+Bootcamp+Full+Stack+Developer&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=4280163138&hsa_cam=14409139146&hsa_grp=129401872969&hsa_ad=542697121674&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=kwd-297466380895&hsa_kw=code%20bootcamp&hsa_mt=b&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&qclid=Cj0KCQjwrJOMBhCZARIsAGEd4VEh3BUQg9TW6v6pAG-

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<https://www.hanze.nl/nld/onderzoek/kenniscentra/centrum-ondernemerschap/organisatie/overzichten/dag-van-de-ondernemende-student>. The feeling that your ideas and your actions make a change in the

society is crucial. Strengthening the cooperation between higher education institutions, businesses, NGO and local/regional policy makers for developing clear action programs targeting the challenges in the local society/community and then invite students to take part of the game.

3. Creating a national register of student engagement activities and initiatives, actions, and results. This not only can help in developing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of such actions but also in building a shared space for experience exchange and success stories.

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