Career guidance and counselling services

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science focuses on Loopbaanoriëntatie en Begeleiding (LOB) (career guidance and counselling). In a sector agreement this ministry and the VO Raad, a secondary education council, agreed on a mandatory inclusion of career guidance and counselling in secondary and tertiary education.

In Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education) career guidance and counselling is obligated by law. With the (MBO Raad), the Dutch VET council, the ministry carried out an improvement plan and created a service point for implementation of products, materials and services, for improving and professionalising career guidance and counselling services within the VET schools and support the transitions of students in education. The availability and quality of relevant career guidance information on VET improved by developing relevant websites and information tools and using them in career guidance.

Policy measures

The programme Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid (Tackling Youth unemployment) contains policy measures to tackle youth unemployment. This programme is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and Education, Culture and Science.

City Deal

One policy measure to address youth unemployment is to cooperate with schools. This measure is called the City Deal and is an example of career guidance within schools. Career guidance helps
young people to make good decisions regarding education and their profession. It also helps them to find jobs and prevents students from leaving school without a diploma. It makes the transition of education to labour market easy. Because of this, young people are better prepared for their future. The Team Tackling Youth unemployment wants to do this by improving LOB activities together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, local municipalities, councils and individual schools:

1. A better preparation in school. LOB does not exist yet in every secondary school and not every student from tertiary education is satisfied with LOB. The two ministries want to improve this.

2. Creating a more LOB-minded environment. To develop students ‘LOB competences a LOB environment is essential. Students will gain real life experiences via work placements.

More information on career guidance and counselling

For more information please visit [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Tackling youth unemployment). According to the ministry this website will not be available anymore after medio 2017. More information in Dutch on LOB in secondary education you can find on the site of the VO Raad (Secondary Education Council) on [this page](#). More information about LOB in [Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs](#) (MBO) (Secondary Vocational Education) you can find at the website of the [LOB servicepoint](#).

Funding

Better connections with the labour market

In addition the Cabinet took measures for better connections with the labour market. These measures are for tertiary education. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has introduced a duty of care labour market prospects for schools, which demands that education has to have good labour market prospects. To achieve this goal, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has also set up a [Regionaal Investeringfonds mbo](#) (Regional Investment fund on secondary vocational education). The ministry wants to stimulate the cooperation between education, the public sector and the business world and invests 100 million euro for this purpose. There is no information available in the link with the national Guarantee’s scheme.

Tackling youth unemployment

According to the [Aanpak Jeugdwerkloosheid](#) (Tackling youth unemployment) public career guidance targeting young people takes place within formal education institutions. Every pupil has a mentor. They can coach pupils when necessary. Also a school dean can advise on how to approach the study and future career opportunities. No information was found on informal education providers. However the business sector is an important actor for offering work places to students. To achieve this the ministries started a partnership with the business sector.

The Dutch government only in Dutch) does not only focus on students in secondary schools, but has also developed measures for students in secondary vocational education. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for these policy measures. You can read more about
these policy measures in the following paragraphs.

**Policy on school dropout**

The LOB (career guidance and counselling) applies to all pupils. But there is also a policy that targets specific groups in the youth population. According to a news report [11] (only in Dutch), which was published in 2016 on the website of the Dutch government of April 2016 approximately 66000 young people under the age of 27 were in a vulnerable position in the labour market. Although school dropout decreased massively in the last couple of years (from more than 70.000 yearly towards less than 25.000 in 2015) this number asked for extra focus upon this group. The minister (Lodewijk Asscher) of Social Affairs and Employment and the minister (Jet Bussemaker) of Education, Culture and Science announced in November 2015 that they will make policy arrangements with municipalities to help young people find a job and to tackle school dropout.

**Reducing youth unemployment**

As mentioned above, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has set up a Regionaal Investeringfonds mbo [9] (Regional Investment fund on secondary vocational education) to improve the connection between education and the labour market in vocational education. In this way youth unemployment can be reduced. The budget [9] (only in Dutch) of the fund is € 100 million for the period 2014-2017. From 2018 the ministry of Education, Culture and Science [12] (only in Dutch) will reserve a maximum of € 30 million (from educational advance funds) which can be used for students to facilitate the step towards higher education. Through regional cooperation the ministry aims for a better fit between secondary and vocational education to higher education, and eventually a better fit with the labour market.

**Quality assurance**

**Encouraging career guidance and counselling**

In 2013-2014 several projects were carried out by the VO Raad [2] Secondary Education Council. These projects encouraged secondary schools to create a quality improvement in career guidance and counselling in secondary education, to enable students to direct their own careers.

These LOB projects were evaluated on the basis of questionnaires, interviews and reports. The projects and activities that had been evaluated are:

- Online courses;
- Encouragement and guidance;
- Deployment of ambassadors.

At the end of April 2014 the VO council and the Cabinet reached a sector akkoord VO [13] (sectoral agreement secondary education) on futureproof secondary education. They agreed that performance indicators will be used to monitor LOB (career guidance and counselling) by using the indicators ‘study successes’ and ‘satisfaction measurements’. This will be used among former pupils who are preparing for their future education. The main outcomes of the LOB evaluation will be used to improve LOB activities.
LOB in future

The Minister and the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science want to further improve career guidance and counselling of students at schools. The focal point will be on strengthening the cooperation between the various educational sectors. As mentioned before, in secondary education several projects were carried out by the VO Raad [2] (Secondary Education Council) between 2009 and 2014 that served as booster to put LOB on the agenda of all schools. Almost all schools formulated a vision on LOB and many teachers were trained in LOB-talks.

Lifelong guidance / LOB

Euroguidance [14] is the organization for the innovation of Lifelong Guidance / LOB. Their aim is to improve mobility and provide relevant information about the Dutch Lifelong Guidance/LOB and the European Lifelong Guidance policy and developments. Their website and Euroguidance.com contain many relevant documents on the policy and results of Lifelong Guidance in the Netherlands and Europe.