Existing initial courses of higher professional education (HBO) have been converted into bachelor’s courses. HBO institutions provide teacher training at both bachelor’s (primary and secondary, grade two) and master’s (secondary, grade one) level. Universities provide training at master’s level only (secondary, grade one).

All teacher training courses can be taken full-time, part-time or as dual courses, i.e. in combination with work experience.

The quality of education and pupil performance are strongly dependent on competent teachers and good school management. In order to attract and retain good teachers, the government is investing in measures to improve teacher training, salaries and career prospects. Teachers have various opportunities for continuing professional development, such as a teacher development grant or a grant to study for a PhD. The government aims to boost the number of teachers holding master’s degrees. Improvements in teacher training programmes should also ensure new teachers meet the requisite quality standards.

The government is also working to improve teachers' pay, for instance by encouraging a better distribution of teachers across the pay scale. This means schools are given extra money to promote good teachers to higher pay scales. In the future, schools will also be able to award bonuses. Performance-related pay systems are currently being piloted.

A national register of teachers will be introduced as of 1 January 2012 to ensure teacher quality. Teacher associations themselves advocated the introduction of such a register. There will also be more opportunity for professional exchange among teachers and school managers (peer review).

Teachers should be even better equipped for their work. Teaching approaches can be further improved by results-driven teaching and adapting teaching methods to pupils' individual needs. But school management is important, too. Managers are responsible for creating a good work climate, including good HR and remuneration policies. Over the next few years, school management will be given support in order to become more aware of how their school is doing and where improvements can be made.

The government’s ambitions and objectives are set out in the action plan ‘Teaching 2020: a strong profession’.

**Regional voluntary agreements**

The teaching labour market is largely a regional labour market. Early in 2004, schools and teacher training institutions in about twenty regions (mainly those in which there were shortages), entered into a regional voluntary agreement together with the local authorities to tackle the teacher shortage.
in both the short and the medium to long term. Schools, teacher training institutions and the trainers of teaching assistants are attempting to match the demand for and supply of teaching staff.

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