9.2.1 Planning policy

Schools in the Netherlands enjoy a large degree of autonomy, including in relation to personnel policy. Central government supports schools by ensuring a balance between teacher supply and demand. Every year, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science publishes a report [1] charting developments in the labour market for teachers, so that any fluctuations can be anticipated.

9.2.2 Entry to the profession

Conditions of service of education personnel

The conditions of service and legal status of education personnel, including teachers, in both public-authority and privately run institutions are determined at decentralised level in sectoral collective agreements. These agreements are laid down in negotiations between employers and unions. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science is not involved in negotiating collective labour agreements. Where possible and desirable, these agreements allow for further elaboration at school-board level. Negotiations at institutional level are between each competent authority and the federations of public service and education unions representing the staff of the institutions for which that particular competent authority is responsible.

Entry requirements

Candidates applying for a job in a given sector of education must be eligible for a teaching appointment.

- Generally speaking, this means they have a certificate qualifying them to teach the subject or subjects in question at that level.

- Primary and special school teachers are required to have a primary school teaching qualification. Secondary and secondary vocational teachers must have a grade one or grade two secondary school teaching qualification.

- Apart from the relevant teaching qualifications, teachers must produce a certificate of conduct (VOG).

- Teachers who are not yet fully qualified may also be appointed on a temporary basis. They are usually lateral-entry teachers.
Nature of contract

Teachers in primary, secondary and secondary vocational education are employed in the general service of the competent authority, i.e. the school board, rather than by a particular school.

- This means that staff who move to another school governed by the same school board are not dismissed and reappointed but simply transferred.

- The letter of appointment must state the start date and, if appropriate, end date of the contract, the job title, salary scale, the number of hours to be worked, the salary and place of work.

9.2.3 Induction

Evaluation of teachers

Teachers are appointed by the school board. School boards are responsible for their own personnel policy and for staff recruitment, supervision, development and evaluation. Staff evaluations are based on two instruments:

- *job performance interviews*, in which teachers discuss their performance with their heads, and look at their prospects for the future;

- *assessment interviews*, in which the teacher’s performance in the period preceding the interview is assessed.

Job performance interview

Most schools regularly hold job performance interviews with their teaching staff, in most cases once every two years. Information on a teacher’s performance is mainly supplied by the individual concerned. In primary schools, classroom observation is also an important source of information. This also applies to secondary schools, where colleagues and pupils are also consulted on teachers’ performance.

Assessment interview

- Schools generally hold assessment interviews with teachers once a year. Some schools do not hold separate assessment interviews, but assess their teachers during their job performance interviews.

- The criteria used in assessing staff include attitude towards colleagues, the quality of their teaching and their professional development.

- Heads also like to have measurable indicators of the performance of individual teachers and their staff as a whole.
Primary schools also use competence profiles in assessing performance. Consequences may be attached to assessments.

- For temporary staff, the results may determine whether their contracts are extended, terminated or made permanent.

- Teachers may also be asked to undergo coaching, or accept a transfer to another job.

Since the introduction of a more flexible personnel budget, schools have more scope to give their teachers a performance-related allowance or bonus. They may decide to do so on the basis of an assessment. It is up to the school to decide under what conditions bonuses or allowances will be granted, and how much money they are prepared to spend on them.

### 9.2.4 Professional status

- Education personnel in public-authority schools and institutions are public servants within the meaning of the Central and Local Government Personnel Act. Their appointment is a unilateral juristic act.

- The same does not apply to staff in privately run schools whose appointment is based on a two-sided employment contract.

- Irrespective of professional status, the same conditions of service apply to all education personnel working in a given sector. These conditions are laid down in a collective labour agreement for privately run schools and in legal status regulations for staff in public-authority schools.

### 9.2.5 Replacement measures

- If a teacher is unable to work due to sickness, primary and secondary schools may claim money to pay for a supply teacher from the Staff Replacement Fund (VF).

- Secondary and secondary vocational schools are no longer required to be signed up with the Fund, but this means that they must pay for supply teachers themselves.

- The Fund operates on the basis of a differentiated contribution system. Every school year, the contributions paid by each competent authority are compared with the amounts claimed for supply teachers to cover for teachers on sick leave. If more money is claimed than is paid in contributions, the regulations specify that the competent authority has to make an extra contribution.

- The costs of covering for teachers on other types of leave than sick leave cannot be claimed.
from the Staff Replacement Fund but are paid by the school or school board in question.

- The differentiated contribution system was introduced to focus the attention of the competent authority on their responsibility for tackling sickness absence in their schools, as the fewer teachers on sick leave, the less money needs to be claimed for supply teachers.

Supply teachers may be hired externally, or found within the school by paying teachers to work extra hours. Teachers cannot be ordered to work extra hours in order to replace a colleague who is on sick leave. School boards generally make use of a supply teachers pool.

### 9.2.6 Support measures

School boards are themselves responsible for their personnel policies and for supervising new teachers. The necessary funds are included in schools’ block grant. They may spend the money on supervising trainee teachers, lateral-entry teachers and other new staff members.

### 9.2.7 Salaries

Every post in education has a corresponding salary scale, determined in accordance with the job evaluation system laid down in the collective labour agreement for the sector.

- The salary scale attached to a post is based on the nature of the position and the duties the staff member is required to perform.

- Before a teacher reaches the maximum salary amount attached to their salary scale, they must move up through a number of salary amounts in keeping with a given career pattern. The job categories for teaching and management posts in primary and special schools are: teacher, deputy head and head.

### 9.2.8 Working time and holidays

#### Working time

- The standard number of hours to be worked per year (standard working year) is fixed at 1,659 for all sectors of education.

- Teachers in full-time posts in primary and special schools work 40 hours a week. Staff are appointed to a standard full-time teaching post or a part-time post, expressed as a working hours factor.

- Primary and special school teachers may spend an average of no more than 930 hours a year on teaching duties.

- For secondary school teachers this figure is 750 hours (a maximum of 26 50-minute lessons a week).
Teaching hours in secondary vocational education are determined on the basis of a general framework under which 1,200 hours of the standard working year (1,659 hours) are intended for teaching and directly related tasks and the remaining 459 hours for tasks relating to the organisation and development of teaching.

The various tasks are distributed among the teaching staff in consultation with the management team.

**Leave**

There are various leave arrangements for education personnel.

- **Holiday leave:** teaching staff enjoy paid leave during school holidays and on national and religious holidays.

- **Sick leave:** in principle, all staff on sick leave continue to receive their full pay for up to 12 months. After 12 months, they receive 70% of their pay for the hours not worked due to disability. When a member of staff has been unfit for work for 24 consecutive months, a medical examination is carried out to ascertain whether they are entitled to benefit payments under the Work and Income (Capacity for Work) Act (WIA).

- **Pregnancy and maternity leave:** Female staff are entitled to sixteen consecutive weeks of pregnancy and maternity leave. The period of leave must begin at least four weeks before the due date.

- **Parental leave:** parents of children under the age of 8 can opt to take paid and/or unpaid parental leave. An employee is entitled to 1,040 hours of unpaid leave or 415 hours of paid leave for each child. The employee receives 55% of their salary for each hour of paid leave taken.

- **Other leave entitlement:** the competent authority must grant teachers special paid leave in specific cases, including when they get married or upon the death of a close relative. The competent authority may also grant unpaid leave.

- **Sustainable employability/age-related leave:** from the age of 57 teachers are entitled to 170 extra hours of leave. They do not receive their full pay when they take the extra leave. Primary and secondary school teachers forfeit 50% of their salary over no more than 130 hours of extra leave taken. In secondary education teachers forfeit 50% of their salary over no more than 120 hours of extra leave taken. In secondary vocational education teachers forfeit 45% of their salary over the extra hours of leave taken.

### 9.2.9 Promotion and advancement

The job structure devised by the parties to the collective agreements for the primary and special education, secondary education and secondary vocational education sectors comprises benchmark
posts and model posts for teachers at various levels.

In primary and special education, the current range of benchmark and model posts provides sufficient scope for differentiation in the job profile for teachers, thus improving their career advancement prospects.

Under the Voluntary Agreement for the Teaching Profession in the Netherlands schools receive extra funding to diversify teaching posts and salaries by increasing the number of posts at higher salary scales. As part of their integrated personnel policies, schools/institutions can assess whether a staff member can be promoted to a job at a higher level on the basis of competence development. Promotion prospects also depend on the educational and organisational choices the school or institution makes, and on its financial position.

### 9.2.10 Mobility and transfers

Schools can decide for themselves whether or not to allow teachers to transfer to another school.

### 9.2.11 Dismissal

The collective labour agreements for each of the education sectors include provisions on dismissal. Various legal remedies are open to public-authority and privately run schools.

The collective labour agreement for primary and special education provides for two possible arrangements in the event of involuntary dismissal:

1. **dismissal policy**

2. Staff are made redundant in the order in which they appear on the redundancy list maintained by their employer. They must, however, have been part of the risk-bearing staff establishment for at least one school year. The redundancy regulations no longer apply to individual schools but to all schools falling under the same school board.

3. If a primary school is planning to dismiss a member of staff, it must apply for permission to do so from the Collective Redundancy Payments Fund. Members of staff may be dismissed if a temporary contract is not renewed or there is too little work for them, for compelling reasons, where there is a clash of personalities, or on denominational grounds.

4. First the school is obliged to attempt to find another job for the person in question either internally or externally, and these efforts are included in the Fund’s assessment.

5. Schools may also dismiss a member of staff after 24 or 30 months’ absence due to sickness or disability on the basis of the Work and Income (Capacity for Work) Act (WIA), after a claim for WIA incapacity benefit has been assessed and approved.

6. **employment policy**

7. Employment policy does not include redundancy regulations. Instead, staff are given a
guarantee of employment. If the employer believes they are no longer able to offer this guarantee, they must draw up and agree a redundancy programme with the trade unions. Under the terms of this programme there can be no involuntary dismissal until two years after the programme has ended.

In secondary and secondary vocational education, only employment policy applies.

**9.2.12 Retirement and pensions**

As a rule, everyone in the Netherlands retires at the age at which they become entitled to an old age pension under the General Old Age Pensions Act (AOW).

- The age of retirement is currently being raised in steps, from 66 years in 2018 to 67 years in 2021 and 67 years and 3 months in 2022. From 2022 the age of retirement will be linked to rises in life expectancy.

- Education personnel also receive a supplementary pension from the pension fund for public servants and education personnel, the [ABP Pension Fund](http://www.abp.nl/abp/)[2].

- Pensions are calculated on the basis of average salary up to the age of entitlement. This applies to old age pension, surviving dependants’ pension and invalidity pension built up since 1 January 2004. Pensions built up before that date are calculated on the basis of final salary. Teachers and other education personnel start to build up their pension on entering service.

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