



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

POSSIBLE DEGREES FOR A BINARY SYSTEM



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Report Committee Review Degrees

June 2005

Colofon

„Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice,
possible degrees for a binary system”

Report Committee Review Degrees for
the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

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Design: Laurant & Bakker Vormgevers
Print: XXLPRESS Nijmegen

June 2005

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FOREWORD

Since the introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's degree system in the Netherlands the international transparency of this system, as practised in the Netherlands, has been under discussion. Different organisations, stakeholders and individuals in the Netherlands disagree on the impact of the system of degree titles. The main issue in this discussion seems to be the fact that the additions "science" and "arts" to the bachelor and master are restricted to research oriented programs by Dutch law. A legal distinction is therefore made between two types of educational profiles: "research oriented" and "professional oriented".

Early January 2005 the Staatssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Mr. Mark Rutte, therefore nominated an international Committee to review the national and international situation with regard to the use of designation of academic degrees.

This report is the result of the work of this international Committee, which has undertaken a review of the Dutch degrees in an international perspective, and worked out a proposal for the use of academic degrees in the Netherlands.

The assignment also underlines that the "Parliament has only recently, with regard to this Committee, adopted a motion that the binary distinction should be reflected in the degrees". The scope of the degrees under study should be all of the accredited higher education degrees. The assignment expressed that the Committee should hold discussions with a wide range of individuals, including industry and employer groups. The Committee should also have a target to complete its deliberation in the first half of 2005 and were asked to submit its study to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science by May 2005.

As secretary for the Committee the ministry appointed Dr. Lies van Gennip, director of the Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (NVAO) in the Netherlands

A tentative working plan for the Committee was worked out in January. The working plan was discussed and brought into operation under the first meeting of the Committee. The Committee has met three times in Den Haag.

In accordance with the assignment given to the Committee, the work comprised of interviews of various stakeholders and persons representing various relevant sectors of the Dutch society. The Committee interviewed 32 persons representing 25 organisations or companies. During the interviews, stakeholders were invited to share their views on the current situation with respect to degrees in higher education in the Netherlands. They were also asked to express strong and weak points of the present Dutch situation and give indications on how they felt the system should be or should change. The stakeholders were also invited to provide written information to the Committee, and several did.

Also in order to get quality assured information of the situation in some European countries the Committee made a survey distributed to national organisations involved in evaluation of higher education in Norway, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, France, Flanders and United Kingdom.

The general picture from the various interviews and from the documentation conveyed to the Committee is that there are strong and varying opinions on the binary system and the degree structure. Based on the review of the Dutch degree system in an international perspective, the Committee's assignment was to describe designations of degrees, as additions to the bachelor and master degree, which are internationally customary, transparent and robust. This assignment is not easy, as the international perspective is very diverse and quite often under change for the time being, and as the opinions of the stakeholders in the issue varies substantially. Nevertheless, the Committee has reached consensus on a proposal for a degree system, which we consider as transparent and robust enough to meet the opportunities and challenges the Committee sees for the Dutch higher education system in the mid term future.

The members of the Committee have shown an impressive ability to evaluate all the various and conflicting information conveyed to the Committee during its work. As a chairperson of the Committee I will like to thank the Committee members for their extraordinary attitude of logical and analytical thinking during the work and particularly during the very fruitful discussions. A friendly and very positive atmosphere during the meetings made it possible to make a stepwise progress towards a proposal with consensus from the whole Committee.

The observers and the experts appointed for the Committee made considerable contributions to the work. We therefore thank them for their skilled and useful advises and inputs.

This work would not have been possible without an outstanding secretariat. Dr. Lies van Gennip, as the appointed secretary, and the organisation NVAO, has contributed in an outstanding and very satisfactory way. Lies van Gennip has performed as a secretary of excellence. Her great understanding and personal insight of the subject, and her professional behaviour as a secretary, has made the work a pleasant task for the Committee. We are therefore very thankful for the very professional secretary assistance given to the Committee.

Roger K. Abrahamsen
Chairperson of the Committee

1. SUMMARY

Since the introduction of the Bachelor's-Master's (Ba-Ma) degree system its international transparency (or readability) has been under discussion within the Netherlands. The main issue is with regards to degree titles; in the current system the suffixes 'science' and 'arts' are only allowed for programmes accredited at WO orientation. Several stakeholders in the Netherlands, including the HBO Raad, claim that the international position of Dutch HBO students and Dutch HBO programmes has been weakened because of this situation.

January 26th 2005 the Staatssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Mark Rutte, nominated an International Committee to review the national and international situation with regard to degree nomenclature. This report is the result of the work of this Committee.

The Committee was chaired by Professor Dr Roger K. Abrahamsen. Professor Abrahamsen is amongst others the chairman of the board of NOKUT (Norwegian 'sister' of NVAO in the Netherlands). The other Committee members were Dr. Nick Harris, Director of Development and Enhancement, QAA (the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) and Christian Tauch - Coordinator of the Departments "International Relations" and "Study and Research in Germany and the EU" at the German Rectors' Conference HRK. The Ministry appointed Bastian Baumann (ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe), Professor dr. Frans Leijnse and Mr Yvonne C.M.T. van Rooy as experts to the Committee. The Ministry allowed Noël Vercruysse to take part in the process as observer from Flanders. The secretariat of the Committee was provided by NVAO, under the responsibility of Dr. Lies van Gennip, Director of NVAO.

This International Committee was to undertake a review of the Dutch degrees in an international perspective. The Committee's assignment was to describe designations of degrees which are: internationally customary, transparent to the (inter)national labour market, higher education institutions and students as well as solid (i.e. not "subject to fashion").

The Committee assessed the international situation as well as the national situation in its review.

Looking at the international situation, the Committee found that the Anglo-Saxon degree system, which is often referred to in the Netherlands, does not really seem to be a coherent system and that it certainly offers a large variety of degree nomenclatures. In the UK there is an almost infinite variation in combinations of prefixes and suffices, with more or less details that make up degree titles. UK universities have (and guard) their autonomy to set the names of their degrees and other qualifications. In other European countries the decision on which degrees a particular higher education institution may award is regulated at governmental level. However, there is no harmonization of degrees across Europe (or internationally).

The claim of the HBO Raad that the Netherlands is the only country that forbids the use of 'science' and 'arts' by other than research universities, was not confirmed by the Committee. For example in Austria the universities may use a whole range of additions, while Fachhochschulen may award only the degrees Ba. (FH) and Ma. (FH). This does not imply, however, that there may not be programmes in other countries that are comparable to Dutch HBO programmes that can use 'science/arts' suffices.

The Committee concluded that building a Dutch degree system that matches "the international degree system" is not possible. Firstly there is no 'international degree system'. Secondly, as the Ba-Ma structure was only recently introduced in other European countries, a similar redefinition of degrees is taking place elsewhere. Following and seeking to reflect international developments is for the moment like trying to hit a moving target.

There is however an international trend that academic programmes are given 'science/ arts' degree titles, whereas when professional associations and/or professional registers have a greater influence on the cur-

riculum, then subject-related degree titles are used. In general it is customary that degree titles match the content of the programme.

The Committee decided to take as a first principle that a degree title should reflect the content of the programme.

The Committee learned that the present degree system in the Netherlands does not meet this first principle. According to the law, the additions ‘science’ and ‘arts’ are restricted to “initial” education programs accredited at WO orientation. The WO orientation relates to the content, but the “initial” nature of the programme to the financing. **The Committee recommends that the law is changed so as to allow both initial and post-initial education programs the possibility of ‘science’ and ‘arts’ suffices.**

Considering the *national situation*, the Committee learned that the binary structure is deeply anchored in Dutch higher education and that it is highly valued by a wide range of stakeholders, including employers as well as students. The Dutch Parliament wishes to retain a binary structure within the organisation of Dutch higher education.

The Committee was made aware of what appeared to be a general believe in the Netherlands that the binary system reflects the existence of two types of students (or even people): the ‘doers’ and the ‘thinkers’.

The Committee concludes that, compared to the international scene, the Netherlands does not distinguish itself by the fact of having a binary system, but by the nature of its binary system. The separation between research orientation and professional orientation seems larger in the Netherlands than elsewhere:

- The fraction of higher education students in research universities (30%) in the Netherlands seems¹ substantially lower than in other countries, suggesting a more selective procedure for entry into research universities;
- There is less development of applied research in combination with professional education;
- Research education of teaching staff at universities of professional education is not yet well developed;
- Co-operation between universities of professional education and regional industries in (e.g.) applied research is not well developed;
- There has to date been little permeability within the higher education system: it is has been very difficult to move from HBO to WO.

The Committee suggests that it is this distinct separation of HBO and WO within Dutch higher education today that has resulted in the current degree discussion. The matter of degree nomenclature and in particular of international competitiveness of specific awards does not seem to be as important an issue elsewhere as it is in the Netherlands.

The Committee also learned that the present Dutch approach to the implementation of the Bachelor-Master system does not meet all of the Bologna objectives of the European Higher Education Area. Importantly, for instance, some first cycle (Bachelor’s) degree programmes, and in particular many WO programmes, do not seek to prepare graduates for the labour market. Until now the reform on many university programmes has been limited to their ‘division’ into two parts (to Bachelor’s and Master’s) without the Bachelor’s element being revised to meet the Bologna and international expectations of what a Bachelor’s title should represent. It is also evident that not all first cycle programmes lead directly to opportunities for second cycle study; in particular many HBO Bachelor’s programmes do not obviously lead to a Master’s programme, without the need for some bridging studies.

The Committee is of the opinion that the Dutch binary system is changing. The recent appointment of lecturers and the establishment of research centres at universities of professional education are, for example, important and will contribute to the development of applied research and to improving the wider qualities of the teaching staff. The Committee understood that in the Dutch system, lecturers have a leading role in applied science in relation to education (hence a role which is comparable to that of professors at research universities). The initiative of the Rotterdam University of Professional Education in establishing a

¹ National contexts in different European countries differ which limits comparability.

strategic connection with the region of Rotterdam is a positive example of how a university of professional education can develop applied research linking to a region. Similarly, the Committee came across several examples of co-operation between research universities and universities of professional education that demonstrate substantial benefits for both (a 'win-win situation'). A major driver for change will be the further development of applied research by universities of professional education, in close collaboration with research universities, research institutions such as TNO, and small and medium sized enterprises.

The Committee believes that with such collaborations, and the development of applied research in relation to professional education, the Dutch binary system will move towards a less polarized and more diverse higher education system. Based on the evidence it received the Committee decided to assume as a second principle that the Dutch binary system will evolve.

Taking the current situation and the impact of its two principles, the Committee offers the following as a structure that would meet the primary need for transparency of degree titles and also the current and likely future trends in Dutch higher education (Fig. 1):

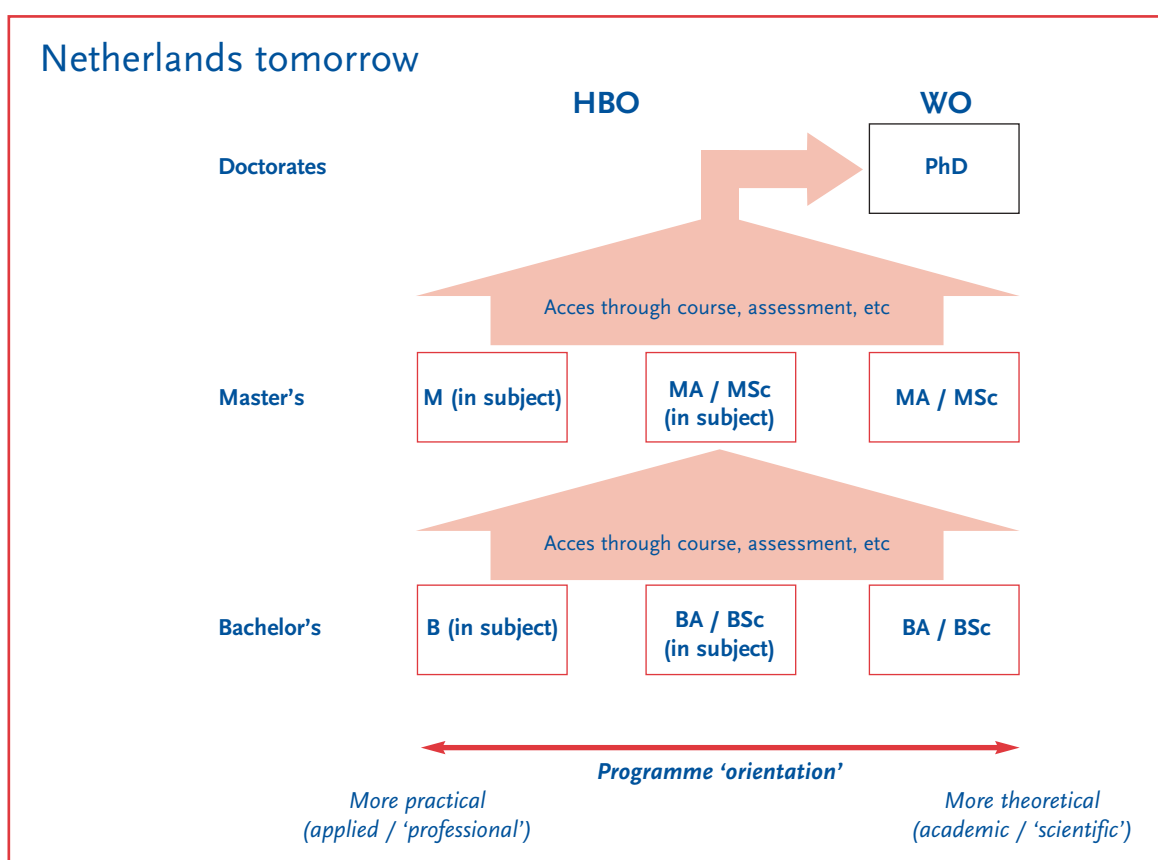


Figure 1: Netherlands tomorrow: a possible structure. The area of applied research in relation to professional education, the middle column, is now virtually nonexistent but will be developed. Bachelor's students from a variety of programmes ranging from more practically oriented towards more theoretically oriented may choose a variety of Master's programmes. The wide arrows indicate that permeability is high and there are possibilities to choose within the system because there is more diversity in programmes and because bridging courses are more easily accessible. Entrance for Master's programmes requires minimum qualifications, which may be achieved through assessment and/or bridging programmes. Similarly entering a PhD requires minimum qualifications, which are research oriented.

The proposed degree system

The Committee proposes a degree system that meets both principles mentioned earlier: the degree title should follow the content of the programme and the degree system offers a range of degree titles that reflect what has already happened within Dutch Higher Education and is likely to happen (Fig 1) based on the evidence that the Committee received.

The Committee recommends that the ‘science’ and ‘arts’ additions be given only when a programme is, to some extent, based on research. However, the Committee believes that some HBO programmes can be research-based as well, probably based mainly on applied research. Similarly, WO programmes may have links with professional practice. The degree structure proposed recognizes the diversity that also exists (or will exist) within the HBO and WO programmes. The proposed degree titles would thus reflect the diversity of Dutch higher education rather than just the binary nature.

The Committee proposes use of ‘science’ and ‘arts’ additions only for HBO programmes with a sufficient connection to research, not for all of the present HBO educational programmes. The Committee realises that this may disappoint the HBO representatives, but it is important that the international position of Dutch higher education is not weakened. In marketing higher education, universities of professional education should be clear on what they offer, and that this is also reflected in the titles of the awards that will be given.

Criteria for the extent of the research connection that would justify the use of ‘science’ or ‘arts’ additions need to be developed. Such criteria should depart from the current learning outcomes, that reflect that the student should be familiar with traditional and advanced research methods, and also reflect the bases of more applied research. Based on learning outcomes, criteria may also address the infrastructure needed to achieve these learning outcomes. Students must have access to such infrastructure, and in a sufficient way to meet the learning outcomes, within a research-based education. This does not necessarily imply that the higher education institution must itself have this infrastructure - it could also be made available through co-operation with e.g. a research university.

The Committee feels that criteria for subject additions (e.g. Bachelor of Arts in American Studies) are not urgent now. A wide range of subjects should be possible and permissible to allow for innovation and for new fields and combinations to develop and distinguish themselves.

These considerations, and evaluation of the various arguments presented to the Committee during its work, led to the following model for degree titles, which can be seen in connection to the higher education system that is shown in Figure 1.

The Committee proposes a system of degree titles with two types of suffices: ‘arts/science’ and subjects. The first depends on the extent of the research connection, the second on the professional connection. This results in the following table of possible degree titles, which should be used as an important guideline. Deviations from this model should be exceptional, but possible, as the Committee recognises that some degree titles may internationally differ from this proposal for historical reasons. If equivalent degrees are offered in the Netherlands, the internationally accepted academic title should be allowed even if it is not in agreement with the system and principles presented here.

1. Bachelor		In.. (subject)	↓	Professional connection
2. Bachelor	of arts / science	In .. (subject)		
3. Bachelor	of arts / science			
4. Master		In.. (subject)	↓	Professional connection
5. Master	of arts / science	In .. (subject)		
6. Master	of arts / science			

The Committee recommends that the Diploma Supplement, according to the UNESCO format, is used as the main tool to increase transparency; it suggests that the value of the degree titles as such should not be overestimated.

The Committee recommends that a national qualifications framework be used as a significant tool for developing transparency. This national framework must be based on the “Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area”, which has been developed by the Bologna Follow-up Group and formally adopted by the European Ministers in Bergen in May 2005.

Given the fact that in the Netherlands an accreditation system, to validate the level and orientation of each programme in higher education, is already in place **the Committee recommends that the current system of evaluation by quality agencies (VBI's) and accreditation by NVAO be employed for quality assurance of degree titles.**

The Committee recognises that this will be an additional task for NVAO (and VBI's) that this will require additional effort and resource. NVAO will have to develop for instance, in close cooperation with the (associations of) higher education institutions, criteria for justifying both 'science' and 'arts' additions to degrees. Similarly NVAO will have to develop criteria for the way VBI's have to extend their work and provide evidence on the issue of degree titles.

While gaining an understanding of the Dutch higher education system, the Committee came across some aspects of this system that it found surprising, and sometimes perplexing. The Committee has described these aspects in a separate chapter in this report.

2. INTRODUCTION

Background

As of September 2002, the majority of Dutch students are studying within a Bachelor-Master structure. In designating degrees in the Netherlands a legal distinction is made between the profile types “research-oriented” and “professionally-oriented”. Graduates from research-oriented education obtain Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees with ‘of Arts’ or ‘of Science’ added, depending on the discipline. Graduates from higher professional education obtain Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees with titles indicating the field of study (for example, Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Nursing, Master of Architecture).

Since the introduction of the Bachelor’s-Master’s (Ba-Ma) degree system its international transparency (or readability) has been under discussion within the Netherlands. In early January 2005 the Staatssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Mark Rutte, nominated an International Committee to review the national and international situation with regard to degree nomenclature. This International Committee was to undertake a review of the Dutch degrees in an international perspective. The assignment for the Committee describes the tasks of the Committee as follows:

“The review of the Committee should help the Dutch government to make decisions on title legislation and describe designations of degrees (or rather: specifications of/additions to the Bachelor and Master titles) which are:

- Internationally customary;
- Transparent with respect to profile types of education to the (inter)national labour market, to higher education institutions and to students;
- Solid; that is not under discussion or otherwise expected to be subject to change. (Note: this means that the names of degrees must be robust, not “subject to fashion” but deeply anchored, not in motion and not some fancy title or other that has just been conceived).

The Committee should start from the policy line regarding degrees for the Dutch system:

- The use of a two-cycle structure of degrees in the English language - this follows the Anglo-Saxon tradition.
- A binary system that distinguishes research-oriented education and higher professional education - although this is contrary to the Anglo-Saxon tradition.”

Members of the Committee and their roles

The members of the Committee were selected and nominated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The aim was to establish a Committee with experts who are knowledgeable in the international scene of higher education. The Committee has a chairman and two members:

Chairman: Professor Dr Roger K. Abrahamsen. Professor Abrahamsen has a background as Dairy Engineer. He is Professor at the Department of Chemistry, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway. He is also the chairman of the board of NOKUT (Norwegian institution for quality in education) - which is an organisation similar to the NVAO in the Netherlands.

The members are:

- **Dr. Nick Harris**, Director of Development and Enhancement, QAA (the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education), UK.
- **Christian Tauch**, Coordinator of the Departments “International Relations” and “Study and Research in Germany and the EU” Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK) / German Rectors’ Conference;

The Chairman and Committee members are responsible for carrying out the assignment and for this report which reflects the views of all members of the Committee.

The Ministry also appointed experts to support the Committee in its assignment. As an international student expert, Bastian Baumann from Germany (ESIB) took part in all Committee meetings. As Dutch experts on the subject, Professor dr. Frans Leijnse, Hogeschool van Utrecht and Mr Yvonne C.M.T. van Rooy, President Utrecht University, supported the Committee. These two experts were suggested by the HBO Raad and VSNU respectively. Throughout the process these two experts were consulted by the Committee. The experts commented on the draft report.

One observer for Flanders took part in the process: Noël Vercruysse, Departement Onderwijs. This observer was not a formal member of the Committee but received all documents and participated in most meetings of the Committee.

The secretariat of the Committee was provided by NVAO, under the responsibility of Dr. Lies van Gennip, Director NVAO. Dr Van Gennip was not a formal member of the Committee and had no formal role in the decision making of the Committee. She supported the Committee in the preparation of the meetings and in reporting, and she participated in all Committee meetings.

Brief CV's of the Committee members, experts, observer and secretariat can be found in Chapter 8 of this report.

Overall planning of the work

The starting point for the Committee was that different organisations and individuals in the Netherlands disagree on the impact of the current system of degree nomenclature. The main issue in this discussion seems to be the fact that the additions 'science' and 'arts' are restricted to research-oriented programmes, by Dutch law.

From the Committee's assignment:

"Dutch research universities stress the importance of a distinction in profile types (research-oriented and professional), and the reflection of this in the titles used, for reasons of transparency for students as well as for the labour market. However the present distinction causes problems with international transparency in some fields of study. They also emphasize the need for international agreements about the use of titles.

Dutch universities of professional education state that they are experiencing problems as a consequence of the new titles. They observe a negative effect of the new titles on international co-operation and on the recruitment of students from all countries oriented toward Anglo-Saxon degrees (for example, large parts of Asia and Africa, parts of Latin-America and many OECD countries). They state that in an international environment, English language degrees without "of Arts" or "of Science" added have less value in international comparisons and that graduates of Bachelor degrees experience inaccessibility for international jobs in profit and non-profit organizations."

In its analysis, the Committee addressed the different points of view, validated and balanced them, and developed its own point of view, which is presented in chapter 6 of this report.

As part of this process, the Committee made an international comparative analysis, looking at the designation of degrees and the content associated with these degrees. The Committee used for this analysis:

- the work done as part of the Bologna Process on the development of a Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area;
- Data that were collected for the Trends IV report, that the European University Association prepared for the Bergen Conference;
- Results of a survey carried out by Nuffic through their ENIC/NARIC networks (15 countries, of which 11 with a binary structure). This survey addressed whether and why a science /arts degree nomenclature is used and whether any binary system is reflected in the degree titles;
- Results of a survey carried out by the Committee itself among the European bodies involved in evaluation in Norway, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, France, Flanders and the UK. This survey addressed similar topics to the Nuffic survey, but also more broader aspects of degrees and the system of validating the degrees. The full list of questions can be found in Chapter 8.

Aware of the fact that the European situation is a moving one, the Committee looked into patterns and trends with regard to degree titles in Europe. Aspects considered were the effects that titles in other countries have on local as well as international acceptance of degrees in the labour market, on international co-operation, and on the recruitment of students. In its analysis, the Committee took into account the context in which degrees (and their designations) are awarded. The analysis resulted in a comprehensive overview, which is presented in Chapter 5 of this report.

To assess the situation in the Netherlands, the Committee interviewed various stakeholders. Between 9-11 March 2005, the Committee held interviews with representatives of the main organisations involved in the early discussions on degrees:

- the associations of education institutions: the HBO Raad (the association for “hogescholen” - universities of professional education), the VSNU (the association for research universities), Paepon (the association for privately funded education institutions) and SAIL (Stichting Institutions for Postgraduate International Education in the Netherlands);
- the employer associations: VNO-NCW and MKB;
- the student organisations: ISO and LSVb, and
- NUFFIC, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education.

The Committee met again between April 6-8 2005 when it held discussions amongst others with representatives from:

- Employers: Philips and Delba (a small company);
- Hogeschool Rotterdam;
- Ebbinge (recruiting organisation);
- an Indonesian student studying at a university of professional education;
- Cesaer (the association of European research universities in advanced engineering).

Prior to and during the last meeting, 9-10 May 2005, interviews took place with representatives of:

- VU-Windesheim*;
- The unions FNV-CNV *;
- KIVI NIRIA**;
- The Royal Academy of Fine Arts and The Royal Conservatoire**;
- because of the existing cooperation of the Netherlands with Flanders on quality assurance in higher education, the Committee felt it useful also to hear experts from Flanders (partly**);
- and the last interview, on May 10th, was with the chairman of the NVAO.

Sometimes it was not possible to arrange interviews during Committee meetings. In these cases interviews were held prior to Committee meetings by Nick Harris and Lies van Gennip (indicated by *) or just by Lies van Gennip (**). In these cases the Committee was informed through authorized reports. Chapter 8 presents a full list of all interviewees.

During the interviews, stakeholders were invited to share their views on the current situation with respect to degrees in higher education in the Netherlands. They were asked for the strong and weak points of the present Dutch situation and how it should change. Stakeholders were asked how the Committee should take up its assignment. They were invited to provide written information to the Committee and several of them indeed used this opportunity. Chapter 8 provides a list of the documentation provided.

The secretariat made reports of the interviews and the interviewees were given the opportunity to correct the draft reports. The reports themselves are not included in this report, but chapter 4 is based on this material.

During the process the Committee learned a lot about the Dutch higher education. The Committee decided to devote a separate chapter of this report to observations on matters which are not within the formal remit of the Committee but do have some links (chapter 7).

3. EXPLANATION OF THE CURRENT DEGREE SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction

In the various interviews with stakeholders, it appeared that not all were aware how the current degree system works. Some believed for instance that the possibility to deliver science and arts degrees was only given to universities (hence, that it was restricted to the institution). It also took some time for the Committee to understand the full structure of the degree system, even with the help of the ministry. For the purpose of clarity, the Committee feels that it would be useful to devote one chapter of this report to describing the current degree structure in its legal context - as it was understood by the Committee. In the development of this chapter, the Committee gratefully employed the description in the assignment and the advice of the Ministry.

Four types of programmes in higher education

Before the introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the Netherlands, students who successfully completed higher education programmes could (and still can) use titles in the Dutch language (e.g. "doctorandus" (drs), "meester" (mr), "ingenieur (ing in HBO and ir in WO)). These titles are protected by law. Titles at the universities of professional education differed from those at research universities. Hence, the binary system was clearly reflected in the system of degree titles. It is forbidden by law to use these protected titles if not rightfully awarded.

Since September 2002, the higher education system has been organized around a three-cycle degree system, consisting of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degrees. Some degree programmes, like dentistry and medicine, could continue to be offered as integrated programmes for some time.

Bachelor's programmes and Master's programmes have either a professional orientation (HBO) or a research orientation (WO). The aim of WO Bachelor's programmes (3 years) is primarily as a preparation for (direct entry to) a Master's programme (in general 1 or 2 years). The primary aim of HBO Bachelor's programmes (4 years) is to offer a first degree to enter the labour market. Most existing HBO Master's programmes, with the exceptions of teacher training, architecture, fine and performing arts, and health, therefore have a post-experience character.

All degree programmes, in order to be allowed to award degrees on the basis of Dutch law, have to be evaluated according to accreditation frameworks. Programmes that meet one of these frameworks will be accredited. The accreditation criteria differ for WO and HBO programmes. There are thus four sets of criteria (frameworks) for accreditation: WO Ba, WO Ma, HBO Ba, and HBO Ma.

The present situation is that institutions have the right, by law, to award Bachelor's and Master's degrees only for programmes accredited by the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO). The NVAO was established by international treaty and it guarantees the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and in Flanders.

According to the Dutch law, the additions 'science' and 'arts' to degrees are restricted to programmes that are undertaken as initial education and are (accredited) at WO orientation.

Initial education

In the Netherlands 14 research universities and 44 universities of professional education are funded ("bekostigd"). With the introduction of the Ba-Ma system the existing programmes of the research universities were divided into Bachelor's and Master's. The existing programmes at universities of profes-

sional education became Bachelor's. At universities of professional education there is a small number of programmes that were originally called 'continuing education', that are now converted into Master's ("bouwkunst" (architecture) and HKP (education)). These Bachelor's and Master's are all called initial education. At present, all of these programmes are accredited by law and not by NVAO, but this accreditation will end between 2006 and 2010, depending on the type of the programme. After that the programmes must be accredited by NVAO, otherwise they will not be able to continue. Features of initial education programmes are:

- institutions are funded for these programmes;
- students on these programmes receive financial support;
- the programmes can deliver Ba-Ma degrees;
- only WO programmes can and must add Sc and A to the degree title. This is by law not restricted to programmes from research universities, but depends on the programme nature itself; it must be accredited at the WO orientation. The institution/programme decides whether to use either the science or arts suffix;
- both research universities and universities of professional education are free to add subject names to the degrees.

The 14 research universities and 44 universities of professional education can also introduce new programmes in initial education. For new programmes to be accepted as "initial", they have to be evaluated by NVAO (accreditation of new programmes). However, the positive quality evaluation of the NVAO is not enough. Additionally, the ministry has to evaluate whether there is a need for these programmes in the Netherlands (doelmatigheids toets). Only after both positive evaluations are the programmes offered as initial; education with features as described in the previous paragraph.

In addition there are about 70 privately funded institutions (often member of PAEPON) that deliver higher education, and are recognized by the Ministry. The existing programmes offered by these institutions were also transferred into Bachelor's and Master's, usually at HBO orientation. At present these programmes are also accredited by law, but after some years these too will have to be subjected to NVAO accreditation. Features of these programmes are:

- students on these programmes receive financial support ;
- the programmes can deliver Ba-Ma degrees. Here also WO programmes would have the obligation to add Sc or A to the degree title.

These institutions can also introduce new programmes. The procedure is similar to that described for the 14 research universities and 44 universities of professional education, with the exception that the "doelmatigheid" evaluation by the ministry is not necessary.

In conclusion, there is no difference with respect to degree awarding for "bekostigde" or "aangewezen" institutions, but there is with respect to financing.

Post-initial education

Before the introduction of the Ba-Ma system post-initial education was not part of Dutch higher education according to Dutch law. A variety of post-academic programmes existed, very often MBA's. These types of programmes were offered by existing research universities and universities of professional education (and also those that are "bekostigd", and institutions that were not involved in "initial" education at all (for instance business schools)). Before the Ba-Ma system, the Dutch Validation Council (DVC) set up a specific accreditation system based on peer review that awarded "accreditations" and "candidate-accreditations". These accreditations had no legal basis, but were nationally respected. With the introduction of Ba-Ma and new approach to accreditation in 2002, DVC stopped this type of accreditation.

Post-initial education is not clearly defined in law. It is generally understood that post-initial education is education at Master's level (WO or HBO). Within WO it refers to a Master's programme that follows an initial Masters. In HBO it is a Master's that follows a Bachelor's. Post-initial education is never funded by the government, even if it is done by "bekostigde" research universities or universities of professional education. However, if students have any residual study financing (students receive support only for a number of years of study) they can use it for accredited post-initial education programmes. In practice

post-initial programmes are generally understood as those that build upon a programme that is relevant to the labour market.

With the new law on higher education that introduced the Ba-Ma system and accreditation (2002), post-initial education was given the opportunity to become part of Dutch higher education through accreditation. Such accreditation is not required, but the possibility is offered. It would imply that the programme is first evaluated as a new programme by NVAO (a positive evaluation results in all effects of accreditation). After 6 years the programme may be accredited by NVAO. NVAO was invited to develop specific criteria for post-initial education, but concluded that the existing accreditation frameworks could be used for post-initial education as well. However, even if post-initial programmes are accredited at WO-orientation, they cannot offer MSc/MA degrees.

Hence, features of post-initial education are:

- Master's programmes that follow initial Bachelor's or Master's in higher education;
- there is no government funding for the programme, but students may use any remaining study financing if the programme is accredited;
- if accredited (or in receipt of a positive evaluation of a new programme) by NVAO, a degree may be awarded, but the titles MSc or MA cannot be used (even for WO orientation).

In cases where a post-initial study programme is not put forward for accreditation, the situation stays as it is: Master's degrees "according to Dutch law" cannot be offered. However, if a programme has a co-operation with a foreign university this is accredited in its own country, a degree can be given, including use of the MA MSc titles! This is called the 'U-turn construction', or 'degrees according to foreign legislation'.

Protection of Bachelor and Master degree titles

Education institutions are forbidden to award Bachelor or Master degrees "according to Dutch law" for programmes which are not accredited (or positively evaluated as a new programme) by NVAO. Hence, the new law addresses the degree awarding institution, not the person who uses the degree.

The law does not protect the Bachelor or Master titles as such, because these are international. This implies that programmes developed in co-operation with foreign accredited education programmes - the so called U-turn construction - can be offered without Dutch accreditation and the titles Bachelor and Master can be used with all possible suffix additions. Non-NVAO-accredited, post-initial programmes are free to offer degrees titles with all additions and without any accreditation, so long as they do not state that the degrees are 'according the Dutch law'. However, when they are accredited, they cannot use the 'science' and 'arts' suffixes.

One benefit for a post-initial programme to be accredited by NVAO is that the IND (the national immigration office) does not allow international students entry into the country to follow non-accredited, post-initial programmes.

As a result of this situation, many of the post-initial education programmes that do not focus on the international student market do not and are unlikely to request accreditation by NVAO.

Examples presented to the Committee

1. NIMBAS university, which has a co-operation with the University of Bradford (UK), has requested NVAO to evaluate 4 programmes (mostly MBA's at WO-orientation). The NVAO evaluation was positive. Because this is post-initial education, NIMBAS does not have the right to award the degree MSc. according to Dutch law, but because of its co-operation with the University of Bradford, NIMBAS can offer the degree as an MSc.
2. The University of Amsterdam and the Hogeschool Amsterdam have developed a joint programme which is, according to the definition, initial at the University of Amsterdam but post-initial at the

Hogeschool Amsterdam. Although studying the same programme students who register at the University of Amsterdam are offered the degree as MSc., whilst those who registered at the Hogeschool Amsterdam are offered the degree as M.

3. The Hogeschool Amsterdam requested an NVAO evaluation of a new programme for occupational therapy. It was requested and positively evaluated as a Master's at WO orientation. The research environment is demonstrated through co-operation with foreign universities. Without additional assessment of effectiveness by the ministry, the programme is, by definition, post-initial and can hence not lead to the MSc. degree.
4. The Committee's assignment is limited to the accredited higher education degrees. However, the Committee noted that many programmes - especially Master's (often MBA's) - which are offered in the Dutch market are not under the scrutiny of the Dutch quality assurance system. Such programmes are not restricted in their use of additions to their degree titles.

4. NETHERLANDS TODAY: FEED BACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Introduction

The Committee spoke with representatives from 25 organisations, and in total with 32 persons. The general picture from these interviews was that there are strong and varying opinions on the binary system and the degree structure, and associated nomenclature. In all interviews, people were invited to express their views. This chapter gives an overview of the opinions and facts presented to the Committee, but in an anonymous manner. The topics in the interviews depended mainly on the interviewees, but show a clear pattern. The chapter is structured around the main issues addressed.

The Committee wishes to stress that the facts and opinions presented in this chapter are those from the stakeholders and do not represent the point of view of the Committee.

Binary system

In all interviews the binary system was given much emphasis. All stakeholders agreed that the binary system is currently very important in Dutch higher education, but opinions about how it will (or should) develop vary. It seems as if the discussion on the binary system, its implications and how it will develop, is the key issue underlying the discussion about degree titles. Some went so far as to suggest that the degree discussion is coloured by the fear of universities that they could lose funding and 'position'.

The binary system is reflected in the existence of 'research universities' and 'universities of professional education'. At present 2/3 of the students in Dutch higher education are at universities of professional education. Some believe this fraction will increase, as research universities focus more on fundamental research and are focussing on just academic students. A stakeholder stated that "Research universities have used the Ba-Ma system to put more emphasis on academic *bildung*."

Some underline that the binary system has a long history and will not be affected by the Bologna Process. Others feel that the binary structure in the Netherlands has been subject to change and that the current situation is relatively young. In the past, "technische hogescholen" (such as Delft, Erasmus, Wageningen) have been transformed into research universities; a reflection and clarification of their international position. Universities of professional education, as they exist now, have their origin in the nineteen eighties. Some stakeholders expect that universities of professional education will develop from institutions primarily concerned just with education to institutions that are also involved in applied research. Hence, they feel that the distinction between universities of professional education and research universities will diminish.

Many noted, as an important aspect, the international position of universities of professional education. Several stakeholders stated that the international position of research universities is strong and not at stake. However, the international position of universities of professional education seems not that strong. It was claimed that universities of professional education want to establish an international position - not the same as the research universities, but a position that respects their own values. It was anticipated that research universities would tend to focus on specific disciplines to further improve their international position.

Stakeholders agree that there is a clear difference between HBO and WO programmes and the students who study on them; it was suggested that this is not only a Dutch but a European phenomenon. WO programmes differ from HBO programmes because they are not solely directed towards a profession. WO students were thought to have a different level of abstraction, reflection and application of methods. Whilst most said that HBO and WO programmes did not differ in level, but mainly in orientation, some stakeholders value HBO programmes less. Employers noted that the HBO or WO background remains

visible in one's career. Most stakeholders believe this is 'a fact of life' and that different orientations will remain. It is thought that this distinction between HBO and WO programmes (and students) will remain even if the distinction at institution level would diminish (e.g. by co-operation between research universities and universities of professional education).

Several stakeholders suggested that they saw that institutions of higher education are changing. Some believe the differences between research universities and universities of professional education will increase. Others point to current co-operations between research universities and universities of professional education and feel that differences will diminish. Some just do not know what will happen, or believe more types of higher education institutions will evolve.

The Committee had the benefit of hearing about several co-operations in the Netherlands between research universities and universities of professional education. One of the initiatives presented the model below as an ideal model for Dutch higher education:

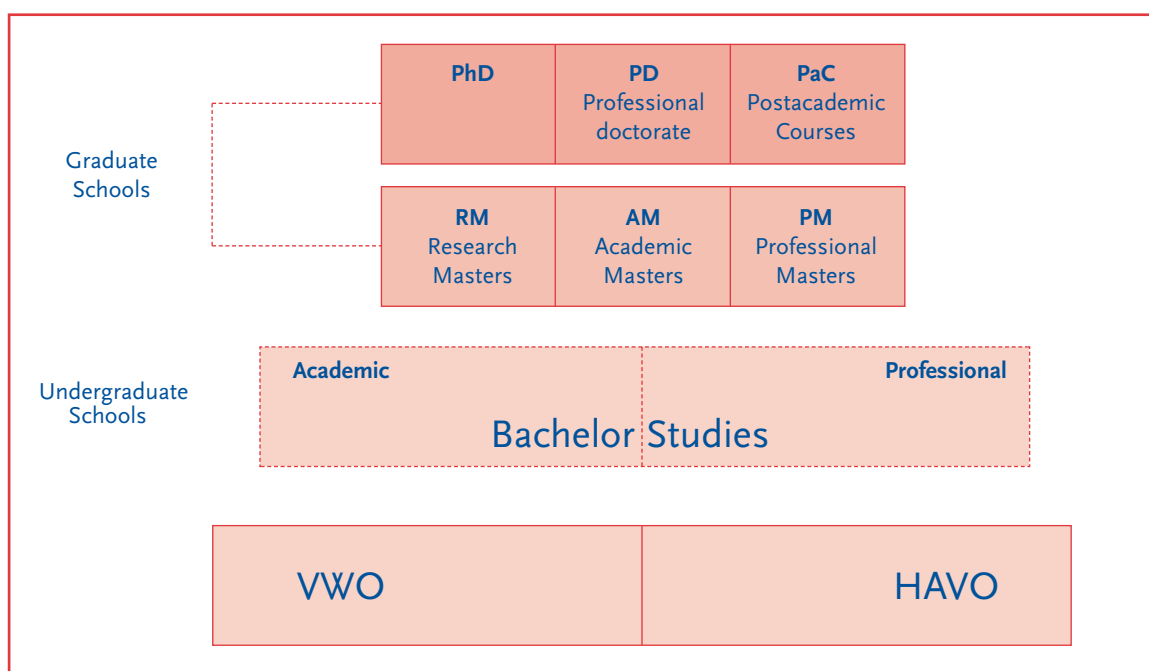


Figure 4.1: Model of higher education, proposed by one of the co-operations of a research university and a university of professional education.

The dotted line in the yellow box for undergraduate schools is meant to indicate that the difference between HBO Bachelors and WO Bachelors is not that sharp. The difference between academic and applied develops at Master's level and beyond. From bottom to top the layers in the model are believed to be increasingly "academic". The top green box is believed to be developed only through (cooperation with) a research university. It is argued that because the distinction at Bachelor level is not that large, it is possible to move from HBO Ba to WO Ma and from WO Ba to HBO Ma. Assessment prior to entry at the Master level, is and would continue to be used to select the students who are (most likely) able to successfully change between programmes with different orientations.

The aim of this co-operation between a research university and a university of professional education is to meet the society's need for employees with a wider spectrum of qualifications (within the same level - i.e. following the Bologna expectations). The structure suggested allows the research university to focus on research in specific disciplines, whilst offering a wide(r) spectrum of education at Bachelor's level. The university of professional education makes use of staff and infrastructure available at the research university to develop its Master's programmes, and appoints lectors to support them.

In Flanders, the co-operation between research universities and "hogescholen" is established by law in "associaties". This system results in a two-tiered system with academic and professional programmes:

- Academic programmes are offered by universities and by hogescholen provided that the hogescholen have a structural co-operation with a university. To this aim the hogescholen have joined an association with one of the five universities. In the association model, the university and the hogescholen have a joint responsibility to offer academic programmes that meet the NVAO framework. This implies an environment of scientific research. To further develop this environment, extra funds have been made available by the Flemish government, however more funds are needed. Hogescholen have been given 8 years to transform their two-cycle programmes into academic programmes.
- Academic programmes are concluded by an academic Bachelor (3 year/180 study points) and a Master (at least 1 year/at least 60 study points, depending on the field). Master's programmes are characterised by the integration of education and research and require a Master's dissertation. In addition to the initial Master's programmes (following immediately after an academic Bachelor programme) universities and hogescholen, as part of an association, have the possibility to offer "Master after Master" programmes (manama). Initial Master's programmes are in most cases in the Dutch language. Some manama programmes are in the English language.
- Professional programmes are only offered by hogescholen. The one-cycle programmes at the hogescholen are transformed into profession-oriented Bachelor's programmes. There is no professional Master's in Flanders. Hogescholen can also offer "Bachelor after Bachelor" programmes (banaba). They are one-year programmes that follow an initial Bachelor programme.
- Higher education in arts was offered by hogescholen in one- and two-cycle programmes. Two-cycle programmes are transformed into academic programmes.

Hence, the HBO Master is not possible in Flanders.

The model in Fig. 4.1 also indicates the development of the professional doctorate. Opinions on the need for the professional doctorate vary. Some believe this is an opportunity, even foreseeing the professional doctorate evolving as a new type of doctorate, not based on publications or books but based on other achievements. Others fear that the professional doctorate will evolve as a second-class doctorate.

Several stakeholders believe that diversity in HBO programmes will increase because of the development of applied research, the introduction of HBO Master's, and also because of the development of major and minor combinations, and of competence-based education. Employers on the other hand feel that these developments are not labour-market driven, but are just aimed to attract students. Employers fear further proliferation in (names of) HBO programmes.

Many believe that an increase in the diversity of provision within higher education, that is seen to be occurring in many countries, will also be reflected within the Netherlands and will increase the need for clarity and transparency in degree titles.

Applied research and professional education

Opinions vary on the need for the development of applied research at universities of professional education. Some of those who spoke with the Committee believe it will lead to 'academic drift'; they believe universities of professional education want to become research universities. Others believe that applied research is largely an uncultivated area that can best be developed by universities of professional education, and further suggest that such developments are important for Dutch industrial developments. It is argued that co-operation between all types of universities and small and medium sized enterprises may need to be improved.

Remarks made in this respect are:

- Universities of professional education have a role in knowledge transfer to small and medium sized companies via consultancy and investigation, but not in research;
- If universities of professional education want to develop applied research, they should invest in their staff (staff with doctorates);
- the development of research at universities of professional education would risk loss of focus on professional development - their main task;
- Research, which is defined through its scientific methods and which is evidence-based, can be carried out by universities of professional education;

- Professors who have a link with business, as well as with applied research, are not well placed at research universities. This is an opportunity for universities of professional education;
- Applied research fits well in the education model of a university of professional education, as is demonstrated by the “Hogeschool Rotterdam”;
- To develop applied research, research universities and universities of professional education should co-operate. A good example is Wageningen university that developed from a research university and two universities of professional education into a good centre for applied research;
- Applied research is very important for the further development of the education system, but is not well placed yet;
- The current development of competence-based education in HBO allows students to show their extra potential in the combination of learning and working;
- The dual model (combination of working and learning) should become more important. Practical experience should be more prominent in programmes. At universities of professional education a link is made with professional life, amongst others, through traineeships that deliver ECTS. These traineeships are nowadays more often carried out through large companies / multinationals. A better co-operation between education and business, especially with small and middle-sized companies, is recommended;
- The ‘sandwich courses’ in the UK (Bachelor’s programmes with either one year of ‘business placement’ within the course, or 6 months education, 6 months in business, 6 months in education etc) could be interesting for the Netherlands too.

Permeability and mobility

The Committee understood that mobility, that is the possibility of Dutch students following programmes in international higher education, is felt to be an important issue in the Netherlands. Some recommended that the Committee focus on the international market when defining a degree system - especially to facilitate this mobility. Permeability, that is the ability of students to move within the (Dutch) higher education system such as from HBO to WO, is felt to be less of a problem, although problems with such permeability have been more evident in the Netherlands.

In the Dutch system, the separation of types of students appears to be made in secondary education at the age of 12-15 - earlier than in most European countries. According to stakeholders, the knowledge gap between HAVO and VWO, in e.g. mathematics and sciences, is hard to catch up later. The fraction of pupils that is allowed to go to university (VWO: 18% of all students) is significantly smaller than in other countries. The separation between “the two groups of students” at secondary education is done through evaluation programmes and by supporting students in making their choices. The process aims to make an effective selection of students to go to a research university or a university of professional education. At the moment 65% of the students who start at a university finish - the aim is to arrive at 95% success.

According to several stakeholders, the possibility for transfer between the two systems is quite difficult and in practice only students with a “VWO-background” really have straightforward access to research universities. Nevertheless there are formal possibilities for students to transfer from HBO to WO. Students with a HBO Bachelor may enter a WO Master, although this is usually after a period of transition of up to one year, or through an extended 4th HBO Bachelor year. Some representatives, including from the research universities, expressed fears that any increased opportunities for transfer would result in HBO students failing within WO. In the old system, HBO students were able to move to WO programmes after one year and many failed. In one of the stakeholder interviews it was stated that at first, 800 of the 2000 HBO students entering WO programmes failed, but since the institution introduced an assessment before HBO students are allowed for WO programmes, student numbers are reduced (to 30%), but the failure among these selected HBO students in WO programmes is now similar to that of WO students.

According to one stakeholder the gap in knowledge is illustrated by the fact that the effective entrance of HBO to WO is much smaller than the entrance from VMBO to HBO. Another recommends access from MBO to HBO should be enhanced.

Remarks in this respect are:

- Dutch research university students are readily accepted by top international universities. However it is not only the degree, but also the recommendation of the professor that helps entrance;
- The system should consider the value of job-related or other experience to enable students to enter programmes (EVK and EVC - “eerder verworven kwalificaties en competenties”) and to enhance permeability;
- More students will move from one education institution to another and from university of professional education to research university (and from HBO to WO);
- To allow students more freedom for mobility, a number of tools are needed: the Europass, the Diploma Supplement and qualifications frameworks at European and national levels.

Degree structure and the distinction between WO and HBO

It is the current degree structure itself that is the starting point for this Committee. It is not surprising that opinions on the degree structure varied with, on one side, the HBO Raad, and on the other, VSNU. Other stakeholders seemed mostly to choose either the VSNU or HBO Raad side.

The HBO Raad provided the Committee with a comprehensive position paper “Current academic titles should be changed”, whose title speaks for itself. The HBO Raad feels excluded from the domain of ‘arts’ and ‘science’ degrees, and also fears that employers will be confused by the degree titles that are now starting to be used in Dutch higher education as a result of the implementation of the Ba-Ma system.

The first reported negative experiences with the new degree titles come from students who are looking for a job in the international labour market and/ or who would like to continue to study in, for instance, the UK. Internationally, at the NESOs (recruitment offices for students abroad) HBO students experience a negative impact of the current degree titles - the HBO degree titles are valued less highly than those with ‘science’ and ‘arts’ suffixes.

Before the introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure, universities of professional education were allowed to translate their Dutch titles into degrees with the suffixes ‘science’ and ‘arts’, but the new system puts newly-graduated students in a weaker position. Moreover, the HBO Raad believes that the Netherlands is the only country that forbids non-(research) university higher education institutions to use the suffixes ‘science’ and ‘arts’.

Several stakeholders agreed that the current degree system is very confusing, not only for students, but for potential employers as well.

Several stakeholders recognized that in some instances Dutch students are in a weaker position as compared to students elsewhere, because of the restricted use of degree titles. Moreover the system does not seem to be used consistently. Some universities, for example, also use the suffixes ‘education’ and ‘laws’ without ‘science’ or ‘arts’, even though this is not allowed by law. Evidence presented to the Committee indicated that, because of the international scene, the degree titles LLB and LLM would be preferred over the degree titles BA and MA for use with law programmes.

However, universities, as well as the large majority of the stakeholders, recommend that there is some reflection of the differences between HBO and WO programmes through the degree titles. On the other hand, others recommended that the importance of the degree titles should not be over-estimated, and many commented on the importance of considering and encouraging the use of Diploma Supplements as a valuable tool for transparency.

Stakeholders all agreed on one important concept: that the degree title should reflect what the student had studied/achieved, not where the student had studied.

Following such a straightforward and seemingly fair concept would, however, result in some complex consequences for the Dutch degree system. For example, the current funding situation, which is formally outside of the remit of the Committee, but in particular concerning ‘post-initial’ education, would not seem to fit correctly. If ‘post-initial’ education (which is not funded) is accredited it can lead to a Master’s degree recognized according to the Dutch law. However, in the current system the use of MSc/ MA degree titles

is not allowed for post-initial education, even if a Master’s programme meets the accreditation standards as described in the WO-accreditation framework.

Several stakeholders recommended that the degree system should give room for the inclusion of an award that is equivalent to an associate degree (a short cycle degree). Associate degrees are generally seen as important for small and medium sized enterprises, and for students who are studying on a part-time basis often whilst in employment; although some employers argued against the introduction of such a degree, claiming there is no real need for it.

Submissions from the field of art education recommended that the Committee did not try too hard to fit the ‘arts education world’ into a degree system. It was suggested that the arts education world does not fit any ‘solution’. Art schools are at the top of what is possible in their discipline - so might be considered to be at university level. On the other hand, the type of education might be regarded as closer to a professional rather than academic education. It was argued that, for example, in the UK, top education in arts is not done at Oxford or Cambridge, but at art schools. The Committee was left with the challenge: what label (degree title) should be attached to (top), (Dutch) art education?

None of the stakeholders suggested that an institution’s name or typology should be referred to in the degree title. All suggested however that degree systems and titles were variations of the additions of ‘science’ or ‘arts’, and subjects. The table below presents the various suggestions made to the Committee:

Bachelor		Master	
HBO	WO	HBO	WO
B economy or B applied science economy	BSc / BA		MSc / MA
No restrictions in suffixes based on HBO/WO, science and arts also possible for HBO programmes. But, see typology below.			
	BSc		MSc
B subject BSc in subject	BSc/ BA BSc LLB	M subject MSc in subject	MSc/ Ma MSc LLM
B applied science / arts B applied law	BSc Bachelor of law	M applied science M applied law	MSc Master of law
B	B	M	M
BSc/BA in	BSc/ BA	MSc/MA in...	MSc/ MA
			MSc engineering

Some remarks made in this respect were:

- If a subject is added to the degree as a suffix, limit it to 5-8 possibilities;
- The government should determine the names of degrees for each of the domains of study. Students who graduate in the same domain should get the same degree and title;
- Domains should be developed comparable to subject levels in the UK, and benchmarked / levelled as in the UK. Domains could be added to the degrees;
- Degrees for Dutch higher education must be internationally comparable and usable; give just enough information, be flexible and useful in the binary system, and fit in student-centred higher education. Moreover the chosen range of titles must be long-lasting. This means that degree titles must be simple, transparent and used in a coordinated and controlled way. A minimum set of degree titles should be used, in combination with the Diploma Supplement;
- Because of the diversification in (higher) education, the solution is not to specify a number of specific degrees, but to put more value in the Diploma Supplement alongside use of Ba-Ma titles;
- Degree titles are not that important, but what should be transparent is whether people are educated

- at a research university or at a university of professional education - because this matters. It was, however, also argued that it was the 'where' that determined the 'what and how' of study, and that it was really the 'what and how' of study that was critical for employers (the 'where' was, in effect, a simple proxy for this). Transparency could also be achieved through the Diploma Supplement;
- The 'science' or 'arts' addition to a degree title should mean something.

Engineering

Engineering education represents a special situation in the Netherlands. Traditionally, Dutch engineers from both research universities and from universities of professional education had a high market value. With the introduction of the Ba-Ma system, this is reflected in engineering with both a WO Masters and an HBO Bachelors, each having high market value. The following remarks were made in this respect:

- The difference between “ing” (HBO) and “ir” (WO) is also reflected in a difference between Bachelor and Master;
- The Netherlands does not have a register of engineers (like a number of other Northern European countries). Accreditation should assure the level of engineers. It is important that the technical profile is assured;
- European development is focussing on a 7-year education and practice model that leads to the qualification of a European professional engineer (EURING). HBO and WO can be considered as different pathways;
- The fundamental research component in Bachelor’s programmes is weak (in both HBO and WO programmes). In WO programmes research is predominantly present in Master’s. Scientific methods are considered within HBO and WO Bachelor programmes; they must be because of FEANU (European Federation of National Engineering Associations)/ CLAIU (Liaison Committee of the Associations of University Graduate Engineers of the European Union) guidelines on a minimal number of ECTS in basic science. One might question the difference between HBO and WO Bachelor’s in engineering. One significant difference is that HBO Bachelors are prepared for and ready for the labour market, whereas WO Bachelors are not, but this may change due to the Ba-Ma system;
- Students from HBO programmes in particular are held back by the current situation. Current degree names (e.g. “Bachelor in built environment”) are confusing and put Dutch engineers from HBO programmes in an unfair position internationally. Before the introduction of Ba-Ma, engineers from universities of professional education could use the degree BSc, but it is difficult to explain the differences in titles between the previous and current systems when there is no difference in the content of the programme;
- The content of WO Bachelor’s from different technical universities is more or less comparable. Some accept Bachelor’s from other institutions (as if they were from their own); such an understanding now exists between 30 leading technical universities. Such mutual, international understanding is the result of a long process and is certainly not obvious or easy;
- The consensus document made by the Technical University Eindhoven, the Technical University Delft, and the Technical University Twente (Criteria for Academic Bachelor’s and Master’s Criteria) was commended to the Committee as a good starting point for a definition of WO Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes, possibly extendable to other than technical educational programmes. Radboud University, University Utrecht and the University Groningen are already looking into this. Such documents can form the starting point for mutual recognition.

Employability

The employers claimed to be happy with the current system of degree titles. They claimed that there is a good match between the current binary system and the labour market. The labour market recognizes and values the differences between HBO and WO- educated people, and wants this reflected in the degree programmes and degree titles. These stakeholders admit however that this situation is specific for the Netherlands.

Both HBO and WO employees are valuable for small companies, but the number of employees from universities is, of course, less. Employers noted that there is a difference between HBO and WO students, but this difference is not leading specifically to their success in particular types of companies. It was reported that one may say that 'WO students tend to think one year ahead', whilst 'HBO students think one month ahead'. The added value of HBO students for companies depends, however, more on their students' practical experience, and attitudes related to that.

Several stakeholders stated that employers are confused by the change in degrees and titles introduced with Ba-Ma; what are the changes as compared to the old programmes? Many stated that the WO Bachelor's awards do not have a direct market value, and they are in fact just an entry point for Master's programmes. Some stakeholders note that the Netherlands differs from the wider international scene in this respect. Moreover, many questioned the market value of the HBO Master's. Some say there is no request from the market for these degrees (yet?); others state that there is such a need in some market areas, such as health care and arts, for example.

On the other hand, stakeholders do put the current confusion into the longer term perspective. There may be confusion now, but in 5-6 years the Dutch (labour) market will get used to the new system. A number of these stakeholders recommended that the Committee did not focus on the national market, but should instead consider the international market.

Several stakeholders recommended that the link between universities of professional education and industry should get stronger. About 40% of the employees in MKB (MKB-Nederland: Dutch organisation for small and medium-sized enterprises) are from universities of professional education and the number is rising. Small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) are not happy with the current communication with the field of (especially) universities of professional education. SME's experience is that the link between education and companies is too weak.

It was thought that universities of professional education and research universities are not the place to teach students "entrepreneurship". Staff at higher education institutions are not (necessarily) entrepreneurial. Teachers should have a link with professional life, but it was claimed that higher education and the business community have become alienated and, for example, if SMEs have an innovation question they would not turn to a higher education institution for help/advice. SMEs also recommend that there should be an early start with practical experience within programmes, and wanted greater promotion of life-long learning.

It was thought that employers would increasingly use their own assessment techniques when considering potential employees, because of the increasing diversity in programmes and decreasing transparency of what students have achieved and/or are capable of.

International marketing

The international market is clearly important for Dutch higher education. Dutch HBO programmes have a strong marketing position internationally, because of the links between education and profession. More than 4000 students from South-East Asia are now studying at Dutch universities of professional education. Universities of professional education fear that potential students and their parents now question the level of Dutch HBO Bachelor's degrees. Dutch HBO students also report that they have negative experiences when they look for a job or study abroad. Students for instance experience that their degree is perceived of as being of lower value than that from a comparable Fachhochschule. Moreover the current situation limits possibilities of universities of professional education for co-operation with universities abroad.

The naming of degrees is important for international transparency and for international marketing; it is thought by some of the representatives providing the Committee with evidence to be more important than subject indication. The degree title is particularly important for students with no government funding.

On the other hand it has been stated that it is easier to explain the English degree titles Bachelor's and Master's than the old (Dutch) titles.

Stakeholders agree that the two types of education in the Netherlands should be made transparent in the international market, and that it is clear that they are of equal quality, but with different orientation. Several stakeholders confirmed international students are currently deceived because they are not sufficiently well informed about the Dutch binary system. It is reported that some students think they subscribe to a research university, but then experience it as a university of professional education. As a result, they do not get the 'science' / 'arts' degrees that they had anticipated; though not all international students accept this. An additional concern is that some fear that the degrees for HBO Bachelor's without 'science' or 'arts' suffices will not be recognized in their own country.

Confusion also results from the fact that only 'degrees by law' are restricted in the use of 'science' and 'arts' suffices. Programmes outside the Dutch law of higher education, can offer any degree titles. For instance, if a programme is developed in cooperation with a university abroad, it can use the degree title it wishes to (U-turn).

Not everybody is happy with the use of English degree titles. Some regret that the old system is abandoned and claim that the old Dutch degrees worked fine and did not restrict the international market position of Dutch higher education and industry.

Other transparency tools

The Diploma Supplement is an important additional tool for transparency. Provision of Diploma Supplements is obliged from March 2005, but in practice they are not yet widely used. Most stakeholders agree this will become an important tool, but it is a rather new instrument that needs to be developed, applied and understood.

Some believe the Diploma Supplement will become more important than the degree title itself, others claim in the Netherlands degree titles will remain more important than the Diploma Supplement.

The HBO Raad and VSNU both mentioned the typology for institutions that is being developed by a group chaired by Frans van Vught. The research universities suggested that a degree system based on this typology should be developed. Others pointed to the development of a European framework for Higher Education qualifications that focuses on skills and competences rather than on institutions. Such a European framework could be much more appropriate when used to increase transparency about degrees.

Nuffic observed that, as part of the Bologna process, a system of comparable degree programmes was being introduced throughout Europe. Nuffic feels that "no particular attention was given to the question if it were desirable to arrive at some harmonisation of degree names, but it is precisely in the light of the Bologna Process that some form of international coordination would be very welcome in the attempts to establish a transparent and readable system of degrees. Much may be learned from the examples provided by countries with the Anglo-Saxon system, including the occasional calls for at least some form of coordination. The countries in the Bologna area now have the opportunity to develop more specific criteria and guidelines for naming degrees. A more consistent policy at national level would facilitate international synchronisation of degree names, which in turn would contribute to international transparency, as well as international recognition of degrees."

Quality assurance/ accreditation

The current accreditation system in the Netherlands distinguishes 4 types of programmes: HBO Ba, HBO Ma, WO Ba, and WO Ma. If a programme is accredited as WO Ba or Ma it must use the suffix 'science' or 'arts', if it is accredited as an HBO Ba or Ma it cannot. One may say that accreditation already plays a role in validating the degrees, however it is only where it concerns the additions 'science' / 'arts'.

Many stakeholders suggested or responded positively to the idea that accreditation must/ can play a more extensive role in the validation of degrees. The chairman of NVAO was confronted with this suggestion and responded positively. If degree titles are to be validated through accreditation, this will affect the eva-

evaluation process by VBI's (Visiterende en beoordelende instanties - quality agencies) as well as the accreditation process by NVAO.

Funding

Many stakeholders addressed the funding system as related to the degrees. The main issue in this respect seemed to be the fact that universities of professional education are hardly funded for research whereas research universities are structurally funded for research.

Universities of professional education receive about 2% of their funding for research and often use this for appointing lecturers and for the establishment of knowledge centres.

Several stakeholders would like to see universities of professional education receive more research funding. This funding should enable them to develop an infrastructure that would allow them to attract contract research money (for instance from industry). However, these funds should not be found by reallocating the research funding of research universities.

Funding is however not the only bottleneck for universities of professional education to develop applied research. Another is that they do not formally have the possibility to appoint professors. They are appointing 'lecturers' instead.

Students noted that HBO Masters are usually not funded, nor are the bridging courses that enable students to move from HBO to WO programmes. Moreover, they mentioned that WO students (after longer secondary education) receive scholarship until completion of their Masters. HBO students (after one year less secondary education but one year more for their Bachelor's degree) only receive funding until the end of their Bachelor's. Not only is it difficult to bridge the knowledge gap from HBO to WO, it is also difficult to bridge the financial gap to move from HBO Bachelor to WO Master.

Language problems

With the introduction of the Bachelor and Master system, the Netherlands decided to introduce degree titles in the English language. Although this may improve international transparency, stakeholders pointed out that it created national language problems as well.

An important language problem is introduced by the terms 'science' and 'arts' themselves. There is confusion on semantics around the use of the term 'arts', on the origin (art as such, or the art of doing something), on the application, and on the perception. A similar confusion exists for the word 'science', which nowadays tends to be interpreted as natural science, but used to have a broader understanding. For instance the Faculty of Arts at a Dutch university is the faculty that delivers education programmes in languages and history. Archaeology and philosophy have separate faculties.

Moreover, students indicated that it is not always clear when university programmes result in 'arts' degrees or 'science' degrees, although universities said they had developed a code to determine when to distinguish between 'science' and 'arts' suffices; Humanities delivers 'arts' degrees, natural sciences "science". Disciplines like economics can choose either.

The term "professional" also appears to be confusing, particularly within an international market. According to recruiting organisations, all graduates would be considered "young professionals" for instance. In this respect the term "university of professional education" in itself gives rise to confusion.

The Committee learned (from interviews and personal experience) that at international education fairs, the binary system is not well explained, "hogescholen" call themselves "universities" and claim to be able to award 'science' and 'arts' degrees. This is a major point of concern for research universities.

Many stakeholders were not happy with the name "university of professional education". They felt the name of the institution should truly explain the role/content. Some suggested use of the term polytechnic - it is shorter and provides less confusion than "universities of professional education". Others sug-

gested the name “university of applied science”, though realising that this could be confusing in relation to terms like for instance “applied physics”. The term ‘university college’ was also suggested. This would be recognised internationally although it was noted that the term has been used to describe a specialist institute within a research university. The latter might more appropriately have been named ‘.. college of the university of ..’.

5. TWO CYCLE DEGREES IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Introduction

The Bologna Process, started in 1999, aims at creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 through parallel reforms to be carried out in all participating countries. In particular the process should facilitate the mobility of students and graduates (i.e. job seekers) through the introduction of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, structured in three cycles: Bachelor, Master, doctorate.

A far-reaching consensus on the length, functions and profiles of Bachelor and Master programmes in the European Higher Education Area has been reached at successive conferences and seminars between Bologna and Berlin, e.g. in Helsinki in 2002 and 2003, but there is still an impressive - and at times - confusing variety of programmes and award names to be found. For this reason it has been decided to develop a Framework for qualifications of the EHEA, and also national frameworks for qualifications.

Nomenclature

In most countries the new degrees bear English names, i.e. Bachelor (of ...), Master (of...) Translations into the national languages are possible in some countries. Thus, in Switzerland the degrees may be translated into French, German and Italian. In Austria the Latin forms are used: Bakkalaureus/Bakkalaurea and Magister/Magistra. In a few countries degrees are in the national language: in Spain a graduate at Bachelor level is called licenciado, at Master level máster. In Italy the first degree is the laurea, the second degree the laurea specialistica.

The decision on which degrees a particular higher education institution may award is regulated in all countries at governmental level, with the exception of the UK where universities may determine which degrees to confer - although they tend to conform to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. There is wide and varying use of particular nomenclatures within what was frequently referred to during the Committee investigations as 'the Anglo Saxon system'. This 'system' is much less straightforward than many would appear to think (see below) and it may not provide as simple and secure a basis for a new Dutch system as some might wish.

Ireland also uses a rather wide variety of degree titles. Each degree has to correspond to one of the generic awards of the national framework of qualifications, e.g. the ordinary Bachelor's degree (level 7), the Bachelor Honours' degree (level 8), or the Master's degree (level 9). Awarding bodies (such as the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) for the non-university institutions) decide on which Higher Education Institution (HEI) may award which types of awards following a process of programme accreditation, e.g. Bachelor of Arts (Honours). In the non-university sector the exact name of the programme, e.g. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Graphic Design, is determined by the HEI but may be different from the title of the degree e.g. Bachelor of Arts. HETAC determine the title of the degree. Some variations in the use of degree names can be found across Ireland. HETAC has limited the titles of degrees to a set number at each level on the national framework of qualifications e.g. Master of Arts, Master of Business, Master of Business Administration, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Engineering (Honours), Bachelor of Music, etc. Neither the nature of the programme (academic/applied) nor the awarding body can necessarily be determined from the name of the award. Only the Diploma Supplement can provide this information.

In Switzerland the degree consists of 3 compulsory elements, to which a fourth, optional element can be added:

1	2	3	4
Bachelor (B) Master (M)	<i>of Science (Sc) of Arts (A) of Law (Law) of Theology (Th) of Engineering (Eng) (Medicine: not yet decided)</i>	Name of the university	Precision of the scientific orientation

All Bachelor and Master degrees must be assigned to one of the 5 specifications in column 2 (with the exception of further education programmes of at least 60 ECTS credits that have to be identified as “Master of advanced studies”, MAS).

Universities are free to choose a denomination from the list above. Thus a Bachelor degree in engineering might be called: Bachelor of Science (University x) in Engineering or Bachelor of Engineering (University x). Since the name of the higher education institution is a compulsory part of the degree name, it is immediately obvious from the certificate which type of institution the degree holder has graduated from.

Flanders follows a similar model. Degree names consist of three elements: firstly, a grade (Bachelor or Master), secondly a specification (of arts, of science) and thirdly a qualification (e.g. chemie or ingenieurswetenschappen). Thus the awards may be called Bachelor of Science in de chemie or Master of science in ingenieurswetenschappen. The specifications: of arts, of science, may be used only for academic programmes offered by universities and hogescholen (in association with a university). They must not be used for professionally oriented Bachelor’s degrees. All Master’s degrees are considered to be academic, i.e. research-driven.

In Germany only four denominations of Bachelor and Master programmes are possible: of Arts (B.A., M.A.), of Science (B.Sc., M.Sc.), of Engineering (B.Eng., M.Eng.) and of Law (LL.B., LL.M.), of Fine Arts (B.F.A., M.F.A.) and of Music (B.M., M.M.). The addition of any further specification (e.g. Master of Science in Chemistry) is excluded.

The only exceptions are for continuing education/non-consecutive Master’s programmes: here the university is free to choose a wording that describes the nature of the programme, e.g. “Master of Organisational Psychology” or “Master of Business Administration”.

Some criticism is voiced in Germany against this strict limitation to 4 specifications that are not defined and therefore do not allow any conclusions as to the nature of the programme: engineering programmes may lead to either an “engineering” or a “science” degree, similarly economics and business administration programmes may lead to “arts” or “science” - without any consensus or definition of the differences between either name.

In Austria a detailed list compiled by the Austrian NARIC spells out all degrees that may be awarded by universities and Fachhochschulen. At universities 7 different Bakkalaureus degrees can be found: art., rer. nat., phil., iur., rer. soc. oec., techn., and theol. (Note that there is no Bakk. sc.!) At Master’s level, the endings med. vet., arch., art., rer. nat., pharm., phil., phil. fac. theol., iur., rer. soc. oec., theol., des. ind. (industrial design) and iur. rer. oec. are admitted. No confusion with Fachhochschul-degrees is possible, as Fachhochschulen may only award the two degrees Bakk. (FH) and Mag. (FH).

In Spain all degree titles, except arquitecto and arquitecto técnico, must include a suffix that specifies the competences of the degree in question, e.g. licenciado en medicina. Moreover, the name of the degree includes the kind of higher education institution awarding it.

Orientation of degree programmes

No European consensus exists with regard to whether programmes should be differentiated systematically between more applied/professional on the one hand, or research-oriented on the other. Several countries, like Latvia, France, Germany and Spain, find such a differentiation useful, but only at Master's level, while others do not e.g. Austria, Belgium and Poland. In Germany the orientation of the programme is not reflected in the name of the degree but becomes obvious only from the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement has been developed to play an important role in making transparent what kind of programme the student has studied.

In Flanders only programmes with an academic orientation may lead to a Ba/Ma of Science/of Arts, but the differentiation is not linked to institutions; Hogescholen, in cooperation with universities, may award these degrees. In Germany Fachhochschulen may offer the same degrees as universities, namely professional and research Masters, both giving access to doctoral studies at university level. The specific profile of a given programme is evaluated and certified in the accreditation. In Switzerland, on the other hand, Fachhochschulen may not award Master's degrees at all. In Finland, no decision has been taken yet on this issue.

The Anglo-Saxon system of degree nomenclature

It has been claimed that the so-called 'Anglo-Saxon' system can provide a coherent approach to the naming of university degrees. In fact, the general approach used by universities in the UK is neither Anglo-Saxon in its origin nor, unfortunately, systematic in its implementation.

UK universities are proud of and jealousy guard their autonomy, which extends to their rights to decide on the nature and content of the academic programmes they offer, the academic standards they set for their degrees and other awards, and the names of the degrees and other qualifications they award.

The word 'degree' is however legally protected and degrees may only be awarded by universities and university colleges.

Degree titles in the UK

Whilst there are a number of frequently-used titles, that may or may not mean the same thing, all degree titles in the UK include a prefix (usually indicating the 'level' of the award, and a suffix that often, although not always, refers in some more or less specific way to the field of study. There is an almost infinite variation in combinations of prefixes and suffices, with more or less detail, that make up degree titles. These titles can, but do not always, provide clarity.

The prefix:

For the equivalent of the Bologna first and second cycle main awards:

- typically Bachelor (B) for first cycle, and Master (M) for second cycle

But there are exceptions, for example:

- Use of Master for what are accepted as first cycle awards. Some programmes in the so-called 'ancient' Scottish universities award MAs for the successful completion of first cycle study programmes. Somewhat confusingly similar programmes in other Scottish universities award BAs.
- Use of Bachelor's title for Master's level awards. The University of Oxford uses the title BPhil for its postgraduate programme in Philosophy (the same degree title is also used at other universities for a Bachelor's degree awarded after a one year 'top-up' that completes a programme in which the first major part was undertaken through a work / study (to a higher national diploma), typically in manufacturing or engineering areas).
- Use of MA for non-academic awards. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge offer MA 'degrees' to many of their graduates from first cycle programmes, but after a passage of time and sometimes

at a cost; but without any additional academic assessment. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications notes these MAs are not recognized as 'academic awards'.

The suffix

Traditionally the main suffices are Arts (A) and Science (Sc), with the main combinations as: BA; BSc; MA; MSc.

There are however an increasing number of programmes for which additional information is provided either by replacement of the 'science/arts' or by addition to it. Such nomenclature is not restricted to any particular types of universities.

The University and Colleges Admission System (UCAS) provides through its web-based files ample evidence of the wide variation in degree titles for seemingly similar programmes of studies at different universities within the UK (see www.ucas.co.uk). Searches can be made by type of programme, which gives an indication of the variation in degree titles across particular discipline areas, or by institution, to give a range of titles awarded by each university. Some institutions maintain a (fairly) consistent pattern of degree titles whilst at others a wider range of approaches may reflect historical developments.

Engineering provides a typical example of the range of titles within a particular discipline, and in this case one in which a high proportion of courses are accredited by external bodies that regulate the ability of engineers to practice their profession. The range of engineering degree titles include BSc, alone or with an addition that indicates the area of engineering studied, or BEng, again alone or with an addition that indicates the area of engineering studied. Generally BSc would suggest a more theoretical approach and the BEng a more practice-based approach within the programme, but this distinction is often eroded when the requirements for professional body accreditation are taken into consideration when designing programmes.

The 'variations upon a theme' may be set out as e.g. BSc Engineering (Civil) or BSc Civil engineering. It is not clear what differences if any this may reflect. The degree certificate may be further complicated if the student has undertaken as part of his/her programme some integrated and assessed work 'in industry'. In such ('sandwich course') cases there may be a further addition to the degree certificate/title or separate award/certificate to mark this aspect / achievement.

Particular examples

During the interviews a number of specific references were made to the benefits of the UK/Anglo-Saxon approach and the clarity that it provides in particular areas. Some of these are identified immediately below with an indication of the range of titles that are awarded in the UK:

Law degrees

On several occasions reference was made to the importance of the Netherlands adopting the LLB / LLM for law degrees in line with the Anglo-Saxon system. A quick check on the UCAS lists indicates that the UK picture is far from regular or systematic, indeed the very first university listed (Aberystwyth) offers Law by itself as either a BA or an LLB (the programmes are different), and in various single specializations (e.g. Business Law, Criminal Law etc) usually as an LLB, but in combinations (e.g. Law with Economics etc) as a BA. Law with French or German can however be studied to either BA or LLB (!). Further there are a range of other subjects with Law, for example Law with Accounting and Finance which is offered as a BA, although Accounting and Finance with Law is offered as a BScEcon .

It was claimed that the UK's ancient / most prestigious universities use LLB; some do e.g. the London School of Economics and University of Durham, but others do not e.g. Oxford and Cambridge, both of which award BA. If there is an emerging trend however it is that most do now award LLBs; this is certainly the case for the (numerous) law programmes at all of the 'new universities'.

It should be noted that the degree does not allow the holder to practice law however. This requires additional study at a recognized law school. Many but not all university law programmes are accredited by the relevant regulatory bodies, in which case the post-graduation study may be undertaken in one year as opposed to the normal two years for students who have come either from non-accredited law programmes, or from degrees in other discipline areas.

Art and fine art degrees

Art as a pure or applied/professional discipline can be studied through a very wide range of programmes from rather academic/research-based to those with very practical perspectives. Irrespective of the orientation of the programme, and/or where it is studied (at an 'old' research-intensive, or a 'new' university, or school or college or art) the award given is almost invariably a BA. This is often, although not always accompanied by an additional element that indicates the area of study. These can include, for example, BA History of Art or Art History, BA Fine Art (Painting and drawing) or BA Fine Art (Digital media), BA Art and Archaeology of the Ancient World, or even BA Fine Art Painting/Equine Studies (!).

Research masters degrees and the MPhil

It is often claimed both outside the UK and within the UK that the title MPhil identifies the award of Master's degree for a substantial (typically 2 years fulltime) programme of research that has been assessed by dissertation. This is not the case. Several universities award the MPhil for just 1 year of postgraduate study that may include (or not) elements of taught study.

Professional doctorates

Professional doctorates are an integral part of UK postgraduate education. Initially restricted to a relatively small number of fields (e.g. education, clinical psychology, business), the number of areas is expanding. Such degrees are seen as an increasingly importance part of life-long learning particularly where there is a continuing need for constant upgrading of knowledge and skills that are underpinned by the latest research (e.g. medicine, law, business, engineering, etc etc).

Clarity and transparency in UK degree titles (the Anglo-Saxon system)

It is clear that the Anglo-Saxon / UK system of degree titles is neither consistent nor straightforward. In 1999/2000 several consultations were undertaken as part of the development of the Framework for HE Qualifications (the national qualifications framework for HE). The responses to a proposal to make the nomenclature system more consistent/transparent were overwhelmingly positive and supportive. Yet in almost all cases each particular university set out its case as to why its particular / special award in Xx or Yy should fall outside the very sensible and proper needs for greater consistency and transparency at a national level. Since UK universities are independent and autonomous it proved impossible to bring in any new criteria requiring degree titles to be changed, other than that the title of the award should reflect the level of study.

There are however other tools for transparency and these are starting to be used much more extensively, certainly within the sector and increasingly by stakeholders. The 'tools' are the student transcript (the UK version of the Diploma Supplement) that sets out the detail of what the student has achieved, and also the 'programme specifications'. Programme specifications are published by the universities for each of their programmes; they set out what is being offered and what is expected of the students if they are to gain their degree (the learning outcomes).

The university sector in the UK has undergone a series of significant changes through the last few decades. Most notably, a new set of universities were established in the 1960s to develop in areas where applied research was likely to be important (engineering, biosciences, languages and social sciences, etc). A number, but not all, of these new(ish) universities now include numerous departments that are at the top of the UK research ratings. A further major change occurred in 1992 with the conversion of the polytechnics into the 'new universities'. In little more than a decade a number of these new universities are establishing themselves at the very forefront of research, particularly in areas of applied research, and establishing substantial reputations and acquiring significant funding for such work. At the same time the more traditional universities are increasingly diversifying and taking on both a wider range of students (from different types of backgrounds), and a wider range of research activities. Flexibility within and between programmes and institutions is increasing and it is now common for students from an 'old' university to undertake further study at a new university and vice versa. Additionally the funding bodies are encouraging all universities to enter into strategic alliances with local further education colleges and stakeholders to provide for continuity of education that matches local needs. In such circumstances the rather anachronistic approach to assigning degree titles becomes perhaps less important.

Conclusions

There clearly seems to be no European consensus on the nomenclature of degrees and their unequivocal identification with a specific type of institution. The matter of denomination and in particular of international competitiveness of specific awards does not seem to be an issue anywhere but in Holland. Therefore little can be gained by following a European comparison. A genuine solution to the specific Dutch problem has to be developed that will do justice to the various national expectations, traditions and needs, but also with an international perspective.

6. TOWARDS A TRANSPARENT AND SOLID DEGREE SYSTEM

Introduction

Based on the review of the Dutch degrees in an international perspective, the Committee's assignment is to describe designations of degrees (additions to the Bachelor and Master degrees) which are internationally customary, transparent and robust. This assignment is not easy, as the international perspective is diverse and changing (chapter 5), and as opinions of stakeholders on the issue vary substantially (chapter 4). Nevertheless, the Committee has reached consensus on a proposal for a degree system, which is transparent and robust enough to meet the opportunities that the Committee sees for the Dutch higher education system in the mid-term future.

Evolution of the binary system

The Dutch Parliament wishes to have and retain a binary structure within the organisation of Dutch higher education, including the ways in which degree programmes are offered. The Committee learned that a binary structure is deeply anchored in Dutch higher education and it is highly valued by a wide range of stakeholders, including employers as well as students. There is a general belief that the binary system reflects the existence of two types of students (or even people): the 'doers' and the 'thinkers'.

The binary structure is very widely regarded and interpreted as resulting from the separation between, on the one hand, research universities and, on the other, universities of professional education. Formally, however, with the introduction of accreditation at programme level in 2002, the binary structure is no longer institution-based. Universities of professional education have by law the primary task of delivering professional education at higher education level, although they may do other things as well (i.e. carry out applied research or offer academic programmes). Research universities have the legal task to carry out research and deliver academic programmes. They too can carry out other tasks such as offering programmes of professional education. The funding system is based on the legal tasks of the two types of institutions, which is aimed at creating a diversity in higher education. The universities of professional education are mainly funded for education and indeed the present funding for applied research is only 2% of their total budget.

A binary system is not uncommon in the international scene. In many countries (for instance in Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Finland, Austria and Norway) research and professional orientations are reflected in institutional differentiation. The Trends IV report suggests that the distinction between professionally-oriented and research-oriented programmes continues to exist in the Bologna process, although the differentiation among the institutions is diminishing. The Committee is of the view that a binary system as such is not a reason for the current problems with degree nomenclature in the Netherlands.

Problems may arise because the binary system is structured differently in the Netherlands as compared to other countries. In the Netherlands, rather than a distinction, a separation between professionally oriented and research oriented programmes occurs. As a result it is more difficult to explain the Dutch HE system elsewhere and to explain the degrees. The Committee has made the following observations:

1. The number of students in universities of professional education (70%) in the Netherlands is substantially higher than the number of students in research universities (30%). Neither research universities nor universities of professional education predict that student numbers will become more evenly distributed (on the contrary - it may even grow further apart). In Flanders the present ratio between Hogescholen and Universities is 60/40. The ratio between professional higher education and academic higher education will be 50/50 when the process of academisation is finished and all two cycles study programmes become 'academic' study programmes. In Germany the ratio of students in universities - fachhochschule is 70-30%. Whilst approximately 70% of the UK and Dutch

graduates enter the labour market with Bachelor's degrees, the figures should not be taken to suggest that the systems are equivalent. In the Netherlands the 70% represents almost exclusively HBO graduates; in the UK employment market the most competitive positions, for example in 'big city', international companies are still taken mostly by graduates with Bachelor's degrees from research universities.

These numbers, as well as information on the process in secondary education, suggest that within higher education, the Netherlands has a (much) more selective procedure for entry into research universities than in other countries.

2. In the Netherlands the area of applied research in connection to professional education seems relatively undeveloped. Applied research is done in research universities or at TNO (the national research institution established for this type of research). However applied research seems hardly connected to and embedded in programmes for professional education. By comparison: in Germany a small but growing percentage of the income of the Fachhochschule comes from third-party funding - in 2002 it was about 5% out of which one third stemmed from contract research. In Norway university colleges have by law the task of carrying out applied research.
3. Teaching staff at universities of professional education in the Netherlands are less educated in research practice than in some other countries. In Flanders, all full time teaching staff involved in "two-cycle programmes" at hogescholen must have a PhD, in Germany, all teachers at the Fachhochschule must have a PhD, and in Norway currently a majority of the teachers must have competence equivalent to the PhD, and 25% must have competence that makes them eligible for a professorship. Moreover, in other countries, teaching staff at hogescholen have greater encouragement to obtain their PhD. This process also forms a basis for encouraging co-operation between institutions for professional education and research universities since it is within the latter that the staff of the former are studying.
4. Universities of professional educations have - as in most countries - an important regional function. In other countries, this function results not only from a regional educational mission, but also from a mission to contribute to knowledge development and support of the local industrial and commercial life. In Norway for instance, university colleges have the task to co-operate with local industry, which results in activities in applied research (see under 2). Stakeholder interviews with employers suggested that such co-operations, especially with small and medium sized enterprises (SME's), are not well developed in the Netherlands. The Committee learned that SME's would not, at present, think to seek support from universities of professional education for innovative problems. Moreover, at a national level there does not seem to be a good communication between the association of universities of professional education and the association of SME's. Although the Committee believes that the goal of higher education is not just concerned with employability, a better co-operation between especially professional education and SME's can benefit both.
5. In most countries there is a problem of permeability (i.e. the ability of students to get access to the opportunities in higher education, e.g. to move from HBO to WO). A recent report of the Educational Policy Institute (EPI - Canada and the USA) concluded that the Netherlands scores highly with regard to the social accessibility of higher education. However, within its higher education, the Committee concludes that there are major obstacles for students in an 'HBO track' to move towards a 'WO track'. Early in secondary education a choice seems to be made for one of the two tracks which then appears to be rather long-lasting in its impacts on subsequent educational career and even life.

There seem to be true knowledge barriers. HBO students are allowed to access WO programmes after a HBO propedeuse, but 66% fail. For comparison, from the students that entered WO programmes directly from VWO, 32% failed and from those that entered with a HBO degree, 38% failed (CBS data from 91/92 - 94/95).

Research universities fear a similar problem for HBO Bachelor students entering a WO Master programme. There are possibilities to bridge the gap and to go from HBO to WO, but they usually cost time and money for the student.

A certain lack of permeability is not a typical Dutch problem, but it is remarkable that the stakehol-

ders do not seem to consider the lack of permeability as a problem to be solved. In other countries, especially the Nordic and UK countries there are more possibilities for students to show what and how they can achieve and there is a growing acknowledgement of experienced-based learning and informal learning. Such possibilities are important to the view of Life Long Learning and create more and more flexible educational pathways. In the context of the Bologna Process it has been decided that every degree should give access to the next cycle. However, in the Netherlands it seems that this is hardly possible for graduates of a HBO Bachelors programme. The Committee observes that the access regulation for graduates of HBO Bachelors does not meet the objectives of the European Higher Education Area.

6. In most Bologna countries there is a problem of transferring the traditional systems of higher education into a true two-cycle system (Bachelor cycle and Master cycle). This is also the case in the Netherlands. The NVAO accreditation frameworks follow the Bologna system; the Dublin descriptors form the basis for these frameworks and are included as appendix in the frameworks. In higher education, however, it appears that in many aspects essentially just a name-change has taken place: old HBO programmes are now called Bachelor's, and old WO programmes are now called Bachelor's and Master's which are however, in effect, inseparable. The Committee observes that the WO Bachelor degree in the Netherlands does not meet the objectives of the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Declaration clearly stipulates that the first degree, after at least 3 years of full-time study, should be relevant to the labour market. This objective has been reiterated subsequently in the Communiqués of Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005). Hence not only HBO but also WO Bachelors should be employable. In the Dutch system the WO Bachelor does not need to be employable ("option to enter the labour market"). Various stakeholders, including employers confirmed that the WO Bachelors are not really employable. Some even stated that a WO student who entered the labour market with a Bachelor's degree would be considered as a student who had failed. The research universities seemed hardly interested in developing WO Bachelor's into Bachelor's according to the Bologna declaration. For a WO Bachelor to be internationally accepted, however, the degree should be in line with the stipulations in the relevant Bologna documents. Again, the problem is not unique for the Netherlands. It is remarkable however that hardly any stakeholders were aware of this problem or were urging for its solution.
7. Maybe the clearest demonstration that the Dutch binary system is unique is that the current degree discussion, in which the research universities and the universities of professional education are not able to reach a consensus, only takes place in the Netherlands. Although many countries introduced the Bachelor-Master system and consequently have to face a new degree system, only in the Netherlands this has given rise to such a broad and ongoing discussion.

The Committee concludes that, although some other countries have binary systems as well, the sharp distinction between the HBO and WO areas, the small number of students in WO programmes, and especially the lack of applied research linked to professional education, make the Dutch binary system very specific. The research universities do not seem particularly concerned by this situation, and may even benefit from it (i.e. from the severe selection for students that go to university). Their position is fairly strong and respected, including internationally. By contrast, the Dutch universities of professional education both claim and seem to be hampered by features of the present Dutch system. They find it difficult to explain their position internationally and have less international visibility. The universities of professional education are thus now requesting a change of the current system of degree titles to allow their programmes to be better valued in the international scene.

There are indications that the Dutch binary system may evolve towards a system that is more compatible to the international scene. For instance, the recent appointment of lecturers and the establishment of research centres at universities of professional education are important to develop applied research and to improve the wider qualities of the teaching staff. The initiative of the Rotterdam University of professional education to establish a strategic connection with the region of Rotterdam is a positive example of how a university of professional education can develop applied research linking to a region. Similarly, the Committee came across several examples of co-operation between research universities and universities of professional education that demonstrate substantial benefits for both (a 'win-win situation'). A major driver for change will be the further development of applied research by universities of professional education, in close collaboration with research universities, research institutions such as TNO, and SME's.

In summary, the proposed degree system assumes development in higher education in the Netherlands from today (as summarised in Figure 6.1) to 'tomorrow' (as in Figure 6.2). In both figures, all Bachelor and Master levels are assumed to be in accordance with the Dublin descriptors/ European framework for qualifications of the EHEA:

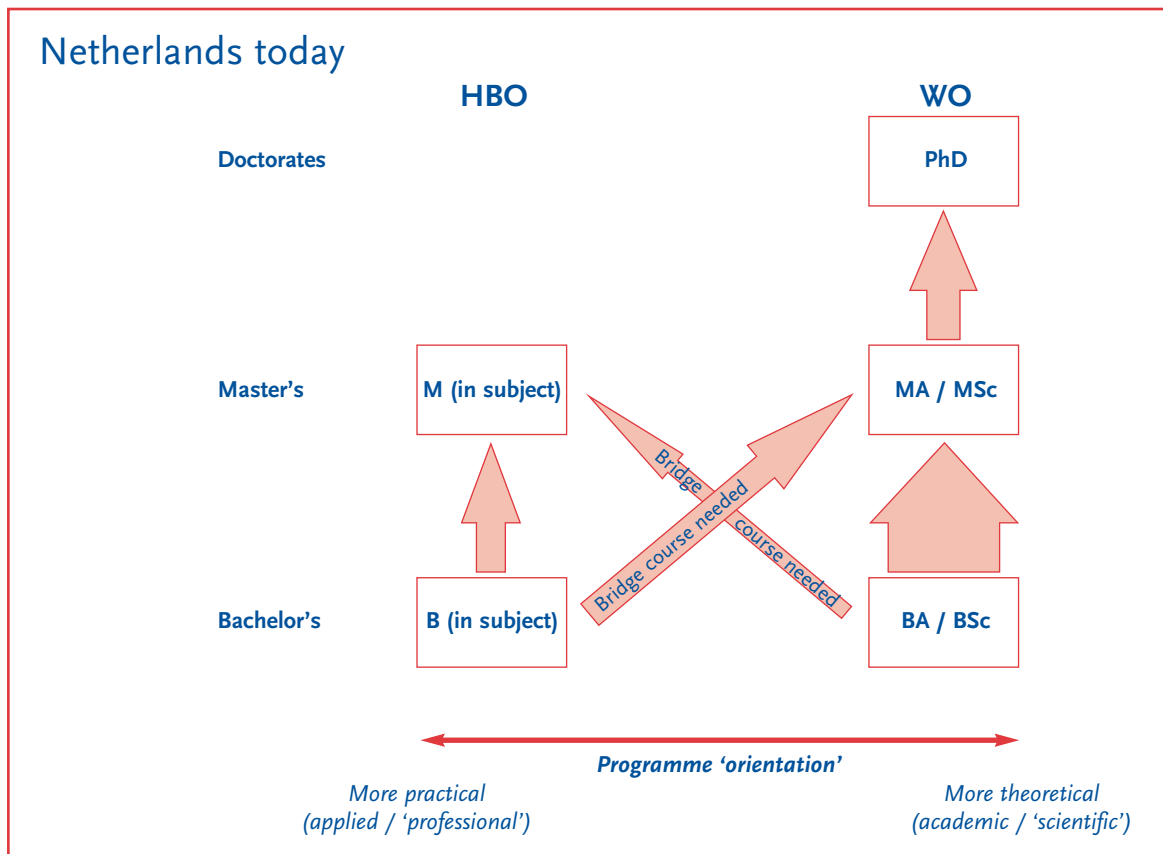


Figure 6.1: Netherlands today. Strong separation exists between HBO and WO tracks, with limited permeability through bridging courses. Applied research in relation to professional education hardly takes place. Arrows indicate present permeability. From HBO Ba to HBO Ma is possible, but there are not many HBO Ma to choose from and funding is a problem. From HBO Ba to WO Ma requires bridging courses (which are not funded). From WO Ba to HBO Ma is in principle possible, but happens infrequently. Almost all WO Ba move directly to WO Ma.

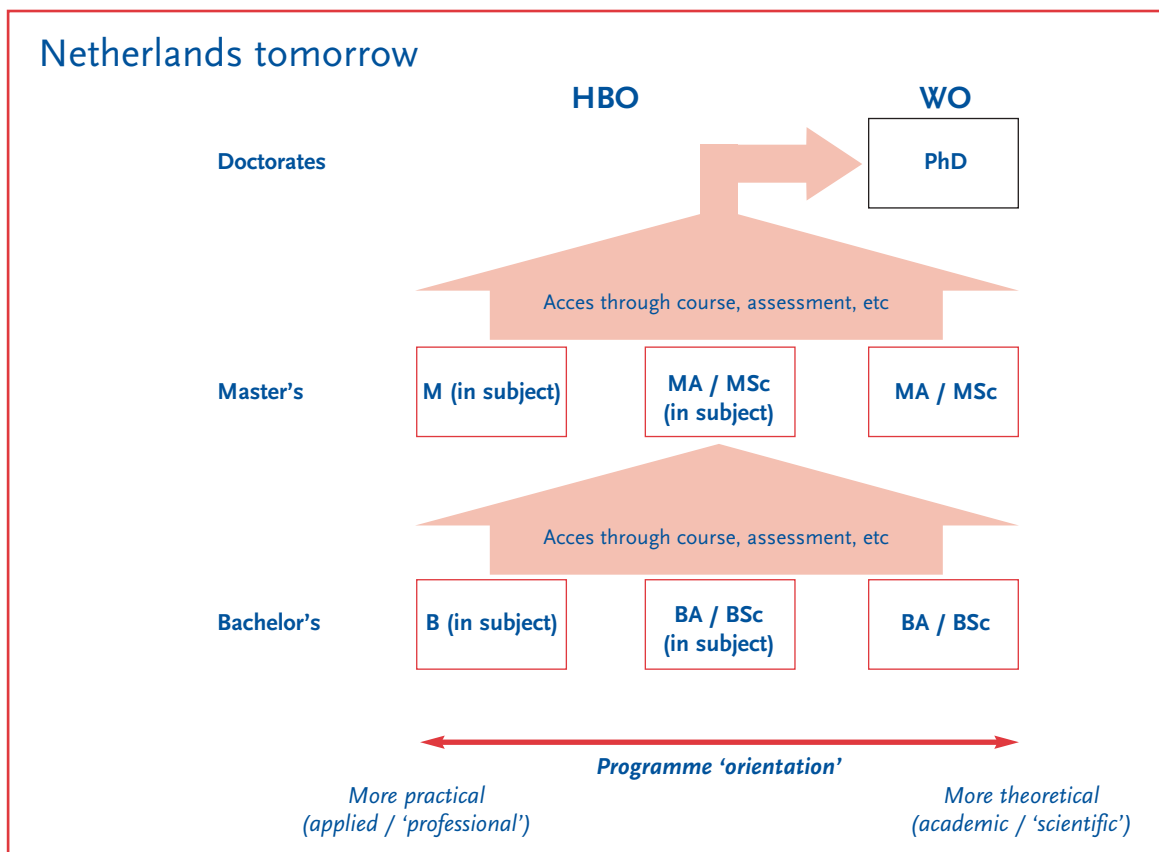


Figure 6.2: Netherlands tomorrow as envisaged by the Committee. The area of applied research in relation to professional education is developed. Bachelor students from the variety of programmes ranging from more practically-oriented towards more theoretically- oriented may choose a variety of Master programmes. The wider arrows indicate there are more possibilities to choose within the system because there is more diversity in programmes and because bridging courses are more easily accessible. Entrance for Master programmes requires minimum qualifications, which may be achieved through bridging programmes and/or through assessment. Similarly, entering a PhD programme requires minimum qualifications, which are research oriented.

Transparency by matching with the international scene?

The knowledge and skills of a student who finishes a programme in higher education are reflected in the degree and its title, and in the Diploma Supplement. Although most stakeholders have high expectations of the value of the Diploma Supplement for transparency, many also desire that the degree structure (programme and title) reflects the binary structure of Dutch higher education. Simultaneously, the HBO Raad strongly objects to the present restriction on the use of the 'science' and 'arts' additions to their degrees, arguing that the Netherlands is the only country that has this restricted use. Moreover, the HBO Raad experiences that the international position of Dutch HBO students and Dutch HBO programmes has decreased because of this situation.

The international review undertaken by the Committee did not confirm the fears of the HBO Raad. To start with, many countries don't have a binary system (i.e. universities and other types of higher education) and

the problem of which institution may award which degree therefore doesn't present itself. But also in the binary systems, the restricted use of additions for WO programmes in the Netherlands is not unique. E.g. in Austria the universities may use a whole range of additions, while Fachhochschulen may award only the degrees Ba.(FH) and Ma.(FH). In some countries institutions of professional education are even more restricted than in the Netherlands and cannot provide Master's at all (e.g. Switzerland). In Finland the polytechnics are still waiting for the right to award Master degrees. Germany is one of the few countries in Europe where both types of higher education institutions may award the same type of degrees.

The Dutch system refers to the "Anglo-Saxon system" - but such a clearly defined Anglo-Saxon system does not exist. As the stakeholders' interviews demonstrate, this choice for degrees in the English language has caused some confusion.

Building a degree system that matches "the international degree system" as such is very difficult. First of all there is no international harmonisation of degrees. Secondly, as the Ba-Ma structure was only recently introduced in many other European countries, a similar redefinition of degrees is taking place elsewhere. Following and seeking to reflect international developments is for the moment like trying to hit a moving target.

Nevertheless, Nuffic observes (and this is confirmed by personal experience of the Committee members) that there is internationally a general pattern (with exceptions) that academic programmes are given 'science' and 'arts' degree titles, whereas when a professional association and/or professional register has a greater influence on the curriculum, subject related degree titles are used. Subject related degree titles convey more information about the content of the programme. In general it is customary that degrees match the content of the programme.

The Committee recommends that, for transparency reasons, the Dutch degree system should follow this general pattern. This implies that the 'science' and 'arts' additions are only given when a programme is, to some extent, based on research. HBO programmes can be research-based as well, probably based mainly on applied research. Hence they can fit the 'science' and 'arts' additions criteria, as is shown by the criteria for HBO programmes in the NVAO frameworks. HBO programmes require, amongst other things, that students acquire knowledge by studying course materials that include professional literature that originated in professional practice and by interaction with the professional field and/or applied research. Similarly, the frameworks describe how WO programmes may have links with professional practice. The degree structure can be used as a tool to recognize the diversity that exists also within the HBO and WO programmes. The degree titles would thus better reflect the diversity that is present and possible, rather than just binary nature, and yet still be within a binary system.

From an international marketing point of view, the Committee would not use 'science' and 'arts' additions for all the present HBO educational programmes. This may lead to some disappointment within the HBO sector, but it is important that the international position of Dutch higher education is not weakened. It might be if foreign students and employers felt disappointment or dissatisfaction with an inappropriate use of degree nomenclature. For HBO programmes with a sufficient connection to research however, there would be full justification for their use of degree titles 'science' and 'arts', and expect that this would be accepted internationally. However, the Committee suggests that the distinction of programmes offered in the Netherlands is made more 'visible' in marketing activities. Furthermore, the Committee would recommend that students should get information on what they will actually be awarded.

Criteria for the extent of the research connection that would justify the use of 'science' or 'arts' additions need to be developed. Such criteria should depart from the current learning outcomes that expect that the student is familiar with traditional and advanced research² methods. Criteria developed by the three technical universities in the Netherlands for their Bachelor's and master's programmes (January 2005) may serve as a starting point. Based on learning outcomes, the criteria may also address what infrastructure is needed to achieve the desired learning outcomes, such as staff qualifications, laboratories, libraries and other important elements of research related infrastructure. Students must have access to such infrastructure in a sufficient way to meet the learning outcomes within a research-based education.

² A definition of research is provided by OECD in the Frascati manual 2002, ISBN 92-64-19903-9.

Art schools do not tend to fit well into any degree system. The research-based addition ‘arts’ as described in the previous paragraph, would not fit real art educational programmes. However, art schools in the Netherlands (which are formally universities of professional education) seem to have solved the degree issue themselves, with the aid of the Association of Universities of professional education. Degree titles have been agreed, such as BMus (Bachelor in Music) and BFA (Bachelor in Fine Arts) which are broadly accepted, and also in the international scene.

Similarly, criteria may have to be developed for the ‘subject’ additions to degrees. The Committee feels that subject additions should focus on the content of the programme. A wide range of subjects should be possible and criteria should not be restrictive; it is important that there is opportunity to allow for innovation, and for new fields and combinations to develop. Such opportunities for academic innovation are already being addressed and met by Dutch universities through e.g. the Erasmus Mundus programme. It is possible that once domains have been developed, these can be linked to the subject additions. For now, the Committee recommends that a specific national framework for subject additions is not developed.

Several representatives offered suggestions on how to solve the issue of including ‘arts/ science’ additions, as well as subject additions. It was interesting that none of the stakeholders suggested any addition relating to the type or name of the institutions.

With the considerations described in this chapter, the following model emerges, describing 6 basic types of degrees. In this model, the ‘science’ and ‘arts’ addition depend on the research connection, i.e. the level of research-based education, and the subject addition depends on the professional connection.



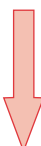

1. Bachelor		In.. (subject)	 Research connection	Professional connection 
2. Bachelor	of arts / science	In .. (subject)		
3. Bachelor	of arts/ science			
4. Master		In.. (subject)	 Research connection	Professional connection 
5. Master	of arts/ science	In .. (subject)		
6. Master	of arts/ science			

Table 6.1 Based on the various information available and on a total evaluation of the various arguments presented to the Committee during its work, the Committee proposes this model for the use of academic degrees and degree-description. Deviations from this model are possible, as explained underneath the table.

The Committee recognises that some degree titles may, internationally, be historically based. If equivalent degrees are offered in the Netherlands, the international and historically-accepted academic title should be used even if it is not in agreement with the presented system and principles. It will be impossible to define one system that meets all such historically accepted degree titles. On the one hand, some traditionally academic studies have a strong professional orientation (medicine, dentistry, law) whilst on the other, for some academic programmes (i.e. law) the ‘science’ and ‘arts’ additions are not customary in the international scene. The Dutch system should be open and flexible to meet deviations to the model in Table 6.1.

In addition to the degree titles, the features of the institution and the programme should be described in the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement is essential to illustrate, or to give a complete view, of the achievements of the student. The Diploma Supplement, according to the UNESCO format, can describe all of the other specifications of the study and competences of the student. The Committee recommends that the value of the degree titles is not overestimated, and believes that the Diploma Supplement will prove a more valuable instrument to increase transparency.

Several stakeholders suggested developing a link between the system of degree titles and the European typology (of higher education institutions) which is being developed by Van Vught and others. As the degree system is linked to educational programmes and not to institutions, the Committee does not think that the typology would really help in solving the degree (title) issue. The European typology of institutions may be useful for other purposes; it does not contribute to transparency of the Dutch degree system.

One tool that could prove helpful in the Dutch situation is that of a qualifications framework. The Berlin Communiqué had called for the elaboration of national qualification frameworks but little seems to have happened in most countries since then. The Anglo-Saxon countries and Denmark continued to develop their existing frameworks, while in Germany a framework for the Higher Education awards was written in 2004. During the preparation of the Trends IV report “European Universities Implementing Bologna” for the Bergen Conference explicit and very positive reference to the qualifications framework as a tool for curricular development and recognition was made by professors and students in higher education institutions in Denmark, England and Scotland.

A Dutch national framework for qualification is now being developed, on the basis of the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, which has been developed by the Bologna Follow-up Group and formally adopted by the European Ministers in Bergen in May 2005. This Dutch qualifications framework could define descriptors for the various awards offered in the Dutch education system, in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The different profiles of the learning outcomes for a M.A., a M.Sc. and other types of Master’s degrees could be laid down in such a document. Whether a given programme fulfils the requirements for the award it leads to could be tested in the accreditation procedure. This would allow a move away from the rigid link between certain types of higher education institutions and certain awards.

The Committee has been asked its opinion on new degrees proposed by various stakeholders, e.g. the associate degree and professional doctorate. Such degrees can be important to recognize efforts in Life Long Learning, which is important in the light of demographic trends in Europe. The Committee discussed this, but did not reach consensus on this issue. With regard to the professional doctorate, the Committee observes that there is not a clear international trend in this respect. Rather there is a consensus on substantial, independent and original research being the main characteristic of a PhD. The Salzburg conference recommended as the first principle: “The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research”. The Committee recommends a high priority should not be given to developing the professional doctorate in the Netherlands at present; this will not improve the transparency of the degree system as a whole.

Several stakeholders mentioned that the distinction between initial and post-initial education, which relates to funding but also has an impact on the degree structure, is very confusing. Accreditation of post-initial education programmes is not compulsory but if such a programme is accredited (or after a positive evaluation of the new programme) by NVAO it may, by law, award a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree. However, even if the accreditation is done at orientation WO, the MSc or MA titles are not allowed.

This restriction on degrees for post-initial education is in contrast with the principle that the degree links to the content of the programme. The Committee understood that even nationally, but certainly internationally, this feature of the present degree system is confusing. The Committee hence recommends that MSc and MA degree titles should be possible for post-initial education as well, providing that the research component in these programmes is sufficient and in accordance with the various criteria developed for the necessary volume and quality of the research component in the programme. The current link of initial programmes, as the ones taken until a relevant qualification for the labour market is obtained, is not in line with the decision in the context of the Bologna Process that every cycle should be relevant on the labour market.

Quality assurance through accreditation

Any degree system that defines degrees based on the content of the programmes needs some national mechanism to validate that the appropriate degree titles are linked to the various educational programmes. Only when such a mechanism exists, can a system truly lead to a transparent national degree system.

In the current quality assurance system in the Netherlands, all Bachelor and Master programmes in higher education must be accredited. The law distinguishes HBO and WO orientations, resulting in 4 types of accreditation. NVAO accredits on the basis of reports produced by quality agencies (VBI's). VBIs are independent organisations that organize the process of peer review. There are several VBI's in operation in the Netherlands, so (in HBO) institutions have the opportunity to choose. For new programmes to enter the system, they must be evaluated by NVAO. For this purpose NVAO hires experts that assess the plans.

In this accreditation system, degree titles as such are not subject to evaluation or validation. Only programmes that have been accredited at orientation WO, can add the suffices 'science' and 'arts' to their degrees. For the time being, NVAO does not have the legal task to validate whether rightfully the suffix 'science' or the suffix 'arts' is used. Nor can NVAO validate subject suffices added to the degree. A degree title that does not actually fit the programme, cannot formally be disapproved by NVAO according to the present system.

Given the fact that in the Netherlands an accreditation system is already in place, it would be a logical step to use the same system to validate whether the degree titles match the content of the programme. The Committee recommends that the current system of evaluation by quality agencies (VBI's) and accreditation by NVAO is employed for quality assurance of degree titles.

There are some comments the Committee would wish to make in this regard:

1. NVAO, in close cooperation with the (associations of) higher education institutions, would have to develop criteria for justifying use of 'science' and 'arts' additions to degrees, as it has developed frameworks for accreditation. The Committee recommends that NVAO co-operates also with other stakeholders in this development, so that the criteria defined are well accepted by these stakeholders. As compared to the present accreditation frameworks, criteria for degree titles should focus more on learning outcomes.
2. By giving NVAO, in close cooperation with the (associations of) higher education institutions, the task to develop criteria to validate degree titles, and by placing the degree system within the existing quality assurance system, criteria for degree titles are more flexible and adaptable to changes in the field than they would be if they were defined in legislation.
3. VBI's will have to extend their work and provide evidence, based on the criteria developed by NVAO (see 1) that justifies the proposed degree title for the programme.
4. If the institution of higher education proposes a degree title for a programme on the basis of international accepted traditions, but it is one that does not fit the model in Table 4.1, there should be substantial evidence that such a degree title is broadly used internationally. For instance, if a programme, which clearly does not meet the required standard of research orientation, applies for the possibility to use a degree designation with 'science' or 'arts', and if it can prove that an equivalent educational programme in most other countries uses the term 'science' or 'arts', the system should approve the use of these suffices in the Netherlands. The burden of proof that this is the case internationally lies explicitly with the institution (and not with NVAO to prove that the claim is wrong). A panel with international and authoritative experts would be required to evaluate the validation of such a proof.
5. The Committee is aware that a possible move towards domain or institution accreditation is now being discussed in the Netherlands. Although such a system will not be introduced before 2009 or 2010, the Committee addressed whether this development would have an impact on the proposed

degree system and concluded that if accreditation would develop towards a higher aggregation level, the validation of degrees could develop towards a validation of the system that the institution uses to define its degrees. System validation could be combined with regular taking of samples. Hence, the proposed degree system would also accommodate such a development.

6. With regard to subjects added to the degree titles, in some areas criteria developed for professional registers or for professional license can form the starting point for such criteria. For instance FEANI (European Federation of National Engineering Associations) has issued minimum requirements for curricula for engineering leading to EURING designation. These requirements define, amongst other things, the minimum content of basic sciences (mathematics) in ECTS. Similarly it would be possible to restrict the titles Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws for programmes with a sufficient academic environment as suggested by the Dutch Bar Association.
7. Clarity about what is behind a title can only be achieved if other transparency tools are used as well. The Committee suggests that higher education institutions are called upon to make use of the Diploma Supplement in the UNESCO format. Furthermore the Committee recommends that a framework for qualifications in the Netherlands is developed.

7. OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Introduction

While working on this assignment, the Committee felt that it gained an understanding of the Dutch higher education system. There are some aspects of Dutch higher education that the Committee found surprising, and sometimes perplexing. The Committee has decided to describe these aspects in the report in a separate chapter, even though they are beyond the formal assignment of the Committee. The Committee felt that it may be interesting for Dutch readers to see what 'other' (foreign and experienced) eyes observe in the Dutch higher education system. These observations may be useful in view of other developments that are taking place in higher education. Some of the observations relate in some way to the Dutch system of degrees and their titles, others less so.

Distinction of the 'doers' and the 'thinkers'

It astonished the Committee that many stakeholders believed in the existence of two types of (Dutch) students and even people: the so-called 'doers' and the 'thinkers', with those who are doers, never likely to become thinkers, and vice versa. Permeability, that is the extent to which students can move within the system of higher education, is low in the Netherlands. It surprised the Committee that this was not considered as a problem. Mobility, that is possibilities for students to move to a higher system in other countries, seemed to be much more of an issue.

This sharp distinction between 'doers' and 'thinkers' appears to be a typical Dutch phenomenon that seems to originate in secondary education, where the actual separation of the 'thinkers' from the 'doers' occurs. In the Dutch secondary education students are put into an educational path at the age of 12; this is (now) very early as compared to many other countries. Only those students who go through a preparatory academic education (VWO; 18% of the total population) can go directly to a research university. The students who go to general secondary education (HAVO; 25%) can go directly to a university of professional education. Other students go to preparatory vocational secondary education (VMBO; 57%) after which they can go to vocational education.

Choices made at that early age largely determine the educational pathway later on, as well as career opportunities. The pathways in secondary education vary not only in length (VWO - 6 years; HAVO - 5 years; VMBO - 4 years), but also in content. The knowledge and skills acquired in HAVO are believed not only to be different but also at a lower educational level. Hence the 5th year of HAVO does not equal the 5th year of VWO. There appears to be a difference in knowledge and skills in e.g. mathematics and physics between HAVO and VWO students that is so substantial that it is hard to make it up in higher education. A similar comparison can be made between HAVO and VMBO.

The system is designed to provide, very accurately, the type of education that is appropriate for each individual student. The aim is to have a small dropout in higher education without needing a system of selection at the gate. However, the system results in a selection of students for research universities in the Netherlands which is more restricted, and takes place much earlier, than in other countries.

In theory there are possibilities to move from the 'doer' path to the 'thinker' path, but in practice there are significant financial and structural barriers. The HBO Bachelor programmes do not seem to be designed to fill the difference in fundamental knowledge and skills that are the result of the differences between HAVO and VWO programmes. This results in a fundamental difference between a HBO Bachelor and a WO Bachelor. Several stakeholders indicated that a HBO-Bachelor would be on a lower level than a WO-Bachelor, without explaining the term level in this respect.

For an HBO Bachelor to proceed to a WO Master, a bridging year is usually required (although sometimes bridging can be achieved in the 4th HBO Bachelor year). This bridging year is not funded, it is not clear how the quality of this bridging year is assured and it should be noted that students receive no additional scholarship for this bridging work. Research universities have expressed a general fear that many HBO Bachelor students will not be successful in WO Masters. This is based on drop-out figures of HBO propedeuse students who entered WO programmes. The Committee was impressed however by the approach taken by, for example, the Free University Amsterdam in its partnership with Windesheim, in which the success rate of HBO students is now comparable with that for the WO students entering Masters programmes. There is however an assessment for HBO students wishing to enter a WO programme (at which only 30% succeed).

The Committee finds it surprising that the lack of permeability in Dutch higher education is apparently so well accepted by all stakeholders. Only the students' representatives initiated comment on this point, but they criticised only the financial aspects, not the sharp separation of opportunities as such. In the Committee's view the disadvantages of having a clear and lasting separation between two populations of students clearly outweigh the advantages. The current system clearly limits the individual opportunities of students: it limits (and categorises) the 'doers' who can think, and it limits the 'thinkers' who know how to do. Moreover, it limits innovative power in the Netherlands, because talent may be wasted.

Value of professional education in relation to applied research

It astonished the Committee that the need for applied research in relation to professional education was not more widely felt in the Netherlands. Some employers even questioned the value of applied research linked to professional education. SMEs did not seem aware of the potential benefit that can be achieved by co-operation with universities of professional education in applied research. They claim to be seeking professional skills rather than a research attitude. However, the abilities to analyse problems, to synthesize, to propose solutions and to communicate about various challenges in the company or the establishment also in a multidisciplinary environment, are becoming more and more important. These abilities are not only important in research environments but also in industry and in the society at large. This, in combination with the knowledge and understanding of real life processes in industry, will give industry additional innovative power. Practical and professional experience of students, by preference from the start of their study and in combination with applied research, will allow these competences to develop.

The initiatives for developing applied research at universities of professional education seem to come from within the institutions themselves, not by external forces. Support for such developments, either by government or industry is low. Despite promising examples such as the recent scheme to appoint lectors and establish 'knowledge centres' and co-operative efforts, the Committee concludes that, as a whole, the research skills of staff and the capacity for applied research at universities of professional education are weakly developed.

Promotion of progression and life-long learning

Life-long learning is very important to maintain and improve knowledge and skills and thus remain (competitively) employable. The present system facilitates learning organised in learning institutions only for a maximum of 6 years, and is therefore not a system in itself for life-long learning. From a financial point of view this is fully understandable. Beyond 6 years, learning will become increasingly expensive, and there are debates about societal and individual responsibilities for supporting such learning/ students.

However, the Committee sees opportunities within the Dutch system of higher education to promote and reward life-long learning. The present system of higher education in the Netherlands can be made more flexible to accommodate the various needs for learning. It should acknowledge efforts and achievements in continuous education, in experience-based learning, and through informal learning. These can be acknowledged, but there does not seem to be any well-defined structure for this. Higher education should equip people with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for their own life-long learning; research knowledge and skills can provide additional help in taking on those responsibilities.

Language problems

During the course of the Committee's investigations frequent reference has been made to the "Anglo-Saxon system" - but such a clearly defined Anglo-Saxon system does not exist (see above). The Dutch choice for degree titles in the English language has caused confusion instead of transparency for many within the Netherlands, and their overseas clients. Whilst the Committee has sought to provide a 'solution' that will provide a way forward it recognises that, especially in the short term, the system of degree titles proposed by the Committee, will continue to cause some confusion until Dutch society as a whole has come to recognise the new approach to titles through experience. The Committee hopes however that the system will be immediately more transparent within an international context. The Committee is concerned that undue prominence has been given to the issue of degree titles and recommends that their value is not over-estimated. By contrast it notes and recommends the particularly important role that the Diploma Supplement can play in describing qualifications and the competences of students in greater detail.

Some of the language problems that relate to the use of English language within the Dutch higher education system are listed below:

Arts and science

As one of the stakeholders stated very clearly, the words 'science' and 'arts' can, by themselves, create confusion. Art can be understood as real art for instance. The addition 'arts' does not necessarily have anything to do with art. Degrees at Art schools may not carry the suffix 'arts' now. However, they seem to have found alternative degree titles which are quite satisfactory.

A similar confusion exists for the word 'science', which is usually interpreted as natural science, but is also used in a broader sense.

It is unlikely the terms 'arts' and 'science' can be used in a way that will create greater transparency, nationally nor internationally.

Research

There are no clear definitions of what research-oriented and professional- oriented are within the Dutch system. Some WO programmes (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, law) directly prepare for professions, but nobody questions their WO character.

Professional

The term 'professional' is used within a Dutch context to refer to programmes and their awards delivered through the HBO part of the binary system. By contrast its international use tends to signify not where a student studied but what a student studied.

For many in higher education, including the Anglo-Saxon system, 'professional' is used when referring to 'professions' - the areas of study that are typically regulated by a 'professional body' and involve the award of a 'licence to practice'. Thus, for example, medicine, dentistry, engineering, chemistry, law, accountancy, etc would all, when studied to a graduate/postgraduate standard, be regarded as 'professional'.

Level and orientation

The terms 'level' and 'orientation' seem to be understood quite differently by the different stakeholders, particularly within the Netherlands and within an international context.

During many of the interviews and discussions, Dutch representatives from both the HE sector and the stakeholders frequently referred to WO and HBO as 'levels'. The difference between HBO and WO is however one of orientation. It was claimed that such reference to 'level' did not discriminate between higher or lower levels but between types (orientations) of achievement, which are of equal value in their respective contexts. Nevertheless many appeared to have greater (intellectual) regard for the WO orientation, although HBO graduates might be more employable, particularly at Bachelor's level.

Within an international context the term 'level' is used with reference to the complexity of the topic(s) being studied, and the resultant qualification awarded; thus level is used to indicate a relative hierarchy (higher /lower) and, for example, the difference between Bachelor and Master. An HBO Bachelor and the

WO Bachelor should have equal level, as set out in the generic ‘Dublin descriptors’ which make part of the NVAO frameworks.

The approach to the use of the term ‘level’ by some Dutch participants is extremely confusing for international audiences. It also and, perhaps regrettably, suggests an inevitable assumption that one ‘orientation’ is regarded as being of a lower level than the other.

University

The Committee understood that “hogescholen” have been given the right to call themselves “university of professional education”. However, these institutions seem to feel free to call themselves “university” within the international scene. The Committee noted that some universities of professional education call themselves “university” at, for example, international education fairs, perhaps for marketing reasons. The Committee suggests that this is misleading for international students, and potentially damaging for the position of Dutch education.

It may be the term “university of professional education” itself that causes this problem, because it invites institutions to abbreviate to “university”.

Few stakeholders appeared to favour the term “university of professional education”. The term “professional” is confusing. For the labour market, all those that finished higher education would be considered “young professionals”. Some prefer the term “vocational”, whereas others strongly object to that. During the interviews (which were in English), most people from the HBO field used the term “polytechnic”, others use the term “college”. The latter seems to meet best international customs, as the term “technic” may suggest technical education only.

Some stakeholders suggested the use of a series of different names for “hogescholen”, as they vary in size, breadth of scope, type of programmes offered, and extent of involvement in applied research. The Committee understood that there is a lot of interest in the initiative of Van Vught and others to develop a typology to define (more) different types of higher education institutes. This classification is based (amongst other things) on the Carnegy system of the US. The classification is suggested to be based on:

- schemes of education (for instance the type of degrees the institution may award which may be linked to the levels in the Classification Framework);
- schemes of research and innovation (for instance the number of doctorates produced);
- schemes on student and staff profile (for instance the percentage of international students and staff) and financial and legal schemes (public/ private funding).

The Committee notes however, that this typology links degree types and program types with the institutions, whereas the Dutch law has disconnected the type of programme from the institution.

Also of interest in this respect is the Norwegian situation where NOKUT has a role in accrediting higher education institutes. NOKUT defined regulations relating to criteria for university colleges and for universities. A university college’s primary activities must be higher education, research and dissemination of knowledge. That means (a.o.) that the institution must have research and development activities related to its disciplines. Universities must have in addition (a.o.) an academic staff and stable research activities of high standard.

The Committee recommends that consideration be given to seeking a different name for “hogescholen”, that will both provide clarity about the relative level of study available but equally not mislead with regard to the overall context within which that study is taking place.

The Committee recommends use of the term “university” (alone or in combination with words such as applied science, education) only for those institutions that are indeed substantially involved in (applied) research. Hogescholen that are not involved in (applied) research at all could be called colleges to indicate that they are education institutions not involved in research.

The Committee recommends that there should be consideration of some scope for remedial action when hogescholen are shown to call themselves “university”, particularly within the international market for higher education. An intermediate term could be “university college” for “hogescholen” that have a narrower breadth and limited involvement in applied research.

Funding

The current funding system, for institutions as well as for students, is one of the obstacles to change in the Dutch higher education system. Since the Committee learned that the funding system will be changed, it has described some of the features it considers should be addressed.

Firstly, whilst the research universities receive specific funding for research, as would be expected, the Committee was surprised to learn how little funding the universities of professional education received for developing applied research.

All stakeholders agree that the development of applied research at universities of professional education should not be at the expense of the research budgets set for universities, however there are needs for 'pump-priming' support to develop staff, infrastructure and co-operations for applied research.

Secondly, funding of Master's programmes. Research universities offer state-funded Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Universities of professional education offer mostly Bachelor's programmes. WO Master's have mostly resulted from the 'old' programmes and thus qualify automatically for funding if accredited. By contrast, there are very few HBO Masters that have been developed from 'old' programmes.

In theory, new Master's programmes (HBO as well as WO) can be financed if they have a positive accreditation and a positive assessment of their usefulness. But even with this option, the current situation is that there are many funded WO Master's, and few HBO Master's.

An important aspect relating to student permeability between different orientations is that institutions are not funded for the development of bridging courses to allow students to move from HBO Bachelor's to WO Master's.

Thirdly, student funding. The system of financial support for students also limits permeability across the binary system. HBO students enter the higher education system one year earlier (at the age of 17), but receive the same scholarship as WO students who enter at the age of 18. However, if HBO students wish to continue with a Master's, after their Bachelor (4+1), or if they need a bridging year to move from HBO Bachelor's to WO Master's (4+1+1), they need funding for the additional time. The Committee agrees with the students that the current situation is unfair and presents a significant barrier to permeability and progression, both of which are important to the development of a fully educated/trained workforce.

The Committee suggests that these examples demonstrate that the current funding model does not provide incentives for increasing mobility and permeability, nor does it provide incentives for development of staff or applied research at universities of professional education. All three are widely accepted in other countries as important, if not essential, to the development of higher education systems that meet the changing needs of society and industry.

8. STATEMENTS OF EXPERTS

Mr Yvonne C.M.T. van Rooy

The Committee made a thorough analysis of the degree system that is now present in the Netherlands after the introduction of the Bachelor-Master system. The Committee gives also a comprehensive overview of degree systems in other European countries that have, like the Netherlands, a binary system. The Committee concludes there is no uniform Anglo-Saxon system. In the contrary, there is a complex and diverse degree system in the United Kingdom which results from the fact that in the UK universities have the autonomy to define degree titles themselves.

Nevertheless there is, as indicated by Nuffic, an international pattern that education programmes at traditional universities give Science and Arts degrees, whereas for programmes which have a professional orientation, subject related degree titles are used. Moreover, degree titles are usually related to the content of programs. Hence it is logical and sensible that the Committee recommends that the Dutch degree system should follow this general pattern.

The degree system that the Committee proposes fits well within the Dutch accreditation system. In this system content and nature of the programme determine whether a programme is WO or HBO oriented - not the institute that offers the programme. It is also in accordance with the recommendation to allow the degrees Bachelor and Master of Laws only for programs with a sufficient academic setting. The Committees recommendation to allow the MSc/ MA degrees for all programmes which are accredited at WO orientation is welcomed. So is its suggestion to employ the accreditation system to assess whether the degree fits the content of the programme. (Assuming this is feasible for VBI's and NVAO considering the large numbers of accreditations that must be completed before 2008. The workload of VBI's and NVAO is already an issue.)

The Committees approach will result in a degree system which is transparent for all stakeholders involved: for the Dutch labour market as well as for foreign students intending to study in the Netherlands. For those international students it should be absolutely clear whether they subscribe for a professional or an academic programme. Also universities in other countries in which Dutch students may want to continue their higher education will benefit from the proposed degree system. In addition to the degrees, the Diploma Supplement will indeed have an added value, as mentioned by the Committee.

There are, however, a number of observations to be made on some of the statements of the Committee.

The Committee states permeability within the Dutch system of higher education is limited. According to the Committee this is demonstrated by the bridging courses between a HBO-Bachelor and a WO-Master. However, the Committee fails to mention that most research universities have arrangements with universities of professional education for HBO-WO cooperating in fast-track programs. These fast-track programs aim to facilitate talented HBO students who want to continue in WO programmes. Before the introduction of Ba-Ma, quite a number of HBO-students successfully entered WO programs in the "doctoral" phase. We presently observe a significant interest of HBO students for the WO Masters programmes, which may suggest a significant number of HBO Bachelor students will subscribe for WO Masters. However, the Committee concludes correctly that the financial conditions to move from HBO to WO have become more unfavourable for both students and institutions in the new system.

The Committee is mistaken in suggesting that the Ba-Ma introduction at the universities was basically a name-change. To the contrary, the implementation of Ba-Ma at universities was a very substantial operation requiring a complete re-design of the programmes. This re-design was accompanied by a reconsideration of the educational philosophy, putting more emphasis "academic bildung". This is demonstrated, amongst others, by the introduction of major/minors and by the introduction of research masters in Dutch universities.

Universities of professional education indeed should not call themselves “university” abroad, as is observed by the Committee. The Committee suggests to use the word “university college” in this respect. However, this is an unfortunate suggestion, as some Dutch research universities have set up successful university colleges for liberal arts and sciences. These are high level academic programmes that attract a significant number of foreign students. They have established an international position and it would be confusing to use the same name for universities of professional education. The name “polytechnic” is to be preferred instead.

Yvonne van Rooy - 30th May 2005

Professor dr. Frans Leijnse

The work of the Committee for the Review of Degrees is of tremendous importance for a better understanding of the international position of Dutch higher education. It seems to me that the Committee has taken great care in appreciating the specific features of the Dutch situation and at the same time making an accurate international comparison. This is rather difficult as the international picture is extremely diverse, and the Dutch situation somewhat peculiar. I have little to add to the Committee’s view, except for two remarks.

First, I have noticed that the Committee mentions the extreme selectivity of the Dutch ‘universiteiten’ at least twice (par 6, under point 1, and later in the beginning of par. 7). From the figures presented one must conclude that Dutch ‘universiteiten’ enroll only the 15% supposedly brightest of every young generation. German ‘Universitäten’ enroll roughly the 25% brightest, British and American ‘universities’ even as much as the 40-45% brightest of every generation. It is therefore obvious that the Dutch concept of ‘universiteiten’ has a substantially more restricted meaning than the English concept of ‘universities’. To put it mildly: in other countries a lot more institutions are called ‘university’, and a lot more courses ‘university courses’ than in the Netherlands, even in countries with a binary system (like Germany).

If Dutch higher education courses are on average of the same level as their English and German counterparts, which is highly probable, and the 40% brightest Dutch youths are no less intelligent or more stupid than their English and German colleagues, which for reasons of convenience we suppose, this simply means that in The Netherlands 10-25% of youths get by international standards a university level education, which may not be called so. This puts them at a disadvantage in international labour markets. And more so, if the Dutch government actively denies their institutions the right to call themselves ‘universities’, and the graduates to use ‘arts’ and ‘sciences’ suffixes to their degrees. It is this active and unnecessary discrimination of a substantial group of higher education students and graduates which damages the international position of Dutch higher education more than anything else.

Secondly, I am in agreement with the Committee that crucial to the position of the ‘universities of professional education’ in the system is the development of applied research and the upgrading of their faculty. The Committee is rightly perplexed that the Dutch government has not supported this development earlier and is still rather hesitant to rise to the occasion. Nevertheless I am not certain that the Committee appreciates fully that this reluctance to invest in applied research at the ‘hogescholen’ is part and parcel of the same higher education policy that has put these institutions at a disadvantage in so many ways (no funded masters, no full degree nomenclature, no right to appoint professors, no degree awarding power for doctorates), even compared to other countries that have a binary system. I read in the Committee’s proposals in par 6 a sincere wish to give the ‘hogescholen’ an opportunity to overcome these drawbacks by building a stronger faculty and a solid public infrastructure for applied research. It may help if the Dutch government would follow the Committee in its proposals to give the ‘hogescholen’ some perspective that their endeavours in this respect may lead to a more balanced position on the issues mentioned before.

Frans Leijnse - 30th May 2005

9. JUSTIFICATION

Members of the Committee

Professor Dr Roger K. Abrahamsen (chairman). Professor Abrahamsen has a background as Dairy Engineer. He is Professor at the Department of Chemistry, Biotechnology and Food Science at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway. He was Rector of the Agricultural University of Norway from 1996 to 2001 and has participated in many advisory groups and professional boards. Mentioned here are:

- chairman of the board of the NOVA-university (1999-2000) - a formal co-operation organisation between all agricultural and veterinary universities/ faculties in the 5 Nordic countries;
- 4th January 2005 nominated as chairman of NOKUT (Norwegian institution for quality in education) by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of education and research, after two years as member of the board;
- deputy chairman of the Norwegian Council of Universities (1999-2000), transformed into the Norwegian Council for Higher Education, of which he was board member from 2000-2001.

Dr Nick Harris is Director of Development and Enhancement, at the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Prior to joining the QAA, Dr Harris pursued an academic career centred on research on the plant products of major crops. Based successively in the (research) universities of Bath, Cambridge and Durham (where he was appointed as a full professor) he developed a large research team that developed extensive collaborative links with research institutions and industry in the UK and abroad. He has an extensive list of publications, and was involved in university and science policy developments at both institutional and national levels. Since joining the QAA his work has been concerned with developing and implementing national and international policy initiatives concerned with clarifying the bases for academic standards and quality assurance in higher education. This has involved working closely with all groups in higher education and, importantly, also with all of the major stakeholders. Although his work now excludes evaluations/accreditations within the UK, he continues such activities in other countries.

Christian Tauch. Coordinator of the Departments “International Relations” and “Study and Research in Germany and the EU” Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK) / German Rectors’ Conference; has co-authored several comparative studies on the Bologna-Process and related developments in European Higher Education (Trends Reports II-IV, Study on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe, etc.).

Experts, observer and secretariat

Bastian Bauman - expert

Bastian Baumann is a student of law at Freie Universität Berlin. He was a member of the Bologna Process Committee of ESIB - the National Unions of Students in Europe from 2002 until 2005. He is a member of the executive board of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). He has been involved in various bodies and organisations at German and European level, dealing with higher education, including the working groups dealing with setting up a European Qualifications Framework.

Professor dr. Frans Leijnse - expert

Frans Leijnse was teacher at the university, he has been in politics (Tweede Kamer, now Eerste Kamer) and was during 6 years chairman of the HBO Raad. He recently resigned and is at present Professor at Hogeschool Utrecht (Lector). Frans Leijnse was suggested as expert for the Committee by the HBO Raad.

Mr. Yvonne C.M.T. van Rooy - expert

Yvonne van Rooy has started her career in politics (minister for Foreign Trade, member of the Tweede Kamer- Dutch parliament). After that she was president of the executive board of the Tilburg University and since one year she is pre-

sident of the executive board of the Utrecht University. Yvonne van Rooy was suggested as expert for the Committee by VSNU.

Noel Vercruysse - observer

Ministry of work, education and training, Flanders, Departement Onderwijs.

Dr Lies van Gennip - secretariate

After her study in Biology, Lies van Gennip had research and management positions in health care. She was director of the Netherlands Institution for Accreditation of Hospitals (NIAZ), before she became director of the NVAO.

Stakeholder interviews

The following people were interviewed by the Committee:

Organisation (alphabetical order)	Representatives
Association of the Catholic University Leuven with mostly catholic “hogescholen” in Flanders	Professor dr. André Oosterlinck, Rector Catholic University Leuven and Chair Associatie Catholic University Leuven
CESAER (Conference of European Schools in Advanced Engineering Education and Research), an association of some 55 leading European Universities in this domain.	Ir. Jan A.M. Graafmans, Secretary General
CNV, National Federation of Christian Trade Unions	Jan Telleman, president Higher Education of the Teachers’ Union CNV.
Delba special carbide products B.V.,small company,Proces,Parts and System supplier of high precision tools,and machining for food and packaging industry.	Tonnie Peters, director
Ebbinge & Company, recruitment organisation focussing on key positions and growth positions within the top level organisations in the Netherlands.	Mr drs I. van de Velde is manager of the department Campus and Young professionals focussing on student recruitment and people with max. 3 years work experience
FNV, Netherlands Trade Union Confederation	A.H.F.M. (Arjan) Ploegmakers, MA, Policy advisor Vocational Education & Training
The Vrije Universiteit (Eng. Free University) Amsterdam and the University of Professional Education Windesheim	Professor dr T. Sminia, rector magnificus and drs A.S. Roeters (both members of the executive board of Vrije Universiteit (Eng. Free University) and Windesheim University of Professional Education)
HBO Raad, Association of Universities of Professional Education	Drs Norbert Verbraak: President Fontys Hogescholen, Acting President HBO-raad and drs Gerard van Drielen: member of the executive board Hogeschool Rotterdam and drs Arian van Staa: director policy affairs HBO-raad
Hogeschool Rotterdam (University of professional education)	Drs Gerard van Drielen, College van Bestuur and dr Frans Spierings, Lector at research centre ‘Growing up in the City’

International student	Maria Satya Rani, Indonesian student at InHolland
ISO (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg) the Dutch National Student Association.	Nienke van Haaren, board member
KIVI NIRIA, Royal Institution of Engineers in the Netherlands	Drs ing. Jan Willem Proper, board, and drs ing. Bouke Bosgraaf, beleidsadviseur
10 LSVb the umbrella organisation of 13 local student unions in the country (regional based).	Koen Geven, executive Committee member
Ministry of work, education and training, Flanders	Dr Dirk M.S. Van Damme, Former general director of the VLIR, the Flemish rectors' conference. Currently head of cabinet of the Flemish minister of work, education and training Frank Vandenbroucke. Expert in the international dimension of qa and accreditation.
MKB-Nederland Dutch organisation for small and medium-sized enterprises	Ir Gertrud F.W.C. Visser- Van Erp, Secretaris Onderwijs,
Nuffic, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education	Jindra Divis, Director of the Centre for International Recognition & Certification, Robert Warmenhoven, expert
NVAO, Netherlands Flemish accreditation organisation	Dr Karl L.L.M. Dittrich, Chairman
NVS-NVL, the national association of people advising students in secondary education	Willem Nijhuis, chairman of the section VWO/HAVO
Paepon, the organisation representing a large group of privately funded education institutes	Drs Anna J.M. Bakker
Philips Electronics Nederland B.V.	Ir Gerard T. Jacobs, Philips Electronics Nederland B.V. / HRN, Senior Manager Employability / Jet-Net
Royal Academy of Fine Arts and The Royal Conservatoire, The Hague (University of Professional Education)	Frans de Ruiter, director of the The Royal Conservatoire and chairman of the board of the university of professional education. Also Professor at the University of Leiden and dean of the faculty of Creative and Performing Arts at Leiden University.
SAIL, the umbrella organisation of five specialised Dutch centres of higher learning	Professor dr ir Martien Molenaar, ITC, chair SAIL and professor dr Louk de la Rive Box, ISS, vice-chair SAIL and dr Riekele Bijleveld, executive secretary SAIL
Hasselt University, Flanders	Professor dr Harry Martens, former rector of the University of Hasselt and chairperson of a working group dealing with the 'academisation' of the bachelor and master study programme at the hogescholen

VNO-NCW, Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers	Mr Jacques Schraven, chairman, and drs Chiel Renique, senior advisor on education and training
VSNU. Association of Universities in the Netherlands	Mr E.M. d'Hondt, President

International survey

The following organisations were approached with questions on the degree system :

AAC-Austrian Accreditation Council

FH Rat, Austria

Akkreditierungsrat, Germany

FIBAA (Foundation For International Business Administration Accreditation)

ACQUIN Geschäftsstelle, Germany

AQAS, Germany

AHPGS - Akkreditierungsagentur Für Studiengänge Im Bereich Heilpädagogik, Pflege, Gesundheit Und Soziale Arbeit E.V., Germany

HETAC, Ireland

NOKUT, Norway

ANECA, Spain

OAQSwitzerland

ZEvA, Germany

Commission de Titres D'Ingénieur (CTI), France

QAA. UK

NVAO - for Flanders

10 out of 15 responded. Some responded by answering the questions, others by referring to national documents or websites explaining the national degree system. Some German organisations that did not respond themselves referred to the general German response provided by the Akkreditierungsrat. The following questions were asked:

1. Are bachelor and masters titles used, and /or are existing national degree titles retained?

We are additionally interested to know whether bachelor and master titles are used 'in English' and / or whether they are translated into a local language; also whether or not existing (pre Bologna Process) degree titles are still maintained.

2. In what way were the overall system (if any) for degree titles, and the titles of specific degrees, constructed and used?

We are keen to understand the variations in use of both the 'stem' (bachelor/master) and the suffix (eg of Science or Arts; Science (engineering); Engineering; etc), and the ways that these are used in combination.

3. We would welcome comments on how the titles are presented in full, and in abbreviation. For example, if you use bachelor's titles for engineering students are they in the form of: Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Bachelor of Science (Engineering), Bachelor of Engineering etc

and are these abbreviated to, for example: BSc, BSc Eng, BSc (Eng), Beng, etc

4. Are there any national regulations or authorizations concerning the use of degree titles?
5. Is it possible to tell from the degree title what type of programme the graduate studying at?
6. Can programmes with a more academic orientation, for example, be readily distinguished from those with a more practical / professional profile?
7. Is it possible to tell from the degree title what type of institution the graduate studying at?
8. How was the current degree system established or defined in your country?

9. Was the process, for example, essentially a 'top down' one, or did it emerge through a democratic process?
10. Is your organisation involved in the validation of degrees for given programmes?
11. What are, in your opinion, the strong and weak aspects of the system of degree titles used in your country?
12. Do you expect developments in the nature of the degree system, and/or in the use of degree titles, in your country in the coming 5 years? If so what kinds of developments?
13. The Committee would also be very pleased to receive any further points that you think would be helpful to its deliberations regarding the use of degree titles.

Documentation received by the Committee

- HBO Raad: Position paper and background information for the secretariate
- Nuffic: Survey on names of academic degrees in the 15 ENIC/NARIC networks
- MKB: Report on employability of HBO students in MKB (in Dutch) and on associate degrees (in Dutch).
- SAIL: Position paper
- ISO: Position paper
- LSVb: Position paper
- VSNU: Position paper
- Cesaer: Various position papers and Criteria for Academic Bachelor's and Master's (amongst others Engineering Education and Research and the Bologna Process *Ön the Road to Bergen 2005*, Communication of Cesear and SEFI on the Bologna Declaration, Communication of CESAER on the Bologna Declaration, Cesaer biennial report.
- Criteria by TU Delft, TU Eindhoven and University of Twente (through Cesaer)
- Dutch Bar Association (Orde van Advocaten), Dr. R.C.H. van Otterlo, Hoofd Opleiding: letter to the Committee with recommendations on degrees
- KIVI NIRIA: formula of basic science content in the engineering programmes and the formula for the professional engineering qualification EURING
- European qualification framework (suggested by MKB)
- Regulations concerning accreditation, evaluation and approval pursuant to the act relating to universities and colleges and the act relating to private colleges (NOKUT) - With annex: Criteria for evaluation of universities' and university colleges' quality assurance systems for educational activities
- Documents comparing the Indonesian degree structure with the Dutch structure and higher education - by Maria Satya Rani (in Dutch)
- Report of the Dutch Bologna Steering group (Ministry), February 24th 2005 (in Dutch)
- Communiqué of the conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen 19-20 May 2005.
- Trends IV report: European universities implementing Bologna (Sybille Reichert and Christian Tauch)

