

FAQ English version

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About

The ISO

The ISO (Dutch National Student Association, or 'Interstedelijk Studentenoverleg') is the biggest nationwide student organisation of the Netherlands and represents the common interest of the almost 730.000 students in the Dutch higher education system. The ISO is the regular conversation partner of, amongst others, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, political parties and the sector associations of the research universities and universities of applied sciences.

The executive body of the ISO consists of an executive board and fourteen employees. The board, consisting of five fulltime board members, changes every year at the start of summer. Employees are usually active for a period of two years.

The ISO stands for the ambitious and critical student who is actively engaged with his own education. We are also there for students who are working on making these core values their own.

Vision of the ISO

Turning great plans into great deeds

Higher education offers students the opportunity to develop themselves as an individual. At least as important is the transfer and discovery of knowledge and experience that can contribute to the progress of society and the economy.

The Dutch National Student Association ('Interstedelijk Studentenoverleg', or ISO) chooses to represent the interests of ambitious, critical and curious students, as well as students who want to make these attributes their own. This calls for high-quality education that is provided by students and teachers in consultation with the labour market and society.

In ISO's ideal world, students reach their full potential in a close-knit educational community. Student, teacher and institution are closely connected. Students and teachers possess the required capacities and show commitment. A teacher has both substantive and didactic capacities. Higher education participation is valuable and inspires both students and teachers day in, day out. Once started, there is no room for a lack of commitment: students are actively engaged in their educational process. This is guaranteed by a critical and constructive attitude of teachers towards students and vice versa. In this way, individual freedom and the acquisition of knowledge are connected with taking responsibility. The student will naturally look for extra-curricular challenges that, in addition to education, contribute to his or her personal development. This gives space to self-development, but is always done in consultation with teacher and university. After all, the student is involved in the educational process and feels responsible for its implementation. Students should be able to make full use of national and international opportunities.

Adequate governmental financing is a key condition for fulfilling ISO's ideal. The student's own investment, in addition to governmental funding, should be financially acceptable. A fair balance between generations must be ensured in financing the higher education system. Society and the private sector contribute there where the added value to education and students is visible, as long as their contribution does not compromise the independence of the higher educational institutions.

To achieve this ideal, the ISO cooperates with its constituency ('achterban') and partner organizations and actively approaches the political arena. They recognize the ISO by its young, fresh, open-minded tone and a passion for education. ISO-employees and board members approach and present their views to students, partners, politicians and the media in a dynamic and creative manner. The organization forges strategic alliances and actively forms coalitions so that broad support can be achieved. In this process the organization is reliable, honest, but also pushes the limits. The ISO is known as a learning organization that is proud of its successes. With ISO's ideal image in mind it shows itself to be a realist. That means devising, proposing and defending alternative solutions. The ISO will always be willing to discuss alternative options: dialogue is essential. The door of ISO's office at the Bemurde Weerd will therefore always be open to those who are in for a good conversation or a strong discussion.

The ISO chooses to represent the interests of the student who is involved with his or her own education. The ISO derives its strength and right to exist from this.

History

On January 26, 1974 the ISO ('Interuniversitair Studentenoverleg', literal translation: Interuniversity Student Consultation) was established as a national umbrella organization for five university councils from various Dutch cities. The students in these councils felt the need to discuss certain issues with fellow student board members from other cities and to exchange information and experiences. In this way they could strengthen their position at their own higher educational institution. Soon the ISO expanded and represented students from all over the Netherlands. In 1995, the ISO changed its name from 'Interuniversitair Studentenoverleg' to 'Interstedelijk Studentenoverleg' (literal translation: Intercity Student Consultation, proper translation: Dutch National Student Association). Since then the ISO also represents Dutch students studying at a university of applied sciences (HBO) at the national level.

The early years

In the early years, the ISO was no more than a suitcase with some documents. The board met at most once a month and then this suitcase opened. The minutes were typed out by the secretary

with a typewriter, using a carbon paper for the necessary duplicates. Scholarships for student board members, provided by the Ministry of Education, were not yet available in the 1970s. At that time the internal politics of the Ministry had not yet become acquainted with the Dutch 'polder model' (consensus-based policy-making) and so subsidizing your own opposition was not really up for discussion. The meetings usually took place in Utrecht in the Academiegebouw because that was centrally located and free. There was no chairman because the ISO did not have a formal structure yet, and due to a lack of money no treasurer was needed either.

The end of the 1980s was a pivotal time for the ISO. Due to immense cutbacks in higher education there were many students protests. Since its inception the ISO had never been this busy. This was caused by the policymaking of the Ministry of Education that, together with the introduction of student finance ('studiefinanciering') and the Harmonization Act ('wetsvoorstel Harmonisatie Collegegelden'), demanded a lot of attention from the ISO. It was time to take matters seriously and after a visit to the notary, ISO became an official association.

The Harmonization Act in particular encountered a lot of oppression. This is why, together with the LSVb ('Landelijke Studentenvakbond', the Dutch Student Union, another major student organization in the Netherlands) and the LKvV ('Landelijke Kamer van Verenigingen', National Chamber of Associations, an umbrella organization for all traditional student associations), under the name LAS ('Landelijke Aktie Studenten', National Student Action) the largest student demonstration ever was set up with 40,000 students. This resulted in the ISO-chair being featured on the eight o'clock news. The discussion about the Harmonization Act was postponed in the House of Representatives ('Tweede Kamer') until June 1988. Eventually, the Harmonization Act was passed after being partially amended. A well-known member of the Senate ('Eerste Kamer') told the press that the Harmonization Act was the worst law that the House of Representatives had ever adopted.

Professionalization continued. In the early 1990s, a new period for the ISO began. The ISO and all its contacts underwent a process of professionalization and the media were employed more and more. By setting up committees the work became increasingly intensive: 40- to 50-hour working weeks were no exception to the board. For the first time, the ISO had a number of fulltime board members. But the knowledge of these people was primarily present in their head. This changed with the emergence of the first ISO-office on the Oudegracht in Utrecht, a professional office where the board members worked on a daily basis.

Name change

In the academic year 1995-1996 the ISO underwent a change that permanently changed its character and objectives. 'Interuniversitair Studenten Overleg' (Interuniversity Student Consultation) became 'Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg' (Intercity Student Consultation); this because the ISO also wanted to be there for the universities of applied sciences (HBO). The challenge remained to extend the plan of adding the universities of applied sciences to concretely cooperating with HBO-organizations. This proved to be difficult at first. Based on personal networks and on an incidental basis, the ISO supported a number of HBO-organizations. In a short period of time many universities of applied sciences were contacted and the ISO became a full partner for all parties involved in the field of HBO.

Because now the interests of the HBO were represented as well, the ISO had gathered a large constituency. But being a student entails more than just studying and in order to gain the best possible insight into and reliable access to all facets of student life and study career, the ISO decided to sign a covenant with the LKvV ('Landelijke Kamer van Verenigingen', National Chamber of Associations, an umbrella organization for all traditional Dutch student associations). It was agreed that both organizations would provide each other with information and that the ISO would represent the interests of the LKvV. Where possible, joint projects would be initiated. The ISO annually appointed a double representative who made sure the interests of the LKvV were properly represented.

FAQ students

Your application

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- Application study programme
- Study choice check
- Admission requirements

Student finance

- Loan
- Tuition fee loan
- Supplementary grant
- Student travel product
- Former system
- How long are you entitled?

Study abroad

- Student finance
- Scholarships
- Tuition fees
- Health insurance
- Deregister from the municipality
- Entire study abroad
- Internship

Graduation

- Mortgage

Second study

- Student finance
- Statutory tuition fees and institutional tuition fees

Is your question not listed?

- Are you an employee of a higher education institution?
- Do you have a dispute with your institution?
- Are you an MBO-student?
- Are you a high school student?

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

- What does a BSA entail?
- What do I do when I have a negative BSA?
- Second year BSA
- Postponed BSA

Transfer

- From HBO (university of applied sciences) to WO (research university)
- From MBO (secondary vocational education) to HBO (university of applied sciences)

Your application

Do you have questions about studying in the Netherlands or abroad? On this page you will find different categories with information on this.

I am becoming a student

If you have registered for a study before May 1, you are entitled to a study choice check. This check is part of your registration and is often required by the institution. If, despite this obligation, you do not participate, your admission right may expire. The study may refuse to accept you.

The study choice check is a final check to see if the study really suits you. Once you have completed the study choice check, you will receive a study choice recommendation from the study programme. This advice can be positive or negative, but is in no way binding. So you can start the study programme, even when you received a negative advice. Nevertheless, it is important to listen carefully to the advice. What the study choice check looks like differs per institution. You can find more information about this on the website of your institution and/or study programme.

Application study programme

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Admission requirements

Once you have selected a study programme, you must look at the admission requirements that apply to that study. For some studies you have to participate in a selection procedure. You must also register early for these studies (see heading: decentralized selection). You can find this information on the website of the institution.

If you are a Dutch national, you register for the programme via Studielink. If you are not Dutch, the website of the study programme will tell you how to register. This differs per institution.

If you register after 1 May, your admission right will expire. This means that the study program may refuse you. You can register for a maximum of four study programmes.

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

What does a BSA entail?

A binding study advice (BSA) is a decision of the institution about the progress of your study. Every student has to deal with the binding study advice at the end of the first year. If this recommendation turns out to be negative, then unfortunately you have to stop your education, unless there are special circumstances. If you have obtained a negative BSA, it is still possible to follow another course at the same institution, or the same course at another institution.

What do I do if I have a negative BSA?

It is of course possible that you do not agree with a negative BSA. You can then appeal within 6 weeks to the Examination Appeals Board. If they decide that you should be dismissed, you can still go to the higher education appeals board (CBHO). You do this by means of a letter that you send to the CBHO with the decision of the Examination Appeals Board with the request to make a provisional provision (a quick emergency decision). You can contact the National Student Law Office ('Landelijk Studenten Rechtsbureau') if you need help in completing this procedure.

Second-year BSA

If you have already received a positive BSA, the program may not set additional requirements for the second year. After all, only one moment for testing is allowed. A second BSA in your second year is therefore not allowed.

If, in previous years, you were dismissed in the second year due to a BSA, then the period for appeals has unfortunately expired. It is possible to ask your institution if you can come back. It is important to refer to court rulings. Here too, the National Student Law Office can help you.

Postponed BSA

If there are serious personal circumstances that prevent you from achieving your BSA, contact your study advisor at the earliest possible stage. The procedure for requesting a deferment can then be started. In the event that you receive a postponement from the BSA, it is possible that the institution will raise the requirement for obtaining the BSA in the second academic year. There is, however, a maximum requirement: the BSA may not require more than 60 ECTS from the first year.

Transfer

From HBO (university of applied sciences) to WO (research university)

When you switch from hbo to a research university, the same rules apply with regard to registration and admission requirements. It is important that you look in advance at the admission requirements of the research university study program, and ensure that you are admissible for the desired program.

What is important to take into account is that the years that you have used student finance in hbo are also taken into consideration when determining your student finance in wo. You can find more information about this on our page on student finance.

From MBO (secondary vocational education) to HBO (university of applied sciences)

If you transfer from MBO to HBO, the same rules apply as for HAVO students who are going to study for the first time. More information about this on the registration and student finance pages. What is different as an MBO student is that you might have already had a student public transport card. You can also use this in the period between the two study programmes, provided that this period does not last longer than 4 months.

For more questions about MBO, you can also contact the JOB ('Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs') which is an umbrella organization for and by MBO students.

Is your question not listed?

Are you an employee of a higher education institution?

Do you have a dispute with your institution?

The ISO promotes the interests of students, but also strengthens local student organizations by offering training courses and exchanging knowledge. Legal services as an element in advocacy for students and student organizations are performed within and by the National Student Law Office (LSR, 'Landelijk Studenten Rechtsbureau'). The LSR assists higher professional and university students in collective affairs. As soon as it is noticed that a problem affects several students, a legal solution is sought. In addition, the LSR is the umbrella organization of twelve local law offices that are ready to answer more individual questions. The LSR forwards your question to one of these law firms or handles it themselves.

Studierechten.com for you, from LSR & ISO!

In October 2016, the ISO and LSR launched the website www.studierechten.com. By means of clear route maps, this platform provides students with tools for tackling common problems step by step and thus defending their legal position at all funded higher education institutions within the Netherlands.

Based on a number of the common problems of students, regarding their legal status, a number of legal route maps have been made for:

- Receive a Negative Binding Study Advice
- Disagreeing on assessment of exam / grade
- Request for postponement of expiration study results
- Compulsory study costs in addition to tuition fees
- Problems with your student finance
- Problems with registration / deregistration at institution
- Other issues

Check the website of the LSR for more information and to see when they can be reached.

Are you an MBO-student?

JOB is the national youth organization that gives vocational education (MBO) students a voice in education. The JOB ensures that your opinion and perspective are not forgotten and that even more is heard. By explaining to students their rights and helping students make their voice heard the media and politics, we give students every means to influence their education, school and internship! You can reach the JOB via email at info@jobmbo.nl

Are you a high school student?

The National Action Committee for High School Students (LAKS, 'Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren') is an organization of, for and by high school students. The LAKS ensures that there is

discussion not only about, but also with the high school student. The LAKS organizes various activities, informs and represents high school students. You have to see this very broadly. The LAKS has an opinion on everything that has to do with secondary education. On behalf of all students. You can reach the LAKS via email at info@laks.nl.

Standpoints

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Co-determination

- General information
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Accreditation and external supervision

General information

In Dutch higher education, there is a system of accreditation that aims to guarantee the basic quality of programmes and institutions. If a study programme is accredited, students are entitled to student finance and the diplomas are recognized by the government. Within the current structure, accreditation is set up in such a way that a panel is selected and then visits the relevant program. By means of many discussions between the panel and people within the study programme - this is called peer review - a visitation report is written, which is then sent to NVAO. NVAO is the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization that, on the basis of frameworks, reads the visitation report and determines whether a study programme is accredited or not.

Recent developments

The recently adopted Custom Accreditation Act ('wet Accreditatie op Maat') has made it possible for students to play a greater role in visitations, for example by strengthening the position of the

study programme committee ('opleidingscommissie'). There will also be a student chapter in the final visitation report that is written by students and has a free design.

Vision of the ISO

Within the European landscape of higher education, we signal a shift from accreditation at programme level to accreditation at institution level. In the Netherlands too, steps have been taken towards institutional accreditation through the Institutional Review Quality Assurance ('Instellingstoets Kwaliteitszorg', ITK) and the Limited Training Assessments ('Beperkte Opleidingsbeoordelingen', BOB). The ISO is of the opinion that quality of education is of great importance and that it is therefore extremely important to once in a while determine whether sufficient quality is provided by the study programmes. In addition, the accreditation system should not only determine the quality of education, but it should also help improve education. This is already done, for example, by naming the strengths and weaknesses of a study programme in a visitation report. The student's voice must be included clearly and consistently throughout this process.

See also our vision document: "Kwaliteitszorg van morgen" (in Dutch).

Teacher quality

General information

The ISO is of the opinion that the performance of students depends to a large extent on the quality of their teachers. For this reason, it is important that there is a vision of the skills that higher education teachers must have. Such a qualification (the BKO, 'Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs', Basic Qualification Education) was jointly recognized by all research universities ten years ago, while the comparable qualification for universities of applied sciences (the BDB, 'Basis Didactische Bekwaamheid', Basic Didactic Competence) is not yet widely recognized.

Recent developments

The ISO has an annual "Teacher of the Year" election. This teacher is an example for many in the field of education and is appointed by an expert jury. In addition, the ISO is always looking for further professionalization of teachers. Through consultation with institutions, umbrella organizations and politics, we look for the best ways in which teachers can align their lessons with the real world and with the wishes of students.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO is always committed to good teachers in higher education and acknowledges that institutions do a lot when it comes to teacher quality, but sharing of knowledge and a common vision are lacking sometimes. The ISO believes it is important that there is a clear vision of the capacities that teachers in higher education must have. From this point of view, the ISO therefore strives for joint recognition of the Basic Didactic Competence (Dutch: BDB), in addition to the comparable Basic Qualification Education (Dutch: BKO).

Legal position of the student

General information

Within the ISO, the independent National Student Law Office (Dutch: 'Landelijk Studenten Rechtsbureau', LSR) monitors the educational problems that students experience. They successfully do this by providing advice, but also by possibly initiating legal proceedings. Furthermore, the ISO believes it is important that there is a good provision of information to

students about their rights, both within their study programme and at their institution in general information.

Recent developments

The ISO signals problems concerning the legal position of students with regard to the number of tracks, directions and variations that higher education institutions offer within study programmes. There is a great diversity in tracks, but many terms are also used interchangeably in the naming of programmes. Moreover, there is no clear definition of tracks, which means that they are sometimes indistinguishable from other options such as minors.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO believes that a framework for tracks is important for the legal position of the student. In addition, a clear framework can contribute to a better informed study choice of students. The ISO does not want a jungle of tracks to emerge that students cannot fathom properly.

Educational innovation and privacy

General information

Every day the ISO concerns itself with the question: how can we make higher education even better? Innovative ideas and developments play an important role in this, in particular new technologies, digitization and flexibilization.

Digitization is a big part of our lives; students are inextricably linked to digital resources. Higher education uses digital resources, but is also investigating how these can best be used for students and teachers. Innovative ideas and developments play a major role in this.

Recent developments

Currently, experiments with flexible studying are taking place at various institutions. The first results are already known, for example at the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. They showed that as a result of the experiment, in which students paid tuition fees per study point, fewer students dropped out. The ISO expects an evaluation of the experiment at the end of 2018, and will use this as the basis for determining what is needed to further shape flexible studying.

The ISO is involved in the implementation of the acceleration agenda in higher education. Through this agenda, various digitization plans are being accelerated in higher education. The ISO is a member of the steering committee responsible for this, consisting of SURF, the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Dutch: VH, 'Vereniging van Hogescholen'), the Association of Universities (Dutch: VSNU, 'Vereniging van Universiteiten') and the Ministry of Education. The ISO closely monitors the quality of education here.

Vision of the ISO

Every student is different and has different qualities, learning styles and needs within his study programme. The ISO believes it is important to pay attention to this within education, so that all types of students can learn as much as possible. However, standardized study programs regularly cause restrictions. The way in which education is designed organized must not be an obstacle. The increasing pressure on students due to efficiency measures on the one hand and the growing demand and need for development within and outside the study therefore requires more flexible education. It is therefore important to give students more room to compile a personalized study path with courses, extracurricular activities, an experience abroad or internships that they deem relevant for their development. The ISO therefore considers it important that higher education is

organized in such a way that it is possible for students to study at their own pace regardless of time and place. Flexible studying is seen as an important means of achieving this.

Digitization offers many opportunities for higher education. For example, developments such as blended learning (campus education supported by web technology) and the flipped classroom (a variation on blended learning, which still revolves around campus education, in which the transfer of information from a course is partly moved to home and supported through blended learning), open Educational Resources (digital educational material that is available for reuse) and Massive Open Online Courses (a new development in distance learning) are increasingly coming to the fore, but it remains difficult to implement them properly. In this context, attention must always be paid to a separation between the learning and performance environment of students, and the privacy of students must be guaranteed.

Student wellbeing and studying with a functional dependency

General information

The ISO signals that the pressure on students is being increased on several sides; students have to study faster, they have to borrow to pay for their studies and gain useful (work) experience during their studies to build their CV. On the one hand, this pressure comes from increasingly stricter social norms that translate into policy measures, such as the introduction of a Binding Study Advice (BSA) of sometimes as many as 60 ECTS and the introduction of a loan system that causes more students to work alongside their studies. On the other hand, this pressure also comes from increasingly compelling social standards, whereby it is the norm to mainly share successes and good experiences/moments on social media and show "the perfect picture".

Recent developments

At the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, student wellbeing has been researched and the results were quite shocking. 38.9% of responders indicated that they experienced mild to moderate anxiety and depression symptoms and 14.4% even had serious symptoms. Many students had burnout complaints and indicated that performance pressure plays an important role here. Subsequently, a student wellbeing action plan was written in which 5 pillars are mentioned to promote student wellbeing and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science wrote a joint ambition in which the bottlenecks regarding student wellbeing were identified and possible improvements were looked into. It is now up to individual institutions to specify further details here, together with the co-determination bodies and possibly with the support of experts.

Vision of the ISO

Starting to study brings new responsibilities and young people need the time and space to find out how to study. That is why the ISO wants to focus on a healthy study climate at every institution, focusing on the prevention of psychological complaints among students. Good and accessible (psychological) assistance must also be available at every institution, so that every student can be helped with complaints. In addition, the ISO believes it is essential that more attention is paid to tighter social norms and expectations and the negative effects that increasing pressure on performance has on students, for example in the form of a national survey on performance pressure and student wellbeing.

Funding of higher education

General information

The funding portfolio revolves around the way in which Dutch higher education is financed. At the moment, the income from Dutch universities and colleges simply consists of three funding streams.

In addition to income from the government (the first funding stream), universities receive funding from the NWO and KNAW for specific research projects (the second funding stream). The third funding stream consists of all other income, such as resources from the EU. Finally, tuition is a source of income. Universities may charge a statutory tuition fee for the programs they offer. Students outside the EEA region or students following a second study pay the institutional tuition fee rate, which is much higher than the regular statutory tuition fee.

Recent developments

The Coalition Agreement states that the funding system for higher education will be revised, with specific attention to technical programmes. As an interlocutor of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the ISO wants to participate in discussions about the ways in which the funding of higher education will change. Partly due to the large increase in student numbers and the overall decrease in funding per student, the ISO signals worrying trends in the current funding system.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO stands for future-proof higher education and appropriate funding. A recent report from the Education Council (Dutch: 'Onderwijsraad') indicates that if higher education wants to fulfil (wider) societal assignments and strive for higher quality, there must also be sufficient funding to achieve this. According to the ISO, it is therefore important that more money is assigned to higher education.

Income position of the student

General information

Student income has deteriorated considerably in recent years. The 'basisbeurs' (literally: basic grant; system where part of governmental student finance was a gift) was abolished in 2015, which has caused students to borrow considerably more. In total, it is expected that as a result of this abolition, students will borrow approximately 6,000 euros more, resulting in an average total debt 21,000 euros. This leads to a huge mountain of student debt, which also makes it harder for students to get a mortgage.

Recent developments

The Rutte III Cabinet has given students a 'present' which in reality is paid from students' own pockets. The government has halved the tuition fees for first-year students, but students will more than pay for this through a higher VAT rate.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO is committed to a good income position for students. The income position of the student has suffered considerably in recent years. It is time for this to turn around. Measures that the ISO supports include at least a broadening of the supplementary followed by an increase of this grant. In addition, the ISO is committed to providing former students with a greater chance on the housing market by arguing that the impact of a study debt on a mortgage must be reduced with politicians and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Education and the job market

General information

The ISO believes that every student is studying to increase his or her knowledge on a specific topic. At the same time, after completing their studies, every student wants to work in the professional field for which he has studied. The ISO is of the opinion that institutions, together with

other stakeholders, of course including the professional field, must take up the gauntlet if we want to ensure that education prepares well for the labour market. It is nobody's wish that a graduate student has to search for a long time to find a job on the labour market. If the study programmes pay timely attention to the connection between studying and the job market, we can prevent this type of search.

Recent developments

The ISO watches if institutions do their best to create a match between study programmes and the labour market demands, but there is still much room for improvement here. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has also instructed student organizations and umbrella organizations to jointly analyse how higher education courses connect to the labour market. In addition to this analysis, the ISO is committed to providing clear information to students, so that students are informed during their studies about their chances on the labour market and how to seize the available opportunities.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO believes that the general development of students in higher education must be a top priority. At the same time, the ISO signals that after their studies, students want to find a place on the labour market within the field in which they have studied. If there is too much focus on the general information broadening of knowledge, the connection to the labour market can sometimes be at stake. The ISO monitors this and looks for solutions to timely solve this problem.

Student finance and public transport

General information

The student travel product is an important condition for students to study. HBO and WO students can use the student travel product for a maximum of 5 years in case the nominal duration of a study is 4 years.

Recent developments

In December 2017, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science announced that the intended savings on the student travel product, through a better use of educational buildings and teaching times, were not successful. This included better spreading of lecture times throughout the day and more digital distance education. With the intended money saved, the minister wanted to invest in the quality of education.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO stands for student mobility and, because of that, the student travel product. This means that students can study at the institution of their choice without being hindered by financial considerations. After all, it is not the case that students do not spend money on public transport besides their student travel product. The Nibud (Dutch organization that informs and advises households and individuals on financial matters) calculated that students spend 63 euros on average per month on public transport alongside the student travel product. In addition, the ISO considers the student travel product of great importance because it offers students the opportunity to develop themselves outside of their city. Examples of this are an internship or a minor at another location.

Accessibility, connection and transfer

General information

For years, the ISO has been calling for accessible education in which everyone can enjoy equal opportunities. The starting point is: equality by making a difference. Within accessibility of education, the ISO distinguishes three different important phases; admission, connection and transfer.

Admission

To the ISO, admission to higher education revolves around (prospective) students who want to get a place in higher education. They must have the opportunity to follow the study programme they want to follow. They must receive proper assistance here in order to make the right choice and not to encounter unnecessary barriers. Selection and additional admission requirements must be avoided as much as possible. If a study programme sets or selects additional admission requirements, then this must be clearly communicated and substantiated. The additional requirements or selection criteria must also be well, and scientifically, substantiated. The admission must also take into account the background and general situation of the (prospective) student. Education benefits from diversity and everyone must have equal admission chances. Admission is custom work!

Connection

The various forms of education must connect to each other as well as possible. Where this is not the case, students must be properly supervised. When looking at good connections, it is not only about returns. The ISO sees study success in a broader and different light than just returns and efficiency, for example by looking at the room for self-development of the student through extracurricular activities or facilitating a healthy study climate through extra supervision. Thus, study success can mean something different to every individual student, ranging from, for example, obtaining a diploma (without being bound by time pressure), to gaining new professional experiences that will benefit the student later in life.

Transfer

Not every student arrives directly at the right place and at the right level of education. This is of course perfectly logical; not everyone develops at the same pace and in addition it is extremely difficult to at a young age know what you like and what you are good at. Fortunately our education system offers the possibility to switch or move on to a higher level. Unfortunately this has become increasingly difficult for students in recent years. On the one hand due to financial pressure, on the other hand due to increased additional admission requirements and required bridging programs. Obviously, it is important that students are sufficiently equipped to start a study programme, but there must still be room for this. The ISO believes it is extremely important to offer transfer opportunities.

Recent developments

In recent years, a large number of policy measures have been taken in higher education with an (in)direct negative effect on accessibility, connection and transfer. First of all, the hard cut (Dutch: 'harde knip') was introduced in 2012/2013: a student must now first have completed his entire bachelor's degree before a master programme can be started. In addition, various things have changed with the Quality in Variety Act (Dutch: Wet Kwaliteit in Verscheidenheid): the automatic admission right for someone with a HBO propedeuse to a research university bachelor's degree has expired, the automatic admission right to a transfer master's degree has been abolished (leading to more possibilities for selection in the master's degree), further prior education requirements for MBO-students who wish to continue at HBO-level have become possible, the central draw (Dutch: 'centrale loting') for *numerus fixus* study programmes (programmes with a limited number of places) has been abolished and the 'basisbeurs' (where a significant part of

governmental student finance was a grant instead of a loan) has been abolished. Moreover, far-reaching internationalization has potential consequences for the accessibility of education and due to the above-mentioned act, selection for Master programmes have increased enormously in recent years. In previous years four reports have been published that map the (in) direct consequences of these measures. The figures in the various reports do not lie; the aforementioned measures have a negative effect on the accessibility of higher education. All students, but certainly specific groups, experience the adverse effects of, among other things, increased selection and admission requirements, strict BSA standards and the higher costs of studying due to the abolition of the 'basisbeurs'. It is high time to change this. Fortunately, the minister also finds accessibility very important. In the coming year, this will therefore be a priority topic for the ISO.

Vision of the ISO

Students should be able to get to the right place and have equal opportunities: that must be the starting point. It is impossible to deny that the background of a student always influences the chances a student has. However, we must ensure that this influence is minimized and that students who need this receive extra support in developing their talents. The emphasis must be on equal opportunities by making a difference. In the coming period, a lot of work will have to be done on drawing up a vision. The first step is to recognize the importance of accessible education and equal opportunities. A second step is to jointly identify the problems and attention points. Measures must then be devised, worked out and taken. The input from student organizations is essential here, as it is of direct concern to them.

Decentral and master selection

General information

Since the abolition of the draw system (Dutch: 'lotingsstelsel'), there is the possibility for institutions to select students. The ISO is pleased that as a result of this there is more attention for the individual student and that a student does not have to rely on luck to get into a study programme. However, in recent years the ISO sees a proliferation of selection requirements, which exposes students to unnecessary selective measures.

Recent developments

The ISO signals that there is not enough consultation between higher education institutions about methods of selection that ensure that the right student ends up in the right place. The ISO investigates what well-founded methods of selection are and tries to discuss this with institutions in a constructive way.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO is pleased with the abolition of the draw system, because this was an unfounded way to select students. However, the result is that a switch has been made to selective measures and these are not always scientifically based. The ISO warns against such a proliferation of selection requirements, because this will create a wall for students and endangers the accessibility of higher education.

Internationalization

General information

Internationalization in higher education covers several topics. Firstly, it is about the internationalization of study programmes in the Netherlands. The range of international

programmes is increasing and more and more institutions are embedding internationalization in their business operations. Secondly, internationalization in higher education is about outbound mobility. More and more Dutch students are going abroad for (part of) their studies. Finally, internationalization is also about European legislation in the field of education. Although education is not a direct competence of the European Union, much has already been determined jointly through harmonization legislation. This concerns, for example, the recognition of each other's diplomas and the common recognition of the bachelor's-master's structure.

Recent developments

Internationalization of education is a hot topic. The number of international students who come to study in the Netherlands is growing enormously. Research universities and universities of applied sciences offer more and more programs in English. Unfortunately, this is not always beneficial to the quality of education and the prerequisites at many institutions and in many cities are not yet in order. Students indicate that the level of English of their teachers is often not yet up to standard and housing for international students is a drama. The ISO remains committed to convincing institutions that they must first get this fixed. The Minister of Education recently presented a vision letter on the internationalization of higher education. It makes a number of important commitments in this regard. It is up to the ISO to properly monitor this.

There are also important developments at a European level. The new Erasmus+ program is currently being implemented, known from the Erasmus scholarships with which many Dutch students go abroad. For the ISO it is especially important that the number of available scholarships will increase for Dutch students: there is currently much more demand for scholarships than there is money available.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO has always expressed its support for internationalization, but it has always been critical of its motives, speed, quality and degree. In order to successfully internationalize, choices must be made and concrete measures must be taken. In many places, institutions do not internationalize in a responsible manner, so the added value is questionable. The most important principle remains that the internationalization of education must always contribute to quality. Internationalization entails more than simply changing the language; internationalization is about adding an international dimension to the study programme. In addition, institutions must have the prerequisites in order before they attract more international students. There must be sufficient accommodation for international students and international students must have the opportunity to fully participate in student life. Thirdly, all Dutch students who want to should be able to study abroad. They should not be deterred by financial obstacles or fear that their credits will not be recognized in the Netherlands.

Education and research

General information

The vast majority of the goals that the ISO sets itself affect both education and research. When it comes to this portfolio, special attention is paid to the synergy between these two concepts. For example, attention is given to research within universities of applied sciences by proclaiming a "Lector of the Year".

Recent developments

The ISO is sceptical about the "PhD-students" (Dutch: 'promotiestudenten') experiment. (In the Netherlands, PhD'ers are historically seen and treated as employees, not students.) The ISO fears

that this experiment from the ministry will not achieve the intended objectives and that the so-called 'promotiestudenten' may be better qualified as regular PhD'ers (Dutch: 'promovendi'). The ISO is also involved in a process where scholarships for teachers in higher education are evaluated. The ISO believes that teachers should be given the space and resources to develop and conduct research about issues that are relevant to academia and therefore society.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO always strives for the right balance between education and research. When there is a sound balance, students are helped in meeting their educational and research needs. In addition, the ISO believes that students who want to obtain a doctorate after their regular studies should be given the space, resources and appreciation that they deserve. The ISO will therefore continue to critically monitor the "PhD-students" experiment.

Talent education

General information

Talent education challenges students, teachers and institutions to get the best out of the student. However, the current system is too one-sided and serves a too small group of students. The ISO believes that there must be more paths to promote excellence. The ISO therefore believes that excellence is not a proper name and prefers to talk about talent development.

Recent developments

Efforts are currently being made to broaden talent programs, while also looking at increasing the profile fund (Dutch: 'profilleringsfonds'). In addition, in cooperation with the ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Economic Affairs, a good interpretation of entrepreneurship education is being discussed.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO argues that the organizational context of research universities and universities of applied sciences should be adjusted so that students are encouraged to get the best out of themselves. The focus should primarily be on talent development; the educational institution offers education in which all students can perform optimally, regardless of the way in which students are talented. After all, every student is excellent in his own way. One student seeks challenges in academic expansion or deepening through special study programs, while the other starts his own company, is a top athlete or does a board year, volunteer work or participates in co-determination. All these forms of excellence are equally valuable to the ISO. These students acquire knowledge, skills and experiences that will help them for the rest of their lives.

Co-determination

General information

Almost continuously the ISO pays attention to the position of students in co-determination councils and program committees. The ISO describes the role of co-determination as a controlling body, which has a say at the highest level of the institution to improve the student's position and to defend it where necessary. The role of co-determination is, besides controlling and cooperative, initiative rich as well: it comes up with ideas to further improve the institution, education and the student. It is therefore both reactive and proactive. This requires a critical but constructive attitude. The role of the co-determination council member is to be aware of both content and process. The ISO has been committed for years to making the position of co-determination as strong as

possible. On the one hand by properly embedding the rights and obligations of co-determination in the law, and on the other hand by training and supporting co-determination as well as possible.

Recent developments

Many bottlenecks that have been known for years in the field of co-determination are still relevant. It remains important that institutions properly facilitate, support and offer training opportunities to the co-determination council. This is not always the case. On the other hand, a lot has happened, central and decentralized co-determination has acquired more and more powers. The co-participation council must now agree with the institutional plan and the main points of the budget, with which they can exert considerable influence on the (long-term) policy of the institution. Since the 'Versterking bestuurskracht' Act, study program committees have the right of consent to certain parts of the Education and Examination Regulations, with which they can exercise significant influence on the quality of education. The quality agreements have recently given an enormous boost to co-determination. The co-determination council must agree to the process of quality agreements and the use of study advance funds (Dutch: 'studievoorschotmiddelen') through the quality agreements. This also entails many responsibilities. The ISO will do everything in its power to ensure that co-determination is as effective as possible.

Vision of the ISO

The ISO sees co-determination as a responsible task that must be carried out with a certain awareness. In this way, co-determination contributes to improving the quality of education and the position of the student. The ISO underlines the importance of an open, transparent management and co-determination culture in which mutual respect and trust are self-evident. In a successful co-determination culture, the council is involved in a timely manner in the decision-making procedure and an open discussion is held in which the council is taken seriously by the consultative partner. The co-determination body must be seen by the institution as a valuable addition, not as a bump in the road. Co-determination must not only be taken seriously on paper, but also in practice.

Co-determination

Co-determination in a nutshell

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Co-determination in a nutshell

Frequently asked questions

Do the same rules apply to all universities?

No, we have three special universities in the Netherlands. These universities may have different rules regarding co-determination. The three special universities are VU Amsterdam, Tilburg University and Radboud University Nijmegen. In addition, the philosophical universities may also deviate. These are the Theological Universities in Kampen and Apeldoorn and the University for Humanities in Utrecht.

Does co-determination at a special university differ from other universities?

That is possible. In principle, special universities follow the regular rules, but the Executive Board of a special university can lay down rules on, for example, the structure of employee participation that deviates from the rules at other universities. These deviating rules must be submitted to the minister.

How do I find out if co-determination is something for me?

To get an impression of how things are going at your educational institution, you can attend a council meeting if it is public. In most cases you can find the meeting dates on the website of your educational institution. In addition, it is also advisable to speak with current or former council members.

How long does one term in co-determination last?

The term of office of the members of the central / university council is laid down in the regulations of the council, formally referred to as the co-determination regulations ('medezeggenschapsreglement'). The Executive Board determines these regulations. These regulations must be submitted to the relevant council when adopting or amending. Only when two thirds of the council agrees with the regulations is it valid.

The term of office of the members of the faculty council is laid down in the faculty regulations ('faculteitsreglement'). The faculty council has the right of consent in the event of a change to the faculty regulations.

How can I become a co-determination representative?

The seats in the central & university council and the sub / faculty council are filled by elections. The educational institution is required to organize elections. First of all you need to stand for election in a personal capacity. Depending on how the educational institution organizes the elections, you may have to submit statements of support before you are included in the election list. You can also form a list together with other candidates. With these other candidates you will be listed under one list name in the elections, but the students still have to vote for one person on that list.

How can I prepare for elections?

It is important to know when the elections are (when students can vote for you). Make sure that students know in advance why they should vote for you. You can announce your goals with flyers and posters. You can also activate students to vote for you via social media. In this way you also make people aware of the fact that the elections are coming up. When you are on a list together with others, you can also campaign together. Directly addressing students works very well during the elections. Therefore, prepare a short elevator pitch and practice it in advance.

How can I prepare for a council year?

A useful way to find out what the council is doing is to read annual reports that the central / university council is obliged to prepare and make accessible. Faculty councils at universities must also prepare such a report. These reports must be public and therefore accessible for you. You can often gain a lot of knowledge through a conversation with a predecessor. A network with other co-determination bodies is often very useful. You cannot start building and expanding this network early enough.

Do I receive a reimbursement for co-determination work?

Yes, the Executive Board makes resources from the profiling fund available for the central / university council and any faculty councils, sub councils and committees. The central / university council determines in the regulations for household matters how these funds are distributed.

Could my participation in co-determination possibly have negative consequences?

According to the law, the Executive Board ensures that the members of the central / university council are not "disadvantaged in their position with regard to the university" because of their council membership. This also applies to candidate members and former members of the central / university council.

The law currently does not contain anything about a similar concern that the Executive Board, or a dean or faculty / sub board, has towards members of a sub / faculty council and / or program committee.

Employee participation in a nutshell

As a student council member you represent the students at your educational institution. Your work is therefore extremely important! As the student's voice, you deal with policy documents, budgets, and you regularly consult with the Executive Board. These are things that you don't just do and that is why the ISO is there for you! The ISO wants co-determination in higher education to be as well-equipped as possible in order to be able to perform its task properly. The ISO is therefore happy to share its knowledge and experience. She does this through the annual training weekend, trainings, work group evenings, position papers, information booklets, and iso.nl!

As a co-determination representative you represent the interests of (a part of) the students at your educational institution. Co-determination is anchored in the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW). Co-determination representatives are interlocutors on the board of (a part of) the educational institution and therefore the horizontal accountability. Through, among other things, the advisory right and the right of consent, the co-determination board can influence the policy to be pursued by the educational institution.

Two different forms are possible within co-determination at both central and decentral levels. Co-determination at the decentral level follows the system of employee participation at the central level.

A distinction is also made between a divided and an undivided system. With a divided system there is one council for the student section and one council for the employee section. Both councils together form the joint council meeting ('gezamenlijke vergadering'). In the case of an undivided council, the employee and student sections are combined in one council and therefore not separated.

Central and decentralized

Co-determination takes place at one or more levels. Every higher education institution has at least one University Council or a central council. This council is the discussion partner of the Executive Board (CvB). The Executive Board informs the council in writing at least once a year of the policy it

has pursued and of the policy intentions for the coming year in the financial, organizational and educational field. If the educational institution consists of more than one faculty or academy, the faculties each have a faculty council or sub council. This council is the discussion partner of the dean and / or the faculty board.

Programme committees (PC)

The programme committee has officially become a representative advisory body since September 2017. Programme committees now have the right to consent on a number of components of the Education and Examination Regulations ('Onderwijs- en examenregeling') where previously the PCs only had the possibility to give advice. The new law also means that PC members must from now on be elected by elections, and no longer only by the program director. Exceptions to this are possible (if the faculty council decides this, for example). The PC also has:

- right of consent in the way of evaluating education
- right to information that the PC itself believes it needs
- right of initiative. This means that the director of the program must respond to the OC's initiative within two months
- the right to call to account the dean or the program board at least twice a year to discuss the intended policy

A dispute with the institutional management

What if the institution board, faculty board or dean does not follow my advice?

The board of the institution ensures that the council is then given the opportunity to consult further before the decision is finally taken.

The council did not give consent on a subject to which the council has the right of consent, what now?

The board has requested the council to agree and the council has not done so. The board may choose to adjust the plan in such a way that it can count on the approval of the board. They can also withdraw the plan or request mediation from higher authorities (for a sub / faculty council this is the institutional management, for the central / university council the supervisory board).

Mediation has not brought a solution, what now?

If the mediation does not bring a solution, the board can start a dispute. This is done through a petition with the National Higher Education Disputes Committee ('Landelijke Commissie Geschillen Hoger Onderwijs').

Who determines whether you go to the Disputes Committee?

If the board wishes to continue with a plan to which the co-determination council has right of consent, but has not given this, it is up to the board to initiate a dispute.

What does the Disputes Committee assess?

The disputes committee only checks the facts.

What value does the Disputes Committee's opinion have?

The decision of the Disputes Committee is binding.

Are there any options after the Dispute Committee?

Yes, you can appeal to the Enterprise Chamber ('Ondernemingskamer').

What exactly does the Enterprise Chamber do?

The Enterprise Section does not look again at the facts as the Disputes Committee has already done so but checks whether the Disputes Committee has correctly applied the law.

Do I personally run a risk?

According to the law, the Executive Board ensures that the members of the central / university council are not "disadvantaged in their position with regard to the university" because of their membership thereof. This also applies to candidate members and former members of the central / university council.

The law contains nothing about a similar concern that the Executive Board, or a dean or faculty board, has towards members of a sub / faculty council and / or program committee.

FAQ Central Councils

Who is the chairperson of the council?

The university council must choose a chairperson and one or more deputy chairpersons. In practice they often lead the meeting. In addition, the chairperson, or if he is unable to attend, a deputy chairman, represents the council in court. The chairperson of the central council is not mentioned in the WHW. The procedure for appointing a chairperson and matters such as the term of office can be regulated in rules of procedure drawn up by the council.

How do I get an overview of the educational institution of which I am a co-determination representative?

At the beginning of the year, the institution board is obliged to provide information about the composition of the institution board, the supervisory board, the organization within the educational institution and the main points of the policy already adopted. In addition, material is often available as part of the transition period from the previous council.

Can I put a subject or proposal on the agenda of the Executive Board?

Yes. You can make proposals and express views. The institution board is to give a written response to the council within three months. The institution board must also give the council the opportunity to discuss this subject at least once.

How do I increase the chance that my proposal will be accepted?

A proposal must be adopted with a simple majority of the council (-> 50%). With an undivided council, where there is an equal number of seats for students and employees, it is therefore important to get the employee part to agree on your proposal. When you involve the employee section in time when developing your proposal, you can work together. Your proposal can, if possible, be enriched by the input from the employee section or can count on support at an early stage. If the Executive Board is positive about your proposal, their support can have a positive effect on the chance that your proposal will be adopted in the council. Before you submit the proposal to the council, you can check with the board how they think about your topic and you can try to build up broad support. Through these unofficial contacts it is sometimes easier to have a conversation about the proposal and you can work on obtaining a positive response from the board.

How do I know what the council can issue advice on and what the council has right of consent on?

The institution board must draw up regulations for the central / university council that, among other things, determine the matters to which the central / university council is entitled to consent and advice and what the powers of the faculty / sub councils are. A number of subjects have been laid down in the WHW on which co-determination has, in any event, right of consent or advice. Pay attention! The right of consent to (part of) the Education and Examination Regulations (Dutch: OER) rests with the central council at universities of applied sciences, unless the task of the Executive Board has been transferred to the program director. At research universities, the right of

consent to the OER lies with the faculty council, and with parts of the OER with the program committees.

Is it wise to have contact with the sub / faculty council?

Yes. By means of a structural consultation you know what is going on at the sub / faculty councils. Subjects are also regularly discussed in the sub / faculty councils before they are discussed in the central / university council. Collaboration with the students of the sub / faculty councils can therefore strengthen your position in the central / university council.

How to deal with the employee section?

A proposal must be adopted by a simple majority of the entire council (> 50%). It is therefore important to include the employee section in your proposal. When you involve the employee section in time in the development of your proposal, you can work together. Your proposal can, if possible, be enriched by the input from the employee section or can count on support at an early stage.

With a divided council, a joint council is attached to the university college or university. This joint council consists of the employee council and the central student council.

Is there a training budget?

The Executive Board gives the members of the central / university council the opportunity to receive training. The amount of training must first be coordinated between the council and the Executive Board, based on what is reasonably necessary in view of co-determination work. The initiative for this lies with the (individual) council members, because they know which training they still miss.

Does the university council / participation council also talk to the Supervisory Board?

Yes, it has been legally established that the University Council / Participation Council consults twice a year with the Supervisory Board of the educational institution.

Which information am I entitled to?

A co-determination council is entitled to all information that the council reasonably needs to fulfil its duties. If the co-determination body finds certain information relevant but does not receive it, the body can request it again and ultimately also open the way to the Disputes Committee.

At the beginning of the year, the institution board is obliged to provide information about the composition of the institution board, the supervisory board, the organization within the university and the main points of the policy already adopted.

The Executive Board informs the council in writing at least once a year of the policy it has conducted in the past year and of the policy intentions for the coming year in the financial, organizational and educational fields. In the case of a proposed merger at a university of applied sciences, the central council is entitled to take cognizance of the drafted merger effect report as referred to in Article 16.16a, second paragraph under b.

How often am I entitled to an official central / university council meeting?

The institutional management must give the central / university council the opportunity to discuss the general course of affairs in the educational institution with it at least twice a year.

In addition, the council is authorized to invite the board of the institution at least twice a year to discuss the proposed policy on the basis of an agenda drawn up by the council.

The board of the institution, the council, the employee section or the student section can also have the council and the executive board come together, stating the reasons.

What are the minimum rights of consent I have?

- The main points of the budget, for the first time for the 2016 budget;
- The institution plan;
- The design of the quality assurance system and the intended policy in the light of the results of the quality assessment;
- The student handbook ('studentenstatuut');
- The management and management regulations at a research university and the management regulations at a university of applied sciences;
- The choice of co-determination systems;
- The policy of the institutional management when applying the profiling fund.

Pay attention! The central council of a university of applied sciences also has the right of consent to the education and examination regulations (Dutch: OER) as referred to in Article 7.13 with the exception of paragraphs 2a to 2g, unless this task has been transferred to a decentralized task. The joint council meeting of a university of applied sciences also has the right of consent for a merger decision as referred to in Article 16.16.

What are the minimum rights of advice I have?

According to the WHW, the central / university council at least has right of advice in determining or changing:

- Issues that concern the survival and the smooth running of affairs within the educational institution;
- The budget, which at least shows the amount of the institutional tuition fee. If, by General Administrative Order (Dutch: 'Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur', AMvB) the minister makes it possible for educational institutions to request a higher tuition fee for honours tracks, the budget must also show the level of this tuition fee.
- The general personnel and appointment policy (only the student section);
- The policy with regard to the institutional tuition fees and the tuition fees (only the student section);
- Arrangement of the board of the institution with regard to reimbursement of statutory tuition fees (only the student section);
- The regulation that the board of the institution determines for the selection criteria and the selection procedure (only the student section);
- The regulation that the board of the institution determines for the criteria and the procedure for dispensing with payment of the higher tuition fees (only the student section);
- The rules that the board of the institution determines with regard to the selection (only the student section);
- The rules that the board of the institution establishes with regard to study choice advice and activities (only the student section).

In addition, unsolicited advice may always be given.

At what time should the institution board ask the council for advice?

The advice must be requested at such a time that the advice can have a substantial influence on the decision-making. As a council, you must also be given the opportunity to consult with the Executive Board before the advice is issued.

How do I know what the institutional management does with the advice of the council?

The board of the institution must inform the council in writing as soon as possible of the way in which they follow up on your advice.

What if the institution's management does not want to follow the advice or does not want to follow it entirely?

The council is given the opportunity to conduct further consultations with the institutional management before the decision of the Executive Board (with which they do not or not fully adopt the advice) is finally taken.

Am I entitled to training?

Yes. The institution board gives the members of the central / university council the opportunity to receive training. The amount of training must first be coordinated between the council and the institution board, based on what is reasonably necessary in view of co-determination work. The initiative for this lies with the (individual) council members, because they know which training they still miss.

What are the responsibilities of the council?

- The central / university council promotes openness, openness and mutual consultation in the educational institution to the best of its ability.
- The central / university council must annually prepare a written report of its activities and ensure that this can be read by everyone in the educational institution.
- The central / university Council generally guards against discrimination on any grounds and, in particular, promotes equal treatment of men and women and the involvement of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and ethnic minorities.

FAQ Decentral Councils

Who is the chairperson of the council?

The chairperson of the departmental / faculty councils are not appointed in the WHW. The procedure for appointing a chairperson and matters such as the term of office can be regulated in regulations of a household nature ('huishoudelijk reglement') drawn up by the council or the co-determination regulations.

How do I get an overview of the educational institution of which I am a co-representative?

At the beginning of the year, the management of a research university faculty is obliged to provide information to the faculty council about the composition of the executive board, the supervisory board, the organization within the university and the main points of the policy already adopted. The WHW does not literally include a similar obligation for deans or boards of universities of applied sciences. In addition, there is of course a lot of material available from the transition of the previous council.

What are the rules in the council?

The WHW does not state that a sub / faculty council must draw up regulations of a household nature, as it must in the central / university council. It is advisable to draw up such rules and to include matters such as the deadline for receiving the documents for the next meeting, the form in which you will receive the documents, how the agenda is established and, for example, how you can introduce a subject to the council.

The institution board must, however, draw up regulations that among other things determine which powers are exercised by the faculty / sub councils.

Can I put a topic or proposal on the agenda of the dean or the Faculty Board?

Only for research university faculty councils does the WHW explicitly state the right to make proposals and to make its views known. The Executive Board or the dean are obliged to give a written response to the Board within three months. The board of directors or the dean must also give the faculty council the opportunity to discuss this subject at least once.

In the sub council of a university of applied sciences it is advisable to check at the start of your term what the agreements are with regard to submitting a proposal and making known a position and the response period of the dean or the board.

How do I increase the chance that my proposal will be accepted?

A proposal must be adopted with a simple majority of the council (> 50%). With an undivided council, where there are an equal number of seats for students and employees, it is therefore important to get the employee section in your proposal. When you involve the employee section in time in the development of your proposal, you can work together. Your proposal can, if possible, be enriched by the input from the employee section or can count on support at an early stage. If the dean or the board is positive about your proposal, their support can have a positive effect on the chance that your proposal will be adopted in the council. Before you submit the proposal to the council, you can check with the board how they think about your subject and you can try to build up broad support. Through these unofficial contacts it is sometimes easier to hold a conversation about the proposal and you can work on a positive response from the board or the dean.

How do I know what the council can issue advice on and what the council has right of consent on?

The institution board must draw up regulations for the central / university council, which must include, among other things, the powers of the faculty / sub councils. The university council or central participation council has the right to consent to this.

The sub / faculty council has the right of consent and the right to advise on matters that specifically concern the faculty and on matters for which the dean or the faculty board has been granted authority. The regulations of the university council and the participation council in higher professional education, which must be approved by the central / university council, also include any other powers that are exercised by the departmental councils.

Pay attention! The right of consent to (part of) the Education and Examination Regulations (OER) rests with the central council at universities of applied sciences and with the faculty council at research universities.

Is it wise to have contact with the central / university council and programme committees?

Yes. Through structural consultation you know what is going on at the educational level and at the central / university level. Some topics are also first discussed in the programme committee before they are discussed in the sub / faculty council. Some topics are also first discussed in the sub / faculty council before they are discussed in the central / university council. Collaboration with the students of the programme committees and the decentralized / university council can therefore strengthen your position in the sub / faculty councils.

How to deal with the employee section?

A proposal must be adopted by a simple majority of the entire council (> 50%). It is therefore important to include the employee section in your proposal. When you involve the employee section in time in the development of your proposal, you can work together. Your proposal can, if possible, be enriched by the input from the employee section or can count on support at an early stage.

Is there a training budget?

The board of directors or the dean gives the members of the departmental / faculty council and programme committee the opportunity to receive training. The amount of training must first be coordinated between the Executive Board or Dean and the respective faculty council or programme committee, based on what is reasonably necessary in view co-determination work.

The initiative for this lies with the (individual) council members, because they know which training they still miss.

Which information am I entitled to?

A university faculty board or dean is obliged, requested or not, to provide the council in time with all information that the council reasonably needs to fulfil its duties.

At the start of the year and at least twice a year, a research university faculty board or dean is required to provide information about the composition of the faculty board, the Executive Board, the supervisory board, the organization within the university and the main points of the policy already established.

The WHW does not literally include a similar right to information for district councils at universities of applied sciences.

How often do I have the right to an official sub / faculty council meeting?

A research university faculty board or dean must give the faculty council the opportunity at least twice a year to discuss the general course of affairs in the educational institution.

In addition, the research university faculty council is authorized to invite the faculty board or dean at least twice a year to discuss the proposed policy on the basis of an agenda drawn up by it.

The WHW also states that in the case of a research university faculty, the faculty board or dean, the council, the staff section or the student section, together with the reasons, can have the faculty council and the faculty board or dean come together.

The WHW does not literally include a similar right for sub councils at universities of applied sciences.

What are the minimum rights of consent I have?

According to the WHW, the faculty council of research universities has a minimum right of consent when determining or changing:

- The faculty regulations;
- The Education and Examination Regulations (Dutch: OER) as referred to in 7.13 with the exception of paragraphs 2 a to g and v and with the exception of the requirements in art 7.28: 4, art 7.28: 5 and 7.30b: 2.

In addition, a sub / faculty council may have the right of consent on subjects that specifically concern the relevant part of the university of applied sciences or faculty of the research university and on subjects for which the executive board or dean are competent. This must be included in the regulations of the university council.

What else can I have the right to consent to?

A research university council can name the faculty councils powers that are exercised by the faculty councils. The answer can therefore be found in these regulations.

The WHW does not literally include a similar possibility for determining powers for sub councils at universities of applied sciences.

What do I have the right to advice on?

A sub / faculty council may have advisory rights on subjects that are relevant for that part of the university of applied sciences or faculty of the research university and on subjects for which the executive board or dean are competent. In addition, there may be other subjects on which you have the right to be advised. This must be included in the regulations of the central / university council.

Am I entitled to training?

Yes. The board of a university of applied sciences gives the members of the sub council the opportunity to receive training. The amount of training must first be coordinated between the sub council and the Executive Board, based on what is reasonably necessary in view of co-determination work. The initiative for this lies with the (individual) council members, because they know which training they still miss.

A faculty council of a research university is also entitled to training. Deviating from a sub council of a university of applied sciences is that at a research university faculty the dean must give the members of the faculty council the opportunity to receive training. The amount of training must first be coordinated between the faculty council and the dean, based on what is reasonably necessary in view of co-determination work. The initiative for this lies with the (individual) council members, because they know which training they still miss.

What are the responsibilities of the council?

A research university faculty council is required to make a written report of its activities annually and to ensure that all those involved at the university can read the report.

The WHW does not include a similar obligation to report for sub councils of universities of applied sciences.

Membership organizations

The ISO association was founded in 1973 by students who were active in co-determination bodies at various Dutch universities. Nowadays the ISO has 41 member organizations and 4 aspiring member organizations that are spread throughout the Netherlands. These member organizations are the local student fractions, councils and unions, from both research universities and universities of applied sciences, who are involved in education at their own institution. Together they form the General Assembly (AV), the highest body of the ISO.

The member organizations participate in all kinds of working groups and committees of the ISO. Both specific and general issues are raised during these working groups and committees. When different member organizations identify problems, the ISO then tries to do something about it. In addition, the ISO organizes various activities and events for its member organizations throughout the year. Training courses are also provided by the ISO or external agencies. Examples of this are a training weekend for new fraction and student council members and a campaign training in the run-up to the local student council elections.

For more information about the different member organizations you can always contact the ISO. For the ISO member organization in your own city you can check out the list below.

Themes

The quality agreements ('kwaliteitsafspraken')

Why the quality agreements?

For a number of years there has been a debate about how the quality and accessibility of Dutch higher education can be guaranteed in the present time. In 2010, the Future-proof Higher Education System Committee (also known as the Veerman Committee) published an opinion stating that it was essential to invest in quality and profiling within higher education. To free up money for these investments, the political decision was made to abolish the basic grant ('basisbeurs') for students. This has been decided in the Higher Education Study Advance Act of 2015. It has been agreed that the resources saved with this measure (also referred to as the study advance funds, 'studievoorschotmiddelen') must be invested in the quality of higher education.

In this law it was also agreed that the research universities and universities of applied sciences should invest this money on the basis of a system of quality agreements. It was stated that students (and employees) from research universities and universities of applied sciences should have influence on how to invest in their quality of education at their institution. Co-determination bodies would be given the right to consent on these quality agreements, via the right of consent on the main lines of the budget. At the time, the system of quality agreements was not further developed. The further elaboration is now laid down in the sector agreements of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science with the VH and with the VSNU of 9 April 2018.

What has been agreed?

The agreements about the quality agreements are fairly extensive. The full text can be found in the sector agreements ([link](#)) and a more detailed summary can be found in our information booklet.

The main points from the agreements are as follows:

- The quality agreements are made within the research universities and universities of applied sciences;
- The horizontal dialogue within institutions forms the basis for the quality agreements;
- Co-determination within the institution has the right of consent to the plan for the use of study advance funds;
- Investments must fall within the following themes: more intensive and small-scale education, educational differentiation (including talent development), teacher quality, appropriate and good educational facilities, more and better supervision of students and study success (including transfer, accessibility and equal opportunities);
- In the annual report, both the board and the representative advisory bodies report on progress, both in terms of content and process;
- The Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO) independently assesses the plans and the implementation of the plans;
- The assessment focuses on the effort, not the output;
- The plans are tested in advance to see whether they are realistic and clear and to see whether the internal stakeholders (including co-determination) are sufficiently involved;
- The implementation of the plans will be reviewed in 2022 to see whether sufficient progress has been made and to see whether co-determination and other stakeholders are sufficiently involved;
- If (after a second try) insufficient progress has been made or the stakeholders are not properly involved, part of the resources will be cut. This part of the funds is then made available for Comenius scholarships for teachers of that specific institution, who can use the scholarships for projects in the field of education improvement and innovation.

A major role for co-determination bodies

Within this system, co-determination is given a major and responsible task. It must be closely involved in creating the plans and ultimately agree, and also throughout the process, it remains closely involved in the implementation of the plans and accountability for progress. To ensure that co-determination can fully play this role, a number of agreements have been made:

- Universities of applied sciences and research universities will ensure that co-determination is well able to conduct the horizontal dialogue. They will support and facilitate co-determination in the performance of its duties. The student organizations will work together with the VSNU and the VH on this support;
- The ISO, the LSVb, the VH and the VSNU set up a national counter for questions about quality agreements and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science facilitates this;
- Sufficient time is a condition for performing the co-determination tasks. Large colleges and universities provide student members of the central co-determination body with at least 8 hours a week. Other colleges and universities provide at least 4 hours a week. A apply-or-explain principle applies to these standards;

- To provide a sector-wide picture, it has been agreed that the NVAO will provide a national picture of progress in 2020 and 2022. These national images are also relevant for horizontal dialogue and co-determination, because they can put progress within the institution in a broader perspective.

Information booklet quality agreements

This is only a very brief summary of the agreements. You will find more information about the reason for the quality agreements and about the content of the agreements in our Quality Agreement Information Booklet. This booklet has been added as a PDF file at the bottom of the page.

Questions or remarks?

The system of quality agreements is new for everyone. We hope that this page and the information booklet will make it clearer. If you have any comments or questions now, or perhaps still have questions, please let us know. We want to offer the best possible support in this new process and all tips are most welcome! You can contact us by mail via iso@iso.nl or by calling 030-2302666.

Method Budgeting and Accounting

In the 2018-2019 academic year, the ISO will start with a pilot of the Budgeting and Accounting Method at four higher education institutions. The Budgeting and Accounting method is a method that helps co-determination in reading the budget of their institution so that they can start the substantive discussion about this.

What is the reason for the method?

Co-determination has right of consent on the main lines of the budget and, by making good use of this right of consent, can exert considerable influence on the policy of the university. The reason for introducing this method now is the agreement on the quality agreements ('kwaliteitsafspraken'). An important part of the quality agreements is namely the right of consent of the co-determination body on the investment of the student loan funds. The method can of course also be used for other themes in the budget than the quality agreements. The Budgeting and Accounting method is set up in such a way that participation councils in a broad sense can help to use the right of consent on the main lines of the budget in a good and constructive way.

What is the origin of the method?

The Budgeting and Accounting method for higher education has its origins in the Duisenberg Method, which has been used by the House of Representatives since 2013 to monitor the budget and accountability of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). The method is now also being applied by the Lower House to the budgets of other ministries. From national politics this method has been passed on to municipal politics, and the method is now being used by more and more municipal councils. The method has proved to be very successful in most cases to improve the information and controlling position of members of the House of Representatives and city council members. Because many co-determination council members have indicated in the past that they sometimes have difficulty reading the budget, the ISO hopes to adjust the method so that it can also be used in higher education. The method thus meets a need for co-determination councils to get a better grip on the finances of their institution.

What is the purpose of the method?

The Budgeting and Accounting method is intended for co-determination boards and their directors to gain more insight into the budget and accountability of the educational institution's investments. The method is a guide to improving the information and control position of co-determination. The method mainly serves as a way to conduct a constructive dialogue between co-

determination and the management and to actually discuss the policy implications of the investments.

When will this method become available for higher education?

The method is currently being developed and it is expected that it will be made available for higher education halfway through the academic year. As soon as more is known about this, the ISO will let you know.

Co-determination Monitor

Since its first and second edition in 2015 and 2016, the co-determination monitor is conducted every two years. The monitor charts the status of co-determination in higher education, and tries to identify any bottlenecks. The study of the ISO from 2013, Good co-determination is human action (see below), the desirability of a cultural change in co-determination was explicitly mentioned. Following the letter from Minister Bussemaker, the ISO presented a general framework for a representative advisory body. Therefore, in addition to the status of co-determination in general, the co-determination monitor also measures the intended cultural change. In addition, with an adequate response, an institutional benchmark will be made available to the co-determination councils.

The co-determination monitor is commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, carried out by the ISO together with the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (VH), the Association of Research Universities (VSNU), the National Consultation Chairmen of University Co-determination ('Landelijk Overleg Voorzitters Universitaire Medezeggenschap'), the National Student Union (LSVb), the National Consultation Fractions ('Landelijk Overleg Fracties'), Association of Co-determination Councils of Universities of Applied Sciences ('Vereniging van Medezeggenschapsraden van Hogescholen') and the Student Consultation Co-determination ('Studenten Overleg Medezeggenschap').

The co-determination monitor will be presented during Co-determination Day. During this day, in addition to the presentation of the research results, panel discussions are also held and propositions discussed. This day is intended to highlight co-determination in higher education, but also to look together at how we can improve it even more. Do you want to get a picture of the previous editions of the Co-determination Day? Below you can view reports and photos.

ISO Membership

Membership of the ISO

The ISO association was founded in 1973 by students who were active in co-determination at various Dutch universities. Nowadays the ISO has 39 member organizations and 3 aspiring member organizations that are spread throughout the Netherlands. These member organizations are the local student fractions, councils and unions, from both universities and colleges of higher education, who are involved in education at their own institution.

For co-determination councils it is possible to become a member of the ISO. For information about membership in the ISO and for more information about the different member organizations you can always contact the ISO.

You can look here for the ISO member organization in your city.

Policy cycle

GAs

Together the membership organizations form the General Assembly (GA), the highest body of the ISO. The member organizations participate in all kinds of working groups and committees of the ISO. Both specific and general issues are raised during these working groups and committees. When several member organizations identify problems, the ISO then tries to do something about it.

Trainings

In addition, the ISO organizes various activities and events for its member organizations throughout the year. Training courses are also provided by the ISO or external agencies. Examples of this are a training weekend for new fraction and student council members, a campaign training in the run-up to the local student council elections, floor days and a best practice day.

Training weekend

Every year, the ISO organizes a training weekend for new council members. During this weekend there are many trainings planned that will fully prepare you as co-determination representative for the intensive year that you are heading for. The Saturday evening party is legendary and you will have plenty of opportunity to get to know the other student councils from all over the country!

Not a member, still participating

Even without membership in the ISO you can still benefit from the ISO. The ISO pays a lot of attention to keeping students up to date (in co-determination), training co-determination councils and providing a platform.

Behind-the-scenes

Finally, it is possible to visit a substantive working group evening of the ISO. Let us know when you are interested in this, and we will send you an invitation for the next meeting. Has the ISO aroused your interest and do you want to work with us or are you considering a board year at the ISO? Look here for vacancies and here for more information about a board year.