

## In general

A University of Applied Sciences (UAS) is a higher education institution with profession-oriented study programmes. Students at these institutions learn how to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice. Work placements and internships in (inter)national companies often form an integral part of the degree programmes offered at our universities.

There are currently 36 Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, offering a wide variety of high-quality degree programmes in English. Thematic fields include economics, engineering, agro and food, healthcare, art, social studies and teacher training (for primary education).

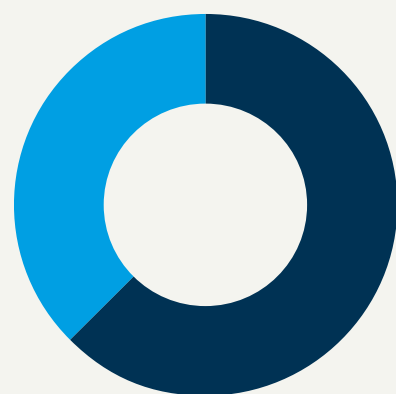
One of the unique features of our Dutch institutions is the problem-based learning (PBL) approach. This method challenges students to form their own practice-based projects, training them to identify and solve real global challenges thus preparing them for a future career in their chosen field of study.

In other words: UAS-institutions apply the concept of 'learning by doing'! This practice-oriented education allows our students to become qualified specialists with excellent career perspectives: most of them (95%) find their first job within a year of graduating.

### In sum

- Core mission: higher professional education and applied research with a strong orientation towards professional practice.
- All Universities of Applied Sciences offer high-quality Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes.
- Research at Universities of Applied Sciences has a high societal impact, is demand-driven and conducted in cooperation with various stakeholders, such as SMEs, businesses and the public sector.

### Number of students: UAS versus research universities (RU)



■ UAS 453.354  
■ RU 276.713

Source: Vereniging Hogescholen en VSNU

## Facts and figures

The higher education system in the Netherlands is based on a three-cycle degree system, consisting of a Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree. The Netherlands has a binary higher education system. Binary in this context means there are two types of higher education: research-oriented and profession-oriented.

- Research-oriented education is traditionally offered by research universities
- Higher professional education is offered by Universities of Applied Sciences

### Student and staff enrolment

### Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands

Number of institutions	36
Bachelor's students	432,511
Master's students	11,878
International students	28,156
Total staff (part-time and full-time)	48,128
Research staff	4,003
PhD students	836

(in cooperation with research universities)

Source: Vereniging Hogescholen

## How Far We Go

### Internationalisation at Universities of Applied Sciences

Our universities invested heavily in the internationalisation of education and research. This provides added value to the quality of our higher education, and gives our students a head start in their future careers. In addition, international students directly contribute to the Dutch 'knowledge economy': International talents that stay in the Netherlands after graduating contribute an estimated EUR 1.57 billion to the Dutch economy.

The open and international character of Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences is one of the reasons that the Netherlands is a leader in the fields of education and research. We therefore continue to commit to:

- 1 contributing to the high quality of Dutch education and research;
- 2 reinforcing the international position of the Netherlands as a knowledge society, also with a view to global challenges;
- 3 ensuring the education provided is a factor in addressing the needs of and the shortages in the employment market.

## Internationalisation facts

- At our Universities of Applied Sciences there are **28,156 international students**, with an increase of 40% over the past 20 years;
- 27% of Dutch higher education students have some form of experience abroad, putting the Netherlands in the vanguard of Europe;
- Incoming students at UAS-institutions are coming from a wide array of countries;

Source: Internationaliseringsagenda (2018) Vereniging Hogescholen en VSNU

## What We Do

### Applied Research with Sustainable Impact

Scientific understanding and practical experience are like two legs without which we cannot, said the Chilean biologist and philosopher Francisco Varela. In other words: theory and practice are interconnected. Therefore our institutions concentrate on the further development of practical research as an important spearhead. We do this through national research budgets, but also by participating actively in European research programmes such as Horizon 2020 and INTERREG. In most cases such research projects are conducted in close cooperation with small and medium-enterprises, academia and public sector (in other words: the triple-helix).

### Positioning practice-oriented research

In our 'Research with Impact'- agenda (2016) our Universities of Applied Sciences presented ten topics on which they focus their research efforts:

- 1 **Health and vitality**
- 2 **Education and talent development**
- 3 **Resilient society: in the neighbourhood, city and regional level**
- 4 **Smart technologies and materials**
- 5 **The built environment: sustainable and habitable**
- 6 **Sustainable transport and intelligent logistics**
- 7 **Sustainable agriculture, water and food supply**
- 8 **Energy and energy supply**
- 9 **Art and creative industry**
- 10 **Entrepreneurship: responsible and innovative**

Source: Vereniging Hogescholen

## On a European level

### UAS research through Interreg and Horizon 2020

#### Interreg (2014-2020)

- Interreg is one of the European research instruments to stimulate cross-regional partnerships. The total budget is 10,1 billion EUR (between 2014-2020).
- 16 of our Universities of Applied Sciences are actively participating in Interreg-programmes, covering a wide area of topics such as high-tech systems, circular economy and fostering youth entrepreneurship.
- One of the key elements is co-financing: between 40 and 50% is covered by the European Union, while the rest comes from local partners (such as provinces). In total the EU provides nearly 130 million EUR for the Interreg-projects in which our UAS participate.
- By forming *Smart Partnerships for Regional Impact*, our UAS institutions work together on innovative practice-based projects together with local businesses and public sector that are strongly embedded in the region. For example: in Interreg A (Germany-Netherlands) in 70 to 80% of the projects local SME's are involved.

Source: Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO)

#### Horizon 2020 (2014-2020)

- With a total budget of 74 billion EUR Horizon 2020 is the biggest research- and innovation programme funded through the European Union.
- At the moment 15 of our institutions have been granted a research fund. This number is steadily increasing.
- 64% of the Horizon 2020-projects in which our UAS participate focus on the Societal Challenges-pillar, in many cases a University of Applied Sciences cooperate with local businesses

Source: Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO)

## How We Do It

### Partnerships!

Innovations and technological developments proceed at such a high pace that we need our teaching staff and students to be up to date with the latest knowledge. Consequently, the (inter)national business community is requiring from our future graduates that they are able to connect the attained *theoretical* knowledge to *practical* skills. A concrete example of how we do this are the Centres of Expertise. In these Centres our Universities of Applied Sciences form partnerships with (local) businesses and public sector in which our students and teachers jointly work on solving real-life issues.

#### Example of a Centre of Expertise: Healthy Ageing

We are all getting older and this calls for new, smart solutions to improve the quality of life and to minimize the health burdens on our society. The Centre of Expertise Healthy Ageing promotes sustainable public-private partnerships in the North of the Netherlands, in the form of so-called innovation labs. These are testing grounds in which researchers, teachers, students, businesses and institutions for healthcare and wellbeing will be looking for joint solutions to concrete problems they encounter within the healthcare sector, such as the social participation of people with a psychiatric impairment, but also develop user-friendly 'eHealth-tools' for the elderly. Hanzehogeschool Groningen (Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen) is the secretary of the Centre of Expertise Healthy Ageing and responsible for its coordination.

#### About the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences

The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (*Vereniging Hogescholen*) unites all 36 government-funded Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The association focuses on strengthening the civic position of Universities of Applied Sciences. To this end the association maintains contacts with a wide range of people and organisations, including journalists, the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers VNO-NCW, the Dutch Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (*MKB-Nederland*), members of parliament and several ministries. The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences also functions as an employers' organisation on behalf of Universities of Applied Sciences. As such, it negotiates on their behalf with unions about collective labour agreements.

#### Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences

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## The Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences: in a nutshell

**Vereniging Hogescholen**  
Netherlands Association of  
Universities of Applied Sciences

June 2018