



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Increase in student numbers

The numbers of pupils and students in state education are higher this school-year in all levels of education. The number of pupils in primary and special education had started to rise earlier in the nineties. Now, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands, the number of pupils in secondary schools has also risen for the first time since 1982. The number of students at vocational colleges has increased for the thirteenth successive year. And while university enrolment had been falling in recent years, this year it remained at the same level, although the number of first year university students was five per cent higher. The results reported in this press release are largely based on information for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which will publish its own press release today on more policy-related aspects and future trends.

Increase in primary and special education

The number of pupils in primary education has risen by nine per cent since the beginning of the nineties. This school-year (1998/'99), just over 1.5 million children attend primary schools. The number of pupils at special needs primary schools also increased until the mid-nineties, but then started to fall; this year too the number is lower than last year at 54 thousand.

Secondary schools providing education for children with learning difficulties have had an increasing enrolment since the beginning of the nineties. This year there are 29 thousand pupils in such schools, a quarter more than in 1991/'92. For other schools providing for special needs, for example for children with handicaps, pupil numbers have also been growing steadily. In the present school-year the number of pupils in these schools was 41 thousand, one third up on 1991/'92.

Overall the number of pupils in various forms of special education rose by 15 thousand, or 13 per cent, between 1991 and 1998.

More pupils in secondary education

Enrolment in secondary schools was up for the first time since 1982: 856 thousand pupils, 4 thousand more than one year ago, but still way below the peak in 1982 (1.2 million).

Fewer pupils are doing junior vocational training though: 300 thousand this year, 7 thousand fewer than last year. In addition 123 thousand youngsters (3 thousand more than last year) are attending combined school/employment projects.

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Increase in higher education

The number of students at senior vocational colleges has been increasing continually since 1985. This year 289 thousand students are registered at a vocational college; and eight out of every ten of them full-time. The number of first year students at these colleges was 75 thousand. University enrolment remained at the same level as last year after four successive years of decrease. On 1 December 1998 160 thousand people were enrolled at Dutch universities, the same number as the year before. Maastricht University has become significantly more popular with eleven per cent more students than last year. The total of 31 thousand first year students is nearly two thousand (5 per cent) more than on 1 December 1997. The Eindhoven University of Technology had the highest rise in the number of first year students, while Agricultural University of Wageningen was the only institution to see the number of first year students drop off.

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