The Netherlands – Strengthening research in Universities of Applied Sciences

One of twelve case studies produced as part of the project on Structural Reform in Higher Education (EAC-2014-0474)

April 2016
Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number (*):

00 8006 7 89 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).


doi: 10.2766/038545

© European Union, 2016

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands – Strengthening research in Universities of Applied Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the structural reform and its main goals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context and background to the reform</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design process for the reform</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy instruments used</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the reform</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring, evaluation and feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important changes in the context for the reform</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements and effects</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This case study is part of the “Structural Higher Education Reform – Design and Evaluation” project, commissioned by the European Commission (EAC/31/2014). The main objective of this project – carried out by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, the Netherlands, and the Centre for Higher Education Governance Ghent (CHEGG), Ghent University, Belgium - is to investigate policy processes related to the design, implementation, and evaluation of structural reforms of higher education systems. The focus is on government-initiated reform processes that were intended to change the higher education landscape, with the following questions foremost: What kind of goals were envisaged with the structural reform? How was the structural reform planned and implemented? What have been the achievements of the structural reforms? How can these achievements be explained in terms of policy process factors?

Three types of reform were distinguished: reforms designed to increase horizontal differentiation (developing or strengthening new types of higher education institutions such as the creation of a professional higher education sector), reforms designed to increase vertical differentiation (bringing about quality or prestige differences between higher education institutions, e.g. by creating centres of excellence) and reforms designed to increase interrelationships between institutions (supporting cooperation and coordination among institutions, forming alliances or mergers). In total, structural reforms in twelve different countries (eleven in Europe, one in Canada) were investigated: Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada (Alberta), Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom (Wales). The twelve case studies – for ease of reference published as separate documents - all follow the same logic and are presented in a similar format, with sections relating to the reform and its context, policy goals, policy design, policy instruments, policy implementation, policy evaluation and goal achievement.
The Netherlands – Strengthening research in Universities of Applied Sciences
Harry de Boer

Introduction to the structural reform and its main goals

The structural reform in the Netherlands investigated here concerns the establishment and institutionalization of a research function as the second core task of Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences (‘hogescholen’) in the period 2001-2015. The overarching strategic goal of this structural reform was to contribute to the strengthening of the innovative capacity of the Netherlands by the optimal use of the UAS-sector in delivering highly-skilled modern graduates and services needed by (regional) industry and the public sector. The reform’s operational goals were the improvement of teaching and learning at the UAS, as well as the improvement of knowledge exchange between UAS and their environments.

Around the turn of the millennium, the question of whether or not the Dutch knowledge infrastructure was adequately equipped to meet the growing demand for knowledge and innovation was increasingly answered negatively. In addressing this issue, strengthening the research focus of the UAS sector, largely absent at the time, was seen as important. Moreover, at the same time, questions started to arise about the type of graduates produced and the qualifications of teaching staff. It was felt that new modes of teaching by staff with a stronger research orientation should be considered if UAS were to produce modern professionals. To address these issues, several instruments have been introduced since 2000, including the introduction of new staff positions at UAS and the introduction of greater public funding for practice-oriented research.

In 2001, the ministry of education and the representative organisation of the UAS concluded an agreement (‘covenant’) that introduced the aforementioned new staff positions at the UAS. These new positions were referred to as ‘lectorates’. Such a lectorate is coordinated by a ‘lector’, a new position sometimes referred to as a ‘UAS professor’ (but without the right to supervise doctoral degrees). One of the core tasks of a lector is to establish ‘knowledge circles’ at the UAS. Knowledge circles consist of a group of persons that develop, exchange and share (practice-oriented research) knowledge in addition to their teaching. The introduction of the lectorates at the UAS had four operational goals: a) knowledge development, b)

---

1 Harry de Boer, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente, the Netherlands

2 In this case-study we will interchangeably speak of UAS and ‘hogescholen’, although we acknowledge that the use of the name ‘UAS’ dates from recent years and symbolizes to some extent the ‘road to maturity’ of the subsector in the Dutch higher education system. Previously ‘hogescholen’ were also named HBO-institutions (HBO is the Dutch acronym for higher vocational education).

3 Karssen, C. Onderzoek op hogescholen: de oogst na 10 jaar, presentation retrieved form the web (see references).

4 In 2013, the UAS representative organisation changed its name from ‘HBO-council’ to the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (‘Vereniging Hogescholen’). In this case study we will use ‘the Association’ or the Dutch acronym VH (including for the period when it was titled “HBO-council”).

5 The position of lector existed at universities until the early 1980s. A university lector was almost equal in rank to a university professor (including the right to supervise doctoral degrees). After 1980 the post of lector was abolished at the universities. The ‘hogescholen’ did not have the position of lector until 2001, but the position fitted in well with the purpose of establishing a highly ranked UAS position without using the tile of professor.
staff professionalisation, c) renewal of educational programmes, and d) knowledge circulation from and to the economy and society.

In 2005 another policy instrument was introduced to strengthen the UAS research function: the ‘knowledge circulation’ grants. The goals of these grants were to improve knowledge development and exchange between UAS and industry (from 2005), and also between UAS and public sector organisations (from 2006). A further related funding programme that focused on practice-oriented research was launched in 2008.

A third instrument was phased in from 2010 when the first Centres of Expertise were established. These Centres are public-private partnerships, partly subsidised by the government, in which UAS work together with industrial partners to enhance knowledge development and knowledge exchange.

This case study addresses the policy process that introduced the lectorates and the knowledge circulation grants. It does not consider the Centres of Excellence or other instruments related to strengthening the research function of UAS.

Context and background to the reform

The Dutch higher education system has a binary structure; it comprises fourteen public universities and thirty-seven ‘hogescholen’. The two subsectors have different mandates, different histories, and are different in size. This case study focuses on the ‘hogescholen’.

The historical roots of ‘hogescholen’ extend back many decades, but as a part of tertiary education their history dates to the 1960s, when colleges for higher professional education were upgraded (De Weert and Leijnse, 2010; Van Bemmel, 2014). In 1986, they were legally acknowledged as a higher education subsector. Their main task is to offer theoretical and practical training with an explicit professional orientation. Since 2001, transferring and developing knowledge has been a second important task. Their primary focus has traditionally been on regional and local needs, although several UAS also operate nationally and internationally. As a subsector, it hosts institutions that vary in size and orientation, from small mono-disciplinary institutions to large multi-disciplinary ones. Around two-thirds of Dutch higher education students are enrolled in UAS institutions. The recent history of the ‘hogescholen’ is characterised by:

- Considerable growth in student numbers: student numbers grew from 181,100 in 1975 to more than 440,200 in 2013.
- A reduction in the number of institutions: from 375 in 1983 to 37 in 2015.
- Increased maturity as a well-recognised, valuable and full part of the HE sector, as indicated by enhanced institutional autonomy.

Design process for the reform

Although the 1986 HBO Act allowed ‘hogescholen’ to conduct research for educational purposes, during the 1990s the research component of these

---

6 These grants are known as the RAAK-subsidies, where the (translated) Dutch acronym stands for Regional Attention and Action for Knowledge circulation. There have been separate grants for the UAS for different targets: SMEs (RAAK-MKB), public organisations (RAAK-Publiek), and practice-oriented research (RAAK-PRO).
institutions was negligible, as they remained almost exclusively teaching institutions. Around the new millennium the idea of developing ‘hogescholen’ that could, and should, have a larger role to play in knowledge development and dissemination received more attention both inside and outside the sector.

Inside the sector, two important issues caused a reconsideration of the tasks and activities of UAS during a number of meetings and discussions. Firstly, the type of graduates produced by UAS was debated. In preference to a rather ‘mechanical’ mode of teaching, a focus on learning different skills was advocated. UAS should teach students to become ‘reflective practitioners’ or ‘modern professionals’. Secondly, it was suggested that the existing teaching staff was not sufficiently qualified for such a change in learning perspective. Upgrading its staff was seen as necessary if the UAS wanted to realize their ambitions of developing further as a well-recognized and fully-fledged part of higher education.

In the same period reports from other actors called attention to adapting the role and position of the ‘hogescholen’. These reports addressed, among other things, the research potential of the sector and the need to take advantage of it. UAS should establish a broader set of tasks to close the gap between the UAS and the business sector: the UAS as knowledge gateway, a knowledge hub for industry, UAS, students and teachers (see ‘Commissie Kuipers’, 1999). Knowledge circulation should be improved at the UAS by establishing more and increasingly systematically developed networks with industry, as well as following up on trends in industry and adapting curricula to the latest developments in the professions more logically and consistently.

In 2000, the minister endorsed the views that: a) it is important that UAS should be embedded more strongly in regional knowledge networks, b) research at the UAS is important to improve the quality of teaching, c) professions’ call for graduates with modern skills (analytical thinking, critical assessment of latest knowledge) can be supported by a research base in the institutions where they study and d) teaching staff in UAS should be knowledgeable about the latest developments in their vocational fields. The minister argued, as did other actors such as advisory councils, that in principle the UAS, together with their partners, should address these issues themselves; the recently acquired autonomy of the UAS should be respected.

Thus, around 2000, the sector itself (with reservations from some institutions), the policy makers, advisory bodies and employers’ organisations came to believe that the role of UAS should change. These actors all expressed in one way or another that establishing a stronger research orientation at the UAS as a second core task would be beneficial to the ‘hogescholen’ and their students, industry, and society at large.

While the suggested changes in the type of graduates and the professionalisation of staff raised eyebrows among some UAS leaders, a number of charismatic UAS leaders strongly supported these views. The UAS Association developed a position on how to address these challenges, as presented in the white paper ‘Higher education ten years forward’ (see also Leijnse, 2000). The introduction of lectorates aimed to change the institutional culture and to develop a research attitude in ‘hogescholen’ which had hardly any experience in conducting research. To stress the uniqueness of the position at the time, and to avoid the impression that this was just a marginal change, it was proposed that the position should be significantly better remunerated than existing staff.
The then minister of education Loek Hermans was receptive to these ideas and acted decisively. He made additional funding available and within a few months a four-year agreement (2001-2004) between the minister and the Association was signed: the “Covenant Lectors and Knowledge Circles in the Higher Vocational Education Sector 2001”. This agreement committed the UAS sector to establish lectorates in order to enhance knowledge transfer, dissemination, circulation and development in the sector.

The introduction of lectorates was also supported by the employers’ organisation VNO-NCW (Renique, 2003), which endorsed the goals of the lectorates. In their view, lectorates could be brokers between the UAS and the regional economy, particularly SMEs.

In 2005, another instrument was established to strengthen the research potential of UAS and to improve the knowledge circulation and exchange between UAS and industry and public sector organisations: a funding programme for ‘hogescholen’ to develop knowledge exchange and circulation. This programme was a logical result of discussions to develop UAS as knowledge gateways. The then minister of education committed financial means to stimulate cooperation and knowledge exchange between UAS and regional industry (particularly SMEs) to improve the degree of innovativeness of regional industry. This aim to strengthen Dutch innovation capacity was broadly supported by national advisory bodies, such as the Social and Economic Council and the Innovation Platform.

Policy instruments used
To meet the agreed objectives the UAS Association established a foundation to allocate the funding made available by the ministry. The foundation – the SKO7 – was an independent committee, with external members from different backgrounds, assisted by a secretary seconded from the Association’s bureau. It had no representatives from the government and the Association. In short the SKO had two tasks: distribution of the funding amongst the UAS and the monitoring and evaluation of the lectors and knowledge circles.

UAS were invited to submit proposals. In principle, based on their size, each institution had the right to claim a part of the budget. However, an institution would only obtain the funding for lectorates if their proposal was approved by the SKO. If proposals did not meet the standards of the SKO they were not funded. The SKO used five indicators in its assessment: 1) impact on existing curricula, professionalisation of staff or change in the programme structure, 2) relationships with international networks, 3) relationships with industry, 4) demonstrable effort to increase knowledge exchange, and 5) substantial increase in third party income.

The budget for lectors and knowledge circles concerned additional money, next to the basic operational grant for the UAS. In the first four years (2001-2004) it was a temporary grant scheme. For the first year, this budget was approximately €15m8, in the next years it increased to €30.4m per annum. In 2004, the government’s grant scheme became structural funding and the budget was increased from €35.4m in 2005 to €50.4m in 2008. In 2007, this separately distributed fund became part of the UAS’ lump sum. By then, lectorates were funded through regular funding.

7 Dutch acronym for Foundation Knowledge Development HBO.
8 32.5 million guilders.
The Innovation Alliance Foundation (Dutch acronym SIA) is in charge of implementing the knowledge circulation funding programme. The Foundation consisted of the following stakeholders: the Association, two employers’ organisations, TNO (the organisation for applied science research), Syntens and Novay. The research topics eligible for funding were neither selected nor prescribed by SIA; projects had to be ‘demand driven from the vocational field’. A consortium of public and private partners could design a project proposal to be submitted to SIA by the Executive Board of a UAS. The maximum project length is two years, with a maximum grant of €300,000. Projects must be at least 30% co-financed. Some projects (‘RAAK-PRO’) have a four year time-frame with a maximum grant of €700,000. Each project is monitored by the UAS (based on given performance-indicators) and progress and effects are reported to SIA. The project proposals are assessed by an External Assessment Committee.

The first funding programme started with a budget of €6m. Since then the budget has increased, as has the number of projects. In 2014/15, the total budget for practice-oriented research was about €27m (excluding the budget for the Centres of Expertise). As with the budgets for the lectorates, the knowledge circulation grants were initially temporary and additional to the basic operational grant. In 2011, the ministry and the Association agreed to create a structural fund earmarked for practice-oriented research and to position SIA within the national research council (NWO). The transfer of SIA to NWO occurred in 2014. What started as a temporary grant has become a structural component of the Dutch research funding model.

In sum, the government made grants available to support lectorates and research projects. The main difference between the two funding instruments was that each UAS was entitled to a have a part of the funding for lectorates (if their proposal was approved), whereas the knowledge circulation grants were competitive. While the agreements between the government and the Association contained a number of rules (such as the requirement for evaluation) the implementation was largely left to the sector itself (for which the Association established the foundations SKO and SIA).

**Implementation of the reform**

The SKO has definitely played a key role in the implementation of the introduction of lectors and knowledge circles. This independent body that met about three to five times a year assessed the proposals of the UAS to establish lectorates, and monitored and evaluated progress by means of a separate committee (Committee Karssen). Through monitoring and feedback, the SKO played a crucial role in the evolution of the lectorates. By applying the assessment criteria, they further defined and specified the lectorates.

In the first years several UAS were reluctant to establish lectorates. In these early years not every UAS used their potential budget to apply for these new positions. They were uncertain about what exactly lectorates were supposed to be, how they would fit in the organisation, and what their added value might be. Moreover, the funding was temporary and they had concerns about the possible discontinuation of

---

9 Syntens is an innovation platform that stimulates and supports innovation in the SME sector. Novay was a public-private partnership of knowledge institutes and companies with the objective of increasing the innovative capability of the Dutch business community.
the funding. Further, existing staff were suspicious of the new positions, lectors being seen as well-paid outsiders that might complicate their jobs.

Nevertheless, several UAS applied for the lectorates, because after all this entailed additional funding. By 2002, 86 lectors had been appointed. After this ‘slow start’ the numbers have increased: in 2015, there are about 600 lectors (approximately 75% hold a PhD). The lectors have been appointed in different areas, and most of them have a part-time appointment. After initial hesitation, many UAS currently see research as a strategic asset and have acted upon it. With some exceptions, it appears to have become an integral part of their missions and strategies. The recent development of Knowledge Centres and Centres of Expertise at ‘hogescholen’ can be seen as an indication of the strengthening of this development over time.

In the first year, 2005, 28 projects were initiated as part of the knowledge circulation programme. In the first period, 2005-2009, a total of 276 projects were awarded. In 2015 there are 464 completed projects and another 85 running. These projects have a strong practice-oriented research base, indicated by the fact that lectors are involved in 95% of the projects. Since the introduction of the first projects in 2005 almost 4600 companies and 6000 professionals have been involved.10

During the implementation of the lectorates and the knowledge circulation programmes the main goals of the instruments were maintained, but in both cases there was a shift in focus. During the implementation, it became clear that conflicts could arise between the different goals of the instruments (such as the link between education and research, staff professionalisation and knowledge exchange in the case of the lectorates). Based on evaluations and experience, it became evident that performing research should have the highest priority; research was the kingpin, perceived as a prerequisite to achieve the other goals (e.g. HBO-raad, 2010, p.4).

During implementation, intense debates took place addressing the key question of what kind of research UAS should conduct. Inspired by concepts such as ‘mode 1’ and ‘mode 2’, the outcome of the debates was that UAS should focus on practice-oriented research (De Weert and Leijnse, 2010). Next, it became evident that to achieve the successful embedding of research as a second core function, its quality should be systematically assessed. For this purpose the SKO developed the Sector Protocol for Quality Assurance in Research adopted by the UAS in 2007. This protocol served as the basis for a national system of quality assurance for practice-oriented research at UAS. In 2009, the system of quality assurance for research was introduced based on this protocol. The independent Validation Committee Quality Assurance Research (VKO) periodically reviews UAS research using scientific, impact and relevance indicators.

**Monitoring, evaluation and feedback**

Lectorates and practice-oriented research projects have been monitored from the beginning, and there have been several formal evaluations of outcomes and progress. There is no doubt that the implementation of both instruments has been seriously and closely watched. In terms of measuring effects and goal achievement,

---

10 The AWTI (2015) reports that nowadays there are about 3500 teachers and 21,000 students involved in the implementation of practice-oriented research.
in both cases there has been a stock taking at the start (baseline measurement at $t_0$).

To evaluate the lectorates, the SKO commissioned a committee with external members (the Karssen committee). The committee’s approach was to not just assess progress in a narrow sense, but to have a more general approach. The main conclusion was that the lectorates were bringing new impetus to the UAS, while at the same time the lectorates clearly were not yet an embedded or integral part of the institutions (see also Van Bruggen and De Vries, 2004). It should be noted that the first SKO evaluation took place shortly after the introduction of the first lectorates, implying that ‘spectacular results’ were not to be expected. In general terms, as regards the lectorates, the committee spoke of a promising yet uncertain start. In their final evaluation in 2008, the SKO stated that in the first years after the introduction the UAS clearly faced problems in incorporating the new position of lector in their organisations, but that they had accomplished a lot in the seven years since then (SKO, 2008, p. 15).

The evaluations of the lectorates, conducted under the auspices of the SKO, have had at least two effects. Firstly, it has given direction to the lectorates and in that respect helped to establish the lectorates as they are today. Secondly, the evaluations have contributed to the continuation of the instruments and their institutionalisation. Many conclusions and recommendations have been endorsed by the ministry. In its subsequent national strategic plans for higher education the ministry echoed the positive tone from the evaluations and continued the funding, making it part of the regular funding model as recommended by the evaluations.

In 2010, the ministry of education conducted a meta-policy evaluation (the Policy Evaluation Knowledge Function HBO 2001-2008). In terms of its effectiveness the ministry concluded:

‘The instruments have demonstrably contributed to the knowledge exchange between UAS, businesses and other knowledge institutions. A number of good practices show that some projects really demonstrate knowledge development. From the evaluations it also can be concluded that the use of the instruments leads to attention for the teaching process. Whether the use of the instruments has resulted in improvement of quality of the teaching as the consequence of the instruments has not been investigated and is not demonstrable on the basis of the available data’ (MOCW, 2010, p. 28).

**Important changes in the context for the reform**

Policy developments at the European level have supported the reform to strengthen the UAS-research function. Both the Lisbon strategy and the Bologna process, and their successors, raised awareness of higher education institutions, including the UAS, as important actors to strengthen Europe’s knowledge base. In a nutshell, Europe’s views and initiatives on higher education’s role in society and the economy

---

11 For example, in 2004 the 2001 agreement was renewed, based on the positive outcome of a mid-term review. The renewed agreement speaks of a positive contribution of the lectors and knowledge circles to a better external orientation, curriculum renewal, staff professionalization, and strengthening the knowledge circulation and development in the UAS. It confirmed the potential UAS could have in the development and dissemination of knowledge by practice-oriented research. Therefore, the number of lectorates should be substantially increased, and consequently the budget from the government as well, and the government grant should become part of the regular operational public grant for UAS (instead of being a temporary provision).
have created ‘favourable winds’ to change the mandate of the UAS and to adjust their position in the higher education system.

Another event that had some effect on the structural reform was a number of scandals in the HBO-sector including cases of the abuse of public funds and diploma-fraud. The consequence in general terms was that some UAS reconsidered their spectrum of activities, including their research function. The turmoil gave food for thought: were UAS actually able to successfully fulfil both a teaching and a research function? But at the end of the day the scandals did not have much impact on the establishment of the UAS-research function.

It should also be noted that the sector has grown considerably in terms of student numbers, which, together with other developments, has placed severe pressure on the UAS. In this context, the further extension of its tasks – practice-oriented research next to teaching – adds to the complexity and such a mission stretch could lead to ‘mission overload’.

Achievements and effects

The assessment of the effectiveness of the reform is a matter of degree, depending on the angle from which one looks. Moreover, one should realise that the UAS subsector is diverse. This variety implies that the degree to which the reform has been institutionalised, as well as when this has occurred, differs from one UAS to another.

The overall impression is that the reform (strengthening the UAS-research function) has been successful in the sense that after fifteen years since the first steps were taken there is general consensus that the research function of UAS has obtained a structural and indispensable position in Dutch higher education. Contemporary UAS cannot be imagined without practice-oriented research, indicated for instance by a growing number of collaborations between lectors and their university counterparts as well as the trend for young PhD-holders to start a career at a UAS.

This conclusion however has to be qualified. While the number of lectors has grown to over 600 in 2015, their share of the total number of teaching staff at UAS is limited (estimate of around 4-5%). As the result one might question their impact, particularly if one takes into account that most lectors hold a part-time position (although this is likely to contribute to knowledge exchange, knowledge circulation and cooperation with other organisations). In its latest strategic plan, published in July 2015, the minister of education proposes to increase the number of lectors – which can be interpreted as both an indication of success and failure. By the same token, despite a substantial number of practice-oriented research projects, involving not just lectorates but also a large number of SMEs, one might question its impact if seen in the context of the country’s total research production. A drop in the ocean of research?

Comments can also be made with respect to the professionalisation of UAS-staff. The number of staff with masters and PhD-degrees has definitely increased. The issue of professionalisation, however, remains on the agenda after fifteen years, which might indicate unsatisfactory success rates, or at least a continuing concern about it. Additionally, to what extent the growth is the direct consequence of the establishment of lectorates is uncertain. It is possible that other changes in HR

\[12\] Staff qualifications is for instance one of the indicators in the bilateral performance agreements between the ministry and the individual UAS.
policies caused the recruitment of new staff with different qualifications (i.e. having a stronger research orientation) and not, or to a lesser extent, the transformation of existing staff through lectors. Changed HR policies, in turn, can be interpreted as a positive side-effect of the introduction of lectorates.

The questions of to what extent the strengthening of the research function of the UAS has caused an improvement in the teaching and learning function, and knowledge exchange between UAS and industry and public organisations that contributes to the innovative capacity of the Netherlands (the strategic goal) are hard to answer. The issue of quality – of UAS-teaching and research, and how teaching is strengthened by the research function – has not yet been definitively answered. Given the results and progress made, as represented by implemented initiatives (lectorates, joint research projects), one can argue that this is the positive effect on the Dutch innovation capacity intended by the policy. Further evaluation of the impact of lectorates, the funding schemes and joint research projects to underpin this assumption is needed.

Summary

This case study described and analysed the establishment and institutionalization of a research function as the second core task of the Dutch universities of applied sciences (UAS) in the period 2001-2015. In general terms, the overarching strategic goal of this structural reform is to contribute to the strengthening of the innovative capacity of the Netherlands by the optimal use of the UAS-sector in delivering highly-skilled modern graduates and services needed by regional industry and the public sector. After the Dutch ministry and the Netherlands Association of Applied Sciences concluded a covenant in 2001, several instruments have been introduced to strengthen the UAS-research function by means of the introduction of new staff positions at the UAS, grants for practice-oriented research and grants for the establishment of Centres of Expertise. The government provided the funding for these initiatives through additional budgets, alongside the operational basic grant, initially as temporary funding, and independent national agencies were established to manage the reform initiatives. In the fifteen years since the first steps were taken the research function of UAS has obtained a structural and indispensable position in Dutch higher education. In this respect, the structural reform has been successful as it has changed the Dutch higher education landscape. Given the results and progress made through the implemented initiatives, it is plausible that they have positively contributed to the innovative capacity of the Netherlands, although conclusive evidence to underpin this assumption is not yet available.
Interviewees
Drs. C.J.G. van Gageldonk, former secretary of the ‘Stichting Kennisontwikkeling HBO’ (Foundation Knowledge Development HBO)

Drs. R.B.J. Jorna, Director School of Health, Saxion University of Applied Sciences

Prof. F. Leijnse, former chair of the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (‘Vereniging Hogescholen’)

Drs. R.H. Slotman, Director NWO division Task Force Applied Research (‘Regieorgaan Stichting Innovatieve Alliantie’)

J. van der Vos, Domain Research, The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (‘Vereniging Hogescholen’)

References


HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:
- one copy:
  via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
  from the European Union’s representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
  from the delegations in non-EU countries (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
  by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm) or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (free phone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications: