



Coronavirus and the education sector

Schools will remain closed until at least the end of the [May school holidays](#).

- Teachers will arrange distance learning for pupils who are at home.
- [All national exams for this school year have been cancelled.](#)
- Universities and institutions of higher professional education (HBO) are requested to offer online lectures instead of large-scale lectures.
- [Childcare will be provided at schools and childcare centres](#) for the children of key workers, so that these parents can continue going to work. Key workers are people who work in healthcare, public transport, the police and fire services and other crucial sectors. This childcare will be provided at no extra cost.
- See also [frequently asked questions to DUO](#).

Frequently Asked Questions about coronavirus and higher education

Lessons, exams and internship

How are higher education institutions providing teaching to students?

Up to 28 April inclusive, education will be provided remotely as much as possible.

Higher education institutions will remain physically open so that researchers can continue their work. But the measures against coronavirus make it impossible for students to follow their courses as normal. Universities and institutions of higher professionals education (HBOs) are expected to give students an opportunity to continue their studies at a later time, or to provide alternatives such as online lectures. It is up to institutions themselves to decide what forms of course delivery are most appropriate in each case. If alternatives are not feasible, a fitting solution will need to be found.

Are students allowed to go to the campus and use facilities such as libraries, or gather in small groups, e.g. for a practical exam?

Higher education institutions have suspended all on-site educational activities where teaching staff and students are physically present in the same location at the same time. This includes lectures, classes, working groups and examinations. The institutions are not obliged to close their buildings. Whether or not the library remains open to students is for each institution to decide, provided they comply with the general instructions of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and the municipal health service (GGD). An exception has been made for certain final examinations and assessments where physical presence is required, such as the public defence of a master's or doctoral dissertation. These may take place, provided the RIVM and GGD instructions are followed closely.

Can higher education examinations scheduled between 16 March and 28 April still go ahead?

As far as possible, education will be provided via distance learning. It is up to individual institutions themselves to decide what forms of course delivery are most appropriate in each case. If examinations can be arranged online, they can still go ahead as planned.

Can students from outbreak areas come to the Netherlands to undertake a work placement or to study?

Students in areas where an outbreak has occurred must comply with local measures, which means they might not be allowed to travel. It's a decision that the educational institution or employer concerned must make themselves, in consultation with the local organisation. Each case is unique and will depend in part on the medical and security situation on the ground. It might be helpful to contact the relevant municipal health service (GGD). If students or trainees decide to come to the Netherlands, it's important to ensure they're well informed (see [frequently asked questions to DUO](#)).

Healthcare courses and healthcare institutions

How will RIVM's advice and the national measures affect teaching and work placements for students on healthcare courses at institutions for secondary vocational education (MBO) and higher education?

- If a student is on a work placement, the healthcare institution decides whether the student can assist with patient care, without compromising the safety and health of patients, staff members or the student. Students also have the option of telling the educational institution and the healthcare institution that they want to end their work placement or clinical placement.
- Current guidelines require all physical teaching activities at higher education institutions to be cancelled. Work placements and other course-related activities that take place outside the institution may go ahead unless the employer or organiser has to cancel the activity in connection with the coronavirus outbreak. Medical and healthcare courses that involve students working in a healthcare institution, such as a university hospital, a general hospital or an extramural healthcare institution, form a special category. In some cases, students on work placements and clinical placements will need to stay at home, so that the institution can focus on providing healthcare. In other cases, they will be needed at the healthcare institution because they have a large part in providing patient care.
- If relevant, the educational institution will decide, in consultation, whether and how any new tasks relate to the goals of the work placement or clinical placement.
- If a student's work placement, clinical placement or other activity is cancelled, they may still work at a healthcare institution as a student volunteer. In this case, separate agreements must be made between the healthcare institution and the student, for instance about insurance. Healthcare institutions are advised to consider carefully whether a student can work there as a volunteer. And they should inform the student that this work is not a continuation of their previous course-related activities and that they will not be assessed on it.

Some higher education staff may be called upon to assist the healthcare services. This may leave institutions for higher education unable to offer their full educational programmes. How should this situation be dealt with?

Some staff who teach medical or healthcare-related courses at universities or institutions of higher professional education (HBO) also have jobs in healthcare or wish to offer their services to that sector. In the current circumstances, the healthcare system may make a greater claim on their time. If this is the case, their healthcare duties are more vital than their teaching duties. Institutions for higher education will need to find appropriate solutions.

Students abroad

Do students who are studying or doing a work placement abroad need to return to the Netherlands?

That depends on where the student is. Students in areas where an outbreak has occurred must comply with local measures, which means they might not be allowed to travel. If that is not the case, it's up to students themselves to decide whether or not to return to the Netherlands. They may wish to discuss this with their educational institution.

If a Dutch student abroad needs help, who should they contact?

Dutch students abroad should contact their own travel insurer first. If necessary, they can also contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 24/7 Contact Centre by telephone on +31 247 247 247, by WhatsApp on +31 6 8238 7796 or on Twitter at @24/7BZ.

Higher education

How will the measures in higher education affect prospective students, now that on-site activities for them have been cancelled?

Many prospective students are now unable to attend activities on site, such as selection days or matching events, due to the measures taken to combat coronavirus. Institutions for higher education should, as far as possible, provide alternatives for this group. The registration deadline will be moved from 1 May to 1 June, to give prospective students more time.

Is 1 May still the deadline for registering for a course? Do I have to register with a university or institution of higher professional education (HBO) before 1 May?

It's important to register as soon as you can. If possible, register before 1 May, so that course matching can be arranged for you. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the deadline for those unable to register before 1 May has been extended to 1 June. So you will still be admitted to a bachelor's degree course or associate degree course if you register by 1 June.

I have registered for a selection-based bachelor's degree course or associate degree course. When will I hear if I've been selected?

Universities and HBO institutions will try to notify you of the outcome of the selection procedure by 15 April. Due to the current circumstances, however, this deadline cannot be met for all courses. You will be informed by the institution you registered with. Institutions have until 15 June to complete their selection procedures for all selection-based courses (including creative arts courses). It's important that you also register for your second choice just in case. Do this before 1 May if possible and before 1 June at the latest.

I'm in the final year of my secondary vocational education (MBO) course, but my progress has been slightly delayed due to coronavirus. Will I still be admitted to an institution of higher professional education (HBO)?

MBO students who are unable to complete one or two smaller course elements or their work placement before 1 September due to the measures to combat coronavirus may still start a bachelor's degree course or associate degree course at an HBO institution. They must obtain their MBO qualification before 1 January 2021. If they do not, they must leave the HBO course. More details about this arrangement will be announced soon. Register for the course of your choice as soon as you can (before 1 May if possible and before 1 June at the latest).

Will the binding recommendation on continuation of studies (BSA) still be issued at the end of the first year of study?

At the end of their first year, based on the number of study credits they have attained, students in higher education receive a binding recommendation (BSA) on whether they may progress to the next year of their course. Due to the measures in place to combat the coronavirus outbreak, first-year students may be unable to obtain the required number of credits. It has been agreed that universities and institutions of higher professionals education (hogescholen, HBO) will take into account the unusual circumstances in which their students are currently studying. Anyone who cannot meet the BSA requirements because their studies have been interrupted or delayed by the coronavirus outbreak will be granted an extension. They can progress to the second year and try to meet the BSA norm in the 2020/2021 academic year.

Financial questions

Am I allowed to delay my tuition fee payments?

Although universities and HBO institutions can't operate as normal at present, because of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, they are providing education in other ways, for example online. So students still need to pay tuition fees. If students are in financial difficulties, for example because their part-time income has stopped, they can increase their student loan from the Education Executive Agency (DUO). They can also apply for a tuition fee loan. This can be done retroactively. This means students can get a loan or increase their loan for every month from the start of the current year of study. Students can arrange this via MijnDUO. Institutions are responsible for collecting tuition fees.

I've got financial problems. What should I do?

Students may encounter financial difficulties, for instance because their part-time income has stopped but they still have to meet regular costs, such as rent. The Education Executive Agency (DUO) is making every effort to help, taking account of personal situations wherever possible. Students can increase their student loan, and if necessary, back-date it to the start of the current year of study. They can also apply for a tuition fee loan. Students can [make these arrangements online](#) on MijnDUO.

I can't make my student loan payments right now. What should I do?

Former students who are repaying a student loan may be unable to do this because their income has stopped. If so, they can suspend their payments by applying for an interest-only period. The maximum duration of this period is 5 years within the entire repayment term. Even if they have already used this option or have already agreed a payment scheme, DUO will try to accommodate their needs.

Student travel product

Will my right to travel as a student be extended because of the coronavirus crisis?

To help students in higher education, any student who is enrolled at a university or institution of higher professional education (HBO) and who in March 2020 was entitled to travel as a student will have this entitlement extended by three months. Please note: if your right to travel as a student would have ended in April, you may have received a message from the Education Executive Agency (DUO) stating that your student travel product will be deactivated. You can ignore that message. If your student travel product has already been deactivated, you will receive a message from DUO within two weeks explaining how to reactivate it.

Do I need to deactivate my student travel product now to be entitled to the extra three months' travel?

No. If you are still studying one year after the end of the nominal course duration, you will automatically be entitled to travel as a student for three extra months. You can however choose to temporarily deactivate your travel product to prevent your student debt increasing further. Do this if you don't expect to travel in the coming months and you're not sure whether you will graduate within the set time limit.

When will we know more about a possible extension of the measures?

The government will decide whether to extend the measures in the week leading up to 28 April. At this point it will become clear what this will mean for educational institutions.

Educational institutions say they receive information from various sources, including the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and local authorities. Is this correct? If they perceive any inconsistencies, they give priority to following RIVM's advice. Is this correct?

Yes, the advice given by RIVM should always be followed. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science makes every effort to align its information accordingly.

Ministry responsible

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