

Towards a normal academic standard

Dutch universities are among the best in the world. Our entire society benefits from this. It makes our economy competitive and innovative and improves our quality of life. Our universities educate the people we need to meet the challenges of our time, such as the coronavirus pandemic and climate change.

Unfortunately, our universities are struggling due to chronic underfunding. Even though the number of students enrolled in our universities has been increasing for years, per-student funding keeps being reduced. This has left academic staff with precious little time and financial resources to conduct high-quality research or deliver high-quality teaching, let alone both.

Yet these close ties between research and teaching are crucial to the quality of academic education. The best way to educate students is to have their lectures delivered by researchers. This way, students can learn first-hand about research methods and recent scientific insights, and develop the inquisitive and critical attitude they need, both in academia and beyond.

Due to underfunding, students are in danger of no longer receiving the education they deserve, and our lecturers and professors are struggling to cope. It is high time that this situation was addressed and that we worked towards a normal academic standard, to ensure that the students of today receive the proper education to meet the challenges of tomorrow. This is why we – lecturers, professors, PhD candidates, postdocs, students, administrators and alumni of all 14 universities in the Netherlands, will sound the alarm on Tuesday, 6 April. We will be calling on the new government to annually invest €1.1 billion in the academic education sector in the long term. The report commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which was recently published by PwC, confirms that the current level of funding is insufficient.

Only if we are to receive this annual €1.1 billion capital injection will we be able to restore Dutch academic education to a normal academic standard. This is what it will take to:

- Safeguard the Netherlands' high position in international rankings and the high quality of our degree programmes.
- Go some way towards attaining the government's target of spending 2.5% of our GDP on education and innovation (down from the 3% target set by the EU).
- Make the Netherlands more innovative and conduct more groundbreaking research.
- Retain outstanding talent in the Netherlands.
- Ensure that lecturers, researchers and professors have enough time to conduct academic research AND teach as well.
- Prevent lecturers and professors being unable to function properly and from leaving academia.

Support academic research and education in the Netherlands and strengthen our call on the government to grant that much-needed capital injection. Towards a Normal Academic Standard!

WoinActie, Aob, FNV Onderwijs & Onderzoek, CNV Onderwijs & Overheid, LSVB, ISO, LKVV, AC/FBZ, Lovum, KNHG, Postdocnl, PNN, de Jonge Akademie en de VSNU, namens de 14 universiteiten.

This information was compiled by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), which took the greatest care in doing so. VSNU contact: Femke van Zijst, +31 (0)6 3331 3016, vanzijst@vsnu.nl

