



Ministry of Education, Culture and
Science



NVAO

*The Accreditation Organisation
of the Netherlands and Flanders*



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap

Associate Degree in Dutch Higher Education

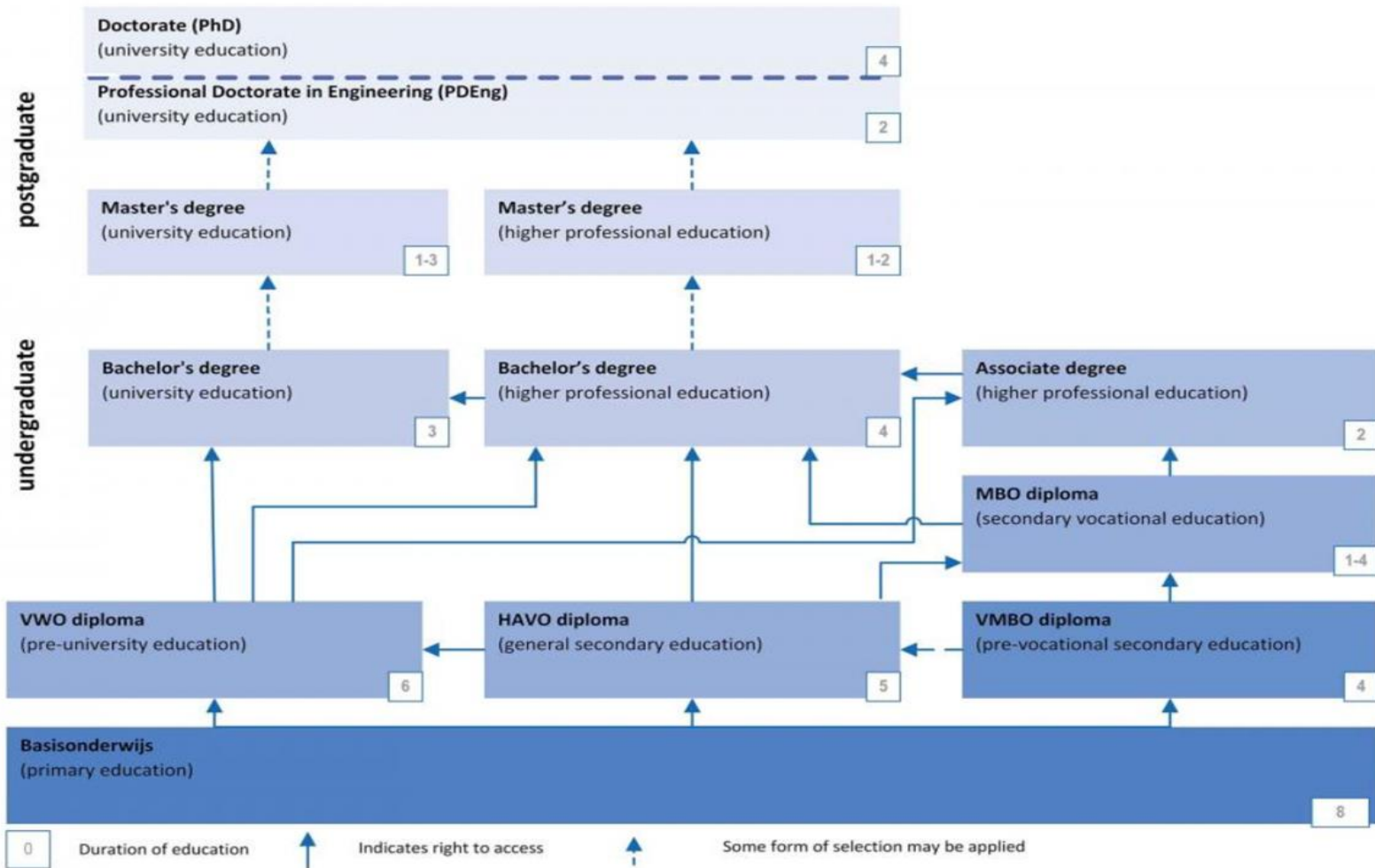
Chain 5 Conference Leeuwarden
8 November 2023

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Associate degree in The Netherlands

- Associate degree-(Ad-)programme, two year, 120 ec
- Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)
- EQF/NLQF level 5
 - = between upper secondary VET and Bachelors degree
- Accessible with diploma MBO 4 (VET), Havo of VWO (Secondary Education)
- Possibilities to continue in related Bachelors degree programmes - 2 year or more, 120(+) ec





Facts & Figures Public Higher Education

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)

- 36 Public
- 59 Private

Research Universities

- 14 Public (incl. Open University)
- 2 Private



Facts & Figures Public Higher Education (2021)

	Total number of students	Influx 1st year
UAS (HBO):	492.516	113.819
Universities (WO):	<u>340.346</u>	62.953 (Ba) <u>56.709 (Ma)</u>
Total	892.862	233.481
Private HE:	60.000 students total	



Historic development of Associate degree

- In the nineties short programmes in private higher education, almost not in UAS
- BaMa-structure in 2004; short programmes are excluded
- But they still meet a demand from the professional field
- Thanks to a lobby the government authorises a pilot with Ad-programmes in 2005
- UAS and recognized private institutions submit applications for approval of new Ad-programmes to NVAO from 2006 on



Quality Assurance

- NVAO develops a framework Assessment of new Ad-programmes
- NVAO panels of experts assess hundreds of applications for new Ad-programmes
- In 2012 about 200 Ad-programmes are approved
- At that time, among strong elements, a lot of applications show two major weaknesses:
 - Lacking representative consultation of the involved professional field on a substantive level
 - Proposed Ad-programmes are too much equal to the first two years of the related bachelor programme



Quality Assurance - II

- The pilot is a period of growth of Ad-programmes; in numbers and gradually in sense of quality
- However, afterwards for unclear reasons, the attention of UAS for Ad-programmes decreases
- A stronger focus of UAS on professional master programmes at that time might be a reason
- Partly due to two advisory reports on request of the Minister ('Veerman', 2010, 'Rinnooy Kan, 2014) UAS re-embrace the Ad-programme from 2015 on
- The success of the separate Ad-academy is another incentive. This initiative of Rotterdam UAS is quickly followed by three other UAS



Quality Assurance - III

- Quality development by cooperation of involved UAS; establishment of the platform Associate degree in 2019
- The platform delivers e.g. strong contribution to
 - the development of professional and educational profiles for several types of programmes
 - better substantive understanding of level 5 and related research skills for students

The platform Ad: a flourishing cooperation of UAS; an example of good practice from the point of view of the philosophy of the accreditation system that emphasizes the importance of ownership of institutions and a bottom-up approach

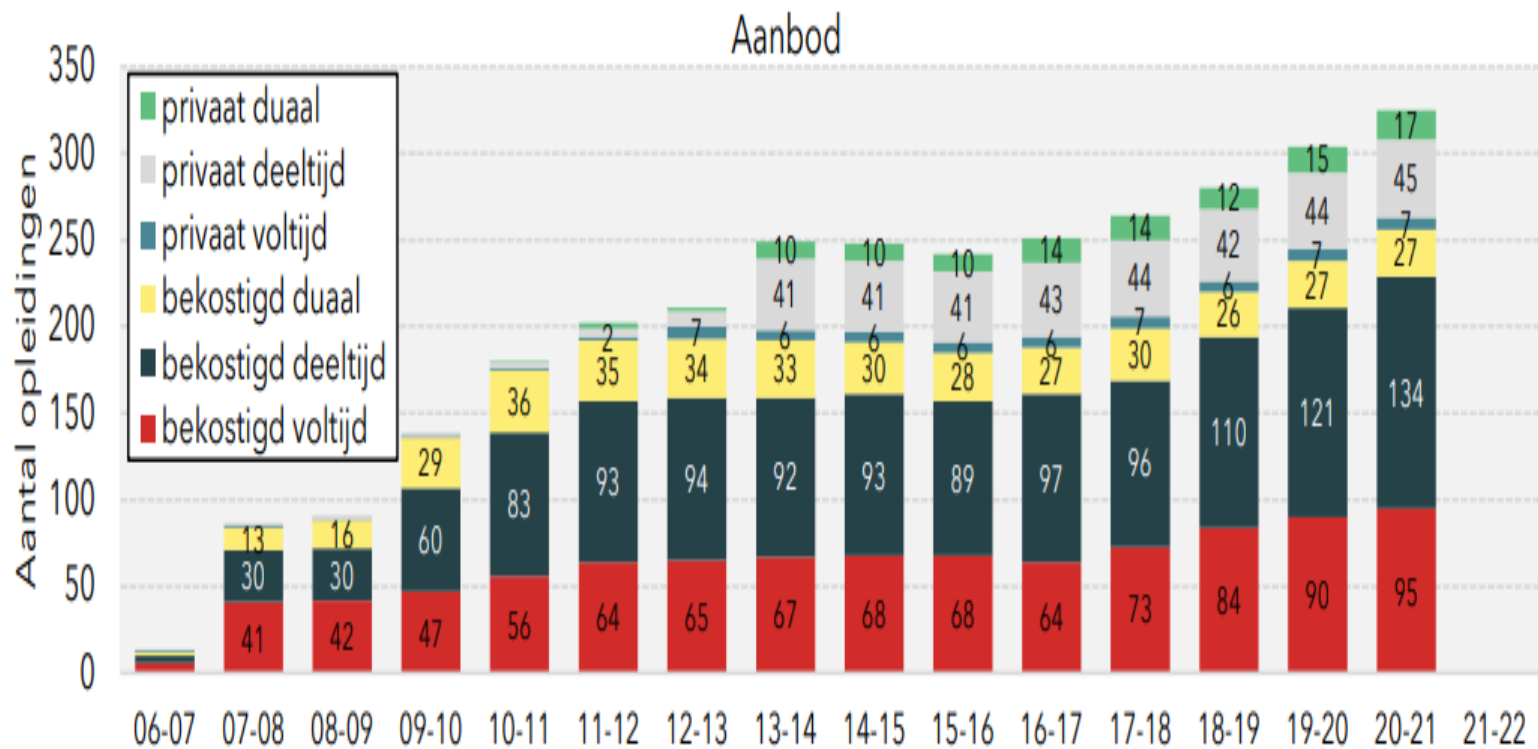


Law on implementation of Associate Degree Programmes

- Structural implementation in law on Higher Education and Sciences in 2018
- Associate Degree = independent degree,
- No longer part of Bachelor Degree Programmes
- UAS does not necessarily need to provide related Bachelor Degree Programme
- But the student does have rights to continue in Bachelor Degree Programmes (120 ec or more)
- Co-operation UAS with VET and possibility to partially execute the Associate Degree Programme in VET institution

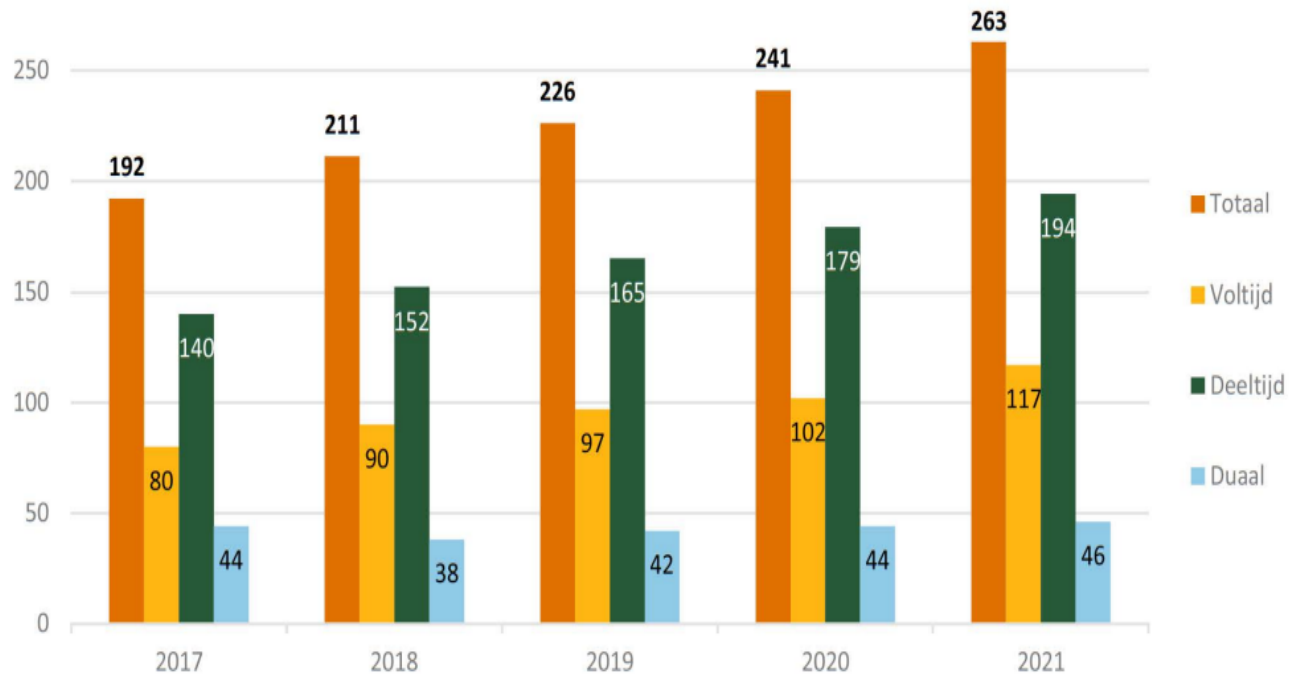


Provision of Associate Degree Programmes



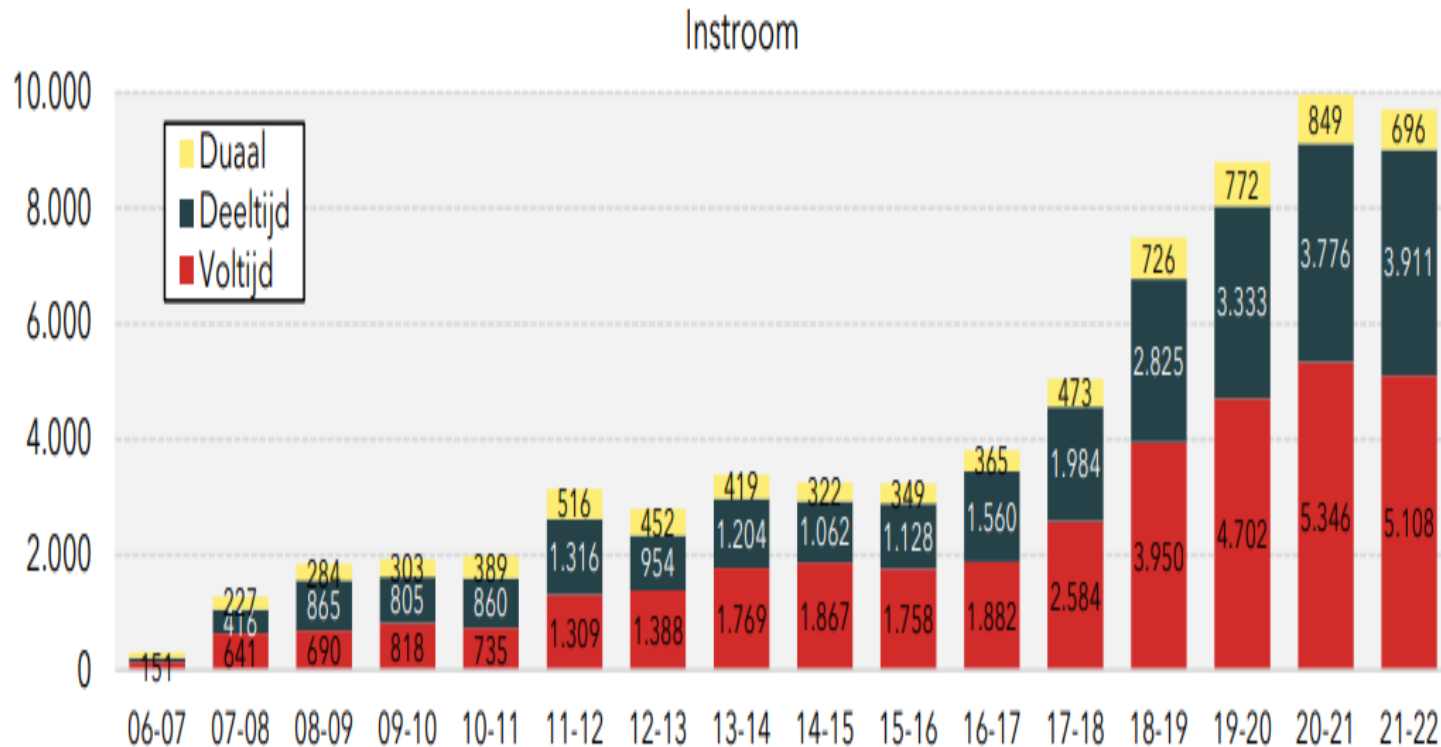


Increasing provision since implementation of law on Associate Degree Programmes 2018



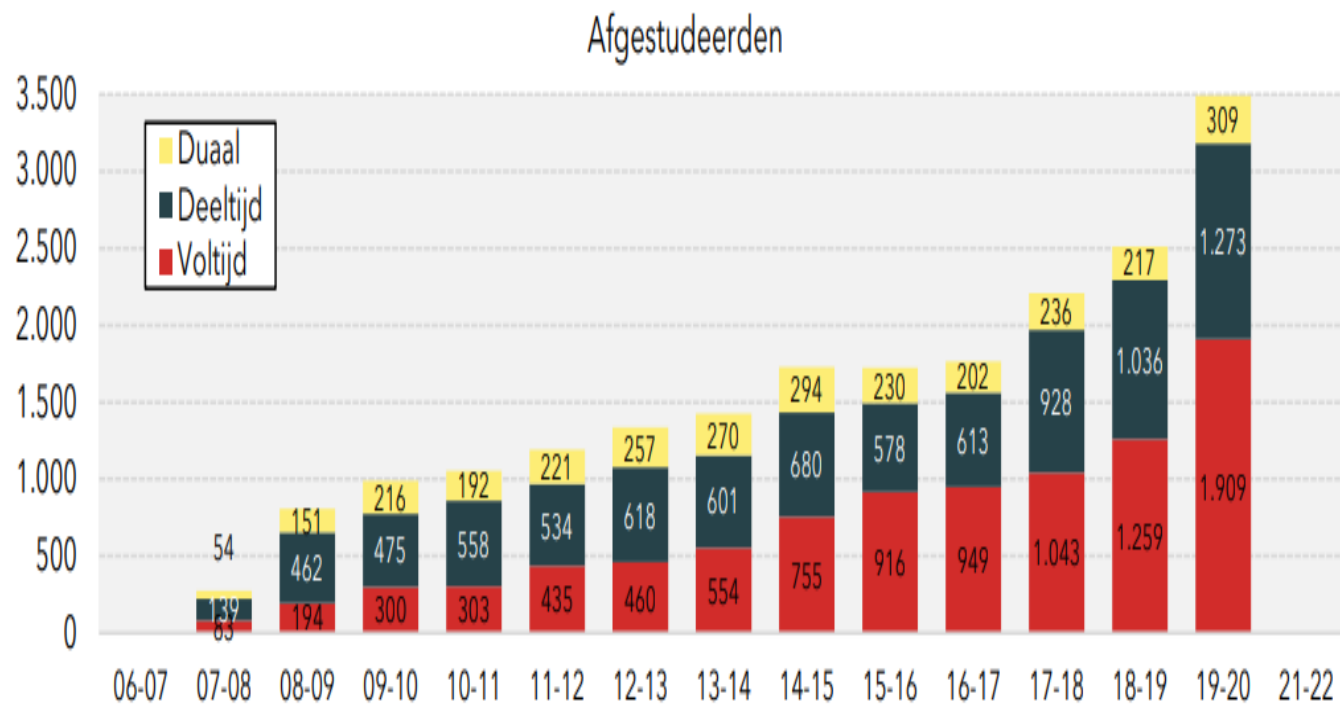


Influx of new students in Associate Degree





Graduates Associate Degree



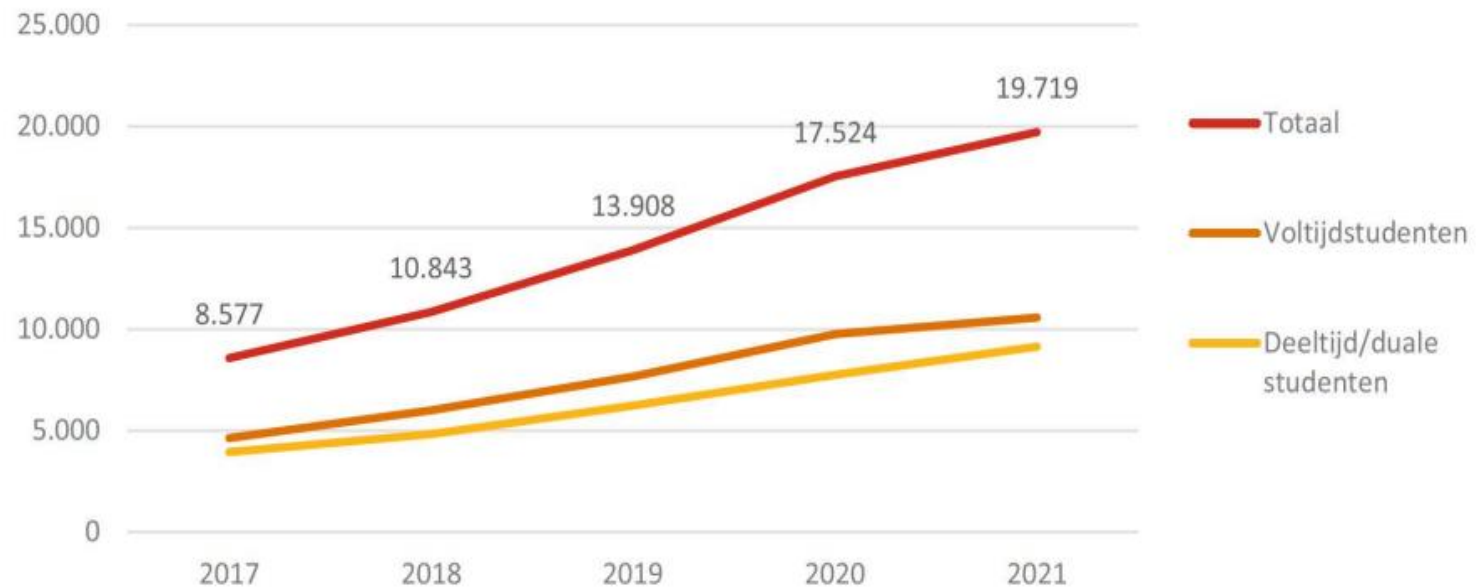


Facts & Figures Associate Degree 2021

- Provision of Associate Degree Programmes: 326
238 Public UAS, 88 Private UAS
Majority in Economics and Engineering
- Influx of students in Public Ad: 9.971
 - 58% new students, 42% were registered as student before
 - New students: 76% from VET (33% in Bachelors Degree)
 - Age of enrolling students from VET 26,2 years in part time and dual programmes
- Total number of students in public Ad-programmes: 20.331
 - About 55% in full time programmes
 - About 45% in part time or dual (WBL) programmes



Full time students – part time/dual students





'A solid position in Higher Education' (1)

Monitor implementation Associate Degree Programmes 2018-2022

- Positive developments, increasing provision and participation
- Students are (very) satisfied, overall score 7/10
 - Content
 - Practicality
 - Relevant professional skills
- Attractive:
 - short duration (2 years)
 - possibilities to continue in Bachelor Degree Programmes
 - dual and part time: combine work & study



'A solid position in Higher Education' (2)

- 30% of graduates continue in a Bachelors Degree Programme
- 70% of graduates work
 - more graduates with a fixed contract after dual or part time programme
 - higher income graduates of dual or part time programmes
 - better career options – new positions and increase in income
 - more self confidence



Challenges

Room for improvement:

- More balanced provision of Associate Degree Programmes related to all branches of industry
- More cooperation with branches of industry with staff shortages
- Better spread provision of Associate Degree Programmes over the entire country
- Increased and improved cooperation with VET institutions
 - From september 2023: possibilities to execute a larger part of the programme in a VET institution
- Increased 'fame' of Associate Degree in both society and labour market

The Associate Degree is 'on its way to adulthood'



Quality Assurance – current observations

- Observations NVAO (source: panel reports accreditation existing Ad-programmes up to and including 2023):
 - Legitimacy of professional profiles has improved; defining roles and job descriptions on level 5 deserve attention
 - Independency of Ad-programmes has grown, but still curricula sometimes too similar with the equivalent part of the bachelor
 - Specific educational concepts are rare, although Ad-students mostly have other learning preferences than BA students



Quality Assurance – current observations II

- Defining and understanding of level 5; programmes tend to define intended results to close to the bachelor level
- Internationalisation currently a topic of discussion on the platform Ad
- Assurance of workbased learning and student assessment are actual quality topics that need full attention in Ad en Bachelor programmes
- Growing to a new educational level takes time; that's probably why recognition of prior learning does not play a major role
- Transition of graduates to bachelor programmes needs a coherent approach on national scale; current differences between UAS are difficult to explain



Questions

Room for questions

Thank you for your attention!