

Plan of action: programme Accessibility

Phase 1: May 2022- April 2023

To: Executive Board and Deans

Department: Academic Affairs (AZ) with assistance of BICC

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1 Accessibility

1.1. Introduction

The Dutch education system is known worldwide as an accessible system. Minister Dijkgraaf emphasized this again last June, stating that we have an education system "that is unique in the world: it is accessible, and it is of high quality" (AOB, 2022).

Ensuring accessibility is therefore a widely shared goal in higher education (RNO, 2022). For example, the WHW incorporates the principle that higher education is generally accessible to anyone with the required prior education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2015).

However, accessibility does not only mean focusing on (prospective) students who possess the required prior education, but in a broader sense it means looking at students who have the potential and ambition to successfully achieve and pass higher education. In doing so, it is important to look at all stages of the study career: from preparation for academic education to graduation (NRO, 2022). Concretely, for Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), this means a focus on optimising both inflow and progression (study success), and outflow of different student groups. In section 1.1 'Limits to growth?' of this chapter, we address a development that is currently receiving and needs a lot of attention: the large increase in the number of students at the EUR.

Section 1.2 'WO and equal opportunities' takes a closer look at why our education system is not equally accessible to all, what this means for equal opportunities and our social task as an academic institution. Finally, section 1.3 elaborates on an educational and societal starting point for Accessibility.

1.2. Limits to growth?

Universities have experienced a considerable increase in student numbers in recent years. The number of enrolled wo students nationwide has increased by about 40 per cent in 10 years. The EUR faces a similar growth trend (from approximately 24 k to 36 k students). Figure 1a shows the growth in the total EUR enrolments with figure 1b showing the percentage of growth compared to the previous year. This growth trend raises the question of whether growth can continue in this way without compromising the quality of education.

Number of enrolments EUR-wide

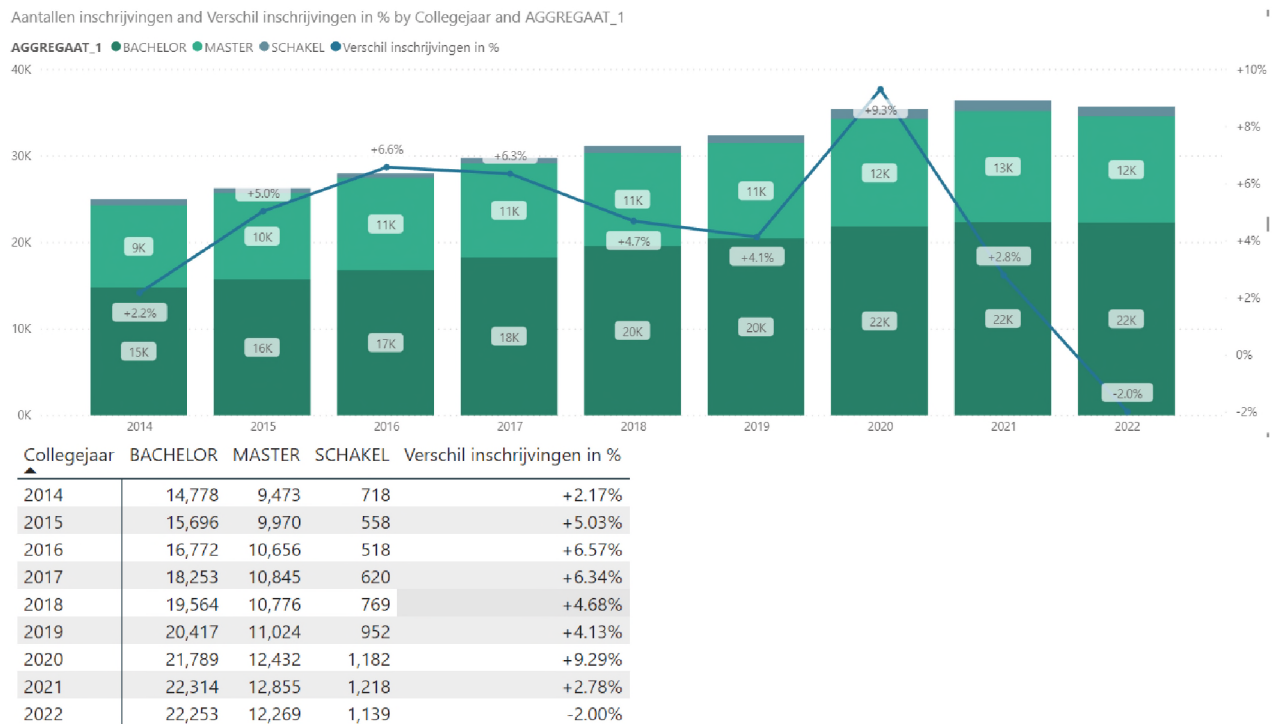


Figure 1a. Enrolments per academic year divided between bachelor, pre-master and master.

Number of enrolments by School

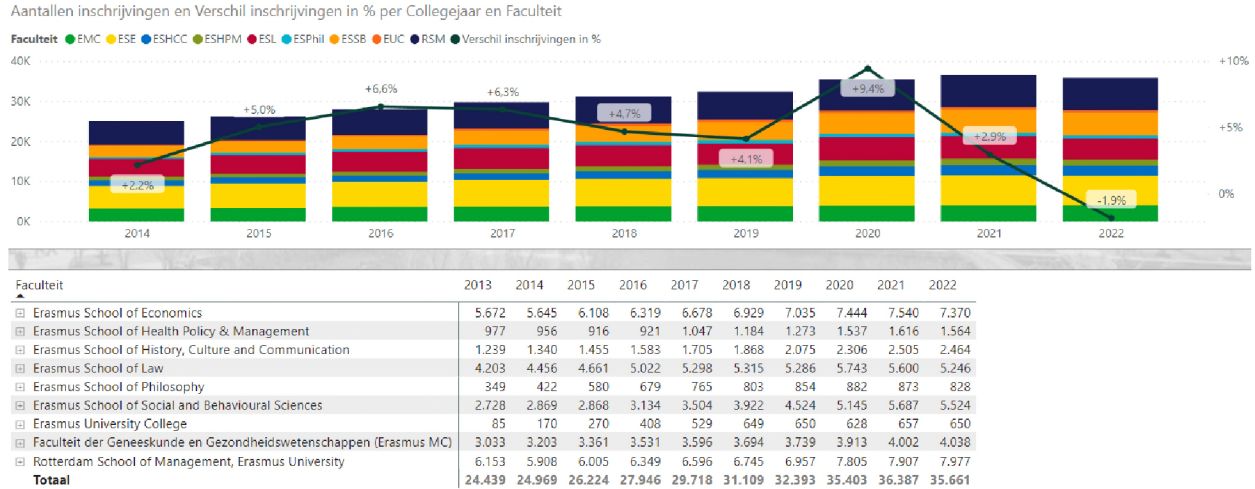


Figure 1b. Enrolments per academic year distributed by School

Despite 2022 enrolments showing a slight decline, according to a forecast based on historical enrolment data from EUR, we can count on an increasing number of students in the coming academic years as well with 90% certainty. The number of expected enrolments is estimated at 38.5K students in 2023, 40K in 2024 and in 2025 the number of enrolments is expected to reach between 39.6K and 43.4K.

Enrolment prognosis 2022-2024

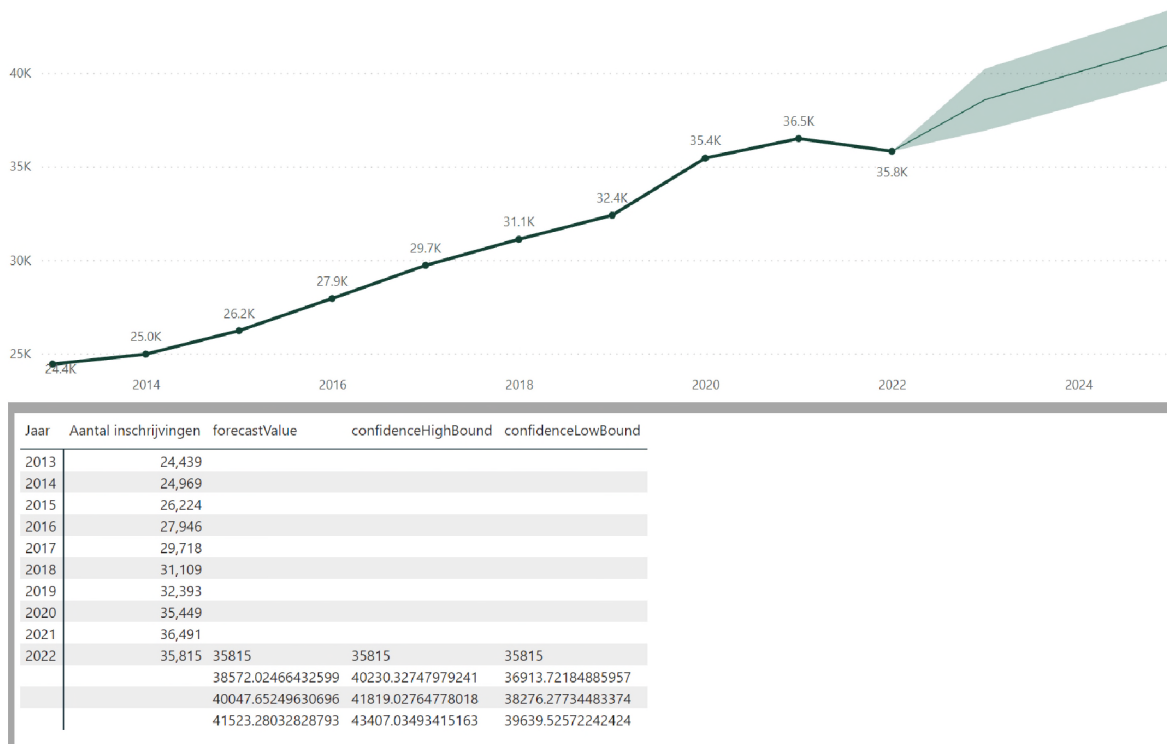


Figure 2. Prognosis number of enrolments from dashboard Enrolments (BICC)

Although growth inherently suggests accessibility, when growth is too high, capacity issues surface. How is the student/staff ratio, are the teaching and support ambitions feasible and affordable, are there sufficient teaching spaces, etc.? There is also the question of what our growth trend means for students for whom accessibility is under pressure. How do we view our growth in relation to equity, our educational quality, study and student success (progression and outflow) and inclusiveness?

In the remaining part of this chapter, these topics are made as transparent as possible with data visualisations on the inflow, progression and outflow of our students and interpreted from our social and educational mission as an academic institution in the regional, national and international context (as formulated in the [Strategy 24](#) and current [Onderwijsvisie](#)). Visualisations provide a good basis for formulating a follow-up question, but it is important to recognise the shortcomings of such simplified representations of reality, beforehand. While higher education policy on study progress relies heavily on measurement results, measuring and interpreting data simultaneously proves as indispensable as it is impossible ([Meten in het onderwijs, VU](#)).¹

¹ Quantifying data inevitably leads to reducing the complexity of reality and defining indicators in reality often translates into changes in certain behaviour. To understand the progression and outflow patterns of different groups of students within the EUR, it is necessary to carry out statistical research in addition to visual interpretations and verify whether optical differences from the data visualisations indicate significant patterns.

1.2.1 Growth picture by School

Figure 1b showed that the growth trend varies by School. Looking at which Schools have seen the strongest growth in Bachelor's enrolments over the last three years, it is noticeable that ESSB and ESHCC have seen relatively the strongest increases (source: dashboard Enrolments and Applications DCH/BICC). Figures 3a and 3b show a growth picture of these Schools with the relative development of the number of enrolments, and the absolute number of enrolments per undergraduate programme per academic year. It has not yet been investigated whether the growth is -still- considered desirable by the programmes.

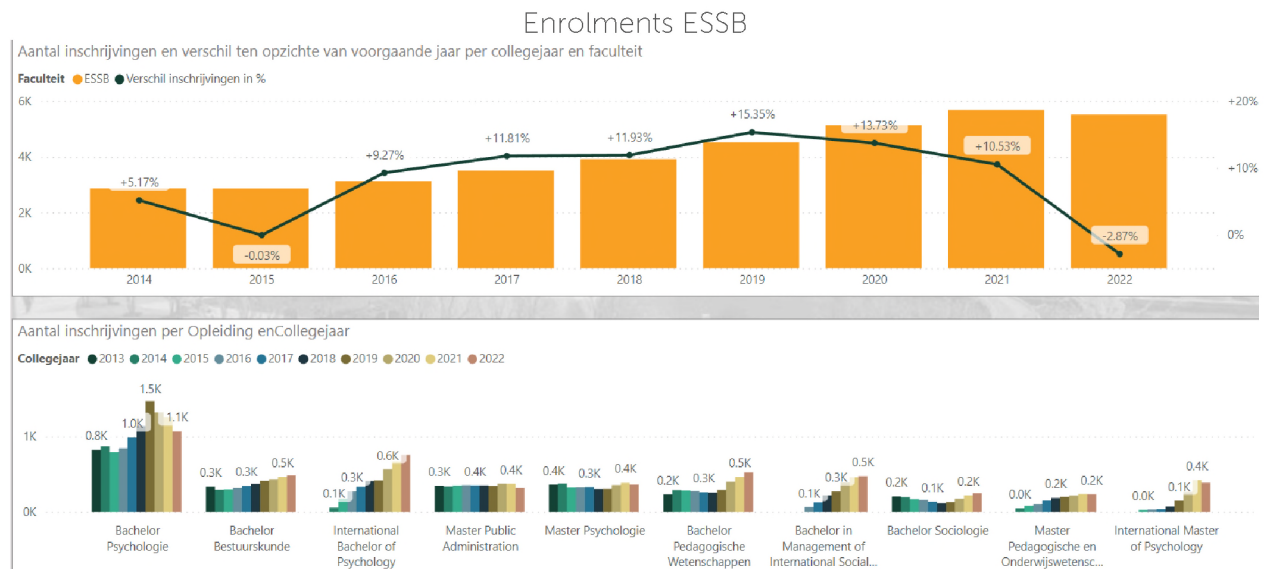


Figure 3a: Growth picture of ESSB based on enrolments in the Bachelor's programme

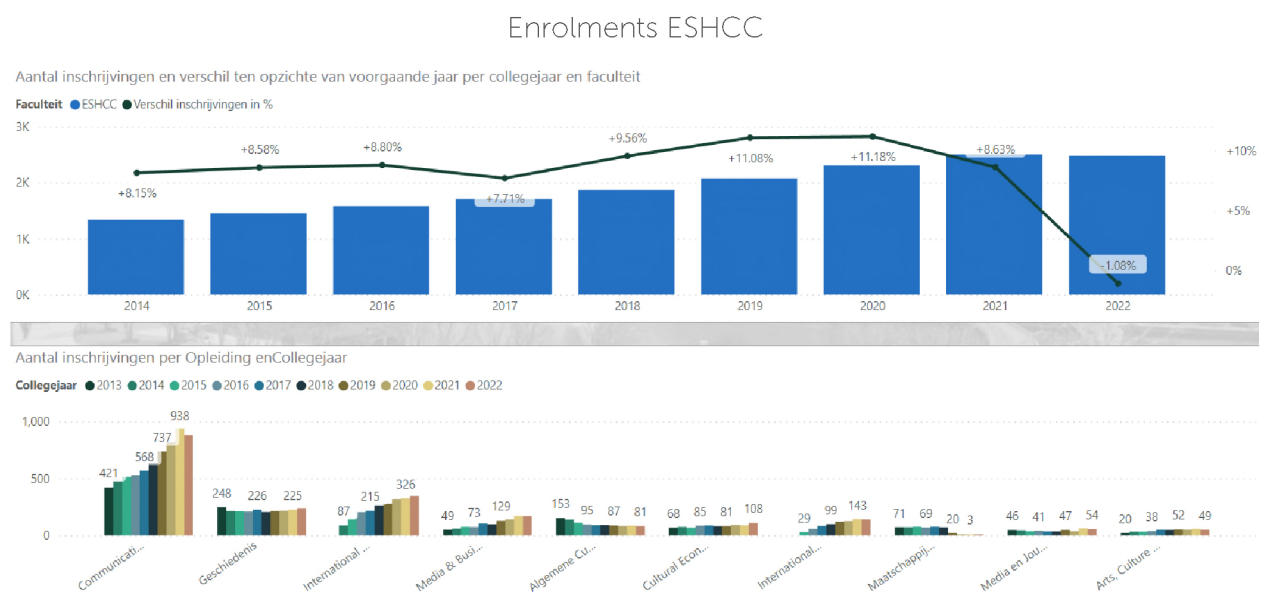


Figure 3b: Growth picture of ESHCC based on enrolments in the Bachelor's programme

For the other Schools - in line with the EUR-wide pattern in Figures 1a and 1b - there is growth, albeit to a lesser extent.² Incidentally, the rising number of registrations is not ubiquitous. At a higher level of detail, for example when looking at specific programmes of study, some also show a slight decrease in enrolments. Furthermore, large growth in specific programmes can somewhat distort the School growth picture. An exact progression of the growth picture by School and level of education can be found in the Enrolments and Applications dashboard (BICC).

In all likelihood, a different growth picture means that growth needs and ambitions vary by programme and School. In practice, this assumes that where one programme has reached a maximum in terms of capacity and growth desire and ambition, another may see plenty of room for growth and may even consider it desirable. There are also programmes and Schools where there is no clear growth ambition, and the growth or shrinkage is the result of a 'natural' process/development. This also means that the issue of 'limits to growth' may not be -equally- relevant for every programme. What further complicates this issue is that the underlying vision, motivations and growth ambitions of programmes and Schools have not been fully captured/documentated. It is also questionable to what extent they still fit the current dynamics of the academic teaching field. If growth (of specific groups or programmes) was deliberately targeted, it is not always clear how this worked out for other groups (in the context of equity).

In addition, it is extremely difficult as an institution to realise, monitor and test our strategic ambitions in terms of Accessibility if there is no clear vision and guiding principles that can serve as a compass and framework for Accessibility. Schools and central units have a joint responsibility here. This further emphasises the importance of and need for a clear, broadly supported vision and strategic policy framework in this area.

1.2.2 Inflow

Origin and prior education

Regarding the origin of students, divided into Dutch, EEA and non-EEA, we see that the overall growth of all student groups has increased in recent years (Figure 4, left), but relatively speaking, the NL group has decreased (from 87% to 78%). The absolute and relative growth of the group of EEA (from 9% to 15%) and non-EEA students (4% to 7%) has increased (Figure 4, right).

² We have chosen to show a selection of the data. For the Accessibility theme, a separate dashboard was built by BICC where the growth by School, programme, year and programme type is described.

Origin of students

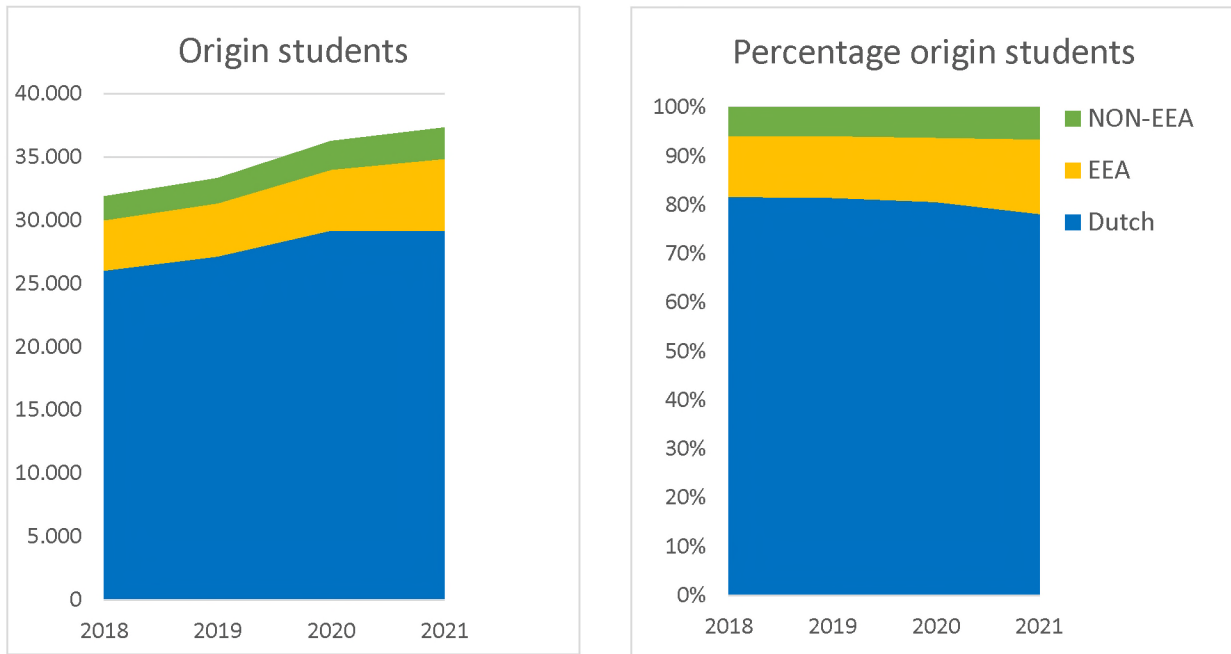


Figure 4. Origin of enrolled students at EUR by academic year, in absolute numbers and percentage distribution.

Figure 5a shows the origin of enrolled students divided by type of prior education. The proportion of students in the first bachelor year coming from VWO seems to consistently account for the largest proportion of the inflow over the years. At EUR wide level, there is no clear rise in the proportion of students coming from HBO.

Origin of Bachelor students by prior education - EUR Wide

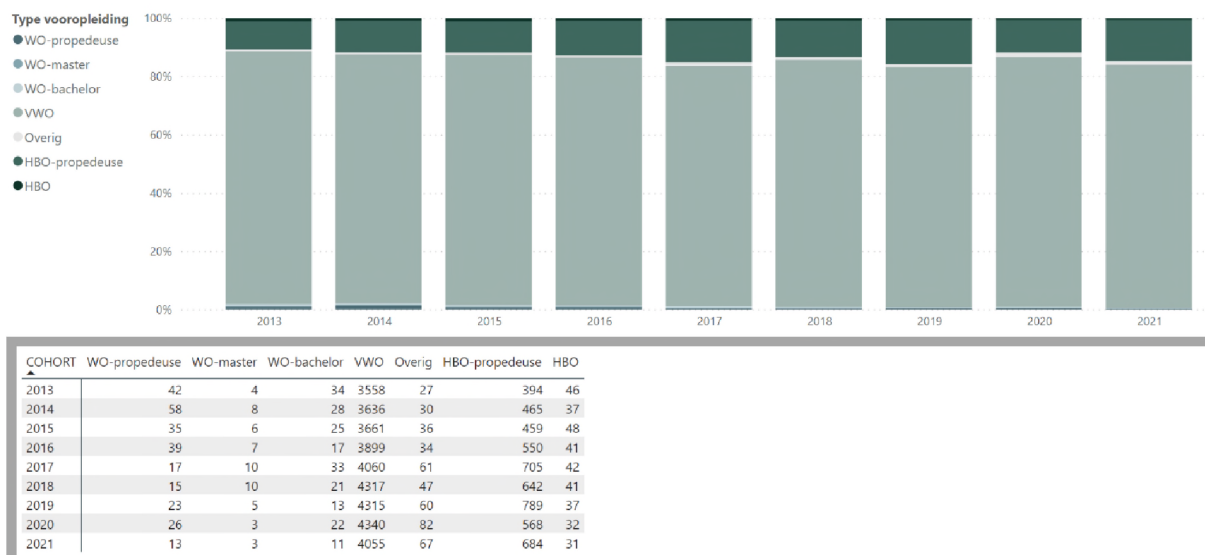


Figure 5a. Origin of students enrolled at EUR by previous education (source: Dashboard Enrolment Monitor BICC)

At School level, it can be seen that the proportion of students with a background in HBO (e.g. an obtained propaedeutic or graduate degree) may differ to a greater extent. For example, at ESE (Figure 5b), where the proportion of HBO students seems particularly small and at ESL (Figure 5c), where the proportion seems to be somewhat higher.

Origin of Bachelor students by prior education - ESE

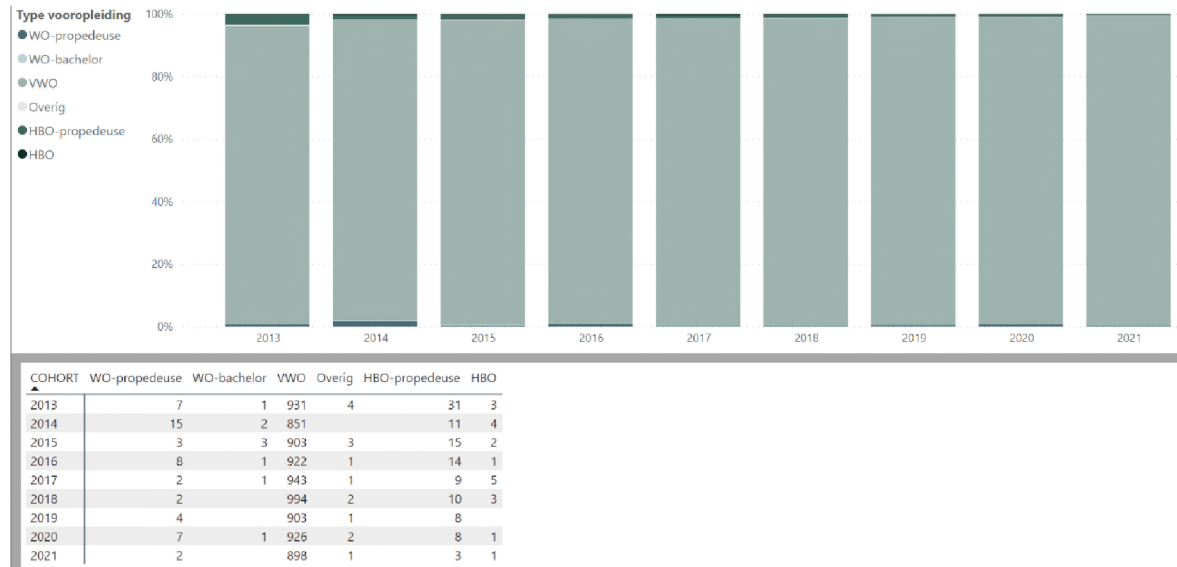


Figure 5b. Origin of enrolled students at ESE by prior education (source: Dashboard Enrolment Monitor BICC)

Origin of Bachelor students by prior education – ESL

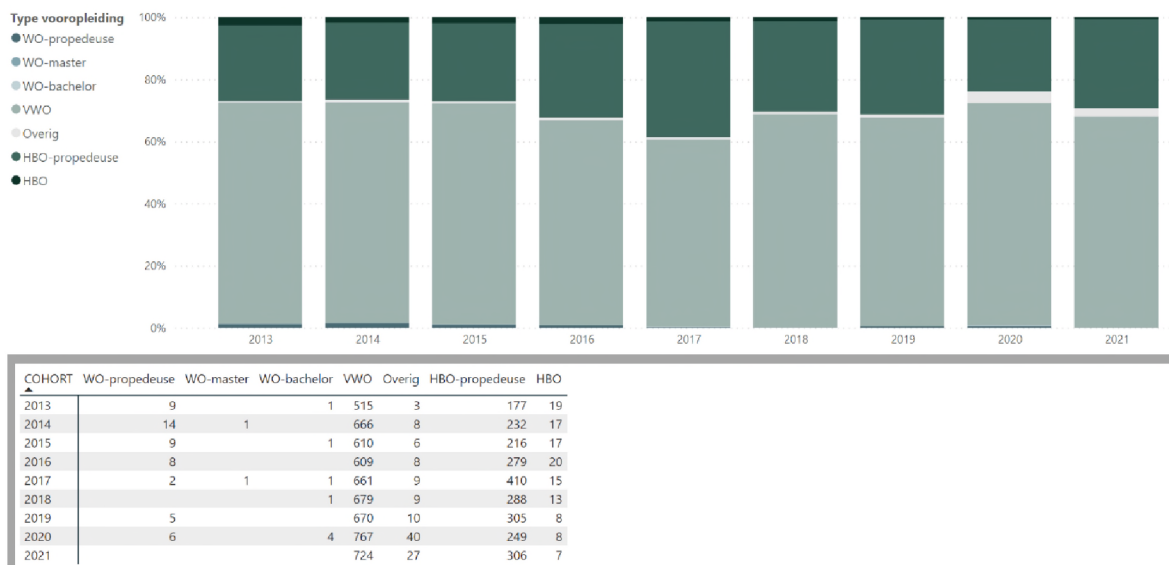


Figure 5c. Origin of enrolled students at ESL by prior education (source: Dashboard Enrolment Monitor BICC)

International students

Growth ambitions can vary not only by School and programme, but also by student group. This is highlighted by recent news reports in which many universities advocate limiting the inflow of international (especially non-EEA) students. Nationally, the [growth of international students](#) is seen as a major cause for the increase in student numbers.³ What can we say about the increase in the number of international students at the EUR?

Enrolment and application data show a EUR-wide increase in the absolute number of students enrolled in both Bachelor and Master programmes (see Figures 6a & 6b). In academic year 2022, the share of students with an international prior education appears to be only slightly higher in Masters (24.75%) at EUR-wide level than in Bachelors (23.54%), with this difference being larger in previous academic years. While the share of international students in Bachelor's programmes - whether as a result of conscious or unconscious policies aimed at internationalization of our education or not - seems to have increased over the past 10 years (11.33% in 2014 and 23.54% in 2022), the share of international students in Master's programmes seems to have increased to a much smaller extent: 20.36% in 2014 and 24.75% in 2022.

Enrolments in Bachelor programmes EUR-wide

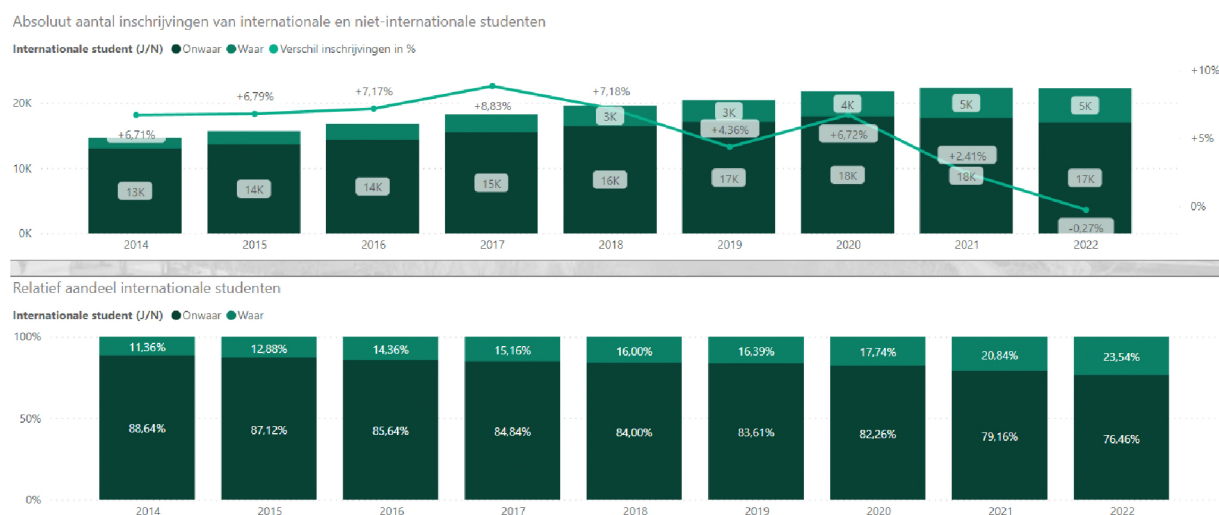


Figure 6a: change in number of enrolled students in EUR Bachelor programmes with an international prior education (True) per academic year

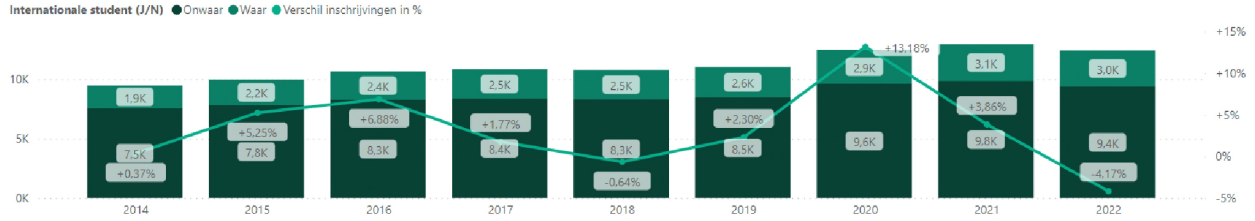
³ In recent months, one of the most discussed issues in terms of Accessibility for international students, has been the [Language and Accessibility Proposal Bill](#). This bill aims to ensure the accessibility of (higher) education and control the inflow of international students. Among other things, the bill regulates:

- modernising the language policies of institutions (he and mbo);
- introduction of a consent requirement for the setting of capacity standard;
- maximising the level of institutional tuition fees that institutions can charge EEA students (including Dutch students) for second and subsequent studies ([source](#)).

After the proposal bill was declared controversial on the 3rd of February 2021, minister Dijkgraaf announced on the 13th of June 2022 that the bill would be held on hold.

Enrolments in Master programmes EUR-wide

Absoluut aantal inschrijvingen van internationale en niet-internationale studenten



Relatief aandeel internationale studenten

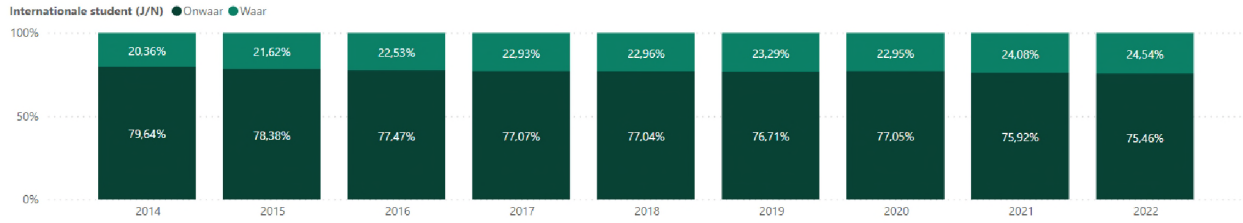
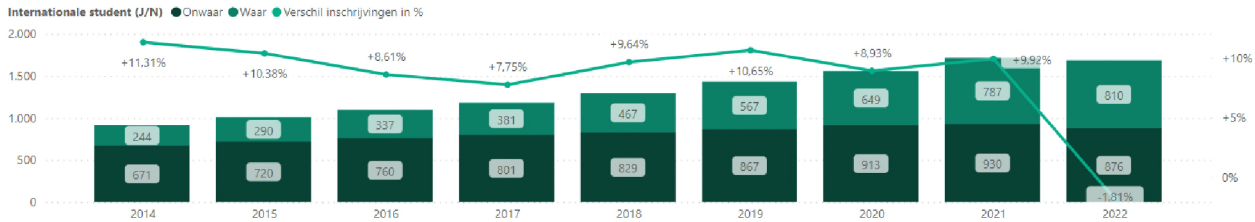


Figure 6b: change in number of students enrolled in EUR Master programmes with an international prior education (True) per academic year

The data at School level also shows a clear difference in the proportion of students with an international prior education. For example, the share of international students seems to have increased to a greater extent in Bachelor programmes at ESHCC (Figure 6c shows a share of 26.67% in 2014 and 48.04% in 2022) over the past 10 years than in Bachelor programmes at RSM (Figure 6d shows a share of 21.95% in 2014 and 27.87% in 2022). There are also Schools where the share of international students is very limited (ESHPM and ESL). Here, the issue around limiting the growth of numbers of international students plays a lesser role.

Number of enrolments by academic year and type of prior education in Bachelor programmes ESHCC

Absoluut aantal inschrijvingen van internationale en niet-internationale studenten



Relatief aandeel internationale studenten

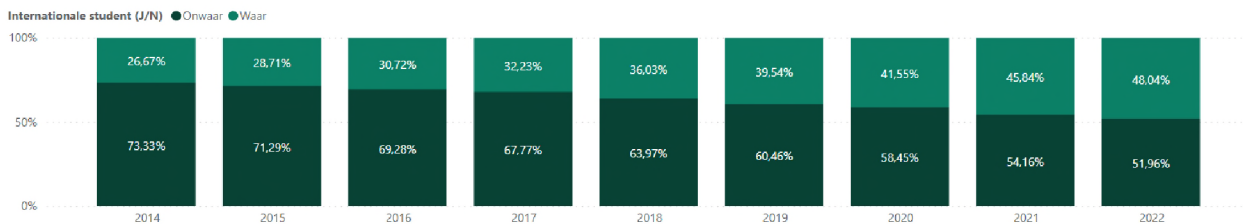


Figure 6c: Progression of number of students with an international prior education (True) by academic year in Bachelor programmes ESHCC

Number of enrolments by academic year and type of prior education in Bachelor programmes RSM

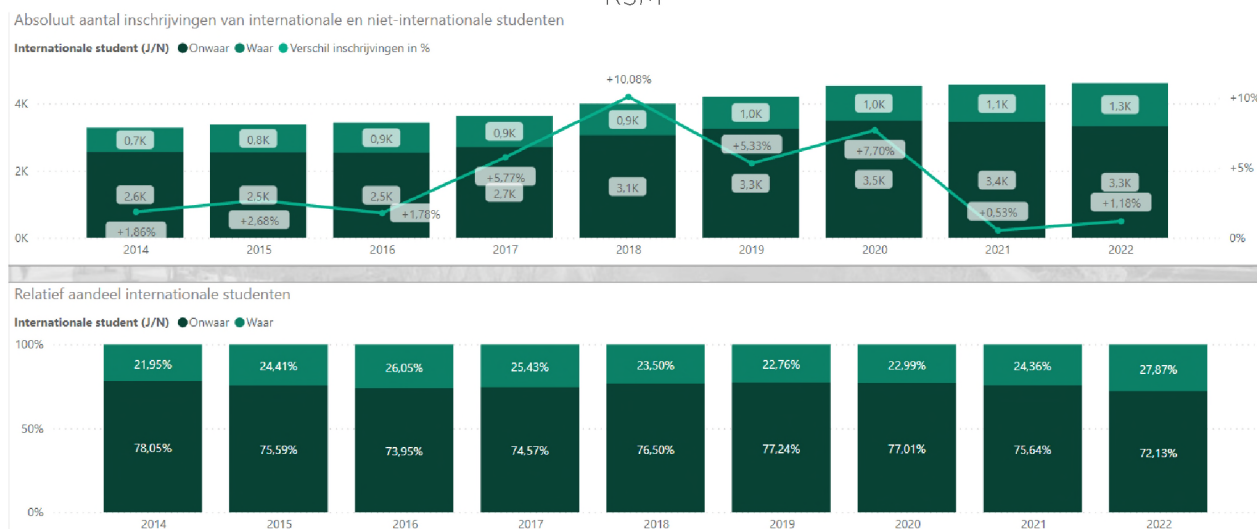


Figure 6d: Progression of number of students with an international prior education (True) by academic year in Bachelor programmes RSM

Our data show that the increase in growth at the central level cannot be solely sought in the increase of international students. So, the perception that we are growing across the board especially on the international segment, is incorrect. This observation only applies to specific programmes and Schools. It is possible that the policies implemented in these specific programmes (aimed at attracting international students) played a role in this regard (examples: ESHCC, ESSB Psychology and RSM). Other explanations lie mainly in the overall increase in the number of students in wo (especially Dutch students).⁴ The pattern of enrolments and applications at the EUR is in line with the national trend. OCW's [Future Exploration](#) (starting September- to be delivered by summer 2023) will also address this growth and the minister will propose legal steering instruments to the House of Representatives that will enable universities to manage international student numbers in a targeted way, without compromising the benefits of internationalisation. Based on our data, this is not expected to be widely used.⁵

Another important point in this context is the assumption that university growth is perceived as a problem or challenge. For instance, it is often stated that Schools and programmes would rather not grow anymore because of the pressure on staff and teaching quality.

⁴ In this light, one of the reasons also often mentioned for the increase in the number of WO students is the [increased flow from HBO](#). In addition, there seems to be a tendency for more students to choose WO rather than HBO. The question that can then be asked here is to what extent our programme range and positioning in the system are contributing to growth (and possibly contraction elsewhere in higher education). The [Future Exploration](#) also addresses these developments. It is advisable to think in time about what this exploration might mean for our institution.

⁵ Earlier, a survey was conducted among EUR programmes regarding the need for experimental space to deploy steering instruments for the intake of international students (in this case, it was specifically about a capacity fixus on a foreign-language track). There have been three programmes that have indicated they want to make use of this: Economics, Business Economics and Public Administration. Psychology has a need for this for both the Dutch and English-language track.

The fact that government funding per student has been lagging behind the growth rate for years, is also seen as problematic (UNL, 2022).⁶

However, there are Schools and programmes that, for example because of financial stimuli, internationalisation objectives and/or didactic models (international classroom), do find growth of specific student groups desirable. Furthermore, there are programmes and Schools that aspire overall growth for various reasons (ranging from labour market needs to technological developments). It may also be desirable to set growth targets based on our strategic ambitions for equity and inclusiveness (e.g. for groups for which accessibility is now under pressure).

In this light, therefore, the accessibility issue is best approached from different perspectives, advocating that the starting point should be a common educational and social mission/vision. In addition to this, attention must of course be paid to programme- and School-specific needs and ambitions. The next section elaborates on equal opportunities: a fundamental part of the future vision for Accessibility. Finally, possible starting points for Accessibility will be discussed in more detail.

Gender

Figure 7 shows the change in the proportion of men/women/other students per college year. What is notable, is that the proportion of women seems to have risen consistently in comparison to 2013, but the ratios are not very different.

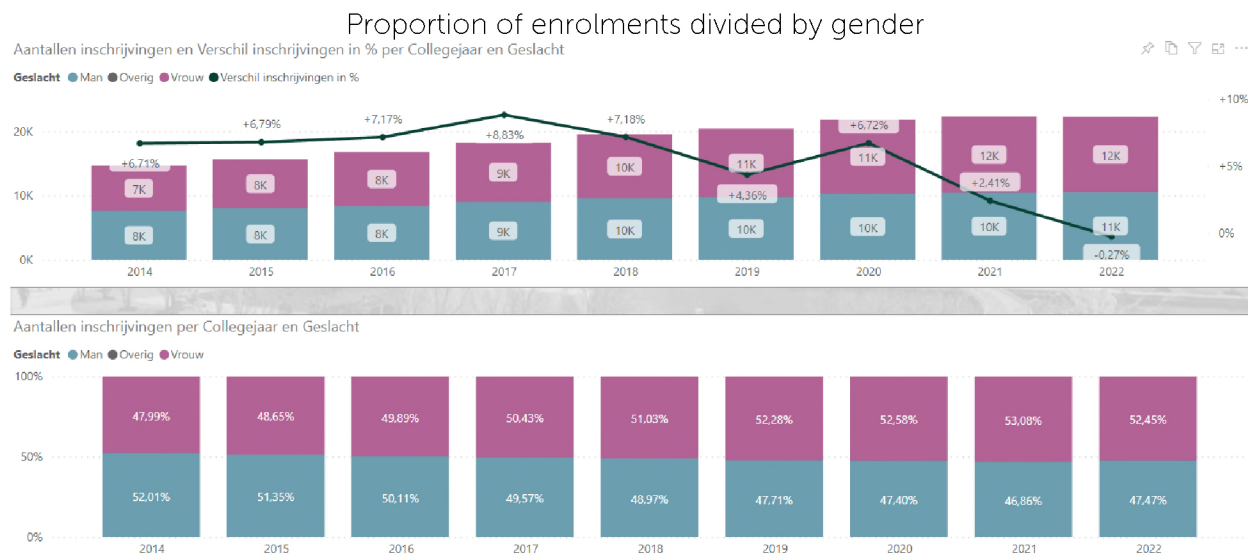


Figure 7: change in proportion m/f/o by college year

⁶ Incidentally, it is relevant to mention here that the government contribution has been increased as of 2021 and that the funds available for WO will increase in the coming years (think Starters Grants, sector plans). These are meant, among other things, to increase working capital in the WO. In all likelihood, this means that many programmes will also have more capacity to serve a growing/larger student population. This could potentially affect the growth ambitions of programmes and Schools.

First-Generation Students

Figure 8 shows the change in the proportion of first-generation students by academic year among new enrolments. For this chart, the definition used is that neither of the student's parents has been in higher education. An important note to this representation is that this percentage is derived from the Inflow Monitor and the response rate of this questionnaire differs by School. This questionnaire is also fairly new and as a result, historical data up to 2014 is not available. Presumably, the percentage of first-generation students in this chart is an underestimation. It is notable that the EUR-wide proportion of first-generation students does not seem to have changed significantly over the past eight years.

Progression of first-generation students by School in new enrolments in the first bachelor year

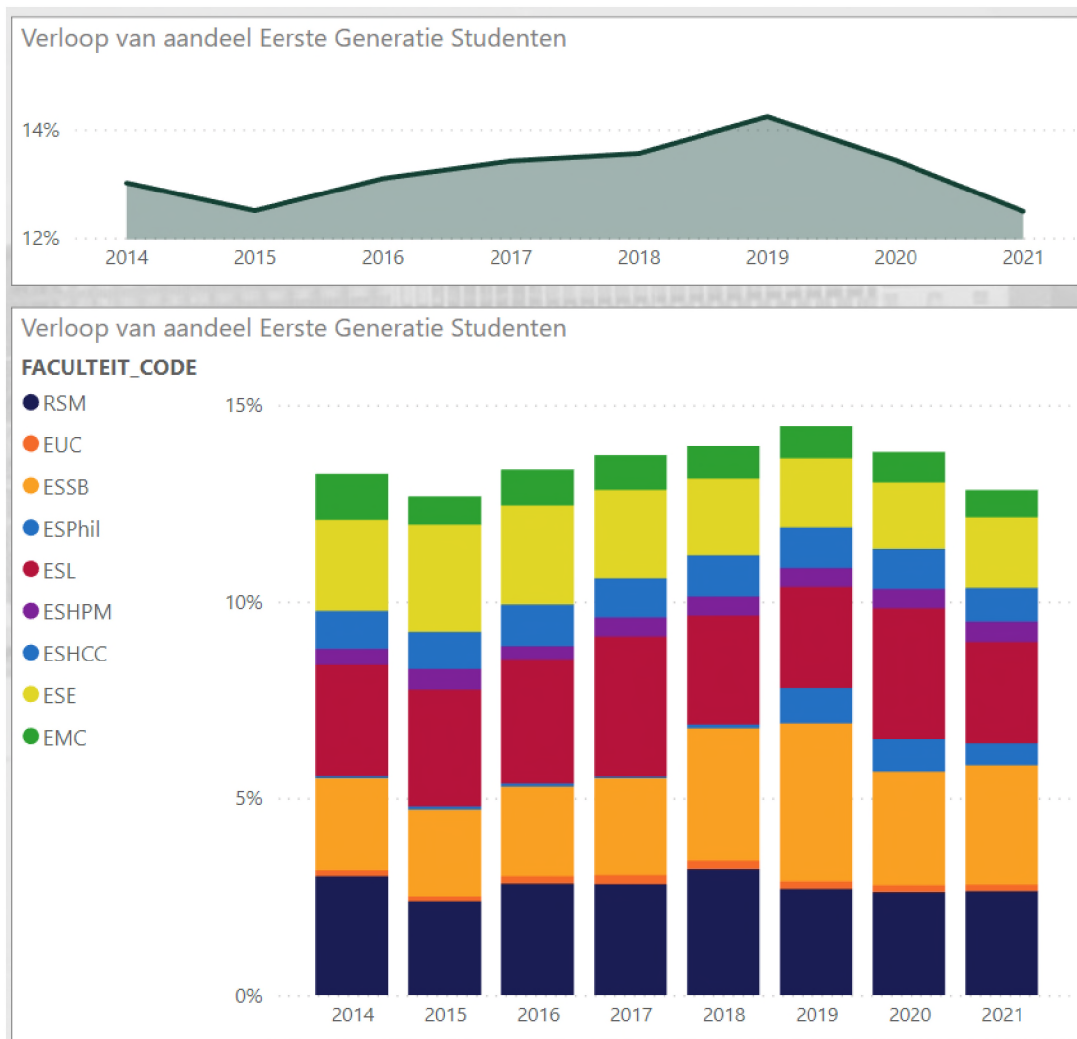


Figure 8: Progression of share of first-generation students by academic year and School. Note: this does not refer to the total number of first-generation students per School.

Migration background

The "Instroommonitor" is a questionnaire that is completed annually by all new EUR students. For the academic year 2021-2022, the data source counts approximately 7.000 respondents. The information derived from this questionnaire provides a picture of the demographic characteristics of new students to be admitted, but not of the entire EUR student population. This should be considered when interpreting the visualizations below.

Based on the Instroommonitor results of the academic year 2021-2022, it can be interpreted that of new EUR students with Dutch nationality, the parents of 67.63% of them were both born in the Netherlands. Of 17.53% of the Dutch respondents, both parents were born abroad, and of 14.56% of the Dutch students, one parent was born in The Netherlands and one parent was born abroad. The table shows the specification of the countries of birth of the parents.

Specification of countries of birth of parents of students with a Dutch nationality

GEBOORTELAND OUDERS VAN STUDENTEN MET NEDERLANSE NATIONALITEIT

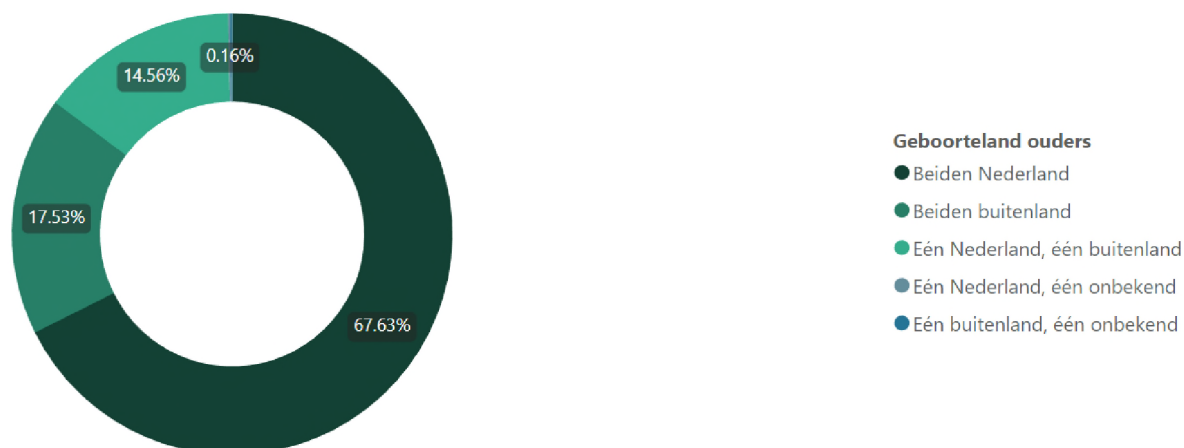


Figure 9. Percentage of Dutch students with parents with or without a Dutch nationality

Specification of countries of birth of parents of students with a Dutch nationality and one or more parent(s) born abroad

Land moeder	Land vader	Count of Studentnummer	%GT Count of Studentnummer
Koninkrijk Marokko	Koninkrijk Marokko	174	11.23%
Republiek Suriname	Republiek Suriname	109	7.03%
Republiek Turkije	Republiek Turkije	92	5.94%
Volksrepubliek China	Volksrepubliek China	64	4.13%
Republiek Suriname	Nederland	60	3.87%
Nederland	Republiek Turkije	42	2.71%
Nederland	Republiek Suriname	39	2.52%
Islamitische Republiek Afghanistan	Islamitische Republiek Afghanistan	38	2.45%

Of all new EUR students in academic year 2021-2022 with a Dutch nationality and of whom one or both parent(s) was born outside The Netherlands (please note: this concerns only part

of the entire student population), the largest share of students find their origin in Morocco (11.23%). Followed by Republic of Suriname (7.03%) and Turkey (5.94%).

Specification of origin of parents* in relation to countries of birth of students with a Dutch nationality



● Europe ● Africa ● South America ● Asia ● North America

*Paths are limited to display the movements from more than 3 students and upward. For more information (e.g. an interactive view of this visualisation or program-specific numbers), please contact BICC.

1.2.3. Progression

Using available data, it can be concluded - based on inflows - that there is a growth trend at EUR that also fits into the national developments in this area. A number of visualisations also suggest that the education system is not equally accessible to everyone. In this regard, it is interesting to look at how the different inflow figures manifest themselves in the progression and outflow of different student groups within the EUR. With that it is particularly relevant to map the progression and outflow trends of underrepresented groups and how they perform at our university. Is there a difference in study success, dropout and study duration? And if so, what are the possible causes? These kinds of insights can form the basis for an accessible and inclusive learning environment.

As mentioned earlier, in order to understand the progression and outflow patterns of different groups of students within the EUR, it is necessary to carry out statistical research, in addition to visual interpretations, and verify whether optical differences from the data visualisations indicate significant patterns. Based on previous studies on study success in which various student groups have been defined and studied, distinctions can also be made within the EUR, based on origin (NL without migration background/ western migration background/ non-western migration background) and prior education, international background, gender and study generation. In academic literature these characteristics are referred to as appropriate indicators for mapping study success. Currently, work is being done on correctly defining student groups in the available data and making differences in study efficiency and outflow statistically measurable.

Study progress General

Figure 10 shows the average number of ECTS obtained per student per academic year, divided by School. In the dashboard 'Study Progress General' (BICC), it is possible to view the graph and related data at School and programme level. It is important to stress that due to mutual differences in the documentation of study progress by Schools, this representation does not provide a basis for inter-School comparison. For example, some Schools use a compensatory education model or have many double degree students (e.g. ESPhil), so the number of ECTS obtained per year does not fully reflect the study progress made.

Average number of ECTS obtained per student per year, distributed by School

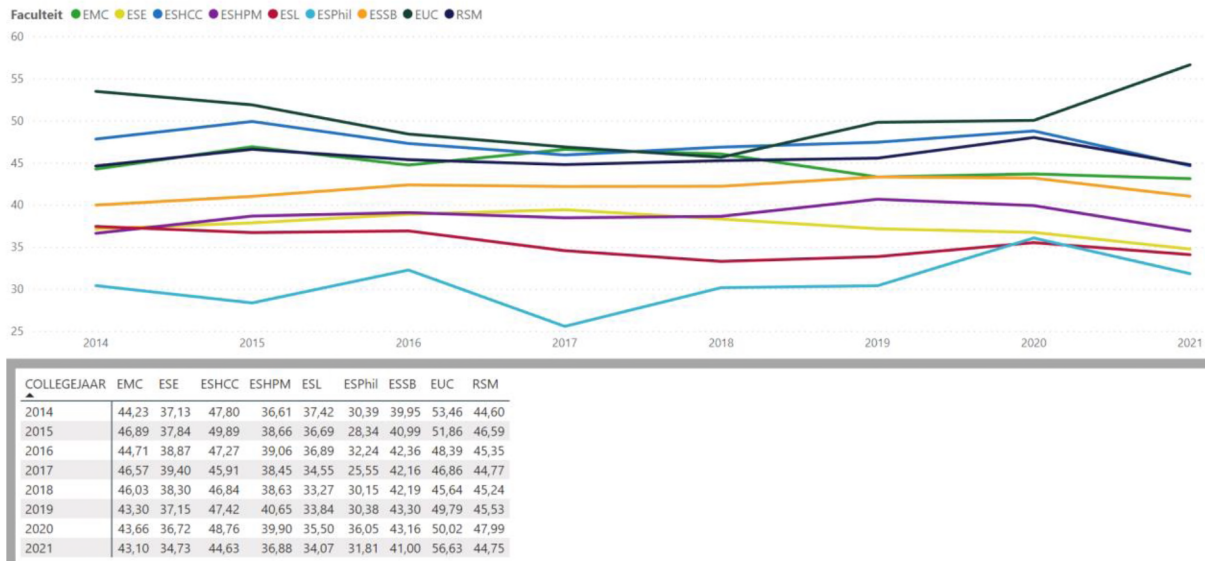


Figure 10: Progression of the average number of ECTS obtained per student per academic year, distributed by School.

Bachelor efficiency

The graph in Figure 11a shows the efficiency achieved according to covenant agreements by undergraduate students at all institutions. Figure 11b shows how the cumulative efficiency of only the EUR developed over the years. In the dashboard 'Efficiencies' (BICC), it is possible to view the corresponding data at a detailed level, and the efficiency of Master's programmes.

Bachelor efficiency of all EUR undergraduates according to covenant agreements per institution

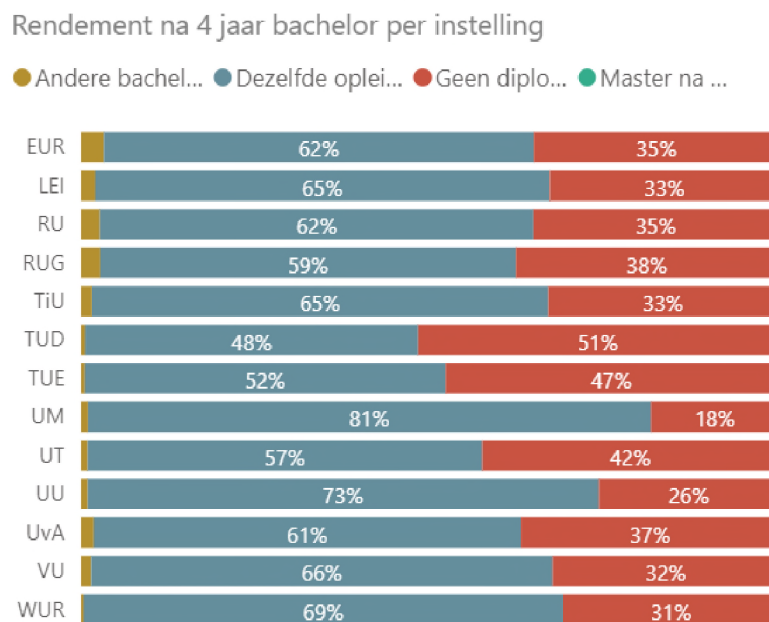


Figure 11a: Bachelor efficiency according to covenant agreements per institution, for all college years.

Bachelor's efficiency according to covenant agreements EUR⁷

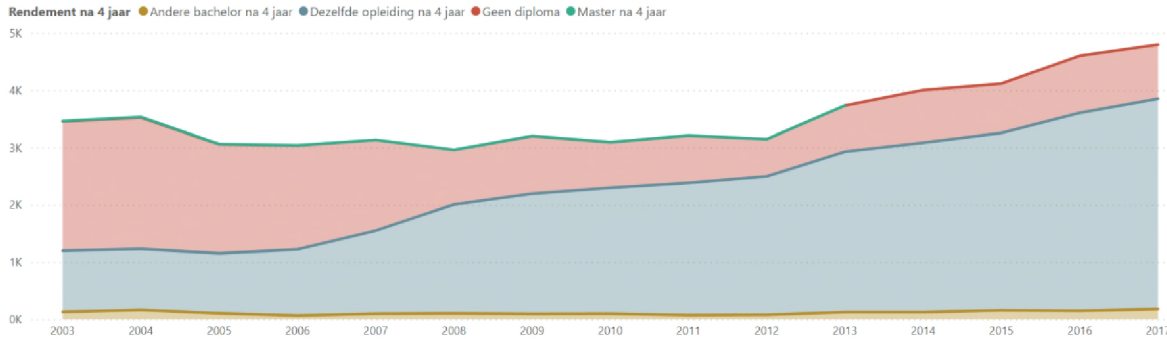


Figure 11b: Bachelor efficiency according to covenant agreements EUR

Figure 11c shows the distribution of the efficiencies from all institutions of students with an international prior education. Figure 11d shows the efficiency of students with a background in HBO.

Bachelor efficiency of students with only an international prior education, according to covenant agreements EUR

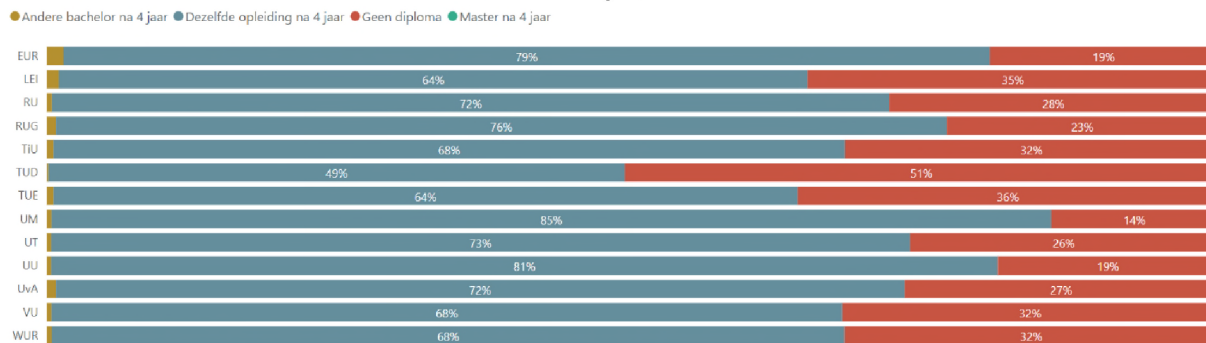


Figure 11c: Bachelor efficiency after 4 years, per institution of students with only an international prior education, for all college years

Bachelor efficiency of students with only a background in HBO, according to covenant agreements EUR

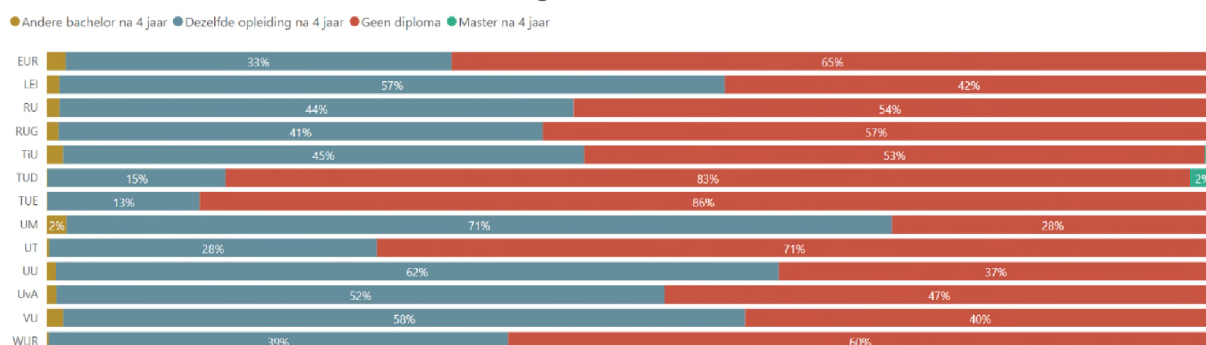


Figure 11d: Bachelor efficiency after 4 years per institution of students with only a background in HBO, for all college years

⁷ <https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/hoofdlijnenakkoord-en-prestatieafspraken.html>

Average number of ECTS obtained

Figure 12a shows an EUR-wide overview of the average number of ECTS obtained per student per year, distinguishing between international students and non-international students. Visual interpretation indicates a difference between the average number of ECTS obtained; with the number of international students appearing slightly higher than that of non-international students. In the dashboard 'Study Progress General' (BICC), it is possible to view the graph and the related data at School and programme level.

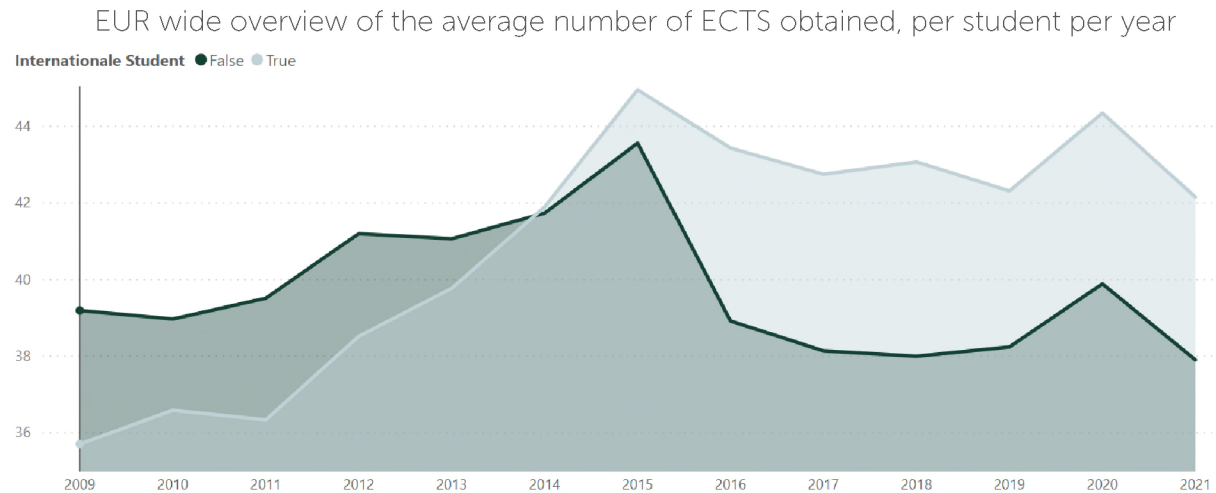


Figure 12a: EUR wide overview of the average number of ECTS obtained, per student per year

Figure 12b shows an EUR-wide overview of the average number of ECTS obtained per student per year, distinguishing between EEA, non-EEA and Dutch students. Figure 12c shows this same number distributed by School. In the dashboard 'Study Progress General' (BICC), it is possible to view the graph and related data at School and programme level.

Gemiddeld aantal behaalde ECTS per student per jaar

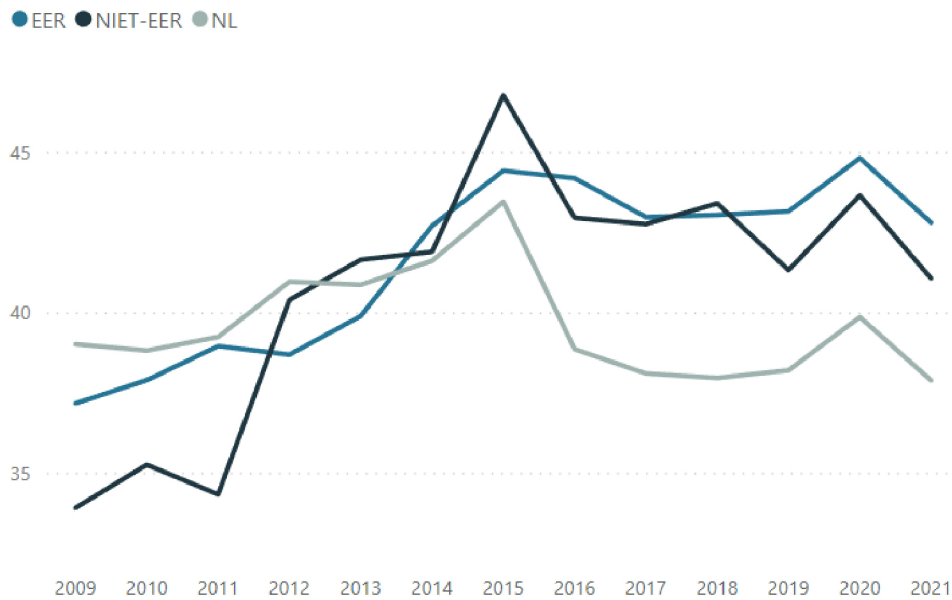


Figure 12b: EUR wide overview of the average number of ECTS obtained by EEA, non-EEA and Dutch students

Gemiddeld aantal behaalde ECTS per student per jaar

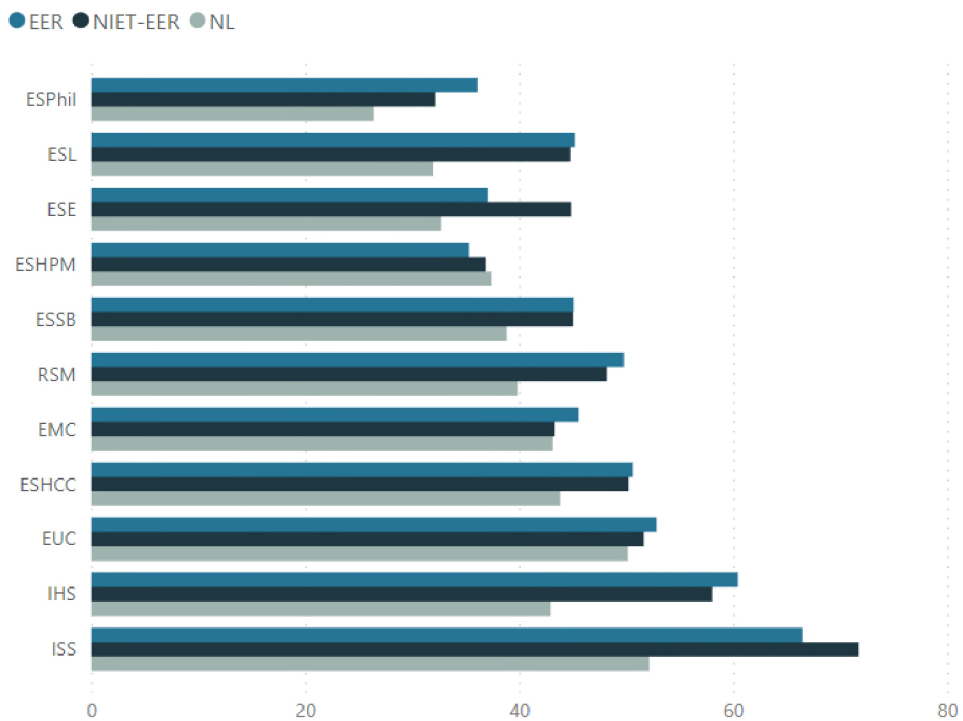


Figure 12c: Average number of ECTS obtained per EEA, non-EEA and Dutch students, per School

1.2.4. Outflow

The focus of the current dashboard on outflow is expressed in the proportion of students leaving the programme in or before February of the first undergraduate year. The reason for this is that later outflow (e.g. in year 2 or 3) is more difficult to identify from the available study data. This is because students who are not actively studying or engaged in the programme often do not have an active enrolment. Further data pre-processing is needed to recognise this group and understand the dropout patterns. In the dashboard 'Study Progress General' (BICC), it is possible to distinguish the proportion of students leaving the programme in year 1 on the basis of gender and international prior education. Work is currently being done on this dashboard to add origin (within the NL group) and study generation. These data come from a different data source and further validation is required for this aggregation.

February quitters

Figure 13 shows an EUR-wide overview of the proportion of students leaving the programme before or in February of the first bachelor's year, distinguishing between Schools. Visual interpretation indicates a noticeable increase in this proportion. The dashboard distinguishes between men and women; and that distinction shows that the proportion of women quitting over the years has increased faster than that of men. It is also possible to distinguish between origin based on NL, EEA and non-EEA. Categorisation based on socio-economic status has not yet been possible.

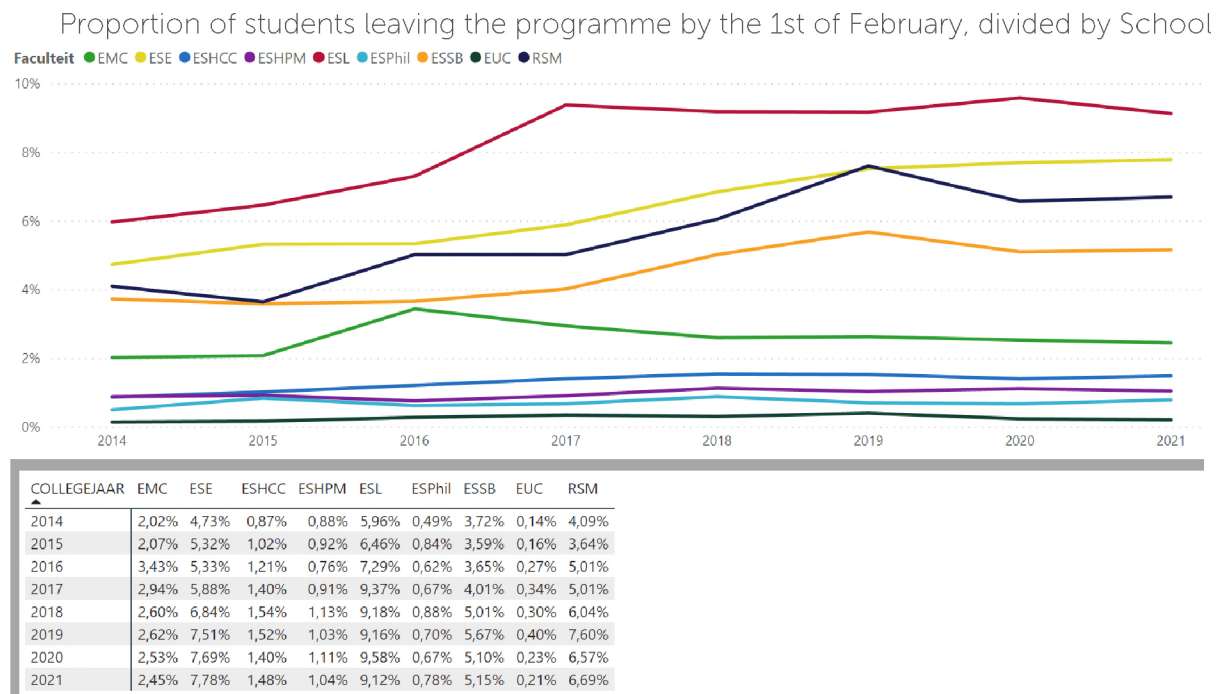


Figure 13: Proportion of students leaving the programme in February of the first undergraduate year

1.2.5. Visual patterns and correlations

As mentioned earlier, in addition to visual interpretation of the displayed views, it is important to carry out statistical analysis to validate and interpret patterns from the data. By conducting a multiple linear regression model, we will examine whether the aforementioned distinctions at student level (origin and type of previous education, international background, gender and study generation) affect study progress (i.e. average number of ECTS obtained per student per year & level of average grade obtained per student per year) and if so; how large these effects are. It will be assessed exactly how much variance in study progress can be explained by each of these factors.

1.3. Accessibility and equal opportunities

The Dutch education system is known as accessible, and an increasing number of students are finding their way to university. At the same time, we can also state that the Dutch educational system is not *equally accessible* to everyone. Various studies reveal that there are formal or informal barriers hindering higher education inflow and progression. This means that the way our educational system is organised in some cases leads to inequality of opportunity.

A well-known example is early selection and differentiation. This means that students in the Netherlands are selected for a certain schooling type of secondary education at an early age. This early selection can lead to unequal educational opportunities. This means that students with the same cognitive abilities, but from different backgrounds, do not end up at the same level of education (Onderwijsraad, 2021). This can also, in turn, - additionally - affect further school and study careers and choices.

Early selection is an example of a mechanism that hinders some pupils and students -depending on background and characteristics- and promotes others. Various research has also shown that other factors (such as educational background of parents and socio-economic background: the capitals of an individual and his environment) influence or add to school and study performance and choices.

Once at or before the gate, students may also face specific selection and admission procedures. Although these measures are meant to be mere selection tools, -again- certain criteria and tools may facilitate unequal opportunities (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2022). Furthermore, there are several factors that can influence the study success and study choices made by (prospective) students. These include: attachment to education (sense of belonging), expectation management, content connection with preparatory education (knowledge and skills), student well-being, competitive activities and motivation.

Several studies also show that underrepresented groups in wo (such as first-generation students and students from non-western migration backgrounds) do not perform as well in education or drop out faster.

For wo, this means that there is a difference in who and in which way they manage to reach university and successfully complete a university degree.

Thus, despite a formal structure that should lead to equal opportunities in terms of entering and progressing through higher education, we can conclude that practice is a lot more unruly: significant differences still exist in the chances of students from diverse backgrounds to successfully enter, study and succeed in higher education (NRO, 2022; Wolf, 2010).

This means it is all the more important for EUR to have congruent policies on inflow, progression and outflow that also contribute to creating equal opportunities.

1.4. Starting point Accessibility

The current, general starting point for Accessibility seems to be that students who meet the formal requirements and subsequently perform to the standard, are welcome. An integrated Accessibility Policy and Framework aimed at promoting equity and study and student success, among other things, is not yet in place.

In order to do justice to the issue of accessibility and thus to the position and well-being of (future) students and lecturers, a different point of departure is advocated, namely: *'Who do we want to be as Erasmus University?'* By deepening our mission as an academic institution, we create space to approach this issue from multiple perspectives. Here, the reasoning is not only from a legal or financial point of view, but from a social vision of education, a foundation is assumed for tackling current and structural issues around Accessibility.

This allows the EUR to set a course based on jointly defined values (Erasmian Values), pedagogical didactic principles (Erasmian Classroom) and the societal educational and research impact we want to achieve as an institution. These will also be featured in the Recalibrated Education Vision. With this, the Recalibrated Educational Vision provides a foundation for the further development of our Accessibility Policy.

1.4.1. Current policy Accessibility

Although societal discussions on Accessibility so far seem to focus mainly on growth (or controlling inflow through selection criteria or capacity limitation), it has previously been argued that this is certainly not the only topic/issue that should be central. More so, this may draw disproportionate attention to an outcome of the growth trend of recent years that has been consciously or unconsciously managed (e.g. due to financial or other strategic considerations). While it is understandable to reason from what one currently perceives in terms of inflow and growth, the desired starting point for this discussion is an integral perspective on Accessibility, fueled from our current and to-be-revised educational vision and social mission (driven by our Erasmian values).

To date, however, there is no *integral* EUR policy around Accessibility (in the broadest sense of the word). However, (sub)topics do recur directly and indirectly in the EUR Strategy²⁴ and the current educational vision. Related themes and sub-themes have also received attention in various settings and several central initiatives have been developed (think of D&I activities around Outreach, study choice workshops, the international classroom concept, alternating streams hbo-wo and more recently: RE&F's plan of action for students with physical disabilities). However, apart from the internationalisation policy, there are no central policy objectives in the field of inclusion and equal opportunities, which would allow us to test, with the help of data, whether our inflow, progression and outflow (of underrepresented or underperforming groups, among others) are in line with our strategic ambitions.

It is therefore necessary to develop an integral perspective on Accessibility: starting with a clear vision (as part of the Education Vision to be reassessed), then ambition formulation and (adjustments to) organisation in this area. For our institution, this can serve as a compass/course for the choices - to be made - regarding our growth ambitions (recruitment, inflow, capacity limitation, study success) and our educational principles, and the organisation of education (in

relation to equal opportunities, study and student success, inclusive education and impact learning with attention to work pressure, teaching quality and teacher well-being).

2 Plan of Action

2.1. Introduction

Accessibility is now (still) used within the EUR as a catch-all term for almost all files and matters related to admission, selection, capacity, study success, inflow, progression and outflow.

Related themes lie in a pedagogical-didactic and inclusive educational environment, and educational principles ideally informed by our Erasmian values and vision of diversity and inclusion. This climate and principles should contribute to the student and study success of all our students.

In fact, the different themes cannot be separated. For example, [a particular selection criterion may affect equity of opportunity](#) by disproportionately disadvantaging certain students. In this case, there is then an exclusion mechanism at the assessment level (part of educational environment). This means that accessibility has a multi-dimensional character in many contexts, and the absence of active policies can also affect Accessibility.

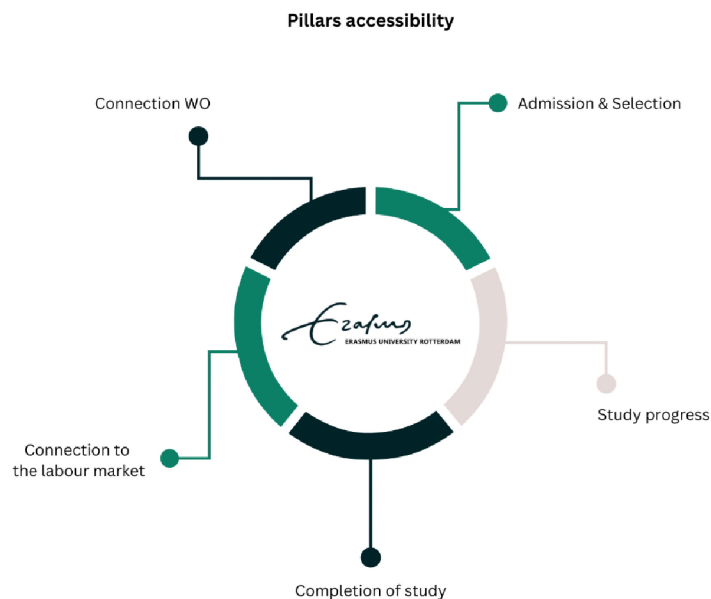
To look at these issues holistically, the EUR needs a certain starting point and a clear vision in terms of Accessibility. In this light, our Erasmian values could serve as a basis for making weighted, careful choices that contribute broadly to our strategic ambitions and institutional vision of education. It is also advisable to provide a clear structure to the multitude of themes that often overlap and are at the same time fragmented (see the pillars of Accessibility): not only in terms of content, but also in terms of organisation and management. As such, there are many different teams and departments where responsibilities and implementation around Accessibility are invested. There is currently insufficient cohesion, organisation and alignment.

2.2. Structuring and (policy)frameworks

In the memo 'Relationship Internal Audit Accessibility - Inspection Survey' of the 4th of March, addressed to the Executive Board, a first, good step has been taken to structure and phase Accessibility in terms of content.⁸ Here, a number of key issues were mentioned that are covered by Accessibility. A desire was expressed by the Executive Board to further strategically put the theme broadly on the agenda and give it shape in a starting memorandum on Accessibility. For the follow-up of the internal review Admission and Selection (Audit & Review), this was included as one of the follow-up actions.

This chapter proposes a content structure in which the various topics that can be classified under the Accessibility theme are grouped into five pillars⁹. Pillar 1 focuses on connection (pre-academic, supplying education), Pillars 2, 3 and 4 assume the student journey, and Pillar 5 focuses on -preparing for- the labour market as an academic professional:

1. The connection between previous education (VWO/ HBO, otherwise) and WO
2. Admission and selection for WO
3. Facilitating study progress
4. Facilitating study completion
5. Connection to the labour market

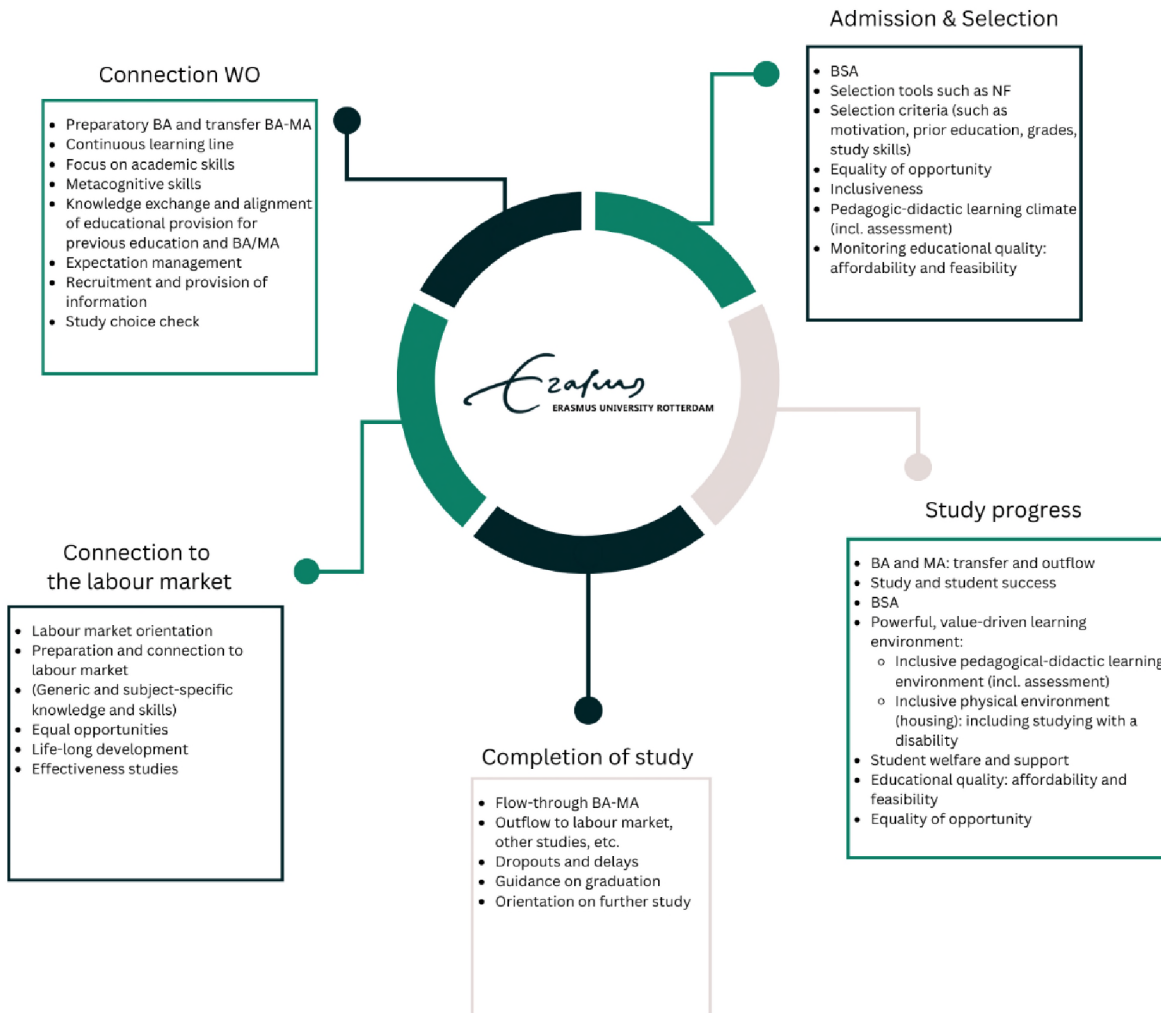


For clarity, a schematic representation of the five pillars to which (sub)themes and topics have been added is included (the overview is not exhaustive and final).

⁸ Through an internal audit, special attention was paid to admission and selection criteria within BA and MA programmes. The audit was not fully completed because the Education Inspectorate announced an investigation into admission and selection requirements in October 2021. The internal audit overlapped with this investigation. In addition, the Education Inspectorate informed the Executive Board of an investigation to be conducted into the number, type and substantiation of selection criteria, as used by selective bachelor's (hbo and wo) and master's (wo) programmes in funded higher education. The study is part of the multi-year programme around the accessibility of higher education and the EUR falls within this study. The Inspectorate's interim results and evaluations are a rich source of information for the Accessibility dossier. So this development is also closely monitored.

⁹ The pillars are largely derived from the theme arrangement adopted by the Kohnstamm Institute in the study '[Knowledge Needs for Accessibility in Higher Education](#)' (2022).

Pillars accessibility



2.2.1. Creation proposal

As already stated, an integrated policy framework for Accessibility is currently lacking. The sources that have so far served as a starting point are the [Strategy24](#) and the current [education vision](#) (dating from 2017). Although (sub)topics of Accessibility are reflected in these directly and indirectly, a clear policy framework and vision -as a starting point for operational actions and School-specific policies- is insufficiently present. The urgency is felt to establish those frameworks in the short term. The aim is to have the outlines reflected in the Accessibility starting memorandum (expected completion date Q3-2022: roll-out possible).

In order to realise an integrated policy framework that is in line with our Educational Vision, Erasmian values, social mission (creating positive social impact) and inclusiveness idea, it is necessary to align internally and obtain input. A broad perspective is necessary to arrive at a framework that does justice to the multifaceted nature of the theme of Accessibility. In doing so, it is also desirable to give the theme a place in the educational vision to be revised (trajectory starts from September 2022). The way in which this will take place needs to be further coordinated.

2.2.1.1. Added value EUR-wide policy framework

Earlier in this document, the question "Who do we want to be as a university?" recurred as an approach to Accessibility. Answering that question is essential to setting a course. For instance, Schools and central departments could agree that the theme of accessibility is considered so important that it should be dealt with jointly (and that this is preferable to primary decentralised policy). The Schools and central services could then come to a common course together, which could be translated to the School in its own way (couleur locale). The added value of this is that the different Schools and departments can learn from each other, identify and discuss challenges and help each other where necessary. It can also be a smart and effective way to make use of EUR's scale. As an institution wide, the EUR has more clout, and strengths and expertise can be pooled more easily. We can also deal with our -scant- resources in a smarter/ more strategic way.

Exactly what form this cooperation will take and how Schools and central services relate to one another (and what space is taken up by whom) is a question that will also be at the centre of phase 1 and on which joint coordination (Executive Board and Schools) should take place.

In doing so, it is important to stress that Schools and central services - regardless of the structure to be chosen - are ultimately jointly responsible for the accessibility of our institution.

2.1.1.2. EUR-wide taskforce

Considering the previous subsection, in order to create a policy framework for Accessibility, it is suggested to form an EUR-wide working group/taskforce including relevant stakeholders (see section 3.3). This working group can share its insights and knowledge in organised meetings and jointly come up with guiding principles for the policy contours for Accessibility. In this process, it is also possible (e.g., through knowledge networks, design sessions) to coordinate with other stakeholders (experts, practitioners, etc.) and collect knowledge.

The following exploratory questions could emerge in this process and may be helpful:

- What scope do we maintain for Accessibility? What choices do we make in topics?
- Which accessibility topics do we prioritise? Which principles guide this?
- How do we formulate a policy framework that clarifies how our vision and elaboration of the educational vision connects to what our students need?
- What (short-, medium- and long-term) policy objectives and (growth) ambitions do we want to achieve in terms of Accessibility? Taking into account set priorities?
- How do we look at the topic of accessibility from EUR's mission 'Creating positive societal impact', our inclusiveness philosophy and from the strategic goals (Strategy 24 and education vision)? How do we integrate this into the policy perspective?
- What should the agenda, tasks, responsibilities and roles in the field of accessibility policy look like, taking into account the current organisation (fragmented and spread out in different places) and the expertise and knowledge that is currently present? Do we want to work with central coordination? Or a form of coordination in which the integrality (currently absent) can be guaranteed?
- How do we ensure that the policy framework will land in the organisation and be sufficiently translatable to School practice (alignment with educational vision, School vision and operational framework)?
- Anticipating a follow-up phase: what financial resources are required during the next five years to achieve our Accessibility goals and ambitions? Bearing in mind that prioritisation, selection and phasing will take place.

The final chapter visually presents the preliminary project phases, timeline and project organisation. After discussion with several stakeholders (vice deans, AZ, general administration departments and RM), these will be finalised and submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

3 Project phases, timeline and organisation

3.1. Introduction

This plan of action focuses on the first project phase of the Accessibility Programme. The ultimate goal of this phase is to deliver a starting memorandum that can serve as an integral policy framework for Accessibility within the organisation (expected delivery date Q2 2023). To this end, first of all, guiding principles are formulated in coordination and with the help of various actors within (and possibly outside) the EUR. It will also draw on the proceeds of the Education Vision reassessment process (see Education Vision Process Plan 22-8-22).

3.1.1. Why a programme?

The intended outcome of phase 1 is a starting memorandum. The policy framework is part of the starting memorandum. In addition, the starting note contains the first outlines for the Accessibility programme. The choice for a programme is based on the following:

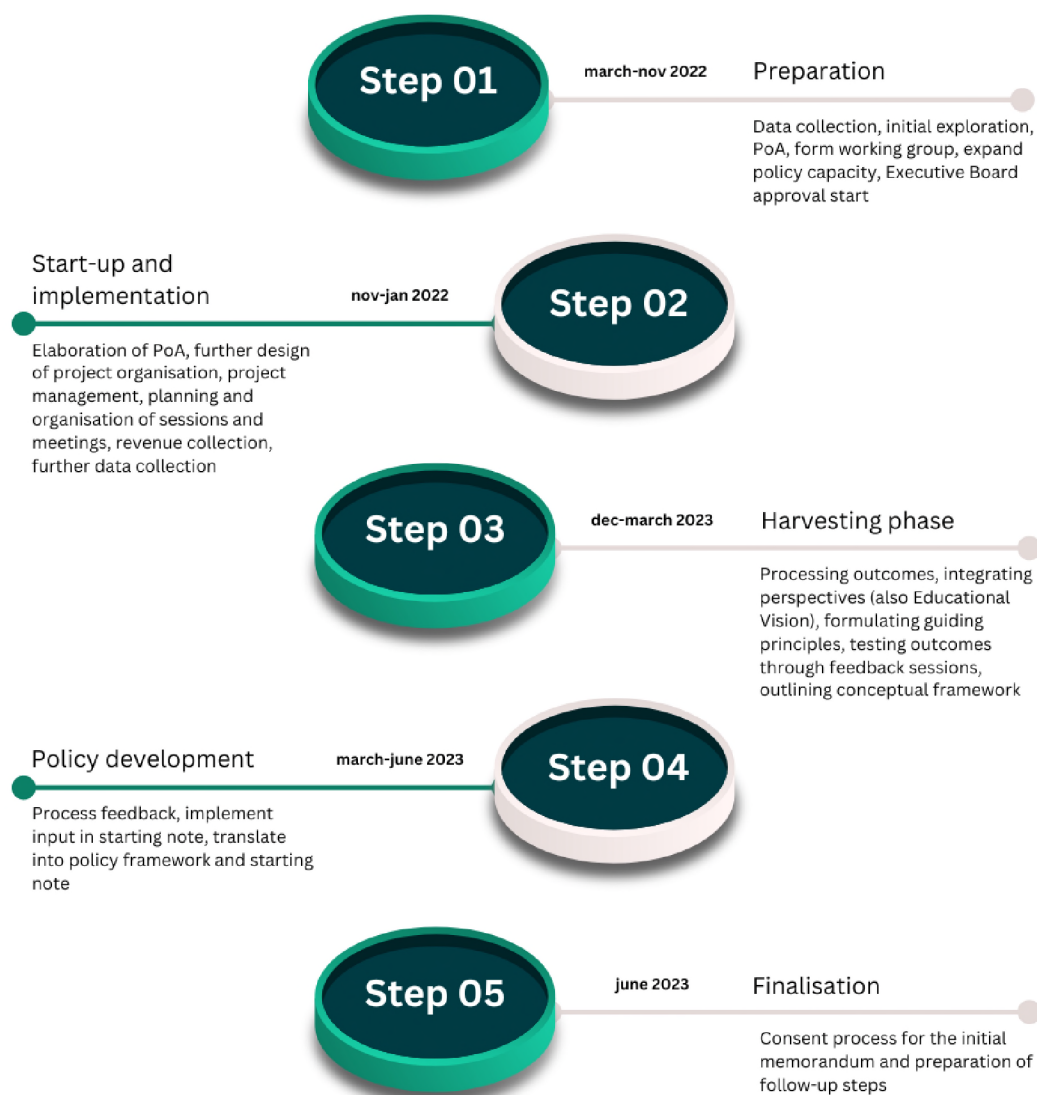
1. This trajectory is a complex task (large number of stakeholders, many and complex (difficult to quantify immediately) goals and sub-goals (more accessibility, more inclusiveness, better pedagogical didactic climate, etc., better connection to the labour market; and large effects for the institution);
2. Close cooperation with Schools and (sister) departments are conditional for the success of the trajectory;
3. Desired consistency is not automatically present (decentralised organisation, common frameworks under development, negligence of the topic);
4. There is a dynamic environment that may also require behavioural change/change of perspective in some cases;
5. Resources are limited (time and capacity especially in the primary process are (always) scarce, and all the more so in relation to research and monitoring).

To achieve these complex, multidimensional and intertwined goals, a programme format is advocated where different buttons can also be pushed at various times. Under the programme, (existing and future) projects, initiatives and other measures can then be steered and implemented as necessary, in conjunction and coordination with the line.

3.2. Process steps and timeline phase 1

The diagram below shows the different steps within phase 1. The plan of action -which includes results of data collection- is part of step 1. The (working and/or feedback) sessions with the task force and other actors will be organised and shaped in consultation with the task force to be established. Section 3.3. shows the preliminary design for the project organisation in phase 1. ¹⁰

Process steps and timeline phase 1



¹⁰ This timeline is updated.

3.3. Project organisation phase 1

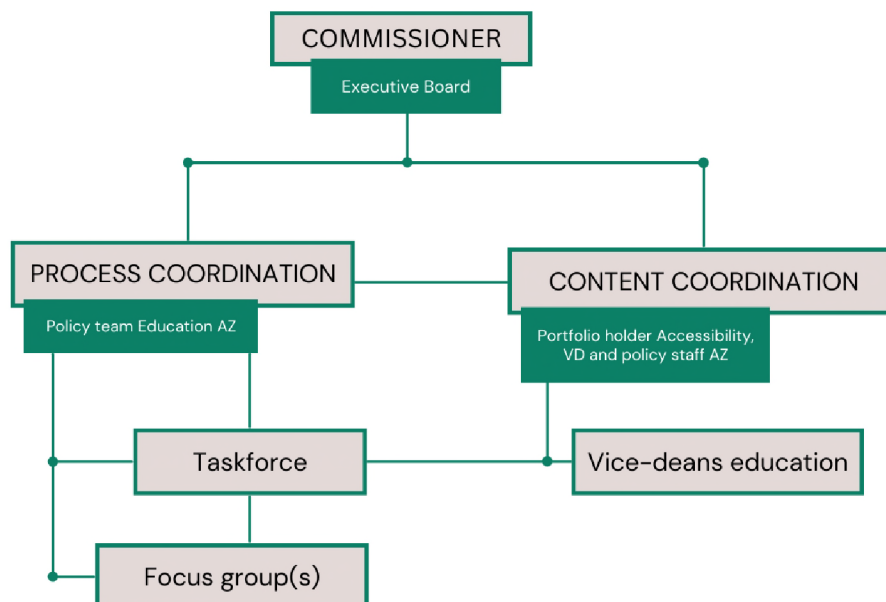
The commissioner for this trajectory is the Executive Board. The process management and coordination are done by AZ whereby substantive coordination and management is done in cooperation with the vice dean, Prof. Maarten Frens, who is also portfolio holder for Accessibility.

The working group/task force could consist of a delegation from various Schools, departments and bodies and could be established in consultation with the deans and the Executive Board.

- School delegation
- AZ
- D&I
- E&S
- M&C
- EDIS
- RE & F
- Delegation of specific target groups (experts, committees, students, etc.).

External stakeholders could also be invited for the focus groups, such as representatives from upstream education (VO, HBO), the professional field (e.g. practice supervisors), alumni and cooperation partners in the region.

For internal communication, regular coordination will be sought with departments dealing with themes within Accessibility. Furthermore, all relevant actors (deans, vice-deans, general administration departments, UR Council, D&I, etc.) will be informed about the progress if necessary/appropriate. The Executive Board will receive regular updates and substantive coordination will be sought with the RM throughout the process.



3.4. Preconditions phase 1

PRECONDITIONS Phase 1: the 4 C's



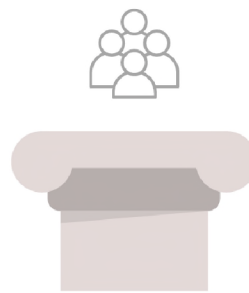
CONSENSUS

There should be consensus on the scope of the Accessibility theme, the pillars and the plan of action. After all, these serve as the starting point for the process.



COMMITMENT

Commitment and cooperation from all relevant actors is necessary for Phase 1 to succeed.



CAPACITY

There should be sufficient (policy) capacity and support from departments such as BICC, D&I and E&S for this project to succeed.



COMMUNICATION

Obtaining an intergral perspective requires adequate communication on adjacent trajectories and developments around Accessibility.