

ROA School-leaver and graduate surveys

The Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA) is a research institute of the Maastricht University School of Business and Economics, established in 1986. Through its research, the institute aims to improve the understanding of the relationship between education and the labour market. More specifically, ROA studies the effects of knowledge and skills acquired in education and other learning situations in three areas, namely the interaction between labour demand and supply, occupational careers, and performance within organizations. ROA's research is organised along three research lines: Dynamics of the Labour Market, Education and Occupational Career, and Training and Employment. An important corner stone of the Education and Occupational Career research programme are the school-leaver and graduate surveys that ROA has been conducting since 1991.

School-leaver and graduate surveys

Since the early nineties ROA has conducted surveys among recent school-leavers and graduates in most sectors of education in the Netherlands. The surveys are held annually and are designed to function as a monitoring instrument for the transition from school to work, covering the full breadth of the Dutch education system. The statistics generated by these surveys contain information on labour market outcomes, competencies and subsequent study activities.

Besides being an instrument for quality control by education institutions, the information contained in the school-leaver data sets are a nationally representative data source, the social and scientific value of which lies in increasing the insight into the transition from school to work. This is reflected particularly in the publication of widely accessible national reports published every year by ROA. In addition, the data is often used for more specific and/or in-depth analyses for various stakeholders. Important stakeholders in the ROA school-leaver and graduate surveys are the education institutions, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the scientific research community in the field of education and the labour market.

The surveys among different groups of school-leavers have been strongly standardized. They have been harmonized as far as possible in terms of field phase, questioning, definitions and classifications. The classifications have been strongly aligned with those used in other statistical sources, for example those of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and are therefore also linked to international standards. This standardization means that the different surveys are integrated into one single data set and that the resulting statistics are comparable over the full breadth of the Dutch education system.

Secondary education: the VO-Monitor projects gathers data on qualified school-leavers from senior general secondary education

(HAVO), pre-university education (VWO) and pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO). The survey is conducted annually some 1,5 years after the participants have gained their qualification.

Senior secondary vocational education: the BVE-Monitor comprises an annual survey conducted among school-leavers from vocational education (BOL) and apprenticeship training (BBL) in secondary vocational education. The survey is conducted annually some 1,5 years after the participants have gained their qualification.

Higher vocational education: the HBO-Monitor is an annual survey among graduates from higher vocational education (HBO). The survey is conducted annually some 1,5 years after the participants have gained their qualification.

Academic higher education: the WO-Monitor is a survey among university graduates in which all Dutch universities participate. Up to 2008 ROA coordinated and conducted the survey. The survey was held annually some 1,5 years after the graduates received their university qualification. From the year 2009 onwards the coordination is in hands of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU).

Research methodology

Newcomers on the labour market in general and school-leavers in particular will need some time to start a suitable working career. Conducting surveys immediately after graduation will result in gathering data on many first, temporary jobs and will result in statistics that won't reflect the true position of these new labour market participants. The same reasoning can be said for their next step in following further education. As both their transition from education to the labour market and their educational careers are two of the main research topics the ROA-surveys are conducted some 1,5 years after graduation.

The questionnaires cover several research topics relevant for education and labour market research fields and the resulting data are input for a number of key indicators. All surveys cover both the school-leavers labour market introduction as their possible next steps in further education. However, as the surveys cover almost all levels of the Dutch education system the several monitors differ in their main focus. The VO-Monitor (secondary education) focuses mainly on further educational careers, the BVE-Monitor (senior secondary vocational education) focuses on both subsequent study activities as well as labour market entrance while the HBO- and WO-Monitor (higher education) mainly concentrate on labour market entrance and occupational careers. Table 1 summarizes the main research topics and some of the key indicators of the ROA school-leaver and graduate surveys. The key indicators can be objective indicators (for example type of contract of current job) or subjective indicators (for example job satisfaction).

Table 1. Main research topics and some key indicators

Research topic	Key indicators
Study programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> width / depth / difficulty of study programme working / internship / other experiences during study programme graduates' satisfaction on choosing study programme
Match between completed study programme and follow up study programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> matching level of study matching field of study graduate's satisfaction on match between two programmes success in follow up study programme quality of study programme as basis for follow up study programme
Transition to labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> labour force status employment status preparation by study programme for labour market duration of job search
Current job characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> job level required field of study occupation sector type of contract temporary / permanent contract working hours salary career possibilities use of knowledge and skills job satisfaction graduate's satisfaction on match between study programme and job
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acquired competencies required competencies importance of competencies required attention during study programme on competencies

Coverage

The structural monitoring of school-leavers and graduates has over the years resulted in data sets with large numbers of respondents for each level of education. Table 2 presents some of the key figures on the ROA surveys.

Other school-leaver and graduate survey projects

Early school leavers: ROA also conducts research among early school leavers: the VSV-Monitor. The survey is set up to reveal information with respect to the reasons for youngsters to leave the education system prematurely, with respect to their chances on the labour market, with respect to their future intentions and with respect to possible hurdles for returning to the education system.

Quickscan secondary vocational education school-leavers: Both in 2009 and in 2010, ROA conducts a so called 'Quickscan-Survey' among graduates of secondary vocational education (both

school-based and work-based). In contrast to the standard school-leaver surveys, the Quickscan takes place approximately 6 months after graduation. The Quickscan is particularly targeted at revealing information with respect to the influence schools have on the decision made by their students to continue education (for instances in higher vocational education). The Quickscan is a valuable source of information for both government and schools in their efforts to keep youngsters in education instead of trying to find a job during an economic crisis.

Table 2. Key figures on school-leavers surveys

Level	Project	Year first conducted	Frequency	Average coverage	Response rate	Number of cases ¹
Secondary education	VO-Monitor	1992	ann	11%	35%	70.000
Senior secondary vocational education	BVE-Monitor	1991	ann	23%	22%	91.000
Higher vocational education	HBO-Monitor	1991	ann	85%	37%	210.000
Academic higher education	WO-Monitor	1998	ann	100% ²	37%	110.000 ³

¹ in 1998-2009 data file

² (until 2007)

³ (excl 2009)

International Higher Education graduate survey REFLEX: ROA is coordinator of the REFLEX project, a large-scale European survey among higher education graduates. The REFLEX project is financed as a Specific Targeted Research Project (STREP) of the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme. The project involves partners from fifteen countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the UK plus Belgium-Flanders, Czech Republic, Portugal, Switzerland, Japan, Estonia, Poland, Turkey, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia).

Statistics and data availability

ROA has a number of publications based on their surveys and an on-line application (in Dutch) for consulting statistics on Dutch school-leavers and graduates on their transition to the labour market and/or subsequent study career. Publications and statistics can be found at www.roa.unimaas.nl/nw_school_leaver_survey.htm. Both national and international data sets are available for scientific research purposes on request. The Dutch data can be found at www.dans.knaw.nl, the REFLEX data set can be found at www.reflexproject.org.

Information

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