

Appendix for Academic Careers in the Netherlands, Facts & Figures, 2013

The VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) publishes an annual report on academic staff at Dutch universities. This Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs Personeelsinformatie (WOPI; translation: University Staff Information System) details the situation at 31 December of each year. For this Facts & Figures, the underlying data from the WOPI figures have been analysed for the years 2003-2011. The mobility within institutions is thus mapped, that is, the inflow, mobility, and outflow of various job positions within a single university. The WOPI data, however, do not provide any insights into the origins of incoming staff or the destinations of departing staff. For the periods spanning 2003-2006 and 2006-2008, there are data on the mobility to, from, and between universities. These figures give annual insights into the academic job market mobility per type of position, but they do not provide information on career steps. Based on these mobility figures, this Facts & Figures gives an estimation of the 'average' mobility to, from, and between universities. Combined with an analysis of the WOPI data, this gives more insight into how academic careers are structured and how the academic job market functions.

The WOPI micro databases formed the starting point of our analyses. These databases contain data on all staff at Dutch universities, such as position, age, sex, institution and HOOP field, for the years 2003-2011. In these databases, each staff member has a unique identification number per institution. This means that a member of staff can be tracked throughout the years, as long as this person works at the same institution. By comparing two consecutive years of WOPI micro data, we can determine the number of people who stay with the same institution, the number of new staff, and the number of departing staff. A significant limitation of the identification number per institution is that people who move between institutions cannot be tracked. People who leave one institution and go to another get a new identification number. Based on the WOPI data, we thus cannot determine if new staff comes from a different university or from outside of academia; and if departing staff are heading for another institution or for the job market outside of academia.

In order to assess both the job market mobility from universities to outside academia and vice versa, we used the MUP data. The CBS (Statistics Netherlands) obtained these data through ascertaining, based on WOPI data, where academic staff went upon departure, and where they came from, respectively. This was possible using other data sources (GBA – register of residents, treasury). Thus, both the job market mobility between universities could be mapped, as well as information on where people came from and where they went. This information is supplied in tables for the transitions 2003-2004, 2005-2006, and 2006-2008. Based on these data, we determined various relative figures on:

- People who came from other universities in relation to newcomers who did not come from another university
- People who transfer within the same university in relation to those who move between universities
- People who go to another university in relation to people who head for another destination
- People who head for another destination on the job market or retire
- People who leave and go abroad or leave and stay in the Netherlands

All these core data were calculated for all separate academic rankings within institutions; support and management personnel, PhD students, other academic staff, assistant professors, associate professors and professors. The MUP tables do not specify the male/female ratios for each position, nor do they specify HOOP fields, and thus these figures could not be generated. All figures apply to the group of academics as a whole. The core data were calculated for all transitions per position shown in the MUP, and subsequently averaged, to obtain the averages across the years. By extrapolating these core figures to the data from WOPI, calculations can be made for data missing in WOPI.

For example: the WOPI data show that over the period 2003-2011, a yearly average of 240 professors departs from the fourteen universities. The relative numbers based on the MUP data show that 15 per cent of all departing professors is subsequently employed by another university; that is 36 professors, on average. Thus, on average, 204 professors depart from academia altogether. Likewise, the MUP relative numbers show that 32 per cent of these departing members of staff retires, and 21 per cent heads for abroad (on average per year).

The third source of information is specifically related to PhD student employees. We are especially interested in PhD graduates who continue after their graduation within or outside of the institution. However, a proportion of PhD students never reaches this point and never graduates. The VSNU publishes data on the success rates of the PhD system per yearly cohort in terms of success rates after four years, five years, and so on. In the WOPI micro data, no data exists on the number of PhD students that actually graduates. For those who continue in a higher position it may be assumed that they graduated. For those who depart, we do not know why. Thus we made an estimation of the portion of people who actually graduated and what portion did not. For this we assumed the average success rate of 75 per cent, as stated by the VSNU.

Used sources

- CBS (2010). Mobility of university personnel, 2003-2006. The Hague/Heerlen: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
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