


Moving education



**Under the Npuls umbrella,
tertiary education in the
Netherlands is building
for the future. Our aim is
for everyone to be able to
learn without barriers and
enjoy the best education,
continuously.**

All public vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities in the Netherlands are joining forces in Npuls to transform education. Together, we are building an education system that supports a resilient society, broad prosperity and a thriving economy for years to come.

We do it together

Npuls unites all 105 institutions represented by the Association of VET colleges in the Netherlands (MBO Raad), the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen; VH), and Universities of the Netherlands (Universiteiten van Nederland; UNL) working together to transform public tertiary education. We do this in collaboration with:

- Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)
- Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO)
- National hub for enrolment in higher education (Studielink)
- Cooperative for facilities in VET (Coöperatie MBO Voorzieningen)
- Dutch expertise network for technology in education (Kennisset)
- Student organisations: Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO), Landelijke Studentenvakbond (LSVb) and Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs (JOB MBO)

Eight-year programme

Npuls is an eight-year programme that started in 2023 and will run to 2031. It is funded by the Dutch National Growth Fund (NGF) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is the lead agency. A total budget of €640 million is available for Npuls, €560 million of which is from the NGF. Institutions contribute €80 million themselves to the ongoing development of their Centers for Teaching & Learning (CTLs).



Npuls is moving education

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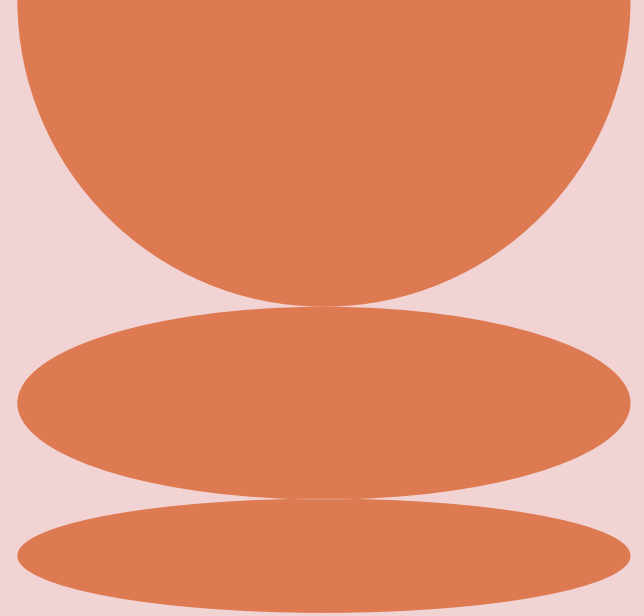
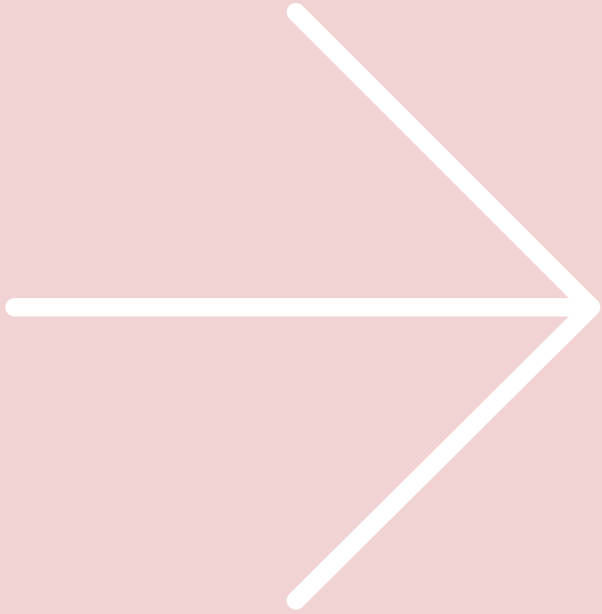
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1. Why?

Motivation behind the
Npuls initiative

Public education in an ever-changing society

An educated workforce is indispensable for a strong economy and a society where everyone can participate. This requires a future-proof tertiary education sector that:



01.

Ensures that all learners have access to education. In other words: both students who are pursuing an initial education programme before starting their career and also people who want to acquire new knowledge and skills later on in life.

02.

Continuously improves the quality of education. Proceeding from an attitude of learning, consistently scrutinises the way education is organised and delivered, evaluates this and makes adjustments where necessary.

03.

Ensures that the content of education remains current and aligns with evolving knowledge and skills as required by society, particularly regarding the safe and effective use of digital tools.

Societal transitions demand new knowledge and skills

Society is changing rapidly; consider, for example, healthcare innovation, the energy transition and the shift towards sustainable agriculture. Each of these developments calls for new knowledge and skills.

What's more, the pace of change is accelerating, with significant shifts already noticeable within a single working lifetime. Lifelong development and learning are therefore essential.

Tertiary education plays a crucial role in this process – it must support all learners, both students and lifelong learners, in acquiring new knowledge and skills.



Education must support all learners in acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Protecting public values

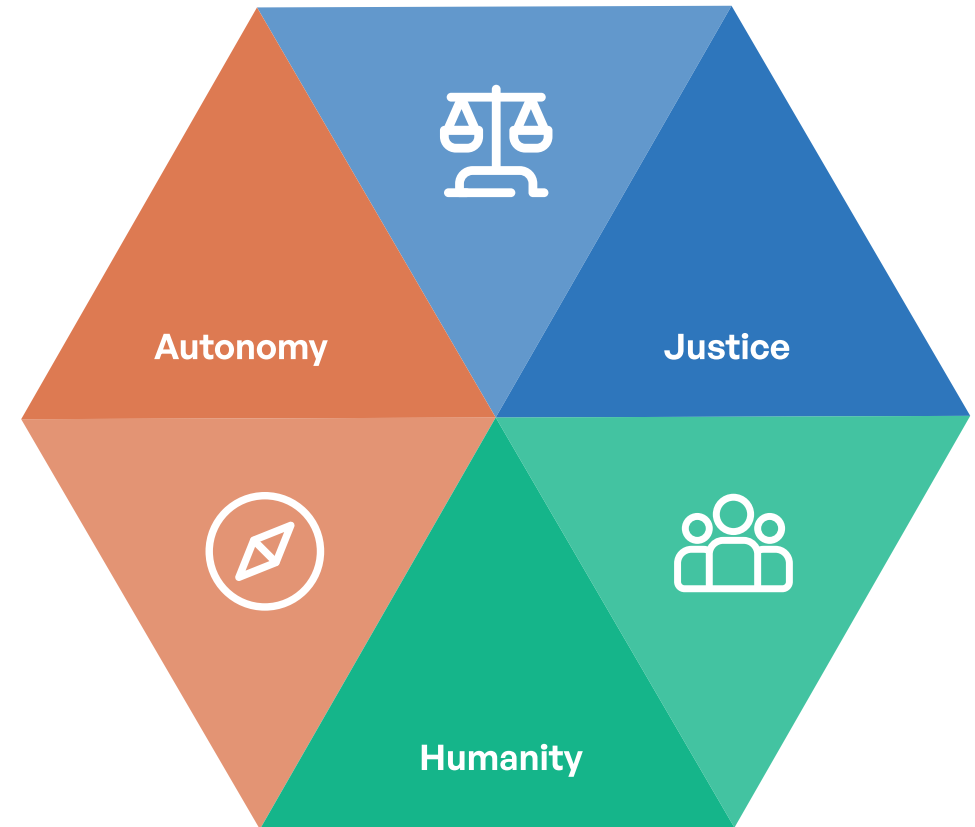
Technology is playing an increasingly prominent role in society. Large commercial technology companies (Big Tech) are gaining increasing influence worldwide. The decisions these companies make have a significant impact on the public sector.

Smaller, individual institutions are often the first to feel these effects. They may struggle to keep up with rapid technological developments, risking loss of relevance or becoming dependent on Big Tech, which can undermine their ability to uphold public values.

To safeguard public values, it is vital for educational institutions to collaborate. By joining forces, they can make their own choices regarding digital facilities. In this way, the education sector in the Netherlands can protect the public value of education and maintain control over its digital environment.

What are public values?

Public values are the principles and standards that matter to society as a whole. Engaging in dialogue about public values enables us to collectively determine what is good and fair for our society.



Value Compass for Digitalisation in Education

The Value Compass¹ for Digitalisation in Education (WaardenWijzer), developed by SURF and Kennisnet, provides a common language for discussing digitalisation in education. At the core of the Value Compass are public values.

Three of these are core values that apply to education: Justice, Humanity and Autonomy. Each of these main values encompasses additional values relevant to educational practice. The value that takes precedence depends on the specific context.

¹ <https://www.surf.nl/themas/publieke-waarden/waardenwijzer>

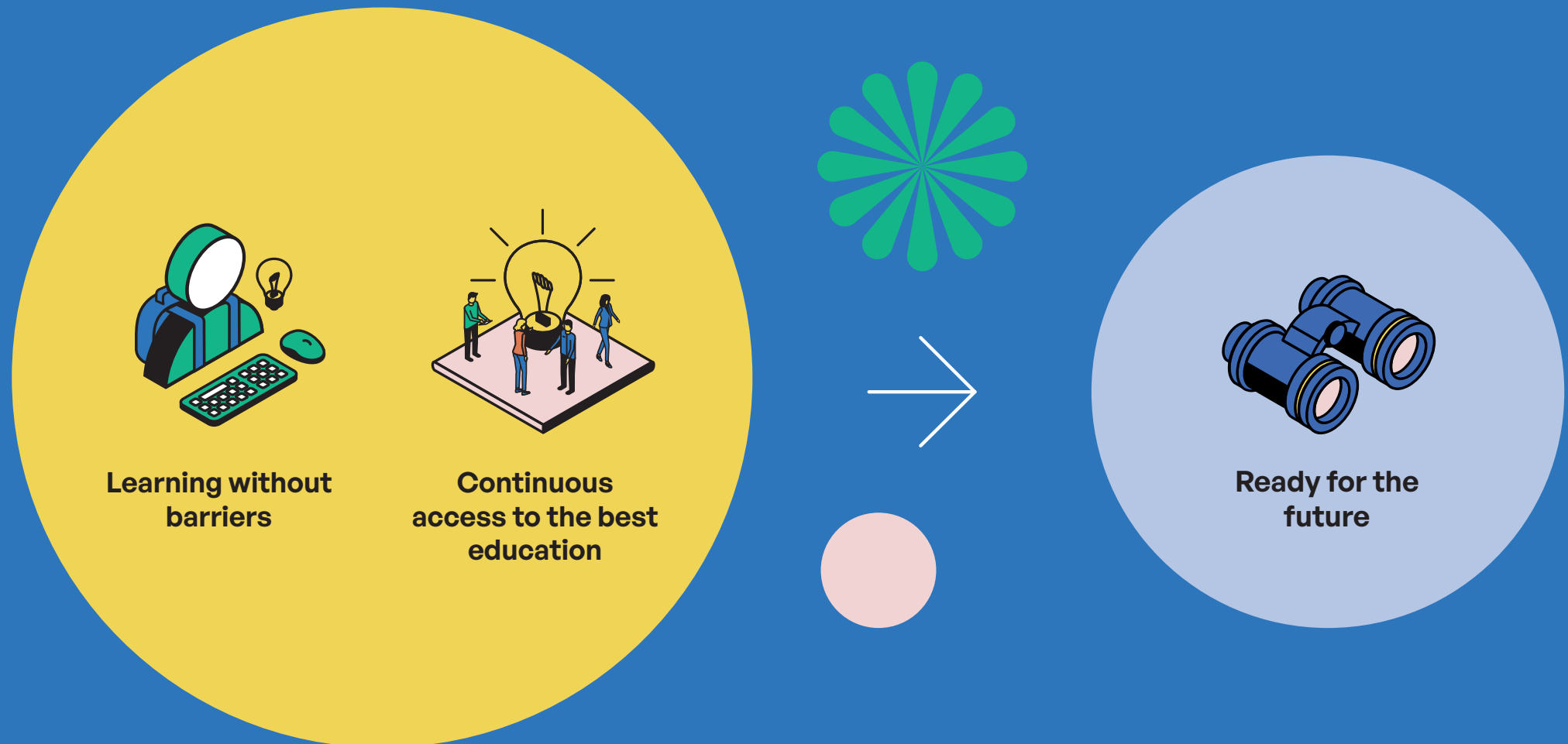
2. Where to next?

The future of tertiary
education in the
Netherlands

The promises of tertiary education

Tertiary education in the Netherlands aims to ensure that every learner – even in a changing world – can learn without barriers and enjoy the best education for years to come. Under the Npuls umbrella, educational institutions are working together to make these promises a reality and to uphold public values.

Within the Npuls cooperative, the education sector addresses themes that require a collaborative approach. Together, we are building a future-proof education sector that will allow people to develop to their full potential and to engage in lifelong learning.



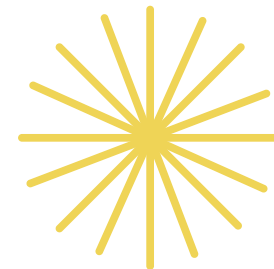
Four perspectives on tertiary education

What will tertiary education in the Netherlands look like in the future for learners, education professionals, institutions and the entire educational landscape?



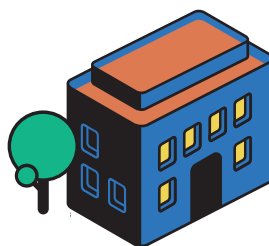
The learner

As a learner, you always receive up-to-date, quality education tailored to your personal learning needs. This can be a full programme or a smaller educational unit. You have a clear overview of available programmes, courses or units and know how to access them. You receive effective guidance in your development and are not hindered by administrative barriers. Throughout your learning pathway, you have easy access to and use of suitable digital and other educational resources.



The education professional

As an education professional, you are continuously improving your teaching and educational skills. You use new techniques and receive appropriate support. You do not do this alone; you share knowledge with colleagues both within and beyond your institution. Robust systems and processes are in place to facilitate this. You are digitally literate and understand the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies such as AI. You also know how to guide learners in their digital development.



The educational institution

Educational institutions maintain control over the content of their education. They are closely connected to society – collaborating with peers globally and with employers locally. This allows educational institutions to quickly adapt their educational offerings to societal developments, which they do in close collaboration with each other as well as with social partners. Institutions can offer tailored learning pathways to learners and give them access to the best educational resources, thanks to improved organisational structures.

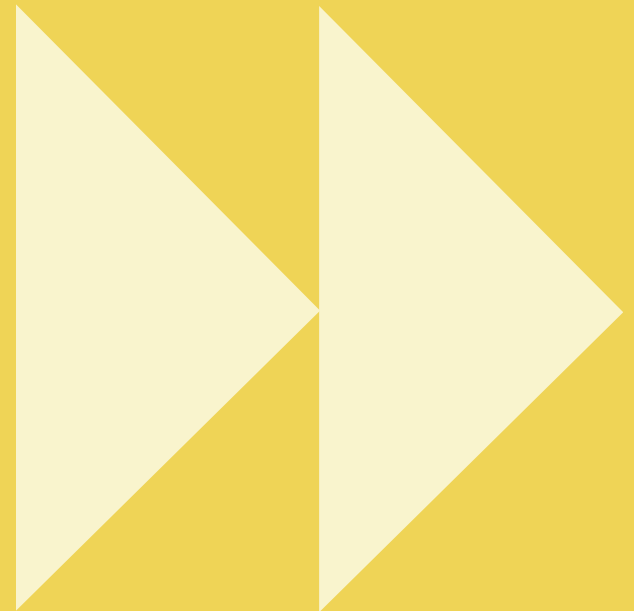


The education sector

The Dutch tertiary education sector maintains robust digital facilities centred on public values and provides clear conditions for collaboration with suppliers. Education professionals can share knowledge through a shared knowledge infrastructure. Thanks to these shared facilities and collaboration, the entire sector can continue to innovate. This way, quality education that meets the needs of society and the labour market is ensured for years to come.

3. What?

Npuls spearheads



Delivering on our promises: what is needed for this?

Our vision for education in 2032 is not yet a reality. Achieving this will require a collective effort based on the following prerequisites.



Education renewal calls for a culture of learning in the educational sector and institutions.



Education that meets the needs of the labour market and society requires agile processes.



Rapid digitalisation in society and education calls for good digital literacy and more training in this area.



Access to education that can be tailored to every learning need requires new working methods and support systems, such as systems to demonstrate skills and knowledge (certification).



The effective use of educational technologies and digital educational resources requires clear agreements on access, findability and usability.



Seamless digital collaboration across the education sector depends on a standardised digital architecture.

Delivering on our promises: what does Npuls do?

We know what is needed to deliver on our promises, which is why Npuls is working on the following themes.



Learning without barriers



Continuous access to the best education

Greater autonomy for learners

Learners have agency over their own learning and development pathways and encounter no barriers.

Better alignment of education with the labour market and society

Education is organised in a more flexible way so that it can respond effectively to societal needs.

Making better use of digital and other educational resources

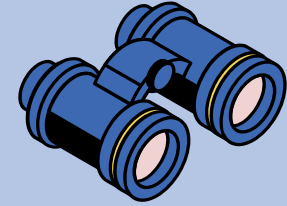
Learners and education professionals use educational resources and technologies tailored to their educational needs.

Strengthening digital literacy

Learners and education professionals develop skills that will enhance their digital literacy.

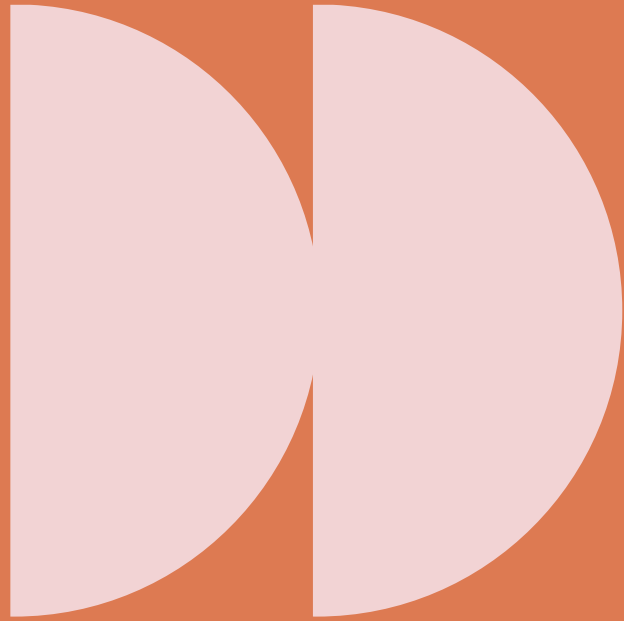
Fostering a learning culture in education

Education professionals work and learners learn on the basis of insights and share their knowledge and experiences.



Ready for the future

We learn from and with each other and develop a shared foundation of digital facilities for the education sector and knowledge infrastructure. In this way, we are building for the future of education together.



4. How?

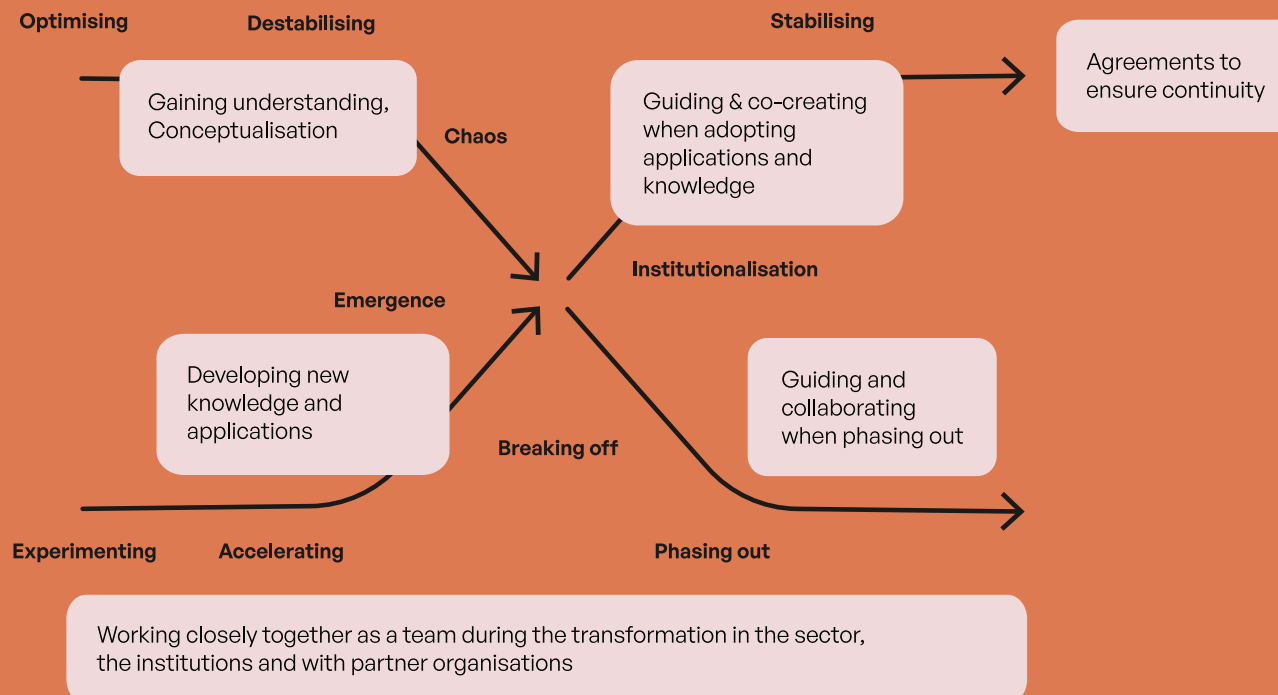
Npuls change strategy

A collective approach to transformation

The quality of education in the Netherlands is of a high standard. However, if we are to deliver on our promises of learning without barriers and continuous access to the best education, we need to restructure our education system. This requires a transformation in the coming years.

This will not be a straightforward process. We know from research and experience that the process does not follow a linear path from A to B.¹ The process is often unpredictable and may feel chaotic and uncertain for those involved.

Nevertheless, together we can steer the transformation in the right direction. Together, we determine what that direction is during the process itself. This also means formulating the transformation challenge for every education professional, institution and the sector as a whole.



We engage in dialogue and support each other in making the necessary changes.

We ask the important questions. Why do we need to change? What should we do differently? What are the challenges? And how can a Dutch national programme support institutions in this transformation?

We develop new solutions and put them into practice.

We are looking at what learners, education professionals, the organisation of educational institutions and the sector as a whole will need in 2032. We adopt new ways of working and discontinue what no longer serves us.

We make new agreements.

We make new agreements that are aligned to these new approaches so that they become the standard.

¹ <https://www.nsob.nl/sites/www.nsob.nl/files/2020-11/DRIFT%20en%20NSOB%20-%202020%20-%20Sturing%20in%20Transities-Fen%20raamwerk%20voor%20strategiebepaling.pdf>
<https://www.nsob.nl/sites/www.nsob.nl/files/2020-11/DRIFT%20en%20NSOB%20-%202020%20-%20Sturing%20in%20Transities-Fen%20raamwerk%20voor%20strategiebepaling.pdf>; Kramer, J. Tricky Tijden – Laat je niet gek maken (Boom, 2024)

Transforming together, at an appropriate pace

Educational institutions themselves determine the pace at which they adopt new working methods, digital facilities and knowledge infrastructure. These are the objectives for the Dutch education sector, as set out in the comprehensive Npuls programme plan.

Dutch tertiary education is extremely diverse, with significant differences between sectors, regions and institutions. Differences also exist within institutions themselves. To support both the sector as a whole and each individual institution, Npuls takes these differences into account.

Npuls provides institutions with guidance in determining how quickly they can transform.



The institution sets the pace

The speed of transformation depends on the individual institution. Npuls offers guidance to make the transformation easier for the institution and to accelerate it. Npuls also stimulates sector-wide dialogue about the transformation and related changes.

Role for innovators and early adopters

Innovators and early adopters play a crucial role in the transformation. Npuls draws on their expertise and knowledge to develop new digital facilities and collaborates closely with them. Institutions that have not yet had the opportunity to take the lead receive support, including financial assistance, to adopt new working methods.

Broad applicability

Everything developed in Npuls is intended to be broadly applicable. This prevents excessive differences between institutions and ensures equal opportunities for all learners.



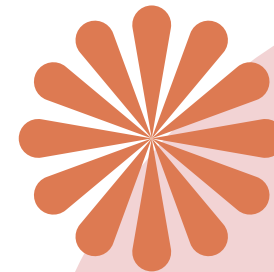


Npuls

Central connector

By facilitating dialogue, co-creation, and adoption, Npuls identifies when joint agreements are needed or when changes in legislation or regulation are required.

Thanks to close cooperation with decision-making committees, sector associations, SURF, other partners and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Npuls contributes to policy preparation.



Examples from practice

We demonstrate what our promises mean in practice and what we are developing to deliver on these promises.

Learners

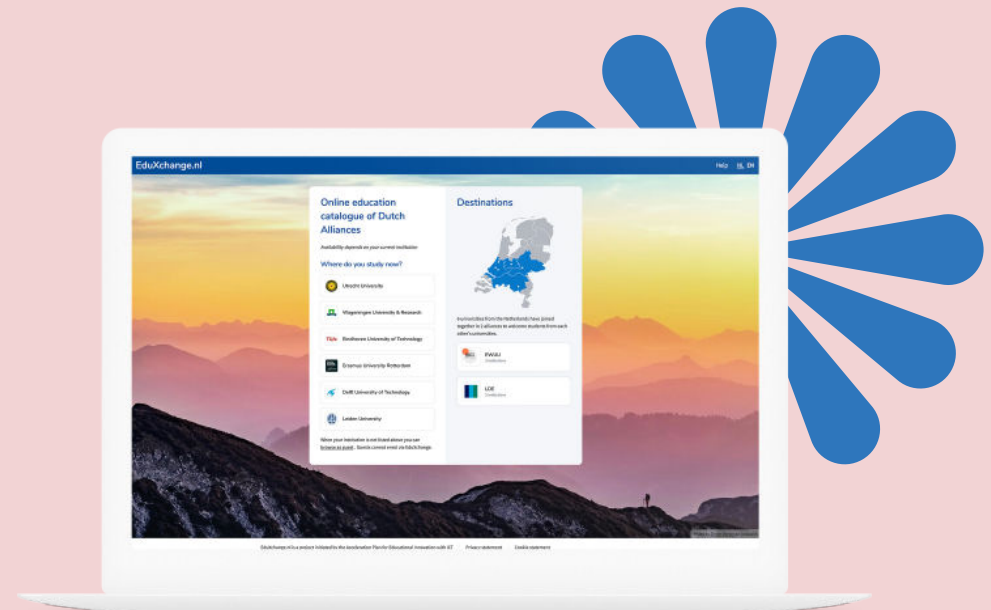
We promise that learners...

- Will have lifelong access to quality education and educational resources in a streamlined process because all institutions and partner organisations will recognise them thanks to a single digital identity.
- Can easily view the range of educational offerings available to them, both within and beyond their own institution.
- Can obtain recognition and certification for completed programmes and courses, including smaller units of study.
- Can manage all information about their learning pathway in one place and share it with institutions or employers.

What are we developing to support this?

- **eduID:** a digital identity for tertiary education. Learners at almost all institutions can link their student number to their eduID.
- **Enrolment:** together with Studielink, we are developing a facility that enables learners to register, enrol, and sign up at institutions for programmes, courses and smaller units of study.
- **Microcredentials:** more than half of the educational institutions in the Netherlands offer learners microcredentials. These institutions have agreed on the description and quality assurance of small units of study, including the level, study duration and learning outcomes of these units of study. Together with SURF, we are developing secure digital badges. In collaboration with the Ministry of OCW, we are exploring the possibility of official recognition of these badges.

- **eduWallet:** We are jointly developing a proof of concept for the eduWallet – an education wallet for storing digital proof of diplomas, certificates or skills.



Examples from practice

- Through the eduXchange platform, all learners can explore the educational offerings of six universities. Learners already enrolled at one of these institutions can register for courses or minors at another institution via the platform using their eduID. This makes cross-institutional enrolment easier and enhances collaboration between institutions.
- Thousands of learners have already received a microcredential. In the future, they will be able to store these in a digital wallet. Learners will also be able to obtain microcredentials for education developed with funding from other National Growth Fund projects.

Education professionals

We promise that education professionals in the Netherlands...

- Will have access to the best digital educational resources and can use new educational technologies, such as AI or XR, effectively and safely.
- Will receive support and information, both within and beyond their own institution, to continuously improve the educational offerings they develop.

What are we developing to support this?

- **Ecosystem:** we are developing an ecosystem for access to educational resources. This is a collection of systems and intelligent connections which will give education professionals and learners an overview of the materials they develop or use in their own systems.
- **AI:** We enable valuable and values-driven use of AI and other emerging technologies in education.
- **Centers for Teaching & Learning (CTLs):** We support institutions in setting up a CTL or developing it further.
- **Communities:** We initiate and facilitate online communities for education professionals.

Examples from practice

- Education professionals can share, find and use open digital educational resources on the edusources platform. Over 10,000 resources are already available. The “Boost your collection” scheme encourages professional communities to maintain their collections, thus ensuring that open educational resources are well-used.
- Online communities make it easy to share knowledge and work together on new solutions. In the AI & Data community, teaching staff can ask questions via the AI Helpdesk and contribute to the development of EduGenAI, which aims to enable safe and reliable use of AI in education.
- Every tertiary education institution in the Netherlands can receive funding to establish a CTL or develop it further. In these CTLs, experts support

teaching staff in innovating their teaching. Npuls supports CTLs through knowledge sharing and a three-year guidance process.



Educational institution

We promise that educational institutions in the Netherlands...

- Will take an integrated approach to the digital transformation, and in so doing learn with and from each other.
- Can use the facilities developed in and by Npuls.



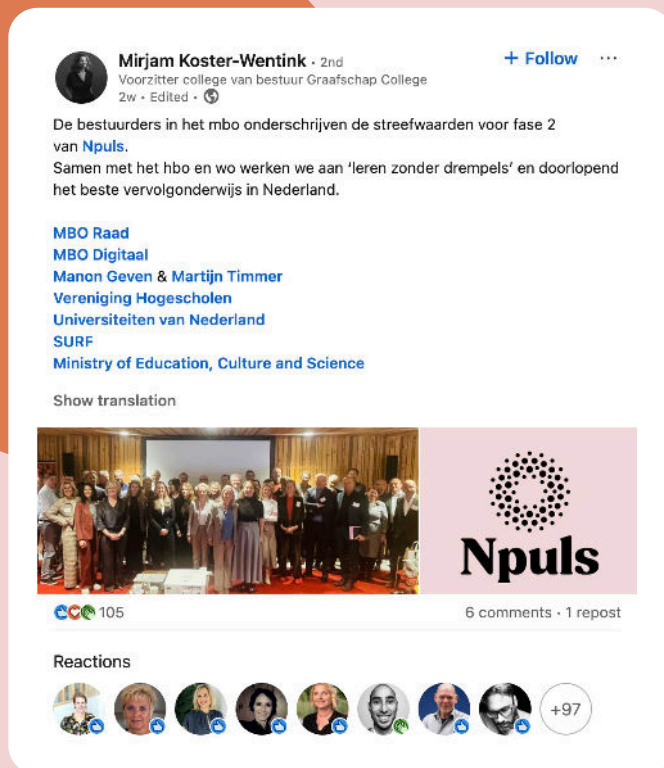
What are we developing to support this?

- **Linking Teams:** All institutions will have set up a Linking Team with diverse disciplines. These teams are the linchpin between their institution and Npuls, coordinating interaction between their own staff and the national programme organisation. In 2025, the Key Position Incentive Scheme was launched. This gives teams scope to explore and set to work on the transformation challenge in their institution.
- **Incentive schemes:** We provide incentive schemes to support institutions in adopting new working methods across all organisational levels and making use of the available digital facilities.

Examples from practice

- Over three hundred participants attended the Linking Teams meeting in November 2024, with around 80% of teams joining the monthly online sessions.
- The OpenUp scheme supports 24 institutions in developing policies for the use of open educational resources.
- The first round of the GetConnected scheme focuses on institutions that are not yet using the foundational components of the digital facilities for the education sector.





What are we developing to support this?

- **Collaborative structures:** We are organising new ways for the sector to engage in dialogue and make agreements.
- **Collective digital facilities for the sector:** We are developing collective digital facilities for the sector, anchored in public values and following a standard architecture.

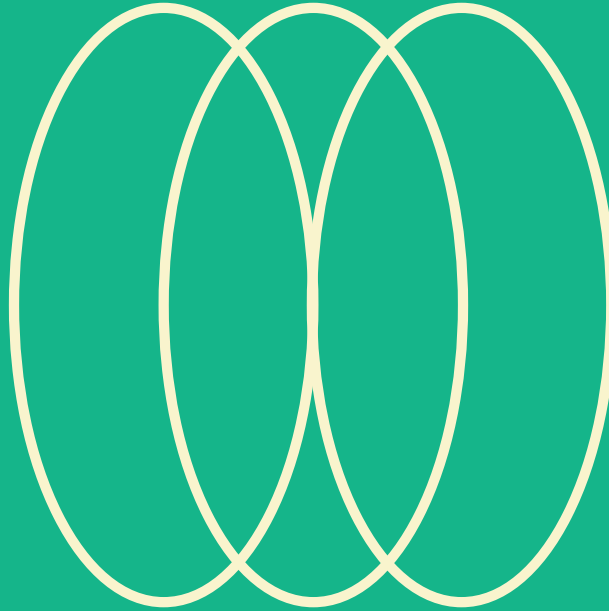
Examples from practice

- Linking Teams from all institutions contributed to the sector objectives for the second phase of Npuls, which were adopted by the administrators of all public institutions.
- The National Growth Fund programmes Npuls and Edu-V are joining forces to build a single public ecosystem for digital educational resources.
- Reference architectures for higher and secondary education are continuously developed and maintained.

Tertiary education sector in the Netherlands

Our promise to the tertiary education sector

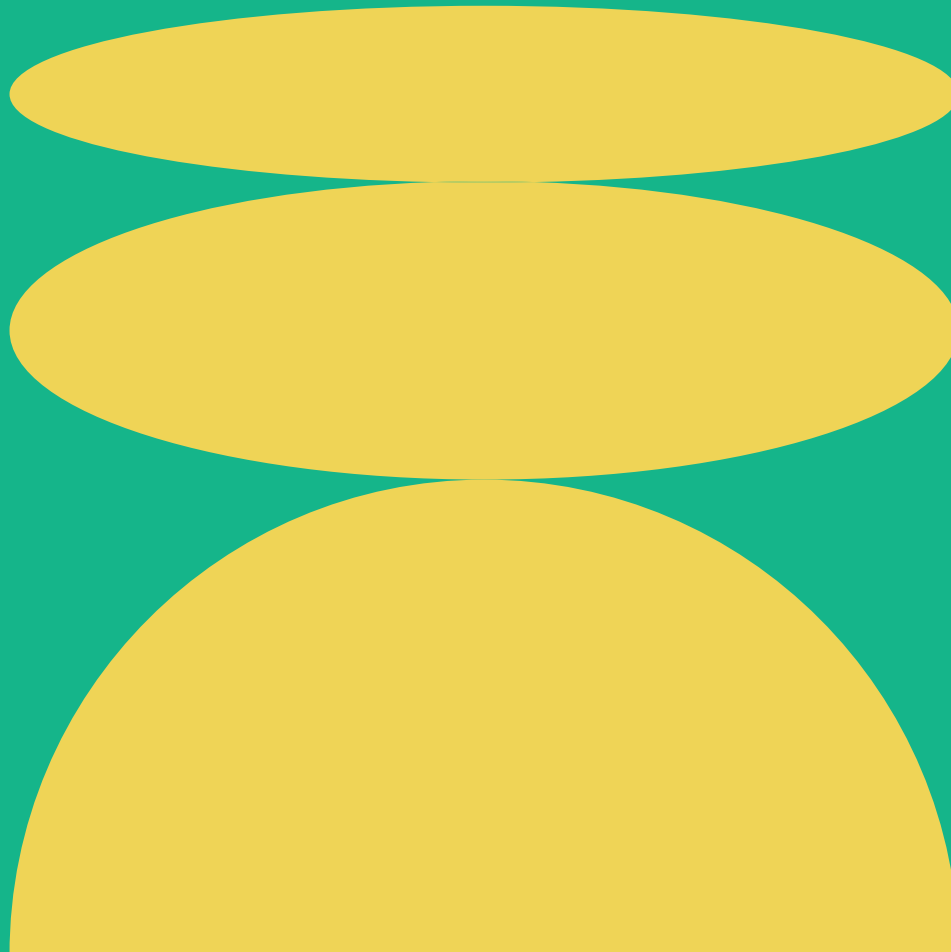
- Organisations in this sector make agreements to collectively facilitate learning without barriers and continuous access to the best education.
- The sector maintains control over its own digital facilities, which are based on public values. It is these facilities that make it possible for us to deliver on our promises to learners.



5. Who with? Collaborations with Npuls

Collaborations

Under the Npuls umbrella, various parties are collaborating closely to transform education in the Netherlands. We do not develop new educational content ourselves, but we ensure that offerings from other National Growth Fund programmes are accessible to all learners in the Netherlands.



Examples of collaboration between Npuls and other programmes



Npuls and the Lifelong Learning Catalyst (LLO-Katalysator): Institutions use funding by the LLO-Katalysator to develop new educational offerings for societal transitions, such as the energy transition. LLO-Katalysator and Npuls explore how LLO projects can use digital facilities developed in and by Npuls.



Npuls and GroenvermogenNL: we are developing a knowledge platform for green hydrogen. This platform supports learners, teaching staff, researchers, professionals and employers in sharing and using new knowledge about green hydrogen. The platform integrates several Npuls solutions, such as making educational offerings transparent, sharing educational resources and facilitating knowledge sharing between experts in a community.



Npuls and DUTCH: We are developing the Simulearn platform, an innovative digital platform for simulation-based education and XR.





International collaboration

Npuls also seeks international partnerships. By developing standards and solutions together, we strengthen the international position of the Netherlands and public education.

More accessible education

Collective standards and agreements make it easier for Dutch institutions to connect with the international education field. This opens up the European education market and makes it more accessible to learners in the Netherlands. Npuls collaborates with SURF, European NRENs, and transformation programmes such as Digivisio and Hochschulforum Digitalisierung. This international cooperation also strengthens the public sector's position compared to commercial providers of digital services.

Together, we are transforming tertiary education for all learners

We are developing new educational offerings

These programmes

Develop new educational offerings and resources to support various societal changes and top sectors in the Netherlands.



We are learning how to transform education together

These programmes

Look at which new skills and knowledge are needed, across the board or by top sector.



Foster and explore new forms of collaboration between the education sector and employers.



Change how educational institutions are organised.



Collaborate in learning how to transform.



Promote knowledge sharing between teaching staff and education professionals.



NAPL

Experiment with new techniques to ensure their safe application in education.



We are laying the foundation

Npuls develops shared digital (and other) applications and working methods to enable learning without barriers and continuous access to the best education.



Npuls also develops standards for information architecture.



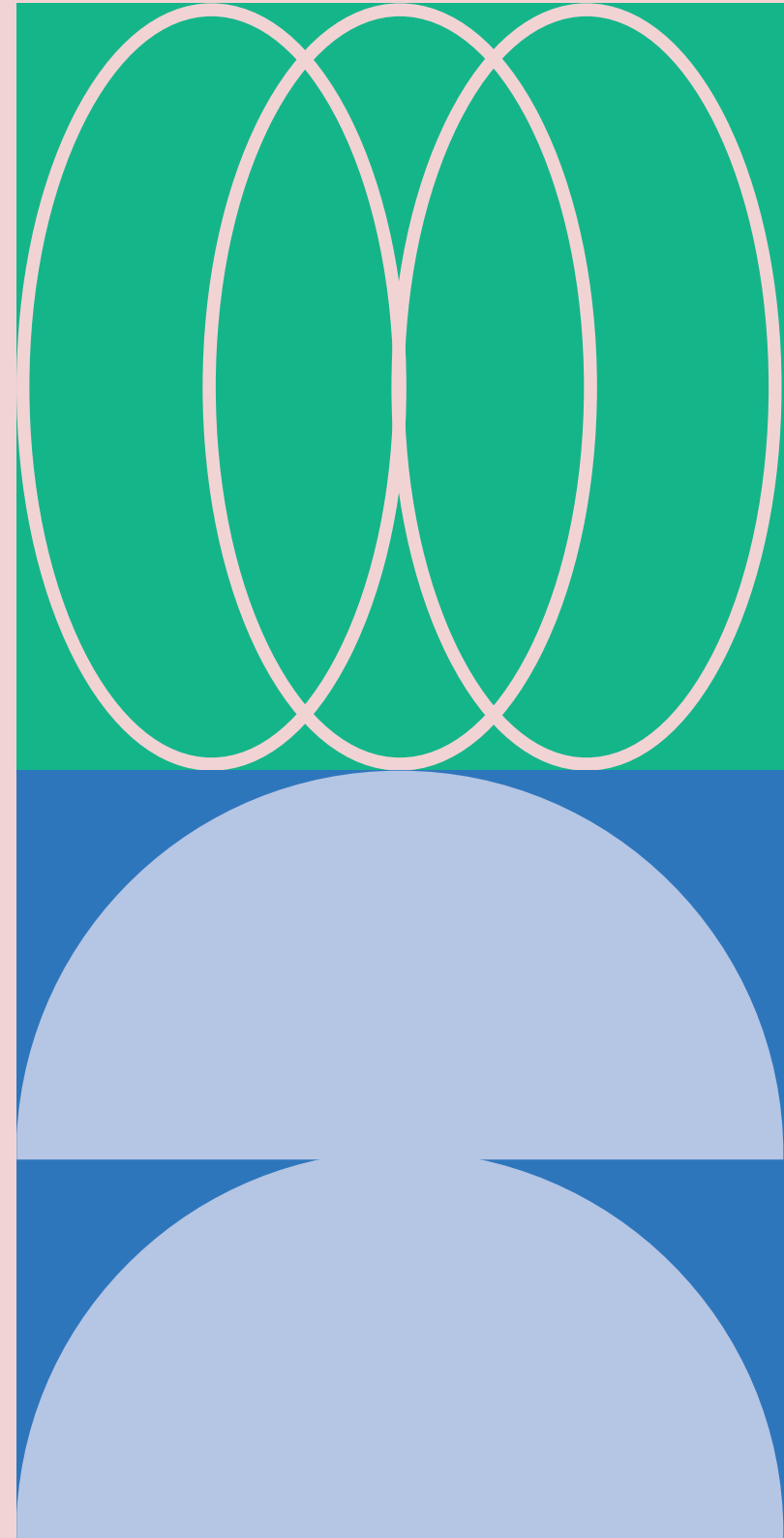
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Together, we are building an education system that supports a resilient society, broad prosperity and a thriving economy. We are collaborating closely with SURF, Studielink, NRO and many other partner organisations to lay the groundwork for tomorrow's education.

Ready to move education forward with us?

Npuls. Moving education.





If you have any questions about this brochure

You can drop us a message at info@npuls.com