

Negotiation Outcome

Collective Bargaining Agreement for Dutch Universities

July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027

The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (UNL), on behalf of the universities, and FNV, FBZ, CNV, and AOb, as employee organizations—hereinafter referred to as the “CBA parties”—reached the following agreements on June 22, 2026, regarding the terms and conditions of employment in the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Dutch Universities.

No later **than July 20, 2026**, the CLA parties will decide, following consultation with their respective members, whether this negotiation outcome will be converted into a final agreement.

Preamble

At a time when universities are confronted with major societal challenges and rapid technological developments, employers and employee organizations have once again sought to collaborate. Based on a shared understanding of the important public role that universities play in education, research, and societal impact, they have engaged in dialogue about the future of work within the sector. This requires a commitment from both employers and employees to be and remain agile.

These discussions have led to a negotiated agreement that focuses not only on attractive terms of employment but also on creating a work environment in which employees feel valued, safe, and supported. The parties to the collective bargaining agreement recognize that the quality of education and research is closely linked to the well-being and long-term employability of employees. For this reason, the agreements reached place explicit emphasis on professional development, health, and work-life balance.

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement consider it essential that universities implement active policies to reduce this workload and provide employees with sufficient opportunities for recovery. Universities will therefore, in consultation with the Local Consultation Committee, establish a number of clear and recognizable “golden rules.” These rules are intended to contribute to a healthy and sustainable work culture and address, among other things, reducing unnecessary meeting pressure, promoting a constructive meeting culture, creating space for rest, recovery, and leave, and respecting employees’ work-life balance.

Through these agreements, the collective bargaining parties express their shared ambition to keep universities attractive not only as employers but also as places where employees can work with energy, commitment, and confidence to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

1 Term and Compensation

Term

The collective bargaining agreement is in effect from **July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027**.

Wage Development

Percentage Pay Increase

On **July 1, 2026**, the salaries of university employees employed by a Dutch university will be **increased by 3.1% on a structural basis**.

Increase in pay scales (cents)

- Subsequently, effective July 1, 2026, all amounts in the salary scale (Table 4.1 of Appendix A) will be **increased by €50**.
- The salary increase and the adjustment to the salary scale will be paid out no later than October 2026.
- This brings the average structural wage increase under this collective bargaining agreement to **4.1%**.

One-time payment

In addition, university employees¹ who are employed by a Dutch university as of **July 1, 2026**, will receive a one-time payment no later than October. Due to the transition to a new pension system effective January 1, 2027, the payment has been increased by the employer's pension contribution. Based on full-time employment, the one-time payment amounts to **€1,534 gross**.

Abolition of Minimum Youth Wages at Universities

Table 4.3 in Appendix A, Section 4, is removed from the collective bargaining agreement.

2 Allowances

On-call and attendance allowances

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement will revise the provisions in Article 3.26 of the collective bargaining agreement. The purpose of this revision is:

- 1 To **simplify** the scheme.
 - 2 To **increase** the allowances and convert them to **nominal** amounts.
 - 3 To **expand** the group of employees who can or must perform these services **to include those up to and including pay scale 12 of the OBP**.
- The (additional) costs of this provision do not reduce the wage budget but are borne by the institutions.
 - The basic principle remains that the employer must issue a written assignment to an employee to perform on-call and/or on-site duty.
 - These amounts will be adjusted once every 3 years in consultation between the collective bargaining parties.

Effective October 1, 2026, the allowances will be changed to a **3-euro** allowance per hour of on-call duty and a **10-euro** allowance per hour of on-site duty.

Retention of Allowances During Pregnancy, Childbirth, and New Parent Leave

- 1 The parties to the collective bargaining agreement agree that during pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal leave, the allowances for special duties (Articles 3.24, 3.26, and 3.27 of the collective bargaining agreement) will continue to be paid, subject to the provisions of paragraph 2.
- 2 The amount of the allowances is set at "the average amount of allowances the employee received in the six calendar months immediately preceding the first day of the pregnancy."

¹ With the exception of contract workers, on-call workers, apprentices, employees on unpaid leave, and employees earning the statutory minimum wage (including employees with a work disability employed under the Participation Act).

For employees receiving Wajong benefits, the employer may waive the one-time payment if this is in the employee's best interest.

3 Workload

Right to be unreachable

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement consider it important that universities actively implement policies to limit work pressure and promote opportunities for recovery. The employer promotes a work culture in which rest periods are respected and in which availability outside of working hours is not expected. Universities therefore establish, in consultation with the Local Consultation Committee, a limited number of “golden rules” regarding availability, meeting culture, rest periods, and work-life balance. These rules cover at least the following:

- Meeting pressure and meeting culture;
- Opportunities for recovery and leave;
- Respect for work-life balance.

The collective bargaining agreement will also stipulate that employees have the right to be unreachable outside their own work schedule and outside any on-call duties, except in situations where being available can reasonably be expected of the employee based on the principles of good employment practices.

Social security

The evaluation of the ombudsman was conducted in accordance with previous collective bargaining agreement provisions. This evaluation shows that the university ombudsman is viewed as an important addition to the support structure in the university sector. The evaluation has led to recommendations at the sector level, the university level, and for the ombudsman himself. The recommendations will be placed on the agenda by January 1, 2027, for discussion with the formal employee representative bodies involved in the Ombudsman function, namely the University Council, the Works Council, and/or the Local Consultative Body.

4 Focus on Development

Development Days

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement note that development days (as set forth in Article 6.10 of the collective bargaining agreement) are currently underutilized. Furthermore, it appears that both employees and managers are not always aware of the existence, purpose, and possibilities of these development days. As a result, an important tool for sustainable employability, professional development, and career development remains underutilized. The parties to the collective bargaining agreement attach great importance to the effective use of development days and therefore agree that universities will take active measures to increase awareness of and utilization of these days, including through active communication and the provision of clear information.

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement wish to encourage employees to make use of these days and will therefore make the use of these days a priority during the upcoming collective bargaining agreement period and actively promote this by organizing a “**Development Day**.” This day is intended to inspire employees and managers to further develop their professional future and to make use of the development days for that purpose. This day will be evaluated during the next round of collective bargaining.

Addition to the collective bargaining agreement (Article 6.10, paragraph 1):

The employer actively promotes the use of development days. Each year, the supervisor discusses with the employee:

- a the employee's development needs;
- b the opportunities for training, career development, and sustainable employability, for example through the use of development days.

Article 6.7, paragraph 1, will also be amended accordingly.

5 Teachers

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement **will investigate** which Level 3 and Level 4 faculty positions will have a structural nature in the coming years. This investigation will be completed no later than April 2027, so that it can then be used in the collective bargaining negotiations to substantiate a target percentage in relation to the necessary flexible workforce for the sector. The parties to the collective bargaining agreement recognize the essential role of faculty members within universities and consider it important to explicitly focus on realistic career prospects, including exit options for faculty members in categories 3 and 4.

Retention of Pay Scale and Step

Lecturers 3 and 4 with a temporary contract will, upon entering a new position as a Lecturer 3 or 4 at another university, be appointed to at least the same pay scale and step as in their previous position as Lecturer 3 or 4.

6 Postdocs

Postdocs and pregnancy

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement note that the combination of postdocs and pregnancy can lead to inequality in the current context. Therefore, we agree that, in line with the earlier agreements for doctoral candidates in Article 2.5.2 of the collective bargaining agreement, postdocs will also be given the option to extend their employment contract by the duration of maternity and childbirth leave, parental leave, and (supplementary) birth leave, provided that this leave was taken during the project period and provided that the term of the chain provision has not yet been reached.

Postdocs who pump breast milk and/or breastfeed during their contract period are entitled to a one-month extension of their employment contract, provided that the term of the chain provision has not yet been reached.

Because the current chain provision means that extending employment is not always legally possible, we are establishing a working group. The parties to the collective bargaining agreement will, in any case, consider the following:

- 1 An investigation into the possibilities of a fixed-term employment contract, the end of which is determined by the completion of the project or the expiration of its funding. This will include consideration of the status of postdocs during maternity and childbirth leave.
- 2 The intention to conduct a joint legal review, partly in light of the Equal Treatment Act, and to explore the possibilities for doing so.
- 3 If necessary, the parties to the collective bargaining agreement will examine the possibility of expanding the "chain employment" provision for this target group.
- 4 Measures to adjust the workload of postdocs.

Retention of salary scale and step

When postdocs enter a new position as Researcher 3 or 4 (postdoc) at another Dutch university, they will be appointed to at least the same pay scale and step as in their previous position as Researcher 3 or 4 (postdoc).

7 Women and Work

Women and Work

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement strive to create an inclusive and vibrant work environment within universities, in which the physical and mental health of all employees at every stage of life is a central priority. This requires a work environment in which health issues or specific life stages that affect daily work can be openly discussed and are taken seriously.

In this context, the parties to the collective bargaining agreement agree that every university should pay special attention to health issues related to the menstrual cycle and menopause. The parties encourage managers and employees to work together to establish tailored arrangements aimed at supporting job performance and promoting sustainable employability.

In addition, special attention is given to employees returning to work after pregnancy. For employees who are breastfeeding, optimal facilities are provided to make this possible during working hours.

Extension of Ph.D. Programs (Pumping and Feeding Time)

The right to pumping and feeding time is well regulated by law, but its impact on the progress of temporary research contracts (such as those of Ph.D. candidates) often went unaddressed in practice.

The parties to the collective bargaining agreement now formally endorse this principle: PhD candidates who pump and/or feed during their contract period are entitled to a one-month extension of their employment contract.

8 Collective Bargaining Agreement Renewal

During the upcoming collective bargaining period, the parties to the collective bargaining agreement will discuss the revised draft text of **Chapter 2 of the agreement**, with the aim of having this new text take effect as of the next collective bargaining agreement.

9 Other Agreements

In addition, the parties to the collective bargaining agreement have reached the following agreements:

- 1 The CAO-NU editorial committee will make a number of non-substantive editorial/technical adjustments when finalizing the revised CAO text.
- 2 The collective bargaining parties will work together on a stricter RVU regulation in line with the criteria and guidelines of the TNO Expertise Center for Heavy Work. This regulation will be finalized and take effect no later than the end of 2026.

Agreed upon on June 22, 2026,

FNV

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