

## A macro-effective educational offering

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The Education Council believes that proper information provision is crucial in working towards a macro-effective educational offering in senior secondary vocational education (MBO) and in higher education, given that intervention in the current offering is only needed in the case of programmes where it is clear that they are not being offered in a macro-effective way. This applies, for instance, to small-scale programmes with a low yield that are offered at multiple locations, to programmes that are under threat, or to programmes with a highly limited labour market perspective. For institutions, indicators should be introduced that provide them with a stimulus to closely monitor their own portfolio of study programmes, to justify the portfolio and, where necessary, make changes. In the Education Council's view, keeping track of whether this actually leads to a macro-effective educational offering is part of the government's system responsibility. In exceptional cases, the government might have to decide to close programmes or, conversely, save them. To improve the information provided to prospective students, the Education Council advocates a compulsory 'student information leaflet'.

### **Recommendation 1: accountability to government based on traffic light system**

The Education Council proposes that the government make use of a 'traffic light' system to indicate, among other things, the required scale and labour market relevance of study programmes. If programmes do not meet such previously established standards, the corresponding traffic light will come on. Introduction and publication of such a traffic light system should encourage education institutions to effectively establish and coordinate their educational portfolio in consultation with other institutions. If necessary, institutions may choose to indicate in their annual reports why specific programmes have been kept open. An institution's supervisory board should play a role here too by emphatically asking the management board to account for programmes that are kept open or closed. Finally, the ball is now in the government's court. In exceptional cases, the government may decide on the basis of the traffic light system to close study centres or withdraw state funding from study programmes.

### **Recommendation 2: improve the study choice process by raising the awareness of participants**

Participants will be able to make a more balanced choice if they are well informed about the labour market relevance and quality of study programmes. The Education Council therefore recommends that information provision be improved. It should be made compulsory for institutions to provide prospective students with a 'student information leaflet' informing them about the quality and the labour market relevance of the study programme. This may cause students to change their mind and ultimately therefore make institutions reconsider offering these programmes. Similarly, the attention devoted to career orientation and counselling in secondary education should also be increased.

### **Recommendation 3: licensing system for unique and socially relevant small-scale study programmes**

Unique and socially relevant small-scale study programmes should be kept open by means of a licensing system and extra funding. A proposal to close the last study programme in a given field should cause an alarm to sound. The Education Council advises the government to establish a reporting centre for the intended closure of study programmes and to organise tender procedures for licences for unique and socially relevant small-scale study programmes.