

20.1.2025

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**Title**

Change in study programmes : the low countries / Jeroen Huisman ; Jef Verhoeven ; Kurt De Wit

**Publication year**

2004

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education policy. - 17 (2004) 3, S. 269 - 285

**Inventory number**

18239

**Keywords**

Ausland : Niederlande : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Niederlande : Studium, Studenten, Lehre ; Ausland : Belgien : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Belgien : Studenten, Studium, Lehre

**Abstract**

Both in the Netherlands and Flanders, the lack of efficiency in the supply of programmes in the university sectors was considered a policy problem in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. This article explores how the institutional context of the university sector (including the governmental steering model and the conflicting interests regarding the programme supply) played a role in the responses regarding the programme supply of four universities in the two higher education systems. The cases show that the institutional context provided mixed incentives, leading to both predictable and unpredictable responses. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)