

Agreement

Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities

1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027

On 22 June 2026, the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), acting on behalf of the universities, and the employee organisations FNV, FBZ, CNV, and AOb, hereafter referred to as the “parties to the collective labour agreement”, made the following agreements concerning the terms of employment in the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities.

On 20 July 2026 parties determined that this negotiation result is converted into a final agreement.

Preamble

At a time when universities are confronted with major societal challenges and rapid technological advancements, employers and employee organisations have once again sought to work together. They discussed the future of work within the sector, based on their shared understanding of the important public role that universities play in terms of education, research and social impact. That future requires that employers and employees are flexible, and remain so in future.

These discussions led to a negotiation result that, in addition to focusing on attractive terms of employment, also seeks to create a working environment in which employees feel valued, safe and supported. The parties to the collective labour agreement recognise that the quality of education and research is closely linked to employee wellbeing and the long-term employability of employees. Given this, they made agreements that place a specific emphasis on professional development, health and work-life balance.

The parties to the collective labour agreement believe it is crucial that universities actively implement policies to limit work pressure and provide employees with sufficient opportunities for recovery. Universities will therefore, in consultation with their Local Consultative Body, set some clear, understandable “golden rules”. These rules will help to make the work culture more healthy and sustainable and will cover, among other things, reducing unnecessary meeting pressure, promoting a constructive meeting culture, creating room for rest, recovery and leave, and respecting employees' work-life balance.

Through these agreements, the parties to the collective labour agreement express their shared ambition to maintain the appeal of universities as employers and as places where the challenges of today and tomorrow are addressed by employees who are full of energy, committed and confident.

1 Term and remuneration

Term

The term of the collective labour agreement runs from **1 July 2026 until 30 June 2027**.

Pay increases

Percentage pay increase

On **1 July 2026**, a **structural increase of 3.1%** will apply to the salaries of university employees who are employed by a Dutch University.

Increase in scales (in cents)

- Subsequently, all amounts in the salary table (table 4.1 of Appendix A) will be structurally **increased by €50** with effect from 1 July 2026
- The pay increase and increase in the salary scale will be paid no later than October 2026.
- The average structural pay increase under this collective labour agreement comes to **4.1%**.

One-off payment

In addition, university employees¹ who are employed by a Dutch university on **1 July 2026** will receive a one-off payment in the month of October. This payment has been increased by the employer's pension contribution, due to the transition to a new pension scheme with effect from 1 January 2027. This one-off payment will be a **gross amount of €1,534**, based on full-time employment.

Abolition of university minimum youth wages

Table 4.3 from Appendix A, paragraph 4 is to be deleted from the collective labour agreement.

2 Allowances

On-call allowance and standby allowance

The parties to the collective labour agreement will review the scheme contained in Article 3.26 of the collective labour agreement. The purpose of this review is to:

- 1 **Simplify** the scheme.
 - 2 **Increase** the allowances and convert allowances into **nominal** amounts.
 - 3 **Expand** the group of employees who can/must perform such shifts **to include all scales up to and including scale 12 (OBP)**.
- The costs of this scheme, including any additional costs, will be paid by the institutions and will not be withheld from the pay bargaining range.
 - The basic principle is still that the employer must instruct the employee in writing to work an on-call and/or standby shift.
 - These amounts are adjusted once every three years by the parties to the collective labour agreement in joint consultation.

With effect from 1 October 2026, the allowances will be changed to an hourly allowance of **€3** for on-call shifts and an hourly allowance of **€10** for standby shifts.

Retention of allowances for pregnancy leave, maternity leave and childbirth leave

- 1 The parties to the collective labour agreement parties agree that during pregnancy leave, maternity leave and childbirth leave, the allowances for unusual working hours (Articles 3.24, 3.26 and 3.27 of the collective labour agreement) will continue to be paid out in accordance with paragraph 2.

¹ With the exception of claimants, on-call workers, trainees, employees on unpaid leave and employees on a statutory minimum wage (including staff with an occupational disability who are employed under the Participation Act).

If an employee receives a benefit under the Young Disabled Persons Disability Benefits Act (Wajong), the employer may decide not to make the one-off payment if this is in the best interests of the employee in question.

- 2 The amount of the allowances is determined as “the average amount of allowances that the employee received in the six calendar months immediately preceding the first day of pregnancy.”

3 Work pressure

Right to not be contactable

The parties to the collective labour agreement believe it is important that universities actively implement policies to reduce work pressure and promote opportunities for recovery. Employers are to promote a work culture in which rest periods are respected and employees are not expected to be contactable outside their working hours. Universities will therefore, in consultation with their Local Consultative Body, set a limited number of “golden rules” on being contactable, the meeting culture, moments of rest, and work-life balance. These rules must cover, as a minimum:

- Meeting pressure and the meeting culture;
- Room for recovery and leave;
- Respecting work-life balance.

The collective labour agreement will also stipulate that employees are entitled to not be contactable outside of their own working pattern and any on-call shifts, except in situations where it is reasonable to expect the employee to be contactable based on the principle of good employeeship.

Social safety

The ombudsperson evaluation was carried out in accordance with previous collective labour agreement provisions. This evaluation revealed that university ombudspersons are regarded as an important addition to the care structure in the university sector. The evaluation resulted in recommendations at sector level, university level and ombudsperson level. Before 1 January 2027, the recommendations will be placed on the agenda for the meeting with the formal employee participation body that deals with the ombudsperson role (this is the University Council, Works Council and/or the Local Consultative Body).

4 Focus on development

Development days

The parties to the collective labour agreement note that insufficient use is currently being made of the development days (as specified in Article 6.10 of the collective labour agreement). Moreover, it turns out that many line managers and employees are not aware of the existence, purpose and possibilities of these development days. As a result, a key tool that supports long-term employability, professional development and career development is not being used.

As the parties to the collective labour agreement set great store by the effective use of development days, they agree that universities will take active steps, including active communication and the provision of clear information, to increase awareness and use of these days.

The parties to the collective labour agreement want to encourage employees to make use of these days, and they will therefore make the use of these days a key aim in the upcoming collective labour agreement term and support this actively by organising a “**Day for Development**”. This day is intended to inspire employees and line managers to continue to work on developing their future careers and encourage them to use the development days for that purpose. This day will be evaluated in the next collective bargaining round.

To be added to the collective labour agreement (Article 6.10(1)):

The employer actively promotes the use of development days. Once a year, line managers discuss the following matters with each employee working directly under them:

- a the employee's development needs;
- b the opportunities for training, career development and long-term employability, such as those that are available if development days are used.

Article 6.7(1) is also to be amended accordingly.

5 Lecturers

The parties to the collective labour agreement **will look into** which lecturer 3 and 4 positions will have a structural nature in the coming years. This study will be completed by April 2027 at the latest, so that during the collective labour agreement negotiations it can be used to substantiate a target percentage for the required flexible workforce for the sector. The parties to the collective labour agreement recognise the essential role of lecturers at universities and believe it is important to pay specific attention to realistic career prospects, including exit options for those in lecturer 3 and 4 positions.

Retention of salary scale and grade

Those in lecturer 3 and 4 positions who have temporary contracts and are subsequently employed in the position of lecturer 3 or 4 at another university will, at the time they are appointed, be on at least the same scale and grade as they were under their previous employment contract for the position of lecturer 3 or 4.

6 Post-doctoral researchers

Post-doctoral researchers and pregnancy

The parties to the collective labour agreement have noted that the current situation can result in inequalities when post-doctoral researchers become pregnant. We have therefore agreed that, following on from the previous agreements made for PhD candidates in

Article 2.5.2 of the collective labour agreement, post-doctoral researchers will also have the possibility of extending their employment contract for the duration of their pregnancy leave, maternity leave, parental leave and any additional post-birth leave, provided that the leave was taken during the project and the term specified in the chain provision has not yet ended.

Post-doctoral researchers who express milk and/or are feeding their baby during their contract period are entitled to a one-month extension of their employment contract, provided that the term specified in the chain provision has not yet ended.

As it is not always legally possible to extend the employment relationship under the current chain provision, we are setting up a working group. The parties to the collective labour agreement will in any event take the following into account:

- 1 Study into the possibilities of a fixed-term employment contract which terminates as soon as the project is completed or its funding ends. The position of post-doctoral researchers while on pregnancy leave and maternity leave will also be taken into consideration.
- 2 The intention to conduct a joint legal review, partly in light of the Equal Treatment Act, including exploring the possibilities.
- 3 If necessary, the parties to the collective labour agreement will examine the possibility of expanding the chain provision for this target group.
- 4 Measures that can be used to adjust the workload of post-doctoral researchers.

Retention of salary scale and grade

Post-doctoral researchers who are subsequently employed in the position of researcher 3 or 4 (post-doctoral) at another university will, at the time they are appointed, be on at least the same scale and grade as they were under their previous employment contract for the position of researcher 3 or 4 (post-doctoral).

7 Women and work

Women and work

The parties to the collective labour agreement aim to create an inclusive and energising working environment at the universities, where the key focus is the physical and mental health of all employees at every stage of their life.

For this to happen, there needs to be a working climate environment in which health complaints and specific life phases that affect day-to-day work are discussed openly and taken seriously.

In this context, the parties to the collective labour agreement have agreed that each university will pay special attention to medical conditions related to the menopause and menstrual cycle. The parties to the collective labour agreement encourage line managers and employees to make tailor-made arrangements, in joint consultation, that are aimed at supporting the employee's performance and promoting long-term employability.

In addition, special attention is to be paid to employees returning from maternity leave. Employees who are breastfeeding will be offered the best possible facilities so that they can do so during working hours.

Extension of PhD programmes (time allowed for expressing milk and/or feeding)

Although the right to time for expressing milk and feeding is well regulated under the law, in reality the impact on the progress of temporary research contracts (such as those of PhD candidates) has often gone unnoticed.

The parties to the collective labour agreement are now confirming this principle structurally: PhD candidates who express milk or are feeding their baby during their contract period are entitled to a one-month extension of their employment contract.

8 Renewal of collective labour agreement

During the upcoming collective labour agreement term, the parties to the collective labour agreement will discuss the revised draft text of **Chapter 2 of the Collective Labour Agreement** with the intention that the new text will become with effect from the following collective labour agreement.

9 Other agreements

The parties to the collective labour agreement have also made the following agreements:

- 1 In establishing the amended text of the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities, the collective labour agreement drafting committee will implement a number of non-substantive editorial/technical changes.
- 2 The parties to the collective labour agreement will work together on a more stringent early retirement scheme in line with the criteria and guidelines of the TNO Heavy Work Expertise Centre. This scheme will be completed and enter into force by the end of 2026 at the latest.

Agreed on 20 July 2026,

FNV

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