

“STEERING AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITIES:
EXPERIENCES FROM THE NETHERLANDS”

The central question of this conference “how can overall state planning for university development be achieved in a system characterized by far-reaching institutional autonomy” is also hot in the Netherlands. The Netherlands are regarded as one of the early adopters of higher education reforms that intend to change the role of the state vis-à-vis the higher education institutions.

One of the explicit tasks of the government in its new role is to establish a strategic agenda that supports the higher education institutions to play its key role in the emerging knowledge society. To successfully play this role the institutional autonomy of the higher education institutions has gradually been increased. In the presentation the national agenda for higher education will briefly be presented. Moreover, the ‘observation’ of having more autonomous institutions will be relaxed.

Subsequently, the main instruments of the government to steer higher education and research will be presented – focusing on legislation, funding and negotiation arrangements. The presentation will conclude with some of the current policy questions including differentiation, excellence, relevance and egalitarianism.