



Higher professional education job market and education fund



GUIDE

SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY

A PRACTICAL OVERVIEW OF SCHEMES
AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

**Zestor was established by
social partners in higher professional education:**



UNIENFTO

AOB Algemene Onderwijsbond



This guide has been developed in collaboration with A-advies and has been prepared on behalf of social partners associated in Zestor. Apart from personal examples, this guide also contains a practical overview of various schemes and how they work. We have deliberately kept the information concise and to-the-point. We hope you can benefit from it!

It is permitted to copy (part) of the information in this report for higher professional educational purposes. In all other cases, the prior written approval of Zestor is required.

October 2016

FOREWORD

How can you make sure that you are fit and enjoying your work at any time during your career? By thinking carefully about your ‘sustainable employability’. Are you still in the right place? Are you using all of your talents? What do you need to do your work properly (or continue to do so)? What do you still want to achieve in your career?

You are responsible for your own sustainable employability. Universities of applied sciences are responsible for giving you space and providing the right facilities. This guide tells you more about applicable schemes, how they work and how you can use them.

Many opportunities

Within the university of applied sciences there are many opportunities to work on your employability. One example is the ‘sustainable employability’ scheme, which has been included in the Collective Labour Agreement for Universities of Applied Sciences (‘cao-hbo’) since 2015. Each academic year you receive an hourly budget (SE hours), which you can use for various purposes in consultation with your employer. It can be used to gain new inspiration, to develop yourself, to maintain a balance between your work and private life, etc. In addition there are various other sector-specific and national schemes to help you work on your employability.

Seize your opportunities!

Talk about possibilities with your line manager and colleagues. Talk about your ambitions, wishes and learning objectives, also when people prefer to focus on day-to-day issues. And don’t just talk about this, actually do something about it. To inspire you, six employees of various universities of applied sciences tell you how they used their SE hours. One thing is certain: they all received a huge boost in energy.

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Chairman of Zestor
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INTRODUCTION

What does sustainable employability mean?

Sustainable employability has become a familiar term and many definitions are being used. Quite often, sustainable employability is considered to be about labour force participation and older employees working longer. However, sustainable employability is a key theme at any stage of someone's life and career, and includes more: it is about vitality, work ability and skill set.

A brief explanation¹:

- *Vitality* means that you can (continue to) work flexibly, energetically, healthily and tirelessly with great perseverance
- *Work ability* is the extent to which you are physically, mentally and socially capable of working
- *Skill set* is about the specific skills you have to be able to perform your current or future work

Sustainable employability therefore is about the extent to which you want to and can continue to perform your work now and in the future. This may be with your current employer, but also with a different employer or as a self-employed person.

Example questions that say something about your sustainable employability

If you want to give yourself an idea of your own sustainable employability, these are the example questions you can ask yourself:

- Health: am I physically fit enough to work?
- Competencies (talents, knowledge and skills): do my talents match the contents of my work?
- Motivation for working: does the work match my personal interests and objectives?
- Social support: do I receive support from my line manager and colleagues while performing my work?
- Environment: do I have to perform care duties, such as informal care?

Whether you want to and can continue to work is related to the answers to these questions, among others. It is important to consider the opportunities you see or the risks to which you are subject, to continue enjoying your work both now and in the future. You should then talk to people about this.

¹ Definitions respectively by Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013, Ilmarinen, Tuomi & Seitsamo, 2005, and Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006

How can I become or remain employable in the long term?

Make sure that you, as the director of your own career, find out what you need to be or remain employable in the long term. Your employer offers several schemes and support for this.

In addition, there are several national schemes that, for example, can help you to:

- develop yourself further
- utilise your talents even more
- unburden you if you need to recover
- combine your work and your private life

The schemes have been included in this guide in a useful overview, with the addition of real-life examples from colleagues. This is to inspire you to take the initiative and talk to your line manager about shaping your sustainable employability.

Overview of schemes

Sustainable employability has various aspects. It is about your career and development, about your health – both physically and mentally – and about the balance between your work and private life. Both on a national level and in higher professional education there are several schemes that you can use to work on your sustainable employability. Below is an overview of the most important schemes. These schemes are individually explained in the following sections.

Would you like to know more about a particular scheme? Each scheme contains a reference to the location where you can find more information. Or you can visit the HRM department of your university of applied sciences.

THEME	POSSIBLY INTERESTING SCHEMES
<i>Your career and development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable employability scheme (1.1)• Livvit scheme (1.4)• Introduction scheme (1.3)• Professionalisation scheme (1.5)• Employment terms and conditions options menu (1.6)• Voluntarily accepting a lower position (1.7)• Tax relief for training (2.1)
<i>Your health (physical and mental)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable employability scheme (1.1)• Reduction in working hours (1.2)• Livvit scheme (1.4)• Schemes involving working hours and work location (2.2)
<i>Balance between your work and private life and care duties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable employability scheme (1.1)• Reduction in working hours (1.2)• Employment terms and conditions options menu (1.6)• Special leave (2.3)• Schemes involving working hours and work location (2.2)

1

RELEVANT SCHEMES IN HIGHER PROFES- SIONAL EDUCATION

*'The scheme gives you a push; it speeds
everything up.'*

1.1 HOURS TO BE USED PERSONALLY

The ‘sustainable employability’ scheme gives you the opportunity to use hours for activities which ensure that you can perform your work well, in good health and with pleasure – also in the long run – and that you can properly combine your work and private life. It’s up to you here: it’s your own responsibility to make good use of the hours. You choose what you will be spending them on.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

Employees at universities of applied sciences who are employed for 0.4 FTE or more. You are entitled to this scheme if you have already worked in higher professional education for three years over the past five years. No past employment in higher professional education? In that case you will be entitled to the Sustainable Employability hours (SE hours) after three years. So if you started working on 1 January 2013, you will start accruing hours from 1 January 2016. In the three years before you start accruing SE hours, you can use the ‘induction of new employees’ scheme (see 1.3).

HOW DOES IT WORK?

As a full-time employee in higher professional education, you receive 40 hours per year that you can spend on your own sustainable employability. If you work part-time, the number of hours is adjusted pro rata. Have you reached the state pension age minus 10 years and have you worked in higher professional education for 5 consecutive years? In that case you will receive 50 additional hours, i.e. 90 hours per year.

The following are examples of how you can spend these hours:

- Work experience outside the university of applied sciences
- Surplus work within the university of applied sciences
- Activities for your development and/or additional study leave
- Restoring balance between work and private life for a limited period of time
- Sabbatical
- Recuperation leave for a limited uninterrupted period of time
- Care duties for a limited period of time
- Activities aimed at widening your employability

Your university of applied sciences can supplement these spending purposes in consultation with the Participation Council.

SE hours *cannot* be converted into salary. The hours expire at the end of your employment. You can save them up to a maximum of 200 hours if you are a full-time employee.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about your SE hours. Do not focus on the contents of the scheme here, but have a ‘good conversation’ about it. You can address several topics: your career and career wishes, your health and the balance between your working life and private life. Agree with your employer in writing on how you will be spending your hours.

In the end it’s up to you how to exactly spend the SE hours. You do need approval from your employer if your spending purpose conflicts with the organisation’s interests. Or if you want to use the hours for regular work at the university of applied sciences, for example, to gain experience in a different position.

MORE INFORMATION

For extensive information, see Section M on *sustainable employability* of the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#). For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the HRM department of your university of applied sciences.

PROJECT BUITEN

Interested in a challenging, temporary project? Have a look on the website of ‘Project Buiten’ (Project Outside): an online platform for employees of universities of applied sciences with temporary projects at your own and other universities of applied sciences. You can use it to gain knowledge and experience or to further expand your expertise. Beyond the boundaries of your own work! ‘Project Buiten’ will start in late 2016. An increasing number of universities of applied sciences will be entering over the course of 2017.

www.projectbuiten.nl



‘As I can be there for my friend whenever it’s required, I can do my work the rest of the week with a good feeling.’

MARLOES STUIJVER

HR Consultant at Van Hall Larenstein

Marloes Stuiver, HR Consultant at Van Hall Larenstein, uses her SE hours to provide care for a limited period of time. One afternoon a week she helps her best friend, who has cancer.

‘I was already familiar with the subject of sustainable employability. This was initially work-related, because I am an HR Consultant. I regularly talk about sustainable employability with line managers, employees and my own colleagues. When my best friend became ill, I also got very close to the theme personally.’

Good balance between work and private life

‘My friend has cervical cancer and was in need of care following her operation and during the radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Joining her for visits to her GP, helping her get dressed or around the house... All the things that need to be done. During the holidays I can support her whenever I want. This is different during working weeks. As I really want to help her, I consulted my closest colleagues and our Director about using my LE budget. I am now spending the hours 1 afternoon per week for 4 to 5 weeks. I described my purpose as: care duties for a short period of time, also resulting in an improved balance between work and private life.’

Employable in the long term

‘To me, sustainable employability means: ensuring that you can continue to work well and enjoy it. I’m assuming that I will have to work until I’m seventy. That means ensuring that you remain employable in the long term. At some point the emphasis will be on your balance between work and private life or a certain care duty. At another point it might be on your own development – which is also a very good cause as far as I’m concerned!’

Who takes over?

‘Around me I have noticed that people are having difficulty thinking about ways to spend their LE budget. It definitely isn’t easy. As an instructor, you have to deal with a timetable and students. It’s quite a challenge to organise things properly in that case. To me the most important thing is discussing as a team how you will be organising things together. I can personally be absent for a morning or afternoon; I’ve made sure that a colleague can then be reached by telephone. But what if someone wants to stay away for longer? We talk about that as a team, allowing everyone to spend the hours without feeling guilty.’

Positive response

‘So far the response has only been positive. Furthermore, I can mention my own example in my role as an HR Consultant – this makes the scheme tangible. As I can really be there for my friend on the agreed afternoons, I can do my work the rest of the week with a good feeling. I won’t be spending my entire LE budget for this year on it, but just like my colleagues I will think about what else I can do.’

TIP FROM MARLOES

‘They are not just hours off. Try to consider for yourself: if I spend these hours, how will that benefit me in my work? Both now and in the future? Keeping that in the back of your mind could make it easier to choose a purpose that suits you well.’

1.2 REDUCTION IN WORKING HOURS FOR OLDER EMPLOYEES

As an older employee, you can structurally start working less (up to a maximum of 20%) using the ‘reduction in working hours for older employees’ scheme, while keeping your salary minus a personal contribution. This scheme replaces the SOP scheme, which could still be applicable to a number of employees.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

Employees who have reached the state pension age minus 10 years, who work at least 0.4 FTE and who have worked in higher professional education for 5 consecutive years.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You can choose to reduce your working hours in recognizable part-days up to a maximum of 20%, for a period of no more than 5 years. You will then pay a personal contribution on your salary for the hours that you work less, namely:

- In salary grades 1 to 7
 - 35% in the period between 10 and 5 years before the state pension age
 - 20% in the period between 5 and 0 years before the state pension age
- From salary grade 8
 - 45% in the period between 10 and 5 years before the state pension age
 - 25% in the period between 5 and 0 years before the state pension age

You may not use the hours taken through this scheme to generate other income. When making use of the reduction in working hours, you are not eligible for the additional SE hours stated under 1.1 (50 extra hours a year). After the reduction in working hours period, you are required to leave employment for at least the number of hours equal to the reduction.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about a reduction in working hours or ask for information from an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

For extensive information, see Article M-2 on *reduction in working hours for older employees* of the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#).

1.3 INTRODUCTION TRAINING FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

The ‘introduction training for new employees’ scheme is meant to support the proper introduction of new colleagues.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

New employees and the people who train them.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Your employer makes arrangements about the introduction of new employees with the Participation Council of the university of applied sciences. The idea is that new employees will be given adequate introduction training over a period of a maximum of 3 years. Are you training a new employee? In that case you will be facilitated in terms of time. If you are a starting teacher, you will in any case be given the opportunity to obtain basic qualifications Didactic Skills, provided you use your professionalisation basic entitlement for this (see 1.5).

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about introduction or contact an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

The above information can be found in Article M-1-c on *introduction training for new employees* of the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#). For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the HRM department of your university of applied sciences.

MISSION FLYING START

To prevent starting instructors from leaving the education sector within a short period of time and to enhance the professionalisation of this group of instructors, the Mission Flying Start project was set up.

Are you involved in the recruitment, selection and/or support of new instructors and would you like to improve the approach to this? In that case you can join our Mission: **Flying Start**.

www.zestor.nl/missievliegendestart



AART VAN DEN DOOL

Instructor in Chemical Technology, Biobased and Entrepreneurship at Avans University of Applied Sciences

‘The SE scheme has accelerated themes that are important to me.’

Aart van den Dool, Instructor in Chemical Technology, Biobased and Entrepreneurship at Avans, makes full use of his SE hours. Last academic year he reserved hours for his cycling trip to work several times within the context of his vitality, and for knowledge development.

‘It’s forty hours you can spend on something that’s all for yourself, that you control and that benefits your functioning – I think it’s fantastic! When the scheme was announced through our coordinators and the Board, I immediately started thinking about how I wanted to use it. There are so many work processes and impulses in day-to-day life at a university of applied sciences. The SE hours give you room to pay special attention to your priorities, spearheads and qualities.’

42 kilometres on a racing bike

‘I believe that vitality, part of sustainable employment, is highly important. Feeling fit, having the energy to get everything you can from things. As it happens I have a racing bike, which I could use to cycle to work. But it’s 42 kilometres from Gorkum to Breda, so you really need to reserve 2 hours (one-way) for that in your timetable and daily routine. Last academic year I used the SE hours for this, and I’m thankful for that. Now I still cycle to work on a regular basis! The scheme gives you a push, it speeds everything up.’

Getting to know more

‘Apart from my instructorship, I have set up MovingTalent together with a colleague from HRM. This is an inspirational programme at Avans that supports employees in optimising the use of their talents and leadership at work. In that context I wanted to get to know more about team development. That is why I used the remaining SE hours last academic year to read up on that. This in turn led me to attend a wonderful Master Class on Team Experience Learning, facilitated by Avans.’

SE café

‘Working on your sustainable employability dovetails with what we do in our MovingTalent programme. We are now also organising an SE café. The focus is wide: from where you stand in society to your work and private life. The café provides room for reflecting on this through discussions or a game. The result is that people ultimately start acting themselves. Employees who recently joined and therefore do not yet receive any SE hours are also welcome!’

Just do it

‘To be fair: in practice, sustainable employability is one of many things. But our interview cycle structurally focuses on this; it is a fixed subject during the appraisal interviews. In the end you shouldn’t just talk about it, but just do it.’

TIP FROM AART

‘Use your creativity to come up with five things that inspire you. Then pick one on which you will be spending your SE hours. (And try to do the other four anyway using different means!)’

1.4 FACILITIES REGARDING HEALTH AND SICKNESS ABSENCE

At almost all universities of applied sciences you can use the employer insurance for work-related care (Livvit). This is free in most cases. It is a package of services and facilities specifically tailored to higher professional education, to improve your health and to prevent and shorten sickness absence.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

All employees at universities of applied sciences who use the Livvit scheme.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The opportunities provided by the Livvit scheme are subdivided into mental, physical and multidisciplinary training sessions, workshops and other care.

Examples are:

- Coaching
- Career surveys
- Lifestyle training
- Occupational consultancy
- Physiotherapy
- Taxi transport

You can sometimes use this scheme in combination with your SE hours.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Ask your own HRM department if your university of applied sciences uses the Livvit scheme and discuss this with them.

MORE INFORMATION

At www.arbocatalogushbo.nl under *resources* you can find the various opportunities provided by this scheme.

WORK AND BALANCE

Everybody sometimes experiences complaints related to work. Just think about it for a minute! Finding and keeping a balance requires regular checks. The website www.werkendebalans.nl has been developed specially for employees at universities of applied sciences. The site includes information about work pressure, a work pressure test and suggestions for solutions.

Visit [werkendebalans.nl](http://www.werkendebalans.nl) and find out more about your situation.

1.5 HOURS FOR YOUR PROFESSIONALISATION

As an employee in higher professional education you can participate in professionalisation activities. Each year you receive a basic entitlement in hours to maintain your professional expertise, for example, to visit conferences or to read up on professional literature (basic entitlement). To follow training courses and for informal learning, time can be freed up in your timetable.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

The professionalisation basic entitlement applies to everybody who works 0.1 FTE or more.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The professionalisation basic entitlement means that you have a number of hours available each year to maintain your own professional expertise. You receive exemption for these hours in your annual assignment. If you work 0.4 FTE or more, you receive 40 hours per year. If you work less, you receive the hours pro rata:

- From 0.1 FTE: 10 hours
- From 0.2 FTE: 20 hours
- From 0.3 FTE: 30 hours

You can decide for yourself how you wish to make use of the hours. You discuss it with your line manager and you must account for the use of the hours.

Apart from this basic entitlement, the number of hours of an official study load compensated by your employer is defined. Your employer draws up a professionalisation plan for the university of applied sciences. Study programmes that form part of the professionalisation plan will be facilitated for 75% of the official study load by the employer. Study programmes that do not form part of the professionalisation plan will be facilitated for 25% of the official study load. You also receive exemption for these hours in your annual assignment, provided that you and your line manager have agreed on this in writing.

In consultation between you and your line manager, you may be asked to use hours from your basic entitlement for certain extensive programmes, e.g. a Master's programme. In that case, these hours will be subtracted from the hours facilitated based on the 75% or 25% scheme.

Professionalisation activities that are mandatory are compensated fully in time and pay.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about your professionalisation or ask for information from an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

For extensive information, see Section O on *professionalisation of the cao-hbo 2016-2017*.



RONALD VAN OLDEREN

Instructor in Project Management and Event Marketing at NHTV

*'Have a look inside a different organisation.
You will always learn from it.'*

Ronald van Olderen, Instructor in Project Management and Event Marketing at NHTV, used SE hours for a secondment with the Municipality and, at the time of the interview, for the project organisation of 3FM Serious Request Breda.

‘The over-50s at our universities of applied sciences used to receive so-called senior hours. Instead of these, everybody who has worked somewhere for three years now receives hours in which you can work on your sustainable employability. These hours are stated in your Annual Work Plan. It is important to use them. And what’s even more important: you really benefit from it, as I found out myself.’

Secondment

‘In 2014 NHTV already wanted to focus more on vitality and employability. A colleague and I then carried out a pilot in the shape of a secondment project. We were given hours to have a look inside another organisation. I personally went to the Events department of the Municipality of Breda 2 days a week for 20 weeks. This was partly for shadowing purposes and to take up a concrete project (‘city dressing’). In addition I analysed the back-office of their events organisation, shared my own knowledge and issued a recommendation.’

Inspiring

‘It was a highly inspiring period: you come into contact with a different culture, you get to know a lot of new people. It also strengthened

the bond between the Municipality and our university of applied sciences. At the same time it was a challenge to combine two workplaces. You’re switching a lot; you have to wear different hats. One fun fact: municipal officers also have shadowing days themselves now. One of them is doing an internship at NHTV.’

Unique opportunity

‘Late last year, a position became vacant at 3FM Serious Request Breda. The Municipality asked our university of applied sciences who could join their project organisation for this major event. They were looking for a link between the Municipality and educational institutions. I applied and got the position. This is a unique opportunity to experience such a great event from nearby. I’m also using my practical experience directly in my lectures and I’m incorporating it in my current book *The Event as a Strategic Marketing Instrument*. I started in January; I formally have hours for it from May 2016 until the first week of January 2017. This is also two days a week.’

From personal wellbeing to professional expertise

‘Sustainable employability has several facets in my view. It can be about your personal development and wellbeing. It can also be more related to the organisation and keeping your professional expertise up to date. I can see these different facets when I look at colleagues: they opt for informal care or hours for their children or additional training. I would like to advise everyone to use the SE budget. Personally I find it very motivating to have a look inside other organisations. You will always learn from it. If you’re going away for a prolonged period of time, however, you sometimes have to make choices and you may, for example, not be able to perform certain tasks for a year.’

TIP FROM RONALD

‘When spending your LE hours, you should really do it for yourself. Look for a company that suits you or make your own choices regarding your personal situation. Will you be temporarily combining two workplaces? In that case, a good balance is an additional focus area.’

1.6 EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS OPTIONS MENU

With the employment terms and conditions options menu, you can use your employment terms and conditions (source) as a means of exchange for other employment terms and conditions that suit your situation (target). Various employment conditions can be used as source and target, both in time and money. However, these may differ from one university of applied sciences to the next.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

All employees in higher professional education. If you are in fixed-term employment, the duration of the temporary employment will be taken into account.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You can use the employment terms and conditions options menu to create a number of customised employment conditions. The sources and targets may differ between universities of applied sciences. Your employer makes a decision regarding the submitted requests.

Examples of what you can use as source are:

- The available hour's holiday over and above the statutory number of days'/hours' holiday and time off, up to a maximum of 90 hours a year or 45 hours a year if you opt for a target in money
- One-off payments included in the Collective Labour Agreement
- The regular year-end bonus
- Salary

You can exchange these sources, for example, for the following targets in time:

- Sabbatical
- Extension of parental leave
- Study leave for non-job-related training
- Additional hours' leave, up to a maximum of 45 hours a year

Or you can exchange the sources, for example, for the following targets in money:

- Additional income during parental leave
- Childcare personal contribution
- Study allowance for non-job-related training
- Pension accrual

For the targets in money, the maximum equivalent value is 45 hours a year.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about the employment conditions options menu or ask for information from an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

For extensive information, see Article L on the *employment conditions options menu* of the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#).

1.7 VOLUNTARILY ACCEPTING A LOWER POSITION

You can choose to voluntarily move back to a lower position. This may help you to remain employable, as this other position could, for example, reduce work pressure or require less responsibility. It may also allow you to work in a new area of expertise or to fulfil a different role within the organisation.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

Employees in higher professional education who are at least 55 years old.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Are you at least 55 years old and are you voluntarily accepting a less highly-paid position? In that case, you can continue to accrue the pension associated with your previous position at your own request. The pension contribution for the difference between the less highly-paid position and the former position will then be allocated between you and your employer in the usual manner.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about your wishes to voluntarily accept a lower position or contact an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

The above information can be found in Article T-7 on *demotion* in the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#). For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the HRM department of your university of applied sciences.

BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

Everyone in higher professional education is being asked to think about questions such as: Am I still in the right place? Am I making use of all my talents? What do I need to do my work properly? To help you on your way, the website '[Kijk eens om je heen](#)' (Broaden your horizons) contains sources of inspiration for low-threshold, short-term activities.

www.zestor.nl/kijkeensomjeheen



MIRANDA KAMP

Coordinator and Instructor in Tourism Management at Inholland University of Applied Sciences

'I definitely managed to recharge thanks to the SE hours.'

Last academic year, Miranda Kamp, Coordinator and Instructor in Tourism Management at Inholland University of Applied Sciences, spent her SE hours on a coaching programme and on participating in the Selection Committee for a scholarship.

‘Everybody at the university of applied sciences has heard of the SE hours, through HRM or the team supporter, but for many it remains a somewhat abstract concept. That also applied to me. You know how many hours are available, but how can you actually spend them and how do you arrange and register that? With help from our team supporter and team leader, things were quickly arranged for me. But spending the hours still is uncommon at our department.’

Support

‘The thing I remember most from the first information sessions was the focus on matters such as informal care and dropout prevention. At the time I thought: “That’s not an issue at all for me.” Until my brother suddenly died in June 2015. I continued to work, but things got increasingly difficult for me. I work in Diemen-Zuid, where you regularly have to deal with students who have problems (at home). It was difficult for me to support them properly. My own emotions were overwhelming. In the autumn of 2015 I therefore indicated that I wanted support.’

Focus on work and private life

‘My manager had already mentioned the Livvit coaching programmes to me. When a colleague told me that they had helped her a lot, I opened up to them as well. I had a total of 5 coaching sessions of 1.5 hours. I had conversations with a very nice lady, focusing both on work and private life. Regarding work: you really are a kind of focal point as an instructor. If you’re having a bad day, you can’t simply leave. It gave me real reference points to handle this properly.’

Great opportunity

‘In the end I registered a total of 16 SE hours for the coaching, including the intake, the associated forms and preparation time. At our work you register those hours on a Work and Leave Card. As I have a 4-day working week, I have 32 SE hours available each academic year. For the remaining hours, I came across a great opportunity early this year: as a former scholarship student, I was approached for the Selection Committee of ‘VSBfonds Beurs’. This is a scholarship to study or conduct research abroad for graduates from a university or a university of applied sciences.’

Positive energy

‘In March my timetable was freed up for two full days for the selection interviews. The travel time, reading up on all the files – quite a lot of reading – an opening session and evaluation afterwards were added to this. It’s not something you do in between just like that. The SE hours therefore came in very handy. And it gave me so much positive energy! At the university of applied sciences you work hard to guide your students to the finish line. Now I was hearing about all the great plans the recent graduates had.’

TIP FROM MIRANDA

‘The SE hours are there. Work pressure is often high. But don’t leave them unused! Use them for new inspiration and energy; you will notice immediately in your daily work. At least make a conscious choice; you can also save up the hours for an instructor’s internship, like some of my colleagues are doing.’

2

NATIONAL SCHEMES

'Remaining employable in the long term is something you do yourself.'

2.1 TAX RELIEF FOR TRAINING

If you are studying, you are eligible for tax relief for your training costs.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

All employees in higher professional education who incur costs for a personal study.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

If you are following a study or training aimed at a (future) profession, you can deduct certain costs for this.

Are you incurring study costs without student finance? In that case you will pay a personal contribution of € 250. Starting at this threshold, the costs not reimbursed by others, such as your employer, are tax-deductible up to a maximum of € 15,000. Examples of this are costs for:

- School fees, course fees, tuition fees, exam fees
- Teaching materials required by the educational institution, for example, books, readers and software (computer equipment is non-deductible)
- Protective equipment required by the educational institution
- EVC procedures (recognition of competencies obtained)
- Depreciation of long-lasting goods that you have to buy especially for your study or training
- Promotion costs; the costs for publication and the costs for the prescribed clothing for the doctoral candidate and the seconds during a doctoral thesis defence ceremony

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

More information about this scheme and how you can use it can be found on the site of the [Dutch Tax and Customs Administration](#).



ESTHER KAPPERT

Instructor of Dutch and Research at Arnhem and Nijmegen University of Applied Sciences (HAN)

'Getting away from the daily grind together for a year. It took away my restlessness, gave me confidence and new energy for my work.'

Esther Kappert, Instructor of Dutch and Research at HAN, had a dream together with her wife: living abroad for a while. And really in a 'different world' as well. She lived with her family in Laos for a year. It broadened her horizons and gave her new energy.

'Our children were 4, 2.5 and over six months old when we left. When the last one had been born, it was time to live our dream. Living in another climate, in another world for a while. Our focus was on South-East Asia. From the Netherlands, we initially applied for real jobs, but that actually meant that we both would have to work full-time. In Vientiane, the capital of Laos, we could start working as volunteers and we would have more time for our family. We preferred that.'

Away for a year

'When we left in 2015, we knew how long we wanted to go: one year. We also arranged everything for a year at the time. I would keep my job at HAN; my wife handed in her notice. Initially I wanted to take unpaid extraordinary leave, but eventually I made use of (partially unpaid) parental leave for our three children together.'

Volunteer work

'We lived in Vientiane for seven months and worked at a local Lao school as volunteers. I even provided English and sports lessons. My wife also taught English and later on she could expand on this by teaching the kindergarten

teachers. All three of our children went to kindergarten at the same school. We really jumped into life there. It was a fascinating experience, as everything is different from here. Including the rats at home!'

Different dynamics

'Around December we decided that we wanted to experience even more of the country. Partly because the transition was quite difficult for our eldest, who had already been to school briefly in the Netherlands. Personally we also wanted to see more, so we went looking for an organisation where we could do volunteer work. We ended up at an organisation in the south and found a house there as well. Unfortunately we were unable to carry out any work there due to stricter government regulations. This was a big contrast to Vientiane, where we had work and sports. We did nothing for four months. It gives you completely different dynamics in the family and the experience as a whole.'

Full of energy again

'Getting away from the daily grind together for a year, in a beautiful country. An empty head, no stress. Nothing to plan, living from day to day. It puts you right back at your core. I had agreed with my line manager that we really wouldn't have contact for a year. We managed that as well. I like my job, I'm full of energy again when I go. It also gave me time to think about what else I could do at HAN. Our time in Laos took away my unrest for the years to come. This was something I had been wanting to do since my student years. It also gives you lots of confidence: doing what you feel you have to do. It was the best present we could have given ourselves!'

TIP FROM ESTHER

'Do you want to get away from it all? Look for a suitable arrangement and discuss it. Don't focus blindly on that Ferrari; we wouldn't have minded going for eight years, but it turned into one year. Take what you can get. Every day was a present.'

2.2 SCHEMES INVOLVING WORKING HOURS AND WORK LOCATION

In consultation with your employer you can work more, less, at home or at different times.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

Employees who work for an organisation with at least 10 employees and who have been there for at least six months.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You can submit a written request to your employer for:

- Working more or fewer hours
- Working at different times
- Working from home or from a different location

Your request can only be rejected for important reasons. Your employer should do so in writing. If your request is rejected, you will have to wait for at least 1 year before you can submit a new request.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about your working hours and/or work location or ask for information from an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

More information can be found on the site of the [Dutch Government](#).

2.3 SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM SPECIAL LEAVE

In various situations your employer may grant you short-term or long-term special leave, often on a legal basis. In many cases this leave is paid.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS?

All employees in higher professional education.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

In various situations you can request special leave from your employer, e.g. for:

- Parental leave
- Illness and necessary care for close relatives
- Calamities

Your employer may set certain conditions for long-term special leave.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE SCHEME

Talk to your line manager about special leave or ask for information from an HRM employee.

MORE INFORMATION

For extensive information, see Section J on *work, leave and special leave* of the [cao-hbo 2016-2017](#).



ROB BONGAERTS

Instructor in various areas of tourism at NHTV

‘Seeing what happens in practice really is a must if you provide higher professional education.’

Rob Bongaerts, Instructor in various areas of tourism at NHTV, used his SE hours for an instructor's internship in professional practice. He joined tour operator TUI for a week. This was a win-win situation for both parties.

'In mid-August, during the holiday period at NHTV, I used my SE hours to do an internship at TUI for four days. Our HR department focuses on instructor's internships; I indicated that I was open to that. After contacting TUI, we compiled a weekly programme together. I had a look around at various departments, attended meetings, talked to a lot of people. It gave me a good impression of what things are like right now in tour operating.'

Mutual benefit

'In my opinion, seeing what happens in practice really is a must if you teach at a higher professional education programme with a practical approach. By only walking around in your school building, you're less aware of all the changes in the sector. We do stay abreast of all the latest developments through our own interns, but actually joining in the work really broadens your insights. A company like that also benefits from this: you're getting someone in with a fresh view and lots of knowledge. And

they have a vested interest in our programmes being up to date. We both enjoyed it. I will be going back once again to provide feedback on my experiences and to share the theoretical ideas our research group has for TUI.'

Consciously choosing your targets

'At NHTV we work with Annual Work Plans. The SE hours are a component of such a plan. At the start of the academic year my line manager asks me if I already have ideas about how I want to spend my SE hours. I believe you really have to think about that; you can spend them on all kinds of things. To me, sustainable employability is about being happy in your work for a prolonged period of time. On the one hand, this is related to staying up to date in your area of expertise and, on the other hand, to a good balance between work and private life. You can also spend hours on that.'

Thinking about what to do next

'When I left TUI, my first thought was: "Everybody should really be doing this!" I will definitely be sharing my new insights and experiences in the team. Previously I had used hours to go to a conference in the UK. I can imagine that this year I will also be taking some SE hours for my father, who is ill. And otherwise I would like to save them up.'

TIP FROM ROB

'Opt for an exchange visit. It's a good way to make new contacts and for networking. But obviously it's primarily about staying up to date. You learn a lot; it's a win-win situation for both the university of applied sciences and professional practice.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following resources were used to compile this guide:

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