



## The FlexScan

### Promising Practice

*Implemented by:*

Centre for Innovation of Education and Training (CINOP)

*Where:*

The Kingdom of the Netherlands

*Status:*

Launched in July 2022

*Summary:*

CINOP has developed a widely applicable tool to measure and improve the inclusivity of education in TVET institutes around the world.

## Overview

With a history of more than 35 years, CINOP has been an expert in learning, training and skills development for decades. It is a leading strategic partner in learning with impact and contributes its international expertise and sound research activities to strengthening systems and stakeholders of technical and vocational education and training.

## Description

### The FlexScan

The FlexScan has been developed in the context of the Learning Outcomes experiments. Through these experiments, the aim is to investigate how education can become more flexible. The assumption is that making education more flexible for a more diversified target audience, particularly those who are employed, will lead to increased participation of working individuals in education and the issuance of more diplomas or formal recognition of their learning. This is necessary to achieve the government's goal of (re-)educating a larger portion of the workforce at a higher level. A better offer in flexible part-time education should make it possible to develop more customized learning experiences, aligning with the student's prior education, work experience, workplace and interests.

### Making education more flexible

The objective of making education more flexible is clear. However, before the development of the FlexScan, there was no instrument that assessed the flexibility of education. Therefore, HAN University of Applied Sciences and CINOP collaborated to develop an instrument that can assess the flexibility of part-time programmes within the framework of the Learning Outcomes experiments.

### Peer review and pilot testing

The FlexScan has been designed based on scientific literature, legislation and policies. A sounding board group, consisting of content experts from HAN, CINOP and the Expertise Centre handicap + study, provided feedback throughout the process regarding the content, structure and wording of the FlexScan. Additionally, experts in flexible learning pathways were consulted multiple times. Furthermore, the FlexScan underwent extensive pilot testing at HAN and at AVANS, NHL, Saxion and Windesheim.

## Objectives

### A practical solution for flexible TVET delivery

The FlexScan provides a practical solution for educational TVET institutions seeking to make well-informed decisions about more flexible and tailored education delivery. This highly adaptive tool offers a comprehensive assessment of the current educational landscape, aspirations, vision and future strategies related to flexibility.

Due to its highly adaptive nature, the FlexScan methodology lends itself particularly well for tailor-made analyses and strategy development. Recently, the FlexScan has been customized to fit the context of inclusive education in Kenya. The tool was tailored to address the specific requirements of Kenyan TVET institutes aiming to enhance their support for learners with special needs.

Applicable at team, sector and organizational levels, the FlexScan acts as a visual guide, facilitating constructive conversations and providing practical insights into the optimal degree of flexibility. Additionally, it serves as a valuable resource for the development and implementation of effective flexibilization strategies.

Examining seven key aspects — **Information Provision & Orientation, Intake, Educational Learning Environment, Professionals, Assessment & Evaluation, Diplomas & Certificates,** and **Business Operations** — the FlexScan addresses nuanced elements such as time, place, design, involvement, and role distribution.

The FlexScan has been implemented as a national monitor for flexible education in the Kingdom of the Netherlands since 2018. In that way, it provides a country-wide benchmark for the flexibilization efforts of Dutch TVET institutes. In total, the FlexScan has helped a multitude of TVET colleges in the country work towards modular education possibilities, vision and strategy development for a flexible student journey, inclusive education practices and new quality frameworks, among others.

The FlexScan helps TVET institutes answer the following questions:

- What is the ambition of the school and the programme regarding flexible education?
- **Shared understanding of flexibility:** Does the flexibility experienced by teachers, students, and the professional field align with the institution's and programme's ambitions?
- **Exploration of the next steps:** What is an appropriate route or approach to make education more manageable and flexible?
- How can you align with long-term education innovation through policy based on the national education strategy? Which development scenario of the FlexScan is most suitable for personalized intake and personalized (catch-up) routes? How can you address transition issues effectively through the intake process?
- **The change question:** How do you transition from the current situation to the desired one? How do you organize the renovation while the store is open?

## Outcomes and impact

The FlexScan supports:

- Enhanced expertise within the TVET institute on the topics of flexible education and modular education;
- A common approach for the re-design of education programmes for more flexible learning pathways;
- Agreements on educational content and quality criteria for the renewed education design following the student journey; and
- A first design, including a roadmap to the end-design, of the education innovation.

*If I receive a question about flexibilization now, it helps that I can delve deeper using the themes and scenarios from the FlexScan: what exactly is meant? Because the tool follows the student journey, it immediately provides a clear understanding of the support needed to make more flexible education possible.*

Fenna van der Burgt,  
Educational Expert and Policy  
Advisor at ArtEZ

*In collaboration with CINOP, we have gained a clearer understanding of our ambitions and the shift from fixed offerings to learning pathways and modular education.*

Simone Schoonhoven,  
ROC Friese Poort

*The FlexScan from CINOP has greatly assisted the five collaborating Johan Cruyff Colleges in formulating a widely supported starting position for the development of our new flexible education model.*

Martijn Loppersum,  
Team Manager,  
JCC Noorderpoort

## Challenges

The FlexScan is a tool designed to assess areas where inclusivity can be enhanced and determine their priority for improvement. It is then used for evaluation purposes. Implementation of the tool shows that it is important to:

- Ensure there is a budget allocated for actual improvements.
- Confirm that participating institutes and their teams are sufficiently familiar with flexible education; otherwise, the scan may not yield meaningful results.
- Customize the scan to align effectively with the local context.

## Insights

No matter how widespread the call for flexibility is, for many educational institutions, putting this into practice remains a challenging task. This is

especially true when considering the increasing diversity within the target audience of students and adult learners. Factors such as socio-cultural differences, previous work experiences, personal learning strategies, physical or mental constraints, home situations, etc., all contribute to the complexity. The likelihood of successfully taking steps in this direction significantly increases when all stakeholders share a common understanding of why and what flexible education should achieve, but most importantly how it should be achieved.

## Next steps

Flexibilization of education remains high on the education policy agenda to better tailor the education system to the needs of the learners and the respective labour markets. CINOP aims to adapt and contextualize the tool for a wider international target group.

### Learn more

**Epke Vogel**, Senior TVET Consultant and UNEVOC Centre Coordinator, Centre for Innovation of Education and Training (CINOP), helped to compile this document.

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To learn more about FlexScan, visit:

<https://cinop.nl/en/publications/the-flexscan>

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