

## **Press release:**

*ROA publishes new report on impact of Covid-19 on labour market opportunities of VET graduates*

### **Labour market opportunities of VET graduates quickly restored after easing Covid-19 measures**

VET graduates who obtained their diploma between 2017 and 2019 were hit hard by the Covid-19 measures in 2020. The youngest cohort, graduating in 2019, was hit harder during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to older and more experienced cohorts in terms of labour market opportunities, but clearly caught up with the previous two cohorts during the year 2021. The negative impact due to the Covid-19 pandemic is thus mainly a short-term effect and does not seem to be visible in the medium term. Government measures to protect job opportunities as well as the prevailing severe tightness in the Dutch labour market have helped to offset the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on recent VET graduates. These are the main findings of a new study by Maastricht University's Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA).

### **Good match between training and labour market protects against job loss**

The study shows that a good match between the education followed and labour market protected against job loss during the Covid-19 pandemic. VET graduates who indicated that their education gave them a good basis to start in the labour market or who reported pre-Covid-19 a good match between the education followed and their job -both in terms of level and direction- were less affected by the economic hard times due to the Covid-19 pandemic: they lost significantly less of their jobs due to this pandemic.

### **VET graduates from school year 2018-2019**

The study further shows that young people with a diploma at levels 1 and 2, those with completed studies in a sector hit harder by the Covid-19 measures, as well as those with a non-western migration background, were more likely to lose their jobs than their fellow graduates. This applies to all VET graduates, who graduated between 2017 and 2019, but mainly to the most recent VET graduates, who graduated in 2019, a few months before the pandemic outbreak. Relative to older cohorts, it appears that VET graduates from school year 2018-2019 were more likely to have temporary contracts and lower hourly wages during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, it took these VET graduates a relatively long time to find their first job, and it appears that they were more often re-enrolled in education one year after graduation (year 2020-2021).

### **Method**

The study was conducted using survey data on secondary vocational education school leavers who graduated in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 or 2018-2019 and were surveyed a year and a half later. Their data is linked to microdata files on employment and wages from CBS. We compare the 2018-2019 cohort that entered the labour market at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic with the remaining cohorts that had been in the labour market for some time when the Covid-19 pandemic started.

You can download the full report (in Dutch) [here](#)