

Flexibility in national examinations: The Dutch experience.

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In the Netherlands the leaving examination for secondary school is in two parts: a school examination arranged by the schools themselves and a national examination produced by Cito. The final grade in each subject is calculated by combining the marks for the school and the national examination.

Due to a growing autonomy of schools and a turn towards a more tailor-made, student-centred educational approach, politics and schools have been urging for a more flexible system of national examinations.

In this presentation I will first give an overview of the various, new types of examinations that Cito has developed to meet the need for more flexibility. Next, I will go into the consequences of flexible examinations for test development, test administration, school organisation and security. Finally, I will conclude with a) the overall reactions from students, teachers and school management to this new system of examination and b) plans for further development.