



APNet Statement concerning the proposed budget cuts in higher education

July 2024 – APNet

APNet is highly concerned with the budget cuts to higher education proposed by the incoming government. We are particularly alarmed by the serious impact these cuts will have on assistant professors. Several universities have already announced the cancellation of incentive grants, previously funded by the sector plan. This decision not only affects future incentive grants, but also jeopardizes those awarded this year, leaving many assistant professors in uncertainty about promised funding. Assistant professors are in the process of setting up new research lines for innovative and cutting-edge research. Being most vulnerable on many accounts such as fewer resources compared to more senior academic staff, such funding as the incentive grants is crucial for protecting the intellectual innovation of assistant professors and thus necessary to maintain academic excellence. The government's failure to live up to its commitment to support assistant professors in these efforts is clear.

Universities of the Netherlands (UvA) also warn in their 'brandbrief' to the government that around 1,200 assistant professors and university lecturers could lose their jobs if the budget cuts are implemented. Many universities have also announced hiring freezes. In addition to the immense economic uncertainty for our academic and teaching staff, this loss will disproportionately affect assistant professors. The potential hiring freezes and layoffs will intensify the already existing gap in support and teaching staff, a burden likely to be shouldered by assistant professors who already carry a heavy teaching load. The proposed budget cuts will dramatically increase work pressure and job insecurity among assistant professors, with serious implications for the quality of education and the international competitiveness of our institutions.

APNet urges the government to reconsider these proposed budget cuts to prevent lasting damage to the higher education sector. We urge the government to maintain its investment in research and education, to support our assistant professors, to maintain our high quality of research and teaching, and to ensure that the Netherlands remains a leader in global academia.