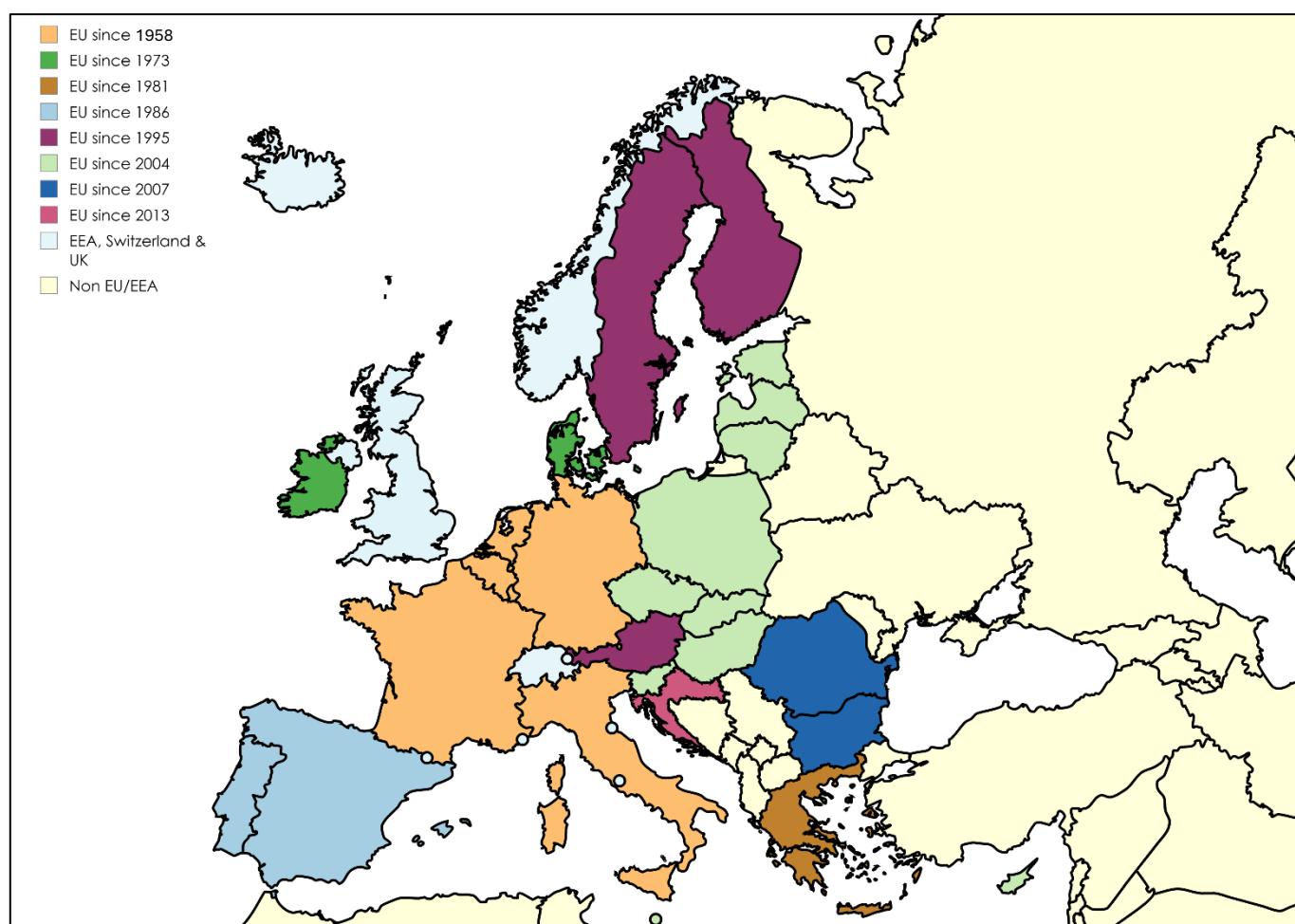


Council of European Dentists

MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

The Netherlands





The Netherlands



In the EU/EEA since	1958
Population (2025)	18 044 027
GDP PPP per capita (2024)	€ 53 221
Currency	Euro € (EUR)
Official language	Dutch
The Netherlands follows a decentralised health system and universal health coverage principles. 99.9% of the population are entitled to statutory health insurance. The benefits package is negotiated between private insurers and private providers. The mixed model of funding is divided between curative care, long-term care, preventative and social care. A very limited part of oral healthcare is included in the basic benefits package, namely dental care to children below the age of 18 years, surgical dental care and removable dentures for adults, and special dental care for patients with severe developmental disorders or abnormalities of the mouth. Voluntary health insurance for oral health care is widely purchased.	
Number of dentists (active, 2025)	9 555
(Active) dentist to population ratio (<i>per 100 000 inhab</i>)	53.0
Members of the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT (2025)	11 144 (with 8 167 active dentists, 518 active specialists and 2 459 inactive members)
The Netherlands officially recognises two dental specialties: orthodontics and oral maxillofacial surgery. The categories of “differentiations” hold a separate status, referring to postgraduate specialties. Twelve categories are recognized by the Royal Dutch Dental Association. The dental team is commonly composed of employed dental hygienists, dental and (perio-)prevention assistants, as well as dental prosthetists and dental technicians.	

Date of last revision: 23 June 2026

Government and healthcare in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. There are 12 provinces and 342 municipalities. There is substantial government decentralisation, especially in education, transport and health.

The Dutch Parliament consists of the House of Representatives or *Tweede Kamer* (150 members, elected for four years by direct universal suffrage) and the Senate or *Eerste Kamer* (75 members, elected by the members of the Provincial Councils).

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for planning, steering and regulating the health system. Strong autonomy however remains in the hands of private health insurers and private providers, through the principle of self-regulation. Policies governing healthcare are developed through a multistakeholder decision-making process. Decisions are therefore taken conjointly by the Ministry of Health, the health workforce and patient organisations.

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	10% 2025	OECD
% of this covered by government & SHI	83% 2025	OECD
% of dental care costs covered under the public system	33% 2023	OECD

Municipalities play an important role in the organisation of public health, social support, and youth care. The planning, purchasing, and financing of care under the Health Insurance Act are however, primarily determined by private health insurers, guided by national frameworks. Health insurers and healthcare providers negotiate the price, quality, and availability of this care. This applies to a lesser extent to oral healthcare, as most dental care for adults falls outside the basic health insurance package.

Healthcare is based on a strong health insurance system and universal coverage. Nearly all Dutch residents (99.9%) are entitled to healthcare through statutory private health insurance (*basisverzekering*), with freedom of choice between health insurance plans under the Health Insurance Act (*Zorgverzekeringswet, Zvw*).

Healthcare is covered by means of a basic package of services, with different premiums depending on the chosen plan. Services are then delivered by private healthcare providers. The insurance packages are offered by several competing private health insurers.

Healthcare in the Netherlands is financed through a mixed system. Curative care is covered under the Health Insurance Act (*Zorgverzekeringswet, Zvw*), which is funded through a combination of community-rated premiums paid to private health insurers, income-related contributions, and government contributions.

Long-term care is covered under the Long-term Care Act (Wet langdurige zorg, Wlz), which is financed mainly through income-related social insurance contributions, supplemented by government funding and income-dependent co-payments. Public health, prevention, and social care are primarily financed through general taxation and administered by municipalities under the Public Health Act and the Social Support Act (Wmo 2015).

Children under 18 have premiums covered by the Government.

Voluntary health insurance is widely purchased in the Netherlands to cover for oral health care costs. According to the information hub Vektis, an estimated 77% of adults have purchased voluntary health insurance for oral health treatments.

Referral is often required between practitioners for services outside primary care, including hospital referral. Referral is not needed for consulting a general dentist or dental hygienist.

Adults are not entitled to oral health care under the public health system. However, some limited exceptions exist, including in the case of surgical procedures, removable full dentures and special dental care for targeted diseases.

Children under 18, on the other hand, are entitled some dental care under the basic insurance plan. This includes annual check-ups, removal of tartar, fluoride treatments, periodontal and endodontic treatments, restorative treatments and fillings, and some surgical treatments.

Dental care accounted for 6% of all out-of-pocket payments in 2024.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

To enter dental school, a student needs a Dutch VWO diploma (secondary education) with physics, chemistry and biology and no entry examination. There is no vocational entry, such as from a priori qualification as dental auxiliary for example.

Admission to dentistry (Tandheelkunde) is highly selective and regulated through a numerus fixus system (*specific to The Netherlands and similar to a numerus clausus*). Candidates apply through Studielink. The admission process usually begins in October of the previous year and ends in January. Since 2025, the selection process is entirely randomised and is carried out through an unweighted lottery organised by universities. Randomly selected students receive an offer through Studielink and have a two-week delay to accept. There are no entry exams or interviews.

The annual number of study places is determined by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in consultation with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and was set at 270 dental students for 2025-2026 (for the number of admission places for each dental school, please refer to the information at the bottom of this chapter).

Year of data	2025
Number of schools	3
Student intake	270
Number of graduates a year	236
Gender balance (% of female students)	69%
Duration of studies (in years)	6

Dental studies currently last 6 years in the Netherlands and are divided into a bachelor's degree lasting 3 years (BSc Tandheelkunde) and a master's degree lasting 3 years (MSc Tandheelkunde).

Three dental schools offer undergraduate dental courses in the Netherlands, including Radboud University in Nijmegen, the University of Groningen and the Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam (ACTA, a joint venture between the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Amsterdam and the Faculty of Dentistry of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). All three universities are public.

All dental undergraduate programmes are taught in Dutch.

Registration

After graduation, students obtain the title of *Tandarts* (dentist) when registering under the National Health Register, the BIG-register (*Beroepen in de Individuele Gezondheidszorg or Individual Healthcare Professions Act (IHPA)*), under the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Registration under BIG is mandatory for all dentists.

Membership of the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT, is not mandatory.

Cost of registration for 5-year period	85 €
Yearly membership fee to KNMT	1 296 €

Once registered, dental professionals may use the protected professional title and independently practice as a general dentist. The title is legally protected. Its use without registration is punishable by law.

The BIG register verifies possession of an accredited Dutch diploma or a recognised foreign qualification (automatic EU recognition) and the individual's professional and legal standing. Registration must be renewed every five years, contingent on proof of recent practice.

The BIG register is also responsible with quality oversight and can impose measures including suspension or removal of practitioners from the register.

The procedure for the recognition of non-EU diplomas can be found [here](#), also undertaken by BIG (or the *Individual Healthcare Professions Act*).

For foreign-trained dentists wishing to register in the Netherlands, all requirements are listed by the [KNMT website](#).

The KNMT Academy introduced in 2024 a module training programme for foreign-trained dentists, on a voluntary basis. The aim of the programme is to provide insight into the Dutch approach to dental care and to improve the integration of foreign dentists.

The KNMT recorded 27 participants in 2024.

Vocational Training (VT)

Vocational training is mandatory in the Netherlands and is integrated in the 6 years of undergraduate studies through university clinics and practical internships.

Language requirements

Registering dentists must be [proficient in the Dutch language](#) and must provide proof of proficiency under the BIG register.

Foreign-trained dentists must demonstrate a satisfactory command of the Dutch language, with a minimum B2+ level in medical Dutch, according to law. For EU and EEA graduates and dentists, this often entails the need to take a language test. For non-EU graduates and dentists, a language certificate of Dutch proficiency is required.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development is not mandatory in the Netherlands. However, the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT, offers voluntary CPD courses for practising dentists through the [KNMT Academy](#). Courses are also offered by private companies and dental schools.

According to the KNMT, a large majority of dentists engage in some form of CPD activity, with an estimated average of approximately eight hours per month.

The cost of voluntary CPD activities is carried out by independent and salaried dentists, and in some cases employers.

Dental practitioners may voluntarily register with the Quality Register for Dentists (*Kwaliteitsregister Tandartsen (KRT)*), and thereby commit to high-quality care, continuing education and also adhere to professional standards. Dentists registered under the KRT are required to obtain KRT-credits in order to remain a member of the KRT. These [courses](#) are provided by the KRT.

Specialist Training Requirements

The Netherlands recognises two types of dental specialties:

- **Oral Maxillofacial Surgery – 4 years**
(Equivalent to oral surgery, as this specialty is not separately recognised in the Netherlands). OMFS candidates must have obtained master's degrees in both medicine and dentistry before start of the specialist training.

The Netherlands recognises OMFS as a dental specialty, contrary to many other EU countries.

The specialist program OMFS has a duration of four years and takes place at one of seven training facilities within university hospitals: Amsterdam (Amsterdam UMC), Groningen (UMCG), Maastricht (MUMC), Nijmegen (Radboudumc), Leiden (LUMC), Rotterdam (Erasmus MC) or Utrecht (UMCU). To undertake this training, a student is required to present both a medical and dental qualification. Students are paid by the hospital.

On completion of the training, the specialist obtains the title of *'Getuigschrift van erkenning en inschrijving als kaakchirurg in het Specialistenregister'*

- **Orthodontics – 4 years**

Orthodontic training lasts four years and may take place at three dental schools: in Groningen, Nijmegen and Amsterdam (ACTA). Trainees are paid by the universities. Orthodontics is also offered to international students at the Radboud University Medical Centre Nijmegen. To apply for specialist training, applicants must be registered as dentists under the BIG-register.

The title obtained upon completion of the training is *'Getuigschrift van erkenning en inschrijving als orthodontist in het Specialistenregister'*.

Dental specialists must register respectively under the orthodontics (DMO) or OMFS (MKA) specialists' register of the [Registration Committee for Dental Specialties](#) (RTS).

This Committee separately assesses diplomas of dental specialists and is handled by the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT.

Workforce

Dentists

The Netherlands has seen in recent years an important shortage of dentists, including in rural and sparsely populated areas. The Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT, explains this shortage as the result of insufficient training capacity and an ageing workforce, with many dentists expected to retire in the coming years.

The Dutch National Advisory Body (*Capaciteitsorgaan*) recommends 386 study places a year to train enough new dentists to meet the requirements. However, for the 2025-2026 academic year, only 270 places were opened in Dutch dental schools.

The Netherlands has also seen a steep rise in the proportion of practising female dentists, from 17% in 1993 to 52% in 2025.

Year of data	2025
Total dentists registered	12 818
Dentists in active practice	9 555
Dentist to population ratio (<i>per 100 000 inhabitants</i>)*	53.0
Percentage female	52%
Foreign-trained dentists	24%
*Active dentists only	

Movement of dentists across borders

In parallel to the shortage of nationally trained dentists, there has also been an important and growing influx of foreign-trained dentists to the Netherlands in the past few years, including from incoming EU and non-EU graduates.

This movement of dentists to the Netherlands has therefore led to a significant proportion of practising dentists being foreign-trained.

It is important to note that the share of foreign-trained dentists has significantly grown in recent years, going from 7% in 2006 to 24% of active dentists holding foreign diplomas in 2025. According to the BIG-register, approximately 150 to 200 new foreign registrants enter the dental workforce every year.

This includes only officially registered professionals. The number of unregistered dental professionals working under the delegation of registered dentists remains unknown, according to the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT.

Of the 2995 dentists registered in the BIG-register with a foreign diploma on the 1 January 2026, 33.9% held the Dutch nationality, 56.7% held an EU or EEA nationality, and 9.4% originated from outside the EU/EEA.

Specialists

Year of data	2025
Orthodontists (active)	340
OMFS/Oral Surgeons* (active)	324
*Oral surgery and OMFS is under the same status in the Netherlands	

The Netherlands only officially recognises two dental specialities: including orthodontics and OMFS. OMFS is solely recognised as a dental specialty in the Netherlands. Although OMFS candidates require a master's degree in medicine in addition to dentistry, OMFS is not considered a medical specialty. The country does therefore not separately recognise oral surgery.

For specialisation in other fields, including implantology, endodontics, periodontology, paediatric dentistry, geriatric dentistry, gnathology, maxillofacial prosthetics, restorative dentistry, prosthodontics, dental sleep medicine, dental care for the disabled, and dental anxiety counselling, training hold a specific status, entitled in Dutch "*differentiations*". These are recognised by the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT, and are registered by scientific associations. They hold a separate status from the two officially recognised specialties.

Dentists wishing to specialise through *differentiations* follow post-graduate programmes. As for all post-graduate dental programmes, applicants must be registered under BIG and have obtained a master's degree in dentistry.

For more information about *differentiations*, please consult the following [page](#).

In contrast to orthodontists and OMFS, differentiated dentists may choose to continue working (partly) as general dentists. Differentiations are not legally protected under Dutch law. However, relevant scientific associations are responsible for quality oversight and the recognition and monitoring of training and practice.

Patients must obtain referral from their general dentist to access specialist care.

Auxiliaries

Five types of auxiliaries are recognised, including dental technicians, dental prosthetists, dental chairside assistants, (perio-)prevention assistants, and dental hygienists.

Technicians (2019)	4 500
Prosthetists (2025)	~ 710
Chairside / (perio-)prevention assistants (2024)	~ 21 300
Hygienists (2022)	~ 3 900

Dental Technicians

Dental technicians train in secondary vocational schools and carry-out an MBO level 4 course (*Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs*), lasting 4 years. Upon completion of training, they receive a diploma but are not required to register.

Most dental technicians work in dental laboratories. They are permitted to produce dental technical work based on a dentist's prescription but are not permitted to perform procedures in the patient's mouth.

Dental Prosthetists

Dental prosthetists are paramedical professionals and, as such, are authorized to perform certain specific medical procedures independently. They specialize in the fitting and fabrication of prosthetic devices for the oral cavity. The fabrication of a partial denture, framework denture, or overdenture on roots and/or implants must be carried out upon referral from a dentist, whereas no referral is required for the fabrication of a complete denture.

To become a dental prosthetist, students must complete a four-year bachelor-level education. The title of dental prosthetist is an educational qualification for which registration in the register for healthcare providers (BIG-register) does not apply. However, the professional organisation of dental prosthetists has established a register under private law.

Dental Chairside Assistants

There are multiple ways to become a dental chairside assistant in the Netherlands. Dental assistants can among others carry-out an MBO-level 4 education in secondary vocational schools or complete education at private institutions.

Internal "in-house" training by individual dentists themselves may be permitted, provided that such training is subject to independent oversight, specifically by qualified professionals from the accredited education and training system. However, external education and formal assessment are preferred to ensure the dental assistant's competence.

Recently, the Royal Dutch Dental Association, KNMT, has developed the quality mark "ABC Mondzorgassistenten" for professionally recognised private training programmes for dental assistants.

Assistants have a wide range of duties but can only carry out "reserved procedures" when authorised by a dentist. The commissioning dentist must ensure the competence of the dental assistant and remains, in all cases, professionally responsible for the care provided.

(Perio-)prevention Assistants

A prevention assistant is a dental assistant with special additional training in the field of prevention and oral hygiene. Prevention assistant training is available to dental assistants in accredited training courses.

The prevention assistant may, under the supervision of the dentist, independently carry out parts of dental treatments, mainly in the field of prevention and oral hygiene. For example, prevention assistants are permitted to carry out supragingival cleaning.

Perio-prevention assistants, who have undertaken additional training in periodontal disease management, may also perform subgingival cleaning up to a depth of 5 mm.

Dental Hygienists

Dental hygienists (*Mondhygiënist*) are paramedicals with independent status and are widespread in the Netherlands. They form an official profession who are required to be qualified and have a diploma. Dental hygienists have to follow a four year, full time, training at one of the four universities of applied science that offer a bachelor's education in Dental Hygiene (*Mondzorgkunde*).

Admission to the Bachelor of Dental Hygiene is nationally regulated through a *numerus clausus* system (*numerus fixus* in the Netherlands), with 349 study places created for 2025-2026.

Similar to dental prosthetists, the qualification of dental hygienist is an educational title. Therefore, dental hygienists are not required to register in the BIG-register but may register in the private-law register of the professional association for dental hygienists.

Most dental hygienists in the Netherlands are employees in dental practices, whereas some work in hospitals and centres for paediatric dentistry. A substantial number of dental hygienists also practises in dental hygiene clinics, independently from a dentist. However, also in the latter setting, all the treatment undertaken must have been referred by a qualified dental practitioner. Some hygienists with extra skills work as orthodontic auxiliaries.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

National dental associations and information centres	
Royal Dutch Dental Association - Koninklijke Nederlandse Maatschappij tot bevordering der Tandheelkunde (KNMT) Postal Address Postbus 4141 3502 HC Utrecht The Netherlands Visiting Address Orteliusslaan 750, 2nd floor 3528 BB Utrecht The Netherlands Phone: +31 30 6076276 Email: info@knmt.nl Website: https://knmt.nl/	The Dutch Dental Hygienists' Association - Nederlandse Vereniging van Mondhygiënist (NVM-mondhygiënist) Postal Address Postbus 1166 3430 BD Nieuwegein The Netherlands Visiting Address Groenewoudsedijk 40 3528 BK Utrecht The Netherlands Phone: +31 30 6571013 Email: bureau@mondhygienisten.nl Website: www.nvmmondhygienisten.nl
Organisation of Dutch Dental Prosthetists - Organisatie van Nederlandse Tandprothetic (ONT) Postal Address Postbus 1312 2130 EK Hoofddorp The Netherlands Phone: +31 23 7200444 Email: info@ont.nl Website: www.ont.nl	

Competent authorities

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport - Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport Postal Address Postbus 20350 2500 EJ Den Haag The Netherlands Visiting Address Parnassusplein 5 2511 VX Den Haag The Netherlands Phone (General number): +31 70 3407911 Contact form: https://www.government.nl/service/contact/public-information-service/email Website: www.minvws.nl Link to the BIG-register for the registration of dental professionals: https://english.bigregister.nl/	National Health Inspectorate - Inspectie Gezondheidszorg en Jeugd Postal Address Postbus 2115 3500 GC Utrecht The Netherlands Phone: +31 88 1205000 Email: meldpunt@igj.nl Website: www.igj.nl
National Health Care Authority - Nederlandse Zorgautoriteit Postal Address Postbus 3017 3502 GA Utrecht The Netherlands Phone: +31 30 2968111 Email: info@nza.nl	

Website: www.nza.nl

Main Professional Journals

NT/Dentz	Nederlands Tijdschrift Voor Tandheelkunde
NT/Dentz t.a.v. Evert Berkel Postbus 4141 3502 HC Utrecht The Netherlands Phone (Editor): +31 6 41077566 Email: ntdentz@knmt.nl Website: https://knmt.nl/scholing/mis-niks/nt/dentz	NTVT Rembrandtlaan 22D 3723 BJ Bilthoven The Netherlands Phone: +31 30 3031350 Email: redactie@ntvt.nl Website: www.ntvt.nl

Dental Schools:

Public Universities	
Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam - <i>Academisch Centrum Tandheelkunde Amsterdam (ACTA)</i>	University of Groningen - Dentistry Programme
Postal Address Postbus 7822 1008 AA Amsterdam The Netherlands Visiting Address Academisch Centrum Tandheelkunde Amsterdam Gustav Mahlerlaan 3004 1081 LA Amsterdam The Netherlands Phone: +31 20 5980380 Email: info@acta.nl Website: https://acta.nl/en Number of programmes: 3 Number of incoming bachelor students 2026-2027: 138 Current number of students: 424 (bachelor), 491 (master)	Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen Academisch centrum Mondzorg Antonius Deusinglaan 1 9713 AV Groningen The Netherlands Bachelor's degree Email: admissions.med@umcg.nl Phone: +31 50 3638004 Master's degree Email: h.j.mast@umcg.nl j.tams@umcg.nl Website: https://www.rug.nl/umcg/education/tandheelkunde/?lang=en Number of incoming bachelor students 2026-2027: 69 Current number of students: 198 (bachelor), 177 (master)
Radboud University Nijmegen - Faculty of Dentistry	
Postal Address Postbus 9102 6500 HC Nijmegen The Netherlands Visiting Address Philips van Leydenlaan 25 6525 EX Nijmegen The Netherlands Email (Study programmes): studieadviseur.tandheelkunde@radboudumc.nl Email (Admissions): admissions@radboudumc.nl Contact details and phone numbers: https://www.ru.nl/opleidingen/bachelors/tandheelkunde/co ntact	

Website:

<https://www.ru.nl/opleidingen/bachelors/tandheelkunde>

Number of incoming bachelor students 2026-2027: 72

Current number of students: 208 (bachelor), 254 (master)