

### General description

The initial training for prosecutors is compulsory for any person that is aiming to become a public prosecutor. Once the trainee prosecutors are given the green light by the selection committee, entrants to the initial judicial programme will complete an intake at the court where they will work.

In consultation with SSR, the length of the programme will be determined (at least one year and six months, at most four years, depending on knowledge and experience) and the work-training environments will be selected in which the trainee prosecutors will work first. When a prosecutor trainee has completed the training, he or she will be appointed as a public prosecutor.

The training of prosecutor trainees is provided by the districts, in collaboration with SSR. Most of the training is done in the work-training environment, where prosecutors trainees will be coached by practical trainers, who will guide them and give them feedback. Furthermore, on one day a week, under the supervision of a core trainer at SSR, attention will be paid to the learning process and to the courses the prosecutor trainees take.

A new group of prosecutor trainees starts twice a year, two groups in October and two groups in April. A maximum of 48 - 54 prosecutors trainees p/year enter the programme. In 2021, 34 prosecutor trainees successfully accomplished their training. At the end of 2021 117 judge trainees were in training.

### Access to the initial training

Candidates for the training programme must of course be graduated as a master in law and have completed a specific package of courses in preparation of a profession in litigation or the judiciary. Also, they have to have at least two years of relevant legal experience outside the judiciary. The selection of the candidates is executed firstly at a local basis (the districts), then a national committee will select a few people and the candidates will have to do an assessment and at last the local district will select the best ones.

So first, there is a letter selection. Subsequently, the assessment firm LTP will carry out an analytical test. Components of this test are verbal reasoning skills, critical thinking skills and abstract thinking skills. These tests, which have been assessed by the Dutch Committee of Tests and Testing (COTAN) or a similar institution, determine whether a candidate performs above average in terms of analytical skills and that they are demonstrably free of cultural prejudices.

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After the candidates have passed the analytical tests, the districts nominate them for an interview. The districts are then sent the application form and two references for each of the candidates. The assessment centre, a university graduate in psychology will have a structured interview with the candidate and the candidate will be tested with personality questionnaires (including a dilemma test), discussion simulation and role playing. The test assesses whether the candidate has the competencies required for being a prosecutor, or has the potential to develop them during the training course.

Subsequently, the candidates will go to the final interviews. These interviews are performed by the national selection committee. Afterwards, the results of these interviews are deliberated by all interviewers. The committee is instructed in terms of interviewing techniques and interpreting the assessment report.

After the final interviews have been conducted, the candidates who have been given the green light are presented to the districts. The districts decide which candidate (or candidates) they wish to appoint. Nominations for remaining 'green light candidates' are put forward to the other districts (if possible).

### Format and content of the initial training

In the Introduction Period, the trainee prosecutor will take part in a work-training team in the district in question, in which the trainee will develop his/her own direction and competencies, transcending the boundaries of the work-training environments. At the end of the preliminary phase, the trainee prosecutor will have to do an assessment of competence to obtain the meeting proficiency certificate. The basic skills and basic knowledge must have been shown in a simulation court, before one is allowed to appear in court as a prosecutor. If one doesn't succeed, there is 1 extra chance but if one doesn't pass that one as well, then he'll have to leave the entire program.

Subsequently, the main phase of the programme will commence (minimum of 15 months, maximum of 45 months). The main phase will be completed within several work-training environments, depending on the length of the programme and the personal learning plan. There will be a time in the prosecutor's office dealing with simple cases, a time where the trainee works as an legal assistant, as an deputy advocate, as prosecutor but with serious cases and as a judge. There is also an external internship possible. Upon completion of each work-training environment, a transfer evaluation will take place with the trainee prosecutor, the core trainer and his manager from that environment.

Supervision will be provided by practical trainers. Furthermore, on one day a week, under the supervision of a core trainer, attention will be paid to the learning process, the portfolio and the learning plan, as well as to research projects and the competencies that transcend the work-training environments.

The supervision provided by the practical and core trainers focuses purely on learning, not assessment.

An international internship is a possibility for prosecutors trainees. This internship varies in length from participation in the EJTN-programme of AIAKOS.

### Termination of the initial training and qualification process

Assessment on the new initial prosecutors programme has been devised on the basis of trainee prosecutors taking responsibility for their own programme and on there being a stimulating learning atmosphere, and also the support of training input from districts themselves and supervision provided by the core trainer. Candidates will be assessed by a board of examiners on the basis of an interview and a portfolio which trainees are responsible for compiling themselves. The portfolio must include a number of compulsory pieces of evidence and another part of it can be filled as the candidate chooses to. A stimulating learning atmosphere requires a programme to take place in a secure setting and the assessment to enable trainee prosecutors to develop as well as possible and build on their talents. We stick to this basis as much as possible by keeping teaching and assessment as separated as possible and making assessment transparent and objective. This allows the trainer to focus fully on the role of coaching and developing the trainee prosecutor. The practical trainer and core trainer do provide input for assessment: they are required to complete a number of feedback forms and evaluation forms every few months for the portfolio and issuing approval of the contents of the portfolio. In order for the system of assessment to be transparent and objective, it must have clear assessment criteria, a clear procedure and as much consistent reliability amongst assessors as possible. This necessitates training of assessors and guidance from a specialist expert from SSR. This also benefits the quality of the assessment. Furthermore, the programme structure also ensures that

candidates are not assessed more than is conducive to assessment from a legal perspective. The system described here – which combines fixed assessment times and supplementary assessment on request – meets that objective. The assessment system therefore has trainee-focused flexibility wherever possible and also supports didactic innovations in competency development.

After the assessment of competence at the end of the introduction period, there is a sitting skill test and a key witness test. The trainee will schedule these assessments when he thinks he is ready. These assessments, the input from each team manager and the evaluation of the portfolio together will be the result of the total program.

This programme does not include any purely legal knowledge tests. That is because such tests would not tally with the basic assumption that trainee prosecutors themselves are responsible for their own course, and possessing adequate legal knowledge is obviously a major part of that. The programme is structured on the assumption that trainees on the programme hold the necessary legal knowledge – or will acquire it at the start of each work-training environment. The assessed final attainment levels also include legal knowledge, which has to be demonstrated within the practical work carried out. It should therefore be emphasised that trainee prosecutors must ensure that their level of legal knowledge is not a factor which will obstruct their progress in the programme as a whole.

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