

Annex 7 Accreditation procedure NVAO

Application

Applications must be submitted by the institutional board no later than four months before expiry of the programme's current accreditation or recognition as a new programme and within two months following publication of the report of the external assessment.

The accreditation procedure starts when NVAO receives an application for accreditation based on a published assessment report. Institutions providing a jointly organised programme must submit a joint application.

Applications must meet the following procedural requirements:

- they must be submitted in electronic format via aanvraag@nvaio.net;
- comprising an application letter signed by the board of the institution;
- the administrative data of the institution and the programme;
- the assessment report;
- and, if applicable, a web link to the website of the involved quality assurance agency, on which NVAO can consult the applied assessment framework and assessment procedure.

The self-evaluation report is no part of the application.

Examination and decision-making

Admissibility

NVAO will check the admissibility of the application to verify whether the procedural requirements have been met. If the application is inadmissible, the institution will be informed accordingly within a timeframe of 15 calendar days. Subsequently, the institution has 30 calendar days to complete its application, in consultation with the process coordinator from NVAO. Should it fail to submit a full dossier within the stipulated time, the application will be declared definitively inadmissible.

When drawing up its draft decision, NVAO may ask the institution and/or the panel for additional information, explanations, and clarifications.

Decision-making

Within an indicative period of three months following receipt of the application, NVAO will take an accreditation decision; before expiry of this period, it will forward a draft accreditation decision and the underlying assessment report from the panel to the board of the institution.

NVAO will arrive at its accreditation decision on the basis of the published assessment report, in accordance with the assessment scale and assessment rules.

Assessment scale

The assessment of the quality of the programme prompts one of the following three decisions:

- Positive accreditation decision
- Positive accreditation decision with limited validity
- Negative accreditation decision

Assessment rule for the accreditation decision

The quality of the programme is assessed on the basis of the integral assessment ground, whereby the coherent questions are not weighted separately. The decision ensues from a holistic and substantiated judgment based on the findings from the examination conducted.

The basic philosophy of the quality assurance system dictates that the assessment is based on the assumption that the quality of the programme meets the assessment ground. The contrary must be substantiated in detail.

Positive accreditation decision

The quality of the programme can be demonstrated in a verifiable manner on the basis of the assessment ground. Recommendations never conflict with a positive accreditation decision. A positive accreditation decision is valid for six years and the new term follows directly on the previous accreditation period. In the event of an assessment following an earlier positive accreditation decision with limited validity, the period of limited validity is deducted from the six-year timeframe.

Positive accreditation decision with limited validity

With respect to well-defined aspects of the assessment ground, the quality of the programme cannot be demonstrated in a verifiable manner. Any quality deficiency must be explicitly substantiated by reference to (a) condition(s) that must be met in order to remedy the deficiency. In addition to conditions, recommendations may be formulated. The limited validity is determined in consultation with the programme, taking account of the timeframe within which the programme can meet the condition(s). The maximum term is three years, follows directly after the previous accreditation period, and prompts a new accreditation decision no later than three months before expiry of the term.

Negative accreditation decision

A new programme assessment ensuing from an earlier positive accreditation decision with limited validity shows that with respect to well-defined aspects of the assessment ground, the quality of the programme cannot be demonstrated in a verifiable manner. The programme forfeits its accreditation and the board of the institution ends the programme. The institution guarantees that the students are able to continue their programme through collaboration with another institution. The Flemish Government may take measures if the institution fails to provide such a guarantee. The board of the institution may not re-launch the programme within six years.

In its decision, NVAO may deviate from the judgment contained in the assessment report, stating its reasons to do so. When drawing up its draft decision, NVAO may ask the institution and/or the panel for additional information, explanations, and clarifications.

Before the definitive endorsement of the accreditation decision, NVAO affords the board of the institution the opportunity to formulate comments and/or objections to the draft accreditation decision and/or the underlying assessment report within a fifteen-calendar-day limitation period, which commences as from the day after their receipt.

The drafts will be amended wherever necessary. NVAO forwards its definitive accreditation decision with the underlying assessment report from the panel to the institution and to the Flemish Minister of Education.

Internal and external appeals

Any (draft) decision by NVAO is open to an internal appeal to NVAO and an external appeal to the Council of State, in accordance with the Regulations for decision-making procedures by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders.

Publication

After the decision-making procedure, NVAO publishes the decision and the underlying assessment report on its website, and forwards both documents to the Flemish Minister of Education.