



International Centre
of Excellence in
**Tourism and Hospitality
Education (THE-ICE)**

AGREEMENT

NVAO & THE-ICE (NL)

Introduction

This agreement between the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) has been collaboratively developed by both organisations. The goal of this agreement is to increase the efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for institutions in the accreditation process, by facilitating a process leading to double accreditation. The agreement only applies to the Dutch institutions and programmes that opt for a joint NVAO-THE-ICE process to receive accreditation from both organisations.

It is important to note that this agreement does not alter the formal responsibilities of the organizations involved (NVAO, THE-ICE, institutions). This agreement sets out the alignment in the procedures to ensure an efficient process when applying for double accreditation.

This agreement applies exclusively to the activities carried out by the Dutch department of NVAO.

An institution requesting a joint accreditation process must inform both NVAO and THE-ICE in due time. i.e. when registering interest in THE-ICE accreditation and requesting an Application Proforma, the institution also informs NVAO about a request for a joint procedure.

1. Assessment frameworks

NVAO accredits at programme level, while THE-ICE accredits at programme level as well as at institutional level, with a strong focus on the departments or teaching units specialising in the provision of tourism, hospitality, events and culinary arts (TH&E) education programmes. The THE-ICE Standards of Excellence address the NVAO assessment standards within both the limited and extensive assessment frameworks, except for the final two standards (assessment and achieved learning outcomes).

Programmes opting for a joint process may use the THE-ICE framework as a basis for the accreditation process. In addition, the final two NVAO standards will need to be addressed in order to comply with the NVAO standards. The panel will assess these standards according to the procedures described in the NVAO framework. Standard and achievable

conditions (the number of final products¹ the panel needs to assess) will be determined as part of the planning process. In principle, the panel will assess at least 15 theses for each programme. A reduction of this number can only be considered if programmes share an Examination Board and if there is a demonstrable overlap of courses between the programmes of at least one year or 60 EC for a bachelor's programme and 20 EC for a master's programme. In that case the panel will assess a minimum of 8-10 theses per programme. NVAO must agree before the start of the assessment to the reduction in the number of theses to be assessed.

In addition to the assessment of achieved learning outcomes, the NVAO framework requires programs to justify their choice for the teaching language if a program is taught in a language other than Dutch. This also applies if the program uses a foreign language name. The program should also demonstrate that teachers have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. In addition, the extensive assessment framework of NVAO requires programs to demonstrate that staff policy is conducive in this respect.

2. Joint visit & joint audit panel

The joint visit will be planned according to the guidelines set by both NVAO and THE-ICE, taking into account mandatory elements on the site visit schedule.

In case of a joint Re-accreditation process, THE-ICE agrees to include a site visit as part of the requirements, irrespective of the member institutions having undergone substantial changes or not during the previous accreditation validity period. The site visit will be planned according to the guidelines set by NVAO.

THE-ICE auditors are registered reviewers of the independent THE-ICE Assessment Panel. These experts will be required to meet the criteria that NVAO has set out for assessment panel members. A NVAO panel is composed of members with domain specific expertise, educational expertise, work field specific expertise, international expertise, audit expertise, and student-experience. An NVAO assessment panel consists of a minimum of four members, including a student. In order to comply with the NVAO accreditation framework and Dutch law, a secretary who is registered by NVAO needs to be provided for each panel. The panel members and the secretary must comply with the requirements for independence as formulated in the NVAO framework. The secretary is not a member of the panel.

At least one panel member must be acquainted with the NVAO framework. His/her role will be:

- to guide and consult the panel on performance on NVAO standards;
- to ask questions in order to judge the programme's alignment with NVAO standards;
- to prepare answers to NVAO's questions after the visit. These answers will need to be endorsed by the panel.

NVAO and THE-ICE agree to engage an audit panel that meets the criteria of both organisations. The following panel composition is justified for joint processes: two (2)

¹ Theses or any other product or products that the programme regards as the final product of a student.

auditors of THE-ICE Assessment Panel,² one auditor acquainted with the NVAO framework and a student-member. It is proposed the auditor acquainted with the NVAO framework will also serve as chair of the panel.

All panel members will receive a briefing on NVAO's and THE-ICE's assessment frameworks before the site audit occurs. The briefing of the panel chair must be compliant with Dutch requirements regarding the training of panel chairs, and sufficient to provide a thorough understanding of THE-ICE Standards of Excellence.

The institution contacts THE-ICE for nomination of THE-ICE auditor(s) and submits a proposal for the composition of an audit panel and the secretary to NVAO and THE-ICE. Both organisations assess the members and the secretary based on their procedures, looking at the different expertise as well as the independence of each member. The NVAO and THE-ICE will decide upon the proposed panel composition and the secretary within four weeks. Any doubts or comments on its part regarding the panel must first be clarified, and if need be, the composition will be modified.

3. Self-review Proforma & critical self-evaluation reports

Both organisations require that programmes deliver a self-review document to the auditor(s) prior to the site visit. Applicants to THE-ICE are required to complete an Application Proforma, which addresses the THE-ICE Standards of Excellence. The outline of the Proforma depends on the type of THE-ICE assessment (e.g. Pre-accreditation or Full-accreditation). The applicant institution is provided with an interim report based on an evaluation of information and supporting evidence provided in the Application Proforma. The NVAO critical reflection provides information and addresses all NVAO standards. For joint visits, programmes may limit their critical reflection to specific NVAO standards and refer to the THE-ICE Proforma for shared standards.

In case of a joint Re-accreditation process, the applicant adds a reflective report on their performance in the THE-ICE ISBSB™ survey to the THE-ICE Proforma and NVAO critical reflection.

4. Distinctive feature (optional)

For the allotment of a distinctive feature, the relevant framework used by the NVAO needs to be applied for assessment. This means that the audit panel must comply with the guidelines set for the procedure and must assess and judge the standards from the relevant framework.

5. Site audit report

An audit report is the outcome of the work of the audit panel. In case of a joint NVAO-THE-ICE process, the audit panel delivers two (2) reports: THE-ICE Application Assessment and Site Audit Final Report, following THE-ICE format and written by the THE-ICE

² In case of a joint Pre-accreditation or Re-accreditation process, only one (1) THE-ICE auditor is required to be part of the audit panel. However, applicants may seek the assistance of an additional THE-ICE auditor in order to meet the NVAO's requirements regarding panel composition. Additional costs may apply.

auditor(s), and an NVAO assessment report, written by the secretary. The accreditation organisations will make their decisions based upon the information in the reports.

THE-ICE completes the application assessment and site audit process with a final report as well as an Executive Summary, presented under four key headings: Observation, Affirmation, Commendation and Recommendation. The documents will be sent to the applicant institution for a check of factual inaccuracies. THE-ICE final report, except for the findings shared with NVAO, will not be published unless with the explicit consensus of the applicant institution.

The NVAO assessment framework prescribes the need for a judgment per standard (meets the standard, partially meets the standard, or does not meet the standard) and per programme (positive, conditionally positive, negative). For NVAO to decide on accreditation the audit panel needs to state and motivate these judgments in the report. In addition, a substantive summary of the report needs to be added to the report. A draft report is sent to the applicant institution for a check of factual inaccuracies. The final report is approved by all panel members and signed by the panel chair. It will be published on the NVAO website for any stakeholder to access and read.

6. Duration of accreditation

The duration of the NVAO accreditation is six years for new programmes and for an indefinite period for existing programmes. All programmes must be assessed by an NVAO approved panel of independent experts and apply for the continuation of their accreditation every six years. THE-ICE grants accreditation for five (5) years. In case of a joint process, THE-ICE will grant accreditation for six (6) years.

7. Separate decision processes

The boards of NVAO and THE-ICE will both make their own decisions and decide on the possible follow-up, based on the assessment reports and the assessment frameworks applicable for their respective organisations.

This collaboration agreement between NVAO and THE-ICE ensures institutions an efficient and effective procedure for acquiring double accreditation. NVAO and THE-ICE strive for as much reduction of the administrative burden of the accreditation processes as possible and therefore seek, when possible, to combine all accreditation processes an institution is involved in.

The Hague, 18 May, 2021 (update to the original agreement of February 27th, 2017)

On behalf of THE-ICE

On behalf of NVAO

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Chief Executive Officer
THE-ICE

Dr. Anneke Luijten-Lub
Member of the Board
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