



Protocol for the recognition as 'rechtspersoon voor hoger onderwijs'

August 2010

1 Introduction

When the Management Enforcement Legislative Act (31 821) comes into force, the current recognition procedure will be abolished. It will be replaced by a procedure aimed at legal bodies intending to commence offering an accredited (graduate or post-graduate) programme. In the event that this is the first one offered by the legal body in question, the programme will be subjected to so-called Extensive Initial Accreditation.¹

The qualification of recognised private institution will be replaced by that of legal body for higher education.²

The procedure focuses on the programme's admission to the higher education system under the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act. To that end, in addition to the requirements involved in initial accreditation, the legal body must demonstrate that the quality and continuity of the programme applying for initial accreditation are guaranteed. This means it must be guaranteed that the legal body aiming to be admitted to the system has a certain continuity, complies with the statutory regulations and delivers (proven) quality. Consequently, the legal body to be assessed must have actually provided education for a period of time (full-cycle requirement).

NVAO will assess the (first) programme to be provided by the legal body requesting to be admitted to the Dutch higher education system by way of initial accreditation. Aspects that will be taken into consideration include, at any rate, the quality achieved. This means that the procedure is not solely an ex-ante assessment, since it will review the quality demonstrated.

NVAO will assess the quality of the programme under consideration; the Inspectorate of Education will assess the quality and continuity of the legal body, including its compliance with laws and regulations. Following this procedure, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science will decide on admission to the higher education system under the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act.

In contrast to the old recognition procedure, NVAO will now assess the quality of a programme only once. In addition, admission to the system is now also open to legal bodies that provide post-graduate education only.

¹ New article 5a.8 of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW).

² Legal bodies for higher education providing graduate programmes and legal bodies providing accredited post-graduate programmes.

2 General conclusions

- The procedure is aimed at institutions (legal bodies) that do not yet provide accredited (graduate or post-graduate) programmes or programmes for which a positive initial accreditation decision has been issued; the legal body is required to actually provide the programme itself.
- NVAO assesses the programme only once by way of so-called extensive initial accreditation.
- The procedure is categorised as extensive because it is not an ex-ante assessment but rather requires a demonstration of proven quality (full-cycle requirement); it also reviews the quality achieved.
- Following a positive assessment by NVAO, the legal body subsequently submits a request to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science for authorisation to award degrees.
- The Minister of Education, Culture and Science then asks the Inspectorate of Education for a recommendation regarding the continuity and quality of the legal body.
- Following receipt of this recommendation, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science takes a decision regarding the request for authorisation to award degrees (i.e., request for admission to the system).

3 NVAO procedure

1. NVAO will assess the (graduate or post-graduate) programme, including the quality achieved, on the basis of the (then) applicable assessment framework for new higher education programmes.
2. The legal body is required to actually offer and provide the programme itself.
3. NVAO appoints a panel of experts.
4. A full-cycle requirement applies.
5. NVAO will pass its judgement within a timeframe of six months.
6. The NVAO assessment is open to internal and external appeal.
7. There is a charge for the NVAO assessment.