Accreditation of existing programme

The programme accreditation system covers Associate Degree, Bachelor's, and Master's programmes in the professional higher education and academic higher education sectors in the Netherlands.

GENERAL INFO

The accreditation system for Dutch higher education comprises two types of accreditation:

- Initial accreditation of a new programme, valid for a period of six years;
- Accreditation of an existing programme, which, following a positive assessment, is valid indefinitely.

All programmes are periodically assessed by a panel of independent experts (peers) approved by NVAO. This assessment takes place in a comparative context with related programmes that are grouped into review clusters. For each programme, a submission date is set (1 May or 1 November) by which the review report must be submitted to NVAO. Missing this deadline may affect the accreditation status.

Institutions are required to report all variants (full-time, part-time, dual), tracks, specialisations, locations, and statutory professional requirements in the review report or accreditation application. Programme components that are not reported fall outside the scope of accreditation.

Please note: all reports must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For further details, see the information on NVAO website.

Programmes offered may make use of the standard assessment framework. Institutions that have not received a positive outcome on the Institutional Audit of Quality Assurance (ITK) are subject to additional standards, including the assessment of facilities and quality assurance. The number of standards to be assessed is four for programmes of institutions with ITK, and six for those without ITK.

The final judgement may be positive, conditionally positive, or negative. If conditions are imposed, the programme must demonstrate, within a timeframe set by NVAO, that these conditions have been met.

NVAO is entering into collaborative agreements with international sectoral and/or professional organisations in order to combine external review and accreditation procedures wherever possible.

NVAO has issued guidelines on the execution of the review process and the working methods of panels. Institutions may propose their own panel and secretary for the assessment of existing programmes, provided they are approved by NVAO.

STEPS

1

1A: SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

A programme that has acquired initial accreditation as a new programme must have its quality assessed by a panel of independent experts within the ...
A programme that has acquired initial accreditation as a new programme must have its quality assessed by a panel

of independent experts within the context of its assessment cluster. By no later than the submission deadline stipulated, the institution must apply to NVAO for accreditation as an existing programme.

2

1B: RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

The accreditation of an existing programme is valid for an indefinite period of time; there is no expiry date. To retain such accreditation, a prog...
The accreditation of an existing programme is valid for an indefinite period of time; there is no expiry date. To retain such accreditation, a programme must be assessed within the context of its assessment cluster and submit the assessment report to NVAO by no later than the stipulated submission deadline. It does not need to apply for retention of accreditation.

3

2A: DECISION BY NVAO REGARDING ACQUISITION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, the programme will be granted (its first) accreditation as an existing programme. NVA...
Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, the programme will be granted (its first) accreditation as an existing programme. NVAO publishes the decision and the report on its website. Upon a negative outcome of the assessment, NVAO will refuse accreditation.

4

2B: DECISION BY NVAO REGARDING RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, NVAO will decide to retain the accreditation of the existing programme. NVAO publishe...
Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, NVAO will decide to retain the accreditation of the existing programme. NVAO publishes the decision and the report on its website. In the event of a negative assessment in which improvement within the foreseeable future is not deemed feasible, NVAO will withdraw the accreditation of the existing programme.

5

3A: NEXT STEP IN THE ACQUISITION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

With the NVAO decision, the institution informs the governmental implementation agency for the education sector (DUO) that accreditation as an exis...
With the NVAO decision, the institution informs the governmental implementation agency for the education sector (DUO) that accreditation as an existing programme has been granted in order for the programme to be registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO). NVAO sets down a deadline for submission of the external assessment report.

6

3B: NEXT STEP IN THE RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

NVAO informs DUO of the retention of accreditation as an existing programme in order for the programme to be so registered on the Central Register ...
NVAO informs DUO of the retention of accreditation as an existing programme in order for the programme to be so registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) and sets down a new submission

deadline for the programme. This does not require any further action on the part of the institution.

RATES

In 2026, the NVAO rate for the accreditation of an existing programme amounts to €2,678 (the same rate applies in the case of accreditation under conditions). The rate for modifying the composition of the review panel is €585, and the rate for changing the HBO degree title is €549, provided that these changes take place in combination with the accreditation of an existing programme.

Different rates apply to other or non-standard procedures. Costs related to foreign site visits or the engagement of external experts, consultancy services, or additional requirements will be charged separately.

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