



NVAO • NETHERLANDS

**TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
FOR THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK
FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION
ACCREDITATION SYSTEM
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

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1 Entry into force of the new framework and Implementation Rules

The new Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands comes into force after its publication in the Netherlands Government Gazette. NVAO will switch to this new framework on 1 April 2024. In recognition of the time that it generally takes to prepare for an assessment, NVAO has drawn up a document containing transitional arrangements. As a consequence, in most cases the rules of the new framework will not be applied in concrete terms until later than 1 April 2024. These transitional arrangements explain what the available options are.

Assessments will continue to be carried out under the existing accreditation framework (from January 2019) after 1 April 2024, and so NVAO will establish the date on which the framework from January 2019 lapses once all pending assessments and reassessments under that framework have been completed.

2 Transitional arrangements

The substance of the new accreditation framework is identical to that of the existing framework (January 2019). This means that the requirements for programmes and institutions have not changed. Where the framework has changed is in its organisation and the inclusion of rules that NVAO previously published separately from the framework, for example the procedures for how external assessments of programmes are scheduled and the distinctive feature of “small-scale and intensive education”.

The new framework has been simplified, and now only sets out the standards for assessing programmes and for institutional audits, the rules that panels should apply when making their decisions and general outlines of the application and assessment procedures. Further details of the procedures and how applications are reviewed are now contained in the NVAO’s separate publication “Implementation rules for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands”.

In light of how similar in substance the existing and new frameworks are, a set of simple transitional arrangements has been drawn up. Below, the arrangements for transitioning to the new framework are described for each of the separate procedures.

Panel composition and approval

Starting 1 January 2024, NVAO asks institutions to confirm the impartiality of anyone put forward in connection with a programme assessment as a panel member for an assessment cluster or anyone appointed as a panel member for the assessment of a new programme or an institutional audit. This has now been formalised in the new accreditation framework.

Assessment of existing programmes

The transition to the new accreditation framework has implications for programmes where preparations for the assessment are already in an advanced stage when the new framework comes into effect, in particular if the institution does not have a positive institutional audit decision. To avoid problems, until 1 November 2024 NVAO will allow panels to base their assessments and reports on the existing framework (January 2019). Until 1 November 2024, institutions may apply for accreditation based on an external assessment report that uses the existing framework (January 2019). NVAO will then base its decision on that framework.

Assessments and external assessment reports after 1 November 2024 must use the new framework. In practice, this means that every cluster and every unique programme with a submission date of 1 May 2025 or beyond must be assessed in accordance with the new framework.

Assessment (or extensive assessment) of a new programme

During the transition to the new framework, until 1 January 2025 NVAO will allow institutions to apply for an assessment (or extensive assessment) of a new programme using the existing framework (January 2019). The panel will then carry out the assessment and draw up its report based on the existing framework, even if the panel was appointed on or after 1 April 2024. In that case, however, the panel itself must meet the requirements under the new framework. NVAO will make its decision based on the existing framework (January 2019).

Conditions

If NVAO issues an accreditation decision for a new or existing programme under the existing framework (January 2019), but imposes conditions, the assessment of whether those conditions have been satisfied will be based on the same framework.

Audit after three years

As soon as the new framework comes into effect, all three-year audits (including where conditions have been imposed) will follow the terms of the new framework. Under the new framework, the submission date for the panel's report on the assessment for the three-year audit has been extended from two and a half years to three years.

3 Appendix: Existing and new frameworks side-by-side

The new version of the accreditation framework does not bring any substantive changes. To help programmes prepare for their assessments, NVAO provides an overview of how the standards from the existing extensive framework relate to the standards and/or generic aspects or additions in the new framework. This overview is intended as a tool only; no rights can be derived from it. In all instances, the new accreditation framework is leading.

January 2019 accreditation framework (extensive framework)	New accreditation framework	Additional or generic aspects
Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	Additional standards for institutions without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principles for how the programme is organised must match the institution's vision on education and its profile; - The intended learning outcomes must be evaluated periodically.
Standard 2: Curriculum: orientation	Standard 2: Learning environment	
Standard 3: Curriculum: content	Standard 2: Learning environment	
Standard 4: Curriculum: learning environment	Standard 2: Learning environment	Additional aspect for institutions without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The learning environment must reflect the institution's vision on education; Generic aspect for institutions with and without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The learning environment must be designed to make the education easier to access and study, including for students with functional disabilities.
Standard 5: Intake	Standard 2: Learning environment	Generic aspect for institutions with and without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme's admission requirements must be realistic relative to the intended learning outcomes.
Standard 6: Staff	Standard 2: Learning environment	Additional aspects for institutions without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The workforce must be sufficiently large; - If the programme is taught in another language than Dutch, the human resources policy must make accommodation for teachers to teach in that language.
Standard 7: Facilities	Standard 5: Facilities	

Standard 8: Tutoring	Standard 2: Learning environment	Generic aspect for institutions with and without a positive institutional audit decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students must be given appropriate guidance and support. The information provided by the programme must be sufficient.
Standard 9: Quality assurance	Standard 6: Quality assurance	
Standard 10: Student assessment	Standard 3: Student assessment	
Standard 11: Achieved learning outcomes	Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	

