



NVAO • LUXEMBOURG

Overview report
BTS PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS 2024-2025
Level 5 in development

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1 Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the findings from the assessments of eleven ‘Brevet de Technicien Supérieur’ (BTS) programmes in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in 2024 and 2025. These assessments were carried out by the NVAO as the accreditation organisation of the Netherlands, Flanders and Luxembourg. Since 2024, the NVAO is the designated quality assurance agency for higher education in Luxembourg.

The NVAO’s overview reports are an integral part of the quality assurance and enhancement cycle. They serve to synthesize accreditation experiences over a specific period and across multiple procedures. Such a synthesis allows for a detailed look at the procedural aspects of accreditations, a reflection on the results found, and critical (self-)insight into how both procedures and structural aspects can be further improved.

Within the methodology section (chapter 2), this report focuses on the transparency, validity, and reliability of the procedure. These are central tenets for the NVAO and serve as the structural pillars for the insights presented later in the report. Chapter 3 briefly outlines the main findings and considerations of the assessment panels as included in their assessment reports. This chapter is structured by assessment area. Both chapters provide the foundation for chapter 4 which presents NVAO’s insights. In this chapter, the NVAO critically assesses the context and procedure, and identifies ways forward for all actors involved.

The following sections frame the Luxembourg context, introduce the NVAO’s assessment framework, and highlight specificities relevant to the current accreditation cycle.

1.1 The national context

The Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS) is a cornerstone of higher education in Luxembourg. Established in 1989 following an initiative by the then-Minister of Education Marc Fischbach, these programmes were designed to meet the growing demand for specialized professional skills that were previously only available through foreign institutions.¹ Today, the BTS is a recognised associate degree programme of 120 ECTS at level 5 of both the Luxembourg (CLQ) and European Qualifications Frameworks (EQF). Approximately 10% of the higher education student population in Luxembourg is enrolled in a BTS programme.²

Since 2009, these two-year programmes have been fully integrated into the Bologna Process, ensuring international recognition and facilitating student mobility across Europe.³ While they are characterised by a strong practical and professional focus—including mandatory internships—they also serve as a gateway to further academic pursuits, with credits often transferable to bachelor’s programmes (EQF level 6) in related fields.

1.2 The new accreditation system

A substantial development in the national quality assurance landscape followed the revised 2023 legislation.⁴ This legislation introduced a renewed accreditation system in which the NVAO was designated as the external quality assurance agency responsible for conducting the external review of BTS programmes and specialised higher education institutions in Luxembourg. Within this accreditation system, a clear distinction is made between the assessment procedure and the formal accreditation

¹ <https://www.ecg.lu/p/10/1>

² Eurostat data

³ Loi du 19 juin 2009 portant organisation de l’enseignement supérieur. (Publié au Mémorial A n° 153 du 1er juillet 2009).

⁴ Loi du 21 juillet 2023 ayant pour objet l’organisation de l’enseignement supérieur. (Publié au Mémorial A n° 470 du 28 juillet 2023).

decision. The NVAO carries out the independent external assessment and formulates an expert judgement based on the four overarching assessment areas of the national framework; however, the NVAO does not issue the accreditation decision. Instead, the NVAO operates as a specialised advisory body to the Ministry of Research and Higher Education. The final decision to grant or refuse accreditation lies exclusively with the Minister, thereby ensuring that BTS programmes remain under the sovereign regulatory authority of the Luxembourgish state.

In 2024, three BTS programmes—each located at a different Lycée—underwent the new external assessment procedure. This phase helped the NVAO to refine and calibrate the new assessment framework within the Luxembourgish higher education context. The external assessments of these three programmes confirmed the robustness of the methodology and provided the basis for the systematic evaluation of all BTS programmes under the Ministry's remit that were scheduled for accreditation in 2025.

1.3 Additional characteristics

Building on the insights generated during the 2024 assessment phase, the 2025 SynCo event represented an important step in the further co-creation of quality for the BTS sector. The event is designed to strengthen a culture of transparency, peer exchange, and collective learning across the institutions involved. Particular attention was devoted to the pedagogical requirements associated with qualifications at level 5 of the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework, with a specific emphasis on the principles of constructive alignment. By addressing the coherent interrelationship between intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment practices, the event equipped programme coordinators with targeted tools to support the continuous enhancement of their programmes. Further details on this event are provided in paragraph 2.2.

An additional characteristic of the current accreditation system is that newly established programmes are assessed with the same assessment framework as existing ones. This means that the same assessment areas and standards apply equally to both. Furthermore, an admissibility committee examines, among other aspects, the structural and financial viability of each programme prior to entering the NVAO's assessment procedure.

2 Methodology

As outlined in the introduction, this chapter describes the way in which the NVAO's assessment procedure ensures transparency, validity and reliability. These three concepts are embedded within the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* and provide a useful structure for presenting the key methodological elements underpinning the NVAO's approach. Transparency is achieved when the assessment procedure is fully comprehensible to all stakeholders. This implies that no unexpected steps arise during the process and that each actor has a clear understanding of the procedural requirements and their respective responsibilities. Validity relates to the clarity and accuracy with which the concepts and terminology used in the framework are defined, understood and applied. This includes an awareness of contextual factors that shape their interpretation, such as ensuring that both institutions and assessment panels share a consistent understanding of what CLQ level 5 education entails within the specific Luxembourgish context. Reliability concerns the consistency with which concepts, standards and procedures are interpreted and applied across different external assessment panels and throughout the entire accreditation cycle. It is important to note that this section provides a descriptive account of the methodological approach as implemented. A critical analysis of these methodological components, along with suggestions for further strengthening the NVAO's approach in future cycles, is provided in Chapter 4.

2.1 Assessment framework

The assessments presented in this report were conducted in accordance with the *Assessment Framework for Programme Accreditation: Brevet de Technicien Supérieur*⁵, adopted on 3 July 2024. This framework is grounded in the Higher Education Law of 21 July 2023 and is designed to ensure that all BTS programmes delivered by Luxembourgish Lycées comply with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. By structuring the assessment around four core dimensions (programme objectives, the educational process, human and material resources, and internal quality assurance) the framework provides a robust basis for determining whether each programme aligns with level 5 of the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework and adequately prepares graduates for entry into the professional field.

The overarching purpose of the NVAO's assessment procedures is to provide the Ministry of Research and Higher Education with an independent, evidence-based recommendation regarding the accreditation of the programmes concerned. Each assessment was carried out by an independent panel of experts, including a student panel member, ensuring a comprehensive, multi-faceted perspective on the quality of these BTS programmes.

2.2 Transparency

Within the NVAO approach, and in line with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, transparency is regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for effective quality assurance and accreditation procedures. The NVAO ensures transparency by making its assessment frameworks publicly available on its website and by clearly explaining the assessment procedure to the wider public. In addition, all stakeholders in Luxembourg are actively informed through targeted information sessions, such as the SynCo events, as well as through preparatory meetings organised in advance of the assessment procedures.

2.2.1 The SynCo event

The BTS SynCo event, held on 6 May 2025 in Luxembourg, served as an important opportunity to strengthen the connection between the formal assessment framework and the expectations of the BTS programmes. Organised by the NVAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Research and Higher

⁵ <https://www.nvao.net/files/attachments/12731/LUX-AssessmentFramework-BTS.pdf>

Education, the primary aim of the event was to foster a shared understanding of the NVAO’s assessment philosophy. By moving beyond a purely procedural briefing, the session sought to anchor the assessment procedure in open communication, enabling BTS coordinators and programme managers to engage more fully with the underlying rationale of the quality assurance system. This approach was emphasised at the outset by Axel Aerden, Director at the NVAO, who positioned the organisation as an accessible partner committed to the long-term development of the Luxembourgish higher education landscape.

This philosophy of openness was further put into practice during an interactive session designed to demystify some of the more abstract concepts often associated with external quality assurance procedures. A central component was a collaborative “puzzle” exercise in which participants jointly explored the defining characteristics of level 5 within the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework (CLQ). By collectively analysing graduate profiles and intended learning outcomes, the session aimed to clarify the threshold between qualification levels and to stimulate reflection on how a coherently designed curriculum can support learners in achieving CLQ level 5 outcomes. The practical exercise was followed by a “lessons learned” segment. By offering candid reflections on the previous accreditation cycle (2024)—including the nuances of constructing a robust SWOT analysis and the interpersonal dynamics that may arise during a site visit, the NVAO sought to reduce procedural ambiguity and provide concrete guidance. In doing so, the emphasis shifted from a narrow focus on compliance towards a shared understanding of how programmes can articulate a coherent narrative demonstrating educational quality.

The impact of this approach was reflected in the feedback collected after the event, where participants reported a clear shift in how they perceived the NVAO.⁶ The emphasis on dialogue contributed to repositioning the agency as a supportive partner in quality enhancement rather than a distant auditing body. Survey results showed that the informal and open atmosphere encouraged frank exchanges among peers on shared challenges, including student recruitment and the practical organisation of work-based learning. With a satisfaction rate approaching 90% (see Figure 1), the initiative appears to have been effective in enhancing understanding of the NVAO’s underlying rationale and expectations, thereby fostering a greater sense of predictability and mutual trust.

1. Comment évalueriez-vous votre satisfaction générale vis-à-vis de l'événement ?



Figure 1. General satisfaction with the 2025 SynCo event.

However, the event also underscored that maintaining this level of clarity requires an ongoing commitment. Although the NVAO’s role and working methods became considerably clearer, participants expressed a need for similarly open dialogue with representatives of the Ministry in order to address broader administrative and policy-related questions. In addition, the request for more sector-specific illustrations indicates that, while the overarching quality assurance philosophy has been well received, a key challenge now lies in translating these principles into the diverse contexts of the various BTS sectors. Ultimately, the BTS SynCo 2025 contributed meaningfully to humanising the accreditation process, reinforcing a shift towards a culture in which quality assurance is viewed as a collaborative endeavour rather than an externally imposed obligation.

⁶ Anonymous survey results collected after the event. N=24.

It is important to emphasise that, while the SynCo event aims to enhance clarity and transparency regarding the accreditation procedure and to address overarching pedagogical or structural themes, particularly those concepts that are relevant for understanding aspects of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (such as constructive alignment or level 5), the event is not intended as a pedagogical training session. The event does not pursue its own learning goals, nor is it designed to function as a workshop on educational management or as teacher training for higher education. Rather, its purpose is to support a shared understanding of the quality assurance framework without assuming the role of a professional development activity.

2.2.2 Preparatory meeting with the Lycées

In addition to the broader SynCo event, the targeted preliminary meetings with individual Lycées form a crucial component of the quality assurance cycle. These sessions are designed to support institutions in contextualising the formal assessment framework within their own operational reality. During these meetings, the full procedural timeline, from the submission of the self-evaluation report to the final ministerial decision, is outlined in detail. This offers institutions a clear understanding of each step, milestone and requirement. By explaining the rationale behind every stage of the procedure at an early point in the cycle, the assessment procedure becomes less abstract and more predictable, helping institutions to navigate the whole procedure in a structured and manageable way.

A key element of these preliminary discussions concerns the structure and underlying philosophy of the self-evaluation report. It is emphasised that the report should function as more than a descriptive document; it is intended to serve as a reflective instrument in which the four core assessment areas (programme objectives, assessment, implementation, and internal quality assurance) are critically analysed. Central to this reflective process is the use of a SWOT analysis as a tool for institutional self-evaluation. By clarifying expectations regarding the type of evidence required and underscoring the importance of involving both internal and external stakeholders, the NVAO seeks to create the conditions for institutions to prepare thoroughly for an open and constructive dialogue with the NVAO's assessment panel.

The site visit dialogue constitutes the core of the NVAO's assessment procedure, and the preliminary meeting is intended to remove any obstacles to an open and constructive exchange. The NVAO provides a proposed schedule for the site visit, enabling the *Lycée* to structure the exchanges between the panel and the various groups, including management, teaching staff, students, and representatives of the professional field. The process for drafting the assessment report is also clarified, particularly regarding the institution's opportunity to review the draft report for factual inaccuracies. By offering transparency about the panel's working methods and the reporting phase, the NVAO aims to ensure that the *Lycée* encounters no unexpected elements, thereby laying the groundwork for a constructive partnership dedicated to the further development of the BTS programme.

2.3 Validity

To ensure the validity of the external assessment, in the sense that the panel evaluates what it is intended to evaluate, the composition and preparation of the assessment panels are of central importance. NVAO panels typically consist of four to five members with complementary areas of expertise, including a student member, an educational expert (preferably with specific expertise at EQF level 5), a representative from the professional field, and a chair who leads the review process. The NVAO strives to convene panels that combine an international perspective with a thorough understanding of the Luxembourgish context, thereby ensuring a multidimensional view of the BTS programme. One or more panel members generally have prior experience with accreditation procedures (often the chair), while additional members possess disciplinary expertise relevant to the programme under review.

The principal strength of the NVAO's panel compositions is that these panels bring together a broad range of perspectives, thereby enabling a multidimensional understanding of the BTS programme under review. At the same time, this diversity of viewpoints reinforces the importance of ensuring that key concepts are clearly defined so that all panel members share a common understanding of the central ideas underpinning this assessment procedure.

The following two chapters illustrate how the NVAO strengthens the validity of its procedures.

2.3.1 Trainings and knowledge sharing sessions

The training provided to panel members, chairs and secretaries is designed to safeguard the procedural validity of the assessment procedure by establishing a clear and uniform framework for conducting the external assessment. The sessions cover the fundamental structure of higher education in Luxembourg as well as the specific legal provisions of the 2023 Higher Education Law, ensuring that all panel members operate from a shared legal and academic foundation.

A central component of the training concerns the distinct roles within the panel and the way in which the chair, secretary and process coordinator collaborate to uphold the integrity of the BTS assessment framework. The training emphasises how the panel members jointly ensure the consistent application of the assessment standards and the overall reliability of their assessment.

The training further addresses the assessment framework, in particular the four assessment areas included in the assessment ground: aims and objectives; admission, evaluation and certification; implementation; and internal quality assurance. Participants are guided in the analysis of self-evaluation reports and in the triangulation of the resulting findings during the site visit. Specific attention is devoted to the methodology of the dialogue, with the NVAO's training promoting the use of open, appreciative questioning in order to facilitate a reflective and authentic exchange with the various groups during the site visit. By standardising both the reporting process and the interpretation of the assessment criteria, the training helps to ensure that the panel's final recommendation, whether positive or conditional, is grounded in a verifiable, transparent evaluation of the programme's quality.

2.3.2 Briefings and debriefings

At the beginning and at the conclusion of the assessment procedure, the Ministry of Research and Higher Education organised briefing and debriefing moments with the NVAO. During the briefing moment, the information provided by the Ministry largely reflected the material contained in the reports of the admissibility committee. This additional contextual information supports the correct interpretation of those reports and identify specific points of attention for the assessment panels, thereby contributing to the validity of the procedure.

It should be noted, however, that these briefing moments were organised for the NVAO process coordinators and did not include the panel members. To safeguard the independence and objectivity of the panel members in carrying out their duties, process coordinators systematically act as the intermediary between the panel and other stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Research and Higher Education and the *Lycées*.

2.4 Reliability

Reliability concerns the consistent interpretation and application of the assessment areas that structure the assessment procedure. As these assessment areas are further elaborated through clearly defined criteria, the framework itself already provides an important basis for ensuring consistency in the assessment process. Additional mechanisms to strengthen reliability include the repeated involvement of experienced panel members across procedures and reflective calibration meetings between the NVAO process coordinators. These measures support a shared understanding of the framework and contribute to a more consistent application of the assessment areas across panels and procedures.

2.4.1 Repeated involvement of panel members

As noted in the section on validity above, a valid interpretation of accreditation concepts requires a sound understanding of the context in which those concepts are applied. For example, an EQF level 5 programme cannot be understood in exactly the same way across different national systems, not only because level 5 descriptors may differ to some extent between jurisdictions, but also because historical, cultural, pedagogical and institutional factors shape how such qualifications are interpreted and translated into educational practice.

For that reason, panel members, whether from Luxembourg or from abroad, must become familiar with the way in which the concepts underpinning the assessment procedure are operationalised within the context of Luxembourgish *Lycées*. In this respect, experienced panel members can play an important role in supporting other panel members when questions arise concerning these contextual elements. The repeated involvement of experienced panel members (and secretaries) facilitates the transfer of contextual knowledge to newly appointed members and thereby contributes to a more stable, consistent and reliable interpretation of the assessment criteria.

2.4.2 Internal reflective calibration meetings

A further mechanism for strengthening the reliability of the NVAO's assessment procedures consisted of organising reflective meetings between the NVAO process coordinators, during which experiences were exchanged and discussed. These meetings also served to share contextual information, for example on the interpretation of validation of prior experience rules, and such information would subsequently be communicated to the assessment panels.

In addition, these meetings supported the calibration of the recommendations and conditions attached to a panel's advice. This concerns the relative weight and intended effect of the panel's final conclusions. A panel may formulate a suggestion or a recommendation. A suggestion refers to an improvement point that the programme is advised to consider. A recommendation carries greater urgency, although neither a suggestion nor a recommendation is necessarily binding on the *Lycée* or the programme. Generally, a recommendation must be considered and the *Lycée* or the programme can decide not to act on a recommendation provided that well-substantiated reasons are given for not doing so. A condition details what needs to be done to ensure (an aspect of) programme quality and is therefore followed by a renewed external assessment after one year. Overall, these reflective calibration meetings, together with feedback from the NVAO Board, help to ensure that a recommendation or a condition reflects a comparable level of severity across all assessed programmes.

It is important to note, however, that the team responsible for the 2025 assessment procedures was new to the Luxembourgish quality assurance system. Acquiring familiarity, within a relatively short period, with the specific features of both the assessment framework and the educational context constituted a challenge and remains an ongoing learning process. In that respect, these reflective calibration meetings proved to be a valuable instrument for sharing approaches to compliance checks, discussing the practical implementation of procedures, and identifying challenges encountered during the process.

3 The assessment panels' principal findings and considerations

In this section of the overview report, we summarize the panel's most important findings and identify elements that recur across different reports. We do not have the intention to focus on one specific programme or accreditation. Rather, our panels find a list of good practices, strong points, and positive aspects in each accreditation. At the same time, there is always room for growth, and working points will also be part of each accreditation. Bringing these elements together provides insight into the focus points of the NVAO accreditation panels and thus helps further the transparency and validity of accreditations. Based on the NVAO assessment reports for various Luxembourgish BTS programmes, the overarching strengths and areas for improvement can be categorized into the four standard assessment areas.

In this section of the overview report, we synthesise the principal findings emerging from the assessment reports and identify themes that recur across different procedures. The purpose is not to single out any individual programme or assessment. Rather, each assessment highlights a range of good practices, strengths and positive features identified by the panel. At the same time, each procedure also points to areas for further development and possible recommendations for enhancement. Bringing these recurring elements together provides insight into the aspects that receive particular attention and thus contributes to the transparency and validity of the NVAO's assessments. Based on the assessment reports for a range of Luxembourgish BTS programmes, the overarching strengths and areas for development can be grouped under the four standard assessment areas.

3.1 Assessment area 1: Aims and objectives of the programme

The assessment of the first area shows that the programmes generally demonstrate a strong alignment with the needs of the professional field. A recurrent strength identified across programmes is their capacity to prepare graduates who are readily employable and able to transition smoothly into professional practice. Representatives of the professional field in sectors such as accountancy, information technology and media consistently confirm that the graduate profiles correspond closely to current labour market expectations. Panels refer to these graduates as "ready-to-hire" or "plug and play" graduates.

The relevance of BTS programmes is further underpinned by a practice-oriented curriculum in which a well-balanced relationship between theory and practice is maintained. In many programmes, a substantial proportion of the curriculum (up to 75%) is devoted to practice-based components. In addition, extended internships (ranging from 8 to 18 weeks) and final projects provide students with authentic opportunities to engage with the professional context and to demonstrate the attainment of the intended learning outcomes in a realistic setting.

There is also a commendable emphasis on "learning-by-doing" and the development of transversal skills through initiatives such as "PowerWeeks" or "Entrepreneurial Weeks," where students solve real-world business cases in interdisciplinary teams. Generally, the learning outcomes align well with EQF/CLQ level 5, focusing on professional autonomy, problem-solving, and adaptability.

The panels also note a strong emphasis on experiential learning and on the development of transversal competences. Initiatives such as intensive project weeks (such as "PowerWeeks" and "Entrepreneurial Weeks") or interdisciplinary challenge-based formats enable students to address authentic professional cases in collaborative settings. More broadly, the intended learning outcomes appear to be well aligned with CLQ level 5, particularly in relation to professional autonomy, problem-solving ability and adaptability within a professional environment.

With regard to areas for further development, the panels note that certain intended learning outcomes are at times formulated at an overly academic level or positioned above CLQ level 5. In some cases, this concerns learning outcomes that appear to require a degree of complexity and autonomy more characteristic of a higher qualification level. The panels therefore recommend ensuring that the

formulation of intended learning outcomes remains fully consistent with the profile and level orientation of a BTS programme.

In addition, although emerging technologies are already present in several programmes, the panels recurrently point to the need for a more systematic integration of generative artificial intelligence. Rather than addressing this solely as a transversal theme, programmes are encouraged to develop clearer frameworks and guidelines for the pedagogical use of genAI within the curriculum and assessment practice.

Finally, the guidance available to students who wish to progress to further studies merits continued attention. In some cases, support for transition to bachelor's programmes is considered insufficiently structured or not yet sufficiently visible. The panels therefore encourage institutions to strengthen progression guidance and to make pathways to further studies more explicit for students.

3.2 Assessment area 2: Admission, evaluation, certification

With regard to admission, evaluation and certification, transparency emerges as a clear strength across the programmes. Panels find that information on admission requirements, tuition fees and programme structure is generally communicated clearly through websites, brochures and other institutional information channels. Once enrolled, students benefit in several cases from effective intake, levelling and progression arrangements, which help to establish a common starting point for cohorts with diverse prior educational backgrounds, including graduates from general and technical secondary education as well as students with international qualifications.

The panels also generally assess the evaluation strategy positively. Across programmes, assessment is typically characterised by a coherent and diversified range of methods, including written examinations, practical assessments, jury-based evaluations and continuous assessment. These modalities are generally well aligned with the intended learning outcomes and appear to focus not merely on the reproduction of knowledge, but on the demonstration of insight, application and professional competence.

At the same time, the panels identify a number of challenges situated within the broader context of the BTS provision. A recurrent point of attention concerns the limited visibility of the BTS at national level and the persistent perception of the qualification as a secondary option in comparison with university education. According to feedback reported by panels, this perception is sometimes also reflected in guidance provided at secondary-school level, which may discourage prospective students from considering a BTS programme.

This broader contextual issue has implications for the sustainability of programmes. Several programmes face low enrolment numbers, which may affect their long-term viability and reduce the opportunities for peer learning and group dynamics that are associated with a sufficiently large student cohort. In addition, although procedures for the validation of prior experience are formally in place, certain regulatory requirements—such as the obligation for candidates to complete 30 ECTS within the programme as regularly enrolled students—may in practice constitute a barrier for working professionals, particularly when the programme or VAE commission expects all or part of these credits to involve course attendance rather than self-study.

Within the programmes themselves, the panels also identify room for further development in relation to the transparency of feedback to students and assessment practices. In some cases, students report a discrepancy between verbal feedback received during the learning process and the final grades awarded. This suggests that more explicit assessment criteria and clearer rubrics could further strengthen the transparency, consistency and perceived fairness of assessment practices.

3.3 Assessment area 3: Implementation of the programme

The implementation of the BTS programmes is generally supported by committed, accessible and professionally competent staff. Across the assessment reports, teaching staff are consistently valued for their motivation, disciplinary expertise and the close guidance they provide to students. This is reinforced by a well-developed tutoring system, which constitutes a distinctive strength of many BTS programmes. Through this system, students receive academic, professional and personal support, which contributes to student progression and helps to reduce the risk of dropout.

In addition, students generally benefit from adequate and, in several cases, high-quality infrastructure and learning resources, including well-equipped classrooms, individual workstations and up-to-date industry-standard software. Another recurrent strength concerns the close involvement of the professional field in programme delivery. In a number of programmes, professionals contribute as guest lecturers, mentors or external experts, thereby helping to ensure that students become familiar with current professional practices, sectoral standards and industry codes.

An area for further development within this domain concerns the resilience and sustainability of programme teams. Owing to the relatively small size of many teaching teams, programmes may be highly dependent on a limited number of key staff members, which can affect organisational continuity where turnover occurs. Strengthening team resilience and ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities therefore remains an important point of attention. And when turnover does occur, policies and practices need to be well documented to ensure swift and successful onboarding of new team members.

In addition, students in several programmes express a desire for a more distinct BTS identity within the *Lycées*. In particular, they indicate the added value of dedicated BTS spaces that would help foster a learning environment more clearly aligned with the character of higher education and more distinct from the broader secondary-school context in which the programmes are embedded.

With regard to external contributors from the professional field, the panels note that their sectoral expertise represents a clear added value for programme delivery. At the same time, these professionals may require additional support in order to align their teaching approach more fully with the applied and level-appropriate pedagogical orientation expected of CLQ level 5 programmes.

3.4 Assessment area 4: Quality assurance measures

The quality culture within the BTS programmes is characterised by strong informal quality assurance mechanisms. Owing to the small scale of many programmes, rapid and direct feedback loops can be established between students, teaching staff and management. In addition, programmes make active use of “Curricular Groups” that include representatives from the professional field, thereby helping to ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to developments in the labour market and professional practice.

These arrangements support a genuine enhancement-oriented approach, in which programmes demonstrate a clear willingness to act on feedback and to translate evaluation outcomes into concrete improvement measures. Examples include adjustments to the pacing of courses or to the selection of software in response to input from students and representatives of the professional field.

At the same time, the formalisation of these quality assurance processes remains a point of attention. A recurrent finding in the assessment reports concerns the limited systematic documentation of the PDCA cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act). In several programmes, improvement measures are implemented in an ad hoc manner rather than being embedded in a formal action plan or structured follow-up framework.

Public transparency regarding internal quality assurance can also be strengthened. In a number of cases, programmes do not yet make their internal quality assurance arrangements, or their detailed accreditation status, sufficiently accessible through their public information channels.

Finally, although formal consultative structures, such as advisory bodies involving representatives from the professional field, are often in place on paper, they do not always meet on a regular basis in practice. This may limit the potential for sustained and structured strategic dialogue with external stakeholders and, consequently, for the systematic enhancement of programme quality.

4 NVAO's insights

As outlined in the introduction, this chapter synthesizes the insights gained from the BTS assessment procedures conducted in 2025. These reflections are structured around the three key methodological pillars defined in Chapter 2: transparency, validity, and reliability. The goal of this section is not to critique individual programmes, but rather to identify systemic opportunities for growth to further professionalize the accreditation landscape in Luxembourg, thereby contributing to the broader quality enhancement process.

As outlined in the introduction, this chapter brings together the key insights arising from the BTS assessment procedures conducted in 2024 and 2025. These reflections are structured around the three methodological pillars identified in the second chapter: transparency, validity and reliability. The purpose of this section is to identify system-level opportunities that may contribute to the continued development of the quality of BTS programmes and of the quality assurance system in Luxembourg.

4.1 Transparency

4.1.1 Preparatory meeting with the Lycées

Although considerable efforts were made to maximise transparency throughout the procedure, certain ambiguities nevertheless remained. As noted in paragraph 2.2, the *Lycées* received a briefing from the NVAO on the expectations, planning and procedural aspects of the accreditation process. However, some elements that were implicitly assumed within the procedure were not always communicated explicitly, which occasionally resulted in minor operational issues.

One example concerns the selection of alumni participating in the site visit dialogue. In a number of cases, alumni invited to reflect on their experiences had completed the programme ten or more years earlier. From the perspective of the external assessment, such a time gap is generally too great to provide a reliable reflection of the programme in its current form. In principle, the NVAO aims to speak with alumni who graduated more recently, preferably within one to three years prior to the assessment procedure. This provides the assessment panels with feedback that is more closely aligned with the current curriculum and educational practice.

A comparable point applies to the dialogue with teaching staff during the site visit. In some cases, nearly the entire teaching team was represented. Experience shows, however, that focus groups comprising more than ten participants are often less effective, as they may limit the depth of the dialogue and reduce the extent to which all participants contribute qualitative input.

In addition, in order to obtain a sufficiently independent and balanced view of the educational practice, it is important that the panel also speaks with teaching staff who do not simultaneously hold a programme coordination role. This helps to ensure that the dialogue captures a broader range of perspectives on the implementation of the programme.

Finally, transparency during the site visit also has a practical and logistical dimension. Relatively simple measures can make a meaningful contribution to the smooth conduct of the assessment procedure. Good examples would be providing nameplates for all participants in the dialogues and ensuring that final projects or dissertations are physically available during the site visit. Although these issues did not give rise to major difficulties in practice, they illustrate that communication with the *Lycées* can be refined further in order to support an even more transparent and well-prepared site visit process.

4.1.2 The SynCo event

The SynCo event continues to be a key instrument for transparency on the NVAO's approach to external quality assurance. For the 2026 edition, the intention is to present this overview report, together with its principal findings, in the form of a keynote presentation. This will also include a self-reflective

consideration of those aspects of the procedure in which the NVAO itself identifies opportunities for further improvement.

In addition, the event is regarded as an opportunity to encourage BTS programmes to strengthen their connections with comparable EQAF level 5 provision elsewhere in Europe. Given the relatively limited scale of the level 5 landscape in Luxembourg, where many BTS programmes are unique and offered at only one location nationally, it can be particularly valuable for institutions to gain insight into how similar programmes are designed, implemented and quality assured in other European contexts. Against this background, a representative of CHAIN5, the European network focusing on EQF level 5 education, has been invited to contribute to the event. This is intended to broaden the international perspective of the BTS programmes and to facilitate the exchange of good practices with European peers, including for those programmes that are already familiar with the network and its activities.

4.1.3 Quality enhancement culture

A broader insight concerns the maturity of the internal quality assurance system. In a number of Lycées, the absence of dedicated structures for pedagogical development at higher education level may create a risk that quality assurance is approached primarily as a compliance requirement rather than as an integral part of the institutional quality culture. Continued efforts are therefore needed to further clarify the role of the NVAO and to strengthen the understanding of external quality assurance as a supportive instrument for quality enhancement. In that context, it remains important to move beyond a perception of the NVAO as an inspectorate and to position the organisation more clearly as a partner in fostering a sustainable culture of quality.

At the same time, it remains important to maintain an appropriate balance in the role assumed by the NVAO. As the NVAO is not an educational consultancy body, support to institutions must not become so directive that it compromises the independence of the external quality assurance process. In particular, care must be taken to avoid a situation in which the NVAO would effectively be assessing the implementation of its own substantive guidance rather than independently evaluating programme quality against its assessment framework.

From a system perspective, the NVAO considers that investment in dedicated pedagogical support capacity would add significant value to the continued development of quality culture within the BTS landscape. In particular, the presence of a designated person or team with expertise in CLQ level 5 education, higher education governance and didactics could provide an important stimulus for strengthening the internal quality assurance practices and enhancement-oriented approaches already emerging within BTS programmes.

4.2 Validity

4.2.1 The training of panel members

During the assessments of 2024-2025, the NVAO identified gaps in the panel members' understanding of the context of the BTS programmes. The NVAO therefore intends to place stronger emphasis on addressing these contextual gaps. The training programme for panel members will therefore devote greater attention to the specific features of the national education system and to the relevant legislative framework. This proactive approach is intended to ensure that panel members, particularly those from outside Luxembourg, enter the site visit with a sufficiently developed understanding of the institutional and regulatory context. As a result, the site visit dialogue can focus more fully on substantive questions relating to programme quality, rather than on contextual or legislative clarifications that can be addressed more effectively during panel preparation.

At the same time, stronger contextual awareness will better equip panel members to recognise and interpret potential legislative or regulatory issues should these arise in the course of the assessment procedure.

In addition to strengthening content-related preparation, the training will place a stronger emphasis on the assessment methodology. Given the thematic interrelationship between several standards, it is important to clarify explicitly for panel members under which assessment area particular findings should be considered. Such clarification is necessary in order to contextualise observations appropriately and to avoid overlap, duplication or ambiguity in the final assessment reports.

Finally, with regard to the technical infrastructure supporting the procedure, a structured feedback loop will be established for NVAO's Learning Platform. Any proposed adjustments to the platform will be communicated to the BTS programmes in advance, so that their input can be taken into account prior to implementation.

4.2.2 Student profile information

BTS programmes would benefit from further strengthening the formulation and use of their intended learning outcomes, which articulate the overall profile and orientation of the programme. Although the formulation of intended learning outcomes is a formal requirement within the accreditation framework, these outcomes have the potential to function as a substantive pedagogical instrument rather than as a purely procedural exercise. A well-developed graduate profile requires a clear articulation of the educational vision underpinning the programme, as well as of the competences expected of graduates upon completion. Where intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly and coherently, they can provide the foundation for the programme's vision, make the underlying learning culture explicit, and support a curriculum in which choices regarding teaching, learning and assessment follow logically from the programme's overarching aims. In the context of CLQ level 5 provision in particular, a valid assessment strategy requires that this graduate profile is anchored in a sound pedagogical rationale.

At the same time, the assessment panels observed that, although many programmes appeared to possess an implicit educational vision, this was not always articulated explicitly in the self-evaluation or during the dialogue, and often emerged only after more in-depth questioning. In several cases, the relationship between this underlying vision, the stated intended learning outcomes and the broader learning culture of the BTS programme remained insufficiently clear. Ultimately, the terminology, concepts and reference points used by lecturers and programme coordinators when discussing the programme can be seen as an important indicator of the maturity and coherence of the quality culture within a BTS programme.

4.3 Reliability

4.3.1 Compliance checking

Although the criteria are formulated clearly within the assessment framework, they are not always equally straightforward to verify within the context of NVAO's assessment procedure. The process begins with a document analysis, based primarily on the self-evaluation report and its annexes, and may be supplemented by a limited review of publicly available information, such as the programme website or other institutional documentation made accessible by the BTS programme or institution concerned. Given that panel members are not expected to have specialised legal expertise, highly technical compliance criteria, for example those relating to the formal legal conformity of the degree and the diploma supplement with specific statutory provisions⁷, may receive less substantive scrutiny during the assessment itself. While ongoing efforts in panel preparation and training aim to strengthen the capacity to address such compliance-related elements, a distinction can usefully be made between criteria that are actively verified through the panel's evaluative work and criteria that are verified more indirectly or in a more documentary manner.

⁷ "The degree shall comply with the provisions of Article 26(2), and shall be accompanied by a supplement complying with the provisions of Article 26(3)"

Certain criteria are likely to remain subject to more documentary or indirect verification, even where panel preparation is further strengthened. This applies in particular to criteria for which the external assessment panel has no practical means of independently verifying the underlying operational data during the procedure. An example is the criterion stating that the proportion between teachers appointed by the Lycée and external contractors must be appropriate to the objectives of the curriculum, with the share of teaching delivered by external contractors not exceeding the 40% threshold laid down in *Article 9(2)*⁸. In practice, programmes generally demonstrate compliance with this requirement by providing an overview of the ratio between internal teaching staff and external contributors. Within the scope of the NVAO's assessment procedure, however, there is no direct mechanism for independently verifying the exact number of teaching hours allocated to each individual staff member. The panel therefore relies on the accuracy of the information supplied by the programme, as the procedure does not include classroom observations or the monitoring of individual staff workloads. Should contradictory information emerge during the document analysis, the site visit or the dialogue with stakeholders, this would of course be taken into account in the panel's assessment. In the absence of such indications, however, this type of criterion remains subject to a more documentary or indirect form of verification, based on the presumption that the documentary evidence submitted by the programme is accurate and complete.

4.3.2 The spirit of the law

As noted in chapter 4.1.3 on 'Quality enhancement culture', if the NVAO is to be recognised as a partner in fostering quality enhancement rather than being perceived primarily as an "inspectorate", it is important to emphasise that the spirit of the law always guides the NVAO in its assessment procedures. The NVAO fears a purely formalistic reading of legal provisions leads to a mechanical approach towards quality. As a result, the NVAO attaches the appropriate weight to the way in which the assessment areas and criteria are interpreted, contextualised and meaningfully embedded in BTS programmes. This prevents a narrowly compliance-driven approach focused solely on the literal wording of the framework.

From the NVAO's perspective, the development of a mature and deeply rooted quality culture is of greater importance than a merely procedural demonstration that individual criteria have been "ticked off". What ultimately matters is not only whether the formal requirements are met, but whether they are translated into coherent educational practice, reflective self-evaluation and a sustainable commitment to continuous enhancement.

4.4 Other remarks and insights

4.4.1 Working and lifelong learning

The assessment panels observed that only a limited number of students combine a BTS programme with full-time or part-time employment. This is noteworthy, given that CLQ level 5 provision is intended, among other things, to contribute to lifelong learning and to create flexible progression opportunities for learners with professional experience. In principle, access to a BTS programme may be facilitated through the recognition of prior learning and prior experience ("*validation des acquis de l'expérience*"). However, according to panel observations, the current recognition procedure is often perceived as administratively complex and may therefore function more as a barrier than as an enabling instrument for participation.

In that sense, the existing arrangements may restrict rather than support professional mobility and lifelong learning pathways. There is therefore scope for both the BTS programmes and the Ministry of Research and Higher Education to further improve the accessibility, clarity and perception of the procedure for recognition of prior learning and prior experience. Strengthening this pathway could help

⁸ "The proportion between teachers appointed in the Lycée and external contractors is appropriate to the objectives of the curriculum, it being understood that the proportion of lessons provided by external contractors may not exceed the threshold of 40% set in Article 9(2)."

attract a broader and more diverse group of prospective students, particularly those seeking to combine professional practice with further study.

4.4.2 Small scale

Many BTS programmes operate on a relatively small scale and are supported by limited programme teams. In such contexts, the implementation of extensive and highly formalised internal quality assurance structures, such as fully elaborated PDCA cycles, may prove difficult in practice. This does not necessarily imply an absence of quality culture. It rather highlights the need to ensure that quality assurance arrangements remain proportionate to the scale, capacity and operational reality of smaller programmes.

Where applicable, assessment panels need to include this context in their investigation. It is important for small scale BTS programmes to ensure that internal quality assurance remains both manageable and effective, while still enabling them to demonstrate systematic reflection, follow-up and continuous enhancement.

5 Conclusion

The assessment procedures included in this overview report show that the BTS programmes in Luxembourg constitute a relevant and valuable form of EQF level 5 higher education. Across the procedures, panels identified clear strengths in the professional orientation of the programmes, the close involvement of the professional field, the commitment of teaching staff, and the strong practice-based character of the curricula. In many cases, students benefit from accessible guidance, authentic learning environments and a programme design that supports their progression towards employment and professional autonomy.

At the same time, the procedures also generated important insights for the further development of the BTS landscape and of the accreditation system itself. In particular, continued attention is needed for the further maturation of internal quality assurance, the explicit articulation of intended learning outcomes and educational vision, the accessibility of progression pathways for non-traditional learners, and the proportional interpretation of quality assurance requirements in the context of small-scale provision.

From the NVAO's perspective, these findings confirm that external quality assurance should not be understood merely as a compliance exercise, but as a means of strengthening quality culture and supporting continuous enhancement. The 2024-2025 cycle demonstrates that the BTS sector is continuing to professionalise and that there is a strong basis for further development through dialogue, reflection and shared ownership of quality.

Annex 1: overview of assessed programmes

School name	BTS Programme
Lycée des Arts et Métiers Luxembourg	Informatique
Lycée des Arts et Métiers Luxembourg	Réalisateur graphique
Ecole de Commerce et de Gestion Luxembourg	Gestionnaire comptable et fiscal
Lycée Guillaume Kroll	Communication Technologies
Lycée Nic-Biever Dudelange	Digital Content
Ecole de Commerce et de Gestion Luxembourg	Gestionnaire commerce et marketing
Lycée des Arts et Métiers Luxembourg	Dessin d'animation
Lycée Guillaume Kroll	Cybersecurity
Ecole de Commerce et de Gestion Luxembourg	Assistant de direction
Ecole de Commerce et de Gestion Luxembourg	Assistant juridique
Lycée du Nord	Gestionnaire commercial et administratif

Annex 2: standard programme for a site visit

Time	Programme
08.15-08.30	Panel arrives at Lycée
08.30-08.45	Closed panel meeting
08.45-09.35	Dialogue with management/coordination of the Lycée and the programme
09.35-09.55	Closed panel meeting/break*
09.55-10.55	Dialogue with teaching staff /support staff
10.55-11.15	Closed panel meeting/break
11.15-11.45	Tour of the facilities
11.45-12.00	Closed panel meeting
12.00-13.00	Light lunch/closed panel meeting
13.00-14.00	Dialogue with employers and alumni
14.00-14.20	Closed panel meeting/break
14.20-15.20	Meeting with students
15.20-15.30	Closed panel meeting/break
15.30-16.00	Backup time: meeting with programme management
16.00-17.00	Closed panel meeting
17.00-17.30	Mutual dialogue programme management and panel regarding the findings of the day
17.30	End of day

Annex 3: panel compositions

BTS Programme	Panel members and CV info
Informatique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Nicolas Navet (chair), Professor in Computer Science, University of Luxembourg; • Joeri Gerrits (panel member), Head of the Information Technology Cluster at PXL University of Applied Sciences and Arts; • Dr. Eric Maillet (panel member), Head of Quality, Process and Transition Unit, POST Technologies, Luxembourg; • Koen De Bruyne (student panel member), currently bachelor of Cybersecurity, Howest University College, alumnus of associate degree in System and Network Administration.
Réalisateur graphique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymonda Verdyck (chair), Former Executive Director, GO! Education of the Flemish Community; • Carole Bayet (panel member), Maître-Assistante in Graphic Arts, Haute école Provinciale de Hainaut - Condorcet (Department of Applied Arts); • Annick Kieffer (panel member), Founder and Design Director, Studio Polenta (Luxembourg); • Maysan Ben Taher (student member), Graduate of the Associate Degree in Marketing & Communication Support (Odisee); Student in Graphic Design (LUCA School of Arts).
Gestionnaire comptable et fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Vanmaercke (chair), strategic advisor VIVES University College, former head of service associate degrees VIVES University College, lecturer in taxation; • Ellen Pierreux, former coordinator bachelor business management, specialisation accountancy and taxation, and former coordinator of the associate degree in accounting administration at Odisee University College; • Renée Aakrann-Fezzo, managing director Mayelin Consultancy S.a.r.l., former managing director of Global Conferencing Services s.a.r.l., at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC subsidiary; • Andrew Best, student associate degree accounting administration Odisee University College.
Communication Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirk Kerckhoven, (chair) Advisor staff dpt. of the director general of the Catholic education. Former Director Don Bosco Sint-Pieters Woluwe; • Dr. Xavier Goac, Professor in research and teaching, Université de Lorraine; • Dr. Amin Mantrach, Manager Applied Science - Generative & Responsive AI, Amazon; • Avkaran Sarminder, Student BA in ICT, Odisee University of Applied Sciences.
Digital Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Steven Vos (chair), Full Professor in Design and Analysis of Intelligent Systems for Vitality and Leisure Time Sports at Eindhoven University of Technology, lead researcher at Fontys School of Sport Studies, and managing director of Ensembleur; • Veerle Van Hoorick (panel member), Program Manager of the bachelor's degree in business management - Creative Media Management at UCLL, Leuven campus; • Netty Thines (panel member), CEO of Mediation, and representative of MarkCom Luxembourg; • Nabil Bali (student member), Bachelor student in Construction Technology at LUCA School of Arts, Sint-Lucas Brussels campus.
Gestionnaire commerce et marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirk Kerckhoven (chair), Advisor staff dpt. of the director general of the Catholic education. Former Director Don Bosco Sint-Pieters Woluwe; • Roland van der Poel (member), Director of Associate Degrees, Rotterdam Academy; • Olga Meaurault (member), Head of Marketing at Cascade, Luxembourg based Member of Women in Finance & Technology program; • Yaness Potloot (student member), Student AD in marketing and communication support Odisee University College.
Dessin d'animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoneko Nurtantio (chair), consultant in quality assurance in Higher Education, social entrepreneur, speaker on sustainability, and trainer in work efficiency; • Jérôme Lievens (member), Coordinator of the 3D Animation Program and teacher at Haute École Albert Jacquard; • Valentin Grégoire (member), Founding partner and creative producer Squarefish; • Luna D'Heere (student member), Bachelor student in Applied Computer Science at EhB.
Cybersecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Nicolas Navet (chair), Professor in the Department of Computer Science (University of Luxembourg); • Yoann Klein, Senior Cyber Security Advisor, Huawei; • Ann Das, Lecturer IT-Organisation & Project Management, AI Business Architect, Hogeschool PXL; • Koen De Bruyne, currently bachelor of Cybersecurity, Howest University College, alumnus of associate degree in System and Network Administration.

Assistant de direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoneko Nurtantio (chair), consultant in quality assurance in Higher Education, social entrepreneur, speaker on sustainability, and trainer in work efficiency; • Diane Ries, Managing Director, HR Services S.A.; • Christelle Cayol, Teacher, Howest University of Applied Sciences; • Arwa Boukili, Bachelor Student Organisation & Management, Odisee.
Assistant juridique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoneko Nurtantio (chair), consultant in quality assurance in Higher Education, social entrepreneur, speaker on sustainability, and trainer in work efficiency; • Diane Ries, Managing Director, HR Services S.A.; • Vera Pletincx, Head of the Quality Management Office and Internal Auditor, Artevelde University of Applied Sciences; • Arwa Boukili, Bachelor Student Organisation & Management, Odisee University of Applied Sciences.
Gestionnaire commercial et administratif (programme en alternance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoneko Nurtantio (chair), consultant in quality assurance in Higher Education, social entrepreneur, speaker on sustainability, and trainer in work efficiency; • Dr. Roland van der Poel, Director of Associate Degrees, Rotterdam Academy; • Steven Scheuer, Head of Business Development, Sales and Marketing, Stoll Maitre Matelassier; • Mayssan Ben Taher, Graduate of the Associate Degree in Marketing & Communication Support (Odisee); Student in Graphic Design (LUCA School of Arts).

