

AACSB & NVAO (NL)

Agreement

Introduction

This agreement between AACSB and NVAO has been collaboratively developed by both organizations with input from a number of Dutch Business Schools. The goal of this agreement is to increase the efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for institutions in the accreditation process. It only applies to the Dutch institutions and programs that want to use AACSB's procedure and accreditation to also receive accreditation from NVAO.

date

25 April 2016

It is important to notice that no formal responsibilities will change because of this cooperation. All responsibilities of the parties involved (AACSB, NVAO, institutions) will remain the same. This agreement sets out the alignment in the procedure to ensure an efficient process when applying for double accreditation.

An institution requesting a joint visit must inform both AACSB and NVAO in due time:

- when submitting the Letter of Application for Initial Accreditation for the AACSB Initial Accreditation Review
- when submitting the CIR application for the AACSB Continuous Improvement Review

1. Critical reflection report

The critical reflection should provide information that meets both the AACSB assessments framework as well as the NVAO assessment framework for the limited program assessment or extensive program assessment. The outline of the critical reflection report depends on the type of assessment of AACSB (initial or continuous improvement review assessment) (see paragraphs 3a and 3b). From the NVAO perspective, it requires that all standards from the assessment framework and all programs to be accredited by the NVAO need to be covered in the CR. This can be fitted into the AACSB reporting requirements.

2. Joint committee & joint visit

The AACSB committee consists of experts from the AACSB-members pool. These experts will most likely meet the criteria that the NVAO has set out for the committee members. A NVAO committee consisting of members with domain specific expertise, work field specific expertise, international expertise, audit expertise and educational expertise. Therefore, composing a joint committee on both the terms of AACSB and the terms of the NVAO will probably be very well possible.

The institution submits a proposal for the composition of a panel to NVAO that meets the criteria of both AACSB and the NVAO. The NVAO will assess the committee members based on its procedure, looking at the different expertise as well as the independence of each committee member.

Page 2 of 4 The NVAO will judge the panel composition within four weeks. Any doubts or comments on its part regarding the panel must first be clarified. If need be, the panel composition will have to be modified.

In order to comply with the NVAO accreditation framework and Dutch law, a student (preferably a business school student) and secretary need to be added to the committee. Preferably this will be the same secretary for all joint visits between AACSB and the NVAO. An additional person, appointed by the institution and acquainted with the NVAO standards, will join the panel. His/her role will be:

- to guide and consult the committee on the institution's performance to NVAO standards for each program under review;
- to ask questions in order to judge the institution's alignment with NVAO standards;
- to interact and liaise with the thesis committee prior to the visit;
- to prepare answers to NVAO's questions after the visit. These answers will need to be endorsed by the committee.

All panel members will receive a training on AACSB and NVAO's assessment frameworks before the visit occurs.

The joint visit will be planned according to the guidelines set by both AACSB and the NVAO. Depending on the size of the institution, the visit may have to be extended with half a day or a day. A regular AACSB Initial Accreditation visit is typically two and a half days in length and a continuous review visit is one and a half day in length. The institution, in consultation with AACSB and NVAO, decides on the length of the visit and includes an open consultation hour as required by the NVAO framework.

3. Assessment frameworks

The main difference between the assessment frameworks of AACSB and the NVAO is the perspective: AACSB accredits at institutional level and the NVAO accredits at program level. The following paragraphs discuss the combining of the assessment frameworks. An important principle in the cooperation is that both levels (institutional and program) are assessed by the committee in order to ensure valid decision-making processes for both accreditation organizations.

3a. AACSB Initial Accreditation & NVAO

The AACSB assessment framework for the initial accreditation is an extended framework that covers, among other standards, the first three standards of the *limited* program assessment of the NVAO. The fourth standard of the latter mentioned framework, is not covered in the AACSB framework. This standard concerns the achieved learning outcomes. The assessment of this standard will be added to the work of the committee. The methodology for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard. Workable conditions (the number of theses¹ the committee needs to assess) will be determined per audit. Following discussion with the review team the organization under review may decide to outsource the assessment of theses to a third party.

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

Page 3 of 4 The *extensive* program assessment of the NVAO is also mostly covered by the AACSB initial accreditation framework. Standard eleven of this framework, is the only standard not covered in the AACSB initial accreditation framework. This standard concerns the achieved learning outcomes. The assessment of this standards will be added to the work of the committee. The methodology for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard. Workable conditions (the number of theses² the committee needs to assess) will be determined per audit. Following discussion with the review team the organization under review may decide to outsource the assessment of theses to a third party.

3b. AACSB Continuous Improvement Review & NVAO

The AACSB continuous improvement review (CIR) framework has, different from the standard by standard approach of the initial accreditation framework, a more consultative and strategic approach and therefore less of a focus on the individual programs. In order to ensure that the NVAO standards are sufficiently addressed, the NVAO accreditation framework for the *limited* program assessment will be the leading framework for the double accreditation. The section *Learning and Teaching* of the AACSB continuous improvement review is per program thoroughly addressed by the limited program assessment of the NVAO. This assessment should suffice for the AACSB CIR. However, none of the other areas listed in the continuous improvement review report outline are addressed by the NVAO limited program assessment and therefore will need to be addressed as indicated in the outline provided by AACSB.

In the case of the *extensive* program assessment of the NVAO framework, the NVAO framework will also be the leading framework for the double accreditation. The section *Learning and Teaching* and the section *Participants – Students, Faculty and Professional Staff* (assuming that staff in the NVAO assessment includes professional staff and faculty) of the AACSB continuous improvement review is per program thoroughly addressed by the extensive program assessment of the NVAO. This assessment should suffice for the AACSB CIR. However, none of the other areas listed in the continuous improvement review report outline are addressed by the NVAO extensive program assessment and therefore will need to be addressed as indicated in the outline provided by AACSB.

3c Distinctive feature Internationalization (optional)

For the allotment of the distinctive feature Internationalization (DFI), the DFI framework used by the NVAO needs to be applied for assessment. This means that the committee has to comply with the guidelines set for this procedure, and has to assess and judge the standards from this framework. Following discussion with the committee the organization under review may decide to outsource the assessment of the DFI to a third party. Adherence to the DFI framework in force remains mandatory.

4. Assessment report

The assessment report is the outcome of the work of the review team and the accreditation organizations will make their decisions based upon the information in

² Idem

Page 4 of 4 this report. The NVAO and AACSB do accept a joint report, however, for the purpose of consistency, AACSB does require that the team follows the AACSB prescribed reporting outline. This report may include specific NVAO sections as long as that is clearly indicated and the report enables both boards/committees to make a substantiated decision. In the case of a joint team report all topics (standards) from both frameworks should be discussed.

The NVAO grants accreditation per program. Therefore, the report needs to state a judgment per program. Furthermore, the NVAO assessment framework prescribes the need for a differentiated judgment per standard and program (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good and excellent). In order for the NVAO to make a decision and include a differentiation judgment, the committee needs to state these judgments in the report.

It is important to note that the reports used by the NVAO as the basis for its decision, are published on the NVAO website for any stakeholder to access and read.

At least all sections of the report regarding NVAO standards, will be published. A format for this report will be provided. Institutions agree with the publication of the assessment report when opting for the joint process.

5. Duration of accreditation

The duration of the accreditation period differs. AACSB grants accreditation for five years, the NVAO for six years. The institutions / programs themselves need to decide whether they will use the possibility of the joint process and therefore apply for NVAO accreditation within five years (instead of six).

6. Separate decision processes

The boards of the NVAO and AACSB will both make their own decisions and decide on the possible follow-up, based on the assessment report and the assessment frameworks applicable for their respective organizations.

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

Amsterdam, 25 April 2016 (update to the original agreement of 25 May 2015)

On behalf of AACSB



Thomas R. Robinson,
President and CEO
AACSB International

On behalf of the NVAO



Paul Zevenbergen
Member of the Board
NVAO