

Code of Ethics - NVAO Flanders

NVAO Flanders' Code of Ethics bundles the rules of conduct and guidelines for panel members in NVAO's assessment procedures. This code applies to all persons who perform tasks on behalf of NVAO in the capacity of "panel member". By signing this code, you agree to abide to the provisions and principles listed below.

The code contains the following basic principles:

- Diligence
- Professional and appreciative conduct
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Independence

Diligence

As a panel member you carry out an assessment with great diligence. This implies that you substantiate judgements within the assessment panel in a reasoned manner.

- In preparation of your tasks and responsibilities as a panel member, you attend a mandatory training course and you practice the application of NVAO's Appreciative Approach.
- During the assessment procedure, you demonstrate goodwill and flexibility to ensure the progress of the procedure.
- You prepare thoroughly for the assessment procedure by studying all relevant documentation.
- You make use of the applicable assessment framework provided by NVAO.
- You do not contact the institution/programme yourself during the processing period of the procedure. All communication takes place through the process coordinator of NVAO.
- You actively contribute to the realisation of the assessment report. You read the final version of this report and pass on any suggestions for improvement to the secretary before endorsing it.
- You are aware of the complexity of the planning and organisation of the assessment procedures. That is why, with the exception of cases of *force majeure*, you make every effort to respect all commitments and the timing that you have agreed upon.

Professional and appreciative conduct

As a panel member you adopt a professional and appreciative attitude. You commit to carry out the assessment within the philosophy of NVAO's methodology.

- You adopt a business-like, open-minded, and approachable attitude and contribute to good atmosphere to facilitate an appreciative dialogue.
- You ensure that discussion topics and questions are in line with the context of the institution/programme under review.
- You work as objective and unbiased as possible. During the dialogue, you empathise with the perspective of the programme and/or institution.
- As a panel member, you do not accept gifts or donations presented by the programme and/or the institution that could jeopardise your independence. Always contact your process coordinator in such cases. The process coordinator will determine whether small gifts or donations might be allowed in special circumstances.
- Within the panel you show respect for everyone's contribution.
- You adopt a constructive approach and you are open to feedback.

- You respect the identity, context and distinctiveness of the programme and/or the institution.
- Your assessment starts from the premise that the quality is satisfactory.
- You have an open eye for both the strengths and the points of attention regarding the programme and/or institution. These aspects are mentioned in the assessment report. Recommendations from the panel always reflect what the programme and/or institution could achieve, without specifying how this should be done.

Confidentiality and data protection

As a panel member you have access to confidential and sensitive information. You are responsible for treating this information discreetly and for only using and retaining it for the duration of the assessment procedure.

- You keep the information made available by the programme and/or institution in a safe manner, only accessible to you.
- You do not share information about the programme and/or institution under assessment with anyone other than your colleagues in the panel, the secretary or process coordinator. If you wish to use this information in any way, you ask permission via the NVAO's process coordinator.
- After the final decision-making by NVAO, you delete the electronic files and destroy the paper documentation that you received for this assessment procedure.
- You do not provide information about the assessment procedure and you ensure the confidentiality of all information obtained to both the institution, and where applicable the programme, as well as to third parties.
- After the site visit you ensure that no documents, neither from the panel nor from the programme or institution, remain behind.
- NVAO's assessment reports are made public. You agree that – in compliance with the legal basis for this - your name, position and profile will be included in the assessment reports for which you are responsible .
- NVAO stores your personal data in compliance with NVAO's privacy statement. Upon simple request you can access your personal data and make adjustments.

Independence

As a panel member you must not have any interest in a positive or negative outcome of the assessment. Acting as a member of panel implies that in the five years prior to the application date you did not have or you currently do not have any of the following relationships with the institution concerned:

1. A membership of:
 - the staff of the institution concerned, regardless of the type of employment or the origin of the remuneration;
 - a governing body of the institution concerned;
 - a governing body of a legal person in which the institution participates;
 - a governing body of the hospital affiliated with the institution;
2. A membership or a representative position in the association to which the institution belongs;
3. Provision of advice or execution of assignments for and to the benefit of the institution or programme concerned;
 - this also includes participation in internal assessment procedures regarding internal quality assurance and/or the institution's own conduct for confirming quality.
4. A marriage or a cohabitation or having family ties up to the second degree with a person referred to under 1°.

It is the responsibility of the panel member to communicate changes in independence spontaneously and immediately to NVAO.

Statement

The undersigned hereby indicates that he/she is not independent with regard to the following higher education institutions:

The undersigned declares to agree with this code of ethics and undertakes to comply with the provisions of this code.

The undersigned declares that s/he will at all times comply with the applicable measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19.

The undersigned explicitly consents to the processing of personal data referred to in this Code of Ethics in accordance with [Article 6 \(1\) a\) of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation](#).

Name

Signature

option 1: signature or copy of signature

option 2: digital signature with ID-card (only for Belgian residents)

Date