



EFMD



# Agreement between EFMD & NVAO (NL)

## Introduction

This agreement between EFMD and NVAO has been collaboratively developed by both organizations with input from a number of Dutch Business Schools. After a few meetings between EFMD and the NVAO, both organizations decided to explore possibilities for joint accreditation processes. The main purpose of the 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 programmes that want to use EFMD's procedure and accreditation to also receive accreditation from NVAO.

It is important to notice that no formal responsibilities will change because of this cooperation. All responsibilities of the parties involved (EFMD, 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.

### 1. Critical reflection report

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

### 2. Joint committee & joint visit

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

The EPAS or EQUIS office proposes the composition of the Peer Review Team (PRT) to the institution who then has to approve it. The NVAO will assess the PRT members based on their procedure, looking at the different expertise as well as the independence of each member.



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

In order to comply with the NVAO accreditation framework and Dutch law, a student and secretary need be added to the PRT (preferably a business school student). Preferably this will be the same secretary for all joint visits between EFMD and the NVAO.

### 3. Assessment frameworks

#### 3a. EQUIS & NVAO

The main difference between the assessment frameworks of EQUIS and the NVAO is the perspective: EQUIS accredits at institutional level and the NVAO accredits at programme level. An important principle in the cooperation is that, in order to ensure valid decision-making processes for both accreditation organizations, both levels (institutional and programme) need to be assessed by the PRT.

The EQUIS framework covers, among other standards, the first three standards of the *limited* programme assessment of the NVAO. In order for the NVAO to base their decision on the EQUIS report, the PRT needs to assess and provide a judgment on each separate programme (and not only on institutional level).

Furthermore, the fourth standard of the latter mentioned framework is not covered specifically in the EQUIS framework. This standard concerns the achieved learning outcomes. This standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The methodology for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard. Workable conditions (the number of theses<sup>1</sup> the PRT needs to assess) will be determined per audit.

The *extensive* programme assessment of the NVAO is also mostly covered by the EQUIS framework. Standard eleven of this framework is the only standard not covered in the EQUIS framework. This standard concerns the achieved learning outcomes. This standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The methodology for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard. Workable conditions (the number of theses<sup>2</sup> the PRT needs to assess) will be determined per audit.

#### 3b. EPAS & NVAO

The EPAS assessment framework is an extended framework that covers, among other standards, the first three standards of the *limited* programme assessment of the NVAO. The fourth standard of the latter mentioned framework is not covered specifically in the EPAS framework. This standard regards the achieved learning outcomes. This standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The

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<sup>1</sup> Theses or any other product or products that the programme regards as the final product of a student.

<sup>2</sup> Idem



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guidelines for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard.

The *extensive* programme assessment of the NVAO is also mostly covered by the EPAS framework. Standard eleven of the latter mentioned framework is the only standard not covered in the EPAS framework. This standard regards the achieved learning outcomes. This standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The methodology for assessing this standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this standard.

### **3c. Distinctive feature Internationalization (optional)**

For the allotment of the distinctive feature Internationalization (DFI), the NVAO framework for the DFI needs to be used for assessment. This means that the PRT needs to assess and judge the standards from this framework per programme. The DFI can only be allotted when the report states the findings of the PRT per standard. Following discussion with the PRT the organization under review may decide to outsource the assessment of DFI to a third party.

## **4. Assessment report**

The assessment report is the outcome of the work of the PRT, based on which the accreditation organizations make their decisions. As far as the NVAO is concerned, this could be a joint report. This report should discuss all topics (standards) from both frameworks. This does not need to be discussed in a particular order or format, but should, with the help of clear Reading Instructions, enable both boards to make a substantiated decision.

The NVAO grants accreditation per programme. Therefore, the report needs to state a judgment per programme. Furthermore, the NVAO assessment framework prescribes the need for a differentiated judgment per standard and programme (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good and excellent). In order for the NVAO to make a decision and include a differentiation judgment, the PRT 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. EFMD grants accreditation for three or five years, the NVAO for six years. The institutions/programmes 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).





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## 6. Separate decision processes

The boards of the NVAO and EFMD 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 EFMD 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.

For **EFMD**

For **NVAO**

Prof. Eric Cornuel  
Director General & CEO

Drs. Paul Zevenbergen  
Board Member

Date:

October 1, 2015

Date:

1-10-2015



# Agreement between EFMD & NVAO (FL)

## Introduction

This agreement between EFMD and NVAO has been collaboratively developed by both organizations with input from a number of Flemish Business Schools. The main purpose of the agreement is to increase the efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for institutions in the accreditation process. It only applies to the Flemish institutions and programmes that want to use EFMD's procedure and accreditation to also receive accreditation from NVAO.<sup>1</sup>

This agreement does not in any way change the formal responsibilities of NVAO, EFMD or the institutions involved. It is based on NVAO's equivalence procedure (in Dutch: *equivalentie*) and calibrates it to ensure that an EFMD accreditation can as efficiently as possible lead to an NVAO accreditation.

NVAO can accept EFMD's accreditation decision for equivalence if the underlying assessment methodology is comparable to NVAO's. The following three elements are essential: a student was member of the assessment panel, all the programmes involved are individually identifiable as accredited, and the achieved learning outcomes per programme are assessed.

The starting point is that institutions should make arrangements to ensure that their EFMD accreditation can be declared equivalent by NVAO and thus formally lead to an NVAO accreditation. To do this they need to take the content of this agreement into account.

### 1. Self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report should provide information that meets EFMD's regular requirements and EFMD additional requirements in order to meet NVAO's equivalence criteria. This means the achieved learning outcomes per programme need to be covered. The outline of the self-evaluation report depends on the type of assessment of EFMD (EQUIS or EPAS) (see paragraphs 3a and 3b).

### 2. Assessment panel

To meet NVAO's equivalence criteria, the assessment panel includes a student (preferably a business school student).

It is advisable to include an NVAO trained secretary to assist the assessment panel in drafting the assessment report.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the Flemish accreditation system will change in the near future. This memo applies to institutions and programmes that need to obtain accreditation at programme level.





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### **3. Assessment frameworks**

#### **3a. EQUIS & NVAO**

The main difference between the assessment frameworks of EQUIS and the NVAO is the perspective: EQUIS accredits at institutional level and the NVAO accredits at programme level. An important principle in the cooperation is that, in order to ensure valid decision-making processes for both accreditation organizations, both levels (institutional and programme) need to be assessed by the PRT.

The EQUIS framework covers, among other standards, generic quality standards one, two and four of the programme assessment of the NVAO. In order for the NVAO to base their decision on the EQUIS report, the PRT needs to assess and provide a judgment on each separate programme (and not only on institutional level). Furthermore, the third generic quality standard of the NVAO framework is not covered specifically in the EQUIS framework. This standard concerns the exit level achieved. This generic quality standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The methodology for assessing this generic quality standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this generic quality standard. Workable conditions (the number of theses<sup>2</sup> the PRT needs to assess) will be determined per audit.

#### **3b. EPAS & NVAO**

The EPAS assessment framework is an extended framework that covers, among other standards, generic quality standards one, two and four of the programme assessment of the NVAO. The third generic quality standard of the NVAO framework is not covered specifically in the EPAS framework. This standard concerns the exit level achieved. This generic quality standard will be added to the work of the PRT to assess. The methodology for assessing this generic quality standard, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing this generic quality standard.

#### **3c. Distinctive feature Internationalization (optional)**

For the allotment of the distinctive feature Internationalization (DFI), the NVAO framework for the DFI needs to be used for assessment. This means that the PRT needs to assess and judge the standards from this framework per programme. The DFI can only be allotted when the report states the findings of the PRT per standard. Following discussion with the PRT the organization under review may decide to outsource the assessment of DFI to a third party.

### **4. Assessment report**

To meet NVAO's equivalence criteria, the assessment report provides substantiation for accreditation decisions at programme level and it demonstrates that the achieved learning outcomes have been assessed by the panel per programme.

The assessment report is the outcome of the work of the assessment panel and both accreditation organisations base their decisions on it. EFMD requires that the assessment panel follows the EFMD prescribed reporting outline. This report then

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<sup>2</sup> Theses or any other product that the programme regards as the final product of a student.



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includes specific sections to ensure NVAO can accept EFMD accreditation as equivalent.

The NVAO grants accreditation per programme. Therefore, the report needs to include substantiations and judgments per programme. Furthermore, the report includes how the panel has looked at how each programme can demonstrate that the learning outcomes are achieved.

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

#### 5. Duration of accreditation

Given that NVAO declares the original accreditation as equivalent, NVAO grants the same period of accreditation as in the original accreditation decision. Since EFMD grants accreditation for five years, this is also the period of validity of NVAO's accreditation decision.

#### 6. Separate decision processes

The boards of the NVAO and EFMD will both make their own decisions and decide on the possible follow-up, based on the assessment report and their own relevant procedures.

This collaboration agreement between EFMD 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.

For **EFMD**

For **NVAO**

Prof. Eric Cornue  
Director General & CEO

Drs. Paul Zevenbergen  
Board Member

Date:

*October 9 2015*

Date:

*1-10-2015*