



NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

TEMPORARY PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION 3.0

FEBRUARY 2022



NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

TEMPORARY PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION 3.0

FEBRUARY 2020



Content

Introduction	4
1 Procedure.....	5
1.1 Panel composition	5
1.2 Preparations	5
1.3 Inspection.....	6
2 Final conclusion	7
3 Reporting.....	8
4 Decision-making.....	9

Introduction

On account of the continued corona virus containment measures NVAO considers certain (temporary) adjustments to the initial accreditation procedure to be necessary for a longer period of time.

Therefore the NVAO Board has decided to extend a number of previously implemented (temporary) adjustments to the initial accreditation procedure in line with the requirements incumbent upon such assessments as stated in legislation and the relevant accreditation framework. The modified procedure safeguards the quality assurance of new programmes, whilst facilitating progress in the processing of applications that have been submitted. These modifications are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines.

The modifications to the initial accreditation procedure are extended until 1 September 2022 and apply to all applications. In principle all visitations and related procedures will take place online. NVAO has discussed the extension of the modifications with the relevant stakeholders and with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The modifications are detailed in the Temporary Procedure for Initial Accreditation 3.0.

Essentially, the modifications entail the preparatory consultation of the panel via digital means and the remote site visit to the tertiary institution. The parties concerned are to be informed in advanced about the online accreditation procedure. The NVAO Board may come to a substantiated decision about the execution of an initial accreditation procedure:

- should all parties involved unanimously decide upon a visitation in person or;
- should the programme, panel and process coordinator be unable to come to a unanimous decision regarding the execution of the procedure.

The quality of the initial accreditation procedure is not to be compromised. The assessment of the plans for a new programme is in the hands of a panel of peers. Students must have certainty that a programme assessed by NVAO meets the relevant quality criteria. NVAO will monitor the findings of those involved in these modified assessments. An evaluation meeting will be scheduled once the first assessments have been conducted. The experience gained in these assessments will be taken into account in any future developments of the accreditation system.

1 Procedure

1.1 Panel composition

The requirements regarding panel composition are identical to those in regular initial accreditation procedures. The NVAO process coordinator will schedule the visitation in consultation with the panel and the tertiary institution.

1.2 Preparations

Completeness check

The NVAO process coordinator will check the information dossier for completeness at the beginning of the procedure. This completeness check is thorough and in accordance with the requirements set out in the accreditation framework¹.

Information dossier analysis

Once the information dossier has been found to be complete, it is to be studied in detail by the panel. The panel will follow the usual preparations, involving a close reading and analysis of the information dossier. The panel members will record their findings on the analysis form on which there is dedicated space for further justification and substantiation of their conclusions. In the online procedure, increased emphasis will be placed on the written analyses of the panel members. The initial impressions may prompt a limited request for additional information.

Schedule and remote site visit

A site visit in the purview of the initial accreditation assessment of a new programme takes in principle one day and will be conducted remotely. The programme proposes a schedule for the site visit which includes the sequence of the interviews, types of interviews, participants, and duration. The panel honours such a proposal wherever possible and may request adjustments to further the formation of reliable conclusions.

The NVAO Board may come to a substantiated decision about the execution of an initial accreditation procedure:

- should all parties involved unanimously decide upon a visitation in person or;
- should the programme, panel and process coordinator be unable to come to a unanimous decision regarding the execution of the procedure.

Preparatory consultation

After submission of the analyses by the panel members, a remote preparatory internal panel consultation will be held, during which the panel will discuss the information dossier and the underlying documents. The process coordinator will explain the assessment framework, the assessment procedure, and the attitude expected of the panel members during the interviews.

¹ Paragraph 3.1 of the framework states: "The plans must have been elaborated to a sufficient extent in order to give the panel a clear picture of the intended learning outcomes of the entire programme, the set-up of the curriculum, the learning environment, the learning assessment, and the staff team that is going to teach the programme. With respect to the first 60 ECs of the programme, these aspects must have been elaborated in detail. Paragraph 3.4.1 provides further details regarding the information dossier to be compiled in initial accreditation procedures."

Paragraph 3.4.1 states: "The initial accreditation of new programmes involves an ex-ante assessment. The information dossier and the appendices provide the panel with a clear picture of the intended learning outcomes for the entire programme, the set-up of the curriculum, the draft teaching and examination regulations, the learning environment, the learning assessment, and the composition of the staff team that is going to teach the programme. With respect to the first 60 ECs of the programme, full information on the content of the programme and the learning assessment must be available in draft form. In addition, tests must have been elaborated for several components. The programme must provide insight into the methods it intends to employ to assess achievement of the intended learning outcomes at the end of the curriculum."

Furthermore, the process coordinator will ensure calibration within the panel by discussing the interpretation of the standards, the conclusions, and the assessment rules.

The preparatory panel consultation will take place before the remote site visit and, in principle, by means of digital communication. The panel members are free to determine their approach in consultation with the NVAO process coordinator. The completed analysis forms constitute the basis for the preparatory consultation. During the preparatory consultation, the panel members will determine key questions to be considered during the remote site visit, in order to arrive at a final conclusion.

The panel will conduct the assessment in accordance with the relevant stipulations of the framework. The assessment involves a peer review, in the sense that conclusions are formed on a peer-by-peer basis. Among other things, this means that the panel approach will be based on trust and the principles of the programme, and that the panel members will engage in an open dialogue with those involved. The ex ante nature of the assessment will remain entirely intact. In their preparatory consultation, the panel members will also discuss the approach to be adopted during the remote site visit.

The preparatory consultation may result in a limited request for additional information.

The panel may find that a remote site visit will not suffice to arrive at a final conclusion regarding the application. In such cases, the panel will advise the Board of NVAO on the necessity of a site visit in person. A panel may issue such a recommendation on the following grounds:

- the need for more substantive questions requiring an in-depth interview, or
- the need for the assessment of services and/or facilities essential to the programme.

Panels will exercise reticence in requesting a site visit in person. The NVAO Board will decide on the matter on the basis of a panel report. The application will be processed once the possibility of a site visit in person becomes possible within government guidelines.

1.3 Inspection

The remote site visit will take place digitally and will be structured in a manner that enables the panel to conduct a thorough assessment. At a minimum, the inspection will involve an interview with (delegates from) the programme management, the development team / staff team, and the board of examiners. Furthermore, the assessment will usually comprise an interview with members of the relevant professional field. The panel may choose to conduct this interview on a date other than that of the remote site visit, and may decide to delegate this interview to specific panel members.

As occasion arises, the panel may request additional discussion partners be included in the remote site visit. In such cases, the programme will be informed accordingly ahead of time. The programme may also suggest discussion partners to be added to the remote site visit. The panel will honour such suggestions whenever possible and may request adjustments in the purview of the formation of reliable conclusions.

2 Final conclusion

As in regular initial accreditation procedures, the information dossier, the preparatory consultation, and the remote site visit constitute the elements underpinning panel conclusions. The panel conclusions are formed on a peer-by-peer basis. The final conclusion will do justice to the various perspectives of quality that are represented on the panel, amongst which is the student perspective. The panel will aim for consensus.

Upon completion of the remote site visit, the panel chair will provide feedback to the programme.

3 Reporting

The report produced in this procedure will be based on a format to be provided by NVAO. In a concise advisory report, the panel will summarise the findings and considerations that have resulted in the scores awarded. The standards and assessment rules in the relevant framework are leading in this report. The panel secretary will submit the first draft of the report to the panel members for feedback.

The draft advisory report will be endorsed by the panel chair, following approval by the panel members. The draft advisory report will then be forwarded to the tertiary institution in order to rectify any possible factual inaccuracies.

The final advisory report will underpin the accreditation decision made by NVAO. NVAO will publish the accreditation decision and the advisory report.

4 Decision-making

The Executive Board of NVAO will take a decision on the application on the basis of the panel recommendations, in the manner as indicated in the framework.

