



NVAO • NEDERLAND

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE INTERIM REFLECTION FOR EXTENDED ACCREDITATION

DECEMBER 2022



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Introduction

In 2021, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science extended the accreditations of a large number of higher education degree programmes (henceforth 'programmes') to better spread the reviews. Achieving this spread meant that the visitation timetable needed to be adjusted. As a consequence, some programmes have had the duration of their accreditation extended by more than two years.

The Minister granted these extensions on condition that each of these programmes must address a written statement to NVAO before the original submission date, showing that it has conducted an interim reflection that NVAO can use to ascertain that the basic quality of the programme is not at risk. On 31 January 2022, the Minister wrote to the programmes in question to announce the following in connection with the manner in which that interim reflection should take place:

This is explicitly a form of interim reflection as is already commonly conducted at educational institutions. The reflection can and may be conducted until approximately three years before the original submission date. At least one independent external reviewer must be part of the reflection: either a peer, or else a member of an advisory council or a representative from the profession. The review must also first be discussed with the relevant bodies within your institution, such as the Educational Programme Committee, the director of the programme, the dean or the director of the educational institution.

The statement must be co-signed by the chair of the relevant Educational Programme Committee. The statement must make reference to a consenting advice from the Educational Programme Committee, which should be attached.

NVAO has prepared a procedure for assessing the written statements that institutions will present during the years ahead. The assessment is a test of reasonableness, to establish whether the institution has satisfied the condition for extending its accreditation by more than two years.

1. Assessment of the interim reflection

1.1 Assessment of the interim reflection

NVAO will assess whether the institution has met the condition that the Minister of Education, Culture and Science set for extending its accreditation by more than two years, as announced in the Minister's letter of 31 January 2022. This means:

1. The board of the institution must send NVAO a written statement confirming that an interim reflection has been conducted, which NVAO can then use to ascertain that the programmes basic quality is not at risk;
2. The reflection may be conducted until approximately three years before the original submission date;
3. At least one independent external reviewer must take part in the reflection activities: either a peer, or else a member of an advisory council or a representative from the profession;
4. The review must first be discussed with the relevant bodies within the institution, such as the Educational Programme Committee, the director of the programme, the dean or the director of the educational institution.

NVAO will assess whether the statement from the institution's board was submitted on time and whether the interim reflection was conducted in the manner outlined above. NVAO will not assess the findings from the interim reflection. It is the institution's responsibility to indicate that the quality of the education is not at risk. The institution only needs to submit the board's statement to NVAO, and (for government-funded programmes) include the Educational Programme Committee's advice. There is no need to present any detailed reporting on the interim reflection to NVAO to support the statement. Nor does NVAO ask for further details to support the independence of the external reviewer who was involved in the review.

NVAO's assessments ends with a letter in which NVAO confirms that the institution has met the condition imposed by the Minister for extending its accreditation by more than two years.

1.2 Submission deadline

As the Minister's letter states, the institution must submit its written statement to NVAO before the programme's original submission date. NVAO will publish a visitation timetable with submission dates on its website to indicate when institutions must submit their interim reflection statements.

It is the institution's own responsibility to submit its statement on time: NVAO will not send any reminders. If the written statement is not submitted on time, NVAO will inform the institution accordingly and notify the Minister. If the written statement is submitted on time, but does not satisfy the conditions outlined in the Minister's letter, NVAO may request that the institution remedy this within a reasonable period of time: for example if the statement shows that the interim reflection was not conducted in the manner described by the Minister. If that reasonable period has ended and NVAO establishes that any shortcomings have not been remedied, it will inform the institution accordingly and notify the Minister. The Minister will take a decision regarding the extension of the accreditation term.

1.3 Alternative arrangements

The Minister's letter of 31 January 2022 also mentions the option of alternative arrangements. Alternative arrangements are possible if shifts in the future or adjustments during the process were to cause currently unforeseeable possible bottlenecks. In such situations, the institution may make a request to NVAO for alternative arrangements.

