

Monitoring quality

Annual Report 2011 Summary

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Foreword

‘Further stringency turned out to be necessary to eradicate any doubt.’

For NVAO, 2011 had two faces. On the one hand, much hard work was done leading up to the introduction of the new accreditation system in the Netherlands and in the discussions about a new system for Flanders. On the other hand, the climate surrounding quality and quality assurance was affected by the publication of irregularities that had been found at several Dutch in universities of applied sciences in 2010 and 2011.

The uncovered shortcomings in terms of quality forced NVAO to take a long hard look in the mirror: how can such situations be prevented in the future? The new accreditation system turned out to already contain a considerable number of improvements. The option of imposing less severe sanctions and offering a realistic possibility for improvement should make it easier for panels to arrive at negative assessments. The significantly increased attention paid to assessment, exams and the level realised is another clear improvement. Moreover, the institutional audit included in the new system focuses attention on the strength and effectiveness of the quality assurance systems used by institutions and the creation of a quality culture. Further stringency turned out to be necessary to eradicate any doubt about the legality, soundness and legitimacy of the qualifications awarded.

Although this put a damper on our activities, it did not stop us from emphatically continuing with our accreditation work: hundreds of decisions were made, two conferences were organised, seminars were held, lectures were given and large international projects were acquired. In this sense, it was a year like any other. Within the organisation, a successful conversion was made to a more comprehensive yet more effective IT system in which work processes will run faster and more smoothly.

In brief, our track record was good. Everyone within and outside NVAO who worked on quality assurance and quality deserves to be complimented: the panels, the assessment agencies, the quality assurance officers, and last but not least, the teaching staff and all those involved in providing education – they are what education is all about! We do, however, need to keep monitoring quality in higher education.

Karl Dittrich

Chair

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Chapter 1

Monitoring quality

Although the first round of accreditations laid the foundations for quality in higher education, sub-standard programmes have disappeared, programmes have increased the number of face-to-face hours of teaching, more lecturers have a master's degree, and programmes are paying more attention to quality assurance, it turns out that there are still serious quality issues in higher education. Irregularities at certain institutions, inadequate administrative procedures and complaints from students and teaching staff led to much ado and outcry in 2011. Accreditations awarded in the past turned out not to offer an adequate guarantee that the quality of the programmes would remain up to scratch in later years.

The fact that doubt could be shed on the legality and legitimacy of qualifications that had been awarded was especially shocking. Politicians and society voiced serious concerns about this and measures were sought to prevent such incidents from recurring in the future wherever possible. More stringent supervision was called for to be certain that every qualification would be awarded legally and that everyone who obtains a qualification possesses the expected knowledge, skills and attitude.

The concern was understandable. Society must be able to have faith in the quality of higher education, faith that it is in good order and will remain so. Incidents demand efficient measures. The responsibility for the quality of higher education rests in the first place with the institutions themselves. However, primary responsibility does not mean *carte blanche*. External quality assurance guarantees that the institutions are fulfilling their responsibilities properly. NVAO plays an important role in the guarantee. NVAO is expected to keep monitoring the quality of higher education and the learning outcomes realised by students and institutions

Greater stringency in the Netherlands

NVAO was also thus hit by the irregularities that had taken place and immediately imposed more stringent require-

ments for the composition of panels. The same applies to the selection of the final papers to be assessed by the panels. In addition, improvements could be pointed out in the new accreditation system that had been unanimously adopted by both houses of the Dutch parliament in 2010. This new system includes an improvement period so that the panels have more freedom in delivering negative assessments. Moreover, for the assessment of programmes, the emphasis has been shifted from the process to the level realised by students and the content of the programme. The new institutional audit pays attention to the strength of the quality assurance system and to the promotion of a quality culture.

The new system is thus more solid, but at the same time it cannot provide the desired certainty that incidents will no longer occur. From this perspective, it is only natural that possibilities are sought for more stringent supervision in the periods between two accreditations.

Measures have now been developed that will tighten-up the accreditation system even further. For example, an additional assessment is requested regarding the quality of the assessment, separate from the quality of the level realised. In addition, assessments must be made by cluster, from now on the panels must be appointed by NVAO and the financial ties between institutions and assessment agencies will be cut. All these measures are intended to increase the objectivity and solidity of the accreditation system.

The first results seem to indicate that the intended effects of the new system are occurring in reality. The assessments appear to be more solid and more improvement periods are being imposed, stringent checks are being made regarding the final level realised and awareness of the need to monitor the required quality both internally and externally is considerably higher. Alertness has increased both inside and outside the institutions.

NVAO believes that the accreditation system now offers adequate possibilities for making discerning assessments in the confidence that the institutions and programmes will make improvements. Good quality assurance requires a positive quality culture. This entails a critical as well as open attitude and the desire on the part of all stakeholders to improve Dutch higher education.

Quieter times in Flanders

Compared to the incidents and public debate in the Netherlands, for Flemish higher education times were

quieter. The attitude towards educational reforms is more restrained, the knowledge component is emphasised more strongly in Flanders than in the Netherlands and the implementation of thinking in terms of competencies is taking place in stages. The labour market is satisfied with the level of the knowledge and know-how of graduates – as is also the case in the Netherlands.

Flanders is dealing cautiously with offering new programmes and allowing them to be offered. The social debate in Flanders is mainly focused on developments like flexibility in higher education, the academisation of programmes offered by university colleges and their integration into universities, and the consequences of this for the organisation and quality of higher education as a whole. In this regard, the difficult financial position of the institutions plays a large role.

New strategy

For NVAO, 2011 was also marked by the development of a new strategy. It was five years ago that the first strategy and mission were drawn up. Meanwhile, a new accreditation system has been introduced in the Netherlands and is being prepared in Flanders; the European Higher Education Area has been officially declared a reality; ENQA and EQAR are using the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance as criteria in Europe; international rankings are becoming more popular and – last but not least – confidence in Dutch higher education should be strengthened.

The changed context is reason enough for NVAO to draw up a new mission and strategy. The new positioning of NVAO will also serve as input for the second self-evaluation report and the external evaluation by ENQA in the spring of 2012.

In NVAO's new mission (see box), accreditation, quality improvement and international cooperation are named as core tasks arising from the central values of autonomy, transparency and respect. The core tasks translate into twelve strategic goals, revised relationships with stakeholders and a modified internal organisation. In this respect, from its independent but clear position, NVAO will be more present in social debates on the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders.

NVAO's mission

NVAO is the independent and binational accreditation organisation set up by the Flemish and Dutch governments, with the primary goal of providing an expert and objective assessment of the quality of higher education in Flanders and the Netherlands.

NVAO does this with a constructive, critical attitude, respecting the autonomy of institutions and their primary responsibility for the quality of their education, and with a view to the growing international context.

NVAO is open, clear and transparent towards society and all stakeholders, especially institutions of higher education and students.

Chapter 2

The quality of Dutch and Flemish higher education

2.1 / Satisfactory generic quality

Despite the quality issues that came to light particularly in the Dutch professional higher education (HBO) sector, it can be said that the vast majority of programmes in the Netherlands and Flanders have a satisfactory generic quality. NVAO even notes a strengthening of quality through structural measures regarding hours of face-to-face teaching, the increased attention paid to staff development, a greater study effort that is also welcomed by the students themselves and greater attention for the level attained in programmes. These measures were found to be particularly necessary in the Netherlands.

2.2 / Convergent developments

In professionally-oriented education, developments at Dutch and Flemish institutions seem to be convergent. Whereas Flemish institutions are taking cautious and well-considered steps towards competency-oriented and knowledge-based education, devoting more attention to skills and attitudes, Dutch institutions are taking a step in the opposite direction based on the need to strengthen the knowledge component in the education provided. As a result, both systems are becoming stronger in terms of quality.

2.3 / More attention for research

NVAO also notes that professionally-oriented programmes are devoting more attention to research, especially – and quite rightly so – for occupation-based research. This development too, is leading to a quality improvement, but a number of comments must be made. The tendency may arise to place too much weight on the content of the research. Universities of applied sciences and university colleges do not train researchers but rather they train professionals who are able to act methodically, have a healthy curiosity about innovations in occupations and the professional field, and who know that they will have to continue to develop throughout their working life. Their efforts in research within their programmes must be focused on this.

2.4 / More attention for outcomes

Attention for student success and outcomes is inevitably increasing. A high degree of attention is, quite rightly, being devoted to this in both the Netherlands and Flanders. The institutions are responsive, but the problem is proving to be

a stubborn one. Fortunately, no tendency has been seen for arriving at a perverse “quick win”: the level has not been lowered to achieve better outcomes. Attention has rather been focused on other measures: creating a more ambitious study environment, holding matching and intake interviews, providing better information on the workload and requirements set by programmes, stringent performance requirements at the end of the first year of a programme, good monitoring of student progress, clear guidelines for internships and final theses, and increasing the commitment of students to their programme. These measures form the basis for effects, but they also demand a long-term effort from students and teaching staff.

2.5 / Rising numbers of students

Virtually every research university, university of applied sciences and university college has to deal with rising numbers of students and with the growing diversity of the student population. This increases the pressure on performance. NVAO is impressed by the serious attention institutions and programmes are paying to the issue of diversity, despite the financial pressure they are under. Policy has been developed virtually everywhere, unorthodox measures are being taken almost everywhere, and virtually everywhere there is a great desire to solve the problems that arise. This is commendable and is of great support to the students who are in need of support and personal attention.

2.6 / Paradoxical consequences of rankings

Universities are being confronted by the paradoxical consequences of rankings that are primarily based on research. The Netherlands and Flanders can be very proud of the average high scores of their universities. Moreover, all the data shows that researchers from both areas have a high quantitative and qualitative output. At the same time, however, the need to publish creates tension with the teaching load, no matter how much importance is given to teaching. Universities are not losing sight of their primary task of training young people for responsible occupations and positions, but the balance between teaching and research is under constant pressure.

2.7 / Academisation: possibility of profiles becoming watered down

NVAO is asking for attention to be paid to the possible consequences of the academisation of Flemish university colleges which will soon have to integrate with research universities. During the assessment and accreditation process it turned out that academisation is having a strong impact on these programmes: not all members of the current teaching staff are capable of performing high quality research, but the assessment criteria for academic programmes offer few possibilities to ignore the problems observed. The programmes concerned are aware that they are running risks and the potential assessment used in the last round of accreditations offers no guarantee for completely successful academisation.

The recent assessments showed that, in general, the labour market is enthusiastic about the profile of these programmes and the quality of graduates. NVAO therefore points out the risk academisation and integration could entail, namely watering down of the programmes' profiles, which could thus become positioned too close to adjacent, existing research university programmes. This might have a major detrimental effect on diversity and labour market orientation within the Flemish higher education sector.

2.8 / Focus on the qualitative outcomes of education

It has been observed that at a number of places within universities of applied and university colleges a shift has taken place regarding the subjects of internal quality assurance. Within these institutions and programmes, attention is shifting from a system governed by the (correct) application of rules, procedures and protocols, to one focusing on the qualitative outcomes of the education provided, concentrating particularly on assessments, exams and final theses. NVAO considers this development to be most welcome because the role and responsibility of the teaching staff is becoming the key focus of attention. And this trend is a prerequisite for the creation of a quality culture that is supported by the teaching staff.

2.9 / More attention for internationalisation

In Dutch and Flemish higher education, attention for internationalisation is increasing. In Flanders the goal of the

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009) to realise a mobility figure of twenty per cent among teaching staff and students in 2020 has been a catalyst for the policy of institutions. Across the board, Dutch higher education institutions have progressed further in their internationalisation policy, but they are now being confronted with questions regarding the funding of foreign students. NVAO is convinced of the importance of internalisation in education and hopes that even in these economic-financial difficult times, the governments concerned will further promote useful internationalisation.

2.10 / Measuring up against the world's best

In both the Netherlands and Flanders there are programmes that measure up to the world's best in terms of quality. A stringent international assessment regularly proves that programmes in the fine arts, and arts and sciences and in some academic niches are of world class. The same applies to the university colleges and in 2011 an international thesis comparative study showed that international panels regard Dutch research master's programmes as "excellent". The much-praised educational highlands of Flanders and the Netherlands thus also have some very high peaks. The increasing attention for excellence in both areas is expected to have a positive impact on the creation of even more peaks.

Chapter 3

Results of the core process

3.1 / Accreditation

In the year under review, NVAO processed a total of 498 accreditation applications (305 applications in the Netherlands and 193 in Flanders) against 539 applications in 2010, 638 in 2009 and 732 in 2008 (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables). There were fewer accreditation applications in 2011 than in the previous year due to the introduction of the new Dutch accreditation system and the fact that 2011 was a transitional year.

3.1.1 / The Netherlands

In the Netherlands a total of 305 accreditation applications were processed in 2011, of which 298 programmes were assessed positively. Five programmes withdrew their application and two applications were assessed negatively (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

As a result of the introduction of the new accreditation system, 2011 was a transitional year in which a limited number of applications from Dutch universities were assessed. The applications for the accreditation of existing programmes which had been prepared in 2010 in accordance with the old accreditation system and had been submitted before 31 December 2011, were dealt with under the old system. Six applications could be handled in accordance with the new accreditation system (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

3.1.2 / Flanders

In the year under review, a total of 193 accreditation applications were processed in Flanders. Of these, 177 programmes were assessed positively. Four programmes withdrew their application and 12 programmes were assessed negatively (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

Academisation of programmes

In 2013 the former two-cycle programmes provided by universities of applied sciences and university colleges must meet the same requirements as academic programmes at research universities. During the assessment procedure NVAO investigates the extent to which the academisation process has progressed and whether or not the achievements and intentions make it credible that the programme will completely fulfil all the criteria regarding this point at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year.

All in all, in 2010 NVAO received applications from 12 institutions for the accreditation of academic bachelor's and master's programmes in the clusters Industrial Sciences, Electronics & IT, Electrical Engineering, and Electromechanics. In 2011, NVAO also received applications from the

clusters Audiovisual Arts, Biomedical Sciences, Drama, Industrial Sciences, Industrial Design, Computer Science, Environmental Studies, Nuclear Technology, Packaging Technology, Nautical Science, and Product Development.

A total of four hearings were organised for Industrial Electro-mechanical Engineering programmes, and three four Industrial Chemical Engineering programmes. In this respect, NVAO had doubts whether the achievements and plans for further academisation provided sufficient confidence that the programmes would actually fulfil all the academic requirements by the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. The major problems in this regard were having an adequate number of researchers in the programmes, the research-related aspects of the curriculum and the question of whether or not students would acquire adequate academic skills in the programmes.

In the 2010-2011 period, ten academisation programmes in Industrial Sciences, IT-Electronics, Electromechanical Engineering and Drama were assessed negatively. Eight hearings were held for programmes with a professional orientation and university programmes. Of these, four were assessed positively and four resulted in supplementary assessment procedures.

3.1.3 / Distinctive (quality) features

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, since 2011, an application for the awarding of a distinctive feature can be submitted at both the institution level and the programme level. However, a separate application for distinctive quality can no longer be submitted. The assessment of "excellent" has been included in the new accreditation system in the standard assessment scale, alongside the assessments of "unsatisfactory", "satisfactory" and "good".

To date, in the Netherlands a distinctive feature has been awarded a total of 42 times. In addition, based on the old system, a distinctive quality was awarded 24 times and based on the new accreditation system, two assessments of "good" and one of "excellent" were awarded.

Dutch higher education institutions can also apply for an Internationalisation distinctive feature and a Small-scale and Intensive Education distinctive feature. In 2011, the Internationalisation distinctive (quality) feature became part of the standard accreditation procedures after completion of the pilot organised by NVAO (for more details, see Chapter 6.4). As of 1 January 2012, the Small-scale and Intensive Education distinctive feature can be applied, also by institutions that do not make use of selective intake and tuition fees differentia-

tion, like, for instance, the legal bodies for higher education. The Small-scale and Intensive Education distinctive feature framework is part of the assessment frameworks of the accreditation system. The Minister of Education, Culture & Science (OCW) grants approval based on the recommendations of NVAO.

Flanders

In Flanders, institutions can apply for a distinctive quality feature when submitting their accreditation application. They need to announce and substantiate this intention in their self-evaluation report. To date, a total of twelve Flemish programmes (none in 2011) have been awarded a distinctive quality feature.

“Entrepreneurship” distinctive feature pilot

In 2011, at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science and the Flemish Ministry of Education & Training, NVAO launched a pilot involving the distinctive feature of Entrepreneurship. With this distinctive feature higher education institutions can show that in its curriculum, a programme devotes special attention to entrepreneurship and provides students with an adequate entrepreneurial basis. The pilot project is being carried out in 2012 and will involve a total of ten Dutch and Flemish institutions and programmes (for more details, see Chapter 4.1.4).

3.2 / Initial accreditation

3.2.1 / The Netherlands

In 2011 a total of 82 Dutch applications for initial accreditation were processed (2010: 106; 2009: 117 and 2008: 114). Of these, 70 programmes received a positive assessment (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables). Twelve programmes withdrew their application.

Most of the positive decisions (35) involved privately funded bachelor's programmes (professional orientation). Most of the withdrawn applications (6 of the 12) involved master's programmes (professional orientation).

2011 was also a transitional year for initial accreditations. Applications for initial accreditation that had been prepared in 2010 in accordance with the old accreditation system and which had been submitted before 1 April 2011, fell under the old system. Seventeen applications were dealt with in accordance with the new accreditation system (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

3.2.2 / Flanders

In 2011, NVAO processed 27 Flemish applications for initial accreditation (2010: 19; 2009: 11 and 2008: 12). Of these, 19 were assessed positively (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables). Eight programmes withdrew their application.

The positive decisions break down as follows: nine master's programmes, seven professionally-oriented bachelor's programmes and three so-called advanced bachelor's programmes. Most of the withdrawn applications (5 of the 8) involved advanced bachelor's programmes.

3.3 / Research master's programmes

Dutch research master's programmes are two-year master's programmes that train talented students for high-quality research careers within universities as well as in the private and public research sectors. The programmes are provided by qualified researchers, involved in highly valued research programmes, who have access to excellent research environments. Students have to apply for a place in research master's programmes. The programmes end with a substantial test of the research skills which are considered to be of value in the relevant academic discipline. This test often takes the form of writing an article that can be published in a renowned journal.

The Royal Netherlands Academy for Arts and Sciences (KNAW) advises NVAO with regard to the quality of research master's programmes. For six scientific fields, it has appointed six committees composed of authoritative scientists. These committees assess the programmes for the purpose of accreditations, re-accreditations and initial accreditations. The six committee members include a student or graduate. Secretarial support is provided by NVAO staff.

In 2011 the assessment frameworks for research master's programmes were adapted to the new accreditation system. In the year under review, ten applications for research master's programmes were processed (2010: 55; 2009: 60 and 2008: 6). Nine of these applications received a positive decision and advice. An application within the Healthcare domain was withdrawn (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

In the year under review, NVAO completed the International NVAO Thesis Assessment Study after three years of experience with the re-accreditation of 113 existing research master's programmes that had been assessed for initial accreditation in 2007. In this context, NVAO organised the *Research Master's Programmes: excellent profiles à la*

Veerman conference on 24 March 2011. The interim results of the study were discussed at this conference (see Chapter 7.1). The study is part of the report entitled *Peaks in Sight - Research Master's Review 2011* that was published in March 2012.

Given that the term of office of all student members of the KNAW committees had come to an end, in collaboration with the KNAW and the university coordinators of research master's programmes, NVAO organised a recruitment and selection campaign. The response was very high as was the quality of the applicants. The interviews were completed towards the end of the year under review and NVAO was able to submit to the KNAW two student candidates for each committee.

3.4 / Appeal procedures

In the Netherlands, NVAO submitted one internal appeal to its Appeals Committee for advice in 2011. In accordance with the advice received from this committee, NVAO dismissed the appeal in question and maintained its decision not to grant accreditation.

In the year under review, no appeals were lodged with the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State. Neither did this court rule in any disputes involving NVAO.

In Flanders, no appeals were lodged over the past year following negative assessments by NVAO. In 2011, the appeals regulations were reviewed on the basis of an evaluation of the preceding years.

Chapter 4

Other activities

4.1 / Associate Degree programmes (the Netherlands)

The Ministry of Education, Culture & Science conducted an additional round of the pilot involving Associate Degree programmes in the autumn of 2011. In this round, universities of applied sciences could choose whether or not they would offer an Associate Degree programme themselves or in collaboration with an adult and vocational education institution whereby a maximum of 60 ECs of the programme would be conducted at the location of the adult and vocational education institution. NVAO developed a protocol for each format, on the basis of which the universities of applied sciences could submit an application. NVAO received a total of 48 applications in this round of the pilot.

4.2 / HBO₅ (Flanders)

The Flemish HBO₅ programmes lead to teaching qualifications at level 5 of the Flemish qualifications structure (HBO₅) and graduates are awarded a graduate diploma. Both new and converted existing programmes qualify for this scheme, as do the secondary vocational education programmes organising the BSO nursing degrees. The existing adult education programmes and the secondary school nursing programmes that wish to be recognised as HBO₅ programme are required to submit a conversion dossier to NVAO by no later than 1 January 2014.

In the year under review NVAO was a discussion partner of various stakeholders who bear responsibility in the implementation of HBO₅. In May 2011 a NVAO representative took part in the closing panel discussion during the Higher Professional Education in Adult Education Study Day conducted in the Flemish parliament in Brussels. In addition, NVAO participated in various talks with the Ministry of Education, the Adult Education Steering Group, the Council of Flemish University Colleges (VLHORA), the Flemish Education Council (VLOR) and the HBO committee that will investigate the macro-efficiency of the HBO₅ conversion dossiers and new HBO₅ dossiers to be submitted.

No HBO₅ dossiers were submitted to NVAO in 2011, despite the NVAO assessment frameworks approved by the Flemish parliament in 2010. No professional qualifications have as yet been placed in level 5. These professional qualifications are essential for converting existing programmes and the curriculum of new HBO programmes. In the summer of 2011, the necessary amendments were made to the Act on the Qualifications Structure (2009) via the Education Act XXI.

The procedure for arriving at a classification for professional qualifications has been set out clearly as have the roles of the various parties involved. Flemish Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (AKOV) will classify the professional competency profiles as professional qualifications and provide advice on their recognition. The first professional qualifications will be available in the spring of 2012.

4.3 / Higher Education Register (Flanders)

The Flemish government has commissioned NVAO to develop and update the Higher education register (HOR - www.hogeronderwijsregister.be/ www.highereducation.be/). This register contains information on all higher education establishments in Flanders and all Flemish bachelor's and master's programmes. NVAO is responsible for the central management of the register but institution managers are free to enter their own information. In addition, the institutions may produce specific exports from the database by selecting the information they wish to receive. The database exchanges information on accredited programmes and/or institutions with the databases of NVAO and the European Crossroads (www.crossroads.eu).

At the request of the Flemish government and the institutions, the Higher Education Register is being simplified. The first modifications were made in 2011.

4.4 / "Entrepreneurship" distinctive feature pilot

Based on the ambition of stimulating the knowledge economy and the importance attached to innovation in the Netherlands and Flanders, the governments and the business community in both regions requested higher education institutions to examine the way in which innovation and entrepreneurship can be stimulated. The institutions responded positively to this request and numerous activities were undertaken ranging from the establishment of Centres for Entrepreneurship to the appointment of lecturers and the development of special programmes and programme components focusing on entrepreneurship. The governments of both the Netherlands and Flanders made additional financial resources available in order to stimulate entrepreneurship as part of education.

The Ministry of Education, Culture & Science requested NVAO to draw up a proposal for a pilot for an "Entrepreneurship" distinctive feature. With this distinctive feature higher educa-

tion institutions can show that in its curriculum a programme devotes special attention to and offers students a satisfactory basis in entrepreneurship. The Flemish Ministry of Education & Training joined in the request of the Dutch government and is funding the participation of two Flemish institutions in the pilot. In part, the request of the two governments was a result of the success of the “Internationalisation” distinctive feature that turned out to be a good aid for institutions and programmes in shaping and implementing their internationalisation policy.

NVAO began developing the Entrepreneurship distinctive feature in the second half of 2011. The aim of the pilot is to develop a framework of criteria on the basis of which an assessment can be made as to whether or not to award an Entrepreneurship distinctive feature. This framework is in alignment with the standards that are used for accreditation or initial accreditation.

During the process of fleshing out the pilot, it turned out that the institutions were using different strategies to stimulate entrepreneurship. Some were introducing separate programmes or components of programmes, while others developed minors that are in principle open to all students. Yet other institutions developed minors specifically for programmes in a particular subject while at other places extracurricular activities were organised, sometimes linked to a Centre for Entrepreneurship.

During the pilot phase, NVAO provides a broad interpretation of the terms that have to do with stimulating entrepreneurship. The institutions make their own choice from the various options and account for this choice in the assessment of the distinctive feature. In this regard, NVAO sticks to the realised learning outcomes as far as teaching activities are concerned. The burden of proof for the acquired knowledge, skills and attitude of students lies with the institutions and programmes. A distinctive feature is based on achieving certain predefined goals.

The framework being used during the pilot is based in part on the framework that was developed for the Internationalisation distinctive feature. To substantiate the content that is more focused on entrepreneurship, use was made of several brain-storming sessions with experts in the fields of education and entrepreneurship from various sectors of society. The pilot assessment framework was presented to interested institutions and programmes in December 2011. In 2012 the pilot will be performed at a group of ten institutions. These institutions are a mix of Dutch and Flemish institutions, and the programmes are a mix of bachelor’s and master’s

programmes, and programmes and programme components with an academic (WO) and professional (HBO) orientation.

4.5 / Legal body for higher education (the Netherlands)

the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) distinguishes two types of organisation qualified to provide accredited programmes: government-funded institutions and legal bodies for higher education. Institutions must follow a specific procedure to become a legal body for higher education (and thus be qualified to provide accredited programmes). NVAO has laid down its role in the NVAO protocol for more stringent initial accreditations. Following a positive decision by NVAO and a recommendation by the Education Inspectorate, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science will make a decision, on the basis of the policy guideline for the authorisation to award degrees in higher education, regarding the recognition of an organisation as “legal body for higher education” and thus its incorporation into the Dutch higher education system.

In 2011, NVAO issued three positive decisions within the context of the legal body for higher education procedure.

4.6 / Validation of subject-specific learning outcomes (Flanders)

The Flemish Qualification Structure Act (30 April 2009) regulates, inter alia, the formulation of joint subject-specific learning outcomes by the Flemish university colleges and universities. In this respect, it has laid down a new task for NVAO.

The subject-specific learning outcomes are developed in concert by all the institutions offering a specific programme. Subsequently, these outcomes are endorsed by the VLUHR (Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges) and validated by NVAO.

In 2010-2011, the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (VLUHR) Steering Group organised pilots for programmes in the Communication and Construction sectors. NVAO was asked to perform a “test validation” within these pilots. In 2011 NVAO had already validated the following subject-specific learning achievements during the approval procedure for various initial accreditation applications:

Professionally-oriented bachelor's programmes

- › Bachelor of Geriatric Coaching
- › Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
- › Bachelor of Industrial Product Design
- › Bachelor of Retail Management

Advanced bachelor's programmes

- › Bachelor of Education: school development

Master's programmes

- › Master of Ergotherapeutic Science
- › Master of Engineering Science: traffic, logistic and intelligent transport systems
- › Master of Laws incl. the profiles "administration of justice" and "government and the law"

4. Preparatory Higher Education teacher training programme in Religion and Philosophical Studies, master's programme (academic orientation), VU University Amsterdam;
5. Secondary school teacher training programme, second level, in Technical Vocational Education, bachelor's programme (professional orientation), Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
6. Technical Vocational Education Support, Associate Degree, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
7. Economics and Business Economics, bachelor's programme (academic orientation), Groningen University.

4.7 / Broadened programmes (the Netherlands)

Under certain conditions, two or more programmes registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) can be combined into a single broadened programme without the need for initial accreditation; this is known as a planning-neutral conversion.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science decides whether or not the consolidation results in a new programme.

To that end, the competent authorities of the initiating institution submit a declaration of planning-neutral nature to NVAO, with a substantiation at the programme level, the curricula of the original programmes and the curriculum of the new, broadened programme. Subsequently, NVAO conducts a marginal assessment and advises the Minister. For the purpose of this test, NVAO has developed the "broadened programmes" protocol. Upon a positive decision, the board of the institution may enter the changes into the CROHO register. Once the broadened programme is open to enrolment, students can no longer enrol in the original programmes.

In 2011, seven applications for planning-neutral conversions were submitted to NVAO by five institutions. In all cases, NVAO issued a positive recommendation. The following broadened programmes were involved:

1. Russian Studies, bachelor's programme (academic orientation), Leiden University ;
2. Political Science and Public Administration, Master's programme (academic orientation), Leiden University;
3. Computer Science, master's programme (academic orientation), Delft University of Technology;

Chapter 5

Reform of accreditation systems

5.1 / The Netherlands

The new accreditation system went into force as of 1 January 2011. The central focus of the new way of assessment is on the content of the education provided and the quality of graduates. It also includes the possibility of an improvement period. In this way, the panels can be more stringent in their assessment of “border-line cases”. Improvement is, after all, a far less serious consequence than the loss of accreditation. Finally, via the institutional audit the new system also aims to limit the (administrative) burden on programmes that are doing well.

A major amendment to the new accreditation legislation is the assessment framework for “limited programme assessment”. This new assessment framework is limited in the sense that, compared to the former accreditation framework, the three themes to be assessed are focused on the content of the education provided and the level of the graduates. This leads to a more substantive dialogue between the panel and the teaching staff during the site visit and reduces the administrative burden on the programmes. This framework is thus definitely not “easier” and due to the limited number of standards it requires a more thorough reflection on the part of the assessed programme.

The new way of assessment also entails more differentiated assessments. Instead of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”, programmes are now scored on a four-point scale ranging from “unsatisfactory” and “satisfactory”, to “good” and “excellent”. By the beginning of 2012, assessments of “good” had been awarded twice as were assessments of “excellent”.

Another change to the system is the obligation of the assessment panels to themselves choose which members of the teaching staff and student population they will speak to during the visit and to themselves make the choice of which final theses to assess based on a list of final projects of the past two years submitted by the institution. In addition, the panel holds an open consultation and is obliged to itself visit classes.

The new system makes it possible for NVAO to perform interim studies into aspects of quality and as a result NVAO is possible, at the request of the State Secretary, to make an interim intervention (to withdraw accreditation). Moreover, since 24 November 2011, NVAO can extend the accreditation period and grant an improvement period of no longer than two years if the shortcomings can be improved within that timeframe (Education and Research Act; Accreditation Decree). This provision offers the assessment panels more room to deliver an unsatisfactory assessment and thus act more decisively. In 2011 NVAO set improvement periods for 13 programmes (cf. Chapter 9.3, Tables).

The institutional audit is a new element in the accreditation system. The aim of the institutional audit is not only to determine if the management of an institution is dealing properly with the quality of its programmes; it also expressly acts as a stimulus for internal quality assurance and the development of a quality culture within the institution. After all, the focus of the institutional audit is on the performance of the management, at every level and across the entire spectrum. The institutional audit is additional to the obligation to have every programme individually assessed and accredited. A positive assessment in the institutional audit is a prerequisite for being allowed to participate in a “limited programme assessment”.

As a transitional measure, the government allowed the institutions the possibility of starting a limited programme assessment procedure in 2011 under the condition that the institution would be positively assessed in an institutional audit before 2014. All research universities and the large majority of publicly funded universities of applied sciences (44 in total) have asked NVAO to perform such an audit. In the year under review, NVAO carried out the first institutional audits at Delft University of Technology and Radboud University Nijmegen. Both audits resulted in positive assessments. Sixteen institutions will be assessed in 2012.

5.2 / Flanders

In Flanders there is an on-going discussion with education institutions and the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (VLUHR) regarding the next phase of the accreditation system. The Flemish legislature envisages a system in which the institutional audit is linked to a limited programme assessment for all programmes.

In July 2011, the Flemish government gave its approval in principle to the draft policy document of Flemish Education Minister Pascal Smet regarding the new accreditation system. The draft policy document outlines the context for the institutional audit and programme accreditation. NVAO subsequently fleshed out a draft programme assessment for the discussions with the government, the VLUHR and the student umbrella organisation. On 9 December 2011, the Flemish government gave its initial approval in principle to the preliminary draft of the decree on external evaluation and the new accreditation system. Further elaboration in the legislative process will follow in 2012. In principle, Flanders will introduce the next phase of the accreditation system in the 2013-2014 academic year.

Chapter 6

International

6.1 / International networks and projects

Since its establishment in 2002, NVAO has been extremely active within relevant European and international networks. In 2011, NVAO again functioned as the secretariat of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). NVAO directors continued to hold management positions within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), ECA and INQAAHE.

As the INQAAHE secretariat, NVAO took on responsibility for the organisation, administration and accountability for projects funded by the World Bank and UNESCO. In a UNESCO audit report in December 2011, NVAO received the highest rating (*highly satisfactory*) for its performance of these activities.

NVAO is also the coordinator of two projects set up by ECA and implemented with funding from the European Commission:

1. European Training of QA Experts (E-TRAIN) is aimed at training international experts so that they can work with the procedures in place in various European countries. To this end, good practices in European training programmes and guidelines for training European experts were published in 2011. The first European trial training course for the experts and trainers from accreditation organisations took place in October and November 2011. A portfolio for experts was also developed which can be used for creating a database of experts from various countries. For more information visit: <http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/projects/e-train>
2. Quality Assurance and Recognition of Degrees Awarded (JOQAR). The aim of this project is to simplify both the accreditation and the recognition of the diplomas of joint programmes. In 2011 an exploratory study was conducted into the setting up of a European coordination centre to simplify the accreditation of these joint programmes by using a simple accreditation procedure. The results of these procedures would have to be accepted by all countries that participate in joint programme consortiums. Meetings with ENIC-NARICs were held to discuss the recognition problems involving joint programmes. For more information visit: <http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/projects/joqar>

As a consequence of the Bologna process it is important that the accreditation decisions of NVAO are accepted throughout the whole of the European Higher Education Area. In this way, other governments, employers, institutions and recognition

authorities can quickly rate the quality of Dutch and Flemish programmes and graduates in their own region. European acceptance of the accreditation system of the Netherlands and Flanders can contribute to the smooth recognition of the qualifications of graduates and thus facilitate opportunities for work and transferring to further studies abroad. Moreover, it would aid Dutch and Flemish institutions in entering into partnerships with foreign partners.

In 2011, NVAO extended its bilateral mutual recognition agreement with the OAQ accreditation organisation in Switzerland. NVAO currently has five bilateral agreements running. In addition, it is working on expanding a multilateral recognition agreement (for example, in the JOQAR project referred to above) involving joint programmes. These international programmes would then no longer have to undergo a full accreditation procedure in each (or several) of the countries that make up the consortium involved.

In the year under review, in both the Netherlands and Flanders NVAO contributed once again to providing advice regarding the national qualifications frameworks that satisfy the European qualifications framework set down by the European Commission.

In the Netherlands and Flanders this resulted in national qualifications frameworks for higher education and in the Netherlands also in the establishment of the National Coordination Centre (NCP) by the Ministry of Education, Culture & Science. In Flanders, NVAO is classifying subject-specific learning outcomes for all bachelor's and master's programmes according to Flemish and European qualifications levels.

In 2011 the project directed by NVAO in Croatia, involving three institutional audits of Croatian universities of applied sciences, was brought to a successful end. All the stakeholders found the project to have been very educational. It contributed to improving the quality of Croatian higher education and, for NVAO, it was an opportunity to gain more experience with the methodology of institutional audits. The project was performed with funding provided by the Flemish government.

In the year under review, NVAO started the ARQATA (Armenia Quality Assurance Technical Assistance) project. In Armenia, NVAO is offering technical support regarding the development of the internal and external quality assurance systems at institutions, and in the further professionalisation of ANQA, the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance. The project is being funded by the World Bank and will run until May 2014.

6.2 / Joint degrees

Since July 2010 it has been legally permissible in the Netherlands for higher education institutions to offer joint degrees. In Flanders the possibility has existed for a longer time. A joint degree programme in the Netherlands is a programme provided by a Dutch institution in collaboration with one or more Dutch or foreign higher education institutions, which leads to the awarding of a joint qualification.

In 2011, based on the protocols drawn up, NVAO approved 12 Dutch applications for programmes leading to the awarding of a joint degree. Four of these applications concerned Dutch institutions collaborating with foreign partner institutions, the rest involved Dutch institutions alone. Initial accreditation was involved in five of these cases, and the remaining seven involved the accreditation of existing programmes (six of which involved conversions). NVAO regularly participates in consultations with the Ministry of OCW and umbrella organisation to discuss the implementation of the legislation.

6.3 / Assessments outside the Netherlands and Flanders

NVAO had earlier provided positive recommendations concerning several applications made by the University of Curacao (formerly the University of the Netherlands Antilles, renamed in 2011). These assessments do not fall under the standard legal duties of NVAO because the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) only applies to the Kingdom of the Netherlands in European territory. These assessments were performed as an additional task at the initiative and with the consent of the Ministry of Education, Culture & Science and the costs were borne by the applicant institution. NVAO delivers its assessment in such cases as “advice”.

At the request of NOVA (the national accreditation organisation of Suriname) at the end of 2011–early 2012, a similar assessment was performed for a programme of the Anton de Kom University in Paramaribo. Prior to the site visit, two staff members of NOVA completed a professional practice internship at NVAO.

6.4 / “Internationalisation” distinctive feature

The Internationalisation distinctive feature became part of the standard accreditation procedures in 2011. In collabora-

tion with several experts, at the end of 2009 NVAO took the initiative of drawing up an assessment framework for an Internationalisation distinctive feature. The framework was tested in a number of pilots in 2010. At the end of 2010, eighteen of the twenty-one participating Dutch and Flemish programmes were awarded the Internationalisation distinctive feature. Moreover, ten of these programmes received a certificate with an assessment of “good”.

Following extensive evaluation, the evaluation report of the pilots and the adjusted assessment framework were set down and published in November 2011. The Internationalisation distinctive feature can now be applied for by institutions within the framework of the institutional audit, and by programmes in the standard accreditation procedure for existing programmes.

In 2011, ECA began to prepare for the implementation of the first phase (at the end of 2012) of European trial assessments leading to a European Internationalisation Certificate. A consortium of European organisations is elaborating the project proposal under the direction of ECA and with NVAO acting as project coordinator.

International activities

- › In 2011, NVAO performed institutional audits at three Croatian universities of applied sciences. The project was carried out using funds provided by the Flemish government. NVAO also started a project in Armenia, funded by the World Bank. The ARQATA (Armenia Quality Assurance Technical Assistance) project offers technical support in the development of the internal and external quality assurance systems at higher education institutions.
- › In the year under review, NVAO worked on setting down national qualifications frameworks that meet the European qualifications framework set down by the European Commission.
- › In 2011, NVAO began assessing applications received from Suriname.
- › In the past year, NVAO received delegations from Armenia, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Indonesia, Japan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lithuania, Peru, Poland, Slovakia, Suriname, Tajikistan, South Korea, Sweden and Switzerland.
- › In early January 2012, two ECA and NVAO seminars were held (on good practices in internationalisation).

Chapter 7

Contact with stakeholders

7.1 / Higher education institutions, governments, umbrella organisations and student associations

In 2011, NVAO once again organised meetings for representatives of institutions, programmes, student associations and umbrella organisations to share experiences with and thoughts about accreditation and quality assurance. These meetings are listed below.

On 23 May and 22 November 2011, NVAO organised a meeting with its Advisory Board. The members of the Advisory Board come from the circles of umbrella organisations and other organisations involved in Dutch and Flemish higher education (cf. Chapter 9.2).

In the spring of 2011, NVAO conducted evaluation interviews with Flemish higher education institutions within the framework of its internal quality assurance policy. Various themes were dealt with systematically during this “Tour of Flanders”, and practical matters were also discussed. In October 2011 the NVAO anonymised and summarised the findings, discussed them internally and explained them to the quality assurance coordinators of the institutions. The *Verslag evaluatiegesprekken Vlaamse instituties* (Flemish Institutions Evaluation Interviews Report) was also made accessible on the NVAO website.

On 24 March 2011, NVAO organised the “Research master’s programmes: excellent profiles à la Veerman” national conference for 126 guests in The Hague. The report entitled *Threefold Differentiation* by former Minister Veerman argues for triple differentiation for the sake of quality and diversity: more differentiation in the structure of the higher education system, more differentiation in the profile of institutions, and more differentiation in the programmes offered. Research master’s programmes fulfil these differentiation criteria. In the afternoon, the interim results of the International NVAO Thesis Assessment Study were discussed. This study is part of a periodic research study into research master’s programmes. The final study report entitled *Peaks in Sight – Research Master’s Review 2011* was published in March 2012.

On 16 November 2011, in collaboration with the Flemish Ministry of Education & Training, the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (VLUHR) and the National

Union of Students in Flanders (VVS), NVAO organised an Autumn Conference for over 300 guests in Brussels. The conference focused solely on the development of the new Flemish accreditation system.

On 14 December 2011, an information meeting was held in The Hague for just under 75 participants, to discuss the request of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science and the Flemish Ministry of Education & Training to start an Entrepreneurship distinctive feature pilot. Afterwards, interested institutions and programmes could register for the pilot. In early 2012 NVAO was able to allocate ten participants to the pilot.

7.2 / Assessment agencies, secretaries and quality assessment agencies

In the current Dutch accreditation system, NVAO approves the panels in advance of the assessment process. NVAO had approved 190 panels up until 16 January 2012. To guarantee the expertise of these panels, NVAO developed a training course and a certification system for external secretaries and process coordinators. NVAO publishes the names of certified secretaries/process coordinators on its website.

The State Secretary of Education, Culture & Science decided in 2011 to modify the relationship between institutions, panels (and/or assessment agencies) and NVAO, and to have the site visits take place in clusters of similar programmes. NVAO supports these measures and has taken over their introduction. The precise implementation is dependent in part on the outcomes of the debate on the legislative proposal on quality assurance after submission to the House of Representatives.

In Flanders in 2011, NVAO consulted with the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and the Council of Flemish University Colleges (VLHORA) – the quality assessment agencies in Flanders that perform the site visits and compile the evaluation reports – and the National Union of Students in Flanders (VVS). Within the framework of the new accreditation system it was agreed for Flanders that the amalgamated organisation of quality assurance units of the VLIR and the VLHORA, the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (VLUHR), in consultation with NVAO would remain responsible for the training of panel members, (external) secretaries and process coordinators.

In this regard, an intervision is scheduled in the spring of 2012.

7.3 / Education Inspectorate

The Education Inspectorate and NVAO are tasked respectively with supervising the quality of higher education in the Netherlands, and guaranteeing its generic quality through accreditation. It is important to the cooperation between the Inspectorate and NVAO that society and politicians desire to strengthen external supervision and external quality assurance. Supervision and accreditation should act as an impetus for improving the quality of higher education, with the primary responsibility resting with the institutions. This means that the starting point for the Inspectorate and NVAO is the autonomy of the institutions, coupled with proper accountability on the part of the institutions: earned trust.

The new partnership agreements are going into force in 2012. The main starting point is that the Inspectorate and the NVAO work complementarily and that no form of “double supervision” or “supervision of supervision” is created. The Inspectorate primarily focuses on compliance with regulations by the institutions and NVAO on the quality of the content of and the level realised in higher education.

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Chapter 8

Organisation

8.1 / ENQA external review

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) lay down several principles for quality assurance agencies that the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) subsequently use as criteria for being a full member and for being registered, respectively. To this end, quality assurance agencies must work in accordance with European standards and guidelines. This compliance is investigated by an external, independent panel based on a self-evaluation reports and a site visit of several days involving interviews with internal and external stakeholders.

In 2011, NVAO worked on a self-evaluation report for a second external review in 2012 (the first review took place in 2007). The aim of this self-evaluation report was once again full membership of ENQA and EQAR registration. In addition, an initial reflection on the new accreditation system in the Netherlands was presented.

8.2 / Organisation

On 31 December 2011, fifty-two people were employed at NVAO (48 FTEs, excluding Board members, staff seconded to the CDHO and temporary staff, cf. the NVAO FTEs per Position table). Eight members of this staff have been seconded by Dutch and Flemish institutions. In 2011 use was also made of a small group of permanent on-call staff for the provision of secretarial support, and for catering/logistics and IT purposes.

Chapter 9

Appendices

9.1 / NVAO Board

The Board of NVAO consists of a maximum of 15 members. The Chair and a maximum of four other members make up the Executive Board.

Board members are appointed for a term of four years by the Committee of Ministers (the Dutch and Flemish Ministers responsible for higher education). The board members have expertise in the field of higher education, the professional practice of higher education, scientific research or the area of quality assurance.

The Board decides on the policy, the management regulations, the budget, the annual report and the annual accounts and the decisions that are open to external appeal. In addition, the Board provides guidelines for the structure of the organisation, information provision and the financial-economic running of the organisation. The Executive Board directs the organisation on a daily basis and is accountable to the Board for its actions.

In September 2011 NVAO received the sad news that former board member Prof. Hans Weitenberg had died. Hans Weitenberg was a member of the NVAO Board from 2002 to 2011. NVAO is grateful for his vision, interest and hard work in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

In 2011, a change took place at the management level. In November 2010 Koen Geven and Paul van Roon were already appointed as new board members. On 1 February 2011 the mandate of board member Boudewijn van Nederveen expired by right. Board member Leendert Klaassen left in March 2011 to take up a position at Stenden University of Applied Sciences. Paul Zevenbergen was appointed to the Board in August 2011. At the end of 2011, the NVAO Executive Board was made up by Dr K.L.L.M. Dittrich (Chair), Prof. G. Langouche (Vice Chair), *lic.* L. Bollaert and *drs.* R.P. Zevenbergen.

Composition of the NVAO Board

(in alphabetical order, as from 1 January 2012)

Dr K.L.L.M. Dittrich (Chair)
Prof. G. Langouche (Vice Chair)
lic. L. Bollaert (member of the Executive Board)
E. Derycke LL.M.
K. Geven BSc
Prof. P. Meurs
Ms C. Tillekaerts
Ms I. van Riet
lic. G.E.D. Vanleenhove
drs. P.M. van Roon
drs. R.P. Zevenbergen (member of the Executive Board)

Composition of the NVAO Executive Board

(in alphabetical order, as from 1 January 2012)

Dr K.L.L.M. Dittrich (Chair)
Prof. G. Langouche (Vice Chair)
lic. L. Bollaert
drs. R.P. Zevenbergen

9.2 / NVAO Advisory Council

The Board appoints an Advisory Council that provides unsolicited or requested recommendations on general policy. The members of the Advisory Council are appointed for a maximum term of three years and come from the circles of: the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad), the Dutch Training and Education Council (NRTO), the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), the Council of Flemish University Colleges (VLHORA) – now combined into VLUHR, the Dutch National Students Association (ISO), the Dutch National Union of Students (LSVb), the Flemish Union of Students (VVS) and the Flanders Social and Economic Council (SERV).

Composition of the NVAO Advisory Council

(in alphabetical order, as from 1 January 2012)

R. Bolte
G. Dewaele
drs. H.A.P. de Greef
Prof. T. van Haften
Ms. H.A.M.F. Keijzer-Lambooy
Prof. H. Martens
T. Martens
Ms N. Muys
Ms T. Timmermans
R. Van Renterghem
P. Verboven

Substitutes

H. Deckers
Prof. P. Geerlings
Ms N. Muys
T. Van den Brande
L. Vandeveld

9.3 / Tables

Totals

Total number of applications processed

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	NL accr.	Initial accr.	Research master's program.	Extended master's program.	FL accr.	Initial accr.
2011	617	305	82	10	-	193	27
2010	719	424	106	55	-	115	19
2009	827	506	117	60	1	132	11
2008	859	573	114	6	4	159	3
2007	770	523	102	5	8	123	9
2006	503	336	91	10	11	42	13
2005	461	371	59	27	1	-	3
2004	345	232	35	78	-	-	-
2003	40	-	5	35	-	-	-
Total	5.141	3.270	711	286	25	764	85

Total number of applications withdrawn, the Netherlands and Flanders

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	accr.	Initial accr.	Research master's programmes	Extended master's programmes
2011	30	9	20	1	-
2010	61	12	42	7	-
2009	47	9	36	2	-
2008	28	2	24	-	2
2007	27	5	22	-	-
2006	48	8	31	3	6
2005	39	14	15	10	-
2004	37	2	35	-	-
2003	2	-	2	-	-
Total	319	61	227	23	8

The Netherlands

Accreditation applications the Netherlands 2011 (old and new system)

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positive	With- drawn	Nega- tive	Report rejected
> Architecture	-	-	-	-	-
> Economics	106	105	1	-	-
> Behaviour and Society	34	33	1	-	-
> Health care	13	12	-	1	-
> Arts	15	15	-	-	-
> Agriculture (and the natural environment)	5	5	-	-	-
> Natural sciences	43	43	-	-	-
> Education and teacher-training programmes	27	27	-	-	-
> Law	3	2	1	-	-
> Language and culture	10	9	1	-	-
> Engineering and Technology	49	47	1	1	-
Total	305	298	5	2	-
> Research universities	60	58	2	-	-
> Universities of applied sciences	212	210	1	1	-
> Privately funded institutions	33	30	2	1	-
Total	305	298	5	2	-
> Bachelor's programmes (professional orientation)	212	207	3	2	-
> Master's programmes (professional orientation)	31	31	-	-	-
> Bachelor's programmes (academic orientation)	21	20	1	-	-
> Master's programmes (academic orientation)	41	40	1	-	-
Total	305	298	5	2	-

Initial accreditation applications the Netherlands 2011 (old and new system)

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positive	With- drawn	Negative (with internal appeal)
> Economics	27	24	3	-
> Behaviour & Society	18	15	3	-
> Health care	5	5	-	-
> Arts	-	-	-	-
> Agriculture (and the natural environment)	1	1	-	-
> Education and teacher- training programmes	12	10	2	-
> Law	4	2	2	-
> Language and culture	3	2	1	-
> Engineering and Technology	12	11	1	-
> Natural sciences	-	-	-	-
Total	82	70	12	-
> Research universities	18	16	2	-
> Universities of applied sciences	25	19	6	-
> Privately funded institutions	39	35	4	-
Total	82	70	12	-
> Bachelor's programmes (professional orientation)	39	36	3	-
> Master's programmes (professional orientation)	17	11	6	-
> Bachelor's programmes (academic orientation)	-	-	-	-
> Master's programmes (academic orientation)	26	23	3	-
Total	82	70	12	-

Applications for accreditation / initial accreditation the Netherlands 2011 (new system)

Settled as of 16 January 2012

	Positive accr. decisions	Negative accr. decisions	Positive initial accr. decisions	Negative initial accr. decisions	Conditional initial accr.
> Bachelor's program. (prof. orien- tation)	3	-	-	-	13
> Master's program. (prof. orien- tation)	3	-	-	-	-
> Bachelor's program. (ac. orien- tation)	-	-	-	-	-
> Master's program. (ac. orien- tation)	-	-	1	2	1
Total	6	-	1	2	14

Decisions involving a recovery periode the Netherlands 2011

In effect as of November 2011

	Accreditations
> Bachelor's programmes (professional orientation)	8
> Master's programmes (professional orientation)	1
> Bachelor's programmes (academic orientation)	-
> Master's programmes (academic orientation)	4
Total	13

Applications regarding research master's programmes the Netherlands 2011

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positive	Withdrawn	Negative
> Economics	2	2	-	-
> Behaviour & Society	2	2	-	-
> Health care	1	-	1	-
> Arts	1	1	-	-
> Agriculture (and the natural environment)	-	-	-	-
> Education	-	-	-	-
> Law	-	-	-	-
> Language and culture	3	3	-	-
> Engineering and Technology	-	-	-	-
> Natural sciences	1	1	-	-
Total	10	9	1	-
> Research universities	10	9	1	-
Total	10	9	1	-

Applications for recognition as Legal Bodies for Higher Education the Netherlands 2011

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positief	Withdrawn	Negative
Total	3	3	-	-

Flanders

Accreditation applications Flanders 2011

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positive	Withdrawn	Negative
> Archaeology and art sciences	-	-	-	-
> Architecture	10	8	-	2
> Audiovisual arts	8	8	-	-
> Bio-engineering sciences	-	-	-	-

Continued on page 41 >

Continued from page 40 >	Total	Positive	Withdrawn	Negative
> Biosciences	-	-	-	-
> Biotechnology	3	3	-	-
> Veterinary medicine	-	-	-	-
> Economic and applied economic sciences	4	4	-	-
> Pharmaceutical sciences	7	7	-	-
> Combined fields of study	5	4	-	1
> Medicine	-	-	-	-
> Health care	-	-	-	-
> Theology, religious studies and canon law	1	1	-	-
> Commerce and business administration	16	15	-	1
> Industrial sciences and technology	44	43	-	1
> Music and performing arts	5	3	-	2
> Education	4	4	-	-
> Political and social sciences	3	2	-	1
> Product development	2	2	-	-
> Psychology and educational sciences	-	-	-	-
> Law, notarial law and criminology	1	1	-	-
> Social and community work	4	4	-	-
> Social medicine	-	-	-	-
> Language and literature	21	17	-	4
> Dentistry	4	-	4	-
> Applied biological sciences	2	2	-	-
> Applied science	16	16	-	-
> Science	33	33	-	-
> Philosophy and ethics	-	-	-	-
Total	193	177	4	12
> Universities	91	81	4	6
> University colleges	96	90	-	6
> Registered institutions	5	5	-	-
> Non-registered institutions	1	1	-	-
Total	193	177	4	12
> Professioneel gerichte bachelor	54	51	-	3
> Advanced bachelor's programmes	4	4	-	-
> Bachelor's programmes (academic orientation)	43	40	-	3
> Master's programmes	72	67	-	5
> Advanced master's programmes	20	15	4	1
Total	193	177	4	12

Initial accreditation applications Flanders 2011

Settled as of 31 December

	Total	Positive	Withdrawn	Negative
> Economics	1	-	1	-
> Combined fields of study	2	2	-	-
> Commerce and business administration	1	1	-	-
> Industrial sciences and technology	1	1	-	-
> Education	12	6	6	-
> Law	7	6	1	-
> Social and community work	1	1	-	-
> Applied science	1	1	-	-
Total	27	19	8	-
> Universities	4	3	1	-
> University colleges	16	10	6	-
> Registered institutions	1	1	-	-
> Non-registered institutions	6	5	1	-
Total	27	19	8	-
> Bachelor's programmes (professional orientation)	8	7	1	-
> Advanced bachelor's programmes	8	3	5	-
> Bachelor's programmes (academic orientation)	1	-	1	-
> Master's programmes	9	9	-	-
> Advanced master's programmes	1	-	1	-
Total	27	19	8	-

9.4 / List of terms and abbreviations

AKOV	<i>Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming</i> Flemish Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training	NVAO	<i>Nederlands-Vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie</i> Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
CDHO	<i>Commissie Doelmatigheid Hoger Onderwijs</i> Committee for Effective Higher Education	SERV	<i>Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen</i> Flanders Social and Economic Council
CROHO	<i>Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs</i> Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes	TEEP	<i>Transnational European Evaluation Project</i>
DUO	<i>Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs</i> Education Executive Agency	VBI	<i>Visiterende en Beoordelende Instantie</i> Quality assessment agency
ECA	European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education	VLHORA	<i>Vlaamse Hogescholenraad</i> Council of Flemish University Colleges
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System	VLIR	<i>Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad</i> Flemish Interuniversity Council
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	VLOR	<i>Vlaamse Onderwijsraad</i> Flemish Education Council
ENIC	European National Information Centre	VLUHR	<i>Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad</i> Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register	VSK	<i>Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel</i> Flemish Pupils Association
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines	VSNU	<i>Vereniging van Universiteiten</i> Association of Universities in the Netherlands
EUA	European University Association	VVS	<i>Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten</i> National Union of Students in Flanders
EVCs	<i>Elders verworven competenties</i> Prior learning	WHOO	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en onderzoek</i> Higher Education and Research Act
HBO-raad	Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences	WHW	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek</i> Higher Education and Research Act
HOR	<i>Hogeronderwijsregister</i> Higher Education Register		
Inspectorate	Education Inspectorate		
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education		
ISO	<i>Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg</i> Dutch National Students Association		
KNAW	<i>Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen</i> Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences		
LSVb	<i>Landelijke Studenten Vakbond</i> Dutch National Union of Students		
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre		
NRTO	<i>Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding</i> Dutch Training and Education Council		
NUFFIC	Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education		

Colophon

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