

Accreditation of existing programme

The programme accreditation system covers Associate Degree, Bachelor's, and (post-graduate) Master's programmes in the professional higher education and academic higher education sectors in the Netherlands.

GENERAL INFO

With respect to higher education programmes, the accreditation system distinguishes two forms of accreditation: the initial accreditation of new programmes with a maximum validity of six years and the accreditation of existing programmes which is valid for an indefinite period of time.

The point of departure is that all programmes are assessed by an NVAO approved panel of independent experts every six years. Such assessment takes place from a comparative perspective with similar programmes. To this end, all the programmes covered by the accreditation system have been divided into assessment clusters. NVAO sets down the deadline by which these clusters must submit a complete assessment report to NVAO in order to acquire or retain accreditation. The period between two submission deadlines is, in principle, six years; however, exceptions may be made if the division into assessment clusters so requires. The submission deadline is strictly observed. Not keeping the deadline will prompt NVAO to withdraw accreditation.

When applying for accreditation (and in the report submitted to retain accreditation), institutions are required to list all the specialisations, modes of study, locations, and statutory requirements associated with the programme in question. Courses of study that have not been reported are not covered by the accreditation.

Programmes taught by institutions that have passed the institutional audit may be assessed in accordance with the framework for limited programme assessments.

NVAO may impose conditions with respect to both the acquisition and the retention of the accreditation of existing programmes.

NVAO is entering into collaborative agreements with international sector and/or professional organisations in order to combine external assessment and accreditation procedures wherever possible.

STEPS

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1A: SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

A programme that has acquired initial accreditation as a new programme must have its quality assessed by a panel of independent experts within the ...

A programme that has acquired initial accreditation as a new programme must have its quality assessed by a panel of independent experts within the context of its assessment cluster. By no later than the submission deadline stipulated, the institution must apply to NVAO for accreditation as an existing programme.

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1B: RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

The accreditation of an existing programme is valid for an indefinite period of time; there is no expiry date. To retain such accreditation, a prog...

The accreditation of an existing programme is valid for an indefinite period of time; there is no expiry date. To retain such accreditation, a programme must be assessed within the context of its assessment cluster and submit the assessment report to NVAO by no later than the stipulated submission deadline. It does not need to apply for retention of accreditation.

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2A: DECISION BY NVAO REGARDING ACQUISITION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, the programme will be granted (its first) accreditation as an existing programme. NVA...

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, the programme will be granted (its first) accreditation as an existing programme. NVAO publishes the decision and the report on its website. Upon a negative outcome of the assessment, NVAO will refuse accreditation.

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2B: DECISION BY NVAO REGARDING RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, NVAO will decide to retain the accreditation of the existing programme. NVAO publishe...

Upon a positive outcome of the external assessment procedure, NVAO will decide to retain the accreditation of the existing programme. NVAO publishes the decision and the report on its website. In the event of a negative assessment in which improvement within the foreseeable future is not deemed feasible, NVAO will withdraw the accreditation of the existing programme.

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3A: NEXT STEP IN THE ACQUISITION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

With the NVAO decision, the institution informs the governmental implementation agency for the education sector (DUO) that accreditation as an exis...

With the NVAO decision, the institution informs the governmental implementation agency for the education sector (DUO) that accreditation as an existing programme has been granted in order for the programme to be registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO). NVAO sets down a deadline for submission of the external assessment report.

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3B: NEXT STEP IN THE RETENTION OF ACCREDITATION AS AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

NVAO informs DUO of the retention of accreditation as an existing programme in order for the programme to be so registered on the Central Register ...

NVAO informs DUO of the retention of accreditation as an existing programme in order for the programme to be so registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) and sets down a new submission deadline for the programme. This does not require any further action on the part of the institution.

RATES

For 2025, the NVAO rate for accreditation of existing programmes (accreditation) is EUR 1,000 (the same fee applies for conditional accreditation). The rate for modification of assigned assessment clusters or of professional degrees is EUR 1,000.

Different rates apply for other or non-standard procedures. The costs of visits abroad, work performed by external experts, advisory work, or work associated with additional requirements will be invoiced additionally.

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