Broadened programmes (planning-neutral conversion)

Dutch higher education institutions may amalgamate two or more programmes registered on the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) into a single new, broad-based programme.

NVAO assesses the amalgamation into a single new, broad-based programme without requiring the institution to undergo initial accreditation; this is the so-called planning-neutral conversion. It is important in this respect for the programmes to be amalgamated to have sufficient common ground, including components such as specialisations, minors, or tracks. NVAO provides a recommendation to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, who decides on the amalgamation to a single new, broad-based programme.

GENERAL INFO

The decisive factor for a successful amalgamation (broadening) of programmes is the conclusion that, in terms of curriculum (content), the broadened programme ensuing from the amalgamation does not substantially differ from the content of the existing programmes involved.

In principle, NVAO will conduct a basic assessment (without appointing a panel of experts) based on the protocol for broadened programmes (see Frameworks/Documents) and draw up a recommendation. NVAO may, however, pose additional questions or, when in doubt, convene a panel of experts, nonetheless. NVAO forwards the recommendation to the institution, which can apply to the Minister for a decision, based on a positive recommendation. Upon a positive decision by the Minister, the institution may implement the changes on the CROHO register. NVAO will announce the amalgamation of the programmes concerned on its website. The institution must turn in its existing CROHO licences (ISAT codes) in favour of a single new licence for the amalgamated programme. In the event that the programmes to be amalgamated are subject to different accreditation expiry dates, the proximate expiry date will apply to the broadened programme ensuing from the conversion.

Once enrolment for the new broad-based programme is open, students can no longer enrol for the original (“old”) programmes. Students already enrolled in the old programmes may complete the programme on which they have embarked.

STEPS

1

PREPARATION OF THE APPLICATION

The institution prepares its application and is free to determine when the application will be submitted. The application comprises an application ...
The institution prepares its application and is free to determine when the application will be submitted. The application comprises an application letter, a statement by the competent authorities that the amalgamation involves a planning-neutral conversion, and a brief information dossier.

2

PROCESSING OF THE APPLICATION BY NVAO

In principle, NVAO will conduct a basic assessment (without appointing a panel of experts). NVAO may, however, pose additional questions or, when i...

In principle, NVAO will conduct a basic assessment (without appointing a panel of experts). NVAO may, however, pose additional questions or, when in doubt, convene a panel of experts, nonetheless. NVAO forwards a recommendation regarding the application to the institution; on the basis of this recommendation, the institution applies to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science for a decision.

3

DECISION BY THE MINISTER

The Minister decides on the application and forwards his decision to the institution. The institution requests the governmental implementation agen...
The Minister decides on the application and forwards his decision to the institution. The institution requests the governmental implementation agency for the education sector (DUO) to adapt the information on the programmes concerned on the CROHO register to the new situation.

4

ASSESSMENT CLUSTER ASSIGNMENT OF THE NEW, BROAD-BASED PROGRAMME

The institution checks how the amalgamation will impact the assessment cluster assignment of the new, broad-based programme. Via the annual so-call...
The institution checks how the amalgamation will impact the assessment cluster assignment of the new, broad-based programme. Via the annual so-called April round, the institution submits a request for the assignment of the new, broad-based programme to an assessment cluster.

5

REGISTRATION ON CROHO

Upon registration of the broadened programme on the Dutch Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) the registration of the original ...
Upon registration of the broadened programme on the Dutch Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) the registration of the original programmes will lapse. Such lapse may be effectuated immediately or in phases. Either way, first enrolments in the original programmes will no longer be possible from the date on which enrolment for the broadened programme is open.

RATES

In 2026, the rate charged by NVAO for the assessment of a broadening of a programme (planning-neutral conversion) amounts to €4,496. When an assessment of a broadening of a programme is requested in combination with the accreditation of an existing programme, a rate of €1,818 applies in 2026. This rate is separate from the costs associated with the accreditation of an existing programme.

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