

Appendix 16: Initial Accreditation Tailored to Ghent University's Quality Conduct

Introduction

Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0, as described in the memorandum, applies to the majority of study programmes, i.e. the ones that have already been accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders (in Dutch: NVAO). For a number of specific cases, the new Quality Code on Higher Education provides for a procedure that is not run as part of a HEI's Quality Conduct, but **tailored to that Quality Conduct**. This is the case, for example, for the Initial Accreditation (in Dutch: Toets Nieuwe Opleiding –TNO).

A **new study programme** is a study programme that is not registered in the Higher Education Register or which is organized by the applicant institution, but does not appear in the Higher Education Register.

This appendix details how this procedure is run.

1. Initial Accreditation: New Procedure, NVAO Assessment Framework Tailored to the Quality Conduct

The new Quality Code for Higher Education came into effect in 2019.

The implementation of **the Quality Conduct** is extended to programmes that have not yet been accredited, such as new programmes. The most important **change** in the above procedure lies in the **NVAO assessment framework**. The programme co-ordinators no longer compose an 'Information Dossier' based on three generic quality characteristics. Instead they answer the three questions listed below in a manner that is at once demonstrable, and tailored to the Quality Conduct. Specifically for Ghent University, this means that the programme initiators complete an **Education Monitor**, which will then form the ground for the assessment by a panel composed by NVAO.

Procedure

Setting up a new study programme from September of the X academic year requires preparations to start in the spring of the X-2 academic year. The detailed process (with an internal and external phase) is described in the 'Study Programme Vade-mecum': <https://www.ugent.be/intranet/nl/op-het-werk/onderzoek-onderwijs/onderwijs/vademecum>

- **the first internal phase** consists of a proposal submission to the **Faculty Council** and the **Board of Governors**. The application for macro efficiency is once again submitted to the Board of Governors in the final phase;
- **the external phase** consists of a dossier for the:
 - o the macro efficiency application, which is assessed by the **Higher Education Committee**. The following topics are covered:
 - the study programme's social relevance;

- the expected number of students and the impact on existing study programmes;
- the expected demand for graduates and the impact on existing study programmes;
- the new study programme's learning outcomes and name;
- an estimate of the degree of interdependence and the relationship with the existing education offer;
- the Flemish Interuniversity Council's (in Dutch: Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - VLIR) advice in attachment.

The Education Department (in Dutch: DOWA) supports the study programme in preparing their dossier.

○ **Initial accreditation:**

- the study programme co-ordinators complete all chapters of the online **Education Monitor**, supervised by DOWA. It goes without saying that this primarily concerns the vision, plans and practical implementation of the study programme (Plan and Do). After all, objectives and indicators relating to the study programme's realization and results cannot yet be checked;
- the faculty Director of Studies informs DOWA when the study Education Monitor is ready
- the Education Monitor is **submitted to the Education Quality Board (EQB)**. The EQB takes note of the monitor and performs an admissibility check, i.e. whether it meets all the formal conditions (is the monitor complete), but also whether the monitor is coherent and contains sufficient information for the NVAO panel. It does so without expressing a value judgement. If the admissibility check has a positive outcome, the **the study programme gets the green light to submit apply for Initial Accreditation with NVAO;**
- after a positive macro efficiency application and the green light from the EQB, DOWA submits the study programme's Information Dossier (in the form of an Education Monitor and mandatory appendices) + an application letter signed by the Vice-chancellor to NVAO. The mandatory appendices consist of the core information requested in the Education Monitor, supplemented by the macro efficiency application;
- NVAO puts together a **panel of experts** for the Initial Accreditation assessment, which reviews the Information Dossier (consisting of the Education Monitor, an online reader's guide and appendices). The readers' guide for the panel ensures that a number of objectives can be emphasized (which are relevant in relation to a new study programme), and that relevant links can be included. This way a certain focus can also be given in the file. The panel of experts does a site visit and meets with all the relevant stakeholders. The panel assesses the study programme's quality based on the following three questions:
 - what is the study programme's aim?
 - how does the study programme intend to achieve this?

- how will it be determined that the aim has been achieved?
 - the panel writes an assessment report with a positive or negative decision. In the event of a positive decision, the quality of the study programme can be demonstrated based on the three questions and the presence of the eight quality characteristics of NVAO is guaranteed;
 - the **NVAO board** takes an **accreditation decision** based on the panel's report;
 - because the Initial Accreditation Information Dossier must already have been submitted to NVAO two weeks after receiving a positive decision on macro efficiency, work on the macro-efficiency application and the completion of the Education Monitor are completed simultaneously. DOWA guides the study programme co-ordinators in this process;
 - after a positive decision by NVAO, the Flemish government takes a recognition decision.
- **the second internal phase:** the curriculum, admission requirements and any co-operation agreement (in case of an interuniversity programme) are submitted to the Ghent University's Institutional Programmes Committee and afterwards to the Executive Board.

2. After the recognition decision: Accreditation Tailored to the Quality Conduct

A new study programme receives recognition as such, i.e. a newly recognized study programme. This entails an accreditation period which is valid until the second academic year following the end of the academic year in which the new programme's study that which runs until the end of the second academic year following the end of the academic year in which the programme's entire credit load has been completed for the first time.

Before the expiry of this period, full **accreditation** is planned, in the course of which an assessment is made of how the new study programme has been able to realize its plans. The **first full accreditation of a new study programme** does not take place according to the institution's Quality Conduct, but is **tailored to the Quality Conduct**. The procedure is the same as for an Initial Accreditation (TNO). The Education Monitor (+ online reader's guide and appendices), now also supplemented with realizations (checks and acts), form the basis for the self-evaluation report. DOWA supports the study programme during this process and submits the accreditation application, together with the self-evaluation report, to NVAO. A panel of experts reads the report, conducts a site visit and, on the basis of this, writes an assessment report that advises the NVAO board on the accreditation decision to be taken. This assurance decision is part of the publicly available information on the Ghent University website.

Only after this phase and a positive accreditation decision does the programme come fully under the Quality Conduct 2.0. It is then included in the calendar for continuous monitoring.