

NVAO & THE-ICE (NL)

Agreement

date
December 9th 2016

Introduction

This agreement between the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) has been collaboratively developed by both organisations. The goal of this agreement is to increase the efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for institutions in the accreditation process, by facilitating a process leading to double accreditation. The agreement only applies to the Dutch institutions and programmes that opt for a joint NVAO-THE-ICE process to receive accreditation from both organisations.

It is important to note that formal responsibilities will not change as a result of this cooperation. All responsibilities of the parties involved (NVAO, THE-ICE, institutions) will remain the same. This agreement sets out the alignment in the procedures to ensure an efficient process when applying for double accreditation.

An institution requesting a joint accreditation process must inform both NVAO and THE-ICE in due time. i.e. when registering interest in THE-ICE accreditation and requesting an Application Proforma, the institution also informs NVAO about a request for a joint procedure.

1. Assessment frameworks

NVAO accredits at programme level, while THE-ICE accredits at programme level as well as at institutional level, with a strong focus on the departments or teaching units specialising in the provision of tourism, hospitality, events and culinary arts (TH&E) education programmes. The THE-ICE Standards of Excellence address the NVAO assessment standards within both the limited and extensive assessment frameworks, except for the final two standards (assessment and achieved learning outcomes).

Programmes opting for a joint process may use the THE-ICE framework as a basis for the accreditation process. In addition, the final two NVAO standards will need to be addressed in order to comply with the NVAO standards. The methodology for assessing achieved learning outcomes, drawn up by the NVAO, will be used when assessing the final NVAO standard. Standard and achievable conditions (the number of final products¹ the panel needs to assess) will be determined as part of the planning process.

¹ Theses or any other product or products that the programme regards as the final product of a student.

2. Joint audit panel & joint visit

THE-ICE auditors are registered reviewers of the independent THE-ICE Assessment Panel. These experts will be required to meet the criteria that NVAO has set out for assessment panel members². An NVAO assessment panel consists of a minimum of four members, including a student. In order to comply with the NVAO accreditation framework and Dutch law, a secretary needs to be provided for each panel.

At least one panel member has to be acquainted with the NVAO framework. His/her role will be:

- to guide and consult the panel on performance on NVAO standards;
- to ask questions in order to judge the programme's alignment with NVAO standards;
- to prepare answers to NVAO's questions after the visit. These answers will need to be endorsed by the panel.

The NVAO and THE-ICE agree to engage an audit panel that meets the criteria of both organisations. The following panel composition is justified for joint processes: two auditors of THE-ICE Assessment Panel,³ one auditor acquainted with the NVAO framework and a student. It is proposed the auditor acquainted with the NVAO framework will also serve as chair of the panel.

All panel members will receive a briefing on NVAO's and THE-ICE's assessment frameworks before the site audit occurs. The briefing of the panel chair has to be compliant with Dutch requirements regarding the training of panel chairs, and sufficient to provide a thorough understanding of THE-ICE Standards of Excellence.

The institution contacts THE-ICE for nomination of THE-ICE auditor(s) and submits a proposal for the composition of an audit panel to NVAO and THE-ICE. Both organisations assess the members based on their procedures, looking at the different expertise as well as the independence of each member. The NVAO and THE-ICE will decide upon the proposed panel composition within four weeks. Any doubts or comments on its part regarding the panel must first be clarified, and if need be, the composition will be modified.

The joint visit will be planned according to the guidelines set by both NVAO and THE-ICE, taking into account mandatory elements on the site visit schedule.

3. Self-review Proforma & critical reflection report

Both organisations require that programmes deliver a self-review document to the auditor(s) prior to the site visit. Applicants to THE-ICE are required to complete an Application Proforma, which addresses the THE-ICE Standards of Excellence. The outline of the Proforma depends on the type of THE-ICE assessment (e.g. Pre-

² An NVAO assessment panel consists of members with discipline-specific expertise, practical expertise in the related professional field(s), international expertise, audit expertise, educational expertise and student-related expertise.

³ In case of a Pre-accreditation process, only one THE-ICE auditor is required to be part of the audit panel. However, programmes seeking Pre-accreditation may ask the assistance of an additional THE-ICE auditor in order to meet the NVAO's requirements regarding panel composition. Additional costs may apply.

Page 3 of 4 accreditation or Full-accreditation). The applicant institution is provided with an interim report based on an evaluation of information and supporting evidence provided in the Application Proforma. The NVAO critical reflection provides information and addresses all NVAO standards. For joint visits, programmes may limit their critical reflection to specific NVAO standards and refer to the THE-ICE Proforma for shared standards.

4. Distinctive feature (optional)

For the allotment of a distinctive feature, the relevant framework used by the NVAO needs to be applied for assessment. This means that the audit panel has to comply with the guidelines set for the procedure, and has to assess and judge the standards from the relevant framework.

5. Site Audit Report

An audit report is the outcome of the work of the audit panel. In case of a joint NVAO-THE-ICE process, the audit panel delivers two reports: THE-ICE Application Assessment and Site Audit Final Report, following THE-ICE format and written by the THE-ICE auditor(s), and an NVAO assessment report, written by the secretary. The accreditation organisations will make their decisions based upon the information in the reports.

THE-ICE completes the application assessment and site audit process with a final report as well as an Executive Summary, presented under four key headings: Observation, Affirmation, Commendation and Recommendation. The documents will be sent to the applicant institution for a check of factual inaccuracies. THE-ICE final report, except for the findings shared with NVAO, will not be published unless with the explicit consensus of the applicant institution.

The NVAO assessment framework prescribes the need for a differentiated judgment per standard and programme (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent). In order for NVAO to make a decision, the audit panel needs to state its advisory judgements per standard and programme in the report. In addition, a substantive summary of the report needs to be added to the report. A draft report is sent to the applicant institution for a check of factual inaccuracies. The final report is approved by all panel members and signed by the panel chair. It will be published on the NVAO website for any stakeholder to access and read.

6. Duration of accreditation

The duration of the accreditation period differs: THE-ICE grants accreditation for five years, NVAO for six years. In case of a joint process, both organisations will grant accreditation for six years.

7. Separate decision processes

The boards of NVAO and THE-ICE will both make their own decisions and decide on the possible follow-up, based on the assessment reports and the assessment frameworks applicable for their respective organisations.

Page 4 of 4 This collaboration agreement between NVAO and THE-ICE ensures institutions an efficient and effective procedure for acquiring double accreditation. NVAO and THE-ICE strive for as much reduction of the administrative burden of the accreditation processes as possible and therefore seek, when possible, to combine all accreditation processes an institution is involved in.

Robertson, January 13th, 2017

The Hague, December 9th, 2016

On behalf of THE-ICE

On behalf of NVAO



Pauline Tang
CEO
THE-ICE

Paul Zevenbergen
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