

## **S5 – Workshop on Panels**

### **Composition of the assessment panel**

(derived from the document: "Requirements regarding panel composition within the framework of the accreditation system", NVAO, 23 August 2011)

It is imperative that assessment panels are composed in a manner allowing meaningful discussions among peers, in which the panel remains sufficiently independent. The institution convenes the panel, appoints a secretary and subsequently presents the panel to NVAO for approval. To that end, the institution provides data on the expertise and independence of the panel members and the secretary, in a manner stipulated by NVAO. The institution may also commission an external quality assessment agency to convene a panel; in such cases the panel must also be presented to NVAO for approval.

The panel secretary has been certified following the completion of a NVAO training course. Every year, NVAO publishes a list of secretaries it has certified.

Assessment panels must meet the following requirements.

1. The panel is composed of a minimum of four members, among whom at least two authoritative experts in the field and a student;
2. Overall, the panel commands the following expertise:
  - a. expertise regarding developments in the discipline,
  - b. expertise in the professional field relevant to the programme,
  - c. international expertise,
  - d. experience in teaching or educational development,
  - e. student-related expertise,
  - f. assessment or audit expertise.
3. The panel is independent (its members have not had any ties with the institution providing the programme for at least the past five years).
4. The panel is assisted by an independent, external secretary trained and certified by NVAO. The secretary does not sit on the panel.

Prior to the visit, all panel members and the secretary certify to not maintaining any connections or ties with the institution in question, either as a private individual, or as a researcher / teacher, professional or consultant, which could affect an independent judgement of the quality of the programme in either a positive or a negative sense and to not having had such connections or ties with the institution during the past five years.

Panel membership requires a professional attitude. To that end, NVAO has formulated a code of conduct for panel members and secretaries. This code of conduct encompasses elements pertaining to the independence, confidentiality and attitude of the panel members and the secretary during the assessment process.

Panel members and secretaries will sign a declaration of independence and confidentiality prior to the assessment process. In this declaration, they attest to having taken note of the code of conduct. Following the assessment process, the chair and secretary sign the assessment report once all panel members have read and approved the report. The report includes a declaration that the assessment has been carried out independently.

## Appendix 1: Expertise among panel members

In addition to the independence requirement, NVAO distinguishes the following essential expertise to be represented in the panel:

- a. expertise regarding developments in the discipline,
- b. expertise in the professional field relevant to the programme,
- c. international expertise,
- d. experience in teaching or educational development,
- e. student-related expertise,
- f. assessment or audit expertise.

• **Expertise regarding developments in the discipline** refers directly to the insight into the state of the art of (curricula in) the (constituting) discipline(s). A specialist expert has taught in a similar or related programme with the same orientation and contributes to the development of the professional practice, the discipline and/or the field of study. This is demonstrated by conference contributions and/or publications in journals and/or a leading role in professional organisations. The specialist expert commands authority in and current knowledge of his/her own field, which is demonstrated by: a (university) degree, executive positions, manifest recognition as a peer or professional, leading publications / text books, awards, etcetera. The following qualify: senior teachers, associate professors or professors, but also active researchers within a profession.

• **The expert in the professional field** commands a proper overview of the requirements set by the professional field for graduates, for example, by being involved in sector organisations or holding an executive position with a major or typical employer. Insight into the requirements of the professional field can be enhanced by a contribution to the debate on job profiles of graduates.

• **International expertise** is present in the panel if the panel is capable of drawing substantive comparisons with related programmes abroad whose orientation and level are similar and, insofar as applicable, the panel has insight into the requirements set by the international professional practice for graduates. For example, a panel member may have insight into the requirements set by the international professional practice through an appointment with a foreign or multinational employer or with an international organisation, with additional international activities or managerial experience with an international trade or umbrella organisation.

• **Experience in teaching or educational development** is found among experts with recent teaching experience or experience in designing and managing programmes and among educationalists. With regard to educational expertise, it is important to ascertain that the expert in question has sufficient affinity with the teaching concept of the programme to be assessed. In order to achieve a meaningful exchange among peers, it is also important that the educational expertise relate to the same orientation (professional or academic) as that of the programme to be assessed.

• **Student-related expertise** focuses primarily on assessing the significance of the plans and the quality achieved for the students enrolled in the programme. The student panel member ascertains whether students are provided with sufficient support guidance and facilities. Student panel members enrolled in a programme within the same discipline also try to answer the question of whether the education provided is of sufficient quality in terms of content.

• **Assessment or audit expertise** can be distinguished into (a) experience in the practical application of requirements set by the discipline (peer), (b) experience with external assessment procedures in the higher education sector (review experience) and (c) knowledge of the NVAO assessment framework and the accreditation procedure. A combination of this expertise must be present in the panel.