

# Frameworks for the Assessment of Internationalisation

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## 1 Introduction

It is by now quite clear how broad and multifaceted the concept internationalisation has become. Higher education institutions and programmes of course need to realise this. Time and time again they will need to question the "internationalisation" objectives they pursue, how they wish to achieve these objectives and whether their internationalisation leads to the desired effect.

NVAO and the Dutch and Flemish higher education institutions are convinced of the importance of internationalisation for education. They view it as an additional contribution to the development of both regions. The Netherlands and Flanders are both indeed very dependent on trade and services and both small regions here rely upon good international relations. Internationalisation is therefore self-evident for nearly all professions and disciplines and education would fail terribly if this was not taken into account.

To underline the importance of internationalisation, NVAO awards a *distinctive quality feature internationalisation* to programmes and a *distinctive feature institutional internationalisation* to institutions. Both features can only be awarded after a positive assessment of the level of internationalisation of respectively the programme and the institution.

Two separate assessment frameworks have been developed to assess internationalisation: the distinctive quality feature internationalisation for programmes and the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation for institutions.

Of course, NVAO's regular programme accreditation already took and takes internationalisation into account. The level and content of the intended learning outcomes have to correspond with international requirements. The more the programme integrates international and intercultural competences, the more this should be reflected by the curriculum and its achieved learning outcomes. Internationalisation is therefore part and parcel of the quality of a programme.

The distinctive quality feature for internationalisation has however been developed for programmes that have a high ambition level regarding internationalisation. The programmes are expected to have a vision on internationalisation. NVAO doesn't prescribe how a programme needs to demonstrate its vision so this can be very explicit but also implicit. This vision on internationalisation however needs to be reflected in the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The curriculum, teaching methods, learning environment, staff and services have to enable the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. All these elements have been translated into criteria that are included in a specific assessment framework.

NVAO's institutional quality assurance audit doesn't take internationalisation as such into account. The distinctive feature institutional internationalisation however closely follows the standards of the original audit framework. The institutions are expected to have a clear vision on internationalisation. This vision needs to be shared and supported by all stakeholders. Institutional policy then enables the realisation of this vision. The assessment may however not be limited to the institutional level since realisations can be demonstrated at programme and/or faculty level. These realisations should at least include elements that

relate to international and intercultural learning outcomes, teaching and learning, staff and students. These are the same elements included in the framework for the distinctive quality feature internationalisation for programmes. Internationalisation has to be included both in the institution's improvement strategy and in the institution's organisation and decision-making structure. All these elements have been translated into criteria that are included in the framework for the assessment of institutional internationalisation.

To reduce the workload, NVAO recommends programmes to combine the application for the distinctive quality feature internationalisation with the regular programme assessments in the Netherlands and Flanders. The assessment of institutional internationalisation on the other hand should be combined with an institutional quality assurance audit.

The critical reflection of combined procedures needs to cover both the standards of NVAO's 'regular' assessment frameworks as well as the standards of the relevant framework to assess internationalisation.

## 2 Distinctive quality feature internationalisation

### 2.1 General principles

The following principles apply to the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature (DQF):

1. The DQF Internationalisation is assessed and awarded at the level of the programme;
2. The DQF Internationalisation is based on the programme's ambition level ;
3. The programme's desired internationalisation must have a significant impact on the overall quality of the programme;
4. The internationalisation and its impact on the overall quality of the programme is reflected in its intended and achieved international and intercultural learning outcomes;
5. The operationalisation of "internationalisation" should be reflected in the programme's teaching and learning, staff, and students;
6. The assessment of internationalisation should be undertaken by a panel that has the appropriate expertise;
7. The DQF Internationalisation is geared towards improvement and therefore includes scaled assessments at the level of each standard and, to conclude, at the overall programme level.

The following elements should clarify this concept:

Because of the multiplicity of issues related to internationalisation, NVAO considers it reasonable that "internationalisation" of each programme will vary greatly. Some programmes focus on an international professional field (e.g. international business), others are based on a discipline which because of its nature has no boundaries (e.g. physics), and even others integrate internationalisation by internationally benchmarking their nationally oriented programme. Such diversity cannot be reflected at the institutional level. Therefore, the DQF internationalisation takes the vision on internationalisation at the programme level as the starting point for the assessment.

NVAO considers it important that a programme clarifies the impact internationalisation has on the overall quality of education. The DQF internationalisation applies to programmes that provide what they promise (or practice what they preach). Such programmes present what they want to achieve through their intended learning outcomes which should include international and intercultural competences.

NVAO does not prescribe or endorse any particular internationalisation approaches or activities. The programme's own vision on internationalisation is therefore considered the appropriate starting point for assessing a programme's internationalisation. A programme can choose to clarify its vision in such a way that suits that programme best. It can opt for a very explicit or for a more implicit approach. A policy statement on internationalisation can be considered the most explicit approach. Several implicit approaches can also be appropriate. Here we can refer to the internationalisation vision embedded in an international cooperation or it becomes clear from an agreement to organise an international (joint) programme.

Programmes have to demonstrate that their graduates have realised international and intercultural learning outcomes. In this concept international and intercultural learning outcomes are to be defined by the programme. These learning outcomes can vary since they are intended to be the result of an international experience or an international dimension, including generic and subject-specific learning outcomes.

The multifaceted concept of internationalisation makes it likely that its operationalisation will take place in very different ways. NVAO sees four elements in which this operationalisation will take place:

- The teaching and learning provided by the programme;
- The way the staff is specifically suited for internationalisation;
- The way the students are engaged in internationalisation;
- The necessary services to make internationalisation function properly

These elements are therefore explicitly included in the assessment framework.

NVAO considers it very important that the assessment of internationalisation is done by panels that have the right expertise. All panels have to include at least two international experts. This includes one person, preferably with a foreign nationality (neither Dutch nor Belgian), who recently and for several years held a position at a foreign institution.

Finally, NVAO considers it useful to assess the standards for internationalisation on a four-point scale: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good and excellent. This scale is also used in the regular accreditation frameworks.

The overall concluding assessment also applies this four-point scale. This provides the opportunity to clearly demonstrate the level of internationalisation of a particular programme. It also incorporates a strong element of improvement into the system: a programme may indeed be challenged to progress from satisfactory to good or even excellent.

## 2.2 Assessment framework distinctive quality feature internationalisation

The framework for the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature consists of five standards and each of these standards has three criteria.

### Standard 1: Vision on internationalisation

**Criterion 1a:** Shared vision

*The programme has a vision on internationalisation. This vision is supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 1b:** Verifiable objectives

*The vision on internationalisation includes verifiable objectives.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 1c:** Improvement-oriented evaluations

*The vision on internationalisation is evaluated periodically and this evaluation forms the basis for improvement measures.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

### Standard 2: Learning outcomes

**Criterion 2a:** Intended learning outcomes

*The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its vision on internationalisation.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 2b:** Student assessment

*The methods that are used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 2c:** Graduate achievement

*The programme can demonstrate that the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes are achieved by its graduates.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

### Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

**Criterion 3a:** Curriculum

*The content and structure of the curriculum enable the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 3b:** Teaching methods

*The teaching methods enable the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 3c:** Learning environment

*The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Standard 4: Staff**

**Criterion 4a:** Staff composition

*The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 4b:** International experience and competence

*Staff members have sufficient international experience, intercultural competences and language skills.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 4c:** Services provided to staff

*The services provided to the staff (e.g. training, facilities, staff exchanges) are in line with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Standard 5: Students**

**Criterion 5a:** Student group composition

*The composition of the student group (diversity of national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme's vision on internationalisation.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 5b:** International experience

*The international experience gained by students is adequate and in line with the programme's internationalisation vision.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Criterion 5c:** Services provided to students

*The services provided to the students (e.g. information provision, counselling, guidance, accommodation, Diploma Supplement) are adequate and in line with the composition of the student group.*

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

### **Overall assessment**

*Based on its vision on internationalisation, the programme has implemented an effective internationalisation strategy, which demonstrably contributes to the quality of the teaching and learning provided.*

**Decision:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

The assessment is based on the following definitions taken from NVAO's original assessment frameworks. These definitions relate to both the assessments at the level of standards and criteria and the overall decision regarding the internationalisation of the programme.

### **Generic quality**

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.

### **Unsatisfactory**

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

### **Satisfactory**

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

### **Good**

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum.

### **Excellent**

The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum and is regarded as an (inter)national example.

## 2.3 Composition of the assessment panel

The composition of the assessment panel has to be in line with the regular and relevant assessment framework of NVAO. In addition to the regular requirements, the following elements need to be taken into account:

- Each panel should include two experts that have an unquestionably international profile. One of these recently held a position at a foreign institution for several years and preferably has a foreign nationality (neither Dutch nor Belgian);
- The panel member with the student-related expertise needs to have international or internationalisation experience;
- All panel members need to have a good command of English since the assessment procedure will take place in English. The critical reflection will be presented in English and the interviews during the site visit will take place in English.

## 2.4 Assessment procedure

### 2.4.1 Critical reflection

The critical reflection forms the basis for the assessment and the interviews during the site-visit. The critical reflection should follow the regular and relevant guidelines for NVAO's accreditation procedures.

In addition to the regular guidelines, the critical reflection needs to provide information that complies with the corresponding standards of the framework for the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature (Annex 1). Annex 2 provides an overview of how this framework relates to the regular assessment frameworks. This annex demonstrates how information related to standards in the DQF framework and can be presented under the standards of the regular accreditation frameworks (limited, extensive, Dutch or Flemish).

The entire critical reflection needs to be written in English. When a programme combines a regular programme assessment with the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature a maximum number of 15 pages may be added to the critical reflection.

The information included in the critical reflection should be sufficient to provide the panel with an initial impression that can be tested and adapted during the site-visit.

Programmes intending to request the assessment of the internationalisation of their programme can use the guidelines provided in 2.7 Guidelines for writing the Critical reflection.

The information needed for the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature is integrated in the critical reflection of the programme and is therefore submitted together with a request for programme assessment. The request for accreditation needs to specifically include the request for the DQF internationalisation.

### 2.4.2 Site visit

The assessment of the DQF Internationalisation includes a site visit. The site visit should be organised according to the requirements for regular assessment procedures.

In addition to the usual groups interviewed by the panel, it is recommended that the panel interviews the staff responsible for internationalisation activities (international officer, exchange coordinator, international student mentor, ...).

#### 2.4.3 *Assessment rules for the panel*

For each standard and each underlying criterion, the assessment panel will give a substantiated judgement on a four-point scale: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent. The panel subsequently provides a final conclusion regarding the overall quality of the programme, also on a four-point scale. The distinctive quality feature is awarded to programmes which are overall assessed as satisfactory, good or excellent.

All standards have the same weight. Overall programme assessment is based on the following assessment rules:

- A programme is assessed as excellent when at least 3 standards are assessed as excellent and 2 standards as good.
- A programme is assessed as good when at least 3 standards are assessed as good or excellent and no standard is assessed as unsatisfactory.
- A programme is assessed as unsatisfactory when 1 or more standards are assessed as unsatisfactory.
- In all other cases the programme is assessed as satisfactory.

NVAO distinctive (quality) feature will be awarded to programmes which are overall assessed as satisfactory, good, or excellent. The grade will be included on the distinctive (quality) feature.

The ECA certificate will only be awarded to programmes which are assessed as good or excellent. The level of accomplishment will be included on the certificate.

#### 2.4.4 *Assessment report*

The assessment report of a regular programme assessment combined with the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature can be extended with maximum 10 extra pages. These reports should follow the requirements for regular programme assessments.

In addition, the panel will give (separate) judgements for each standard and each underlying criterion included in framework for the assessment of internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature. These judgements should all be separately substantiated. This chapter of the assessment report should conclude with an overall judgement regarding the level of internationalisation and the award (or not) of the DQF internationalisation.

The executive summary of the assessment report of a regular programme assessment should contain at least one separate paragraph which addresses the assessment of the distinctive quality feature on internationalisation.

### 2.5 **NVAO decision-making**

The NVAO Board will make a separate decision about whether to award the DQF internationalisation.

In case the DQF internationalisation is awarded, the programme retains this distinctive quality feature for the period of validity of the (initial) accreditation. It is not possible to be awarded a distinctive quality feature without a valid (initial) accreditation status.

## 2.6 Required documentation

The programme provides the assessment panel with a limited number of additional documents. NVAO assumes that these are existing documents, available within the institution, rather than documents prepared especially for this assessment. The documents serve as a substantiation and, if needed, as verification as well.

In addition to the documents that are required for the regular programme assessment, the following documents are required as appendices to the critical reflection:

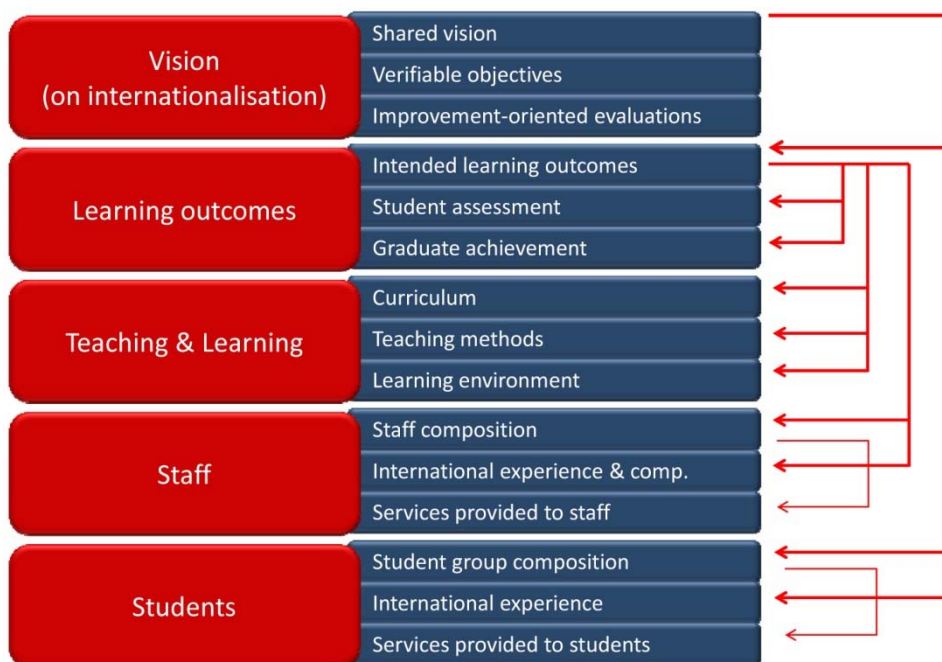
1. Vision on internationalisation;
2. A reference to courses or other (curricular) activities (by means of a matrix or reading guide) where intercultural and international learning outcomes can be achieved (if not already included in the regular course overview);
3. Examples of at least three Diploma Supplements;
4. Table of incoming and outgoing students of the last three years (percentage and absolute figures) per country, per type (credit or degree mobility and international internships by country, company name and duration);
5. In addition to the CV's of the staff an overview of the nationality and international or internationalisation experience of staff needs to be provided;
6. A list of international or internationalisation projects related to education of the last three years (e.g. Intensive Programmes, Curriculum Development, thesis projects..) and the programme's role in these.

## 2.7 Guidelines for writing the Critical reflection

Programmes applying for the distinctive quality feature have to address the five standards of the framework in their self-evaluation report. The evaluation report of the pilot assessment procedures (see NVAO's website) provides good practices for each of these standards.

### 2.7.1 Introduction

The standard and criteria included in the framework are assessed in the context of the programme's vision on internationalisation. NVAO does not prescribe or endorse any particular internationalisation approaches or activities. The programme's vision is therefore considered the appropriate starting point for assessing a programme's internationalisation. NVAO consequently expects that this vision has an effect on the intended learning outcomes aimed for by the programme, on the student group composition and on the students' international experience. The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes provide the context for the assessment of the bulk of the remaining criteria. A visual illustration of how the criteria are interlinked is presented below.



### 2.7.2 Vision on internationalisation

The ambition level of the programme is considered the starting point of its internationalisation activities. This ambition level is referred to in the framework as the programme's vision on internationalisation. This vision can be demonstrated very explicitly (e.g. internationalisation policy statement) or implicitly (e.g. international (joint) programme agreement). This vision, whether explicit or implicit, needs to make clear what the programme wants to achieve with its internationalisation and how internationalisation contributes to the overall quality of the programme. Usually the internationalisation vision of the programme will be connected to an internationalisation policy at institutional or faculty level. It is important for the sustainability and effectiveness that the vision on

internationalisation at the programme level is supported by stakeholders, such as staff, management, and the relevant professional field.

The vision on internationalisation or the programme's internationalisation strategy should include verifiable *objectives*. These objectives facilitate and ensure the proper implementation and evaluation of the programme's vision on internationalisation.

Programmes may include the institutions (national and/or abroad) that are referred to in order to benchmark, to learn from good practices, or to form partnerships (e.g. for students or staff exchanges, etc.).

The vision on internationalisation should be evaluated periodically. The results of this evaluation should lead to improvement in the implementation or to the revision of the vision itself. Part of the evaluation of the internationalisation vision is also the evaluation of the quality of existing partnerships with foreign institutions and the selection processes for new partner institutions.

### 2.7.3 *Learning outcomes*

Each programme is responsible for clarifying its aims and objectives. In European higher education, learning outcomes are considered the most transparent way to present a programme's aims and objectives. In line with the *Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area*, a programme's intended learning outcomes make clear what a student is expected to be able to know, understand and demonstrate after having successfully completed the curriculum. For NVAO, learning outcomes are the starting point. Programmes that apply for the DQF internationalisation should have their vision on internationalisation reflected in the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes of the programme.

Intended international and intercultural learning outcomes need to be clear and explicit. They preferably involve subject-related aspects, social/communicative skills and attitude-related features. International learning outcomes can refer to generic and subject-related aspects (e.g. language) relevant for interaction with people from different countries. Intercultural learning outcomes focus on the social and behavioural skills relevant for interaction with people from different cultures.

The critical reflection has to contain a list of all intended (international and intercultural) learning outcomes.

Assessments can transparently demonstrate whether students achieve the learning outcomes a programme aims for. All types of assessments can be taken into account, such as interim assessments, final examinations, final projects, research assignments, theses and performance evaluations. These assessments should however not only take into account the overall learning outcomes of the programme. They should also be suitable to assess achievement of the international and intercultural learning outcomes. Particular attention has to be paid to the inclusion of international and intercultural competencies into standard assessment forms and/or templates.

If the student assessments are suitable to assess the international and intercultural learning outcomes, these assessment can transparently demonstrate whether the graduates of the programme achieve the international and intercultural learning outcomes the programme is aiming for. Programmes can use additional methods to demonstrate achievement of these learning outcomes, such as alumni and labour market appraisal of what the programme's graduates know, understand and demonstrate.

#### 2.7.4 Teaching and learning

The curriculum is here understood to be the coherent and structured set of educational content (courses, modules, etc.) covered by a programme. This educational content should provide students with the necessary elements to achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

If a Bachelor of Nursing intends its graduates *to be able to teach, supervise and assess junior colleagues in professional practice*<sup>1</sup>, the curriculum should cover (and assess) this type of teaching, supervising and assessing.

The same type of correspondence should also be available between the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes and both the teaching methods and the learning environment.

If a Master of Arts in History intends its graduates *to be able to participate in group work productively and taking the lead on occasion, presiding over debates and discussions in an international or multicultural group*, this should have repercussions on the teaching methods. In this case the teaching methods need to enable class participation and discussion, including work in smaller and mixed groups, where students are coached as chairs of groups or debate presidents.

If a Doctorate in High Energy Physics intends its graduates *to be able to work in large international groups appreciating different national and cultural traditions and ways of working*, this should have repercussions on the learning environment. Here, the setting in which the learning takes place needs to accommodate working in large international groups. Additionally, the work in these large groups needs to be versatile, including different cultural traditions.

Curriculum, teaching methods and learning environment constitute a coherent teaching-learning setting in which the students should be able to achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

#### 2.7.5 Staff

The composition of the staff contributes in an important way to the overall quality of a programme. Quantity of staff refers to the amount of staff deployed in the programme. Quality of staff refers to their qualifications in a broad sense. It does not only refer to their subject-/discipline-specific knowledge, but also refers to their skills and experience. These may be demonstrated through their curriculum vitae or portfolio.

Differences in the composition of the staff can enable differentiation between the programmes in the same subject. The international (and intercultural) experiences and competences of the deployed teaching staff essentially determine whether a programme will be able to enable all its students to achieve the programme's international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Obviously, staff members in the beginning of their teaching career can't be expected to already have all the appropriate international experiences and/or intercultural competences. In the same way, staff members that did acquire international experiences, intercultural competences and/or additional language skills should be allowed and enabled to update these. In both cases the institution and/or the programme need to make it possible that staff members gain and strengthen their international experiences, intercultural competences and/or language skills. These services can be offered in various forms and can, in some

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<sup>1</sup> The learning outcomes included are examples from Lokhoff, J. & Wegewijs, B. (Eds.), *A Tuning Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles Including Programme Competences and Programme Learning Outcomes*, Bilbao, 2010.

cases, be mandatory.

The services are intended to actively provide support to staff in order to better meet the programme's international and intercultural activities and/or aspirations. Preferably they are an integral part of the programme's vision on internationalisation.

#### 2.7.6 *Students*

The composition of the student group can shape the international and intercultural experiences individual students gain. Both international student bodies with students from all continents and national student bodies with students from the region can provide opportunities for international and intercultural teaching and learning. A programme's vision on internationalisation however needs to determine the level to which this is the case. The international experiences gained by the large international student body can for example originate from following an international curriculum offered in an international classroom with internationally oriented staff. The national student body on the other hand can for example gain their experiences through international exchange initiatives such as internships, international projects and international semesters abroad. But in both cases the composition of the student group needs to correspond with the programme's internationalisation vision.

Services provided to students can be both curricular and extra-curricular. The link between these services of course depends on the composition of the student group. All students (national and international) should be able to make use of a broad range of integrated services before, during and after their studies. In the case of international students, programmes preferable demonstrate how they meet the demand of their student body and the level of intercultural awareness when providing services.

## 2.8 Reference guide to existing NVAO frameworks

### 2.8.1 Limited programme assessment (The Netherlands)

Limited Programme Assessment (NL)	Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p> <p><i>The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements</i></p>	<p>Stand 1. Vision on internationalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vision (1.A)</li> <li>• Verifiable objectives (1.B)</li> <li>• Improvement oriented evaluations (1.C)</li> </ul> <p>Stand 2. Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended learning outcomes (2.A)</li> </ul>
<p>Teaching-learning environment</p> <p><i>The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes</i></p>	<p>Stand. 3. Teaching &amp; learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum (3.A)</li> <li>• Teaching methods (3.B.)</li> <li>• Learning environment (3.C)</li> </ul> <p>Stand. 4. Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff composition (4.A)</li> <li>• International experience and competence (4.B)</li> <li>• Services provided to the staff (4.C)</li> </ul> <p>Stand. 5 Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student group composition (5.A)</li> <li>• Services provided to students (5.C)</li> </ul>
<p>Assessment and achieved learning outcomes</p> <p><i>The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved</i></p>	<p>Stand 2. Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student assessment (2.B)</li> <li>• Graduate achievement (2.C)</li> </ul> <p>Stand 5. Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experience (5.B.)</li> </ul>

2.8.2 Extensive programme assessment (The Netherlands)

Extensive Programme Assessment (NL)	Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation
Intended learning outcomes	Stand 1. Vision on internationalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vision (1.A)</li> <li>• Verifiable objectives (1.B)</li> </ul> Stand 2. Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended learning outcomes (2.A)</li> </ul>
Curriculum	Stand. 3. Teaching & learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum (3.A)</li> <li>• Teaching methods (3.B.)</li> <li>• Learning environment (3.C)</li> </ul> Stand.5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student group Composition (5.A.)</li> </ul>
Staff	Stand. 4. Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff composition (4.A)</li> <li>• International experience and competence (4.B)</li> </ul>
Services and facilities	Stand. 4. Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided to the staff (4.C)</li> <li>• Services provided to students (5.C)</li> </ul>
Quality Assurance	Stand. 1. Vision on internationalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement oriented evaluations (1.C)</li> </ul>
Assessment and learning outcomes achieved	Stand 2. Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student assessment (2.B)</li> <li>• Graduate achievement (2.C)</li> </ul> Stand 5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experience (5.B.)</li> </ul>

2.8.3 Accreditation Framework (Flanders)

Aims and objectives	Stand 1. Vision on internationalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vision (1.A)</li> <li>• Verifiable objectives (1.B)</li> </ul> Stand 2. Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended learning outcomes (2.A)</li> </ul>
Curriculum	Stand. 3. Teaching & learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum (3.A)</li> <li>• Teaching methods (3.B.)</li> <li>• Learning environment (3.C)</li> </ul> Stand. 5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student group composition (5.A.)</li> </ul>
Staff	Stand. 4. Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff composition (4.A)</li> <li>• International experience and competence (4.B)</li> </ul>
Services	Stand. 4. Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided to the staff (4.C)</li> </ul> Stand.5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided to students (5.C)</li> </ul>
Internal Quality Assurance System	Stand. 1. Vision on internationalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement oriented evaluations (1.C)</li> </ul>
Results	Stand 2. Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student assessment (2.B)</li> <li>• Graduate achievement (2.C)</li> </ul> Stand. 5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experience (5.B.)</li> </ul>

### 3 Distinctive feature institutional internationalisation

#### 3.1 General principles

The following principles apply to the assessment of institutional internationalisation as a distinctive feature:

1. The distinctive feature Institutional Internationalisation is assessed and awarded at the level of the institution;
2. The distinctive feature Institutional Internationalisation is based on the institution's internationalisation vision;
3. This vision needs to be mirrored by appropriate policies;
4. Institutional internationalisation must have a significant impact on the overall quality of the education provided;
5. The realisation of "internationalisation" policies should be demonstrated throughout the institution's education provision. Realisations include at least the following elements: international and intercultural learning outcomes, teaching and learning, staff and students;
6. The assessment of internationalisation should be undertaken by a panel that has the appropriate expertise;

NVAO deems it reasonable that "internationalisation" of each institution depends on the overall aims and objectives of that institution. NVAO does not endorse any particular approach to internationalisation. The institution's vision provides the context in which the assessment should take place. This vision is therefore the starting point of the assessment of institutional internationalisation.

NVAO considers it important that institutions turn their vision into policies. This means that institutions enact what they aim for. The context of institutional internationalisation makes it likely that the realisation of an institutional vision will take place in very different ways. NVAO however distinguishes four elements which need to be included in each institution's internationalisation policy or policies and in their realisation:

- International and intercultural learning outcomes;
- Teaching and learning provided by the institution;
- Staff;
- Students;

These are the same elements included in the framework for the distinctive quality feature internationalisation for programmes.

NVAO considers it very important that the assessment of institutional internationalisation is done by panels that have the right institutional and international expertise. All panels have to include at least two international experts. This includes one person with a foreign nationality (neither Dutch nor Belgian) and one person with considerable international experience.

### 3.2 Assessment framework distinctive feature institutional internationalisation

The framework for the assessment of institutional internationalisation as a distinctive quality feature consists of five standards and each of these standards has three criteria.

#### Vision

**Standard 1:** *The institution has a clear and shared vision on internationalisation, which is supported by stakeholders within and outside the institution and which is linked to the quality of its education.*

**Explanation:** This vision matches the institution's ambition regarding its internationalisation and is linked to the quality of its education. The institution encourages internationalisation of its education institution-wide.

**Assessment:** Meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

#### Policy

**Standard 2:** *The institution's policy enables the realisation of its vision on internationalisation. This policy includes at least the following elements: "international and intercultural learning outcomes", "teaching and learning", "staff" and "students".*

**Explanation:** The institution's policy is not necessarily limited to the elements included in the standard but should be the result of the institution's vision. Adequate policy requires both specific objectives which are in line with the vision and sufficient resources for its implementation. International and intercultural learning outcomes are important because they accurately demonstrate the impact of internationalisation on the quality of the education provided and consequently the relevance of internationalisation for students, graduates and the labour market.

**Assessment:** Meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

#### Realisations

**Standard 3:** *The institution can demonstrate the extent to which its policy is realised.*

**Explanation:** The institution has management information with regard to the implementation of the elements included in its internationalisation policy and the impact its policy has on the quality of the programmes offered. The information comprises the policy initiatives presented under Standard 2.

**Assessment:** Meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

### **Improvement strategy**

**Standard 4:** *The institution can demonstrate that it has included internationalisation in its internal quality assurance system.*

**Explanation:** The internal quality assurance system of the institution covers the elements included in its internationalisation policy. Internationalisation also has an impact on the internal quality assurance system. The institution utilises internationalisation approaches (e.g. international benchmarking, peer learning, networking) as part of its improvement strategies. These improvement strategies are evidently not limited to internationalisation activities.

**Assessment:** Meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

### **Organisation and decision-making structure**

**Standard 5:** *The institution has effectively integrated internationalisation into its organisation and decision-making structure.*

**Explanation:** The organisation and decision-making structure enables the coherent implementation of all elements related to institutional internationalisation: vision (standard 1), policy (standard 2), realisations (standard 3) and improvement strategy (standard 4). The organisation and decision-making structure includes clearly defined tasks, authorities and responsibilities.

**Assessment:** Meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

### **Overall assessment**

*Based on its vision on internationalisation, the institution has implemented an effective internationalisation policy, which demonstrably contributes to the quality of the education provided.*

**Decision:** Positive or negative (weighted and substantiated).

### 3.3 Composition of the audit panel

The composition of the audit panel follows the regular framework of the institutional quality assurance audit. In addition to the regular requirements, the following elements need to be taken into account:

- Each panel should include two experts that have an unquestionably international profile: one person with a foreign nationality (neither Dutch nor Belgian) and one person with considerable international or internationalisation experience;
- The panel member with the student-related expertise needs to have international or internationalisation experience;
- All panel members need to have a good command of English since the assessment procedure will take place in English. The critical reflection will be presented in English and the interviews during the site visit will take place in English.

### 3.4 Assessment procedure

#### 3.4.1 *Critical reflection*

The critical reflection forms the basis for the assessment and the interviews during the site-visit. The critical reflection should follow the regular and relevant guidelines for NVAO's institutional quality assurance audit.

In addition to the regular guidelines, the critical reflection needs to provide information that complies with the corresponding standards of the framework for the assessment of institutional internationalisation as a distinctive feature. The standards in this framework relate more or less directly to the regular framework of the institutional quality assurance audit.

The entire critical reflection needs to be written in English. A maximum number of 15 pages may be added to the regular critical reflection for the institutional quality assurance audit. This brings the total to maximum 65 pages, not including the required appendices. The information included in the critical reflection should be sufficient to provide the panel with an initial impression that can be tested and adapted during the site-visit.

The information needed for the assessment of institutional internationalisation as a distinctive feature is integrated in the critical reflection of the institution and is therefore submitted together with a request for an institutional quality assurance audit. The request for the audit needs to specifically include the request for the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation.

#### 3.4.2 *Site visit*

The assessment of institutional internationalisation includes site visits. These should be organised according to the requirements for the regular institutional quality assurance audit. In addition to the usual groups interviewed by the audit panel, it is recommended that the panel interviews the staff responsible for internationalisation activities (international office(r), exchange coordinator, ...).

#### 3.4.3 *Assessment procedure within the audit panel*

All the standards in the assessment framework are assessed and this assessment is substantiated with the panel's objective findings and subjective considerations. Institutions

are assessed as either meeting, partially meeting or not meeting the standard. In conclusion, the panel formulates an overall, substantiated decision on the question whether an institution has implemented an effective internationalisation policy, which demonstrably contributes to the quality of the education provided. This decision is either positive or negative.

The overall decision will always be “negative” if one of the standards is assessed as not meeting the standard. A “positive” overall decision is a precondition to award the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation by NVAO.

#### 3.4.4 *Advisory report*

The advisory report of the institutional quality assurance audit combined with the assessment of institutional internationalisation as a distinctive feature can be extended with maximum 7 extra pages. These reports should follow the requirements for regular institutional quality assurance audit.

In addition, the panel will give (separate) judgements for each standard and each underlying criterion included in the assessment framework distinctive feature institutional internationalisation. These judgements should all be separately substantiated. This chapter of the advisory report should conclude with an overall judgement and the award (or not) of the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation.

The executive summary of the advisory report of a regular institutional quality assurance audit should contain at least one separate paragraph which addresses the assessment of the institutional internationalisation.

### 3.5 **NVAO decision-making**

The NVAO Board will make a separate decision about whether to award the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation.

In case the distinctive feature institutional internationalisation is awarded, the institution retains this distinctive feature for the period of validity of the result of the institutional quality assurance audit. It is not possible to be awarded this distinctive feature without having undergone an institutional quality assurance audit which had a positive overall result.

### 3.6 **Required documentation**

The institution provides the audit panel with a limited number of additional documents. NVAO assumes that these are existing documents, available within the institution, rather than documents prepared especially for this assessment. The documents serve as a substantiation and, if needed, as verification as well.

The documentation that is required for the regular institutional quality assurance audits are presumed to include the relevant internationalisation elements to be able to assess the corresponding standards. For example, NVAO expects the regular staff (policy) plan to include elements that enable the appropriate assessment of the element *staff* mentioned in standard 2.

In addition to the documents that are required for the regular institutional quality assurance audit, the following documentation is required as appendices to the critical reflection:

1. Internationalisation policy plan or similar document(s) (if not already included in another document);

2. Policy plan on intercultural and international learning outcomes (if not already included in the Education policy plan);
3. An overview of the institution's international collaboration (e.g. institutional networks, bilateral agreements, double/joint degree arrangements);
4. Table of Incoming and outgoing students of the last three years (percentage and absolute figures) per country and per type (credit or degree mobility);
5. Examples of at least three Diploma Supplements;