UG Educational Quality

Policy memorandum on Educational Quality Assurance: 2023-2025

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1 About this policy memorandum

Updating Educational Quality Assurance

This *Memorandum on UG Educational Quality Assurance* 2023–2025 is an update of the *UG Quality Assurance Protocol for Teaching 2019–2022*. It has been adapted on the basis of:

- the key elements of the UG's Strategic Plan for the 2021–2026 period
- changes to policies and/or procedures at national and/or institutional level[1]
- an evaluation conducted by the University Committee for Education (UCO) in September 2022

The previous version of this quality assurance policy was developed in line with the recommendations of the 2019 Institutional Quality Assurance Assessment. The innovations at that time focused primarily on promoting and facilitating a quality culture based on trust. To this end:

- faculties and degree programmes were given greater freedom to make their own choices within their own quality assurance systems and the University-wide frameworks;
- the requirement to use Quamatrix as a document system was ended;
- a vision on quality culture and the University's role as a learning organization to stimulate the quality of teaching was formulated;
- a mid-term review for the institution and the degree programmes was added to the quality assurance cycle;
- limiting the scope of reporting for the period between visitation and mid-term reviews was envisaged.

The evaluation carried out by the UCO in the autumn of 2022 revealed that the pursuit of a quality culture based on trust is recognized and shared by the faculties. This is facilitated by the current policy, and major changes are not considered necessary or desirable at this juncture. Should institutional accreditation be introduced nationally, a thorough revision of this memorandum will be required.

Structure of this memorandum

The memorandum first outlines the relevant parts of the UG's Strategic Plan and the vision on teaching, to which the vision on Educational Quality and quality culture are related.

The general principles of the UG's quality assurance system are then discussed. The PDCA cycle at the heart of the system is explained in more detail. The assurance part of the UG's quality assurance, in which structural reporting and cyclical discussion by the main actors play an important role, is also explained.

[1] An overview of the policies and procedures at institutional level relating to teaching quality can be found on the UG's Teaching Quality Assurance website.

The memorandum concludes with an outline of the advice and support for the improvement policy.

In order to safeguard the quality of teaching, the UG has drawn up a number of agreements and procedures, partly at institutional level and partly at faculty level. These are included in Annex 3 to this memorandum. The agreements and procedures include visitations, degree programme tracks, mid-term reviews, and Education Monitoring.

2 Introduction

UG Strategic Plan

One of the basic principles of every UG Strategic Plan is to promote and improve teaching. The UG has defined its concept of good teaching and Educational Quality in an up-to-date vision, which also forms the basis of faculty visions on teaching.

Vision on teaching

The UG stands for sound academic degree programmes, which we provide in and through an inspiring academic community, in which academic teaching and research are interlinked. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is primarily the result of good interaction between staff and students; interaction which helps students become active and responsible participants in their own learning processes.

The UG is committed to creating strong connections between students and staff, between teaching and research, and between education and relevant societal issues in a national and international context. We believe that talent thrives in a close-knit academic community which shares, creates, exchanges and integrates knowledge: a community that inspires its members to develop their academic knowledge, interests, and talents to the full.

Vision on Educational Quality assurance

The characteristics of the UG's quality assurance procedure are:

- there are two aspects to quality in teaching: maintaining existing quality and achieving quality improvement;
- information in the form of pre-defined indicators of Educational Quality, established in consultation with the main parties within the UG;
- the governance cycle in the field of Educational Quality;
- UG procedures, including those for starting, modifying, or discontinuing degree programmes or tracks, and for preparing for and handling visitations (see: appendices to this memorandum);
- the awareness that the daily practice of quality assurance consists of facilitating and promoting a quality culture, with continuous attention to the processes that create quality. This is done on the basis of the substantive ambitions of the teaching staff in an open context of safety and trust in which they take joint responsibility and ownership, share knowledge and enter into discussions about Educational Quality.

Quality assurance is based on qualitative, quantitative, and evaluative information about teaching[2]. The systematic collection, integration, and discussion of this with various bodies provides the Board of the University with signals about the Educational Quality that help it to follow the PDCA *(Plan-Do-Check-Act)* cycle. The system appeals to actors at all levels, which permits the formulation of appropriate actions in line with practice. Monitoring is done at the staff, student, course unit, degree programme, faculty, and institutional level.
With this quality assurance system, the UG aims to strike a healthy balance between efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the institution, and the accountability that the University, as a public organization, must provide to society. To achieve and maintain quality in teaching, the UG has a quality assurance policy that is applied within a quality culture.

QUALITY CULTURE

The UG is an organization where responsible professionals, shared ownership, and mutual trust are the foundations of a quality culture. Quality assurance is consistent with the UG's decentralized governance model[3], in which the Board of the University sets UG-wide frameworks within which faculties develop their own policies. These frameworks are developed in conjunction with internal and external stakeholders: the exact details of the frameworks are the responsibility of the faculties. The UG's governance culture is geared towards shared governance.

Since 2019, the Board of the University has been, and will continue to be, strongly committed to supporting faculties and degree programmes in safeguarding quality in teaching. This is based on the principle that strengthening the professionalism and personal responsibility of staff reinforces the quality culture. In line with the transition to a quality assurance system which places less emphasis on monitoring and is based on trust, annual education interviews have been introduced. These interviews are conducted in an open context, where follow-up steps are jointly formulated to promote the quality of teaching.

Thanks to the flexibility provided by the frameworks, Faculty Board members, as competent professionals with sufficient autonomy, are able to make decisions that best suit their degree programmes, disciplines, staff, and organization. This contributes to a widely supported vision, sufficient variation per discipline, and the further development of a common quality culture. Accountability is achieved by Faculty Boards providing insight into their results at the cyclical Administrative Meeting with the Board of the University.

Within a quality culture, quality assurance is a combination of formal and informal systems which facilitate discussing Educational Quality and signalling issues. Because this also supports informal contact, signals are more likely to be shared compared to a purely formal system.

LEARNING ORGANIZATION

[2] See: Annex 1 Inventory of evaluations, data, and reports

[3] See: Annex 4.

In addition to formal systems, quality assurance is also addressed informally. There are several examples of informal consultation aimed at improving the quality of teaching, such as:

- the monthly informal lunch of the Committee of Deans. There is no agenda for these meetings, and the deans discuss current affairs, which they find very useful.
- the University Council's 'strategic hour'. This takes the form of a brainstorming session about a subject on which no policy documents have (yet) been prepared, and offers the University Council the opportunity to provide input at an early stage.
- peer discussions for members of the Boards of Examiners and Programme Committees.
- the activities of the Teaching Academy Groningen (TAG): an interfaculty and interdisciplinary community for and by lecturers, in which good practices are shared and knowledge is developed in order to promote innovative and interdisciplinary teaching.

QUALITY AGREEMENTS 2019–2024

The national agreements set out in the 2018 Academic Education Sector Agreement have been translated by the UG into plans to further improve the quality of teaching and successful study[4]. Funds from the student loan system facilitate this push for quality, so that students can continue to benefit indirectly from the abolition of the student loan system. The quality agreements cover the period from 2019 to 2024.

In early 2019 the UG's faculty and cross-University plans for the quality agreements were approved by the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). These plans were then further developed into concrete projects. A Quality Agreements coordination group and a working group are responsible for coordination and alignment. The substantive projects were submitted to the central and decentralized consultative participation bodies for advice and approval.

In consultation with the academic community, a decision was taken to use the projects to address five of the six national themes. The UG decided that the quality agreements should primarily focus on teaching intensity, which will receive the lion's share of the funding. The other themes are student supervision, study success, teaching facilities, and lecturer professionalization. The monitoring of progress is included in all project plans in the form of input, throughput, and output indicators.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prompted the adaptation of several projects to reflect the new reality. These adaptations were also submitted to the consultative participation bodies for approval.

Progress on all projects is monitored centrally on an annual basis and reported to the Board of the University and the central and local consultative participation bodies. Reporting is carried out via the UG's Annual Report. In 2022 the NVAO conducted an external assessment of the quality agreements for the 2019–2021 period. The UG received a positive assessment of the progress made on the projects. The NVAO will issue a final assessment in 2025.

3 UG Quality Assurance: components

Cyclical quality assurance in education consists of agreements, information and signals, images and analyses, and finally follow-up. This puts the various actors in control.

The actors have agreed:

- to look cyclically at certain signals or indicators, sometimes in the form of core data and sometimes through complex process indicators.

[4] See: UG Institutional Plan on Quality Agreements, spring 2019.

- on how to analyse and interpret these signals (analysis).
- to respond to the signals, depending on their nature or the constellation of signals observed, to maintain, support, and if possible, improve the quality of teaching (follow-up).

SIGNALS

Degree programmes, faculties, and the Board of the University collect various types of information on the quality of teaching, such as:

- business intelligence/management data such as inflow, throughput, and outflow rates, participation in excellence programmes, lecturer quality, teaching capacity, and degree programme pass rates;
- evaluations such as course unit evaluations, curriculum evaluations, the National Student Survey, the National Alumni Survey, the Monitor of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, institution-wide surveys on teaching and wellbeing, external evaluations of degree programmes and institutions (visitations);
- signals from students, lecturers, and professionals in the field, such as information passed on by the Programme Committees, study advisors, Boards of Examiners, confidential advisors, R&O interviews, and contacts with the field;
- evaluations of teaching adaptations and innovations in the form of process monitoring; and
- signals from Advisory Boards.

Faculties are free to choose how and to what extent they should generate this information, based on their own vision on teaching and organizational structure.

ANALYSIS

This information can then be used to determine the status of various teaching aspects. The institution, faculty, or degree programme can then take action as appropriate, such as:

- to organise a discussion about teaching and the Educational Quality with those directly involved, such as staff, students, and management;
- to perform a follow-up analysis, if the signals do not provide sufficient indicators to define concrete improvement measures, including the design and purpose of the follow-up investigation;
- to propose improvement measures with an action plan, intended effects, and evaluation period;
- to adapt policy, when the signals concern issues which transcend the degree programme or faculty, including analysis of the signals, proposal for adjustment, and evaluation period; and
- to adapt the strategy or vision: adaptation of the vision on teaching or vision on Educational Quality, and related objectives.

FOLLOW-UP

The cyclical approach is documented in reports, and systematic follow-up is carried out based on the results of evaluations, visitations, and administrative agreements:

- staff: reports of R&O interviews with lecturers and staff surveys;
- course and assessment: course unit and examination evaluations;
- degree programme: programme evaluations, visitations, annual reports of the Boards of Examiners, Programme Committees, and Advisory Boards or Education Monitoring reports;
- faculty: audit reports, annual education interviews, administrative agreements, faculty Education Monitors, project evaluations (innovations and changes in teaching); and
- institutional: including horizontal meta-analysis of the signals from faculty Education Monitoring and vertical trails from faculty Education Monitoring, and the general evaluation and results of the institutional assessment.

4 PDCA cycle

The UG's Educational Quality assurance model is based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and consists of the following elements:

STRATEGIC GOALS (PLAN)

The faculty's strategic plans are aligned with the UG's Strategic Plan for the 2021-2026 period. This ensures a high degree of convergence and continuity of the vision on teaching within the institution as a whole.

POLICY PLANS

Faculties prepare policy plans for their Educational Quality and related key issues as part of an effective quality assurance system. This also includes objectives in line with the University's vision and policy on teaching. This concerns the following topics:

- teaching and degree programmes: elaboration of the faculty's vision on teaching;
- assessments and Boards of Examiners;
- course unit and curriculum evaluations;
- lecturer quality;
- teaching concept;
- study progress supervision;
- support services;
- housing (University)

Policy plans are updated at least once every six years. The assessment plan of a faculty or degree programme is always updated on the basis of the teaching programme.

POLICY AND TEACHING (DO)

Teaching policy plans provide the framework for daily teaching practice:

- in terms of organization: for example, the number of contact hours, the sequence of examinations, and the use of course evaluations;
- in terms of content: for example, the interweaving of research and teaching, the links with other course units in the learning pathway, internationalization, and connection with the professional field;

EVALUATIONS (CHECK)

Closed quality cycles require the identification of the effects of the implementation of practice and improvement measures. Teaching at the degree programme and faculty level is mapped out via the Education Monitoring reports, in which a snapshot of the most important developments and points for attention are reflected on annually. Education Monitoring reports are informed by structural periodic evaluations. In-depth evaluations and internal reviews are also carried out at every level of the institution, when indicators identify the need. An elaboration of the evaluation procedure can be found in Annex 1.

At the institutional level, the *External Reports of the Administrative Meetings* describe the current state, including a reflection on the main points for attention and outcomes of the Administrative Meetings. An elaboration of this system can be found in Chapter 5 of this memorandum.

ACTION PLANS (ACT)

On the basis of the evaluation results, current developments, Education Monitoring reports, and the *External Reports of the Administrative Meetings*, points for improvement are identified and action plans are drawn up after discussion in the relevant bodies such as the Programme Committee, the Board of Examiners, and the Advisory Board. These action plans have four possible functions:

- to develop a policy when it is lacking for a specific topic;
- to adjust the policy when the existing policy on a topic is not or is no longer satisfactory;
- to adjust objectives when the policy objectives are missing or are no longer met; and
- to share current best practices.

5 Quality assurance in practice

MONITORING

Monitoring and reflection on the Educational Quality is carried out at degree programme, faculty, and institutional levels.

Degree programmes and faculties report on:
1) results on indicators;
2) examination of those results;
3) improvement plans including a timetable; and
4) evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the improvement plans.

DEGREE PROGRAMME, INCLUDING STAFF AND COURSE UNITS

Each year, faculties prepare a monitoring report for degree programmes individually, or in clusters, or jointly for all faculty degree programmes in combination with the faculty level monitoring, in which the most important findings, developments, and plans for the degree programmes are discussed. To this end, faculties reflect on the quality of their degree programmes, including:

- the key findings of the broad evaluations;
- in-depth evaluations; and
- ongoing improvement plans and the effects of completed action plans.

Faculties also identify new or recurring themes and points for attention in their monitoring reports for their degree programmes and discuss evaluations and improvement plans.

FACULTY

Each year, the faculty prepares an Education Monitoring report, potentially on the basis of separate degree programme Education Monitoring reports, in which it discusses the key findings, developments, and plans at the faculty level. The faculty reflects on:

- the key findings of the broad evaluations;
- in-depth evaluations; and
- ongoing improvement plans and the effects of completed action plans.

The faculty indicates when there are changes in the faculty's teaching strategy and also identifies new or recurring themes and points for attention, including evaluations and improvement plans.

INSTITUTION

Implementing the strategy

To ensure that the strategy is properly implemented, the Board of the University discusses its strategic themes every year. During the autumn Administrative Meetings, a formal meeting is held between the Board of the University and the Faculty Boards to discuss the faculty's strategy as regards to research, teaching, societal impact, and related processes such as HR and the relationship with the UG Strategic Plan. The evaluation cycle of the strategic agenda is described in the annex to the Strategic Plan. Input for the Administrative Meetings includes the faculty budget, integrated reports on the implementation of the strategy, and the Policy and Budget document.

Implementing Educational Quality

Educational Quality is discussed in the spring. On behalf of the Board of the University, the head of the Strategy Education and Students (SES) department meets with each faculty to discuss the quality of teaching, based on the analysis of the Faculty Education Monitoring report by the policy staff at the SES department. The Faculty Board member for Education, the Director of Education, and the faculty policy officer for teaching may be invited to this meeting, as well as the student assessor or a member of the Faculty Council. The faculty's account manager attends the meeting and is responsible for reporting.

The minutes of the annual education meetings are put on the agenda for the Administrative Meetings in the autumn. In addition, based on all the individual meetings, an overarching report is drawn up which, after approval by the Board of the University, is shared with the University Committee for Education, the Education Council and the Education and Research Quality Assurance Committee of the Supervisory Board.

The quality agreements report is annexed to the Education Monitor report and may therefore be part of the annual education interviews. This report is analysed by the Quality Agreements working group. The coordination group advises the Board of the University, which submits the report to the University Council for approval and adopts it. The working group provides aggregated reports for the UG's Annual Report.

The annual planning letter cycle ensures oversight of changes to degree programmes (e.g., tracks, selection, name changes, and applications for new degree programmes). The call for requests for such changes is sent to the Faculty Boards at the beginning of November: requests must be submitted before mid-February to permit timely decision-making and processing in the administrative systems. If plans regarding changes are related to the faculty's strategy, these can be discussed in the autumn Administrative Meetings prior to the call for requests.

INFORMATION

An important quality assurance element is that the quality cycle is supported by documentation. Documents are stored in the appropriate University or faculty storage systems and are therefore accessible to relevant stakeholders. This includes visions on teaching, policy plans, evaluation results, action and improvement plans, annual reports, and the reports of related committees such as Programme Committees and

Boards of Examiners, and documents from the educational process: student handbooks, various protocols, and the Teaching and Examination Regulations. It is important that quality assurance is transparent and that policies and developments are traceable for those involved.

Access to the documentation must be effective for different users and must correspond to the questions that they raise or have to answer as a result of their role in quality assurance. External and internal reviewers – for instance for the institutional assessment, visitation and accreditation, and mid-term reviews – will be interested in a different selection of documents than lecturers, students, Programme Committees, and Boards of Examiners, or policy advisors and directors.

EVALUATIONS

The institution conducts periodic evaluations at every level. Longer-term developments are also taken into account. The main results and developments from these broad evaluations are summarized in the education charts and serve as input for reflection at all levels of the institution. More in-depth evaluations are also carried out if the situation presented by the indicators so requires. The quality assurance cycle is explicitly addressed in the internal review. The internal review can be used as a further control instrument by the Board of the University or as a peer review by the Faculty Board[5].

ACTORS: RESPONSIBILITIES

The quality cycle is supported by an organizational and decision-making structure in which tasks, powers, and responsibilities are defined and in which the participation of students and staff is the norm. The tasks and roles are shown in Table 1.

CENTRAL FACILITATION

When implementing the improvement policy in response to signals or indicators from quality assurance, the Board of the University makes a number of facilities available to faculties and degree programmes.

ADVICE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Faculties may request advice from the Education Strategy department regarding the Education Strategy and quality assurance. The General and Legal Affairs department (AJZ) is a possible point of contact for questions and implementation-related issues concerning the Boards of Examiners, the Teaching and Examination Regulations, and other points on educational legislation and regulation. Both departments are part of University Services, formerly the Office of the University.

SUPPORT

[5] An elaboration of the various evaluations can be found in Annex 1.

In addition to internal faculty support for teaching, faculties and degree programmes can call on the UG's expertise centre for Educational Support and Innovation (ESI), which is part of UG's Center for Information Technology (CIT). The support available focuses on the following issues:

- assessment support: processing and analysis of assessments, advice and training for assessment development, and support for ICT applications in the context of assessments;
- lecturer professionalization: University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) and Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ), registration, and customized course units;
- advice and customized training for teaching innovation and curriculum design;
- contributing to or establishing teaching and project evaluations;
- subject and curriculum evaluations: technical support, design tools, and training; and
- advising quality assurance staff on the collection and analysis of education-related data;

The quality of the ESI's services is monitored through internal and external audits. In addition, a customer satisfaction survey is carried out every two years. Reflection on the impact of technological innovation on the quality of teaching is an ongoing process. This is one of the reasons why the CIT director attends the Education Council meeting.

Table 1: Overview of stakeholders and their responsibilities in quality assurance in teaching

This table is presents four types of responsibilities: supervision, implementation, consultative participation, and advice. Different stakeholders sometimes have different responsibilities depending on the situation. The table presents the stakeholder's main responsibility.

Level	Responsibilities	Quality assurance	Core documents	Results
Institution				
	Supervision			
Supervisory Board	The Supervisory Board ensures that the Board of the University complies with laws and regulations. The Supervisory Board is responsible for approving certain decisions of the Board of the University and also provides advice.	Establishing a quality assurance system.	*External Reports of the Administrative Meetings*, education charts.	Agreements with the Board of the University.
Supervisory Board Committee on Educational Quality	The Supervisory Board Committee on Educational Quality monitors the quality of UG teaching and quality assurance and advises the Supervisory Board on whether the Board of the University complies with laws and regulations for teaching and Educational Quality.	A Supervisory Board sub-committee with a special focus on Educational Quality.	Comprehensive evaluations, recorded via education charts, *External Reports of the Administrative Meetings,* etc.	Agreements with the Board of the University.
	Implementation			

Board of the University	The Board of the University bears ultimate responsibility for monitoring, managing, and facilitating quality assurance at all faculties and degree programmes. The Board of the University takes action and makes agreements with faculties when indicators or signals so require.	Establishing a quality assurance system, risk management, by means of internal audits and in-depth evaluations, *External Reports of the Administrative Meetings*, and provisional adoption.	Faculty Education Monitors, broad evaluations (recorded, among other things, in education charts), and in-depth evaluations.	External Reports of the Administrative Meetings.
	Consultative participation bodies			
University Council	The University Council has an advisory role in quality assurance and a formal role in the provisional establishment of the quality assurance system. It also provides models for the regulations developed by the faculties.	Advises on *External Reports of the Administrative Meetings.* Establishes models for regulations. Approves the quality assurance system Advises on Broad evaluations.	*External Reports of the Administrative Meetings,* Broad evaluations (recorded in education charts etc.). Optional: own initiative evaluations.	Recommended: Annual report of the University Council.
	Advice			
UCO	The University Committee for Education (UCO) advises the Education Council and the *Strategy Education and Students* department on the development of education policy and quality assurance.	*Advises on quality assurance, visitations and accreditations, broad and/or in-depth evaluations, and University Minors.*		Report of meetings.

Level	Responsibilities	Quality assurance	Core documents	Results
Faculty and degree programmes				
	Supervision			
Board of Examiners	The Board of Examiners monitors the realization of the learning outcomes of degree programmes by means of assessment and assessment plans of the degree programmes or faculty policy. For a detailed description, see: Board of Examiners Handbook.	Assessment procedures and criteria, and pass-mark system (Establishing, Article 7.12b of the WHW), relevance of assessment to learning outcomes. Monitors the quality of assessment and supervises the implementation of the assessment plan.	Course unit pass rates, assessment evaluation, and the assessment plan.	Annual report of the Board of Examiners.
	Implementation			
Faculty Board	The Faculty Board is responsible for the Faculty Education Monitoring, improvement plans, implementation of quality assurance, and Degree Programme Education Monitoring.	Establishing the Faculty Education Monitoring and Degree Programme Education Monitoring, establishing faculty quality assurance systems, and establishing an assessment plan.	Degree Programme Education Monitoring, in-depth evaluations, annual reports of Boards of Examiners, Programme Committees, Advisory Boards, and broad evaluations (recorded in education charts, etc.).	Faculty Education Monitor and Degree Programme Education Monitoring.
Programme Director/Coordinator	The Programme Director/Coordinator works on behalf of the Faculty Board and is responsible for the annual work plan for education and quality assurance and its implementation.	Preparing a Degree Programme Education Monitoring, and preparing an assessment plan.	Broad evaluations (recorded in education charts), in-depth evaluations, and annual reports of Programme Committees, Boards of Examiners, Advisory Boards, etc.	Degree Programme Education Monitoring.
Admissions Board	On behalf of the Faculty Board, the Admissions Board selects students on the basis of criteria derived from statutory provisions and, in the case of selective degree programmes, on the basis of the vision, content, and learning outcomes of the programme in question.	Checking the quality of non-Dutch students and the intake for selective degree programmes.	Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Regulations for Application and Admission to Higher Education (RATHO), selective admission criteria, and Service Level Agreements.	Annual report of the Admissions Board.
	Consultative participation bodies			
Faculty Council	The Faculty Council plays an important role in contributing ideas, providing feedback, and identifying bottlenecks. It also contributes to the assessment of the development of policy in faculties and degree programmes. The Faculty Council may provide unsolicited advice.	Potentially advises on the Faculty Education Monitoring.	Broad evaluations (recorded, among other things, in education charts), and reports of Administrative Meetings. Optional: in-depth evaluations and own evaluations.	Annual report of the Faculty Council.

Programme Committee	The Programme Committee provides input for and identifies bottlenecks at degree programme level. It provides the Faculty Board with solicited and unsolicited advice on the degree programmes, has the right to consent to a number of programme-specific provisions in the Teaching and Examination Regulations, and advises on the other parts of the Teaching and Examination Regulations and on the manner in which they are implemented.	Agreeing to parts of the Teaching and Examination Regulations, advising on other parts, monitoring the implementation of the Teaching and Examination Regulations, and advising on teaching evaluations.	Course unit evaluations, course pass rates, curriculum evaluations, and the Teaching and Examination Regulations. Optional: in-depth evaluations.	Advice issued to the Faculty Board, and the annual report of the Programme Committee.
	Advice			
Advisory Board	An Advisory Board advises the degree programme on learning outcomes, the content of the degree programme in terms of relevance to the professional field, and on graduate career opportunities.	Advising on learning outcomes with regard to the professional field and the placement protocol.	Broad evaluations (recorded in education charts, etc.) and learning outcomes descriptions. Optional: in-depth evaluations.	Annual report of the Advisory Board.

- Annexes

ANNEX 1: INVENTORY OF EVALUATIONS, DATA, AND REPORTS

Medium	Level	Frequency	Dates available
Evaluations			
National Student Survey	Degree programme Faculty Institution	Annually	Institution level: June Faculty/degree programme level: September
National Alumni Survey	Degree programme Faculty Institution	Every two years	June/July
Staff Survey	Degree programme Faculty Institution	Every two years	Varies
Assessment evaluation by the Board of Examiners	Course unit (spot check)	Annually	Varies
Final projects level check	Course unit (spot check)	Annually	Varies
Course unit evaluations	Propaedeutic course unit Post-propaedeutic course unit	Annually Once every three years	Varies
Course unit evaluation (*in-depth*)	Course unit	*If signalled*	Varies
Institution mid-term review	Institution	Every six years	Subject to national planning, Institutional Quality Assurance Assessment
Degree programme mid-term review[6]	Degree programme	Every six years	Varies, subject to visitation planning
Curriculum evaluation (*in-depth*)	Degree programme	*If signalled*	Varies
Data			
Education chart	Degree programme Faculty Institution	Annually Annually Annually	Continuously available in the BI portal.
Management information	Course unit	Annually Annually	Continuously available in the BI portal.

[6] The Board of the University has exempted the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from mid-term evaluations of education, as the interim international accreditations Equis and AACSB also look at education and the associated quality assurance system within the programmes. Should there be signs that a mid-term should be carried out, the faculty has a protocol for this purpose.

	Degree programme Faculty Institution	Annually Annually	
Reports			
Education Monitoring	Faculty *Optional:* degree programme	Annually	Faculty: February Degree programme: varies per faculty

Table 2: Evaluations, data, and reports

EVALUATIONS

National Student Survey (NSE): the NSE is conducted annually by an external agency on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, and almost all academic institutions in the Netherlands participate. A number of statements are included for each theme for students to indicate their level of satisfaction. Every year, students receive an invitation to participate by email. The NSE data are also used for the Elsevier survey and the Dutch Higher Education Guide (Keuzegids). If a significant level of dissatisfaction is reported, a degree programme or faculty will investigate this further and introduce an improvement policy where needed.
Purpose: to elicit students' opinions, also in a national context, and to obtain signals or indicators to improve Educational Quality (curriculum level), study guidance, facilities, housing, and quality assurance.

National Alumni Survey (NAE): the NAE is conducted annually by Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) among alumni who graduated about one and a half years previously. The questions mainly relate to their position in the labour market and the extent to which the knowledge and skills they obtained from their degree programme have been useful. If dissatisfaction or repeated dissatisfaction is reported for specific elements, a degree programme or faculty will draw up an improvement policy.
Purpose: to have access to alumni opinions and to use signals to improve the link between the labour market and the final attainment level for degree programmes.

Staff Survey:
Every two years, the UG commissions an external agency to carry out an employee satisfaction survey, the Staff Survey. The results are used to improve staff and educational policies, including the professionalization policy.
Purpose: to elicit staff opinion and to obtain signals or indicators to improve staffing policy and Educational Quality.

Assessment evaluation: the Board of Examiners ensures that the assessment of all course units meets the quality requirements set out in the programme's assessment plan. The Board of Examiners examines the assessment material and associated forms (e.g., signature of the second assessor, answer models, etc.) and checks that the course unit learning outcomes are actually being assessed. The Board of Examiners does this annually, reviewing an appropriate number of examinations each year.
Purpose: to obtain relevant information about assessments and enable the Board of Examiners to fulfil its statutory task with regard to guaranteeing the quality of assessments.

Checking the level of the final projects or theses: the Board of Examiners ensures that theses and the grading of theses meet the quality requirements set out in the programme's assessment plan. The Board

of Examiners examines theses and final projects and their accompanying documentation (e.g., the signature of the second assessor, answer models, etc.) and checks that the theses' and projects' learning objectives and learning outcomes have actually been assessed and achieved. The Board of Examiners does this on an annual basis, reviewing an appropriate number of final projects or theses each year.
Purpose: to obtain relevant information about theses and final projects and enable the Board of Examiners to fulfil its statutory task with regard to guaranteeing the quality of assessments, and of theses in particular.

Course unit evaluations: students are a key source of information on Educational Quality. Students are surveyed on quality indicators at the end of a course unit. The results provide lecturers with a starting point for implementing improvement measures. They also provide the Programme Committee with information for monitoring the quality of teaching.
Purpose: to elicit students' opinions on course units and to obtain signals and indicators to improve the quality of teaching.

Course unit evaluation (in-depth): this type of course unit evaluation is carried out when one or more results of the broad course unit evaluations indicate that it is needed. The exact form this takes depends on the signals received. Students, lecturers, and experts may be involved through panel discussions and surveys.
Purpose: to obtain more, and more specific information in response to indicators or signals, and to identify further leads for improvements or policy measures.

Mid-term review for the institution: an institutional mid-term review is conducted between two institutional assessments. This can take different forms, depending on the current situation within the institution, its organization, and policies.

Mid-term review for a degree programme: a mid-term review is conducted between visitations, at programme or cluster level. The main purpose of the review is to improve teaching: this is the moment to initiate constructive discussions with all parties involved. A mid-term review can take different forms but will always address the following points:
Reflection: a) Action points following the previous visitation; b) Striking points following broad evaluations and in-depth evaluations; and c) Innovations results in the review period.
The future: a) Possible continuation or completion of actions following the previous visitation; (b) Actions following broad and in-depth evaluations; and (c) Proposed innovation plans.
Composition of the panel: the panel should consist of at least three members, including at least one student and one or two colleagues from another degree programme or cluster of degree programmes in the faculty concerned or another faculty. This can include a Programme Director, a Programme Committee chair, a Programme Coordinator, or a member of a (University-wide) Advisory Committee or Advisory Board. External peers with substantive or administrative knowledge may also be invited to participate.
Participants: it is desirable to have at least the following participants from within the degree programme: lecturers, students, chairs of the Board of Examiners and the Programme Committee, and degree programme management.
Purpose: the Faculty Board uses mid-term reviews to gain further insights into the quality of the degree programmes. Actions based on review reports are discussed at the Administrative Meeting.

Curriculum evaluation (in-depth): this type of curriculum evaluation is performed when one or more the results of the broad evaluations indicate a need. The exact form this takes depends on the signals given. Students, lecturers, and experts may be involved through panel discussions or surveys.
Purpose: to obtain more, and more specific information in response to indicators or signals, and to identify further leads for improvement and policy measures.

DATA
Education chart: education charts are produced annually for each degree programme, faculty, and institution, containing the results of the broad evaluations and other management information in a multi-year perspective.
Purpose: The education chart serves as a factsheet and snapshot of the quality of teaching and helps the Board of the University and Faculty Boards maintain control.

Management information and business intelligence: degree programmes and faculties structurally monitor a number of indicators. These include:
- enrolment numbers: including intake of international students and total intake[7]
- students' matching profiles;
- drop-out and switching rates: for instance, for first-years and higher years, possibly with a more detailed breakdown;
- excellence numbers;
- exchange key figures: outgoing and incoming;
- course pass rates, Bachelor's and Master's pass rates;
- teaching commitment: No. of FTEs by grade;
- lecturer-student ratio and contact hours in the propaedeutic year, as included in the Teaching and Examination Regulations; and
- UTQ and STQ key figures.

Purpose: to have relevant numerical overview of teaching and to use indicators to improve various aspects of the quality of teaching and related issues.
In order to interpret the key figures, clear and verifiable indicators and targets are needed. Each Faculty Board records these. Deviations from targets and trends can provide signals for the Faculty Board. For example, an ever-growing or declining intake will eventually require adjustments to housing, staffing policy, and the organization of teaching.

REPORTS
Education Monitoring: every year, each faculty compiles an Education Monitoring report on the state of teaching and all degree programmes offered by the faculty as a whole. Guidelines are available for this purpose which lists the topics that the report is expected to include.[8]
Purpose: the Education Monitoring report provides input for the annual education interviews held in the spring. On behalf of the Board of the University, the Director of Education at the Strategy Education and Students (SES) department meets with each faculty to discuss the quality of teaching, based on an analysis of the Education Monitoring report. The Faculty Board member for Education, the Director of Education, or the faculty policy officer for teaching are invited to this meeting, as well as the student assessor or a member of the Faculty Council. To further knowledge sharing, Faculty Boad members for

[7] A degree programme/faculty may decide that other characteristics (e.g., intake of students with a diploma for the propaedeutic phase from a university of applied sciences, pre-Master's intake, etc.) for specific degree programmes or the faculty as a whole are also relevant.
[8] See: Annex 2 Education Monitor.

Education are invited to attend the annual education interview of another faculty. The aim of this annual meeting is to jointly formulate points for attention and action which enhance the educational quality. Accountmanagers are present at this meeting and the minutes are included on the agenda of the autumn Administrative Meeting with the Board of the University.

ANNEX 2: STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

Faculty Education Monitoring report
The Faculty Education Monitoring report forms the basis of the annual education interview. It covers a series of set topics, but its scope may vary from year-to-year depending on where the degree programmes are in the accreditation cycle. The Faculty Monitoring report offers a snapshot of the state of teaching, also in relation to the faculty's vision on teaching as formulated in the faculty's strategic plan. It also provides management information on the quality of teaching and covers the entire PDCA cycle.
Faculties decide themselves which information will be used to draw up a Faculty Monitoring report. One option is to prepare separate Education Monitoring reports for each degree programme or cluster of degree programmes.

Degree Programme Education Monitoring report
The Degree Programme Education Monitoring report provides information about the vision, goals, policy, actions and processes, and evaluation and reflection. In a Degree Programme Education Monitoring report, degree programmes report on the agreed key issues related to the quality of teaching; they reflect on the current situation and describe any changes. In the Degree Programme Education Monitoring report, a degree programme (or cluster of programmes) reports to the Faculty Board on the most important outcomes in the PDCA cycle.

Planning of the Faculty Education Monitoring report
The content of the Faculty Monitoring report depends on where the degree programmes are in the accreditation cycle. In some years, for example, there will be more reporting on mid-term reviews than in others. Reporting on Degree Programme Education Monitoring reports will also vary from faculty to faculty, depending on the signals.

Planning of the Degree Programme Education Monitoring report
Degree programmes undergo an external visitation every six years and an internal mid-term review every six years. It is recommended to relate the cycle for the Degree Programme Education Monitoring to this. Faculties decide how to collect information for each degree programme (or cluster of programmes) as input for the Faculty Monitoring report. They may do this through a Degree Programme Education Monitoring report or through another approach determined by the faculty. The cycle of self-evaluation, mini-monitoring, and extensive monitoring described here is therefore a recommendation; faculties may deviate from this.

Year	Product	Action
1	Self-evaluation report	Visitation
2	Mini-monitoring	Input for the Faculty Monitoring
3	Mini-monitoring	Input for the Faculty Monitoring
4	Extensive monitoring	Mid-term review and discussion of follow-up actions at the annual education interview

5	Mini-monitoring	Input for the Faculty Monitoring
6	Mini-monitoring	Input for the Faculty Monitoring

Chapter layout of the Faculty Education Monitoring report (guidelines)
Guidelines are available for the annual Faculty Monitoring report, outlining the topics on which reporting is expected:
1. A brief description of how the Education Monitoring report was compiled.
2. A summary of the progress made on the actions from the previous monitoring report.
3. Reflection on details from the education charts, with key figures on degree programmes and proposed actions.
4. Reflection on the current status of the follow-up on teaching visitations, reporting on concerns and proposed actions.
5. If applicable: reporting on mid-term reviews of degree programmes and follow-up actions.
6. If applicable: reporting on track evaluations.
7. Signals from students, staff, consultative participation bodies, Boards of Examiners, Programme Committees, and Advisory Committees, and intended actions.
8. Report on initiatives within the framework of Lifelong Learning.
9. Optional: report on educational innovations.
10. Optional: Status of quality agreements and planned actions[9].

Chapter layout of the mini-monitoring report (optional)
It is recommended that the mini-monitoring report includes at least the following topics:
1 Education chart with key figures, and reflection on notable items.
2 Status of the follow-up to the teaching visitation.
3 Signals from students, staff, consultative participation bodies, and Advisory Committees that require action.
4 Status of quality agreements[10].

Chapter layout of the extended Degree Programme Education Monitoring report (mandatory components, optional format)
The extended Degree Programme Education Monitoring reports starts with the intake (intake profile, numbers, matching and selection, and drop-out rates) and ends with the outflow (learning outcomes, degree certificates, assessment, and relevance to the professional field). This structure corresponds to the degree programme assessments in the current accreditation system. This monitoring report can serve as input for the mid-term review. The chapters cover the following topics, which correspond to the topics covered during a visitation:
1 Executive summary:
Summary of the most important outcomes and actions.
2 Vision and intended learning outcomes. It is desirable to comment on:
a. vision and intended learning outcomes (level, and relationship with international requirements in the discipline);

[9] In addition to these eight predefined topics, additional reporting may be requested on topical issues or on the implementation of existing policies. For example, reporting on the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of teaching was added to the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 monitoring reports.
[10] Faculties decide for themselves whether also to report on the quality agreements per degree programme or only in an aggregated form in the Faculty Monitoring report.

b. relevance to the labour market (social integration role of Advisory Boards, results of the Alumni Monitoring process, envisaged progress after completing a degree (Master's/PhD/labour market)).

3 Degree programme and organization. It is desirable to comment on:
   a. curriculum (vision on learning and teaching, relationship to intended learning outcomes, intertwining of teaching and research, feasibility, lecturer and student satisfaction, and curriculum evaluations);
   b. curriculum organization (curriculum and assessment, planning, staffing and staff quality, Student Support, facilities such as IT and housing, and curriculum evaluations);
   c. course unit quality (feasibility and student satisfaction);
   d. justification for choice of language if the name of the degree programme or the language of instruction is not Dutch;
   e. differentiation (excellence, space for the Minor, internship, and time spent abroad).

4 Achieved learning outcomes, including assessment. It is desirable to comment on:
   a. assessment policy;
   b. Board of Examiners;
   c. content and level of the thesis.

5 Evaluation of the quality assurance process, including the status of the follow-up to the previous external teaching visitation. It is desirable to include:
   a. quality assurance system (quality assurance plan, organization and PDCA cycle with improvement measures, and internal and external reviews);
   b. evaluation planning.

6 Intake, progress, and outflow (figures from the education charts). It is desirable to comment on:
   a. key figures and intake (intake numbers, origins, trends, benchmarks, etc.);
   b. drop-out and switching rates (self-selection, and student's suitability for the degree programme);
   c. degree certificates and outflow (number of certificates, progressing to Master's/PhD/labour market);
   d. student characteristics and matching (VWO-WO, international, pre-Master's programmes);
   e. information, matching, and selection.

7 Status of quality agreements.

ANNEX 3: PROCEDURES

FACULTY PLANNING

In November each year, the Board of the University invites the faculties to submit faculty plans for degree programmes that are to take effect in the September of the calendar year following the one to come or in subsequent years via a 'planning letter'. This concerns changes or innovations which – given the possible need for elaborate preparation, decision making, deadlines, and communication with students – require timely attention and effort, and need to be incorporated into the administrative systems as of September of the planned calendar year. For changes concerning current students, the transition period cohort + 1 applies.
The planning letter may include the following subjects, which are explained in this annex:

- New degree programmes: a faculty intends to create a new Bachelor's or Master's degree programme.
- Double or joint degrees: a faculty intends to amend existing joint degree programmes or create new joint degree programmes.
- Discontinuation of degree programmes: a faculty intends to discontinue a degree programme.
- Tracks: a faculty intends to add new master or bachelor tracks to degree programmes or to discontinue tracks.
- Change of degree programme/track name: a faculty intends to change the name of a degree programme or track.
- Change of language of instruction: a faculty wants to completely or partially change the language of instruction for degree programmes or tracks.
- Fixed-quota Bachelor's degree programmes: A faculty may seek to limit the number of places available on a Bachelor's degree programme by means of unweighted lottery or – if substantiated – by means of a selection procedure. A fixed quota is valid for one year: a faculty must therefore submit a new request each year in order for the fixed quota to continue to apply.
- Selective Master's degree programme: a faculty wishes to limit access to a Master's degree programme by means of a selection procedure, possibly including a cap on the number of students. The faculty can also report changes to an existing selective Master's degree programme or the discontinuation of a selection procedure in the planning letter.
- Change of type of programme: a faculty intends to add a new type (full-time, part-time, dual) to a degree programme or wishes to terminate a type of programme.
- HBO propaedeutic certificate: a faculty wishes to make changes regarding access to a degree programme with an HBO propaedeutic certificate.
- Matching (Bachelor's degree programmes): a faculty wishes to switch from compulsory matching to voluntary matching or vice versa for part or an entire degree programme.
- Second starting date for Master's degree programmes: a faculty wishes to abolish or reintroduce the compulsory second starting date for an ordinary Master's degree programme.
- Change in clusters of related degree programmes for BSA: A faculty intends to make changes to one or more clusters of degree programmes for the binding study advice (BSA).
- University Minor: A faculty wants to start or terminate a new university minor in line with the University Minors policy.
- Other: for example, planning-neutral conversion, or inter and extra-faculty

cooperation.

The above changes or innovations are subject to the procedures described below.

VISITATION AND ACCREDITATION: THE NETHERLANDS

The Board of the University bears the final responsibility for visitation and accreditation; the faculty is responsible for implementation.

1 Existing degree programmes

The visitation and accreditation procedure consists of the following steps:

1 The NVAO determines the cluster and visitation period for an existing degree programme. This depends on the submission date, as stated in the Institutions and Programmes Register (RIO).
2 In consultation with SES at University Services, a timetable for the visitation process is drawn up based on the cluster allocation.
3 A kick-off meeting is held between the SES, the faculty's policy officer, and the degree programme. During this meeting, the degree programme is informed about the process and a decision is taken as to when the self-evaluation can be submitted to the University Committee for Education (UCO) for assessment.
4 The degree programme management prepares a self-evaluation or, in the case of a development-oriented visitation, an information file[11]:
    a In the self-evaluation, the degree programme discusses the four assessment standards[12]. The self-evaluation includes a written contribution by students of the degree programme. The degree programme actively encourages the preparation of an independent and representative written contribution by the students.
    b The Faculty Board assesses the self-evaluation or information file.
    c The UCO advises the Board of the University on the self-evaluation or information file and discusses the advice with the Faculty Board and degree programme management.
5 The UCO's advice may take three forms:
    a Reject the self-evaluation: the faculty rewrites the self-evaluation and resubmits it to the UCO;
    b Approve the self-evaluation subject to amendments: the faculty amends the self-evaluation and – if necessary - submits it to the secretary of the UCO; or
    c Approve the self-evaluation: the self-evaluation is ready for the visitation committee.
6 The faculty sends the self-evaluation to the visitation committee.
7 The faculty and the visitation committee agree on a visitation programme.
8 The faculty organizes a mock visitation.
9 A visitation committee pays a site visit to the degree programme, in two parts:

[11] The information file is based on existing documentation and is prepared in consultation with the evaluation office. The information should be such that the visitation panel is able to make an assessment based on the four standards stipulated in the accreditation framework. A student chapter forms part of the documentation to be submitted.

[12] Assessment protocol: www.nvao.net.

a An assessment as part of accreditation and improvement. For this purpose, the visitation committee meets with various degree programme bodies; or
b A development meeting between the degree programme and the visitation committee to discuss potential improvements in terms of development.

10 The Education Strategy department attends the visitation committee's informal feedback meeting and informs the Board of the University. If the feedback is a cause for concern, the Faculty Board informs the Board of the University immediately.
11 Within two weeks, the faculty responds to factual inaccuracies in the draft version of the visitation report (hearing procedure), in coordination with the Board of the University via the Education Strategy department.
12 The Board of the University sends the final visitation report to the NVAO with a request for extension of accreditation.
13 Based on the final report, the faculty includes improvement measures in an improvement plan.
14 Within a reasonable period after the NVAO accreditation decision, the institution publishes the conclusions of the development meeting with the visitation committee on the UG website.
15 The faculty reports on the progress of the improvement plan annually in the Education Monitoring report.

2 New degree programmes

If a faculty wants to start a new programme, two external processes must be completed: 1) the macro-efficiency[13] application through the Higher Education Efficiency Committee (CDHO); and 2) the accreditation application with NVAO. This results in the following steps:

1 A kick-off meeting is held between University Services policy officers and the faculty to inform the faculty about the procedures for applying for a new degree programme. This concerns both the CDHO procedure and the New Programme Assessment (TNO) procedure.
2 If a faculty intends to develop a new programme, the Faculty Board member for Education must report this to the Education Council. If there are objections, the proposal will also be discussed in the Committee of Deans. If other deans consider that the intended new programme or track overlaps with a programme or a track of a programme from their own faculty, the faculties must coordinate their plans in such a way as to avoid duplications. In line with the agreements made, the requesting faculty adjusts the proposal.
3 The Faculty Board discusses the plans for starting the development of the new degree programme[14] with the Board of the University during the Administrative Meeting.
4 Before a macro-efficiency file can begin to be drafted, the faculty must request a go/no-go decision through the planning letter procedure. The faculty must gather the following information for this purpose:
    a) To what extent do the plans fit in with the UG's strategy?
    b) To what extent is there a demand from the labour market and can it be substantiated with figures (see especially the labour market prognosis for relevant types of

[13] This does not apply to the Executive Master's programmes.

[14] This also applies to an existing track in a degree programme that has already been assessed, which the faculty wishes to become independent.

programmes via the AIS database of the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA))?

c) Which degree programmes within the UG are related to the proposed new degree programme? Which Faculty Boards were consulted via the Education Council meeting and what is their view on the plans? Are there possibilities for cooperation?
d) Which degree programmes in the Netherlands are related to the proposed new degree programme? The relationship between programmes is determined in accordance with the three axes of macro-efficiency (see Appendix 5).
e) How will the faculty ensure sufficient academic and support staff for the intended programme?

Each new programme is provided with an opinion on the language of instruction of the proposed new degree programme by the UG language expert group before decision-making. This advice is requested by SES and ABJZ for all new study programmes at the same time for placing on the agenda of the Board of the University. If the application is promising, the Board of the University will give approval to develop the plans.
Steps 6-8 have been agreed upon with Universities of the Netherlands (UNL). See also the Roadmap for coordination of plans for new degree programmes within UNL (appendix 5).

5 The *Regeling macrodoelmatig opleidingsaanbod hoger onderwijs 2023* stipulates that institutions notify their plans for new programmes twice a year, namely on 15 March or 15 September, to facilitate coordination at national level. To this end, the applicant prepares a description in the size of half an A4 which is shared by SES with the CDHO. The overviews of all plans within the Netherlands are published by the CDHO on their website at two times a year, namely at the end of March and the end of September. Subsequently, institutions have 12 months to formally submit the application. Coordination between institutions can take place during these 12 months; the results of this coordination are attached to the formal application for the macro-efficiency assessment.

6 To enable coordination with other institutions, the applicant itself should - in accordance with the three axes of macro-efficiency (see Appendix 5) - identify a number of programmes related to the proposed new degree programme with which a benchmark talk should take place. SES then shares this overview in the UNL national consultation meeting on quality assurance (LOK). Other institutions can supplement this overview with the following information:
a. the names and e-mail addresses of the heads of the listed benchmark programmes, for the purpose of planning (online) benchmark talk.
b. the names and e-mail addresses of the programme leaders of programmes that should also participate in the benchmark talk but have been overlooked by the applicant.

7 Once this information is available, SES shares it with the Faculty Board of the applicant faculty. The faculty then schedules a benchmark meeting with all representatives of the related degree programmes and keeps SES updated on the planning. Within two weeks of the benchmark meeting, the participant(s) of the benchmark meeting communicate(s) to the initiator (SES and intended programme director, LOK member in cc) whether there are any objections to the proposed new degree programme. SES shares the results of the benchmark meeting with the LOK. The LOK and the UNL prepare the decision-making process of the UNL's Education and Research Steering Group (SOO) in accordance with the Roadmap for coordination of plans for new degree

programmes within UNL (see Appendix 5). In the event of a positive decision, the applicant can continue with the development of the application file for the macro-efficiency assessment, to which the applicant adds the results of the benchmark meeting.

8 In accordance with the guidelines, the faculty draws up an application file for the macro-efficiency assessment by the CDHO. This includes the information gathered for the go/no-go decision as well as the results of the benchmark talk. Attention is also paid to the question how the intake figures of related degree programmes have been developing in recent years (for intake figures of the related programmes, the faculty can contact the Education Strategy department). After completion, the faculty submits the macro-efficiency file to the Board of the University (via the Education Strategy department) in order to request advice from the expert group. The expert group advises the degree programme on how to enhance the application and advises the Board of the University whether the file can be approved, in accordance with the procedure for the assessment of self-evaluations by the UCO. Faculties are advised to already start drafting a file for the New Programme Assessment (TNO) while drafting the macro-efficiency file.

9 Following a positive recommendation from the expert group, the Board of the University submits the macro-efficiency file to the CDHO. The CDHO advises the Minister of Education, Culture, and Science. Other institutions in the Netherlands may submit an opinion if they feel that there is no room for the proposed degree programme or if they object to the name of the degree programme, etc. It has been agreed between the universities that they will not submit any opinions, provided that there has been sufficient substantive national consultation on the need and room for the proposed programme (steps 6-8). However, universities of applied sciences may also submit opinions. This could slow down the process.

10 Submitting an opinion may lead to further questions from the CDHO or a negative CDHO recommendation to the Minister.

11 As soon as possible after a positive decision by the Minister on macro-efficiency, the TNO file is furnished with advice by the UCO in accordance with the procedure for assessing self-evaluations[15].

12 The continuation of the process is identical to that of the existing programmes, with the exception that there is no development interview.

Time/duration:

CDHO procedure: drafting and internal decision-making regarding the application file will take at least six months, depending on the curriculum content. Processing an application for a new degree programme takes at least six weeks (sixteen for a branch office) from receipt of the written application. In practice, the CDHO advice could be ready four weeks after submission of the application; the Minister's decision will be available after eight weeks in parallel: a total of two months.

If an objection is made by way of an *opinion*, an objection must be lodged within six weeks of the date of the Minister's decision. It then takes another nine months before a final decision can be expected from the Minister: this procedure takes more than ten months in total.

[15] TNO protocol: www.nvao.net

NVAO procedure: the period from drafting a file to submitting it to the NVAO is at least ten months. The NVAO visits the institution about three months after submitting the file and will deliver a final report within two months of the visit.

After a positive macro-efficiency decision, the institution has ten months in which to obtain a positive quality assessment from the NVAO, otherwise the decision will lapse.

New degree programmes at other universities:
- Twice a year, SES receives an overview of proposed new degree programmes from the UNL national consultation meeting on quality assurance (LOK). This should be supplemented with:
1. the names and e-mail addresses of the heads of the listed benchmark programmes.
2. the names and e-mail addresses of the programme leaders of programmes that should also participate in the benchmark talk but have been overlooked by the applicant
- SES shares the overview with the faculty board members for education (cc to faculty policy advisors for education, who communicate who should be delegated to the benchmark meetings and which additional degree programmes should be included in the benchmark).
- The faculty policy advisors for education/educational quality pass on the required information to SES on behalf of the faculty board.
- SES shares the information in UNL context.

If the national consultation in UNL context did not lead to the desired outcome, it may be decided, in consultation with the Rector Magnificus, to submit an objection to the SOO. The administrative leaders of macro-efficiency play a role in guiding the discussion and ensuring that SOO members engage in an open and honest dialogue with each other, with the aim in principle being to reach a point of no objection. Issuing a point of no objection is considered a binding outcome: SOO members commit to no further opinions being submitted to the CDHO.

3 Improvement in case of an impending or actual unsatisfactory visitation
When a degree programme is assessed as unsatisfactory, the following steps are taken:

1 The Faculty Board informs the Board of the University as soon as possible if a degree programme receives or is likely to receive an unsatisfactory assessment.
2 Possible information moments:
   a signal during preparations for the visitation or mock visitation;
   b signal from the UCO following self-evaluation;
   c the visitation committee's site visit;
   d verbal report of the visitation committee after the site visit; or
   e draft visitation report and hearing period.
3 If a faculty reports a potentially or actual unsatisfactory assessment to the Board of the University, the Board of the University invites the Faculty Board to a meeting for further explanation of the next steps.
4 If a degree programme is likely to receive an unsatisfactory assessment, the Board of the University, may at any point during the process, set up a Collegial Supervisory Board consisting of faculty board members to supervise and monitor the improvement process.
5 In the event of an unsatisfactory assessment, the Board of the University has the following options:
   a If improvement is unlikely on the basis of the visitation report, the Board of the University decides, in consultation with the Faculty Board, to discontinue the

degree programme, i.e. to allow the accreditation period expire: see *discontinuation of a degree programme*.

b If, on the basis of the visitation report, improvement is possible and the visitation committee has confidence in this, the NVAO may be asked to conduct a one or two-year improvement process.
- The faculty draws up an improvement plan and submits it to the Board of the University.
-The Board of the University submits the improvement plan, while the NVAO requests additional advice from the visitation committee.
-If the NVAO grants an improvement period, the Board of the University discusses progress with the Faculty Board in the spring and autumn Administrative Meetings.
-The Faculty Board organizes a mock visitation in preparation for the re-visitation, during which an observer is present on behalf of the Board of the University.
-The Faculty Board submits the documentation for the re-visitation to the Board of the University.
-The Faculty Board sends the documentation to the visitation committee.

1 Positive re-visitation: the Board of the University submits a request for an extension of accreditation to the NVAO.

2 Negative re-visitation: the degree programme ends by operation of law after expiry of the current accreditation period.

4 Visitation and accreditation of Research Master's degree programmes*[16]*

The assessment of new and existing Research Master's degree programmes follows the same framework as that of an ordinary taught Master's degree programme. In addition, the following points are assessed:

1 How the research-oriented nature of the degree programme has been shaped in the intended learning outcomes, whereby both the outflow and the functioning of graduates in an academic and social context are taken into account.

2 The degree programme is offered in a context of research that is demonstrably, also from an international perspective, assessed as good or excellent and is related to the content of the programme in which PhD candidates and other early-stage researchers are also trained. The results of research visitations via *SEP* (Standard Evaluation Protocol for Research) are used as a reference, supplemented if necessary by information on the performance of the most involved senior researchers and professors.

3 The content, design, and structure of the degree programme clearly reflect its research-oriented nature and its incorporation of the research context. The assessment covers at least the following aspects:
   a admission requirements and how the degree programme selects students;
   b the coherence of the programme in both years and the interweaving of subject matter and research skills throughout the programme;
   c the proportion of the programme components specific to the research Master's degree programme;

[16] For additional requirements, see: https://www.nvao.net/files/attachments/.1254/Nadere_uitwerking_aanvullende_criteria_onderzoeksmasters_30_mei_2016_nieuwe_huisstijl.pdf.

d whether, and if so which, additional requirements are imposed on Research Master's degree students for course units that are also taught in ordinary Master's degree programmes;
e the involvement of senior researchers and professors in the teaching and supervision of graduation projects (theses);
f the opportunities for students to include specific individual components in the programme to deepen or broaden their research or research capacities, within the nominal duration of the programme;
g the programme's focus on the current scientific methodology in the domain and the ethics of conducting scientific research.

4 The degree programme concludes with a substantial test of research competence, of value in the relevant scientific discipline. The assessment addresses at least the following aspects:
a scope of the thesis, in relation to the programme design;
b relationship between the thesis subject choice and the research context;
c extent to which the thesis is deemed fit for publication;
d extent to which the entire research cycle is completed in the graduation project.

Composition of the panel: for a Research Master's degree programme, the following requirements apply to the visitation panel in addition to those which are applicable to committee members for an ordinary taught Master's degree programme.
The composition of the committee reflects the specific research-oriented nature of the degree programme. A committee has at least four members, one of whom is a student. The student member may also be a PhD student who is well acquainted with the teaching programme of early-career researchers. The other members of the committee must have the following characteristics:

1 They are independent and scientifically authoritative researchers;
2 They have an overview of the field and can independently give an opinion on the quality of the research context on the basis of the sources mentioned in the framework;
3 They are able to assess, with critical distance, whether the degree programme lives up to its distinctive character and whether the final attainment level is appropriate;
4 They have knowledge of and experience in research-oriented degree programmes, whereby at least one of the panel members is distinguished by experience and insight, which may also have been gained outside the specific subject area of the degree programme under assessment.

VISITATION AND ACCREDITATION: INTERNATIONAL

The Board of the University bears final responsibility for international visitation and accreditation; the faculty is responsible for implementation.

1 Joint programmes: joint degree, double degree, and Erasmus Mundus/+ programmes[17]

A joint programme is a degree programme that is offered in collaboration with several Dutch or international universities through a consortium. Such a programme is based on a consortium agreement with one or more other universities. The International Strategy and Relations

[17] Detailed information on joint and double degrees can be found in the Joint and Double Degrees Handbook.

department advises the Board of the University on the desirability of the programme and the status of the partners.

A joint programme can lead to a joint degree (JD) or a double degree (DD). The difference between a joint degree and a double degree is as follows:

1. Degree certificate: for double degrees, the UG and the partner university both issue their own degree certificate for the student's entire programme: course units taken elsewhere are then included in the curriculum. For joint degrees, the degree certificate is issued by or on behalf of the UG by and with partners, on behalf of the consortium.
2. Accreditation: for a joint degree, whether it is a joint degree for an entire UG degree programme or a track within a degree programme must be determined prior to accreditation. The Board of the University then concludes in consultation with the faculty, which protocol should be used for visitation and accreditation. Once determined, the process is identical to that of other degree programmes. A double degree is accredited on the basis of the Dutch degree programme or track according to the Dutch accreditation system (NVAO). The accreditation process runs parallel to the programme as registered in RIO. A joint degree is accredited on the basis of the joint programme, i.e. the accreditation data and results are partly dependent on those of the partners. If the accreditation at one of the partner institutions expires, the accreditation of the UG programme also expires. A point for attention in the case of joint degrees is the position of the consortia's Admissions Boards and Boards of Examiners. According to Dutch law, these are required to execute decisions on behalf of the committees of the ordinary degree programmes under which the programmes fall in terms of content.
3. A joint degree can obtain the status of an Erasmus Mundus or an EU Programme.
4. Accreditation and certification of a joint degree programme must be jointly agreed with and depends on the partner or partners. The joint degree must also comply with Dutch legislation, which has proved difficult to implement in practice. With a double degree, the UG retains control of the accreditation and certification process and therefore run no risks in implementation.

2 New joint degree: if a degree programme is to become a joint degree programme in collaboration with one or more Dutch or foreign partners, there are two possible ways forward:

1 The change in the degree programme is so extensive that it becomes a new degree programme. In this case, the route for new degree programmes applies, based on the assessment protocol for joint degrees[18].

2 The change in the degree programme is relatively small, with less than 40% of the learning outcomes being adjusted. In this case, institutions can design the joint programme as a track, which in the Netherlands falls under an existing (already accredited) degree programme. In this case, the following procedure applies:

   a The Faculty Board submits the proposal to the Board of Examiners of the degree programme;

   b The Board of Examiners assesses whether the programme achieves the relevant learning outcomes, meaning that there must be at least 60% overlap in terms of content;

   c The Faculty Board assesses the proposal including the approval of the Board of Examiners.

[18] See: www.nvao.net.

d The Faculty Board sends the proposal, with the approval of the Board of Examiners, to the Board of the University at least one year before the desired starting date;
e The Board of the University decides on the location of the track and, in the event of a positive decision, submits a request for conversion to the NVAO.

3 New double or multiple degree: if a faculty wishes to create such a programme, the International Strategy and Relations (ISR) department will first be consulted on behalf of the Faculty Board regarding the quality of the partners. All agreements with partner institutions must be laid down in contracts prior to the start of the programme in consultation with AJZ. These are subject to separate regulations[19]. The following steps are required:

1 If it concerns a track from an existing degree programme, the Faculty Board submits the proposal to the Board of Examiners of the degree programme for approval. If it concerns a new track, a request must be made via the planning letter procedure;
2 The Board of Examiners assesses whether the programme achieves the relevant learning outcomes, meaning that there must be at least 60% overlap in terms of content;
3 The Faculty Board assesses the proposal with the approval of the Board of Examiners;
4 The Faculty Board sends the proposal with the approval of the Board of Examiners to the Board of the University at least one year before the desired starting date;
5 The Board of the University informs the Faculty Board of its decision.
6 Subsequently, the faculty, in consultation with the ISR and AJZ departments, draws up the contracts and the Board of the University signs them so that implementation for the University and students is guaranteed;
7 Visitation and accreditation: the faculty includes the double degree or multiple degrees in the usual degree programme visitation process, starting with the self-evaluation.

4 Existing joint degree or double degree, change:
If a degree programme wishes to change an existing joint degree or double degree, the following procedure applies**:**

1 The request is discussed with internal stakeholders;
2 The Faculty Board decides on a proposal including justification of the choice of partner;
3 The International Strategy and Relations department is asked to give an opinion on the cooperation in the light of the University's strategy;
4 The cooperation agreement (MoU) is amended in accordance with the checklist. An agreement is drafted with the partner or partners (MoU) in consultation with the AJZ;
5 The draft cooperation agreement (MoU) is sent to internationalabjz@rug.nl for review and signature by the Board of the University;
6 Decision by the Board of the University.

For evaluation and renewal after five years:

1 Key signals are reported each year in the Education Monitor;
2 After three years, an evaluation is carried out by the faculty concerned. On the basis of this evaluation, the Board of the University decides whether or not to continue the programme.

5 Terminating a degree programme

[19] Examples of this and of the contracts can be found on My University > Facilities and facilities > Legal advice > International cooperation agreements.

There are several reasons for ending a degree programme:

1 If a visitation or re-visitation is unsatisfactory, the accreditation will expire because it has become impossible to extend the accreditation;
2 If a degree programme: a) no longer fits in with the vision of the UG or the faculty, or b) formally ceases to be an independent degree programme and is included as a track in another degree programme.

In all cases, the 'nominal plus one year' rule applies to students: students who have started a degree programme must be given the opportunity to graduate in that programme within the nominal duration of the degree programme plus one year, unless students agree not to do so. In that case, a degree programme may be ended earlier.

TRACKS[20]

1 Starting and changing a track

1 The degree programme draws up a proposal for a new track and submits it to the Programme Committee for advice;
2 The proposal is submitted for approval to the Board of Examiners of the accredited degree programme in which the track is to be included;
3 The Board of Examiners assesses whether the track is valid in terms of graduation from the degree programme, based on the proposed learning outcomes, progression/curriculum, and quality assurance;
4 The Faculty Board assesses the proposal with the approval of the Board of Examiners;
5 The Faculty Board member for Education reports the plans to the Education Council.
6 The Faculty Board sends the proposal to the Board of the University via the planning letter procedure. The proposal should be accompanied by:
   a a *New Master's/Bachelor's Track Assessment Form*[21] signed by the Board of Examiners with a prognosis for the track in terms of the assessment points;
   b the application form, including the Faculty Board's justification for applying for the track;

   Each new track is provided with an opinion on the language of instruction of the proposed new track by the UG language expert group before decision-making. This advice is requested by SES and ABJZ for all new study programmes at the same time for placing on the agenda of the Executive Board.
7 Following approval by the Board of the University, SES or AJZ informs the Faculty Board of the Board of the University's decision and, in the event of a rejection, the reasons for the rejection. SES or AJZ forwards the information on the new track t SIA for inclusion in the administrative systems.[22]

2 End of a track

1 The Faculty Board announces its intention to discontinue a track via the annual planning letter procedure. The time needed to discontinue a track is cohort (C) + 1. The intention must be accompanied by:
   a. the application form, including a brief justification from the Faculty Board for discontinuing the track;

[20] Detailed information on track policy can be found in the Guideline for Master's tracks as well as the policy for bachelor's tracks

[21] See Guideline for Master's tracks/ Policy for bachelor's tracks

2 The SES or AJZ then forward the information, following a positive decision from the Board of the University, to the SIA for processing in the administrative systems.
3 The faculty is responsible for timely and good communication regarding the discontinuation of the track.

3 Evaluation of a track

An assessment system has been developed to further ensure the quality of tracks, to allow faculties to periodically assess the viability of their tracks.

1 The tracks of each degree programme must be assessed at least once every three years.
2 The Faculty Board performs this assessment itself or delegates the task to a committee. The Board of Examiners provides advice.
3 The assessment is conducted as part of the accreditation of the Master's degree programme to which the track belongs or as a mid-term review.
4 As part of the preparations for accreditation, an assessment is performed one year prior to accreditation. The Faculty Board determines when a mid-term review should be conducted to ensure that it is compatible with the faculty's quality assurance system.
5 During the assessment, each track is assessed separately according to the Master's Track Assessment Form[23].
6 The assessment forms part of the Degree Programme Education Monitoring. The results are summarized in the Faculty Education Monitoring report.
7 Based on the results of the assessment or assessments, the Faculty Board decides on the continuation, modification, or discontinuation of the assessed track or tracks no later than one year after the assessment.

CHANGING THE NAME OF DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND TRACKS

To apply for a name change for a degree programme, a request file with an expert opinion must be submitted to the NVAO. To limit the additional administrative burden, it is recommended that the visitation panel be asked for a substantive recommendation at the time of the visitation and that the name change be requested when submitting an accreditation extension.

1 Change of degree programme name

A Dutch university can request a name change of one of their degree programmes during a visitation. A change of a degree programme name can also be requested in-between visitations by means of the planning letter procedure. In the latter case, the request must comply with internal University of Groningen policy.* The NVAO assesses whether the content of the degree programme has changed substantially, in addition to the name. If it has, the institution must apply for a New Programme Assessment (TNO), preceded by an application to the Higher Education Efficiency Committee (CDHO). The procedure is as follows:

1 The Faculty Board member for Education reports the plans to the Education Council.
2 The Faculty Board submits the proposed change to the Board of the University with reasons that are in line with the criteria mentioned under point 4 (see below). Next to this, the faculty provides the Board of the University with the following information:
    a. a concise market survey into the suitability of the proposed new name,
    b. an inventory of degree programmes/tracks in the country that use the same terms,
    c. an explanation of the extent to which the proposed new name is in line with marketing principles (see appendix 8).

[23] See: Guidelines for Master's tracks.

3 After obtaining advice, the Board of the University decides.
4 When preparing a proposal, the following should be taken into account:
   a in its request, the institution or degree programme must state the reasons for choosing a new name and whether the new name is consistent with the content;
   b if the new name is the result of a change to the degree programme, justification should be provided to demonstrate that it is not a new programme;
   c if the content of the degree programme is not or is only marginally amended and the proposed name is in line with what is customary in the sector or visitation group, the NVAO will not engage an external expert or experts and will take a decision on the basis of the request portfolio and desk research;
   d If the degree programme changes, the NVAO will call in an external expert or experts.
5 The name change may not result in the degree programme being listed in a different section of RIO (WHW, Article 7.3, paragraph 5, in conjunction with article 5a.2, paragraph 2a). If this is the case, then this is also a *request for reclassification*. The CDHO also advises the Minister on the *reclassification request*.

*__Application for a programme name change in-between visitations:__ In specific cases, a faculty may ask the Board of the University through the planning letter procedure to submit a request for a programme name change to the NVAO in-between visitations.
According to internal policy, an in-between application must demonstrate that there is a need to deviate from the rule of applying for a programme name change during visitation.
Reasons for exceptions may include:
1 External political pressure,
2 Change of direction and/or curriculum in response to recommendations resulting from the re-accreditation and/or current developments in society/science.

Deadline: The NVAO will process the request for a name change within three months, depending on the need to involve an expert or experts. After receiving the NVAO's draft decision, the institution may lodge an objection.

2 Registration of an international name
The Faculty Board may ask the Board of the University to enter or change an international name in RIO via the planning letter procedure. The change of an international name can only be determined based on the ISAT code, and must be the same as that of any sister programme. International names are also submitted via the AJZ to the International Strategy and Relations (ISR) department for advice to the Board of the University on the international connotations of the specific name. SES registers the international name in RIO and, from there, SIA transmits it to the other administrative systems.

3 Change of track name
Changes to track names are carried out in Studielink following a request from the Faculty Board via the annual planning letter procedure and approval by the Board of the University. Next to this, the Faculty Board member for Education reports the plans to the Education Council.
The application via the annual planning letter procedure must include a motivation for the change of name. Next to this, the faculty provides the Board of the University with the following information:

a. a concise market survey into the suitability of the proposed new name,

b. an inventory of degree programmes/tracks in the country that use the same terms,
c. an explanation of the extent to which the proposed new name is in line with marketing principles (see appendix 8).

Guidelines for track names:
1 The track name does not contain any repetition of (a part of) the degree programme name, unless it is evident that this is unavoidable due to the naming system used within the programme.
2 The track name is limited in length (guideline: max. 4 words).
3 When changing the name of a track, consideration must be given to the position of students already enrolled in the track.
4 Recruitment is done based on the name of the degree programme and not based on the name of the track.
Tracks are registered in Progress and therefore also appear in RIO. Additionally, tracks are registered in Studielink.

MID-TERM REVIEW, PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE MINI AUDIT[24]
Since 2016, the internal mini audit is no longer part of the central PDCA cycle. The audit was used to monitor policy implementation: this step is now included in the Education Monitoring. Optionally, a review or mid-term review can be carried out by the Board of the University or the Faculty Board if signals at faculty or institution level give cause for concern.
The procedure for an internal review at institution level is as follows:
1 The Board of the University requests advice from the UCO or the Education Strategy department on the issues raised in the Education Monitoring report.
2 The UCO or the Education Strategy department advises on a sample: themes and faculties.
3 A committee conducts the review.
4 After a hearing, a report is sent to the Board of the University.
5 The Board of the University and the Faculty Board discuss the results and recommendations in an Administrative Meeting and, where necessary, reach agreements.

The procedure for a review at faculty level is as follows:
1 The Faculty Board requests advice from the UCO or the Education Strategy department on the issues raised in the Education Monitoring report.
2 The UCO or the Education Strategy department advises on a sample: themes and degree programmes.
3 A committee conducts the review.
4 After a hearing, a report is sent to the Faculty Board.
5 The review is reported on in the next Education Monitoring report.
6 If there is cause to do so, the Faculty Board and the Board of the University discuss the review in an Administrative Meeting.

For the degree programmes in the table below, the following steps are added to the procedure above:

[24] As the term *audit* is associated with finance, it is currently preferable to use the term *review* or *mid-term review*.

7 The Faculty Board sends the report of the committee to SES through accreditaties@rug.nl, including a declaration or advice from the Programme Committee that shows that the report is discussed with them. For this purpose, existing documentation can be used, for example an advice sent by the Programme Committee in response to this discussion, or an example letter can be requested through accreditaties@rug.nl;
8 The Board of Directors concludes that there are no risks regarding the educational quality of the degree programme, and sends a letter with this statement to the NVAO.

The final deadlines for these letters can be found in the overview below. SES preferably receives the report and the letter of the Programme Committee as soon as the review and the report are finished.

Finale date for letter	**Cluster**	**Faculty**	**Name of Programme**
1-5-2025	WO Chemistry	FSE	B Chemistry
			B Chemical Engineering
			M Chemical Engineering
			M Chemistry
	WO Sociology	FBSS	B Sociology
			M Sociology
	WO Dentistry	FMS	B Dentistry
			M Dentistry
1-11-2025	WO Physics and astronomy	FSE	B Natuurkunde
			B Astronomy
			B Applied Physics
			M Applied Physics
			M Astronomy
			M Physics
	WO Mathematics	FSE	B Applied Mathematics
			B Mathematics
			M Applied Mathematics
			M Mathematics
1-5-2026	WO History	FoA	B History
			B International Relations and International Organization
			M History
			M International Relations
	WO Arts and Culture	FoA	B Arts, Culture and Media
			B Art History
			M Arts and Culture
	WO Artificial Intelligence	FSE	B Artificial Intelligence
			M Artificial Intelligence
			M Computational Cognitive Science

CHANGE OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

If a faculty wants to change the language of instruction of a degree programme or a track, the Faculty Board may submit a request to the Board of the University via the planning letter

procedure. Each request must be accompanied by an opinion from the UG language expert group. This advice is requested by SES and ABJZ for all new study programmes at the same time for placing on the agenda of the Board of the University.
The Board of the University takes a decision on this subject in accordance with the following points:
At UNL level, agreements have been made with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science regarding language changes. In its request, the Faculty Board indicates how these agreements have been implemented.

1 With regard to the language of instruction, universities commit themselves to a careful decision-making process for each degree programme. The choice of language is made in accordance with the legally required language code of conduct. A change in the instruction language will be laid down in the Teaching and Examination Regulations so that the consultative participation bodies are also involved in the decision-making process.
2 Prudent decision-making regarding the language of instruction also involves monitoring and collegial coordination at national level with the aim of maintaining a sufficient number of Dutch-language Bachelor's programmes. Universities coordinate this by discussing changes in meetings of the discipline consultation body.
3 Universities ensure that degree programmes taught in English are accessible to Dutch students. To this end, they pay sufficient attention to the development of academic English.
4 Universities ensure that Dutch students are able to improve and maintain their knowledge of academic Dutch, even if they are following an English-language Bachelor's degree programme.
5 Universities ensure that academic and support staff have a sufficient command of English. Universities of applied sciences and universities require teaching staff to have obtained at least C1 level.
6 Universities are committed to increasing the likelihood of international students staying in the Netherlands by offering Dutch language courses for international students.

If a degree programme is not offered in Dutch, the visitation panel assesses whether there are sufficient grounds for this. The accreditation framework stipulates that the degree programme justifies the choice of language and that lecturers are able to teach in that language.

FIXED-QUOTA BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES

A faculty may seek to limit the number of places available on a Bachelor's degree programme by means of unweighted lottery or – if substantiated – by means of a selection procedure or a combination of both. This is possible both on the level of the degree programme or on the level of one or more of its tracks. The request must be accompanied by the following information: the procedure, the number of places, the selection criteria (at least two, if applicable), the reasons why the Faculty Board considers the available teaching capacity insufficient to allow unrestricted enrolment of students (e.g., lack of qualified lecturers or labs), and the rationale for this (why more funds are not made available).
Pursuant to Article 9.33a, paragraph 2(d) of the WHW in conjunction with Article 7.53, paragraph 3 WHW , the student section of the University Council has the right to advise on the procedure and the selection criteria (if applicable).

SELECTIVE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES

A faculty may seek to limit access to a Master's degree programme by means of a selection procedure, possibly including a cap on the number of students. In doing so, it takes into account the sectoral accessibility of Master's degree programmes and complies with the Protocol on Selective Master's Safety Net (see Annex 6).
The request must be accompanied by the following information: the number of places (if applicable), the selection criteria (at least two) and the instruments used to test these, the selection procedure, the reasons why the faculty board considers the available teaching capacity insufficient to allow unrestricted enrolment of students (e.g., lack of qualified lecturers or labs), and the rationale for this (why more funds are not made available).
Pursuant to Article 9.33a, paragraph 2(d) of the WHW in conjunction with Article 7.30b, paragraph 2 of the WHW, the student section of the University Council has the right to advise on the selection procedure. This applies to new selective Master's programmes and amendments.

MATCHING (BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES)
A faculty may opt for either voluntary or compulsory matching for each Bachelor's degree programme. This decision always applies to the Bachelor's programme as a whole. A change must always be recorded in the Regulations for Registration and Tuition Fees (RIC).
The purpose of both voluntary and compulsory matching is to determine whether the degree programme is a good fit for the applicant. If a degree programme decides to use voluntary matching, applicants may take advantage of this opportunity, but it is not compulsory. If matching is compulsory, applicants may be rejected if they do not participate in the matching process on time. An applicant may not be rejected on the basis of the result of a matching interview (compulsory or voluntary), as the result is advisory.

SECOND STARTING DATE FOR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES
Under certain conditions, faculties may depart from the mandatory February starting date for ordinary Master's degree programmes. The faculty may request new exemptions or the reinstatement of an exemption previously approved through the annual planning letter procedure. Requests for new exemptions must be substantiated and must include a proposal for an alternative study path for students transferring from bachelor to master level. The latter concerns, for example, the possibility of making individual agreements for enrolment in February through a registration date. The obligation to offer a second starting date does not apply to Research Master's and selective Master's degree programmes. If the degree programme has introduced a cap and applicants are ranked, the selection process can only take place once a year. This is because the applicants must be compared with each other. In view of the legal requirements concerning the prevention of study delays due to educational organizational factors (legislation on the 'Bachelor-before-Master' rule adopted in 2011), an exception to the compulsory enrolment round for Master's programmes is permitted if the request is sufficiently justified and an alternative study path is offered to avoid delay in the transition from Bachelor's to Master's programmes (this only applies to UG students in the same discipline). Justification for departing from the compulsory ordinary starting date in February cannot therefore be based solely on administrative or financial considerations.
A starting date always relates to an entire degree programme and may not differ per track.

CHANGE OF TYPE OF PROGRAMME (FULL-TIME/PART-TIME/DUAL)
The type of a degree programme (full-time, part-time, or dual) always applies to the degree programme as a whole, including all tracks, and is registered in RIO. Therefore, a change in the type of programme will also lead to a change in RIO.

CHANGE OF CLUSTERS FOR THE BSA

Certain degree programmes at the University of Groningen are grouped into clusters. A negative BSA applies to the degree programme in which the student is enrolled and to the related ISAT code. This advice will also apply to any related degree programmes with different ISAT codes within that cluster. Once the Board of the University has approved a request for a change within a cluster, it is recorded in the Binding Study Advice Manual (BSA): https://www.rug.nl/about-ug/organization/rules-and-regulations/education/handboek-bindend-studieadvies-(bsa).

ANNEX 4: UG GOVERNANCE MODEL

The UG governance model is the basis for the interpretation, implementation, and monitoring of teaching. The University is based on professional accountability, shared ownership, and trust. This has been translated into a structure where general frameworks are drawn up centrally. Within these frameworks, faculties, researchers, and support staff have a high degree of autonomy for their further development. The UG's governance culture is geared towards shared governance.

Faculties are free to shape centrally formulated goals and policies according to the needs and principles of their own disciplines. The funding model for strategic projects was adapted accordingly, as of the 2015 Strategic Plan: this is now in the form of a lump sum per faculty rather than a separate budget per strategic objective. The Board of the University regularly consults the Faculty Boards on the progress and results of the educational policy.

Management line
According to this model, the Board of the University directs the organization by formulating strategic objectives (the Strategic Plan) and developing policy plans. The Board of the University then monitors the implementation and results in the faculties and service units. The Board of the University is accountable to the Supervisory Board on these matters.

The multi-year strategy is defined every five years in a 'horizontal dialogue' with all external and internal stakeholders. The Board of the University monitors the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Implementation is based on the faculty strategic plans, which are based on the University-wide plan and approved by the Board of the University. Progress on these plans is the focus of the Administrative Meetings.

The six-monthly Administrative Meetings between the Board of the University and Faculty Boards, deans, and the boards of the service units are a result of the UG's governance model.

The following diagram shows how signals from all actors ultimately reach Administrative Meetings:

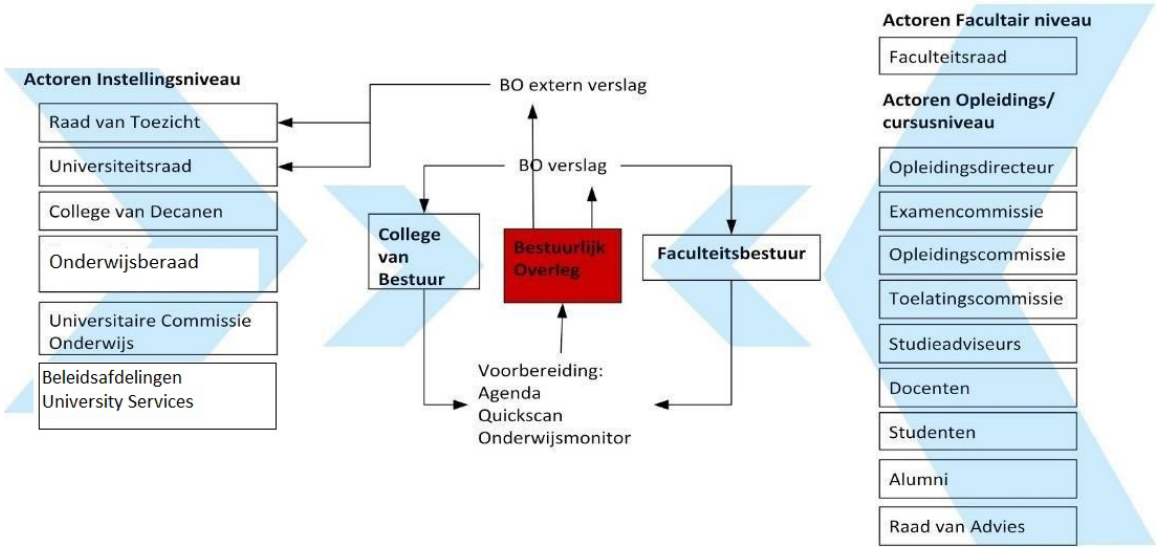


Figure: Administrative Meeting

The Board of the University and Faculty Boards are assisted by various advisory bodies. Formal and informal coordination is performed at institutional, faculty, and degree programme levels, with and between advisory bodies. The academic community is therefore involved in the formulation and implementation of strategy and policy.

ANNEX 5: ROADMAP FOR COORDINATION OF PLANS FOR NEW DEGREE PROGRAMMES WITHIN UNL

Click on image to enlarge.



ANNEX 6: PROTOCOL ON SELECTIVE MASTER'S SAFETY NET

If a Faculty Board decides to make a Master's degree programme selective, the following procedure applies:

1. The Faculty Board should inform the Board of the University in writing of its intention to make a Master's degree programme selective.
2. If a Faculty Board decides to make a Master's degree programme selective, the guiding principle is that a Master's degree programme should be available for every UG Bachelor's student that is in line with the RIO profile of the respective completed Bachelor's programme.
3. Should a student be denied registration to a Master's degree programme due to the selection process, then sufficient appropriate alternatives should be available within the UG. If this is not the case, then the faculty is obliged, together with the student in question, to find an alternative Master's degree programme outside the University, with a RIO profile in line with that of the student's Bachelor's degree. The student will be supported in this by their study advisor.
4. If this search also proves unsuccessful, then the UG is responsible for finding an appropriate solution within the UG, together with the student. The chances of this occurring are very slim, but it could happen. This will only occur if:
    a. the student has been awarded a UG Bachelor's degree.
    b. the student has demonstrably been denied registration to appropriate Master's degree programmes at the UG, which have the same RIO profile as the Bachelor's degree awarded to the student, due to the selection process or because the student's previous education does not sufficiently align with a non-selective Master's degree programme.
    c. the student has demonstrably been denied registration to two Master's degree programmes outside the UG, which have the same RIO profile as the student's Bachelor's degree.
5. The Faculty Board will annually report in the Education Monitoring report, the degree programmes that are selective, the Bachelor's degrees that do not provide direct admission to a Master's degree programme, and whether any problems have arisen.
6. If problems concerning selective Master's degree programmes arise, this will be discussed at the Administrative Meeting.

ANNEX 7: LOCATION

A faculty may offer an existing programme (in whole or in part) at a new location.
A new location must be requested via the CDHO and must be approved by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.

If a faculty wishes to express its intention to offer education at a new location, the communication must include the addition “if the Minister agrees”.

The procedure for applying for a new location is as rigorous as the procedure for applying for a new degree programme and takes at least three years from the moment of application to the offering of the location. More information can be found on the website of the CDHO: www.cdho.nl
Faculties are advised to contact the central and faculty quality assurance officers responsible for accreditations in good time.

It is possible to offer parts of a programme at a different location without having to apply for a new location. The criteria for this are:
1. not the entire first year/the first 60 ECTS
2. not an entire track/specialisation
3. a maximum of 1/3 of the study load, including graduation projects, excluding internships.

It is always possible to offer lifelong learning activities at another location, as they are not covered by the accreditation provisions in the law. However, this also means that no credits (ECTS) may be awarded for lifelong learning activities and that the participation fee must be cost-covering and competitive.

ANNEX 8: MARKETING PRINCIPLES FOR NAMING DEGREE PROGRAMMES AND TRACKS

From a marketing perspective, there are a number of points that are important to consider in the decision-making process for naming courses and tracks:

- Ensure clear and distinctive names that match the content and future prospects of the degree programme or track.
- Avoid “trendy” names purely for marketing purposes; the name should primarily be student-oriented and relevant to the labour market. In addition, trendy names are often only temporary, while establishing a degree programme and making it recognisable is often a process that takes several years.
- Use unambiguous and transparent terminology for all tracks, variants and specialisations so that students know exactly what they are choosing – and implement this consistently across all communication channels.
- Present degree programme and track names clearly on all online platforms (university website, Studiekeuze123, social media) with SEO-optimised page titles and accessible explanations. (Please note that the degree of the programme must always be mentioned along with the track name.) In addition, search engines now recognise natural and meaningful search terms better than “trendy” names. Conducting keyword research before finalising the names of degree programmes or tracks can significantly improve findability. By analysing which terms potential students use, you gain insight into popular and relevant keywords that can be incorporated into the titles and descriptions. This not only helps in choosing clear and recognisable names but also ensures that the degree programme better matches the search behaviour of the target group.
- Test the intended naming of tracks and degree programmes and the associated communication with focus groups of current and potential students, so that the language used is appropriate for the target group and any misunderstandings are identified immediately.