

Short Cycle Higher Education in the Netherlands and Flanders

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Nederlands-Vlaamse accreditatie-organisatie (NVAO)

- The Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organisation
- Officially established on 1 February 2005
- Binational organisation
- Programme accreditation and Institutional audit
- About 15 fte staff (policy advisors)

Short cycle programmes

- The Dutch situation
- The Flemish situation

The Dutch situation

- At first (1993 – 2003) short programmes were mainly offered by recognized private institutions
- From 1993 on private education is legalized in the Dutch law on higher education
- But in ten years a rather confusing picture of short programmes in the private sector arised (*short and shorter*).

The Dutch situation - 2

- Short programmes were abolished in 2003 by the introduction of the bachelor-master structure
- However, the demand for graduates of short programmes remained, specially in small and medium sized enterprises
- In 2005 the minister decided to (re)start a new type of short programmes fitting the BAMA-structure. A pilot was started

The Dutch situation - 3

- A short programme should be part of an accredited bachelor programme (240 ECTS), a stand-alone position is not allowed
- The programme contains at least 120 ECTS and achieves level 5 of EQF (Associate degree)
- The civil need of the programme had to be proved in advance

The Dutch situation - 4

- Plans for these pilot programmes had to be assessed by NVAO
- A positive advice was compulsory to be allowed to start
- The minister defined the amount and the regional distribution of the pilot programmes

Results – Some numbers

- By four application rounds in 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2010 the pilots were gradually extended
- About 250 applications were presented
- 137 applications were assessed positively
- Very few from recognized private institutions

Results - some numbers - 2

- The enrolment is about 2200 students every year now
- The current size is about 2% of the population of students of Universities of Applied Sciences. But it will be more in the next years.
- About 30 Universities of Applied Sciences participate

Results – Impressions on quality

- The civil need was not always well proved; the professional field should be involved more
- Most convincing are programmes
 - that consult the professional field at least on two levels: e.g. a national and a regional level
 - that implement results of this consultation

Results – Impressions on quality - 2

- Not every sector in the professional field can accommodate a short programme. It does not always fit (e.g. in Primary Education)
- Proving level 5 of EQF (Short Cycle), distinguishing from level 4 and 6, is sometimes weak
- Most short programmes are based on the first two years of the bachelor programme; the own identity of short programmes needs improvement

Results – Impressions on quality - 3

- Vocational higher education versus skills based training; a short cycle programme should be higher education
- Target group mainly graduates from vocational programmes and employees

The Flemish situation

- Professional bachelor programmes (180 ECTS) offered by Universities of Applied Sciences, level 5 is not integrated yet
- Centres for Adult Education (CAE) don't offer recognized higher education up till now
- Current level of programmes of CAE mostly between level 4 and 5 of EQF

The Flemish situation - 2

- Initiatives to integrate level 5 in HE started some years ago, mentioned HBO5
- In 2009 HBO5 was legalized by law
- CAE's can develop new programmes or transform existing programmes to level 5
- Professional bachelor programmes can start a short cycle programme (90 - 120 ECTS)

The Flemish situation - 3

- Cooperation between the two sectors is encouraged
- NVAO organised a pilot for CAE's
- Some results of the NVAO assessment will be presented here and in the workshop

Some results of the pilot HBO5

- A shift in orientation and an upgrade to level 5 must be discussed better with the stakeholders
- A part of the programmes of CAE's have the potential quality to develop to level 5
- Not all should have that ambition. Their current position can be adequate for students (and the professional field)

Some results of the pilot HBO5 - 2

- The assessment of learning in the professional field is a very important issue, but needs a lot of improvement
- A lot of students participate in a programme related to their job

Concluding (the Netherlands)

- A stand alone position of Associate degree programmes is not expected
- Probably all accredited professional bachelor programmes can apply for an Associate degree programme
- A initial accreditation procedure is compulsory

Concluding (the Netherlands)

- SCHE will be formally integrated in Dutch HE in 2011
- The social interest of Associate degree programmes is emphasized by a committee chaired by Professor Cees Veerman, former minister of Agriculture and Fishery in the Netherlands
- This committee recommended on how to develop Dutch Higher Education (2010)

Concluding (the Netherlands)

- The recently published evaluation of the pilots Associate degree programmes in the Netherlands is positive.
- The enrolment of students in Associate degree programmes is still growing
- Enrolment of graduates from vocational education and working students

Concluding (Flanders)

- HBO5 will be integrated in Flemish higher education in the next years
- The proposed cooperation between Universities of Applied Sciences and Centres of Adult Education will be challenging
- A stand alone option of Short Cycle programmes in higher education in Flanders is much more realistic than in the Netherlands