

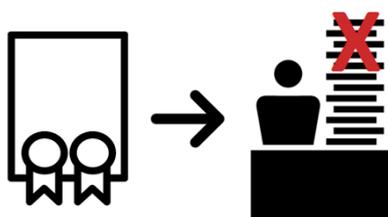
The road to joint (public-private) accreditation processes

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Background

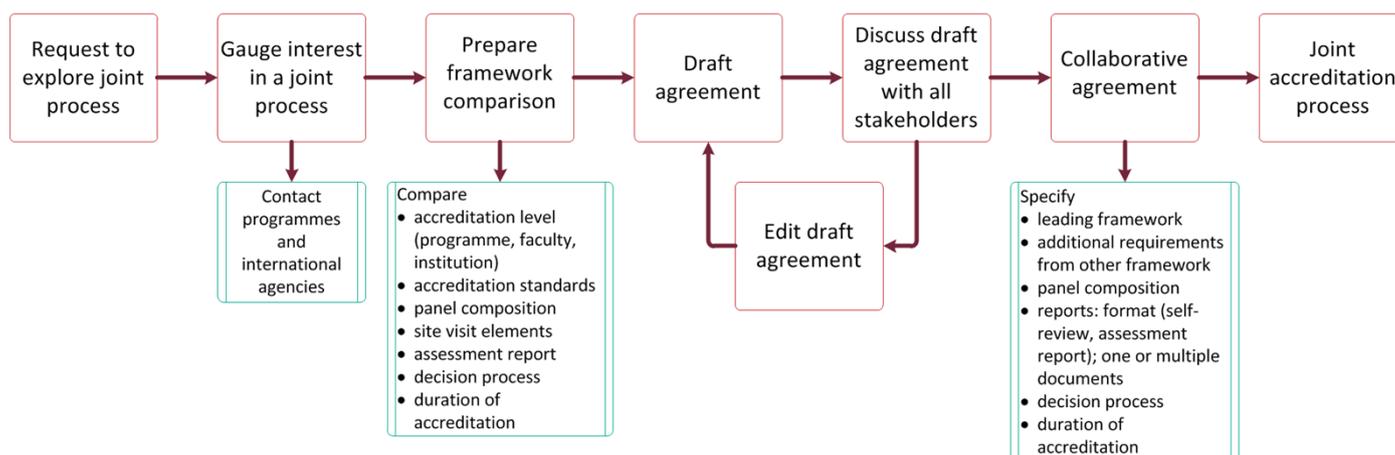
Several higher education programmes are accredited by multiple accreditation organisations: both public (e.g. NVAO) and private (professional) agencies are involved. In the Netherlands, accreditation by a public agency is required by law, while obtaining international recognition is a way for programmes to **distinguish themselves** and to **stress their international nature**.

The processes employed by different agencies often show **overlapping elements** in terms of

- scope of assessment standards (e.g. learning outcomes, learning environment, assessment);
- Preparations prior to site visit (e.g. self-review document);
- elements of site visits (e.g. meetings with programme management, teachers, students);
- assessment by a panel of experts.

To stimulate further internationalisation of higher education, NVAO believes that engagement with professional organisations is to be stimulated. One of the ways to do so is by **facilitating double accreditation** and thus **decreasing the experienced 'accreditation burden'**: from $1+1=2$ to $1+1=1.5$.

Setting up a joint accreditation process



Recommendations

Tailor the agreement to the specific context; take into account the **preferences of the programmes** involved (e.g. leading framework).

Plan a thorough **briefing** for panel members, so everyone knows what is expected.

Opting for a joint process is **always optional** for programmes.

Remember that this is a **continuous learning process** for all involved. Stay in **close contact** with both representatives from programmes and international accreditation organisations to make amendments where necessary.

Results so far

Collaborative agreements with several accreditation organisations in **different disciplines** (business schools, public administration, development studies). NVAO is expanding joint accreditation to more disciplines, and other countries have expressed interest in similar processes. Noticeable **enthusiasm** to set up joint processes, both from programmes and international accreditation organisations. The first joint visit led to an experienced **decrease in accreditation burden** (leaving more time and energy for education and research). Based on the first experiences, agreements were **updated**.

