

Besluit **Accreditatierapport en -besluit met een positieve beoordeling van de accreditatieaanvraag voor de opleiding Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (European Master in Disaster Medicine) (master na master) van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel i.s.m de Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale**

datum	1. Inleiding
16 september 2013	Bij brief van 16 mei 2013 heeft het instellingsbestuur van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel te Brussel een accreditatieaanvraag ingediend bij de Nederlands-Vlaamse
onderwerp	Accreditatieorganisatie (NVAO) voor de opleiding Master of Science in Disaster Medicine
Accreditatierapport en -besluit (001843)	(European Master in Disaster Medicine) (master na master). Deze aanvraag is ontvangen op 29 mei 2013 en ontvankelijk verklaard op 17 juni 2013.
bijlage	1

De accreditatieaanvraag steunt op het visitatierapport van een externe beoordeling uitgevoerd door een visitatiecommissie ingesteld door de Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad (VLUHR).

De visitatiecommissie kende de volgende samenstelling:

Voorzitter:

- Prof. dr. Gaston Verellen, em. hoogleraar Pediatrie; Université Catholique de Louvain.

Leden:

- Prof. dr. Hans Knape, hoogleraar Anesthesie, Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht;
- Prof. dr. Gerard Visser, em. hoogleraar Gynaecologie en Obstetrie, Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht;
- Dr. Joost Bierens, anesthesioloog;
- Prof. dr. Luc Snoeckx, hoogleraar Fysiologie/Onderwijskunde medische opleidingen, Universiteit Maastricht, (onderwijsdeskundige);
- Mevr. Krishna Vyncke, student Specialistische Geneeskunde, UGent (student-lid);
- Dhr. Ward Heggermont, student Specialistische Geneeskunde, KU Leuven (student-lid).

Secretaris:

- Dhr. Wouter Teerlinck, stafmedewerker Vlaamse Universitaire Raad (VLIR).

De visitatie heeft plaatsgevonden op 4 en 5 juni 2012. Het visitatierapport dateert van mei 2013.

De NVAO komt tot de volgende vaststellingen:

- De externe beoordeling is opgesteld en onderbouwd overeenkomstig het toepasselijke Accreditatiekader bestaande opleidingen hoger onderwijs Vlaanderen van de NVAO en volgens de daarbij behorende beslisregels;
- De visitatiecommissie heeft voor de externe beoordeling het door de VLUHR vastgestelde visitatieprotocol gevolgd;
- De externe beoordeling verschaft inzicht in de samenstelling van de visitatiecommissie;
- De externe beoordeling bevat een onderzoek ten gronde naar de aanwezigheid van voldoende generieke kwaliteitswaarborgen.

De NVAO is in het licht van het vorenstaande tot de slotsom gekomen dat de externe beoordeling over de voorliggende opleiding regelmatig en gedegen tot stand is gekomen.

3. Inhoudelijke overwegingen

De NVAO steunt haar inhoudelijke besluitvorming in hoofdzaak op de onderstaande elementen uit het visitatierapport.

Doelstellingen

Based on the SER and the various meetings, the panel concludes that the general and domain-specific learning outcomes are described in detail at the level of the programme. The objectives reflect the final qualifications as listed in Article 58 of the Structure Decree. The panel believes that the learning outcomes have a wide range of characteristics that are related to internationalisation, competence-based learning and acquisition of professional and academic qualities, which are instrumental in achieving an advanced master level. The panel believes that defining competency domains would be helpful for students, staff and the workfield. This emphasizes the multidisciplinary character of the programme and helps to further refine the description of some of the learning outcomes

Based on the SER and the various meetings with alumni, often currently active in disaster medicine and disaster medicine policy, the panel concludes that the learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements of the intended professional field. As mentioned in the SER and recorded by the panel, professional regulations or legislations in the field of disaster medicine are non-existent. The field of disaster medicine is young and currently in full development, both at the professional and academic level.

The programme is one of the leading academic initiatives in the field of Disaster Medicine. However, the panel regrets that the programme did not make a detailed comparison between its own objectives and those of similar or other academic programmes in the field of disaster medicine in Belgium as well as abroad.

Programma

Looking at the objectives and comparing them to the content of the programme, the panel found an overall alignment between the goals and the programme. Concerning the general quality of courses offered, the programme adequately reflects the level and orientation of the objectives. The panel applauds the multidisciplinary elements of the curriculum. This multidisciplinary character is widely integrated in the programme because both teachers and students have diversified academic, professional and cultural backgrounds.

The combination of an e-learning based teaching system with a two-week training period offers students the opportunity to achieve the formulated learning outcomes. However, the generic description of some of the learning outcomes, especially those related to the

Pagina 3 van 9 academic level of the master, gives the impression that academic and research skills are less important for the programme. Therefore, the panel recommends to further strengthen the academic and research skills throughout the curriculum.

The panel noticed a very good interaction and feedback between work field experiences and generic and specific academic skills. The programme clearly aims at the integration of knowledge and skills with experience. Given the rapidly developing nature of the disaster medicine field, the panel appreciated that the contents of the course modules are adjusted on a yearly basis, based on feedback of the students, staff and alumni on the one hand and on the new research results, lessons learned, and experiences gained by the Faculty members from recent disasters on the other hand. Nevertheless, the panel found that an overview of the recent changes of the curriculum was missing in the SER.

The panel noted that there is sufficient substantive consistency within the programme. All course modules are compulsory. The modules also have a logical sequence by the built-in order of enrolment on the e-learning platform. The panel also noticed an intense collaboration between the universities and/or institutions which substantially contributes to the organization of the programme.

The programme counts for 60 ECTS credits and thus complies with the formal requirements regarding the size of the programme.

The results of a limited survey in the academic year 2010 – 2011 showed that students correctly assess the workload at the start of the programme. The programme also monitors the student's activity and interactions on the e-learning platform. Formal study time measurements have not been performed. The panel urges the coordinating committee to organize full and detailed study time measurements, as suggested at the initial accreditation by the NVAO panel in 2009. Nevertheless, the panel concludes that the workload of the programme is appropriate in itself and that there is an appropriate match between the actual and estimated study time.

The programme shows a good mix of theoretical and practical courses, as well as individual and group work. There is sufficient variation in teaching methods and materials. The students told the panel that the programme format enables them to reach the objectives of the programme. The panel applauds the modern approach founded on a well-developed pedagogical concept.

The panel consulted the questions of the final examination. It appears that the questions do not cover the core content of all course modules. Given the high scores and the fact that all students pass, the panel recommends the reconsideration of the concept of the final examination. Both level and coverage of the content of the e-learning modules should be reconsidered as well. Nevertheless, the panel finds the procedures concerning the learning assessment appropriate. Based on the information provided in the SER and the interviews with staff, students and alumni, the panel concludes that the assessment methods and criteria are sufficiently aligned with the learning outcomes of the programme components and of the programme as a whole.

The assessment panel has read and analysed a sample of Master's theses of the programme, which have been submitted since the initial accreditation in 2009. The assessment panel finds the overall quality of the Master's theses to be adequate.

Pagina 4 van 9 However, large differences in the quality of the theses have been recorded. The Master's theses contain sufficient critical thinking and provide ample evidence of the student's research skills, despite the large differences in the students' research experience. The panel evaluates the assessment of the Master's theses as fair and the scoring as appropriate, but advises to organize a presentation to a jury of peers to better guarantee a balanced and correct assessment of the theses.

The panel learned that the quality of incoming students has been good in the course of years due to the fact that more students apply for the programme, which allows a strict selection. It is the opinion of the panel that managing the intake quality is of utmost importance for an international programme with a wide variety in student's backgrounds. The current procedures are by no means inadequate but should be refined and further supplemented to ensure an adequate focus on students who are expected to develop into an academic oriented direction.

Inzet van personeel

Based on the conversations with students, alumni and staff and on the quality of the course material used, it is clear to the panel that the expertise of the staff is well-tailored to the programme's objectives and of high quality. Students and alumni are very positive about the quality of teaching and support. They also appreciate the broad international perspective provided by the many contributions of many lecturers with specific expertise. They also indicate that individual lecturers are putting a lot of energy in the interaction with the students.

Considering the information in the SER about the teaching staff involved in the programme, it is clear to the panel that both the professional and the academic orientation of the staff as a whole are guaranteed. The range of specialisations is sufficiently broad to cover the intended research areas and the delineated professional streams. Looking at the research output on the different locations, the panel observed that the staff scores high on international peer reviewed publications. The panel has no objections of principle towards fostering a mix between research and professionally adverts from oriented personnel, but does encourage the programme to keep ensuring that all teams of promoters and supervisors have a balanced professional and scientific background.

Besides a core staff, consisting of a few professors from the VUB and Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO), the programme depends on a large number of staff members from all partner universities who take care of (parts of) the different programme modules, and as well as many tutors, often alumni of the programme. The total number amounts to 32 staff members, 12 alumni contributors, 23 tutors, 6 teaching assistants and 3 administrative and technical supporters for an average of around 30 students per year in the programme. The quantity of staff is more than adequate to handle the different teaching responsibilities of the programme. However, the appointment of staff members is limited to 1,6 FTE. So, the programme depends largely on the voluntary contributions of academic personnel and tutors.

Voorzieningen

The panel considers the online e-learning platform, as well as the provided infrastructure for the two-week training period, as truly outstanding. The online platform offers an interactive learning environment for distance learning. The embedded monitoring system offers staff and tutors the opportunity to monitor the progress of each student individually.

Pagina 5 van 9 In the context of the thesis and the e-learning modules, students have free online access to the electronic libraries of VUB and University of California Irvine. Furthermore, the panel was impressed by the available facilities during the two-week training period. The panel concludes that there are ample facilities for disaster simulation exercises. For the large scale disaster exercises the MscDM can rely on the cooperation of local authorities and on support and cooperation from fire fighters, police...

Based on the conversations with students, alumni and staff the panel believes that the tutoring is very effective in the first semester, in preparation for the two-week training period. The system augments the learning experiences and success ratio. Nevertheless, some students experience a hard time in the second part of the programme, i.e. after the two-week training period. Often the thesis supervision appears to be difficult given the international character of staff and students. The Executive Committee has already taken some measures to improve the thesis supervision, but the panel advises to examine if the tutors can also be given a more supportive and motivating role in the second part of the programme.

Interne kwaliteitszorg

It is the opinion of the panel that the development of the instruments and initiatives in relation to evaluation not only provides the programme with a good variety of mechanisms to ensure periodic feedback, but also testifies to a positive and proactive attitude towards quality assurance and enhancement. This attitude was also confirmed in the meeting of the panel with the education director. The panel advises to strengthen the current evaluation instruments to collect more detailed information. In addition, the panel strongly advises that the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee (CQIC) initiates the development of a thorough and detailed study on the workload and study-restrictive factors.

The panel states that the programme already has taken various measures for improvements following the initial accreditation report, the results of student surveys and experiences by staff and tutors. The panel appreciates that the programme has paid attention to the conclusions and recommendations of the initial accreditation report.

The interviews with alumni, students and staff provided ample evidence of the programme's concern with continual improvement. The panel met enthusiastic lecturers and leaders, showing great commitment to the programme. The panel is confident that the further development of the programme will be continued with an equal amount of enthusiasm and attention for continual improvement. The panel advises to generate a structured roadmap for further continuous quality improvements, allowing the monitoring of the annual progress.

The internal quality assurance of the programme is mainly carried out by CQIC and the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets at least 4 times a year.

The involvement of the lecturers, students and alumni in the internal quality assurance process is a very active one. The direct input from the students and alumni allows the programme to implement changes rather rapidly.

Despite the young age of the MScDM programme, intensive contacts do already exist between the programme and the alumni or the professional field. The direct involvement of these stakeholders in the programme evaluations and adjustments is clearly visible.

The panel concludes that, with respect to the internal quality assurance, the involvement of staff members and students is good. They play an active and important role in adjusting the programme and implementing improvements. The involvement of the alumni and the professional field is large and has a significant impact on the programme.

The balance between theory and practice in the programme is appreciated by most students, as well as the multidisciplinary and international character of the programme. Most alumni stressed that this programme added great value to their previous education and their further (academic) career. Several Master's theses have been published in peer-reviewed journals and were presented at international conferences.

Based on the scientific quality of the master's theses and the questions asked in the assessments, the programme's international dimension and its multidisciplinary character, the student's general appreciation of the programme and their future employment profile, the panel concludes that the learning outcomes and, in effect, the programme are largely realized.

Since the last four years, the success rates of the students in the programme have been rather moderate in relation to the strict admission requirements and selection procedure. The study results varied between 58% and 84%. According to the self-evaluation report, the high drop-out is only due to the non-submission of the thesis. The panel noticed that many of the students claim that it is difficult to complete the master-programme in one year. This is partly due to the fact that many students think it is very hard to combine the programme with a full time job. On the other hand, the faculty found that some students from Asia and the Middle East deliberately choose not to submit a thesis. For these students participation in the programme is often sufficient for their further career.

The panel strongly advises to follow-up study efficiency patterns in the programme. The panel subscribes the intention of the Course Director to closely evaluate these trends in the future.

General opinion of the panel

The panel evaluates the Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (European Master in Disaster Medicine) as having good generic quality elements and expresses a positive final opinion.

Recommendations

NVAO underlines the recommendations as given by the panel, especially the advices to strengthen the academic and research skills throughout the curriculum, to reconsider the concept of the final examination, to improve the supervision of the theses and to ensure that all teams of promotors and supervisors have a balanced professional and scientific background.

Conclusie

De NVAO is in het licht van het vorenstaande tot de slotsom gekomen dat het eindoordeel van de commissie deugdelijk is gemotiveerd. De NVAO kan zich dan ook aansluiten bij de bevindingen en overwegingen voor alle facetten en onderwerpen, zoals verwoord in het visitatierapport. De eindconclusie uit het visitatierapport wordt gevolgd.

Pagina 7 van 9 **4. Oordelen visitatiecommissie**

De tabel geeft per onderwerp en per facet het oordeel van de visitatiecommissie weer.

ONDERWERP	ORDEEL	FACET	ORDEEL
1 Doelstellingen opleiding	V	1.1 niveau en oriëntatie	G
		1.2 domeinspecifieke eisen	G
2 Programma	V	2.1 eisen gerichtheid	V
		2.2 relatie doelstellingen - programma	G
		2.3 samenhang programma	V
		2.4 studielast	V
		2.5 toelatingsvoorwaarden	V
		2.6 studieomvang	OK
		2.7 afstemming vormgeving - inhoud	G
		2.8 beoordeling en toetsing	V
		2.9 masterproef	V
3 Inzet van personeel	V	3.1 eisen gerichtheid	V
		3.2 kwantiteit	V
		3.3 kwaliteit	G
4 Voorzieningen	V	4.1 materiële voorzieningen	E
		4.2 studiebegeleiding	G
5 Interne kwaliteitszorg	V	5.1 evaluatie resultaten	V
		5.2 maatregelen tot verbetering	G
		5.3 betrokkenheid	G
6 Resultaten	V	6.1 gerealiseerd niveau	V
		6.2 onderwijsrendement	V

Eindoordeel: positief

De onderstaande tabel geeft per onderwerp het globaal oordeel van de NVAO weer.

ONDERWERP	OORDEEL
1 Doelstellingen	V
2 Programma	V
3 Inzet personeel	V
4 Voorzieningen	V
5 Interne kwaliteitszorg	V
6 Resultaten	V

Eindoordeel: positief

6. Besluit¹

betreffende de accreditatie van de Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (European Master in Disaster Medicine) (master na master) van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel en de Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale.

De NVAO,
Na beraadslaging,
Besluit:

Met toepassing van het decreet van 4 april 2003 betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen, wordt het accreditatierapport en –besluit met positief eindoordeel voor de opleiding Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (European Master in Disaster Medicine) (master na master) van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel en de Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale goedgekeurd en wordt de opleiding geaccrediteerd. Het betreft een opleiding zonder afstudeerrichtingen die te Brussel en Novara wordt georganiseerd.

De in het eerste lid bedoelde accreditatie geldt vanaf de aanvang van het academiejaar 2013-2014 tot en met het einde van het academiejaar 2020-2021.

Den Haag, 16 september 2013

Voor de NVAO,



Lucien Bollaert
(bestuurder)

¹ Bij e-mail van 5 september 2013 heeft de instelling gereageerd op het ontwerp van accreditatierapport. Dit heeft geleid tot enkele aanpassingen in het accreditatierapport.

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– naam instelling	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
– adres instelling:	Pleinlaan 2 B-1050 BRUSSEL BELGIË
– aard instelling	ambtshalve geregistreerd
– partnerinstelling	Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale (UPO)
– graad, kwalificatie, specificatie (European Master in Disaster Medicine)	Master of Science in Disaster Medicine
– niveau en oriëntatie	master na master
– studieomvang	60 studiepunten
– opleidingsvarianten	
– afstudeerrichtingen:	geen
– studietraject voor werkstudenten:	nvt
– vestiging opleiding	Brussel Novara (Italië)
– onderwijstaal	Engels
– (delen van) studiegebieden	Geneeskunde