NVAO

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INITIAL ACCREDITATION

JOINT BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME IN MOLECULAR BIOSCIENCES

HAN University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands), University of Dundee (United Kingdom)

PANEL REPORT CONDITIONS

9 JULY 2024

Content

1 Introduction

On 3 October 2023, the panel assessed the quality of the joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences during a site visit. In its advisory report (7 November 2023, AV-2036), the panel issued a conditionally positive advice. Subsequently, the NVAO came to a conditionally positive decision on 24 January 2024 regarding the application for initial accreditation. One condition was imposed, which had to be met by 24 July 2024. The consortium submitted a response to the conditionally positive NVAO accreditation decision to the NVAO on 7 June 2024, explaining how the consortium intends to meet the imposed conditions.

At the request of the NVAO, two panel members from the former panel (AV-2036) assessed whether the consortium met the condition.

- Prof. Dr. Frank Witlox, MAE, FAcSS (chair), Head of Department and Senior Full Professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography of Ghent University (UGent, Belgium);
- Dr. Ivo Horn, owner of Picamed and coordinator for international students at University of Applied Sciences Leiden;

The panel was assisted by Tinka Thede MSc, policy advisor at NVAO, also secretary. All panel members completed and signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel assessed the condition for the joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences according to the Standards of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), issued in October 2014 and approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015. This European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes should be applied for quality assurance of international joint programmes if some of the cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level. The standards to be assessed are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG). This procedure allows the possibility that only one procedure can lead to accreditation in several countries.

Only the criteria for the standards where conditions have been imposed are mentioned in this report. Per standard the panel presents a brief outline of its findings, as well as the considerations that led the panel to a concluding judgement on a three-point scale: the programme either meets, partially meets or does not meet the standard. At the end of this chapter and based on its judgements on the individual standards, the panel presents an overall conclusion on whether the conditions have been met. This conclusion can be either positive, conditionally positive or negative.

The panel members read the documentation presented by the institution (Annex 1: documents reviewed) and reported their findings to the secretary. Based on the findings, considerations and conclusions, the secretary wrote a draft advisory report that was first presented to the panel. After the panel commented on the draft report, the chair endorsed the report. On 8 July 2024, the advisory report was sent to the consortium, which was given the opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies in the report. The consortium replied on 9 July 2024. This led to no corrections. Subsequently, the final report was endorsed by the

panel chair. The panel drafted its advice fully independently and offered it to NVAO on 9 July 2024.

2 Description of the programme

2.1 General data

Institutions	:	HAN University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands) University of Dundee (United Kingdom)
Programme	:	Molecular Biosciences (not publicly funded)
Level	:	Bachelor
Orientation	:	Professional
Degree	:	Joint Bachelor of Science in Molecular Biosciences
Locations	:	Nijmegen, Dundee
Study load	:	240 ECTS credits[1]
Mode of study	:	Fulltime
Field of study	:	CROHO[2]: Technology ISCED[3]: Biological and related sciences, Biochemistry (0510, 0512, 0519)

2.2 Profile of the consortium

The application was filed by a consortium of two public higher education institutions in two countries: HAN University of Applied Sciences (HAN) in the Netherlands and the University of Dundee (UoD) in the United Kingdom. The partner institutions have collaborated for almost a decade and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences on 8 January 2021. This led to the development of a Collaboration Agreement specifying the organisation and responsibilities related to the joint programme.

HAN University of Applied Sciences was established in 1996 and is one of the largest universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. Its mission is to qualify, socialise and prepare students for their future professional practice and citizenship, and to provide innovation in a dynamic, increasingly globalised and complex society. The institution has fourteen schools that are responsible for the content and organisation of education and research within a domain. The School of Applied Biosciences and Chemistry (SABC) offers three bachelor's programmes and one master's programme. HAN successfully passed the institutional audit of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and its programmes are recognised in accordance with the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW).

The University of Dundee was awarded university status in 1967, although university education has been provided at its campus since 1881. The institution has eight academic schools. The School of Life Sciences has a reputation as one of the leading research institutes in Europe and focuses on research, learning and teaching, and impact and translation. It offers fourteen BSc Honours courses (undergraduate level) and seven MSc courses (postgraduate level). The institution's quality assurance processes are overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland (QAA/QAAS). The most recent review of the University of Dundee was the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review in 2023.

[1] Credits indicating the study workload, based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.
[2] Central Register for Programmes in Higher Education 'Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs')
[3] International Standard Classification of Education

2.3 Profile of the programme

The joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences aims to prepare students for employment in the biosciences, specifically related to the development of large-molecule-based therapeutic approaches and research. The curriculum consists of 240 ECTS credits and combines the focus on technical skills at HAN with UoD's research-led courses.

Students spend the first two years of the programme in Nijmegen, where they lay the foundations in general biology, biochemistry, molecular biology and genetics, coupled with studies in the chemical and physical sciences. They also develop their technical laboratory and professional skills. Subsequently, they move to Dundee for two years of research-intensive, deep learning. In the final year, students spend twenty weeks at a relevant company during an internship period. The programme is taught in English and intends to attract students from a wide variety of countries.

The programme builds on modules that are already available in single-degree programmes at HAN and UoD, supplemented with modules that have been jointly developed by the partner institutions. Staff members cooperate during these courses as well as in the student support track that runs throughout the programme. Graduates obtain a joint degree that is fully recognised by both institutions and their respective countries.

3 Assessment realisation conditions

3.1 Condition 1 Standard 5: Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]

3.1.1 Assessment of Students

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

Condition
The JBE meets to establish the joint Education and Examination Regulations, which is to be approved by the appropriate bodies in both partner institutions. It clarifies what the role of the JBE is in relation to the local Exam Boards at HAN and UoD and students are made aware of the different policies applied in years 1 and 2 compared to years 3 and 4, wherever applicable. The composition of the JBE is in line with the Dutch Higher education and Research Act (WHW).

Outline of findings
The consortium compiled a document in which they provided the necessary additional information. The information comprises the composition of the Joint Management Board (JMB) and the Joint Board of Examiners (JBE). The UoD and HAN JBE consists of representatives from the educational programme (modules and internship) and external members, and they are not connected in any way to the Joint Management Board.
The document describes the joint tasks and responsibilities of the JBE as well as the situations in which – and how – the JBE is involved in the examination process.
The document describes also in which situations the HAN and UoD apply their own examination processes and regulations.
The changes have been formulated and approved by both Higher Education Institutions.

Considerations
The panel is of the opinion that the programme leaders have made a clear effort to address the panel's concerns about the role of the JBE in relation to the local Exam Boards at HAN and UoD. The panel considers the solutions, retain tasks and responsibilities of the local Exam Boards at HAN and UOD complemented by tasks and responsibilities of the JBE where necessary, logical and effective.
The panel deems it imperative that the consortium makes the distinction of the different policies very clear to students at the start of the programme.

It is clear to the panel that the JBE has no budgetary and/or resource responsibilities. An external member from both HAN and UoD forms part of the JBE.
The panel found that the proposed composition of the Joint Board of Examiners is now in accordance with the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW 7.12a).

Conclusion
The panel assesses that the joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences meets the condition related to standard 5.2, assessment of students.

3.2 Conclusion

Overall, the panel finds that the documents presented by the consortium adequately address the realisation of the condition. The panel was able to properly determine whether and, if so, how the consortium intends to meet the condition.

The programme leaders have clarified the composition of the Joint Board of Examiners and the Joint Management Board. The JBE is now in accordance with the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW 7.12a).
Joint tasks and responsibilities of the JBE have been described as well as in which situations the HAN and UoD apply their own examination processes and regulations.

The panel concludes that the programme meets the imposed condition. Therefore, the panel issues a positive advice.

4 Overview of the assessments

Standard	Judgement
5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
5.2 Assessment of students	Meets the standard
Conclusion	**Positive**

Annex 1: Documents reviewed

Documents presented by the institution

1. Response to conditionally positive NVAO accreditation decision [JMB and JBE members];
2. Signed collaboration agreement HAN UoD

Annex 2: List of abbreviations

BSc	Bachelor of Science
EAQA	European Approach for Quality Assurance
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
HAN	HAN University of Applied Sciences
JBE	Joint Board of Examiners
JMB	Joint Management Board
MSc	Master of Science
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders ('Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie')
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QAAS	QAA Scotland
SABC	School of Applied Biosciences and Chemistry (HAN)
UoD	University of Dundee

This report was written at the request of NVAO and is the outcome of the peer review of the conditions for the new joint bachelor's programme in Molecular Biosciences of HAN University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands) and University of Dundee (United Kingdom).

Application number: AV-2676

NVAO

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