

Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein
College van bestuur
Postbus 9001
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Besluit

Besluit strekkende tot een positieve beoordeling van een aanvraag om accreditatie van de opleiding hbo-bachelor Tropische Landbouw van de Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein

datum	Algemene gegevens:	
4 augustus 2011	Naam instelling	: Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein
onderwerp	Naam opleiding	: hbo-bachelor Tropische Landbouw (240 ECTS)
Definitief besluit accreditatie	Datum aanvraag	: 2 december 2010
hbo-bachelor	Variant opleiding	: voltijd
Tropische Landbouw van de Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein	Locatie opleiding	: Wageningen
(#4628)	Naam VBI	: Certiked
ons kenmerk	Datum visitatie	: 3 juni en 1 juli 2010
NVAO/20111925/ND	Datum VBI-rapport	: november 2010
bijlagen		
1	Beoordelingskader:	
	Accreditatiekader bestaande opleidingen hoger onderwijs [hbo-bachelor] van de NVAO (Accreditatiekader; Stcrt. 2003, 120). Op grond van het toepasselijke Accreditatiekader wordt een opleiding beoordeeld aan de hand van zes onderwerpen, te weten: doelstellingen opleiding, programma, inzet van personeel, voorzieningen, interne kwaliteitszorg en resultaten.	

Samenstelling panel:

- dr. M.S. Leloux (chair), free lance advisor in the field of knowledge valorisation. Since 2003, she works for Certiked as panel chair, expert, secretary.
- ir. Th. Hilhorst, senior advisor sustainable economic development of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT);
- ir. W.C.S. Heemskerk, senior advisor sustainable economic development of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT);
- R.G.S. van 't Ende (student member); completed his Horti- and Agriculture study at Dronten University of Applied Sciences in 2010.

Gesprek met de instelling:

Het VBI-rapport gaf de NVAO aanleiding tot een gesprek met de instelling. Dit heeft plaatsgevonden op 17 maart 2011. Het gesprek betrof de opbouw van het programma en de toekomst van de opleiding gegeven de kleine studentenaantallen. De uitkomsten van dit gesprek heeft de NVAO in haar besluitvorming betrokken.

Doelstellingen opleiding

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

The historical roots of the degree programme go back to the four-year programme Tropical Agriculture, designed in the early seventies to meet the need for rural development workers in developing countries. In the late nineties, the government restructured the educational sector, and the Tropical Agriculture programme did not fit in. So in 1998 the influx of students stopped. In response to market and student demands, in 2003 Van Hall Larenstein (VHL) restarted a programme with more focus on international trade flows, marketing and agribusiness, and emphasizing the philosophy 'Trade for Aid' and "people, planet, profit". A choice was made also for focusing on equity issues in trade (hence fair trade) combined with "ecological/ biological" agricultural production processes to reflect the "sustainability" principle. Hence the name Tropical Agriculture has been changed into Agri-Systems Management (ASM).

The continuing discussions on the job profiles reflect the rapid changes in the professional field and the changing rationale behind the programme: from a 'production oriented rural development' approach to a 'value chain development' approach. However, in the minds of the teaching staff the historic roots and old rationale of the 'Tropical farming' programme are still relevant. It is argued also by students and some part of the professional field that attention for agricultural production should remain part of the Domain Specific Frame of Reference. The assessment team fully agrees that it is important for the programme to honour her roots – where part of its still recognised reputation and uniqueness is situated - and to continue paying adequate attention to agricultural production and to farmer interests in developing countries. This tension between the two rationales (production versus more upstream chain activities) exists also in the professional field. The challenge for ASM is to teach students how to deal with these two streams of thought.

The framework to describe the area, context, focus and attitudinal requirements of ASM graduates was based on input from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Work Field Advisory Committee, Civil-society Organisations, job vacancies and positions, such as: manager production/processing facility, manager of quality systems, value chain consultant, manager sustainable procurement (private company or NGO), and surveys among alumni. The assessment team concludes that the most recent version on the job profile (June 2010) shows an increasingly coherent vision on the developments in the professional field. This job profile emphasized the growing need for commercial sustainable chain facilitation regarding agricultural commodities produced in the (sub)tropics. The job clusters and the rationale of the programme are based on extensive consultation with the profession. The assessment team regards the connection of the 8 competencies to the defined job clusters as adequate. The assessment team is of the opinion that the final qualifications of the programme meet the requirements of the Dublin descriptors. ASM qualifies students for positions within three professional domains: Agronomic services for Good Agricultural Practices; Commercial sustainable chain facilitation; Certification auditing and consultancy. The assessment team considers ASM as well-focused on these professional work fields in its approach and design. The described levels of the final qualifications mirror the performance level of a starting professional in the work field.

Pagina 3 van 11 In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the aims and objectives of the degree course as positive.

De NVAO stelt vast dat in het VBI-rapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden Certiked dit onderwerp positief heeft bevonden.

De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'doelstellingen opleiding' als voldoende.

Programma

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

In het gesprek op 17 maart 2011 heeft de instelling, aan de hand van de tabel in het VBI-rapport die een overzicht van het curriculum bevat, aangegeven welke onderdelen van het programma de ontwikkeling van algemene respectievelijk opleidingsspecifieke competenties betreffen. Eerstgenoemde onderdelen volgen ASM-studenten samen met studenten van andere opleidingen. In het eerste jaar gaat het om drie van vier perioden, in het tweede jaar om het tweede semester. Ook in de curriculumonderdelen, die ASM-studenten samen met anderen volgen, zijn zij bezig met specifiek ingekleurde leerdoelen, context en kennisinhoud. In die zin zijn ook de zogenoemde algemene competenties per opleiding specifiek. Het derde jaar, bestaande uit het "major semester" en de grote stage, is geheel ASM-specifiek. In het vierde jaar doen studenten een minor (eerste semester; vrij te kiezen binnen grenzen) en hun thesisproject (tweede semester; ASM-specifiek).

The influx of new students dropped dramatically in 2006 and 2007, causing strong concern among the staff. After in depth discussions both internally and with the Work Field Advisory Committee it was decided to concentrate the ASM programme in one major course named: Fair Trade Management. VHL considers this name to be appealing to young students. The major specific theme 'value chain analysis' runs through the years of the programme. In the first year the student focuses on the improvement of a cultivation plan. In the second year the student analyses an agricultural sector. In the third year the student focuses on issues to strengthen the farmers' market position in a sustainable way. The fourth year is dedicated to the minor and thesis, when the student deals with managerial aspects of chain governance and quality management systems.

The assessment team observes that the programme, which has an international orientation, uses adequate and relevant professional literature up to international standards. However, the relations with Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR) could be further optimized in this field. The assignments for the students, the placements (abroad) and the thesis assignments are based on real issues or questions in the professional field. The assessment team welcomes the ample time for placements in the curriculum and the input from the work field in the assignments and the learning environments.

The assessment team observes that the study components jointly constitute a comprehensive programme allowing students to achieve the targeted final qualifications. The whole set up is consistent with the claim of the programme that students develop the relevant competences for the work field. The descriptions of all components of the programme explain in detail what students are supposed to learn, how they should work and what the assessment will be. Generally speaking, students go abroad at least for the placements and the thesis terms; also, students participate in excursions abroad. The

Pagina 4 van 11 assessment teams considers that the programme stimulates international exchange thoroughly.

The assessment team considers the study components to be well integrated. The coherence between the study components within the first two years is not always recognised by the students, as is illustrated by the student evaluations and the meetings with the assessment team. According to students the horizontal coherence in year 1 and 2 is also not easily perceived. The ASM team realizes that the horizontal coherence can be improved and actions will be taken. The vertical coherence is partly realized by the major specific context throughout the years and the increasing complexity of the described competences. The assessment team is quite positive on the placement evaluation session, which is also aimed at the introduction of the minor and thesis, with a view to coherence between these two programme components.

The division of the academic year into four terms (or two semesters) helps to spread the study load adequately. When prompted, students told the assessment team that the study load is reasonable. The number of contact hours is 20 in the first and second year, decreasing during the third and fourth year when students embark on their internship and thesis.

The assessment team welcomes the special programme components to help international students get acquainted with the Dutch educational system.

VHL has adopted the policy that Dutch HAVO and VWO students are required to have chemistry to be admitted to ASM, which is part of the old Tropische Landbouw inheritance. Applicants who have a lower level of education in chemistry are offered a deficiency summer course in order to be qualified at the start of the academic year. Students who fail the deficiency course on chemistry have not been admitted since September 2009. The VHL team adheres to the claim of chemistry for admittance, although the curriculum does not build on basic knowledge of chemistry. The rationale is that students with chemistry have a feeling for technical agricultural issues and chemistry comes in handy when studying agricultural pests and diseases management.

ASM is an internationally oriented programme where Dutch, European and non-European students interact. Students of Dutch as well as foreign origin, have a similar educational level. In the vision of the ASM team a dialogue between Northern and Southern students with a multiple cultural background is essential and a goal in itself. The level of foreign diplomas is evaluated with NUFFIC-rules. English needs to be at an IELTS score of at least 6 for Bachelor level (or equivalent level from comparable tests).

The assessment team is of the opinion that VHL has developed clear admission standards. The policy to qualify students for exemptions and procedures to admit students who do not fit in the formal admission standards are fully developed. Shorter programmes (three or two years) for students with adequate previous education are offered. The rationale to maintain chemistry as an admittance criterion does not convince the assessment team, as the objectives might just as well be served with 'biology' or 'physics' as criterion. The suggestion is to reconsider the chemistry restriction. The assessment team welcomes the extra study groups to help students with completely different backgrounds in order to accommodate to the educational concept and system.

The programme meets the formal requirement of 240 ECTS.

Pagina 5 van 11 In 2005, Competence-Based Learning was introduced in all programs of VHL, including ASM and the language of instruction for ASM changed from Dutch into English. Lots of cases and assignments from the professional field feature in the courses. There is ample time for international placements, excursions and field work. The didactical concept is well developed and is completely in line with the objectives of the programme. Lecturers are aware that students need more guidance in the first two years to develop their learning skills. Still, evaluations show that students experience difficulties in getting a clear overview and insight in what they are supposed to do, especially in the first six terms. This is corroborated in meetings with the assessment team, when students tell the same story.

The final semester is exclusively devoted to the thesis. Per student, 17 hours are available for thesis supervision. Students prepare the thesis project at VHL, usually collect their data at a location abroad, then finalize the project back at VHL. The thesis report is assessed by two independent assessors, independent in the sense that they are not involved in the thesis project or in the supervision of the student. One of the assessors is a staff member of VHL, one is external. The assessment team is of the opinion that the set up of the thesis project assures that the student will execute a relevant question or problem in the professional field. The procedures, different roles and assessment criteria are well described in the thesis manuals.

The ASM team honours the '4 eye principle' for written assessments, as a second lecturer verifies (by taking a sample) the grades. Oral assessments are attended by two lecturers, one could say the '4 ear principle'. It is clear that assessments are an important issue for the ASM team in terms of time and attention. Due to the consistency of the didactical concept, the assessments cover the end qualifications and are strongly related to practical cases from the work field. The quality of the assessments is assured by the 'four eyes and four ears principle'.

In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the programme of the degree course as positive.

Met inachtneming van de aanvullende informatie door de instelling verstrekt in het gesprek op 17 maart 2011, stelt de NVAO vast dat in het VBI-rapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden Certiked dit onderwerp positief heeft bevonden.

De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'programma' als voldoende.

Inzet van personeel

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

The merger with WUR included the move from the Deventer location to the Forum building in Wageningen, and retirement of core staff members (completed in September 2007). Most lecturers in the present ASM team have a long history with VHL.

The assessment team notices that nearly all lecturers have professional experience in the (sub) tropics, although for most of them this is more than a decade ago. Therefore it is important that the lecturers continue to be involved in relevant projects within the professional field and visit developing countries. They do so through development consultancy in overseas missions and projects, congresses, symposia, practical training

Pagina 6 van 11 courses, excursions, supervision of placements, thesis projects, and assignments; teaching international mid-career professionals in master programmes of VHL.

In cooperation with VHL's professional master programme in Agri Production Chain Management, the ASM team participates in a knowledge management programme with a consortium of ten universities and research institutes in Eastern Africa.

Guest lectures feature in every term of the first year. Some of these lectures are open to students of all years, who are invited to join.

The ASM team consists of four staff members (3 FTE), covering the main disciplines in the programme. ASM closely collaborates with the other majors of VHL. Jointly, VHL's majors are being taught by a team of 25. In most of the terms in year 1 and 2 the programme is implemented in learning environments shared with one or more other majors.

The staff : student ratio should equal 1 : 20 according to VHL policy. For ASM, the actual ratio varies with student numbers over time. Also, it depends on one's definition of the ratio in a setting with small numbers for ASM exclusively as opposed to larger numbers for the combined majors. In terms of "small numbers", staff : student ratios have been around 1 : 5 in recent years.

The implementation of Competence Based Learning and the new ASM programme has severely added to the work load of the ASM staff. In the annual staff evaluations and in the bi-annual staff monitor it has been indicated that the staff feels burdened.

Three lecturers have a PhD, one has a Bachelor, the other lecturers have a Master Degree. The assessment team is satisfied that the lecturers have the required professional competences and have been trained in the didactical competences needed for the competence-based educational concept. The HRM policy of VHL offers ample opportunity for personal development and the development of teamwork. In the interviews with teaching staff the assessment team enjoyed the enthusiasm and commitment for the new curriculum.

Students are less satisfied with aspects of the programme's organisation, for example the late scheduling of excursions. Thus, the main drawback is in organisational matters. The scarcity of staff resources flows over into the quality of the organisation, it just does not function smoothly. In the view of the assessment team, the vulnerability of lecturer quantity constitutes a topic for improvement.

In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the deployment of staff of the degree course as positive.

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De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'inzet van personeel' als voldoende.

Voorzieningen

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

The assessment team is strongly impressed by the modern and advanced architecture of the new Forum Building. The Wageningen campus offers the benefit of well equipped modern facilities of classrooms, project groups and individual work, offices, and the library.

Pagina 7 van 11 Students are very satisfied with the building and the facilities. VHL has kept its own administration and has its own location within the building, where VHL rents the 5th, 6th and 7th floor. The assessment team feels that students combine the best of two worlds: the personal atmosphere of ASM and the excellent facilities of WUR. ASM uses the practical training facilities of PTC in Ede. Students comment favourably on these facilities.

From the outset, every student is assigned a Career Counsellor (CC). The student is expected to see the CC at least twice each term in a bi-lateral meeting. Students collect the evidence of their competence-development in a physical or electronic portfolio. This portfolio will help students to demonstrate their self development in assessments.

The students' opinions on tutoring and information provision are evaluated each term. The ASM team concludes that not all students are convinced of tutoring as a means to prepare them for their future career. In a meeting with the assessment team the students explained that reflection skills come in handy in the fourth year, then the benefits are reaped. The assessment team evaluates the design of career counselling is up to standard.

Communication about practical matters is not well organized in the ASM programme. There is a lot of information to share and there are many information channels. The result is a rather chaotic information scene, as being experienced by students. The assessment team suggests to pay special attention to the management of these information processes.

The assessment team is of the opinion that the Forum Building and the facilities are in an excellent way equipped to realise the degree programme. The career counselling courses have been well designed and attention is paid to further improve their implementation. The information exchange on the organizational matters is not well executed, students spend a lot of time to figure out how the system works. The assessment team sees ample room for improvement.

In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the services of the degree course as positive.

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De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'voorzieningen' als voldoende.

Interne kwaliteitszorg

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

The quality system is based on the EFQM model, in combination with the PDCA cycle. The objective of the management is to reach the third level of the EFQM model, the system oriented phase. The most important instruments are: evaluations by students, by lecturers in the major team, by external supervisors of placements and thesis assignments, and by guest lecturers; exit and dropout interviews; surveys of alumni; surveys among staff; the HBO monitor.

The results of these evaluations are disseminated to the course manager, the core lecturers, the term coordinator and the Programme Advisory Committee. In about 50% of

Pagina 8 van 11 cases improvement plans are written. Once approved, practical changes of limited impact can be put into effect immediately, whereas considerable changes may be carried out the next academic year. Several changes have been implemented this way.

ASM is a small-scale programme. Staff and students know each other well, communication flows easily in this community. In this context it is not very useful for the management to formulate quantitative improvement goals. The targets are qualitative: to remove the bottlenecks in student satisfaction. In the meeting with representatives of the Programme Advisory Committee, students explained that they repeatedly complained about the organisational aspects of the programme, apparently without effect as the same issues come up every year.

The assessment team ascertains that the management of ASM systematically seeks input from a broad variety of stakeholders to improve the quality of the course. As said earlier, the small scale and open, informal atmosphere cause information to flow easily and suggestions and ideas for improvement come up naturally in the course of daily communications. The management fosters the relationship between stakeholders, as in the meeting of members of the Work Field Advisory Committee with students. The assessment team welcomes this as a very good practice.

In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the internal quality assurance of the degree course as positive.

De NVAO stelt vast dat in het VBI-rapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden Certiked dit onderwerp positief heeft bevonden.

De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'interne kwaliteitszorg' als voldoende.

Resultaten

Het panel komt tot de volgende bevindingen en overwegingen.

The first cohort of ASM students following the new curriculum enrolled in 2005 and graduated in July 2009. The assessment team has studied most of their theses. The assignments were relevant for the professional field and of sufficient bachelor level. Reading the theses and the corresponding evaluations led to the conclusion that the reports are up to standard. This is corroborated by the feedback from the companies / organizations where the placements and thesis projects were done. The assessment team evaluates the achieved learning outcomes of the programme as conforming to intended outcomes.

The assessment team notices that target figures have been set: a propedeutic phase yield of 60% after one year, 95% after two years; average stay of dropouts: 1.35 years; average stay of graduates: 4.20 years. Student progress is monitored and the corresponding information is used. The assessment team agrees that the study progress of the students falls within the required range, however, the small number of students in the curriculum makes the statistics rather arbitrary. The influx needs serious attention to maintain a viable degree course.

After the extremely low 2007 enrolment number (2 students), influx has increased to 10 (2008) and 12 (2009; of whom 5 are international students). The management is concerned about the low number of students. More attention for international recruitment, in

Pagina 9 van 11 combination with activities to establish the name of the programme in the Netherlands, should result in growing numbers in the next years. In the view of the assessment team, increasing enrolment constitutes a topic for improvement.

The assessment team suggests to use the development of the new VHL strategy as leverage to strengthen the cooperation – or even a merger – with the VHL programmes Rural Development and Agribusiness and Business Administration.

In view of the above, the assessment team evaluates the aims and objectives of the degree course as positive.

De NVAO stelt vast dat in het VBI-rapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden Certiked dit onderwerp positief heeft bevonden.

De NVAO onderschrijft de aanbeveling van het panel met betrekking tot samenwerking met de opleidingen Plattelandsontwikkeling en Agribusiness and Bedrijfskunde en Agribusiness. Tijdens het gesprek met de instelling op 17 maart 2011 heeft de NVAO met instemming kennis genomen van het feit dat de instelling deze aanbeveling als een serieuze optie aanmerkt.

De NVAO beoordeelt derhalve het onderwerp 'resultaten' als voldoende.

Pagina 10 van 11 **Besluit:**

Ingevolge het bepaalde in artikel 5a.10, tweede lid, van de WHW heeft de NVAO het College van bestuur van de Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein te Velp in de gelegenheid gesteld zijn zienswijze op het voornemen tot besluit van 5 juli 2011 naar voren te brengen. Bij brief van 29 juli 2011, heeft het College van bestuur van deze gelegenheid gebruik gemaakt. Dit heeft geleid tot enkele tekstuele aanpassingen.

Op grond van het voorgaande besluit de NVAO dat accreditatie wordt verleend aan de hbo-bachelor Tropische Landbouw (240 ECTS; variant: voltijd; locatie: Wageningen) van Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein te Velp.

Dit besluit treedt in werking op 1 januari 2012 en is van kracht tot en met 31 december 2017.

Den Haag, 4 augustus 2011

Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie

bla



K.L.L.M. Dittrich
(voorzitter)

Tegen dit besluit kan op grond van het bepaalde in de Algemene wet bestuursrecht door een belanghebbende bezwaar worden gemaakt bij de NVAO. De termijn voor het indienen van bezwaar bedraagt zes weken.

Onderwerp	Facet	Beoordeling door VBI
		<i>voltijd</i>
1. Doelstellingen	1.1 domeinspecifieke eisen	V
	1.2 niveau bachelor	V
	1.3 oriëntatie hbo	V
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
2. Programma	2.1 eisen hbo	G
	2.2 relatie doelstellingen – programma	G
	2.3 samenhang programma	V
	2.4 studielast	V
	2.5 instroom	V
	2.6 duur	voldaan
	2.7 afstemming vormgeving en inhoud	V
	2.8 beoordeling en toetsing	G
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
3. Inzet personeel	3.1 eisen hbo	V
	3.2 kwantiteit personeel	V
	3.3 kwaliteit personeel	G
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
4. Voorzieningen	4.1 materiële voorzieningen	E
	4.2 studiebegeleiding	V
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
5. Interne kwaliteitszorg	5.1 evaluatie resultaten	V
	5.2 maatregelen tot verbetering	V
	5.3 betrokkenheid medewerkers, studenten, alumni en beroepenveld	G
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
6. Resultaten	6.1 gerealiseerd niveau	V
	6.2 onderwijsrendement	V
Beoordeling onderwerp		V
Eindoordeel		Positief

De facetten krijgen het oordeel onvoldoende (O), voldoende (V), goed (G) of excellent (E), met uitzondering van het facet "Duur" (2.6), waarvoor geldt: "voldaan" of "niet voldaan". De onderwerpen krijgen het oordeel voldoende of onvoldoende