

Substantive Change Report
by the Quality Assurance Unit of the Flemish University and
University Colleges Council (VLUHR QAU)

Register Committee

Ref. RC/C02

Ver. 1.0

Date 2015-10-20

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Decision of:	20 October 2015
Report received on:	8 July 2015 (revised 9 October 2015)
Agency registered since:	7/5/2013 (predecessors: VLHORA since 10/4/2009, VLIR since 7/10/2009)
Last external review report:	9 September 2014
Registered until:	30 September 2019
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Lucien Bollaert
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarification request of 31/08/2015 2. Substantive Change Report

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 8 July 2015.
2. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from VLUHR QAU on some matters, referred to below, and noted the revised Substantive Change Report submitted by VLUHR QAU.
3. **The Register Committee took note of the changes in the Flemish legal framework for external quality assurance, resulting in a reduced number of programme assessments that VLUHR QAU expects to carry out in the future.**
4. The Register Committee sought clarification on the future development of VLUHR QAU's staff and VLUHR QAU consequently supplemented its Report.
5. The Register Committee noted that VLUHR QAU has started to offer to carry out programme assessments on behalf of the higher education institutions that now have own responsibility for those. The Register Committee understood that these will be carried out in line with VLUHR QAU's existing and established methodology, which was reviewed against the ESG in September 2014.

6. The Register Committee underlined that VLUHR QAU is required to make (a) Substantive Change Report(s) should there be further changes to its activities between now and the next external review in 2019.

7. The Register Committee sought clarification from VLUHR QAU on the systems in place to separately clearly between quality assurance and consultative activities. VLUHR QAU pointed to its existing systems and informed that its governing structure was being revised.

8. The Register Committee underlined that VLUHR QAU is required to make a further Substantive Change Report when changes to the governing structure are introduced.

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VLUHR QAU
Mr Nik Heerens

– by email –

Brussels, 31 August 2015

Substantive Change Report – Clarification Request

Dear Nik,

We wish to thank you for the Substantive Change Report of 8 July 2015. Your report has been reviewed by two rapporteurs before being brought to the attention of the entire EQAR Register Committee.

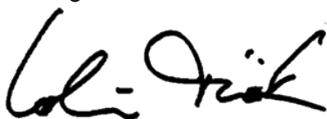
In order to prepare consideration by the Committee, we would be obliged if you could clarify the following queries:

1. How did VLUHR QAU's staff develop in response to the decreasing number of assessments, and how do you expect the number of staff to develop in the future?
2. In the Report, you indicated that VLUHR QAU intends to develop additional activities. Does VLUHR QAU already have more precise plans as to what type of reviews or services it is going to offer, and did VLUHR QAU begin to consider the procedures and criteria it is going to apply in these new activities?
3. In case some of VLUHR QAU's new activities will be of a consultative nature, which measures does VLUHR QAU plan to take in order to distinguish clearly between quality assurance activities and consultancy services?

In order to expedite proceedings we kindly ask you for a reply **by 20 September 2015**. Please inform us if any difficulties arise in meeting this deadline.

I shall be at your disposal if you have any further questions or inquiries.

Kind regards,



Colin Tück
(Director)

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VLUHR QAU - Substantive changes

In June 2015 the Flemish government approved a re-organization of the external quality assurance system in Flanders. As a result of the re-organization, the institutions have a choice between two options:

- Option A: a combination of institutional review and study program assessments (present system). Both review and assessment follow the present legal system (Higher Education Codex);

or

- Option B: an extended institutional review. The institutional review is extended with a review of the way the institution coordinates the quality assurance of the study programs. In this option, NVAO adjourns the study programs accreditation for 8 years (with exception of the accreditation of new study programs, study programs in international collaboration, study programs of registered institutions and the study programs with a negative or temporarily accreditation).

All institutions have chosen for the extended institutional review (option B).

Impact on VLUHR QAU

The re-organization implies that the study program evaluations that VLUHR QAU has to execute from July 2015 on, will be limited to new study programs, study programs in international collaboration, study programs of registered institutions and the study programs with a negative or temporarily accreditation. These represents still 53 assessments for the period July 2015-December 2018. The number of assessments can increase pending on the accreditation decisions of the ongoing assessments and pending on the decisions concerning ongoing applications for new programs. Furthermore VLUHR QAU continues to develop more activities in the field of quality assurance, in accordance with the mission of VLUHR QAU.

Impact on VLUHR QAU staff

VLUHR QAU has estimated that it needs 4 FTE to conduct the planned study assessments and to continue the development of additional (consultancy) activities. From mid 2016 VLUHR QAU counts 4 members. Pending the development of new activities, the number of staff members can increase in the future. At present VLUHR QAU still counts 11 members and they finalize the study program assessment of 2014 and 2015. The employment contract of 7 staff members will end by mid 2016.

Additional activities

Concerning the other activities in the field of quality assurance, VLUHR QAU continue to offer support to organisations to implement an internal quality assurance system. At the moment VLUHR QAU supports institutions who offer HBO5 (associate degree) programs and a governmental body involved in training and education.

Furthermore VLUHR QAU aim to organize the study program assessments which each Flemish higher education institution has to organize in the framework of the extended institutional review. These evaluations are part of the quality assurance system of the institution but must be conducted in accordance with the ESG and het Quality Assurance Code of NVAO. At this moment VLUHR QAU have acquired one project where it will conduct a part of the study program assessments of the institution, namely the composition of the panel and the training of the panel members.

Distinction between quality assurance activities and consultancy services

At the moment there is no conflict of interest between the quality assurance activities and the consultancy activities. A new governance for the future VLUHR QAU is under construction and the measures to distinguish the quality assurance and the consultancy activities will be part of it.