# Guidelines for content of faculty plans on quality agreements

## 1. Background information on Quality Agreements

In response to the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) the University of Twente (UT) needs to develop agreements on the quality of education in 2018. These quality agreements will be effective for a period of 6 years, from 2019 until 2024. The income of the student loan system (WSV-funds, abbreviation of wet studievoorschot) is used to enforce the quality agreements, thereby giving an impulse to the quality of education. The NVAO will assess the plans on quality agreements and the realisation of these agreements. Important moments in this respect are:

- 2019 – assessment of UT plan on quality agreements parallel to the Institutional Audit
- 2022 – midterm assessment of progress of quality agreements until 2021 based on UT annual reports
- 2025 – assessment of realisation quality agreements parallel to the Institutional Audit

The NVAO developed a protocol for the assessment of the plan on quality agreements. This protocol describes the criteria on which the plan will be assessed by the expert panel of the Institutional Audit[1]. The three criteria for the assessment of the plan on quality agreements that the NVAO defined are:

I. Content:
  a. Well argued that plan contributes to quality improvement of education.
  b. The intended investment of the WSV-funds and the aims that will be realized by means of these funds are clearly defined.
  c. Plans are related to the quality themes of OCW[2]. It is possible to make motivated choices between these themes.
  d. The plans match with the university's context and vision on education (corresponding to educational vision and broader ambitions regarding education).

II. Process:
  a. Internal stakeholders are sufficiently involved in developing the plans on quality agreement. If applicable, relevant external stakeholders are consulted.
  b. Management and participatory bodies both take care for broad involvement of the academic community.
  c. Participatory bodies are well facilitated to perform their task.
  d. Participatory bodies have to approve the plans on quality agreements.

III. Realistic:
  a. Plans are worked out in concrete policy measures and processes that reasonably contribute to quality improvement.
  b. Internal stakeholder and, if applicable, external stakeholders, deem the plans to be realistic and feasible. Thereby taking university's financial context and university's vision on education into account.
  c. Explanation of monitoring processes and about involvement of internal and relevant external stakeholders coming years. Specific questions: how will the progress and realization of the quality agreements be monitored?, how will the plans and budget be adjusted if necessary?

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[1] The assessment of the plan on quality agreements will be organised as a trail of the Institutional Audit (in Dutch: Instellingstoets kwaliteitszorg). The site visits of the Institutional Audit probably take place in October 2019. The deadline for delivering the plan on quality agreements to the NVAO is set on the 1st of January 2019.
[2] Intensity of Education, Study Success, Differentiation in Education, Teacher Quality, Guidance of Students, Educational Facilities

## 2. Approach UT to formulate quality agreements

The intention of OCW is that universities continuously improve education and realise a clear development. It is up to the UT to challenge ourselves for the coming period and describe on which topics we want to make a significant impact.

### *Quality agreements defined as programmes*

The open framework of the NVAO allows universities to substantiate how they keep track on the development of education and to explain how quality is improved. Because the duration of the quality agreements is long (six years), it is required to incorporate a certain level of flexibility in the quality agreements. At the same time the UT has to explain in what direction education will be developed. That is why the UT chose to define the quality agreements by a number of programmes that have a certain scope and in which faculties can participate to the extent that is required in order to realise a significant improvement of education. Per programme it has to be clear how tasks and responsibilities of stakeholders are addressed and how required resources are provided. The activities within a programme have to be worked out in more detail for the first couple of years. Especially for 2019 it has to be clear what faculties will do within these programmes. Based on new insights the course of a programme can be further defined coming years in consultation with participatory bodies. This approach of the quality agreements fits the motive of OCW to stimulate that education continuously develops in consultation with internal and relevant external stakeholders.

### *Quality Agreement Programmes of UT*

The programmes are identified based on the input provided by students and staff within faculties. In the preliminary plans of faculties some topics repeatedly show up and suggestions for measures that are mentioned in the preliminary plans cluster around a number of themes. The programmes comprise the preliminary plans of faculties and describe the direction in which education will be developed. The programmes are:

1. Learning facilities
2. Community building
3. Teaching professionalisation
4. Talent development of students
5. Global citizens

Each Quality Agreement Programme is defined by a long term aim and suggestions for measures that the UT can work on during the course of the quality agreements (see Appendix I 'Programme descriptions' for a more extensive description of the programmes). Please notice that aims are not necessarily distinctive by themselves. However, the results that the UT will deliver coming years have to be new and can strengthen the profile of the UT, for example our small scale and intensive education. It is important that students recognise change and improvement during their time at the UT as a result of the Quality Agreement Programmes.

Faculties are asked to describe what their long term plans will be per Quality Agreement Programme. Like already mentioned, faculties can make a motivated choice between the programmes. Faculties can also give priority to Quality Agreements Programmes in the first several years. For example to invest coming years in study facilities that support the learning experience of students and later on during the course of the quality agreements paying attention to academic counselling in order to support talent development of students. Because discussions within some faculties mainly concerned the near future, plans for the first period of the quality agreements will be more specific and long term perspectives might be more general.

## 3. Guidelines for faculty plan on quality agreements

The NVAO criteria provide insight on what the university should address in its plan. Given the UT approach of developing quality agreements, information of faculties is required. In order to support faculties in transforming their ambitions on quality improvement into plans that are structured in a similar fashion and that can be compared easily, the following guidelines are provided.

### 1. Context of faculty

*The NVAO asks to explain how the plan on quality agreements relate with existing ambitions and vision on education. Because faculties, within the setting of the university, might have varying ambitions on education, it is desirable to incorporate an explanation of this diversity into the UT plan.*

Faculties are asked to submit a brief description of current ambitions and existing policy on education.

### 2. Description of development process quality agreements

*It is expected that internal stakeholders are sufficiently involved in developing the plans on quality agreements.*

Faculties are asked to describe which stakeholders were relevant in the development and in what way they have been involved and what their contribution was. Faculties are also asked why this approach fit the faculty well.

### 3. Ambitions related to education quality

a. Description of long-term ambitions. In which programmes (see Appendix I 'Programme descriptions') does the faculty want to participate coming 6 years. Given these programmes, on what specific topics does the faculty want to realise a significant improvement / change coming 6 years?

b. What is the motivation to choose these programmes? If applicable, why does the faculty not participate in other programmes?

### 4. Deliverables in relation to ambitions

*Given the NVAO timeline there will be two moments on which the realisation of the intentions are assessed: 1) a mid-term assessment in 2022 based on the progress until 2021 and, 2) a final evaluation based on the results until 2024. The university is asked to explain what she wants to accomplish in 2021 and what the intended outcomes are in 2024.*

Faculties are asked to specify in detail what they intend to accomplish in 2021 and to describe in more general term what the intended outcomes are for 2024. In order to evaluate the progress on quality agreements upcoming years, it is important to have a frame of reference. Therefore faculties are asked to describe the current situation on the deliverables mentioned in the faculty plan.

### 5. Measures related to the deliverables

Faculties are to describe which measures they intend to undertake to reach abovementioned deliverables. Please specify these measure in detail for 2019. Measures for the years to follow can be formulated on a more abstract level.

*In 2018 faculties already received WSV-funds. That is why the UT agreed that faculties will describe how these funds are used in 2018 to improve the quality of education. The faculty council has the right to agree on the allocation of these funds.*

Faculties are asked to describe what has been done or will be undertaken in 2018 to improve the quality of education by means of the WSV-funds. Please note that these actions are not

necessarily related to the long-term Quality Agreement Programmes. Faculties are asked to provide information on this before September 1st.

6. *Investments in 2018 and indication of long-term costs*

*The UT has to deliver a long-term budget that provides the NVAO sufficient insight in how WSV-funds are invested in relation to the Quality Agreement Programmes.*

In order to draft a long-term budget at UT level per Quality Agreement Programme, faculties are asked to provide an indication of their costs for the comings 6 years concerning the measures as explained under point 5 in this paragraph. The budget concerning the WSV-funds for 2018 and 2019 has to be specific. Financial implications of long-term measures can be given as a general indication.

7. *Methods and procedures to monitor progress of quality agreements*

*The approach of the UT in formulating quality agreements is to focus on efforts that reasonably contribute to quality improvement of education. That is why the UT will design a process for continuous development that leads to tangible results per programme. The way of working to keep track on the quality agreements and to adjust plans if necessary should fit into the regular quality improvement cycle of education.*

Faculties are asked to draft the planning & control cycle for their part in the quality agreements. How will the participatory bodies (Faculty Council and possibly Programme Committees) be involved in this process?

## Appendix I - Programme descriptions

The Quality Agreement Programmes that the UT has defined, are described in this appendix. For each programme the overarching aim is described and several measures are suggested that were based on previous input from Faculties. This autumn the UT will, in a joint collaboration with faculties and participatory bodies, further refine the content of the programmes.

### Learning facilities

Aim: Learning facilities support the learning experience of students.
Measures:
- Creating learning spaces that allow for different forms of learning. The design of ideal learning space will be worked out together with students and educators.
- Integrating digital technologies in learning. For example e-learning and digital facilities to increase formative feedback.
- Investing in equipment; for example flexible research equipment to do experiments in the field.
- Optimizing user-friendliness of the real-time booking system and stimulating usage of this interface so students use project rooms optimally.

### Teaching professionalisation

Aim: Continuous development of staff who have a role in education, and learning assistants is stimulated, facilitated and rewarded.
Measures:
- The skills and competences for the different roles in education are explicitly addressed and developed. The different roles might be:
  - Lecturer
  - Tutor
  - Mentor
  - Academic counselor
  - Learning assistant
  - Designers of modules and/or programmes
- Education related tasks are rewarded in career paths of academic staff.
- Starting a Learning Assistant Programme in which learning assistants are trained to support the learning process of other students, for example by learning how to provide constructive feedback. Learning assistants hereby co-design the learning process. Learning assistants can obtain a certificate which is acknowledged as relevant for a Teacher Training Programme or the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). Having a certificate stimulates learning assistants to further professionalise as an educator. The Learning Assisstant Programme also aims to increase the feedback students get during a course and helps to relief the work of academic staff.
- Developing flexible training programme for teachers with an UTQ. Short courses that meet the need of teachers and are relevant for our educational model (e.g. use of formative feedback in study programme, usage of digital technology in learning).
- Increasing available time for academic staff for professionalization; for example by means of extra support.

### Community building

Aim: Students feel part of a community, consisting of staff and fellow students, which supports individual members in their learning process and contributes to their well-being.
Measures:
- Investing in facilities that stimulate community building. For example by means of home-base inclusive learning environments, year-round classrooms, and common zones for staff and students.
- Stimulating Team-Based Learning within education.
- Optimising the introduction period in order to create a community of student cohorts that become increasingly diverse as a result of internationalization.

*Talent development of students*

Aim: Students are stimulated and have the possibility to create their own learning experiences.
Measures:

- Opportunities that are provided to students:
  - Increase differentiation within study programmes. For example by creating flexible trajectories and learning paths, and by using of a variety of learning methods.
  - Developing talent programmes in line with profiling themes of UT. For example regarding entrepreneurship, and  multidisciplinary societal challenges (high tech – human touch).
- Increasing coaching of students. Students are stimulated and supported to shape their personal development. Education is approached as a chain (high school student >undergraduate> graduate > professional) in which students are supported to make the right study and career choice. This requires that students are aware of their strengths and competences. Possibilities to work on this is to invest in academic counselling, to set-up a mentoring or buddy system, to invest in formative feedback.
- Providing inspiration and experiences on career possibilities. Students need to have information concerning future career possibilities in order to make a well-considered study or career choices. During their study, students could be offered possibilities to experience what the professional field is like. This can be done by developing a systematic line of career preparation activities, consisting of guest lectures, an internship, and real-life case studies.

*Global citizens*

Aim: Students are prepared for an international career, both in the Netherlands and abroad.
Measures:

- Increasing the number of undergraduates that participate in an exchange programme. Degree programmes can set a specific target for 2024.
- Developing joint programmes with international partners.
- Implementing an international curriculum in degree programmes. An international classroom conceptual framework can be used to direct this development. Programmes that choose to apply for a Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation, which is awarded by the NVAO, will be supported by the UT.