

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis of the Report Submitted by The Netherlands

Prepared October 2011

**Background**

The National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) initially determined that the Netherlands' medical education accreditation/approval process was comparable to that used in the United States at its fall 1998 meeting.

In 2003, the country submitted an application for a determination of continued comparability for consideration at the NCFMEA's March 2004 meeting. At that meeting, the NCFMEA deferred, until September 2004, a decision on whether the Netherlands' accreditation process continued to be comparable to that used in the United States. For the September 2004 NCFMEA meeting, the Netherlands provided additional information regarding its accreditation process and reported that beginning in 2004, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science delegated the responsibility for accrediting its medical schools to the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization (Dutch acronym: NVAO). However, the Committee again deferred its decision until the country could provide three documents for review at the NCFMEA's Spring 2005 meeting.

However, the Committee's subsequent meetings were suspended until fall 2007. In a May 1, 2007 letter, the country was asked to provide a full response to the Committee's updated guidelines. The Netherlands appeared next before the NCFMEA at its September 15, 2008 meeting, and after testimony from Dutch representatives, the NCFMEA formally reaffirmed the prior determination that the standards and processes used by the Netherlands to accredit medical schools were comparable to those used in the United States. In the November 17, 2008 letter notifying the country of the NCFMEA decision, the country was requested to submit an update report of its activities by June 15, 2010. This analysis represents a report on the country's accrediting activities through June 15, 2010.

**Summary of Findings**

Based on its review of the information submitted by the country, Department staff concludes that the Netherlands addressed the NCFMEA's request for a report of its accrediting activities. However, anticipated activities involving the Netherlands Antilles may have an impact on the current accreditation of the medical school located in Saba. Currently, the Accrediting Commission of

Colleges of Medicine, acting on behalf of the government of Saba, accredits the Saba School of Medicine enabling the U. S. medical students in attendance to receive federal student financial assistance.

The Department would request the NCFMEA to inquire about the anticipated changes in the government structure and the impact the changes will have on U. S. students enrolled in Saba University. In support of the anticipated changes, the Department suggests that the NCFMEA may want the NAVO to submit documentation of the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and documentation concerning the status of the Saba government with the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM). The Committee may also want the country to provide updated information regarding any training activities it has or will conduct, specifically with regard to the assessment of the medical institutions in the Netherlands Antilles.

## **Staff Analysis**

### **Current status of medical schools**

#### **Country Narrative**

Medical school Programme Level (academic) Date of most recent NVAO accreditation decision Accreditation valid until

Universiteit Utrecht

Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor

Master

2006-12-14

2006-12-14 2012-12-13

2012-12-13

Universiteit Maastricht Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor

Master

2006-12-14

2006-12-14 2012-12-13

2012-12-13

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor

Master

2006-12-14

2006-12-14 2012-12-13

2012-12-13

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor

Master

2007-01-09

2007-01-09 2013-01-08

2013-01-08

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor

Master  
2007-01-09  
2007-01-09 2013-01-08  
2013-01-08  
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor  
Master  
2009-01-01  
2009-01-01  
2014-12-31  
2014-12-31  
Universiteit Leiden Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor Master  
2009-01-01  
2009-01-01  
2014-12-31  
2014-12-31  
Universiteit van Amsterdam Geneeskunde (medicine) Bachelor Master  
2009-01-01  
2009-01-01  
2014-12-31  
2014-12-31

### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

The Netherlands reported that it has evaluated eight medical schools between December 14, 2006 and January 9, 2009. During this period, the country accredited five medical schools and each medical school received accreditation for six years. In 2009, the country accredited three additional medical schools, each receiving a grant of accreditation for five years. These timeframes appear congruent with practices in US accreditation (3-10 years) and more stringent even than LCME accreditation which is for up to eight years.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

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### **Overview of accreditation activities**

#### **Country Narrative**

Since the last update report the bachelor and master programs in medicine of the Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, Universiteit Leiden, and Universiteit van Amsterdam have been accredited by NVAO. Committees of independent experts visited the institutions and wrote their reports according to the framework of NVAO. NVAO made its accreditation decisions on the basis of these reports and in some cases there were additional questions from NVAO which were answered satisfactorily. The accreditation decisions are valid for a period of 6 years commencing on 1st January 2009 and ending on 31st December 2014.

At the request of the Minister of Education, Science and Culture of the Netherlands, following consultations with the government of the Netherlands Antilles, the NVAO has assessed five medical schools on the Netherlands Antilles. These assessments do not constitute accreditations according to Dutch law but should be seen as assessments aimed at the improvement of the quality of these medical schools. Of the five medical schools that were visited and assessed in Autumn 2008 by a NVAO committee of independent experts only the medical school on Saba has been assessed positively by NVAO. The positive NVAO decision applies to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program from the Saba University School of Medicine and is valid from 15 June 2009 until 14 June 2015. The NVAO decision and the committee's report can be downloaded from: <http://www.nvao.net/assessed-programme/detail/2959>

### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

Specifically, the NVAO based its accreditation decisions on the reports prepared by teams of independent experts that visited the institutions and prepared reports according to the NVAO requirements. The grants of accreditation of the bachelor and master programs in medicine at the three institutions are valid for six years beginning on January 1, 2009 and ending on December 31, 2014.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture of the Netherlands after consultations with the government of the Netherlands Antilles, requested NVAO to assess five medical schools on the Netherlands Antilles (five islands consist out of: Curacao, Bonaire, St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatiu). Although the assessments of medical schools on the Netherlands Antilles do not equal accreditations according to Dutch law, NAVO reports that its relevance is to establish the improvement of the quality of the medical schools. Of the five medical schools (listed in part I of the country's narrative) visited and assessed in the fall 2008, only the medical school on Saba received a positive assessment by NVAO, that is valid from June 15, 2009 until June 14, 2015. The NAVO did not discuss whether it held training sessions for its independent experts who visited and reported their assessment of the medical schools.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

### **Analyst Remarks to Response**

The country did not provide a response to this element of the report. The Committee may want the country to provide updated information regarding any conferences and training activities it has or will conduct specifically with regard to possible assessment activities at the medical schools in the Netherlands Antilles.

Staff Conclusion: Additional Information requested

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## **Laws and regulations**

### **Country Narrative**

There have been no changes in the Netherlands' laws and regulations that would affect the accreditation of medical schools.

### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

Since its last appearance before this committee, the NVAO reports that no changes in the Netherlands' laws and regulations have occurred that would affect the accreditation of medical schools.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

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## **Standards**

### **Country Narrative**

There have been no changes in the accreditation standards that the NVAO uses to evaluate and accredit medical schools

### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

Since its last appearance before this committee, the NVAO reports that no changes in the Netherlands educational standards have occurred that would affect the evaluation and accreditation of medical schools.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

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## **Processes and procedures**

### **Country Narrative**

There have been no changes in the NVAO accreditation processes and procedures.

### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

Since its last appearance before this committee, the NVAO reports that no changes in the Netherlands processes and procedures used by the approval body have occurred that would affect conducting site visit, selecting and training of independent experts, periodic reevaluation and monitoring of medical schools, etc.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

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### **Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities**

#### **Country Narrative**

There are no accreditation activities planned in the near future.

The dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles is expected to take place on 10 October 2010. The islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba will then come directly under the jurisdiction of the Netherlands. After a transitional period it is foreseen that the Dutch recognition and accreditation regulations will apply on these islands. It is expected that NVAO accreditation of the medical schools on the islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba will not become legally possible before the Summer of 2011.

#### **Analyst Remarks to Narrative**

The NVAO reported in its narrative that it has not planned any accreditation activities in the near future.

However, the NVAO has reported that the dissolution of the government of the Netherlands Antilles will eventually expand its accreditation activities to include its oversight of medical education programs on the islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius, and Saba. As noted in its report, the NVAO did already conduct an assessment of the five medical schools on the Netherlands Antilles in 2008, and reported that "while the assessments do not constitute accreditations according to Dutch law, they were aimed at the improvement of the quality of these medical schools. Of the five medical schools that were visited and assessed in Autumn 2008 by a NVAO committee of independent experts only the medical school on Saba has been assessed positively by NVAO. The positive NVAO decision applies to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program from the Saba University School of Medicine and is valid from 15 June 2009 until 14 June 2015."

According to the NVAO, formal accreditation of the medical schools on those islands will not occur before the summer of 2011.

### **Country Response**

No Response Provided

**Analyst Remarks to Response**

The country did not provide updated information regarding its plans for accrediting the entities in the Netherlands Antilles. The committee may want the country to discuss the current and future status of the medical schools on the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. This status of Saba is of concern since the government of Saba has delegated to the Accrediting Commission of Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) the country's medical school accreditation function. The changes in the government's structure may have an impact on U.S. students and their access to federal student assistance.

Staff Conclusion: Additional Information requested

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