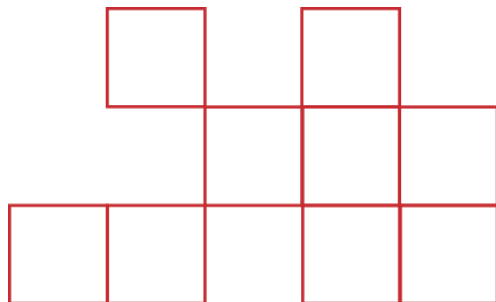


EPC-Guide

The guide for your educational program committee.



PREFACE

The role of the educational program committee (EPC) within the educational program is of fundamental importance. Therefore, as of September 1st, 2017, the EPC is a formal participation body with all associated rights and duties. In this book, we aim to cover all matters important to the EPC. As such, we will not only highlight the duties and authorities, but we will also go over tips and examples that may aid in the execution of your work.

In order to function optimally, it is imperative to know how the organization works, which participation bodies are present and how these communicate with each other. For the sake of legibility, we will use a minimum amount of varying terminology: where 'dean- or faculty board' is mentioned, one may read 'principal'¹, and with 'faculty' we also mean 'domains'. The same applies to the Supervisory Board (Dutch acronym: RvT) with which the supervisory body is meant. In cases in which the law stipulates a specific distinction, we will discuss universities and universities of applied sciences separately. This book will only elaborate on institutions that are funded by the government.

Are you interested to learn more about the HEARA (Dutch acronym: WHW) and the overall rights of those active in participation? Order the 'HEAR-About this?!'. Apart from this, Customized Trainings (Dutch acronym: ToM) organizes training sessions for educational program committees. You may always call or mail about questions or comments regarding training opportunities. Additionally, we are always looking for enthusiastic individuals who are interested in becoming active within the LSVb, the LOF or the SOM.

Good luck and enjoy your EPC year! More information can be found at www.opleidingscommissies.nl, www.studentenpolitiek.nl or www.lsvb.nl.

¹ One may also read 'director', predominantly used when referred to universities of applied sciences.

Special thanks to our sponsor:



**rijksuniversiteit
 groningen**

Contents

Special thanks to our sponsor:.....	3
1. General Info	7
1.1 Type of organization	7
1.2 Organizational structure.....	7
1.4 Faculties at university of applied sciences	8
1.5 Faculties at university.....	9
1.6 Educational level	9
1.7 Content/cooperation with other bodies.....	10
2. Functions within the EPC.....	12
2.1 (Vice) Chair	12
2.2. Administrative secretary	12
2.3 Student- and Teacher members	13
2.4 External members & auditors	13
2.5 Working Groups.....	14
3. What rights apply?.....	15
3.1 Right to information.....	15
3.2 Right of consultation	15
3.3 Right of consent.....	17
3.4 Other rights.....	17
3.5 What if you cannot come to a solution?	18
4. The EPC in the HEARA	20
4.1 Important articles	20
4.2 Duties of the EPC.....	21
5. Teaching and examination regulations (TER).....	23
5.1 What is a TER?.....	23
5.2 What does the TER look like?	23
5.3 What are the assessment criteria for the TER?.....	24
5.4 What is minimally included in the TER?	25
5.5 Validity of TER	28
6. Annual Plan.....	29
6.1 Composing an annual plan	29

Example planning:.....	30
6.2 A budget	31
6.3 An annual report.....	31
7. Quality assurance	32
7.1 Internal quality assurance	32
7.2 Education evaluations.....	32
Other evaluation systems are:	32
7.3 Discussing outcomes	33
7.4 External quality assurance	34
8. Meeting techniques	36
9. Negotiating.....	39
9.1 The starting position	39
9.2 Fundamental negotiations (Ury and Fisher).....	39
9.3 Negotiating: tips & tricks	41
10. Constituency and networking	43
11. Continuity and transition.....	45
11.1 Job familiarization.....	45
11.2 Archive.....	46
12. In Conclusion	48
13. The EPC-Guide – 2018 Edition	49
13.1 Terms of use.....	49
Landelijk Overleg Fracties	50
Studentenoverleg Medezeggenschap	51
Dutch Student Union	52
Appendix A. Relevant Articles of the HEARA	53
A.1 Article 7.13. Teaching- and Examination Regulations	53
A.2 Article 7.51 Financial Support	55
A.3 Article 9.18 Educational Program Committees (wo)	56
A.4 Article 9.35 Advice	58
A.5 Article 9.38 Power of consent of the faculty council.....	58
A.6 Article 9.40. Powers of participation arbitration board and procedure	59
A.7 Article 7.48. Facilities and training	61
A.8 Article 10.3c. Program committees (hbo)	61

A.9 Article 10.20. Power of consent of the participation council.....	62
A.10 Article 10.23. Advice	63
A. 11 Article 10.39. Facilities and training	64
A. 12 Format request (training)budget.....	65
Budget Request educational program committee [program] [year]	66
Total budget request EPC [program]	66
Appendix B: Terms and Acronyms	67
Appendix C. Useful addresses.....	70
Dutch Student Union (LSVb)	70
SOM (for universities of applied sciences).....	70
LOF (for universities).....	70
Interesting links	71

1. General Info

The EPC is not provided in isolation. It is a radar in an ever-changing body. The bigger the institution, the more often you have to comply with plans that have been composed elsewhere. Therefore, it is of importance to know where you have to be.

1.1 Type of organization

One may differentiate between public and special institutions (see i.a. art. 9.51). Special institutions are founded in accordance with an ideological or religious movement. Most universities of applied sciences are a special institution. The members of the Supervisory Board (Dutch acronym: RvT) of public institutions are appointed by the minister. Special institutions may have a different supervisory body, such as the board of a foundation.

1.2 Organizational structure

The Executive Board (Dutch acronym: CvB) is appointed by the Supervisory Board. The Executive Board and Supervisory Board meet periodically. The Supervisory Board assesses and consults the Executive Board. Additionally, they authorize the budget, annual report and regulations. It is legally established that the Supervisory Board meets biannually with the participation in order to be informed about the course of affairs.

The Central Participation is composed of a joint university council with staff and students or a student council and a works council. At a decentralized level, the faculty board is composed of: a dean (university) or principal (university of applied sciences), or the management of the faculty. The participation discusses and consults with the associated level of management. At the educational program level, an educational program board or principal, the educational program committee and the examination committee are active.

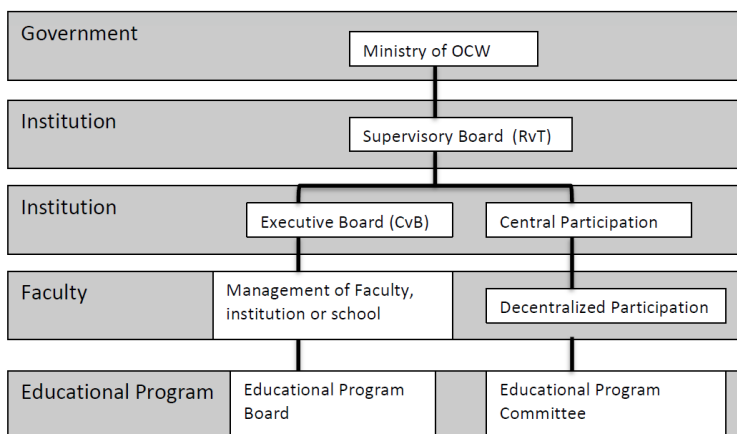


Figure 1: Structure of a university of applied sciences with an undivided council

1.3 Undivided vs. divided council

An undivided structure means both students and teachers are joined in university- and faculty councils. In a divided council, separate bodies are instituted for students and staff: the student councils (Dutch acronym: SR) and works councils (Dutch acronym: OR). This system is called 'divided participation' because students and staff each have their own body. They assemble during Joint Meetings (Dutch: *Gemeenschappelijke Vergaderingen*) to discuss matters with each other and the Executive Board. Each institution has management regulations in which the allocation of tasks are stipulated.

1.4 Faculties at university of applied sciences

Within universities of applied sciences, smaller-scale units may be instituted. These domains or faculties are included in the management regulations. These regulations clearly describe which tasks belong to the board with respect to these sections. It is legally

arranged that each section is associated with a sub-council. The authorities of this council are linked to the authorities of the board members.

1.5 Faculties at university

Universities are composed of one or multiple faculties. At the head of a faculty resides the dean or a faculty board. The dean is entrusted with the general management of the faculty; they are allotted quite some freedom in doing this. When a faculty board heads a faculty, the dean is the chairman of that board. In that case, a student is appointed who attends the meetings and maintains an advisory voice within the board.

In some cases, deans have a tendency to say that “things should be arranged at a central level”, but things are rarely that black and white. In these cases, the EPC may inquire the central level whether this is really true. The dean establishes the Teaching and Examination Regulations (Dutch acronym: OER) as well as the faculty regulations. The faculty regulations include e.g. the appointment procedure, rights and provisions for the EPC. The TER will be discussed in chapter 5.

1.6 Educational level

At some institutions, each educational program has its own board, but in most cases, an educational program director has the responsibility for the educational program. If an educational program board is in place, a student is ought to be part of that board. This student is enabled full participation and is not allowed to be a member of the EPC (art. 9.17).

The examination committee is the body that establishes whether a student meets the criteria that the TER articulates with respect to knowledge, insight and skills needed for acquiring a degree (art. 7.12).

They are to function independently and professionally. The examination committee determines whether it is desirable that a member of the examination committee concurrently functions as a member of the EPC. It is recommended to investigate potential conflicts of interest and other advantages or disadvantages.

Apart from that, the examination committee is responsible for the quality of exams, exemptions and processing requests or complaints. Additionally, the examination committee may decide the validity period of exams. In accordance with the '*Wet Versterking Bestuurskracht*', the validity period may only be curtailed if the tested content is demonstrably outdated (art. 7.10 paragraph 4). The burden of proof lies in the hands of the examination committee. Finally, the examination committee establishes the rules and guidelines.

1.7 Content/cooperation with other bodies

Regular contact with other individuals active in participation is advisable. It is of importance to consider each other's trade-offs: prevent to end up on opposite sides. It may be of additional value to invite a member of the faculty participation to the EPC meetings as an auditor. This may strengthen the different participation bodies. Additionally, the faculty participation maintains regular contact with the deanery. That way, they are able to represent the interests of the EPC.

On the other hand, the EPC is often provided with the TER at a much earlier stage. The faculty participation has to wait longer and thus execute their response in a shorter amount of time. On top of that, the HEARA states that the EPC is to send a copy of all their submitted advice to the faculty council and the educational program board. This has been specifically legally defined in order to enhance the consultation and the coordination between the various bodies.

Contact with study associations may also be useful. They are informed about what is going on at the educational program and often include a member who is specifically focused on assessing education. Good contact with study associations may contribute to the familiarity among students when it comes to the EPC.

2. Functions within the EPC

Both teachers and students are seated in an EPC. There are various functions within the EPC. At least one chairman should be appointed. It is also practical to appoint a vice-chair who can fill in whenever the chair is absent. Since it is important that both student and teacher members maintain an equivalent position, it may be useful that one of these functions is allotted to a student member, and the other to a teacher member.

2.1 (Vice) Chair

The chair is the 'face' of the EPC. He or she is the focal point for the outside world and hence represents the entire EPC. By the same token, this is often the individual who technically chairs the meetings. Associated tasks are going over the agenda, structuring discussions, and safeguarding the annual planning. Cancellations are processed via the chair or vice chair. The chair monitors whether the support and facilities provided to the EPC are sufficient enough to allow for adequate functioning.

Each chair has their own style: there are decisive chairs that take matters into their own hands, substantive chairs or chairs that focus on the form. A good chair ensures a safe environment that facilitates everyone to share their opinion. In appointing a chair, it is sensible to take the group's preference for a certain type of chair into account. In any case, organize an open discussion about the chairmanship and elect a chair that operates on behalf of the interests of the entire EPC.

2.2. Administrative secretary

Every EPC maintains the right to support by an administrative secretary. The administrative secretary looks after the minutes of meetings, manages the general e-mail address, and processes incoming mail. Of all mail items, a list of received mail is composed. For each mail item, the date, sender, recipient, and the subject are listed. This list is submitted in annex to the agenda. This way, everybody has access to the mail. Additionally, the secretary makes

sure that all EPC-members are provided with the meeting documents in time.

2.3 Student- and Teacher members

Apart from students, teachers also make up the EPC. Teachers are often seated in the EPC for a longer time than student members and are therefore more knowledgeable and experienced. The benefit is that continuity is ensured within the committee, but a disadvantage may be that the students trail behind in terms of knowledge and experience. By being well prepared and knowing your rights, you may put the voice of the student forward.

2.4 External members & auditors

In smaller educational programs, it can be difficult to find enough teachers for the EPC. This is why the Explanatory Memorandum (Dutch acronym: MvT) of the law includes that externals may be seated in the EPC. This concerns individuals who are involved with the educational program or comprise a valuable addition to the EPC for a different reason.

In some cases, it may be sensible to invite people that are not members of the EPC to attend (part of) the meetings. For instance an expert, the educational program director or the study association. Strictly speaking, they are ought not to speak, but you may ask them to elucidate something or to give their opinion. For some EPCs it is not common that the educational program director is present throughout the entirety of the meeting. An educational program director will never be an official member of the EPC and thus attends the meeting as an audit. It may be practical for the educational program director to be informed about the considerations of the EPC. However, the presence of the educational program director does cause open and critical discussions to be more difficult. A happy medium may be that the educational program director only attends part of the meeting.

A member of the faculty participation or somebody of the study association may also be invited to be auditors. They often possess knowledge of relevance for the EPC and vice versa. Sometimes, it may be difficult to arrange, but it can be of great added value. In order to keep each other informed, it is also optional to send the agenda and minutes.

2.5 Working Groups

There are matters that cannot be solved during an EPC-meeting; sometimes, you cannot get beyond a certain point in a discussion. It may help to organize a working group: a few members of the EPC that contrive solutions to the problem in a smaller group. It is important, however, that information is regularly fed back to the entire EPC, in order to keep everybody informed about the developments.

3. What rights apply?

As a body of formal representation, the EPC maintains a representative function: the EPC represents the interests of students and staff. For a healthy balance between the EPC and the management, rights are in place.

A minimum description of the rights and duties of an EPC is stipulated in the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (Dutch acronym: WHW). On top of that, participation follows control. If something is decided at a different level, the associated rights transfer along.

3.1 Right to information

The participation has the right to all information that they consider necessary (art. 9.32). The board is required to provide this information. When the EPC is provided with insufficient information to execute their tasks adequately, this should be passed on to the dean or the faculty council. They fulfil a supervisory role and are to safeguard the quality of the process. Incomplete information may also serve as an argument not to consent to a request of approval or to advise against it. Article 9.33 stipulates that the board is also required to provide an annual planning. This must include when they need advice or consent.

3.2 Right of consultation

Following its own initiative, the EPC may submit unsolicited or solicited advice. There are certain tasks for which the board is required to ask advice from the EPC, such as intended decisions. The HEARA describes that the EPC is responsible for providing consultation regarding the enhancement and protection of the quality of the educational program (art. 9.18). The EPC maintains advisory rights regarding the Teaching and Examination Regulations (Dutch acronym: OER), as is articulated in article 7.13.

Content-wise, solicited and unsolicited advice do differ from each other, but the structure/construction remains similar. An advice starts off with the impetus. Then, the information on which the advice is based is described. It is advisable to refer to sources. This way, the board is able to read up on the material. Show that different options have been weighed and why this is the best alternative. Describe which considerations have lead to the present advice and which circumstances have been taken into account. In conclusion, provide the advice as clearly as possible. Avoid ambiguous language. Be clear and concrete.

It may be the case that students and teachers within the EPC do not agree with each other about an advice that is to be submitted. For some educational programs, it is common that the student delegation submits advice separately. Prior to submitting their advice, the EPC must be enabled to discuss with the manager. This way, ideas can be clarified and refined. Apart from this, the EPC is to be informed in written and as quickly as possible about the way the manager will process the advice. The terms are specified in the faculty regulations.

Informative purposes do not suffice. In case the manager refuses to follow up on (part of) the advice, the EPC should be granted the opportunity to meet once more prior to the finalization of the decision (art. 9.35 paragraph d, Explanatory Memorandum). Additionally, the refusal to comply with the submitted advice should be substantiated by the board. The board is always required to respond to an advice in writing. The maximum response term is two months (art. 9.18, Explanatory Memorandum). The advices and propositions that the EPC sends to the board should also be sent to the faculty participation for informative purposes. In case the EPC is not content with the way in which the decision is made, it is possible to let the arbitration committee take a look at it.

3.3 Right of consent

With the right of consent is implied that a decision can only be finalized after it is being consented to by the participation. Within six weeks after receiving the matter, a motivated reply is to be given. If this does not occur, and there has not been a request for additional time, an automatic consent follows. The board may want the EPC to provide their consent quickly, however, the constituency may have considerable reasons not to consent. It is important to optimally utilize the legal term and to investigate the implications of the propositions: haste makes waste.

It is also important to know that a conditional yes ("yes, if...") does not exist in the law. In that case, the EPC has given their consent. It is more wise to vote with a "no, unless". If it turns out that there are serious objections, it is advisable to communicate these prior to the official moment of voting. This way, all parties involved may think of a solution without an unnecessary loss of time.

In case of doubt, it is often sensible to request advice from external sources. This may take form as legal advice, a training, but also advice from the (faculty) participation or a direct stakeholder. This may provide enlightening new insights or may aid the argumentation.

3.4 Other rights

The EPC also maintains the right to provisions. This comprises at least administrative, financial, and legal support as well as training. The training budget is established in advance and in consultation with the EPC (art. 9.48). It is good to look at what events are organized each year, which training you consider necessary and what the associated expenses are. The following topics may be potentially interesting to request training for:

- Information about participation, the structure of your university of applied sciences or university and your rights and duties as EPC. You can also ask previous EPC-members for specific inside information.

- TER-training.
- General skills: meeting techniques, negotiating, setting up quality assurance systems and policy advising.
- Constituency policy: how do you get informed about the course of affairs at your educational program?
- Teambuilding: what do you expect from each other and how do you interact with each other? This can also take place outside of a training session.

The training budget is based on what the EPC deems necessary for an adequate fulfillment of their tasks (art. 9.48). Therefore, identify the possibilities at training agencies, LOF, SOM or Customized Training (Trainingen op Maat). Additionally, you have the right to at least two conversations with the educational program board/dean per year. Members of EPCs are also eligible for financial support through the Student Financial Support Fund. This support amounts to 'non taxable' income (7.51 paragraph 1 and 2 sub a). If this is nonetheless indicated as such by the institution, you need to sound the alarm. This is legally defined in the article. The Student Financial Support Fund is a fund that each institution is ought to have and from which scholarships and other forms of financial support to students are being financed. The first paragraph defines the conditions that the student needs to meet. Educational institutions are able to formulate additional conditions. The central participation has consenting rights to these rules, so in case you are unsatisfied with the remunerations for EPC-members, you will find yourself at the right place there.

3.5 What if you cannot come to a solution?

With the enforcement of the *Wet Versterking Bestuurskracht*, the EPC became an official participation body. The EPC is therefore enabled to approach the arbitration committee directly. One can speak of a dispute when two bodies fail to agree on something. This means a dispute is already existent before the arbitration committee is

approached. The arbitration committee assesses the process and weighs the interests of the different parties.

Often, the dispute is solved without the involvement of the arbitration committee. There is a whole process between the actual official notice that the EPC fails to reach a consensus and requests the insights of an independent third party, and being present at the arbitration committee. Up until now, only 12 disputes have taken place. It is important that the EPC has all facts in order. Therefore, record data, request responses or confirmations in writing, and make sure to have an archive.

In case of a difference of opinion, or a dispute, it may be sensible to request (legal) advice from outside the institution. The board is required to allocate a part of their budget towards this end. Inform the board about this in advance. The LOF, SOM and LSVb are always approachable for advice through telephone or in writing.

4. The EPC in the HEARA

Article 9.18 (wo) and 10.3c (hbo) of the HEARA (Dutch acronym: WHW) are entirely dedicated to the EPC. These describe that for each educational program or group of programs an EPC is ought to be in place. According to the HEARA, it is the duty of the EPC to ameliorate and safeguard the quality of the educational program. It is good to keep this in mind throughout the process of making decisions and writing advice.

4.1 Important articles

The HEARA can be quite a substantial task to read. Fortunately, you can always approach us with any questions. As of September 1st, 2017, the EPC is considered an official participation body. For that reason, article 9.18 /10.3c include references to article 9.31 or 10.17. These articles describe that half of the EPC is composed of staff elected by staff and that the other half is composed of students elected by students. In case elections for the EPC are not (yet) possible, article 9.18 / 10.3c state that the board can, in consultation with the faculty council, formulate a different method of formation. This method is stipulated in the faculty regulations. Each year, this will be reconsidered and defined.

Article 7.13 includes and elaborates on a very important document: the TER (Dutch acronym: OER). Therefore, it is sensible to print this part of the HEARA and always carry it with you. As soon as somebody has a question regarding the TER, you can immediately check the details. It is advisable to take a specific course about this. The sooner all EPC-members are thoroughly familiar with the TER, the better this is for the students. Amendments to the TER are often prepared in November. However, if the EPC proposes their ideas in February, the odds are that their desired amendments need to wait another year.

It is interesting to, at an early stage, investigate whether the TER is complete and not in conflict with other regulations. Occasionally, this does not go well. The EPC is also concerned with the method in which the TER is executed and whether that is correct. As soon as something remarkable happens, the EPC is responsible to provide consultation about this.

4.2 Duties of the EPC

In the participation of higher education, the EPC fulfills a unique task: student and teachers concern themselves with education-related matters in an organized and joined fashion. The EPC is the center of expertise regarding the educational program. Here, all decisions of all the different management levels need to come together and lead to something nice. Quality enhancement and safeguarding occupy central stage in this respect.

The educational program committee also maintains a complaints handling function for students. Students need to be able to approach the EPC about their complaints, suggestions and issues regarding courses, exams and staff members. This only works if the EPC is locatable for students. This can be facilitated through spreading the general email address of the EPC, such as the digital learning environment, a physical bulletin board, via study associations, and via the website of the educational program.

The most concrete duty of an EPC is to consent and submit advice regarding the TER. These tasks can be executed in various ways: proactively and reactively. The EPC may take initiative to be involved into the process at an early stage and write unsolicited advices. The EPC may also anticipate what the board requests of them. It differs per EPC and per individual to which extent they deal proactively or reactively with the legal frameworks. The Education Inspectorate (Dutch: Onderwijsinspectie) and the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (Dutch acronym: NVAO) expect a proactive stance from the EPC.

Through releasing advice, the EPC may exert an important influence on the quality of the educational program. Submitting advice is not quite as noncommittal as one may assume. The board is required to inform the EPC as soon as possible (within two months upon receipt) about how it will process the advice (art. 9.18 paragraph 2 for universities; art. 10.3c paragraph 2 for universities of applied sciences).

When the board decides to deviate from the advice, this decision needs to be supported by 'reasoned justifications for underlying considerations', explaining why this is the case. The precise details of what happens with the advice are greatly dependent on the position of the board. Therefore, request feedback and put it on an action list. Feedback is often neglected, even though it is the most important part of an advice.

In order to substantiate the duties that belong to the EPC, you need to convene. At many places, a minimum of four times a year is applied, but the EPC can achieve more by convening more frequently: for example on a weekly basis, a monthly basis or once every six weeks. This is something that is established in the faculty regulations or in the EPC regulations. It is also possible to get together in working groups: smaller groups allow for a more in-depth look into a topic.

5. Teaching and examination regulations (TER)

For each educational program, a TER needs to be established. This document contains adequate and clear information regarding the educational program. It is therefore of importance that the TER is written clearly and intelligibly. The HEARA describes the minimum requirements for the TER. This document is therefore of great importance for students. It is a student's only legal footing. Often, students are not aware of its existence, but the EPC may help in this respect.

5.1 What is a TER?

Educational institutions are required to provide each student with a student charter upon the onset of the program (art. 7.59). This document describes the rights and duties of a student, as well as the different rules and procedures that are applicable at the institution. The student charter is composed of an institution-specific and educational program-specific part. The institution-specific part provides an overview of the provisions that hold true for each student. These are provisions following legal stipulations, such as the legal protection of students. The educational program-specific part includes information about the program, such as its set-up and a description of the course load. This includes what procedures, rights and duties are in place concerning education and exams. The participation may also put forward a proposition to process an educational program-specific matter into the TER.

5.2 What does the TER look like?

There is no standard format for the student charter or the TER. Each educational institution decides for itself what the student charter will look like. The TER needs to form a comprehensive entity of regulations. That is why differences between the TER and the student charter are not always easily discernible. Many institutions copy articles from the HEARA, but the HEARA is not always intelligibly

written. The EPC and the participation are therefore allowed to come up with a proposition about the form of the TER.

Each educational program has established in the TER what the program looks like exactly. It includes which rights belong to the students and teachers and what may be expected education-wise. The dean determines the TER with the consent of the student- or participation council. Prior to consenting to the TER, the dean is ought to have requested the EPC for consultation. If the board intends to amend some of the regulations of the TER, it is required to request consultation from the EPC once more. Only after the educational program committee has submitted their advice, the TER is allowed to be finalized. But note: in case the EPC does not respond within the term indicated by the educational program, the program may establish the TER nonetheless.

5.3 What are the assessment criteria for the TER?

The content of the TER needs to align with the guidelines of the HEARA. Are things missing; parts outdated; controversies; incorrect referrals? The guideline that the propaedeutic phase needs to be finalized within 2 years (P-in-2) is an example of this. There are educational programs that still operate with this guideline, whereas it is in conflict with the HEARA. Have a critical stance towards the points that remained *unaltered*. Perhaps, a much better regulation is possible. Apart from that, assess whether the TER is sufficiently legible and *intelligible* for students. Consequently, you can dive deeper into certain topics. One could split up the TER: give each EPC-member a task to check a certain part thoroughly.

Advice should be requested *timely*, in order to facilitate enough time to read the TER, have a meeting about it and potentially discuss it with the manager in question. When a manager does not comply with the advice, it should be supported by clear arguments why the advice is disregarded. If this is neglected, or if you disagree with the arguments used by a manager, then consenting rights can enforce a certain argumentation or amendment. The EPC may always provide unsolicited advice or come up with proposals.

5.4 What is minimally included in the TER?

Article 7.13, paragraph 2, HEARA	Authorities faculty council	Authorities EPC as of September 1 st , 2017
The Teaching- and Examination Regulations institute, without going beyond the framework of what is legally defined by law, per educational program or group of programs valid procedures and rights and duties regarding education and exams. Provided are at least:		
a. the content of the educational program and exams	Advice is possible	Advisory rights
a1 the method of evaluation	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
b. the content of the majors	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
c. the attributes in terms of knowledge, insight and skills that a student needs to have acquired by the end of their educational program	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
d. the set-up of practical assignments	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
e. the course load of the educational program and courses	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
f. binding study advice	Advice is possible	Advisory rights
g. the course load of Master programs	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
h. the number and continuity requirements of exams and the	Consenting rights	Advisory rights

moments in which these can be taken		
i. the fulltime, part-time, or dual set-up of the educational program	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
j. the order, period and the number of times you are enabled to take exams	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
k. the validity period of successfully completed exams	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
l. whether the exams are taken orally, in writing or in a different method	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
m. the way in which students with a disability or chronic disease are reasonably enabled to take the exams	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
n. the degree to which an oral exam is public	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
o. the term within which the results of an exam are shared	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
p. the method in which and the term during which the person who has taken a written exam gets access to their work	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
q. access to assessment questions and assignments of exams	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
r. the grounds upon which the examination	Consenting rights	Advisory rights

committee grants exemption from taking on or multiple exams		
s. where necessary, that the successful completion of exams is a condition for being allowed to take other exams	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
t. where necessary, the obligation to participate in practical assignments given the completion of the exam in question	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
u. the protection of study progress and the individual study guidance	Consenting rights	Advisory rights
v. If applicable: the method with which the selection of students for a special trajectory within the educational program takes place	Advice is possible	Consenting rights
w. the factual configuration of education	Consenting rights	Advisory rights

Paragraph 3 of the TER lists the requirements an individual needs to meet in order to be admitted to the master program. This means that master programs may apply additional selection criteria. Before, it was the rule that each bachelor program at universities needed to facilitate admission to at least one master program. Due to the *Wet Kwaliteit in Verscheidenheid*, each bachelor program offered by

universities should allow admission to at least one master program in the Netherlands. When master programs utilize this possibility, there needs to be a qualitative requirement, apart from quantitative requirements such as the grade point average. For instance, a motivation letter. A master program is also considered selective when it exclusively applies qualitative additional requirements, such as a motivation letter or a reference.

All the above should be at least included in the TER. More can be included, it is allowed to be more elaborate, in a different order or in a language that is more legible. However, it is not allowed to be in conflict with the law or to be less complete. Consenting rights may also be more elaborate than legally defined. The EPC and the board may make a joint decision that it is appropriate for the EPC to consent to more topics. Downward adjustment is not allowed.

5.5 Validity of TER

There are no rules regarding the validity period of the TER. For some institutions, the TER is established for the starting year of the program and is valid for the entirety of the study period of the student. One can only deviate from this when it benefits the student or if the student agrees to a TER from a different year. Whether this rule is applied is stated in the TER. For other institutions, amendments to the TER are applicable to all students that are part of a program at that specific moment; regardless of how far along they are with their studies.

This is problematic because the rules of the game are changed during the game. If you do not agree with it, you cannot do anything about it. On top of that, students are expected to read the TER each year. That is quite a task. Before, we mentioned that the institution is required to provide students with the student charter upon the start of the program. If this document is subjected to large changes annually, the institution should actually be forced to take responsibility for providing the student charter to their students on an annual basis.

6. Annual Plan

At the beginning of the year, the EPC has the right to receive the annual planning from the faculty board. On the basis of that planning, the EPC can compose their own planning. As such, peak moments are clarified on which you can capitalize. Based on that, tasks can be distributed and it becomes clear what the EPC will be working on. These documents may also serve a valuable purpose for the transfer.

6.1 Composing an annual plan

At the first meeting of the EPC, it is sensible to create an inventory of the expected time investments, the interests and capacities of the various members. Subsequently, one can look at what the EPC desires to achieve that year. It is advisable to first create a priority list. Be aware that some goals require a long-term strategy, but are certainly worth to embark on. It is also of interest to think about what your personal learning goals are within the EPC.

Try to compose concrete plans in order to create a planning. Connect this to the cycle of the faculty board. Consider the following questions: What do we want exactly? How much time will it cost? Is this a one-man job, or should multiple people be involved in a certain topic? Is it sensible to organize working groups for certain topics?

You can create an open access for the annual planning in order for your constituency to keep track of what you are doing. This can be done through, for example, the website of your educational institution or of the EPC, a mail-to-all, or a distribution of a physical version. In any case, send a copy to the faculty- or sub council in order to enable them to capitalize on what is happening at the program-level.

Example planning:

Period	Occupation
September	Familiarization with the educational program board and the (de)central(ized) participation; formulation of main points for the new year; examination of the curriculum
October	Submitting advice regarding the budget of the program; writing an annual report; assessment of TER input, planning TER training.
November	Submitting TER input; writing the first consultation, examining the course evaluations
December	Plan meeting with the dean; plan and develop qualitative evaluations
January	Publish course evaluations; write advice concerning the course evaluations

6.2 A budget

If everything goes to plan, then money follows content. Therefore, create a substantive plan first and base the budget on it. The budget can be maintained in Excel. If the expenses are kept up to date in this file, then you will always have an insight into the actual state of affairs. A budget is composed of the following elements:

1. **Activities:** among these are all the activities that the EPC aims to organize in a year. Per activity, an inventory of the costs is made. For training activities, please see appendix A9 for a template that can be used.
2. **Who:** who takes on the responsibility for the task and keeps track of the big picture. Additionally, this individual is in charge of regular updates.
3. **Amount:** what amount is needed for the organization of an activity? This is often dependent on the number of people you aim to reach, how expensive the materials are, and the duration of the activity. Take into account that for training sessions and locations, the VAT is separately calculated.
4. **Total:** this part includes the total expenses that the EPC expects to incur.

6.3 An annual report

An annual planning is of course a good basis for an annual report: what you have accomplished, what could have been improved and what is not yet completed. It is of additional value to frequently discuss whether the targeted course is being followed. This is something to examine each meeting for about 5 to 10 minutes.

To an annual report/planning belongs a semi-annual extensive evaluation. This can be done during the standard meetings, but also during dinner at somebody's home or in a little house on the prairie. It can be really encouraging to discuss some achieved results with each other. But it can be equally liberating to discuss irritations.

7. Quality assurance

7.1 Internal quality assurance

There are different ways in which an educational program can monitor quality, such as surveys among alumni, the working field and national researches. With internal quality assurance is meant the way in which the quality is safeguarded. The EPC comprises an important part of this.

7.2 Education evaluations

One of the tools is education evaluations. In a well-functioning quality assurance system, there is more than just evaluations, such as annual meetings with teachers, program coordinators, etc. It is legally established that all students should be enabled to evaluate their education. The EPC maintains consenting rights to the method with which education is being evaluated.

There are various ways to motivate students to partake in education evaluations. For instance, students may win a prize through a lottery, each student may be obligated to partake in a panel discussion once, and you can ensure that results are fed back to the students properly.

Other evaluation systems are:

- **Education evaluations:** it is preferred that each course is evaluated in writing and anonymously by each participant. Some educational programs opt for a joint evaluation of a number of courses, but this does not elucidate how students view a certain course.
- **Oral evaluations:** this is complementary to the written evaluations. Make sure that people feel like they can be honest and critical. This may be difficult, because this is not anonymous.

- **Panel discussions:** a delegation of students is asked to provide their opinion about education. This can be complementary to written evaluations.
- **Focus groups:** naturally, graduates, the professional domain and teachers also have an opinion about the educational program. It may be very useful to invite these groups and talk about positive points as well as points for improvement.
- **Complaints box/website:** As an EPC, you need to be easily accessible. Make sure there is a complaints box, an email address, or a website that is known among all students. Being approachable for complaints may contribute to the accessibility.
- **Education Prize:** at some institutions, the EPC organizes an education prize. For the stimulation of good education, a prize is awarded to a course or a teacher after a vote.
- **Walk-in hours:** Agree on a moment that the EPC is operating from a location that is easy to find, such as a cafeteria. This way, students are facilitated to enter into a dialogue with the EPC.

7.3 Discussing outcomes

There are multiple variations to the abovementioned evaluation methods. It is one of the core tasks of the EPC to provide advice regarding results. It can also be interesting to critically review the evaluation forms. A good evaluation form includes at least questions concerning the content of the course, the teacher, as well as the course load and provides sufficient space for the participant's input. If it turns out that a certain course or a certain part is badly evaluated, the EPC makes sure that the board of the educational program composes an improvement plan.

In order to show that something is being done with the course evaluations and that it is thus useful to complete them, it may be sensible to publish the general results. It is helpful to do this at a fixed and findable location. It may also be interesting for teachers to see

how other courses are valued. Possibly, this enables them to help improve their own and each other's teaching.

7.4 External quality assurance²

The check on quality of the educational program carried out by individuals outside the institution is called 'external quality assurance' or in Dutch 'Accreditatie'. The responsibility for this lies with the Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (NVAO). A panel of experts will judge the quality of the educational program based on their visit. During this visit the panel will sit down with representatives from the educational program and professionals in the relevant field of work. The panel also includes international professionals and a student (from another institution).

An important part of the visit is the self-evaluation by the educational program. One of the focus points of the evaluation is on evaluative reports of the EPC's. In these reports the programs compliance with the TER (Dutch acronym: OER) is described. There is also a separate student chapter in this self-evaluation in which students discuss their perceived quality of the educational program. The panel will judge the quality of the program and will provide points for improvement. It can be tempting to be only positive concerning your educational program because it will improve its chances of passing. Still, it's better to be honest. This way the panel can make a fair and realistic assessment of the program. Eventually everybody profits from this. At the next visit the panel will have a look at the previous visit and what the program has done to better themselves since last time.

What does the focus of the quality assurance panel?

The members of the panel currently judge the educational program by the NVAO's 'beoordelingskader 2016'. Institutions can choose to show a couple of items institution wide instead of limited to a the program concerned. This is called the 'instellingsstoets kwaliteitszorg'

² This part was written in collaboration the NVAO and translated by the Dutch Student Union.

(institutional quality assurance). If the institution passes this inspection the limited program evaluation is applied. This consists of three basic questions divided into four evaluation standards.

1. What is the goal of the educational program?
2. How does the program achieve this goal?
3. Are the goals being met?

When this is not chosen the extended program evaluation is applied. This consists of six central questions:

1. What is the goal of the educational program?
2. With which content?
3. With what personnel?
4. With what facilities?
5. How does the program guarantee its quality?
6. How are the goals reached?

These six questions are divided into eleven evaluation standards. The panel will evaluate these standards with an inadequate, adequate, good, or excellent mark. The panel will also provide a well motivated final evaluation over the quality of the program as a whole. This will also be evaluated with an inadequate, adequate, good, or excellent mark³.

³ The new law 'Accreditatie op maat' which will probably be enforced as of late 2018 will replace the four-point scale (InAd, Ad, Go, Ex) with a three-point scale (inadequate, adequate under reservation, and adequate).

8. Meeting techniques

Often, there is a difference between meetings with EPC-members and meetings with those to whom the advice is addressed. The former is often less formal than the latter, but sometimes this boundary is fluid. It can happen that an educational program board chooses to be present at EPC-meetings. If this is not practical, for instance because the educational program board is too dominant at meetings, the EPC may refuse this. Also when priorities are determined and strategies are formulated, involvement of the educational program board may not always be helpful.

The most important aspect of a meeting is that there is a clear goal. Nothing is as unpleasant as a never-ending meeting, when nobody is precisely clear on what needs to be discussed. It is therefore sensible to meet at a fixed time and let everybody send in their agenda items in advance in order to enable invitations with corresponding documents to be sent out in a timely fashion. It is preferred that agenda items are submitted in writing and provided with a status, such as:

- Imaging;
- Opinion-shaping;
- Decision-making.

A standard agenda looks as follows:

- 1) **Opening:** The chair welcomes those present at the agreed upon time. From that moment onwards, the meeting is official.
- 2) **Announcements:** Cancellations and announcements concerning topics that are relevant to the meeting are mentioned. If a discussion about this is necessary, it will be moved to the remaining business or it can be added to the agenda. It can also be moved to a following meeting.
- 3) **Establishment agenda:** Sometimes, agenda items are removed or added.

- 4) **Minutes previous meeting:** Minutes are sent with meeting documents. In most cases, minutes are first handled textually. Participants can submit a proposal for revision or questions for clarification. It is not intended that questions turn into discussions, the chair should make sure this does not happen. In this stage, the chair also goes over the list of action points. This is a list at the end of the minutes in which the task division is itemized pertaining to the points that are discussed during the meeting: who does what and when.
- 5) **Incoming and outgoing mail:** Relevant mail items are mentioned by the secretary.
- 6) **Topics:** The chair or the person who has submitted a certain topic, clarifies the topic. How it will be handled depends on the status. At the end, the chair briefly summarizes the outcome of the discussion.
- 7) **Any other business (AOB):** In this part of the meeting, topics are discussed that throughout the course of the meeting required additional attention, but were not explicitly put on the agenda. In case of a time constraint, these points are put on the agenda of the following meeting.
- 8) **Any questions prior to closure:** in this stage of the meeting, the chair asks whether somebody still wishes to say something. This does not necessarily have to be a question: it may also be an announcement or a comment.
- 9) **Closure:** The chair proposes a date and time for the next meeting and closes the current meeting.

Meeting is an art in itself, and many books have been written about it. The literature list contains a number of book recommendations. Nonetheless, experience is still the best tutor.

- Make sure that topics of priority are at the top of the agenda. This way, you avoid that these points are improperly discussed or postponed due to time constraints.

- A good decision stands or falls with a good discussion. Personal attacks and (endless) repetitions of the same argument are not part of this. The discussion does not have to be lengthy, but needs to be

thorough. A good method is the IOD-cycle: Imaging, Opinion-shaping and Decision-making. The first phase includes brainstorming and collecting as much information as possible. In the second phase, points of view are identified and connected to each other. Finally, a decision is made.

- Allow each other to finish speaking. Meetings may incite irritations when people get the feeling that they are being cornered. When a discussion becomes too heated, it can be helpful to take a break.
- Compose a schedule per agenda item. There is no harm in slightly deviating from this schedule, but people tend to formulate more concise statements and take decisions more quickly when there is a clear timetable.

9. Negotiating

9.1 The starting position

Argumentation and negotiation are skills that you learn and shape in practice. That is why it may be important to take training for this. Meetings of the EPC can largely consist of negotiating. You are part of the EPC along with various different individuals; each has their own perspective, way of thinking, and interests. In order to deal with this pleasantly, it is important that everyone knows what they are responsible for: make sure you are well prepared for the meeting!

Try to remember that each has their own function: the student members, the board and other bodies. Despite that you want to move towards each other, this may not be advisable. Because you are, for instance, not seated in the chair of the manager. In order to execute this function well, you need to be aware of the interests of your constituency. Know these in time. Also make sure you take a notebook with you. In a meeting, there is a lot of multi-tasking: your interests and arguments, the interests of others and how to respond to those. By writing down keywords, arguments and interests, you may make things a bit easier for yourself.

9.2 Fundamental negotiations (Ury and Fisher)

There are various theories about negotiating. It differs per individual which theory works best. It has shown to be effective to apply the negotiating techniques of Ury and Fisher.

In this negotiating style, it is essential to discern between people and problems. Never make things personal. Try not to get angry with people and don't tolerate them getting angry with you. The content is central and not the person speaking. Acknowledge the difference between the various parties and their (differing) interests. This may aid in contextualizing the different perspectives, interpretations and outcomes better.

Make sure that the matter in question is not only your issue, but also a common issue that requires joint action in appropriating a solution. In clarifying the issue, you have to ask yourself why this is an issue for the other party. Show understanding for the interests and perspectives of another: "I understand that you cannot solve this immediately, but we must do something about this." Beware that the negotiations do not turn into a debate or a game of 'oh yes it is, oh no it isn't'. Therefore, stay in dialogue.

It is often advisable to involve an external 'referee'. This can be a technical chair that is independent and entrusted by both parties.

As soon as you notice that the conversation does not concern content anymore, put the discussion to a stop and go back to the common interest (that goes beyond your own interests); "students experience this as a problem and therefore we need to seriously evaluate it with each other." Indeed, your constituency plays a key role in this. In case this fails to work, try to agree on the circumstances about which a consensus is reached. This implies taking a step back in order to create space for more movement in the discussion (negotiating is like a dance).

Concentrate on the interests and not on the positions. This means that you should look into the underlying interests, not into the strategic position that the other party takes on. This can be done by acknowledging and respecting the interests of the other. You are not required to negotiate these. Subsequently, request why somebody chooses a certain position and what aspects of your own position are considered burdensome: what would be acceptable. Carefully listen and describe why that is or is not in line with your interests. Do not stand in opposition against each other, but find alternative outcomes without compromising your own interests in the process.

The following step is finding a solution in your common interests. This only works if both parties have been open about their interests and wishes. A solution that works for both parties, aims to meet everybody's interests to the greatest extent. Develop multiple alternative options, in order to avoid having to find a middle ground

through concessions: there must be something possible that satisfies all. Look at a way in which your solution solves the problems of the other party. Agree upon basing the final result on an objective norm and not on a personal point of view. However, the unfortunate reality is that your negotiating partner is not always planning on achieving their goal in a fair manner. Try to avoid being manipulated. For that reason, always postpone definitive agreements to at least a day after the meeting. You can't possibly oversee everything during a meeting. When in retrospect you get the feeling you were being played, do not fear to revisit the agreement. When you decide to do this, explain that you felt like you were manipulated. This may be a vulnerable and difficult moment, but it is truly worth the effort.

9.3 Negotiating: tips & tricks

Negotiating is extremely hard. For that reason, practice as much as possible. When you know there is an important negotiation coming up, practice out loud and let somebody else impersonate the other party. This way, you gradually learn to recognize certain situations and you can capitalize on these. Subsequently, you can respond in the appropriate manner. Recognizing tactics is very important: do not fear to talk during a negotiation or discussion about the way in which the negotiations are being done, or to state that your negotiating partner is personally attacking you or that they keep increasing their demands. It may be necessary to indicate your boundaries and thus to point out that certain manners are not accepted. Below, you can find a list of frequently occurring tricks used to cheat and how to respond to this:

- **False facts:** indicate, without personally attacking people, that the facts are (potentially) not or merely partially correct.
- **Questionable intentions:** be frank if you get the feeling that there are questionable intentions. Make sure that there are agreements about the terms of commitments and what happens if an agreement is not adhered to.

- **Personal attacks:** try to recognize a personal attack and to point it out. Indicate that you prefer a substantive discussion.
- **Threats and warnings:** recognize and utilize these to your benefit. Indicate that you do not wish to negotiate in such manners. Do not let yourself get cornered.
- **Refusal to negotiate:** acknowledge this as a tactic, find the interests of your partner and make proposals. Consider that it is not just you needing something from them, but that they also need the EPC.
- **Extreme requirements:** people tend to paint an extreme picture if they disagree with something, but often there is a world between two extremes. Request a justification and refer to a possible nuance.
- **Increasing demands:** recognize the situation, point it out to your negotiating partner and stop the negotiations from continuing. In order to recognize this, it is advisable to write along during negotiations.
- **Take it or leave it:** if the situation does not change, you may indicate the negative consequences of not reaching an agreement. Do not hesitate to agree with the 'leave it' option if you are not left any other choice.

10. Constituency and networking

As an EPC, it is important to keep in touch with your constituency. Often, the student delegation approaches students and the teacher delegation approaches other teachers of the program. The EPC needs the support of their constituents in order to exert influence on their behalf on the policy of an educational program. Additionally, it becomes easier to find successors if the EPC is well known among students and teachers.

In practice, however, communication with the constituency has often shown to be difficult. In any case, it is important that you are easily accessible for students and teachers. Creating a fixed email- and mailing address, building a website or adding yourself to an internet system may aid in reaching this.

In addition, creating a complaints box at a central location at your department or faculty may stimulate the approachability.

Some EPCs ensure that all years of the program are represented, since contact does run more smoothly with your own peers. On top of that, it enlarges your familiarity among students: after all, there is a representative of each year. Next to providing information about what the EPC is and what it does, it is important to keep your constituency up to date about what has been achieved and what is being worked on. This can be done through, for example, making public documents truly public and findable. In any case, it is advisable that the committee lets its voice be heard every once in a while. This can be done in various ways:

- **Information in a study guide:** Make sure that each year, a piece of information is included about what the EPC is and who is part of it.
- **Newsletter:** Requests the email addresses of students at the educational program in order to send out a periodical newsletter.
- **Educational program paper:** Through this medium, regularly publish about the occupations of the EPC.

- **Bulletin board:** Utilize this or arrange your own central point where you can regularly put items on the wall.
- **Class chats:** Do these at least once you're appointed, because this will familiarize students – at the beginning of the academic year – with the idea that they can approach you.
- **Internet:** Claim a spot at the website if your educational program and publish photos, in order for students to recognize you. This facilitates the accessibility and lowers the threshold to approach you.
- **Discussion evening/walk-in hour:** It may be interesting to organize a get-together in order to discover what is happening among students and whether an important change is bound to happen.

11. Continuity and transition

If you have just entered the EPC, it is sensible to gain the right knowledge as soon as possible and to familiarize yourself with the skills that allow you to take action. A good induction period guarantees continuity and makes sure that the wheel does not need to be reinvented each year. This chapter contains tips for a smooth transition.

11.1 Job familiarization

It is the duty of your predecessors to take care of this as well as possible. Generally speaking, it is important to have a plan that allows your successors to be well familiarized with the job. Do not underestimate the importance of a good induction trajectory and plan sufficient time for this. This can be done in a number of ways:

- **Observing:** it is advisable to invite your successors to tag along and observe you for a day or during a meeting. In the meantime, you can also go over the past year.
- **Getting acquainted:** it is sensible to get your successor acquainted with a number of key figures prior to your resignation. The staff delegation of the EPC is part of this. It is also advisable to get your successor acquainted with the educational program director, members of the faculty council and other people with whom you will have to deal.
- **Transfer documents:** these include an overview of the key decisions that the EPC has taken, and what were the underlying considerations. It is also advisable to hand over contact details of previous EPC-members, (summarized) minutes of meetings, regulations and all other matters of relevance to the functioning of the new EPC-members. EPC-members in turn may compliment these documents for their successors.
- **A sooner transfer:** in order to prevent that you have a completely new (and thus inexperienced) next generation of EPC-members, you

may opt for two transfers per term of office of half of the committee, instead of just once per term of office. Apart from that, you may appoint each member for $\frac{3}{4}$ year: that way, each year layer is represented and continuity is ensured.

- **Induction weekend:** Each year, the LOF and SOM organize an induction weekend with different training sessions; open to EPCs. The costs can be reimbursed with the educational program and this way, you can get acquainted right away with fellow participation members.

11.2 Archive

Constructing an archive ensures that new EPC-members are enabled access to important information. The following documents should be findable:

- The annual plan and annual reports of the EPC;
- Points for improvement resulting from the latest program assessment;
- EPC- and faculty regulations;
- All applicable regulations, laws and documents;
- Minutes and lists of decisions taken during all meetings of the EPC, educational program board, etc.;
- Budget or budget-agreements of the EPC;
- Annual reports of the educational program;
- Updated lists with contact details of present and past members of the EPC;
- Current address database of contact persons within and outside of the educational program;
- Transfer documents;
- Evaluation report.

Keeping the archive up to date is quite a task. If the EPC itself does not have enough time to update the archive, make sure to have official/administrative support. This can be indicated at the educational program board or the faculty board. It may also be sensible to have a secured digital archive. Construct a good search

system, in order for everybody to be able to utilize it and that information can be passed on easily.

12. In Conclusion

The LOF, the LSVb and the SOM have written this book for members of EPCs. We hope that the information was useful. In case you still have questions, comments or tips for improvement of this book, please do not hesitate to contact us. Also when you run into a dilemma, have questions or need advice, we would be happy to hear those.

When you are interested to learn more about the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (HEARA, Dutch acronym: WHW), you can order the book *'HEAR-About this?! A guideline for the Higher Education and Academic Research Act for students and those active in Participation'* by sending an email to lsvb.lsvb.nl. This book costs € 7,50, and you can reimburse these costs at your educational program.

Additionally, the LOF, the LSVb and SOM are always looking for volunteers. There are also regular vacancies for staff. For the current job openings, please visit the website. You can also discretely contribute by becoming a member of the student panel: you will receive an online survey once a year that takes about 15 minutes to complete. You can register via www.lsvb.nl/studentenpanel (Dutch only). You may also register for the newsletter of the SOM or LOF via www.studentenpolitiek.nl (Dutch only).

13. The EPC-Guide – 2018 Edition

Take into account that certain information may change and may be outdated at a certain point. Address the following website for the most up to date legal provisions: <http://wetten.overheid.nl>.

For more information, questions, orders or tips for improvement of the EPC-Guide, one may contact the LSVb, the LOF or the SOM. These organizations arrange training days for student members of the educational program committees regularly, and on top of that, the LSVb offers customized trainings via ToM. For more information, reach out or go to the website: www.dutchstudentunion.nl.

13.1 Terms of use

The EPC-Guide of the Dutch Student Union relies on in-licensed intellectual property rights in accordance with the *Creative Commons Credits-Non-commercial 3.0 Netherlands* license. Everyone may copy, spread and pass on this work under the conditions valid within the license. The complete texts of the license can be found on: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/nl/>.

Credits: The user is ought to mention the name that is indicated by the maker or the licensor (but not as to create an impression that they implicitly agree with your work or your usage of the work).

Non-commercial: The user may not utilize the work for commercial purposes.

Commercial use: In case (parts of) the EPC Guide are used for commercial purposes, one is ought to first request permission from the LSVb, as the LSVb maintains the right to refuse to grant permission or to impose certain conditions.

Landelijk Overleg Fracties

The foundation *Landelijk Overleg van Fracties* (Dutch acronym: LOF) is a national network of fractions, university councils and central student councils with the goal to provide information, procure training sessions and exchange ideas relating to participation.

We organize a monthly get-together for student members of the central and faculty participation. The goal of these get-togethers is transfer of knowledge, networking and discussing current political themes. During the year, various speakers are invited to make these meetings extra interesting. Generally, these get-togethers take place on the second Friday of the month.

Apart from that, we have an online training program for those active in participation: *De Politieke Zaal*. The topics that are covered are 'negotiating with the manager', 'advising skills', 'performance agreements', 'rights', 'knowledge of participation', and 'cooperation and organization'. Interviews with former members of participation bodies are guiding in the course and are complemented with theory and hands-on assignments.



Studentenoverleg Medezeggenschap

The foundation *Studenten Overleg Medezeggenschap* (Dutch acronym: SOM) is the national network of and for students active in participation bodies within universities of applied sciences. The goal of SOM is:

- Providing information
- Actively supporting participation bodies
- Procuring trainings
- Exchanging ideas, knowledge and experience

The SOM is affiliated with the Dutch Student Union (LSVb) and closely cooperates with the Landelijk Overleg Fracties (LOF) under the name 'Studentenpolitiek'.

Assemblies: Every last Wednesday of the month, there is a thematic meeting about a current topic. Often, there is a guest (speaker, someone with expertise in the field) present to cause the meeting to be extra interesting or educational. Some examples of themes that have been discussed are: Teaching and Examination Regulations, Budgets, Education Quality (with the chair of NVAO), Participation (with the chair of Vereniging Hogescholen), Quality assurance (with the chair of Vereniging Hogescholen). Look at Events to see an overview of all assemblies and other activities, and to register.



Dutch Student Union

The Dutch Student Union is a federation of local student unions. The LSVb was founded in 1983 in order to represent the unions on a national level. The board of the LSVb, together with the LOF and SOM, commits itself daily to the interests of all students in the Netherlands. This occurs through, for example, regularly discussing with the ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Dutch acronym: OWC), the political body, the umbrella organizations of universities of applied sciences and universities, the minister or state secretary of higher education and the national participation. Qualitatively good education and good provisions for students are high priorities on our agenda. Apart from that, the LSVb offers various services, among which free legal aid for students. Are you interested to learn who represent on your behalf, are you curious about the organization of the LSVb or are you interested to become active? Check our website: www.dutchstudentunion.nl.



Dutch student union (LSVb) | **Visiting address:** Drieharingstraat 6, Utrecht | **Mailing address:** Postbus 1335, 3500 BH Utrecht | Reachable by phone via: 030-231 6464 | lsvb@lsvb.nl | www.dutchstudentunion.nl

Appendix A. Relevant Articles of the HEARA

Please note: the following translation is authoritative and translated officially by the Dutch government. Any translation added by the LSVb will be shown in italic. Additionally, spelling will be in BE.

A.1 Article 7.13. Teaching- and Examination Regulations

1. For each programme or cluster of programmes offered by the institution, the board of the institution shall set down teaching and examination regulations. The teaching and examination regulations comprise adequate and clear information regarding the programme or cluster of programmes.

2. The teaching and examination regulations shall set out, without prejudice to other relevant provisions of this Act, the procedures and rights and obligations with respect to the education and examinations that apply for each programme or cluster of programmes. This shall comprise, as a minimum:

- a. the content of the programme and of the associated examinations,
- b. the content of the specialisations within a programme,
- c. the qualities relating to knowledge, insight and skills a student must have acquired upon completion of the programme,
- d. wherever necessary, the structure of practical exercises,
- e. the workload of the programme and of each unit of study that constitutes part of that programme,
- f. the further rules, referred to in Articles 7.8b, sixth paragraph, and 7.9, fifth paragraph,
- g. the master's programmes with respect to which Article 7.4a, eighth paragraph, has been implemented,

- h. the number and the consecutiveness of the interim examinations as well as the times at which they may be sat,
- i. the full-time, part-time or work-based structure of the programme,
- j. wherever necessary, the order in which, the periods of time within which, and the number of times per academic year that students shall be afforded the opportunity to sit the interim examinations and examinations,
- k. wherever necessary, the period of validity of interim examinations that have been passed, subject to the authority of the examining board to extend that period of validity,
- l. whether the interim examinations shall be administered orally, in written form, or in another manner, subject to the authority of the examining board to stipulate otherwise in exceptional cases,
- m. the manner in which students with a handicap or chronic illness shall reasonably be afforded the opportunity to sit the interim examinations,
- n. the public nature of interim examinations to be administered orally, subject to the authority of the examining board to stipulate otherwise in exceptional cases,
- o. the period of time within which the result of an interim examination shall be announced, and whether and how this period of time may be departed from,
- p. the manner in which and the period of time during which the student who has sat a written interim examination shall have access to his assessed work,
- q. the manner in which and the period of time during which cognizance may be taken of questions and assignments, posed or given within the framework of a written interim examination, and of the standards underpinning the assessment,

r. the grounds on which the examining board may grant exemption from sitting one or more interim examinations on account of interim examinations or examinations in higher education passed earlier, or, as the case may be, on account of knowledge or skills acquired outside the higher education domain,

s. wherever necessary, that passing interim examinations shall be a pre-condition for admission to sitting other interim examinations,

t. wherever necessary, the obligation to participate in practical exercises with a view to admission to sitting the interim examination concerned, subject to the authority of the examining board to grant exemption from that obligation, whether or not under the imposition of substitute requirements,

u. the monitoring of progress and the individual student counselling, v. if applicable: the manner in which students are selected for a special course within a programme, as referred to in Article 7.9b, and

v. the actual instructional practice.

3. The teaching and examination regulations shall set out how a person may exert his right to continue his bachelor's programme in professional higher education, referred to in Article 7.8a, fifth paragraph, and which requirements he must meet to this end.

A.2 Article 7.51 Financial Support

1. The board of a government-funded higher education institution shall make provisions for the financial support of any student enrolled in that institution who has fallen behind or is expected to fall behind in his studies owing to an exceptional circumstance.
2. The exceptional circumstances referred to in the first paragraph are:

- a. membership of the board of a student organisation of some significance with full legal rights, a degree programme committee, the board of a programme as referred to in Article 9.17, the university council, the faculty council, the body established pursuant to the participative scheme referred to in Article 9.30, third paragraph, or 10.16a, third paragraph, the participation council, the sub-council or the student council,
- b. activities in the administrative or social domains that, in the opinion of the board of the institution, are also in the interest of the institution or of the programme in which the student is enrolled,
- c. illness or pregnancy and childbirth,
- d. a handicap or chronic illness,
- e. exceptional family circumstances,
- f. insufficient feasibility of a programme ,
- g. other exceptional circumstances as set down by the board of the institution in which a student finds himself,
- h. circumstances other than those referred to in sub-sections a up to and including g that, if a request for financial support based thereon would not be honoured by the board of the institution, would lead to serious inequity.

A.3 Article 9.18 Educational Program Committees (wo)

1. For each educational programme or group of programmes, an educational program committee is established. The committee is in charge of providing advice regarding the amelioration and safeguarding of the quality of the educational programme. The committee will henceforth:

- a) have consenting rights regarding the teaching- and examination regulations, as defined in article 7.13, with the exception of the topics listed in the second paragraph, under a, f, h up to u and x, and with the exception of the*

requirements as defined in the articles 7.28, fourth and fifth paragraph, and 7.30b, second paragraph, ^[17]_[SEP]

- b) have the duty to annually assess the method of executing the teaching and examination regulations, ^[17]_[SEP]*
- c) have advisory rights regarding the teaching and examination regulations, as defined in article 7.13, with the exception of the topics with respect to which the committee has consenting rights pursuant to part a, and*
- d) d. have the duty to, upon request, or of its own accord, issue advice or proposals to the management of the programme, as defined in article 9.17, first paragraph, and to the dean regarding all matters relating to the education of the programme in question.*

The committee will send the advices and proposals, as defined under d, for the purpose of disclosure to the faculty council.

2. Regarding the advice as defined in the first paragraph, article 9.35, preamble and parts b, c and d shall correspondingly apply.

3. Provided that the committee submits a proposal as defined in the first paragraph, part d, to the management of the programme or the dean, the management or the dean shall respond within two months upon receiving the proposal.

4. Article 9.31, third up to the eighth paragraph, shall correspondingly apply to the educational programme committee. In negotiations between the management of a programme or the dean and the faculty council, an amendment to the faculty regulations in the form of a different method of composition of the educational programme committee may be established as opposed to election. It is annually established whether implementing a different method of composition is desired.

5. The educational programme committee is authorized to invite the management of the programme or the dean at least twice a year to discuss the proposed policy in accordance with an agenda set up by the committee.

6. Provided that a faculty contains merely one programme, the faculty regulation may decide that the tasks and authorities of the educational programme committee will be exercised by the faculty council, as described in article 9.37.

A.4 Article 9.35 Advice

In the event that a decision to be taken pursuant to Article 9.33a of the university council regulations must be submitted to the council beforehand for advice, by virtue of Article 9.34, third paragraph, subsection b, the executive board shall ensure that:

- a. the advice is requested at such a time as may have a material effect on the decision-making,
- b. the council shall be afforded the opportunity to consult with it prior to issuing advice,
- c. the council is informed in writing, as soon as possible, of the manner in which the advice issued is put into effect, and
- d. the council, in the event that the executive board does not wish to put all or part of the advice into effect, is afforded the opportunity to further consult with it before taking a final decision.

A.5 Article 9.38 Power of consent of the faculty council

The Dean shall require prior consent of the faculty council for each decision to be taken by him with respect to, at least, the adoption or amendment of:

1. the faculty regulations, referred to in Article 9.14, and
2. the teaching and examination regulations, referred to in Article 7.13, with the exception of the topics listed in the second paragraph, under a up to and including g, and v, and with the exception of the requirements referred to in Articles 7.28, fourth and fifth paragraphs, and 7.30b, second paragraph.

A.6 Article 9.40. Powers of participation arbitration board and procedure

1. The arbitration board referred to in Article 9.39 shall take note of disputes between a participation body and the executive board or the Dean regarding: a. the establishment, amendment or application of the participation regulations, referred to in Article 9.34, and b. disputes arising from Articles 9.30a, 9.32 up to and including 9.36, 9.38, and 9.38a.

2. In the event of a dispute between the body established pursuant to the participative arrangement, referred to in Article 9.30, third paragraph, second sentence, the university council or the faculty council, and the person who or the body that has power of decision, the executive board shall investigate whether an amicable settlement between the parties is possible. If the executive board is the body that has power of decision, the supervisory board shall investigate whether an amicable settlement is possible. Should such prove not to be possible, the participation body referred to in the first sentence, or the person who or the body concerned that has power of decision shall submit the dispute to the arbitration board.

3. In the event of a dispute that pertains to the failure to put all or part of the advice of a participation body into effect, the implementation of the decision shall be suspended for four weeks, unless the body concerned has no objections to an immediate implementation of the decision.

4. The arbitration board shall be competent to effect an amicable settlement between the parties. If an amicable settlement is not attained, the arbitration board shall settle a dispute submitted to it by binding decision, whereby it shall assess whether:

- a) the executive board or the Dean has observed the requirements of the law and the regulations referred to in Article 9.34,

- b) the executive board or the Dean, upon consideration of the interests involved, have reasonably been able to reach the proposal or the decision, and
- c) the executive board or the Dean has acted in a negligent manner vis-à-vis the participation body concerned.

5. In the event that the executive board or the Dean has not obtained approval from the participation body for the intended decision, it may request permission from the arbitration board, in deviation from the fourth paragraph, to take the decision. The arbitration board shall only grant permission in the event that the decision of the participation body to withhold consent is unreasonable or in the event that the intended decision by the executive board or the Dean is necessitated by weighty, organisational, economic or social reasons. Insofar as a dispute involves the outlines of the budget and the arbitration board has not granted the executive board permission to take a decision before 1 January of the year to which the budget pertains, the executive board may avail itself, to cover expenses in that year, of a maximum of four twelfths of the amounts featured in corresponding sections of the budget for the preceding year, until the arbitration board has taken a decision regarding the granting of permission.

6. If decisions are concerned as referred to in Articles 9.30a, second and third paragraphs, or 9.33, first paragraph, under a, b or d, and second paragraph, the arbitration board shall, in deviation from the fifth paragraph, second sentence, assess whether the executive board or another body has reasonably been able to reach the decision upon weighing the interests involved.

7. The participation body may, insofar as the submission of a dispute is concerned, take over the advisory powers of the programme committee, insofar as such is in keeping with the advice from the programme committee.

A.7 Article 7.48. Facilities and training

1. The executive board shall permit the university council the use of the facilities it has at its disposal, and that the council reasonably requires for the performance of its duties.

2. The executive board shall afford the members of the university council the opportunity to receive, for a period of time to be jointly determined by the executive board and the council, the training the council members require for the performance of their duties. The university staff shall be afforded the opportunity to receive such training during office hours and on full pay.

3. This Article shall apply mutatis mutandis to the faculty councils and programme committees, on the understanding that the Dean shall take the place of the executive board.

A.8 Article 10.3c. Program committees (hbo)

1. A programme committee shall be established for each programme or cluster of programmes, subject to the provisions of the fourth paragraph. The committee shall be tasked with:

- a) advising on the teaching and examination regulations before the regulations are ratified by the board of the institution,
- b) annually assessing the manner of enforcement of the teaching and examination regulations, and
- c) advising, upon request or of its own accord, the sub- council referred to in Article 10.25, and the faculty board or the board of the organisational unit concerned, or, in the event that the university of applied sciences does not comprise any faculties, the board of the institution, regarding all other educational matters of the programme concerned.

The committee shall forward the advice referred to under a and c, to the participation council or the appropriate sub-council for information.

2. Insofar as the advice of the committee concerned is not followed in the establishment, further arrangement or implementation of the teaching and examination regulations, the decision to that effect shall be substantiated.

3. The administrative regulations shall set rules of a procedural nature with respect to the application of the first paragraph, and set out the manner of appointment and composition of the committee, on the understanding that students enrolled in the programme shall account for half of the membership of the committee.

4. In the event that a faculty or other organisational unit comprises but a single programme, the administrative regulations may stipulate that the duties and powers of the programme committee shall be performed and exercised by the sub-council, referred to in Article 10.25.

5. The educational programme committee is authorized to invite the executive board at least twice per annum to discuss the intended policy on the basis of an agenda to be drawn up by it.

6. Provided that the faculty encompasses merely one programme, the faculty regulation may decide that the tasks and authorities of the educational programme committee will be exercised by the sub council, as defined in article 10.25.

A.9 Article 10.20. Power of consent of the participation council

1. The executive board shall require prior consent of the participation council for each decision to be taken by the executive board with respect to, at least, the adoption or amendment of:

- a) the strategic plan,
- b) the design of the quality assurance system in accordance with Article 1.18, first paragraph, and the intended policy in light of the outcomes of the quality assessment, referred to in Article 2.9, second paragraph, second sentence,

- c) the students' charter,
- d) the administrative regulations, and, if Article 10.8a is applicable, the relevant part of the articles of association,
- e) the teaching and examination regulations, referred to in Article 7.13, with the exception of the topics listed in the second paragraph, under a up to and including g, and w, and the third paragraph,
- f) rules pertaining to working conditions,
- g) the choice of participation systems, referred to in Article 10.16a, first paragraph,
- h) the policy pursued by the board of the institution upon application of Article 7.51, and the rules referred to in the fourth paragraph of that Article, and
- i) a decision to amalgamate, as referred to in Article 16.16.

2. The executive board shall afford the participation council, in a timely manner, prior to the request for consent to a decision to amalgamate as referred to in the first paragraph, sub-section i, the opportunity to take note of the amalgamation impact report referred to in Article 16.16a, fourth paragraph.

A.10 Article 10.23. Advice

In the event that a decision to be taken pursuant to the provisions of the participation regulations must be submitted to the participation council beforehand for advice, by virtue of Article 10.22, under b, the board of the institution shall ensure that:

- a. the advice is requested at such a time as may have a material effect on the decision-making,
- b. the council shall be afforded the opportunity to consult with it prior to issuing advice,
- c. the council is informed in writing, as soon as possible, of the manner in which the advice issued is put into effect, and

d. the council, in the event that the board of the institution does not wish to put all or part of the advice into effect, is afforded the opportunity to further consult with it before taking a final decision.

A. 11 Article 10.39. Facilities and training

1. The board of the institution shall permit the participation council the use of the facilities it has at its disposal, and that the council reasonably requires for the performance of its duties. The board of the institution shall afford the participation council the opportunity to meet during working hours whenever possible.

2. The board of the institution shall afford the members of the participation council the opportunity to receive, for a period of time to be jointly determined by the board of the institution and the council, the training that the council members require for the performance of their duties. The staff of the university of applied sciences shall be afforded the opportunity to receive such training during office hours and on full pay.

3. The first and second paragraphs shall apply mutatis mutandis to sub-councils and programme committees.

A. 12 Format request (training)budget

To: [name Dean/educational program director]

From: Educational program committee [name program]

Date: [fill in date]

Concerning: **Request (training)budget EPC [name program] [year]**

Dear [name dean],

Hereby you receive our budget request for the upcoming year.

The request is based on the legal articles 9.48 and 10.93 from the HEARA (Dutch acronym: WHW) and the participation regulations of the institution.

Beware: some institutions have composed additional rules to the participation regulations, always check these!

Number of members educational program committee: [number of EPC members] members.

The budget request covers the following expenses:

1. The aim of the participation training is to optimize our knowledge and skillset, and to fulfill our duties.
 - Examples are: Optimization of the cooperation, meeting techniques, training of new members and training concerning the TER (Dutch acronym: OER).
2. Representation expenses are for example posters and business cards.
3. Additional budget for e.g. a playful stunt to raise awareness about the EPC.

We are looking forward to hearing your response.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the educational program committee

[Name chair EPC], chair EPC [program]

**Budget Request educational program committee
[program] [year]**

Induction weekend of the SOM and LOF of 40 euro per person.

Training costs (ranging between 100 and 200 euro per person.)

Representation expenses

Additional budget for an action

Total budget request EPC [program]

Appendix B: Terms and Acronyms

Dutch Student Union (LSVb) National student-interests advocacy, federation of local unions.

Studenten Overleg Medezeggenschap (SOM) National network of and for students active in participation at universities of applied sciences.

Landelijk Overleg Fracties (LOF) National foundation aiming at ameliorating and strengthening university participation.

Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (Dutch acronym: NVAO) An organization founded on a convention between the Netherlands and Flanders that safeguards the quality of higher education.

Vereniging Hogescholen (Dutch acronym: VH) The Union of Universities of Applied Sciences is an advocate for the interests of Dutch universities of applied sciences.

Higher Education and Academic Research Act (HEARA, Dutch acronym: WHW) Dutch law in which higher education and research is legally defined and established.

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) The system with which study credits are recognized within the bama-system. This European system enables international comparability.

Management- and Administrative Regulations (Dutch acronym: BBR) Regulation within which rules are included regarding the management, administration and set-up of the institution.

Explanatory Memorandum (Dutch acronym: MvT) The document composed for each law in which the author explains what is implied with the legal articles and/or why a certain article is being amended.

Binding Study Advice (Dutch acronym: BSA) The right of an institutional board to force a student to stop their studies during their propaedeutic phase.

Teaching and Examination Regulations (Dutch acronym: OER) This includes information regarding the educational program, the quality thereof, the tests and exams.

Supervisory Board (Dutch acronym: RvT) The body that maintains a supervisory role towards the board of an institution.

Executive Board (Dutch acronym: CvB) The central management of an institution.

Central Participation Council (Dutch acronym: CMR) The participation body at central level in an undivided participation system. The CMR is composed of students and staff.

Student Council (Dutch acronym: SR) The participation body for students at central level in a divided participation system.

Works Council (Dutch acronym: OR) The participation body for employees at a central level in a divided participation system.

Examinations Appeals Board (Dutch acronym: CBE) Independent body to which an appeal can be lodged against the decisions of examination committees, examiners and admission committees.

Examination Committee (Dutch acronym: EC) Independent committee affiliated with a (group of) educational program(s) responsible for safeguarding the quality of examining and the final level.

Dean Single leadership of decentralized management of an organizational unit within the institution.

Faculty Board (Dutch acronym: FB) Decentralized management of an organizational unit within an institution.

Sub-Council The participation body at decentralized level that is composed of students and staff. Is also referred to as: Faculty Participation Council (Dutch acronym: FMR), Faculty Council (Dutch acronym: FR), Domain council (Dutch acronym: DMR), Cluster council (Dutch acronym: CR), Faculty Student council (Dutch acronym: FSR).

Educational Program Committee (EPC, Dutch acronym: OC) Committee composed of students and staff that ensure the quality of a (group) of educational program(s).

Appendix C. Useful addresses

Dutch Student Union (LSVb)

Visiting Address: Drieharingstraat 6, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Mailing Address: Postbus 1335, 3500 BH Utrecht, The Netherlands

030-231 6464 lsvb@lsvb.nl www.dutchstudentunion.nl

SOM (for universities of applied sciences)

som@lsvb.nl www.studentenpolitiek.nl

LOF (for universities)

lof@lofnet.nl www.studentenpolitiek.nl

Local student unions and student organizations

The LSVb is affiliated with various local student unions in different cities in order to provide support to students studying in the city in question. For instance, they are occupied with lobbying in the field of education and housing, but also offer services. Also for (members of) EPCs, contact with a local union is very useful. As such, EPCs and the union can cooperate to improve education. Contact details can be found here: <https://dutchstudentunion.nl/about-us/>

Interesting links

www.opleidingscommissies.nl: Knowledge platform for EPCs with current information and tips and tricks.

www.studentenpolitiek.nl: Website of the *Landelijk Overleg Fracties* (LOF) and *Studentenoverleg Medezeggenschap* (SOM) with information for participation bodies of universities or universities of applied sciences, as well as online records of related topics.

www.nvao.net: Website of the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (Dutch acronym: NVAO) with information regarding accreditation.

www.scienceguide.nl: For the latest news about higher education.

www.wetten.overheid.nl: For the most up to date legislation.

www.dutchstudentunion.nl: Website of the Dutch Student Union (Dutch acronym: LSVb) with information for students and news regarding higher education.

