

Work Method and Assessment Framework

Higher Education and Research Review Committee

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Preamble

The outline agreements that the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) concluded with the research universities and universities of applied sciences (2011), also on behalf of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, with regard to green education and research, constitute the framework for performance agreements to be realised in September 2012. The Higher Education and Research Review Committee (RC) will advise the State Secretary before 1 August 2012 about the proposals for performance agreements made by individual universities that are submitted to him no later than 5 May. Here you are presented with the memorandum that includes the work method and the assessment framework of the Review Committee. The RC is committed to a process in which clear administrative agreements can be reached with the State Secretary based on the strategy and ambitions formulated by the institution. The RC adheres to three basic principles in its work method:

1. **The institution bears responsibility for its own strategic choices**

The principles for the administrative relationships between institutions and government are trust, autonomy and accountability. Institutions make their own strategic choices. Reaching performance agreements fits in with this management philosophy.

In the profiling, the individual character and development prospects of the individual institution are the primary focus. The RC hopes and expects that, in this way, a large range of institution profiles will become visible. To do justice to this variety, the RC assesses the plans of the institutions firstly in light of their prior history and the context of the individual university. The Review Committee's assessment of the proposals for performance agreements is focused on the institutional level. The Review Committee gives an integral assessment of the plans of the institution.

2. **The institution makes a concrete, transparent proposal**

Agreements should primarily pertain to goals and results. This requires the performance agreements to be formulated as concretely and *smart*¹ as possible. It is the responsibility of the institution to underpin its own strategic choices and ambitions and to make them transparent. The institutions are free here to use indicators or not, with the exception of the compulsory indicators for education quality and study success laid down in the outline agreements. They can make use of indicators that the RC has placed on its website as an aid to achieving this. But, of course, they can just as well make use of their own indicators, e.g. indicators that they use to plot the institution's strategy or as internal management information.

The RC recognises the limitations of working with indicators: not everything that is valueable can be measured. This is why institutions are expressly invited to embed the concrete goals and indicators in a qualitative description of their (intended) profile. The institution's own substantiated story is the primary focus.

3. **The Review Committee uses a transparent assessment framework**

The third principle of the RC is that the assessment framework it uses should be as transparent as possible. This is necessary to be able to show institutions how the RC gives shape to its thinking and the dialogue about profiling. This assessment framework is systematically developed in this memorandum. It is also ensured that the RC has a discussion with each institution before it drafts its final recommendation.

1. Introduction

This memorandum includes the work method and the assessment framework used by the Higher Education and Research Review Committee (*Reviewcommissie Hoger Onderwijs en Onderzoek* - RC). Based on this framework, the RC will advise² the State Secretary³ concerning:

- the proposals submitted by the individual institutions for performance agreements on quality and study success, profiling and valorisation.
- the allocation of a selective budget to individual institutions for profiling and for developing focus areas.

This concerns the following questions:

1. Can the RC advise the State Secretary to sign the performance agreement proposed by the institution? Extra attention is also required for the commitment of the institution to education quality and study success. In 2016 it will be assessed whether the agreed performance goals for the period running up to and including 2015 have been realised. This assessment determines whether and to what degree the resources for "quality and study success" (conditional funding) will be continued in the 2017-2020 period.
2. Which proposals of institutions from 2013 on are eligible for (how much) extra money from the selective budget?

Timeframe

The State Secretary of OCW has invited all research universities and universities of applied sciences to submit a *proposal for a performance agreement* by 5 May 2012 at the latest. The RC will assess each proposal and advise the State Secretary of OCW in this regard.

The RC will give each institution the opportunity to explain the proposal in May or June in an individual *meeting* with at least two members of the RC. The institution can utilise this meeting to discuss any specific circumstances of the institution; if necessary, the RC can ask additional questions.

The institution is subsequently given the opportunity in the week following the meeting to draft a short letter with additions or changes to the proposal. This letter is then sent to the State Secretary of OCW with a copy sent to the RC.

Subsequent to this, the RC draws up a *draft recommendation* that is delivered to the institution no later than 13 July with the request to check the recommendation for *factual* inaccuracies. Any corrections should be in the hands of the RC no later than 20 July.

The RC will then offer the *final recommendation* before 1 August 2012 to the State Secretary of OCW.

2. Work method

As agreed in the outline agreements, the performance agreements will pertain to education quality and study success, the profiling of education and research, and valorisation. The RC will assess the proposals of the institutions in light of their profile, the achievements they have realised in recent years and their ambitions for the future. That is why, in addition to their proposals for the performance agreement, the institutions are asked to give a description of their profile, of the achievements they have realised in recent years and of their ambitions for the years ahead. In the profile description, institutions should indicate what their priorities are with respect to the profile dimensions of education, research and valorisation, and on which target groups they are focused.

Current profile, strength-weakness analysis and pursued profile

The RC is aware that profiling is a dynamic process that is completed over the course of time. Nevertheless, a good assessment by the RC requires an explicit description of the profile. The institution profile should contain the three following elements:

1. *A description of the current institution profile*

The institution is initially asked to describe the current institution profile, in which a distinction is made between the profile dimensions of education, research and valorisation. It is up to the institution to indicate which dimensions they consider relevant for the institution profile and to what degree.

2. *An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution*

The RC secondly asks the institution to indicate in the proposal what strategic considerations underpin the choices recorded in the profile description and the proposal for the performance agreement. The RC realises that the institutions have little time to draw up an integral strength-weakness analysis. If they prefer, an institution can use existing documents.

3. *A description of the intended changes to or highlights in the institution profile*

Thirdly, the institution is invited to indicate what highlights or changes they wish to introduce to the profile of the institution. The RC asks the institution to indicate:

- the ambitions for education, research and/or valorisation expressed in quantitative and qualitative objectives that can be evaluated during the review in 2016.
- the plans with respect to adapting the provision of education and research in light of the profile pursued.

The institution is free to use or not to use indicators for the three aforementioned elements of the institution proposal. To assist the institutions, the RC provides a list of possible indicators on its website (www.rchoo.nl) for each of the three profile dimensions and for the context of the institution. Relevant background information for the institutions is also available on the website of the RC.

The institution can also decide for itself whether it wishes to use the information provided by the RC and/or wishes to use its own indicators. An exception to this discretion are the "compulsory" indicators⁴ for education (education quality and study success; for the precise definition of these indicators, see the RC website) as recorded in the outline agreements with the universities and the freedom to choose agreed to (see paragraph 3.2). These indicators should be discussed in each proposal. If the institution chooses its own indicators, the RC asks for a satisfactory description for each indicator and a validation of the empirical information supplied with them.

The RC asks institutions to indicate how the relevant stakeholders (such as employers, students, teachers and researchers) are involved in the decision-making for the performance agreement.

Assessment criteria

The RC will test the proposals of the institutions against the following three criteria:

- ambition level and reality value;
- connection to developments pursued at the system level;
- feasibility.

The third criterion is only involved in the assessment performed for the allocation of money from the selective budget. The manner in which the RC is to adhere to these criteria is elaborated further in the assessment framework (paragraph 3).

The importance of the specific context and history of an institution

The individual character and the development prospects of the individual institution is the main point of focus in the profiling. To do justice to this, the RC assesses the proposals firstly in light of the specific context and history of the institution. Central questions are whether or not the proposals are sufficiently ambitious and feasible and whether or not they connect to the desired developments at the system level.

It is also important for the RC to gain a picture of the development of the institution over the recent past (What steps were taken in recent years? To what results did this lead? What lessons were learned from the past?) and of the specific circumstances that should be included in the assessment.

The RC will collect relevant contextual information itself, but it also urges the institutions to produce a clear picture of their context and history.

Comparative perspective

In addition to this attention to context and history, the RC will consider how the plans of the institutions compare with the plans of comparable institutions. Institutions can also themselves name (nationally and/or internationally) relevant institutions for this purpose. A condition for this is that the university in question ensures that reliable data for the chosen institutions is available to the RC in time.

No particular format required

The institution can decide for itself how it wants to present the proposal for the performance agreement. There is no required format for drafting the proposal. In drafting the proposal, an institution can make use of existing documents or plans. The RC assumes that the work method and assessment framework described here will offer sufficient starting points for the institution to determine whether it has provided the information that the RC has asked for.

The RC sets a maximum size for the proposal, i.e. 40 pages including any appendices. The institution is of course free to supply a less extensive document.

3. Assessment framework

3.1 General

Criteria

The assessment framework is made up of three criteria that are further elaborated in this section:

- ambition level and reality value (3.2);
- connection to developments pursued at the system level (3.3);
- feasibility (3.4).

The RC will form an assessment of the institution proposals based on these three criteria and will express this assessment in three ordinal five-point scales that pertain to this assessment.

The RC will conduct its assessment of the criteria at the institutional level. However, because profiling sometimes takes place at a lower aggregation level, the RC wishes to make space for this. If institutions make proposals and plans concrete at the levels of programmes, faculties, schools or sectors, the RC will include the information concerned in its assessment.

Weighting

As indicated in the introduction, the RC will assess by answering the following two questions:

- Is there a sufficient proposal for a performance agreement?
- Is the institution eligible for extra – and if so, how much – money from the “selective budget”?

In both assessments, the RC will use the same assessment framework, although for the first question no assessment takes place on the third criterion of feasibility. The RC will also weigh the three criteria differently in the two assessments.

Performance agreements

In forming its assessment of the performance agreements, the RC will come to a positive assessment if a score of at least 3 is achieved on the first criterion (ambition level and reality value) and on the second criterion (connection to developments pursued at the system level) on the five-point scales to be presented later. No assessment will be made on the third criterion (feasibility).

The RC will also come to a positive assessment when institutions that score a 2 on the second criterion “connection to developments pursued at the system level” can compensate for this with a score of 4 or 5 for the first criterion “ambition level and reality value”. This gives room to institutions that choose a broad and far-reaching quality improvement as their first priority.

Selective budget

For the formation of an assessment concerning a possible allocation from the selective budget, the scores for each of the three criteria must be at least a 3. This assessment

will also weight the criterion of “connection to developments pursued at the system level” heavily in relative terms. The RC also adheres to the following weighting distribution:

- ambition level and reality value: 25%
- connection to developments pursued at the system level: 50%
- feasibility: 25%.

Institutions do not have to submit a separate plan for the selective budget. An institution can, if it wishes, bring attention to the ambitions or plans for which it particularly wants to use the resources. The RC will advise it about how the selective budget is distributed over the proposals that meet the minimum conditions and that score the best on the weighted criteria.

As agreed in the outlines agreement with the universities of applied sciences, a part of the selective budget is also available for institutions that expressly distinguish themselves from other institutions in terms of ambition or continually proven (education) quality. The RC will acknowledge this with a score of 5 for the first criterion.

In respect of the research universities, the RC will expressly ensure in its assessment that not only the intended ambition, but also the *past performance* of the university is explicitly considered.

Yet there still need to be starting points for connecting to the pursued system developments; in addition, the plans should be sufficiently feasible.

In its advice on the amount of the money to be allocated, the RC will take into consideration the size of the institution (in terms of student numbers), but the quality of the proposals will be given priority.

The institutions that receive resources from the selective budget will, as a result, be able to execute the plans they have proposed sooner and to realise, intensify or deepen the proposed ambitions earlier. At the *midterm review* in 2014, a light test will take place to ascertain whether the resources have been spent effectively and whether the plans have got off the ground.

At least half of the selective budget for professional higher education is available for the substantive development of focus areas. A crucial condition in this context is that the selective resources may only become available when the basic quality of all Bachelor's programmes of the university of applied sciences is up to standard according to NVAO assessments.

3.2 Ambition level and reality value

Definition

The criterion of “ambition level and reality value” is defined as the degree to which the institution is pursuing an improvement in its (activities and) performance, such that, at the same time, a reasonable case is made that the ambition can be realised. It is important that a balance is struck between the activities and performance level pursued, on the one hand, and the chance of realising them, on the other.

Points of attention in the assessment

The RC shall consider formulated ambitions primarily in relation to the context and history of the institution in question. It will include the strategic choices made in the recent past and the improvement achieved in its assessment. Even the maintenance of an already existing high level of performance can be seen as being ambitious. The RC urges the institutions to bring these points, where relevant, to the attention of the RC in the proposal.

The proposals should, in any case, contain a concrete description of the plans and intended results for 2015, because the RC will issue its final recommendations after 2015. This in no way alters the fact that the institution can formulate an ambition for the long term.

The measure of freedom for the institution in formulating its ambitions differs with respect to education, research and valorisation. These differences will be discussed later on.

Education, including “education quality and study success”

Institutions are invited to give a short, general characterisation of (their approach to) education in order to sketch the profile of the institution as regards this dimension. The institutions should also indicate how they give attention to the intensification of education, the improvement of the outcomes of their programmes, the reduction of the dropout rate and study switches, the creation of a more ambitious and less informal study culture and the improvement of the teacher quality.

In line with the report by the Veerman Committee, research universities are called on to indicate the degree to which and in what way they give attention to academic development. They are also asked to describe how they plan to realise greater differentiation in the education they provide.

Universities of applied sciences face a two-fold challenge: to increase the quality of the Bachelor’s programmes and to realise greater differentiation in the course programmes. This also includes strengthening the practice-based research as a quality boost for the education provided.

For “education quality and study success”, agreements were reached in the outline agreements concerning the indicators for which institutions will formulate ambitions: dropout rate, outcomes, study switching, teacher quality, education intensity, quality or excellence. The proposal will also contain concrete objectives with respect to the indirect costs. Both research universities and universities of applied sciences have the freedom to use their own definitions for several indicators, provided they are substantiated and validated. This does not alter the fact that an institution can choose additional indicators in this profile dimension if it wishes to.

The RC recognises that there can be some tension between the indicators. In the outline agreement with the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad), it is stated that the parties should be aware of the tension that exists between the need to increase the standard for Bachelor's degrees, while the quality of the student intake is under pressure and the study success must increase. In the assessment of the performance agreements, consideration will be given to this trilemma. Included as a precondition in the outline agreement with the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) is the stipulation that the improvement of the outcomes must not be achieved to the detriment of the quality and the exit level of the programmes. A high ambition for one indicator can be coupled with a less high ambition for another indicator. In the outline agreements it is explicitly stated that institutions have room on this point to make their own choices.

The RC will also take into consideration the time at which changing legislation and regulations become operational with respect to, for instance, selection in higher education, admission requirements for intermediate vocational education/professional higher education (MBO-HBO), transfers from professional higher education to academic higher education and the bringing forward of the registration date.

For *excellence in education*, the RC will use two approaches. Firstly, the institution can use the participation percentages of students in excellence routes as an indicator. This can pertain to routes already accepted in the context of the current Sirius Programme or routes still to be developed by the institution. In the latter case, these routes should expressly be a part of the institution proposal and external validation of the excellent character of the programme is required to be convincing when it is used as an indicator. Towards this end, such an excellence route to be developed must be assessed by the committee of *leading experts* from the Sirius Programme no later than in 2013. The RC will reach agreements with this committee about this.

Secondly, the institution will be offered the possibility of choosing the two other indicators named for education quality, i.e. NSE-assessment⁵ and a good/excellent score from NVAO.

Finally, the universities are asked to indicate what choices they have made. Are there parts of the course programmes that the institution wishes to cut back on, adjust or expand?

Research

Research universities and universities of applied sciences are involved in research in different ways. The RC therefore tries to do justice to a wide range of research types, from fundamental and applied research to practice-based research. Whereas, in the case of universities of applied sciences, the frame of reference is often regional or national in character, university research is more often aimed at the production and dissemination of knowledge in a global academic/scientific context.

For university research, both more and more robust indicators are available than there are for the practice-based research conducted by universities of applied sciences. Indicators for practice-based research and valorisation at universities of applied sciences are strongly aligned with one another. The connection with professional practice and the feedback given to the education sector are generally recognised key points. Via projects such as Evaluating Research in Context (ERiC, NWO⁶), indicators have been developed and also, in the context of the Validation Committee for Quality Assurance Research (*Validatiecommissie Kwaliteitszorg Onderzoek - VKO*), specific indicators for the performance and impact of practice-based research are given attention. A selection of these are included as examples in the list of indicators on the website of the RC.

With regard to the research, the RC is also asking the institution to indicate which components of the research it wants to cut back on, expand or adjust.

What, in terms of ambition level, can apply as a (strong) improvement in the profile dimension “research” depends, of course, on the type of institution and the research objectives, the disciplinary specialisation profile, and the starting situation of the institution. In the Strategic Agenda for Higher Education, Research and Science (*Strategische Agenda Hoger Onderwijs, Onderzoek en Wetenschap*) and in the outline agreement it is stated in this light that research universities will strengthen their academic/scientific profile by developing focus areas and by working together.

Valorisation

It has been agreed in the outline agreements that an attempt will be made to achieve a widely supported set of valorisation indicators before 2015. This can serve as a basis for further agreements on valorisation after 2015. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (EL&I), the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the National Valorisation Commission are all involved in the development of the set. The RC will expressly follow this process surrounding the development and testing of valorisation indicators. For the coming performance agreements, the RC is asking institutions to indicate what their ambitions are in the area of valorisation, based on indicators if possible.

The RC is stressing again that possible improvements in terms of valorisation activities and performance are highly dependent on the type of institution and the objectives, the disciplinary specialisation profile, and the starting situation of the institution.

With respect to “valorisation”, the RC will include the points of attention named in the outline agreements in the assessment of the proposals for the performance agreements. At the research universities, this pertains to:

- ambitions in the area of valorisation and making these concrete, including:
- the manner in which the institution embeds valorisation in the organisation (including education in adopting an enterprising spirit and entrepreneurship) and the HRM policy.

At the universities of applied sciences it pertains to:

- what has been achieved up to 2015 in education with respect to teaching about the enterprising spirit and entrepreneurship and utilising the knowledge gained from the practice-based research, and what steps the institution is taking in this regard;
- how the institution is embedding the utilisation of knowledge and entrepreneurship training in terms of organisation and professional infrastructure (in the HRM policy).

Assessment

The RC will express its assessment of the criterion “ambition level and reality value” via a score on the following five-point scale. The RC will use this scale for an integral assessment of the ambition level of the proposal.

Points	Meaning
5	<p>The institution proposal is exceptionally ambitious. The ambition can be realised convincingly given the context, history and chosen strategy with the institution's associated measures.</p> <p>It is expected that the institution, in achieving the ambition, will strongly improve its position from the current situation or could consolidate its current strong position. Clearly visible and verifiable progress compared with the current situation can be expected during the review in 2016. If an institution has already built up a clear-cut profile in recent years in combination with continually proven high quality, then maintaining the same high level will also be classified as ambitious.</p>
4	<p>The institution proposal is ambitious. Given the context and history of the institution, the ambition can be realised it seems. The ambition can be securely realised given the context and history of the institution and the chosen strategy with associated measures. It is expected that the institution, in achieving the ambition, will improve its position from the current situation; visible and verifiable improvements over the current situation can be expected during the review in 2016.</p>
3	<p>The institution proposal is ambitious for the most part. The ambition can be realised it seems given the context, history and chosen strategy with associated measures.</p> <p>Visible and verifiable improvements over the current situation can be expected in most of the components during the review in 2016.</p>
2	<p>The institution proposal falls short for the most part with respect to ambition and feasibility, given the context and history of the institution.</p> <p>Visible and verifiable improvements over the current situation can be expected only for a few components during the review in 2016.</p>
1	<p>The institution proposal falls far short with respect to ambition and feasibility, given the context and history of the institution.</p> <p>Visible and verifiable improvements over the current situation cannot be expected during the review in 2016. It is expected that the institution will not improve its position over the current situation with this formulation of the ambition.</p>

3.3 Connection with developments pursued at the system level: developing focus areas and differentiation

Definition

In various documents (strategic agenda, outline agreements, Innovation contracts and “Human Capital Agendas” in the top sectors, Master Plan for Science and Technology, sector plans, EU programmes “Horizon 2020” and “Erasmus for all”) hopes for the future development of higher education, research and valorisation are recorded. These documents are summarised in Appendix 1. They form the basis of the second criterion. The RC will make an assessment of the degree to which the proposals are in keeping with two main priorities: developing focus areas and differentiation in the education provided. For the concentration of efforts within core areas of activity, in particular, it is important for the institutions to anticipate the points named in Appendix 1.

As indicated previously, the RC will allow this criterion to weigh heavily in relative terms in the recommendations given on the possible allocation of financial resources from the selective budget.

Research universities

A. Efforts made for performance agreements

The *development of focus areas* at research universities concerns the creation of focus and mass, a stronger link of education to research, the preservation of the university’s own scientific strengths, and taking advantage of the Innovation Contracts and “Human Capital Agendas” in the top sectors and the new EU programmes focused on education and research.

Differentiation in the education provided at the research universities focuses on a reorganisation of the course programmes, an expansion of the Bachelor’s programmes, cooperation efforts in small programmes and excellence routes. This differentiation should be linked to the effort to strengthen the connection to the course programmes in the profile of the university and in the top sectors. This reorganisation is now already leading to a stronger connection between the Master’s programmes and research focus areas. The formation of national Master’s programmes could be useful in this regard.

B. Selective budget

The plans with respect to concentrating efforts in education and research and to differentiation for the 2013-2016 period weigh heavily in relative terms in the allocation of extra resources from the selective budget. For the research universities, these resources are a part of the education budget. However, in the RC’s assessment of the plans of the universities, the integrality of education and research is a top priority.

The RC will expressly ensure that, in the assessment, not only the proposed ambition is included, but also explicitly the *past performance*.

Universities of applied sciences

A. Efforts made for performance agreements

Each university of applied sciences describes what steps were taken in recent years in the areas of concentrating efforts in core areas of activity or thematic profiling, differentiation in the education provided, reorganisation of the course programmes and the connection to the top sectors. The university of applied sciences also describes what results were thus achieved, what the ambitions are for the years ahead and what measures are being taken to realise these ambitions. Consideration is also given to the

sectoral explorations and the agreements that have been reached in the context of sector plans.

The development of focus areas in the professional higher education sector is aimed at strengthening practice-based research via public-private cooperation in combination with high-quality course programmes, and at taking advantage of the “Human Capital Agendas” in the top sectors and social challenges.

Differentiation in professional higher education concerns the connection with sectoral explorations and the realisation of a profile-setting differentiation in course programmes. This could pertain to three-year, pre-university education routes, greater excellence (see paragraph 3.2), Associate degree programmes and Master’s programmes with a professional orientation. The two latter programmes should be expressly tailored to the needs of working people and the business community. The Master’s programmes should also function as transfer routes for students in Bachelor’s programmes, for instance students from honour classes and the three-year routes for pre-university students. For the Associate Degree, it is important to establish a relationship with the outcomes of the Associate Degree Committee⁷ (roll-out of successful programmes and the top 25 from the work field).

Universities of applied sciences have the possibility of using their own timeframe that fits in with their development process. On the basis of this, each university of applied sciences presents concrete proposals for its own profiling. This can pertain to the development of substantive focus areas, a reassessment of the course programmes, excellence and/or educational differentiation of the education provided for the period covered by the performance agreements.

In the outline agreement with the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, it has been established that universities of applied sciences generally fulfil a regional function, particularly when it concerns the Bachelor’s programmes. To meet the local demand of the labour market and the demand from students, a broad multi-sector character is the starting point for most universities of applied sciences. It has also been agreed that sectoral explorations are an important instrument for the reassessment of the course programmes.

B. Selective budget

The plans with respect to the concentration of efforts in core areas of activity and differentiation for the 2013-2016 period weigh heavily in relative terms in the allocation of extra resources from the selective budget.

The outline agreement with the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences also states that the selective budget is meant to reward extremely high ambitions and the *continually (proven) performance of universities of applied sciences in the area of quality*. The last point is recognised by the RC in the first criterion (with the condition of a score of 5 on the first criterion of “ambition and reality value, see paragraph 3.2).

At least half of the selective budget for professional higher education (HBO) is available for the development of focus areas. The budget that can be allocated to a Centre of Expertise (CoE) is, in principle, equal to the budget that institutions could receive during the previous allocation round for Centres of Expertise (€1 million per year for a limited number of years). For a CoE, in any case, there are the conditions that the CoE fits into the profile of the institution and that there is co-funding and public-private collaboration. In view of the short time available by which the proposals must be submitted, a part of the development could take place in 2013 (cf. Appendix 1).

Specifically for higher agricultural education (HAO), the selective resources must give further substance to the subsequent route, in line with the HAO sector plan.

Points of attention in the assessment

The RC will assess each institution proposal for:

- the degree to which it fits in with one or both main priorities (development of focus areas and differentiation in the education provided) and
- how this is expressed in the profiles being pursued.

An important goal of profiling, as is discussed in the policy documents named, is that the individual institution, given the context and history of the institution, should make clear-cut choices that can increase the effectiveness and quality of the education and research. In forming its assessment, the RC will also consider whether an institution has taken concrete, visible steps, such as cutting back, concentrating or joining forces. The RC will also take stock of whether proposals have consequences for other institutions and/or whether there is an overlap with the course programmes offered by many other institutions.

The RC attaches considerable value to supra-institutional agreements. It will expressly include this in the assessment, provided it has been made visible in the proposals of all institutions involved.

The RC will also take the type of institution and its context into consideration. After all, a monosectoral primary school teacher training college will not be able to engage in differentiation and the development of focus areas to the same extent that a broad-based large university of applied sciences can.

Assessment

The RC will express its assessment of the criterion "connection to developments pursued at the system level" via the score on the following five-point scale:

Points	Meaning
5	The institution proposal is very sharply focused on differentiation and the development of focus areas. The institution proposal contains clear-cut choices strongly focused on this with respect to the course programmes and research offered. The choices are very closely related to the relevant (regional or (inter)national) environment.
4	The institution proposal is sharply focused on differentiation and the development of focus areas. The institution proposal contains clear-cut choices focused on this with respect to the course programmes and research offered. The choices are closely related to the relevant (regional or (inter)national) environment.
3	The institution proposal is substantially focused on differentiation and the development of focus areas. The institution proposal contains choices focused on this with respect to the course programmes and research offered. The choices are sufficiently related to the relevant (regional or (inter)national) environment.
2	A limited part of the institution proposal is focused on differentiation and the development of focus areas. The institution proposal contains a few choices focused on this with respect to the course programmes and research offered. The choices are moderately related to the relevant (regional or (inter)national) environment.
1	The institution proposal is not or is barely focused on differentiation and the

	development of focus areas. The institution proposal contains no or hardly any choices focused on this with respect to the course programmes and research offered.
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3.4 Feasibility

Definition

The third criterion used by the RC concerns the “feasibility” of an institution proposal. This criterion is involved only in the assessment made for the selective budget.

For the criterion of “feasibility”, the RC is concerned with the extent to which the institution makes a plausible case that it can realise the profile it seeks. For this reason, the institution should indicate – briefly, but as concretely as possible – how it plans to realise the ambitions.

Points of attention for the assessment

Among other things, it is important that the institution gives attention to:

- the cohesion between the planned ambitions, the decisions to be taken and the measures to be introduced;
- recent successful initiatives that are in keeping with the formulated ambitions;
- the available capacity and resources;
- the embedding in the institution (strategy), as well as a sustainable, consistent approach.

The RC will also give special attention to the plans with respect to the development of focus areas and differentiation.

Assessment

The RC will express its assessment on the criterion of “feasibility” via the following five-point scale:

Points	Meaning
5	The institution proposal is extremely feasible. The institution has set clear priorities for the deployment of capacity and resources and indicates very convincingly how the strategy with associated goals will be realised.
4	The institution proposal is feasible. The institution has set priorities for the deployment of capacity and resources and indicates convincingly how the strategy with associated goals will be realised.
3	The institution proposal is largely feasible. For a large part of the strategy and associated goals, the institution indicates convincingly that they will be realised.
2	The institution proposal is no more than partially feasible. It is insufficiently clear how the strategy with associated goals will be realised.
1	The institution proposal is not feasible or is barely feasible. It is (fairly well) unclear how the strategy with associated goals will be realised.

¹ Smart: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, time-linked

² For a complete job description, see the Decision of the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science of 28 February 2012, no. HO&S/355166, consisting of the establishment of the Committee for quality, profiling and valorisation in higher education and research, i.e. the Higher Education and Research Review Committee (*Instellingsbesluit Reviewcommissie hoger onderwijs en onderzoek*)

³ Hereafter in this memorandum, any reference to the State Secretary (of OCW) also includes the Minister of EL&I with respect to green education and research.

⁴ Other indicators will, in part, apply to the Open University (OU). The OU is a university with its own task and position in the higher education system. The OU is also invited, in the context of the outline agreement with the research universities, to present a proposal for a performance agreement. In the letter of 23 December 2011 to the House of Representatives, containing his policy response to the advice from the international review panel Open University, the State Secretary sketches several outlines for the future of the OU. In assessing the proposal of the OU, the review committee will take these outlines into consideration. In consultation with the OU, it has been established that the required indicators for the conditional funding do not correspond well with the nature of the OU. The OU has been given the room to introduce its own indicators for education quality/excellence, study success and organisational measures (substantiated and validated).

⁵ National Student Survey 2011 (*Nationale Studentenenquête, 2011*)

⁶ http://www.eric-project.nl/nwohome.nsf/pages/NWOA_6TZJ28

⁷ Policy response of the advisory committee for Associate degrees concerning the approach to the definitive introduction of Associate-degree programmes in professional higher education (HBO), letter from State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science to the Chair of the House of Representatives, The Hague, 20 December 2011