



Utrecht University



Autonomy, Assurance & Assessment

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I. Backdrop

- **Importance/role of universities in and for society**

- A. Valero/J.van Reenen, *The economic impact of universities: Evidence from across the globe*, *Economics of Education Review* 68 (2019), p. 53-67

- **MCU: Academic Freedom/Institutional Autonomy**

Institutional, self-governance, employment, finances

- **Regulation vs Discretionary Power**

II. Assurance in Education

- **Guidelines UNESCO & OECD/Council for Higher Education Accreditation**
<https://www.oecd.org/general/unescooecdguidelinesforqualityprovisionincross-borderhighereducation.htm>
- **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**
- <https://europass.europa.eu/en/european-qualifications-framework-efq>

Goals: Transparency, Mobility & Lifelong learning

Dutch Flemish Accreditation Body (NVAO)

<https://www.nvao.net/en>

8 Criteria for quality:

1. The learning outcomes of the programme are a clear and programme-specific interpretation of the international requirements with regard to level, content and orientation;
2. The curriculum of the programme is in line with the most recent developments in the field, takes into account developments in the professional field and is **socially relevant**;
3. The teachers deployed for the training offer the students the optimal opportunity to achieve the learning results;
4. The programme offers students adequate and easily accessible facilities and study guidance;
5. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the learning process and contributes to smooth study progress;
6. The **assessment of students reflects the learning process** and concretises the intended learning outcomes;
7. The programme provides complete and easy-to-read information on all stages of the study career;
8. Information about the quality of the training is publicly accessible.

Research shows assurance through two main components: self-evaluation & external validation

Role for students in every stage

Threads

- **Politics: autonomy**
- **AI: quality**

Point 6 of the quality criteria.

"The assessment of students reflects the learning process and concretizes the intended learning outcomes"

Purpose of education

- **qualification**
- **socialization**
- **subjectification**

➤ *Bald de Vries et al (eds.), Perspectives on subjectification in higher education, Utrecht University as a case study – a position paper*

How to safeguard quality?

- **constructive alignment; looking at the total chain: aligning learning objectives, assessment and learning activities.**
 - **More programmatic testing**
 - **Stronger contact between student and teacher. Working groups/personal contact is the essence of education**
 - **More co-creation with students**
- Kummeling, H., Kluijtmans, M., & Miedema, F. (2024). *The University in Transition*. (1 ed.) Publishers of Trial and Error in collaboration with Universiteit Utrecht. [\[DOI\]](#) [\[Repository\]](#)

III. Assessment in Research

- **Old fashioned metrics are history**

- Kummeling, H. (2025). Leadership for Universities in Transition. In M. Alvarez et al. (Ed.), *CYD Report 2025* (pp. 232-234). Knowledge and Development Foundation. [[Repository](#)]

- **Qualitative assessment > CoARA: more peer review, part of recognition and rewards**

<https://www.coara.org/agreement/the-commitments/...nr 2>.

- **New ways for improving qualitative assessement?**

New approaches qualitative assessment?

- **PRC system: publish, review, curate**

More recent:

https://rori.figshare.com/articles/report/The_Future_of_Peer_Review_A_system-wide_perspective/32685351?file=65684898

- **Trust markers (already under debate: new metrics on individual level? Role publishers?)**
- **Peer engagement (broader than PRC)**
- **Evidence synthesis**

IV. Role of AI

- **Disruptive innovation.**

Agreement on : be completely clear about the use of AI. Where, when, what, how (what it does exactly). So transparency and accountability

Back to the Human

Artificial Intelligence? Authentic Intelligence!

V. Conclusion

In the spirit of the MCU:

- **We can only fulfil our role if we give substance to Institutional Autonomy**
- **We should not let our quality be determined by, or outsourced to external parties such as government and publishers**
- **We have to be in control ourselves, in full responsibility**

THANK YOU!