

Topic 2: Career Development and Accreditation of Chemists.

Career Development:

As a consequence of political decisions within the European Union the Dutch system for higher education is transformed into the Bachelor-Master structure. Many universities suffer from low numbers of chemistry students and have used this transformation to develop new Bachelorprogrammes with a multidisciplinary character. The KNCV, together with the VNCI (the branche association of chemical companies) follows this trend critically. Both organisations support the creation of Masterstudies that will be concentrated around specialised researchgroups at the universities.

Divisions of KNCV play a role in training and (life long) learning in the post-graduate period by organising symposia and sometimes courses. The KNCV itself has no Career Development Program.

Accreditation

Recently the government has installed an Accrediation Office for the accreditation of programmes at Universities and Polytechnics. A positive evaluation by this Office gives a higher education "License to Operate" for a limited period of time and is needed as a prerequisite for funding by the Government. The role of KNCV in this proces is limited.

In the Netherlands most chemical or chemistry related professions don't use a qualification system (it is only used by Clinical Chemists, Epidemiologists and Toxicologists). We think this is one of the reasons that a program as the European Chemist qualification, set up under auspicien of FECS, is not popular in the Netherlands.

We therefore have our doubts about an International Accreditation System that goes beyond graduate level.