

## OOTI formally certified

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*In the previous issue of XOOTIC MAGAZINE (april 1993) we reported on the fact that a commission of people from business and industry was in the process of evaluating the post-masters programme Software Technology (OOTI). Shortly after that publication the commission concluded its work by sending a report with its findings and recommendations to the Dutch Certification Commission for courses for Technological Designer (CCTO). Based on the positive conclusion in this report, the CCTO has turned the temporary mandate of OOTI into a definitive certification.*

As all starting post-masters programmes, OOTI was working under a temporary certification of the CCTO, valid till October 1st, 1992. In order to exchange the temporary certification for a permanent one, the programme had to be examined on its quality by a commission originating from the world of business and industry (that is, after all, the world where OOTI and other post-masters programmes are targeted on). It took some time for the CCTO to set up this commission, which finally had its first meeting at October 9th, 1992. The temporary mandate of OOTI was, pending the investigation, extended with one year.

The commission consisted of four members (ex-Philips, BSO/AT, Hollandse Signaal, Shell). Compared to other commissions that examined other post-masters programmes, this commission had a thorough way of working. Whereas other commissions only spoke with course organizers and had a look into some project reports, this commission also took the effort to speak with students, graduates, and bosses of graduates (although the latter is not mentioned in the commission's report). The commission took about half a year to conclude its work with an advice report to the CCTO. This report was the reason for the CCTO on May 10th, 1993 to give OOTI a definitive certification, valid for a period of five years.

### Recommendations

Although the report is very positive about OOTI, it also contains some criticism and recommendations for further improvement. A brief overview of these comments is given below.

- The system of four optional blocks makes that the OOTI graduate is skilled in only one

of these four fields, while he is 'blank' in the remaining three. In the opinion of the commission every graduate should at least reach an 'awareness' level in all four areas. This could be obtained by following courses in the four fields (80 hours per block) instead of only one (320 hours). The 'small project' (120 hours) would stay, guaranteeing that the student becomes skilled in one area.

- The still increasing number of students has led to bottlenecks w.r.t. workspace, available hardware and software, homogeneity and team spirit within the group of students, and quality and interactivity of classes. This should be a point of attention.
- Although some non-technical skills are well-covered in the programme, more attention is needed for business economical aspects, cost awareness, cost calculations, cost management, project management, flexibility, and result orientedness. Try to increase the input of external lecturers from business and industry.
- Stimulate the usage of standardized software systems. Pay more attention to a programming language as C++.
- Make sure that the 'big project' contains all the aspects of a project. Many of the projects which are part of larger projects of the university do not contain all these aspects. Improve the project management of these 'big projects'.
- The programme should pay attention to the process of job application.

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