

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AFFECTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND ONE'S CONTROL**

Adopted by the Executive Board with the agreement of the University Council on 26 June 2017.

### INTRODUCTION

Article 7.51d of the Higher Education and Research Act allows for the provision of financial support for international students.

The Executive Board adopted the following scheme in relation to the awarding of financial support in accordance with this law on 26 June 2017, with the agreement of the University Council.

### Article 1 – Scope

This chapter applies solely to students who are not entitled to a student grant because they do not meet the nationality requirement of Article 2.2 of the Student Grant Act 2000 (Wet op de Studiefinanciering 2000) or who, because of the nationality requirement, are eligible only for tuition fee credit but do meet the other conditions to which the right to a student grant is subject.

### Article 2 – Financial support

1. Any student who, as a result of exceptional circumstances as meant in Article 4:

a. has fallen behind schedule in their studies during the number of months corresponding to the nominal duration of their Bachelor's degree programme or during the number of months corresponding to the nominal duration of their Master's degree programme

and

b. was enrolled as a student at Utrecht University during this period and had paid his or her tuition fees,

shall be eligible for financial support if he or she is enrolled at Utrecht University on a study programme for which he or she has not been awarded a degree and for which he or she has paid tuition fees to Utrecht University.

2. The periods referred to in paragraph 1 shall be reduced by the months during which the student in question was enrolled on a similar higher-education study programme.

### Article 3 – Level of financial support

The level of financial support is €425 per month.

### Article 4 – Exceptional circumstances: circumstances beyond one's control

1. An exceptional circumstance is defined as follows:

- a. illness of the applicant;
- b. exceptional family circumstances;
- c. pregnancy of and giving birth by the applicant;
- d. handicap or chronic illness of the applicant;
- e. falling behind schedule in studies as a result of the way in which the degree programme was organised by the institute;
- f. circumstances other than those listed above, if rejection would result in a manifestly unfair situation.

2. If the applicant received an administrative grant from Utrecht University during the period in which he or she fell behind schedule in his or her studies as a result of exceptional circumstances, account will be taken of any compensation that the applicant received through the administrative grant when the amount of graduation support is determined.

### Article 5 – Notification; limiting the extent to which a student falls behind in his or her studies

1. If a student falls behind schedule in his or her studies as a result of circumstances beyond his or her control, the student must immediately, or no later than three months after the circumstances arise, notify the study advisor, student counsellor, or student psychologist to discuss measures to limit the delay as much as possible<sup>1</sup>.
2. If the exceptional circumstances continue into a subsequent academic year, paragraph 1 shall apply where applicable.
3. Failure to provide notification in time may result in no compensation being awarded for a particular academic year.

#### Article 6 – Determining the extent to which a student has fallen behind schedule in their studies

The extent to which a student has fallen behind schedule in their studies is determined for each academic year. This is based on the number of credits that should nominally be gained in one academic year and the actual number gained, calculated against the number of months' delay in a student's studies due to exceptional circumstances per year.

#### Article 7 – Maximum level of support

1. Support will then be limited to three months for each academic year and nine months for the entire Bachelor's programme. For Master's programmes, support will be limited to three months for each academic year and three C months for the entire Master's programme ('C' stands for the nominal course duration in years).
2. Financial support will never exceed three months per academic year, even if more than one of the circumstances listed in Article 4 applies.

#### Article 8 – Minimum extent of delay in a student's studies

Students who have fallen behind schedule in their studies by less than one month are not entitled to financial support.

#### Article 9 - Application

1. Applications for financial support should be submitted online using the designated form.
2. Applicants will then receive an online confirmation of receipt.
3. Applications must be submitted no later than one month after the end of the nominal course duration period. Applications submitted later than this period will not be considered, unless the applicant can demonstrate that he or she was unable to make the application earlier as a result of circumstances beyond his or her control.
4. Applications should be accompanied by a statement by a study advisor, student counsellor or student psychologist in relation to notification of the study delay as meant in Article 6, and by documentation relating to the relevant circumstance.

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<sup>1</sup> The student concerned must show 'responsible study conduct', which means that he or she must do all in his or her power to limit the extent to which he or she falls behind as much as possible. The university provides supervision for students, help with planning their studies, and, if necessary, special facilities. Any student who falls behind schedule in his or her studies as a result of exceptional circumstances must actually use this supervision and these facilities in order to qualify for graduation support. The obligation to notify the student supervisor mentioned in this article serves this purpose. The measures needed for ensuring that the delay in the student's studies is not needlessly extended are then discussed with the student supervisor.

5. If the applicant has submitted an application that is not complete, he or she will be given an additional week in which to do so. Any application has not been submitted in full by the end of this period will not be considered.

#### Article 10 - Processing and decision

1. The director of the Academic Affairs Office will decide on the application on behalf of the Executive Board within eight weeks of receipt of the documentation referred to in Article 9, paragraph 1.
2. Any application as mentioned in Article 9 will be put to the student advisor for their recommendation.
3. The decision will be one of the following:
  - the application will be rejected;
  - financial support will be awarded for a period to be determined;
  - the application will not be considered due to late submission or because the submission was not complete by the end of the applicable period.
4. The decision will be delivered to the applicant in writing, and will include the reasons for the decision. The decision will state that the applicant may lodge an objection to it with the Executive Board, in accordance with Article 7.1 of the General Administrative Law Act. The ruling on the objection will state that the applicant may lodge an appeal against it with the Higher Education Appeals Board, in accordance with Article 7.66 of the Higher Education and Research Act.

#### Article 11 – Payment of graduation support

The financial support will be paid in equal monthly instalments. The amount for each period will be paid at the end of the period in question. The first period starts from the month subsequent to the month in which the application is received, unless the applicant has requested that the payments be made at a later time.

#### Article 12 – Power of derogation

The director of the Academic Affairs Office acts on behalf of the Executive Board in the case of applications for financial support under this scheme, unless this could have consequences for any of the parties involved that due to exceptional circumstances would be disproportionate in relation to the objectives of the scheme.

#### Article 13 - Entry into force

This scheme entered into force on 01 September 2017.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### *General*

This scheme provides for 'graduation support' for international students who fall behind schedule in their studies as a result of circumstances beyond their control.

### *Explanatory notes for each article*

#### Section 1

The scheme is intended for students who are ineligible for a student grant on the grounds of their nationality (that is, for students from outside the EU), and for students who on the grounds of their nationality are only eligible for tuition fee credit (that is, students from the EU/EEA). All applicants must meet the other conditions for eligibility for a student grant.

#### Section 2

A condition for receiving support is that the student has fallen behind schedule in his or her studies as a result of exceptional circumstances during the nominal course duration period. That means three years for Bachelor's and, depending on the Master's programme in question, a period of one, two, three, or four years. The exceptional circumstances must not have been foreseeable at the start of the student's studies.

#### Section 3

The level of graduation support is equal to that for students who come under the student loan system.

#### Articles 4 and 5

Articles 4 and 5 specify the exceptional circumstances that are taken into consideration. A requirement is that the student in question reported them in time and displayed 'responsible study conduct'.

#### Articles 6, 7, and 8

The extent to which a student has fallen behind schedule in their studies is determined for each academic year on the basis of the number of credits that should nominally be gained and the actual number gained. A condition is that the student must have fallen behind schedule by at least one month. A maximum limit has been included.

#### Articles 9, 10, and 11

The procedure relating to applications and how they are processed and decided upon is described in Articles 11, 12, and 13.

#### Section 12

The scheme includes a hardship clause, which allows the director of the Academic Affairs Office to derogate from the terms of the scheme to prevent a manifestly unfair situation.

#### Section 13

This scheme entered into force on 1 September 2017.