

BSA Manual

Valid from academic year 2017-2018 onwards

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Rules and regulations

BSA threshold

A binding (negative) study advice is issued when:

Full-time degree programme (all)

- a student has earned fewer than 45 ECTS credit points by the end of the first year of study.

Part-time degree programme

- a student has earned fewer than 20 ECTS credit points by the end of the first year.

Exceptions

Primary School Teacher Training College (Academische Pabo)

In the propaedeutic phase, these students follow course units worth 30 ECTS credit points at the University of Groningen. The BSA threshold for these students is thus the same as the threshold for part-time students (minimum 20 ECTS in the first year of registration).

BSA threshold and exemptions

If a student is granted an exemption for a certain course unit because in the opinion of the Board of Examiners he or she has already achieved an equivalent result elsewhere, then the number of ECTS credit points for that course unit must be included when determining the total number of credit points earned. This should be set out clearly in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER).

BSA system in year 2

On 12 September 2016, the Board of the University decided to abolish the requirement that full-time students must gain their propaedeutic certificate within two years (P in 2). A study advice can only be postponed until the second year of registration if no advice can be issued in the first year due to personal circumstances. Postponing the BSA threshold to the second year means that no binding study advice will be issued by the Faculty Board in the first year. Postponement of the BSA threshold must always be reported to and approved by the Faculty Board or the BSA Committee.

Applicability of the BSA system

Introduction

The BSA system was introduced at the University of Groningen in academic year 2010-2011.

Students who were already enrolled in the same degree programme in academic year 2009-2010 do not fall under the BSA system.

Students with a university propaedeutic certificate/completed propaedeutic phase:

Students with a propaedeutic certificate from a different university degree programme (at the University of Groningen or another university) do not fall under the BSA system for the degree programme for which they register for the propaedeutic phase.

Term of validity

A binding (negative) study advice is valid for a period of 2 years from 1 September of the subsequent academic year.

Scope of the BSA system

Certain degree programmes at the University of Groningen are grouped into clusters. The clusters are set out in Appendix 1.

A binding (negative) study advice applies to the degree programme of registration and to the related CROHO code. This advice will also apply to any related degree programmes with different CROHO codes within that cluster.

Registration

Multiple degree programmes

The BSA and enrolment in several degree programmes

Occasionally a student will have enrolled in two or more degree programmes. The University of Groningen is of the opinion that good students must be free to choose to follow two degree programmes. Thus, as long as a student passes the BSA threshold for one of the degree programmes, the requirement lapses for the other degree programme(s).

Once a student passes the propaedeutic phase of one of the degree programmes, he or she is exempt from the BSA requirement for the other degree programmes (see 3.2 Applicability of the BSA system; Introduction as of cohort 2010-2011 – exceptions).

- a. If a student is given a positive advice for one of the degree programmes (i.e. has earned 45 ECTS credit points or more in the propaedeutic phase), then he or she can show this to the other degree programme(s) and avoid being issued with a binding (negative) study advice there.
- b. A student who is registered for several degree programmes and does not earn 45 ECTS credit points in any of them will be issued a binding (negative) study advice for all the degree programmes he or she has enrolled in.

Study progress overviews/preliminary study advice for all degree programmes

Students who are enrolled in several degree programmes will be sent two mid-term study progress overviews, a mid-term preliminary advice and a definitive advice (BSA) for each degree programme.

Study Progress Supervision

On registration, students are automatically included in the study progress supervision system for all the degree programmes they register for.

Enrolling in a second degree programme after 1 February

Students who register in a second degree programme at the University of Groningen after 1 February will still have to pass the BSA threshold of 45 ECTS credit points for one of the two programmes to be allowed to continue, even if the second degree programme is part-time.

New degree programme, late enrolment

Registration after 1 September

BSA threshold for full-time programmes

Students who register between 1 September and 1 February must pass the regular BSA threshold; they must earn at least 45 ECTS credit points by the end of the academic year:

BSA threshold for part-time programmes

Students who register between 1 September and 1 February must pass the regular BSA threshold; they must earn at least 20 ECTS credit points by the end of the first year of registration.

Contact with the study advisor

Students who register after 1 September must make an appointment with a study advisor to see what possibilities and potential problems there might be for passing the BSA threshold. Students will be informed of this by e-mail (from CSA) at the start of their degree programme.

Registration after 1 February

New degree programme

A BSA threshold of 20 ECTS credit points in the second semester of the first year of study applies to registrations after 1 February.

Part-time degree programme

A BSA threshold of 10 ECTS in the second semester of the first year of study applies to registrations for a new part-time degree programme after 1 February.

If the registration involves switching from full-time to part-time in the same degree programme, please refer to the section on switching degree programme format.

Deregistration

Deregistration before 1 February

1 February is included in the BSA regulations as a benchmark date to stop or switch programmes. If a first-year student *deregisters from the **degree programme** before 1 February* and does not register for a different degree programme at the University of Groningen, no BSA will be issued and the student may in principle start the same degree programme again the next year. Any results already achieved will remain valid.

Students who deregister before 1 February and reregister for the same degree programme (or for a degree programme from the same cluster) in the following year will therefore start with a clean slate. These students must, just as 'real' first-year students, pass the BSA threshold of 45 ECTS credit points in the first year of reregistration. N.B. this principle can only be applied once for each degree programme. Students who deregister for the same degree programme for the second time before or as of 1 February will still receive a BSA advice at the end of the academic year.

What matters in this context is the date on which the student is officially deregistered and not the date on which he or she has submitted a request to this end. A request for deregistration must therefore be submitted to Studielink in January at the latest. Students who deregister by or on 1 February of the current academic year will be sent an e-mail explaining the status of this dispensation.

Deregistration after 1 February

Students who deregister from their degree programme or the University of Groningen after 1 February will be issued a study advice for the degree programme in which they were registered in the first semester.

Switching degree programmes at the University of Groningen¹

Switching degree programmes before 1 February

If a student deregisters from a degree programme at the University of Groningen in the period between 1 September and 1 February, and in the same period registers for a different degree programme at the University that is not in the same cluster, the student will not be issued a study advice for the degree programme for which he or she has deregistered, and the threshold for the new degree programme will be the regular threshold of 45 ECTS credit points.

Switching degree programmes before 1 February

Students who deregister before 1 February from a degree programme at the University of Groningen and reregister on 1 February for a different degree programme at the University which does not belong to the same cluster² will not be issued a study advice for the degree programme from which they deregistered.

The threshold for the new degree programme will be the regular threshold of 20 ECTS credit points.

Such students may, if they wish, reregister for the original degree programme in September, at which point the regular BSA threshold (45 ECTS credit points for a full-time degree programme) will apply.

Switching degree programmes after 1 February

Students who submit a deregistration request via Studielink for a degree programme at the University of Groningen on or after 1 February and register on 1 February for a different degree programme at the University that does not belong to the same cluster will be issued with a study advice for the degree programme from which they deregistered.

The threshold for the new degree programme will be the regular threshold of 20 ECTS credit points.

These students will no longer be able to reregister for the first degree programme if they were issued with a binding (negative) study advice for that degree programme.

Students who are issued a positive advice for a degree programme with a BSA threshold lower than 45 ECTS credit points (because they registered as part-time students and/or registered after 1 February) are not automatically considered to also have passed the BSA threshold for the other degree programme. If a student earns fewer than 45 ECTS credit points in the degree programme with the regular BSA threshold, he or she will be issued a binding (negative) study advice for this programme.

Switching between degree programmes in a cluster before 1 February

Students who deregister from a degree programme before 1 February and register for a degree programme from the same cluster as of or after 1 February are not subject to a modified threshold. They must earn 45 ECTS credit points by the end of the year.

¹ N.B. Not all faculties allow interim switching. Always contact the study advisor of the degree programme to which you wish to switch to check whether switching is possible, and if so, whether you will have to satisfy a matching requirement. As a rule, it will be possible to switch between degree programmes in the same cluster, on condition that they are not degree programmes with a fixed quota.

² See appendix: Clusters at the Faculties

Switching degree programme format

Students who deregister from a full-time degree programme before 1 February and register for the part-time version of the same degree programme as of or after 1 February are not subject to a modified threshold. They must earn 45 ECTS credit points by the end of the year.

Extraordinary circumstances

If extraordinary circumstances play a role, the BSA threshold may be adjusted accordingly. Below are some examples of extraordinary circumstances and the related consequences for the BSA threshold.

Types of extraordinary circumstance

Personal circumstances

Special faculty-specific regulations apply to students faced with extraordinary circumstances (illness, family circumstances, functional impairment, etc.). These regulations must follow closely the list of circumstances set out in the Graduation Fund Regulations. Contrary to the stipulations of the Graduation Fund Regulations, the question of whether the circumstances will influence the BSA is assessed at faculty level – this power is mandated by the Board of the University to the Faculty Board, which can in turn delegate it to the Faculty BSA Committee.

Top-level sport

Recognition of participation in top-level sport as an extraordinary circumstance is subject to the same conditions as in the Graduation Fund Regulations. As with personal circumstances, agreements will be made with the student about required study progress.

Students who wish to apply for the top sport scheme must be referred to the top sport coordinator: Cees Reitsma (<http://www.rug.nl/staff/c.r.reitsma/>).

Committee membership regulations

Students who become a member of a committee in their first year of registration must pass the BSA threshold.

Regulations governing extraordinary circumstances

The BSA advice will be postponed until the second year of registration if no assessment can be made with regard to a student's suitability for the degree programme in the first year due to personal circumstances.

The acknowledgement of extraordinary circumstances means that the BSA system can be adapted to the student's extraordinary circumstances. When such circumstances occur, the question of whether they are such that a student can reasonably be expected to incur substantial study delay (at least 10 ECTS credit points), and thus prevent him or her passing the regular BSA threshold, must be examined. If this is the case, a study plan will be drawn up with the student.

Postponing the BSA threshold to the second year means that no binding study advice will be issued by the Faculty Board in the first year. Postponement of the BSA threshold must always be reported to and approved by the Faculty Board or the BSA Committee.

If, due to extraordinary circumstances, the advice is postponed with or without adjustment to the threshold, the student will receive a final advice no later than at the end of the second year of study. It will thus be clear after the first two years of any cohort who has received a positive advice and who has not.

The above requires clear task and role divisions between the study advisor on the one hand and the Faculty Board on the other. To this end, the faculties must appoint a Faculty Committee to advise the Faculty Board regarding the study plan agreed on by the student and study advisor. In case of a postponed advice, the Faculty Board will make a definitive decision about the BSA for students whose advice was postponed due to extraordinary circumstances no later than at the end of the second year.

Students must report extraordinary circumstances as soon as possible. The same applies if a student is unable to keep to the agreed plan due to the extraordinary circumstances. The regulations governing this are the same as the Graduation Fund Regulations.

Extraordinary Circumstances Protocol

The way to deal with extraordinary circumstances is set out in a protocol drawn up by the Board of the University. The protocol is included here as an appendix.

Contact person for extraordinary circumstances

If you have any doubts or wish to discuss a specific case of extraordinary circumstances, please feel free to contact Ms J. Doorenbos, Head of the Student Service Centre (j.doorenbos@rug.nl).

Lodging an objection or appeal

Appeal

Students can appeal a study advice issued by the Faculty. Before a binding (negative) study advice is issued, the Faculty Board will send the student a negative advice notification.

After this advance notification, the student can put his or her point of view to the Faculty Board or to a committee acting on behalf of the Faculty Board.

If the student does not agree with the decision of the Faculty Board, he or she can appeal to the Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE).

An appeal against a BSA decision can be submitted to the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights within 6 weeks of the decision. The address of the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS) is <http://www.rug.nl/education/laws-regulations-complaints/complaintobjectionappeal> or P.O. Box 72, 9700 AB Groningen.

The CBE will first request the Faculty to arrange a settlement meeting between the student and the Faculty Board. If this meeting does not lead to agreement, the appeals procedure will be set in motion.

Summary

- Students who do not pass the BSA threshold will be sent a negative advice notification during the second semester.
- Students then have the opportunity to put their side of the case to a committee set up by the Faculty Board.
- The Faculty Board issues a definitive study advice.

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- Students can appeal the Faculty Board's decision to the CLRS within 6 weeks of the date of the BSA.

Marking periods and registration of results

Marking period

All examination results must be sent to the Student Administration Office at the latest ten days after the examination.

Registration period

The Student Administration Office will process all the examination results within three working days.

Dates for study advice notifications

Study progress overview

The degree programme will send students a study progress overview by e-mail halfway through each semester (end of November/early December and end of April).

Preliminary study advice

The degree programme will send students a preliminary study advice by e-mail after the first semester (between 15 and 28 February).

Negative advice notification

Students will be sent a definitive study advice at the end of the second semester. If the advice is negative, students will first be sent a negative advice notification after 15 July. The Faculty will then enable the student to put his or her side of the case, after which a definitive advice will be issued.

Definitive study advice (binding if negative)

The Faculty Board will send students a definitive study advice (binding if negative) by the last Friday in July at the latest.

Study advice before this date

Faculties will be able to issue students who have already earned 45 ECTS credit points in the course of Block 3 or 4 a positive study advice sooner. This is particularly important with an eye to the extension of the residence permits of international students.

Faculties can hear the cases of students who will clearly not be able to earn 45 ECTS credit points in the course of Block 3 or 4 and who have not invoked 'extraordinary circumstances' and issue them with a definitive BSA sooner.

Information for staff and students

Protocols, schedules, flow charts and BSA regulations

<http://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/medewerkers/werk-en-carriere/werkenstudenten/bsa/>

General portal for first-year students

<http://student.portal.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/>

For students

<http://student.portal.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/begeleiding-carriere-advies/studiebegeleiding/>

Educational Quality Management

<http://www.rug.nl/bureau/expertisecentra/azis/az/producten/onderwijskwaliteitszorg>

Protocol for internal quality assurance at the University of Groningen: 'In Control of Educational Quality' – available on the website above.

Trinicom with BSA info

Questions frequently asked by students: <http://www.rug.nl/insandouts>

Student Service Centre

Student Counsellors

<http://student.portal.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/studenten-service-centrum/decanen>

Psychological Counselling Service

<http://student.portal.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/studenten-service-centrum/studenten-psychologen>

Workshops and courses

<http://student.portal.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/studenten-service-centrum/workshop/>

University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations

<http://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/studenten/profileringsfonds/>

Appendix 1: clusters of related degree programmes

Faculty of Law

All of the propaedeutic phases of degree programmes at the Faculty of Law belong to one BSA cluster.

Faculty of Economics and Business

		Clustered with	
Croho code	Name of degree programme	Croho code	Name of degree programme
50645	B Business Administration	50019	B International Business
50019	B International Business	50645	B Business Administration

Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

		Clustered with	
Croho code	Name of degree programme	Croho code	Name of degree programme
56286	B Life Science and Technology	56860	B Biology
		56157	B Pharmacy
		56989	B Pharmaceutical Sciences
56860	B Biology	56286	B Life Science and Technology
		56157	B Pharmacy
		56989	B Pharmaceutical Sciences
56157	B Pharmacy	56860	B Biology
		56286	B Life Science and Technology
		56989	B Pharmaceutical Sciences
56989	B Pharmaceutical Sciences	56860	B Biology
		56286	B Life Science and Technology
		56157	B Pharmacy
56980	B Mathematics	56965	B Applied Mathematics

56965	B Applied Mathematics	56980	B Mathematics
50206	B Physics	56962 50205	B Applied Physics B Astronomy
56962	B Applied Physics	50206 50205	B Physics B Astronomy
50205	B Astronomy	56962 50206	B Applied Physics B Physics
56857	B Chemistry	56960	B Chemical Engineering
56960	B Chemical Engineering	56857	B Chemistry

Appendix 2: Procedure governing extraordinary circumstances

Basic procedure

Article 7.8b.3 of the WHW lists a number of extraordinary circumstances. Personal circumstances can be divided into the following categories:

- illness/functional impairment
- extraordinary family circumstances
- pregnancy
- membership of a committee

On behalf of the Board of the University, the Faculty Board assesses whether and to what degree a personal circumstance is at issue. The Faculty Board may appoint a Faculty Committee to issue an advice. The procedure set out below is designed to supplement and elaborate on the texts included in the BSA Manual. The procedure is intended to clarify exactly what is expected from study advisors.

Study advisors who have any questions about the procedure and approach regarding personal circumstances can contact Joeske Doorenbos, head of SSC.

The basic procedure is as follows for **all** personal circumstances. The Faculty BSA Committee decides on behalf of the Faculty Board and on the advice of the study advisor whether the BSA threshold will be adapted.

* Students must report as soon as possible to the study advisor in the event of personal/extraordinary circumstances that may hinder study progress. Students should also report when in doubt.

* The study advisor and the student will together draw up a study plan that takes the circumstances into consideration. The study plan will be immediately signed by both the student and the study advisor and included in the student's BSA file. If the circumstances change in the course of the year to such an extent that the study plan must be adapted, the adapted plan too must be signed by the student and the study advisor and included in the student's BSA file.

* The student must submit a personal explanation of the nature, seriousness and – if possible – estimated duration of the circumstances to the study advisor within three months of reporting them, and in any event before 1 August of the relevant academic year. The student must also submit documentary evidence/an expert statement.

Depending on the nature of the circumstances, the following may be considered documentary evidence:

- in the event of illness or functional impairment, a statement from the GP or specialist or from an independent confidential doctor
- when coping with a bereavement or in the event of psychological problems, a death announcement card (or photocopy thereof) or a statement from a psychologist
- in the event of learning disorders such as dyslexia, a statement and an assessment report from a certified assessment agency and/or a statement from a student counsellor.

* The study advisor will submit an overview to the Faculty Board of the students with whom an adapted study plan has been agreed at least three times per academic year. The BSA Committee will decide on behalf of the Faculty Board whether the BSA threshold will be adapted.

* The Faculty Board will take the consequences of the personal circumstances for the study progress into consideration when issuing a study advice at the end of the year, and will assess the study progress achieved in light of the adapted study plan.

Procedure for each category of personal circumstance within the framework of the BSA system

Illness

The student must report immediately to the study advisor in case of an illness that may hinder study progress. The student must also ensure that declarations and documentary evidence are submitted (see above). If the delay threatens to increase to 15 ECTS credit points or more, the student must also make an appointment with a student counsellor in connection with possible financial compensation from the Graduation Fund. Because a grant from this Fund can only be applied for after the end of the academic year, students are advised to make copies of expert statements/documentary evidence and to store these carefully.

If in doubt, the student should report as soon as possible to the study advisor and, depending on the extent of the delay, also to a student counsellor!

Functional impairment

If a student needs an adapted learning environment as a result of a chronic performance disability or learning disorder, an appointment must be made with a student counsellor before the start of the academic year. The student counsellor and the student will discuss the nature of the impairment and the student's learning history, and the student counsellor will assess whether the requested adaptations can be sufficiently supported by statements from experts. On this basis, the student counsellor can draw up a statement for the degree programme or the relevant Board of Examiners indicating which adaptations are desirable and/or essential.

In addition, the student counsellor will inform the student about the BSA and the Graduation Fund. If it is clear before the start of the degree programme that the student will not be able to achieve the nominal study progress, the student counsellor will refer the student as soon as possible to the study advisor. He or she will discuss with the student what adaptations to the study plan are necessary and what the consequences of the reduced student workload will be for the BSA threshold. The Faculty Board will decide whether the threshold will be adapted. The study advisor will also initiate contact with the Graduation Fund.

Pregnancy/maternity leave

A student who becomes pregnant must report to the study advisor as soon as possible. In principle, the student will be considered unable or virtually unable to make any study progress in the four months around the birth. The study advisor will always refer to the student counsellors in the event of a pregnancy, and the student can confer with them about whether to temporarily suspend her degree programme or to continue and claim four months support from the Graduation Fund.

Extraordinary family circumstances

Students must report to the study advisor as soon as possible in the event of a serious family circumstance resulting in study delay and, if the delay threatens to exceed 15 ECTS credit points, the student counsellor must be informed as soon as possible in connection with possible financial compensation. Students should also report when in doubt.

Appendix 3: Form confirming medical circumstances

Form confirming medical circumstances (illness, functional impairment)

Information for the student

Every student at our University must pass a study progress threshold set by the Board of the University for the propaedeutic phase of the degree programme. If a student does not succeed, the degree programme can issue a binding (negative) study advice (BSA). If extraordinary personal circumstances hinder you from passing the BSA threshold, you can submit a request via your study advisor for postponement of the advice and possibly an adapted threshold. Your Faculty's BSA Committee will decide whether or not to grant your request. BSA committees only deal with requests accompanied by documentary proof of the circumstance in question. If your study delay is being caused by a *temporary or chronic extraordinary medical circumstance*, please ask your GP or a specialist (psychologist, physiotherapist) to fill in this form and attach it to your request as documentary proof.

N.B. If the delay is caused by a learning disorder such as dyslexia, a dyslexia statement signed by a remedial educationalist will be sufficient.

Information for the GP/paramedic

This form is not a medical declaration.

You do not need to make any content-related statements about the nature and/or treatment of the symptoms of the student/patient. We also do not ask you to assess the extent to which the medical circumstance has influenced or will influence study progress or whether there are grounds for adapting the study progress threshold. Please only indicate below **that** there is or has been 'a medical circumstance':

Details to be entered by the student:

Surname, given name(s):

.....
.....

Date of birth:

.....
.....

Student number:

.....
.....

Details to be entered by the GP/specialist:

The undersigned, surname and initials

.....
....

Address:

.....
.....

BIG Registration number:

.....
.....

The student suffered a medical circumstance in the period from

..... to



The student has had a functional impairment or chronic disease since

.....

Date

Signature

Stamp