



University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2023-2024

Part A Financial support for students who incur study delay due to extraordinary circumstances

Introduction

Article 2a of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) relates to the Graduation Fund (*Profileringfondsen*) and contains regulations concerning financial support for students who incur study delay due to extraordinary circumstances.

These Regulations apply to requests for the 2023-2024 academic year.

The Board of the University approved the regulations set out below concerning the granting of financial support on the basis of these legal regulations after approval by the University Council on 4 July 2023.

See also: www.rug.nl/studievertraging. This page provides more information about these regulations, as well as a link to the request form.

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Chapter 1 General provisions

Article 1. Definitions

Academic year:	A period of time that starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following year.
Act:	The Higher Education and Research Act (WHW: <i>Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk onderzoek</i>).
B:	The nominal duration of a university Bachelor's degree programme.
Board of the University:	The Board of the University of Groningen.
CLRS:	Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (<i>Centraal Loket Rechtsbescherming Studenten</i>).
Degree programme:	A Bachelor's or Master's degree programme.
DUO:	The Dutch Education Executive Agency (<i>Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs</i>).
Higher education:	Education provided at research universities (WO) and universities of applied sciences (HBO).
M:	The nominal duration of a university Master's degree programme.
Nominal student workload:	In accordance with Article 7.4 of the Act, the nominal student workload is 60 ECTS credit points per academic year.
Performance-related grant:	Article 5.1 WSF 2000: basic grant, a travel allowance, possibly with the addition of a supplementary grant and bonus for a single-parent family. The performance-related grant is awarded by DUO for the combined nominal duration of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. The travel allowance is awarded for the combined nominal duration of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, plus one extra year.
Statutory tuition fees:	The tuition fees as referred to in Article 7.45 of the Act for registration as a student, set by the Minister.
University tuition fees:	The tuition fees as referred to in Article 7.46 of the Act for registration as a student, set by the Board of the University;
Student counsellor:	Contact person for students who have study progress problems.
Student finance:	A performance-related grant and the student loan that students receive during the nominal duration of their degree programme, followed by a three-year loan period, in accordance with the WSF 2000.
Student:	A person who has paid tuition fees and is registered at the UG, with all the rights connected to registration as set out in Article 7.34 of the Act.
Study advisor:	The person appointed by the faculty to inform, advise and guide students in their study planning and progress, as well as in their choice of degree programme.
UFC:	University Funds Committee; a committee appointed by the Board of the University which advises the Board with regard to decisions made on the basis of these Regulations.
UG:	University of Groningen.

WSF 2000: Student Finance Act 2000 (*Wet studiefinanciering 2000*).

All other terms used in these Regulations will have the meaning that the Act ascribes to them.

Article 2. Conditions for financial support

The UG provides financial support from the Graduation Fund (*Profileringfondsen*) to students who have incurred study delay due to exceptional circumstances, and who:

- are enrolled in a full-time degree programme at the UG for which they have not yet been awarded a degree, and
- have paid the relevant statutory tuition fees or university tuition fees to the UG.

Article 3. Extraordinary circumstances

Extraordinary circumstances include:

- a. illness of the claimant
- b. pregnancy and childbirth
- c. physical, sensory or other functional impairments
- d. extraordinary family circumstances
- e. an insufficiently feasible study programme
- f. the claimant's degree programme not being reaccredited while the student has not yet gained their degree
- g. the provision of informal care by the claimant.

Article 4. Duration of support

1. In addition to the provisions of Articles 2 and 5, on the basis of these Regulations students will be entitled to financial support for study delay incurred during the *Bachelor's phase* for one additional year calculated from the first year of registration in higher education (B+1).
2. In addition to the provisions of Articles 2 and 5, on the basis of these Regulations students will be entitled to financial support for study delay incurred during the *Master's phase* for one additional year calculated from the first year of registration for the Master's degree programme in higher education (M+1). This is based on the nominal duration of the Master's programme in which the student is enrolled in the period to which the request relates.

Chapter 2 Study delay due to extraordinary circumstances

Article 5. Reporting study delay

1. Students must immediately report to their study advisor as soon as it becomes clear that their exceptional circumstance will last more than a month (resulting in a study delay of 5 ECTS credit points or more) to discuss how the study delay can be limited as much as possible.
2. The study delay is calculated on the basis of the nominal student workload of 60 ECTS. All ECTS credit points earned will be counted, regardless of the degree programme in which they were earned. ECTS credit points earned through the Honours College or through another degree programme or extracurricular activity will be counted in the calculation of the study delay.
3. After the initial report to the study advisor, the student must also contact the student counsellor immediately if the study delay increases to more than 15 ECTS credit points during the academic year.
4. If the study advisor refers the student to a student counsellor, the student must make an appointment with the student counsellor as soon as possible but no later than four weeks after reporting to the study advisor.
5. The study advisor or student counsellor will complete a digital registration form on the basis of the study delay circumstances. This form also includes the agreements made. The student must tick this digital form for approval via the website.
6. Students who are unable to report to the study advisor and/or the student counsellor themselves must appoint someone to do this for them.
7. Students must follow the advice of the study advisor and/or student counsellor and make every effort to minimize the study delay.
8. A student who fails to report to the study advisor in good time and is not required to report to the student counsellor in accordance with these Regulations will only qualify for support from the moment that they report to the study advisor.
9. A student who reports to the study advisor in good time but then fails to report to the student counsellor in good time will only qualify for support from the moment that they report to the student counsellor.
10. A student who fails to report to the study advisor in good time but then does report to the student counsellor in good time will only qualify for support from the moment that they report to the student counsellor.
11. A student who fails to report to both the study advisor and the student counsellor in good time will only qualify for support from the moment that they report to the student counsellor.

Article 6. Extension of student finance/performance-related grant

1. In the event that the study delay is caused by a medical circumstance, the student may in certain cases, and only with the support of the student counsellor, request an extension of the performance-related grant from DUO. The study delay upon which such a request is based must have been reported to the student counsellor in accordance with Article 5 of these Regulations. The student counsellor will assess whether the extension request qualifies for support.
2. The study delay is calculated on the basis of the nominal student workload of 60 ECTS. All ECTS credit points earned will be counted, regardless in which degree programme they were earned. ECTS credit points earned in the Honours College or in other degree programme and extracurricular ECTS will be counted in the calculation of the study delay.
3. A student who is granted an extension of a performance-related grant from DUO, or who is supported by the student counsellor in their request for extension of the performance-related grant, cannot receive financial support from the Graduation Fund for that period. This also applies to students who choose not to submit a request with DUO.

4. The performance-related grant received from DUO is extended by 12 months. If a student has been granted an extension of the performance-related grant in a particular academic year and once again incurs a study delay in the following academic years due to special circumstances, the student will only be re-eligible for financial support from the Graduation Fund if the study delay that qualifies for support exceeds in total the 12 months covered by the extension of the performance-related grant.

Article 7. Duration and limitation of support

1. Regardless of which extraordinary circumstance caused their study delay, students are eligible for financial support on the grounds of Part A of the Graduation Fund Regulations for **a maximum of 12 months for the entire period (B+1 and M+1 together)** during which they were registered at the UG in accordance with Article 2, and for a maximum of **6 months for each academic year**.
2. The starting date for calculating the 12-month period is 1 September 2021. Any study delay incurred before 1 September 2021 will not be counted in this calculation.
3. Financial support is only granted per full month.
4. No financial support will be granted for study delays of less than one month (less than 5 ECTS credit points).
5. Eligible for financial support is the study delay incurred during the period in which the special circumstances occurred. Study delays incurred as a result of access requirements within the curriculum will not be reimbursed.

Article 8. Amount of financial support

Financial support is related to the extent of the study delay and amounts to €321,- per month, plus any supplementary grants that the student received during the period in which the study delay was incurred.

Article 9. Request for financial support

1. Students can submit their request for financial support between 1 September and 31 January following the academic year during which the extraordinary circumstance occurred by completing the digital request form and uploading the necessary documentary evidence on the website www.rug.nl/studievertraging.
2. Requests submitted on or after 1 February of the year after the academic year in which the extraordinary circumstance occurred will be considered not to have been submitted in good time and will not be processed.
3. If the request is incomplete, the student will be granted four weeks to complete the request. If the request is not completed within this period, it will not be processed further. The student will be notified of this.
4. The Board of the University will make a decision with regard to the request after consultation with the UFC. This will take place as soon as possible but within a maximum of eight weeks of receipt of the completed request.
5. The decision will be:
 - a. either the granting of financial support, including the method of payment, or
 - b. rejection of the request, or
 - c. non-consideration of the request because it was submitted after the deadline, or
 - d. non-consideration of the request because the request was incomplete and the missing information was not provided before the deadline.
6. The decision, and the reasons for it, will be communicated to the student.

Article 10. Documentary evidence

The following documents must be submitted with requests for financial support:

- a. If the request is based on circumstances referred to in Articles 3.a and 3.b: a declaration from a specialist (e.g. a physician or psychologist) specifying the period during which the circumstances occurred.
- b. If the request is based on a physical, sensory or other functional impairment as referred to in Article 3.c: a declaration by a specialist stating that such a functional impairment is indeed present. This may be a one-off declaration provided by an expert.
- c. If the request is based on extraordinary family circumstances as referred to in Article 3.d, written proof of the extraordinary family circumstances.
- d. If the request is based on grounds as referred to in Article 3.e, a declaration from the faculty.
- e. If the request is based on loss of accreditation for the degree programme as referred to in Article 3.f, written proof and an explanation to support the request.
- f. If the request is based on the provision of informal care as referred to in Article 3.g, written proof of the provision of informal care.
- g. The documentary evidence referred to in Articles 10.a-f may be submitted in Dutch or English.
- h. If the student has received a supplementary grant during the period in which they incurred the study delay, they must also submit a notification from DUO to that effect. If a supplementary grant was received in the period in which the study delay occurred, then the Notice of Study Financing must also be enclosed which states the amount of supplementary grant received in the relevant period (downloadable in My DUO. Instructions for downloading can be found at www.rug.nl/studievertraging).
- i. The most recent printout of the student's study results, in chronological order. This must be a certified printout from the Student Administration Office (i.e. not the student's own printout from Progress WWW).

Chapter 3 Transitional and final provisions

Article 11. Lodging an objection

Students may lodge an objection against a decision taken by or on behalf of the Board of the University on the grounds of these Regulations within six weeks of the date of the decision with the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS) via the website www.rug.nl/clrs or P.O. Box 72, 9700 AB Groningen.

Article 12. Concurrence with other parts of the Graduation Fund Regulations

In the event that study delay within the meaning of these Regulations coincides with membership of a consultative body or board/committee, or with top-level sports activities as set out in the 'University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2023-2024, Part B', the specified term for these activities will be taken into consideration when determining the extent of the study delay.

The maximum number of months of financial support per academic year on the grounds of parts A and B of the Graduation Fund Regulations together is twelve.

Article 13. Hardship clause

In some cases, a request for financial support may be granted if rejection would result in a situation of unfairness of overriding nature.

Article 14. Deviation from the regulations

In exceptional circumstances the Board of the University may deviate from the provisions of these Regulations.

Article 15. Date of commencement

These Regulations will take effect on 1 September 2023 and will apply to requests relating to a study delay incurred in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Article 16. Citation and publication of these regulations

1. These regulations may be cited as: 'University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2023-2024', possibly supplemented by 'Part A: Financial support for students who incur study delay due to force majeure'.
2. These regulations have been sent to the faculty boards for reference, are published on www.rug.nl and are included as an appendix in the Student Charter.

Groningen, 4 July 2023

the Board of the University