



University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2017-2018

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

Introduction

Section 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

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 29th of June 2017.

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

Ba:	The nominal duration of a Bachelor's degree programme.
CLRS:	Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights.
Board of the University:	The Board of the University of Groningen.
DUO:	<i>Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs</i> , the Dutch Education Executive Agency.
Higher education:	Education provided at universities (WO) and universities of applied sciences (HBO).
Ma:	The nominal duration of a Master's degree programme.
Degree programme:	A Bachelor's or Master's degree programme.
Performance-related grant:	A travel allowance, possibly with the addition of a supplementary grant and bonuses. 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.
UG:	University of Groningen.
Student:	A person who has paid tuition fees and is registered at the University of Groningen, with all the rights connected to registration as set out in WHW Article 7.34.
Student Support & Career Services (SSCS):	University of Groningen expertise centre in the field of study and career guidance.
Student counsellor:	Confidential advisor for students who have study progress problems, employed by the SSCS.
Study advisor:	Employee of the Faculty; advisor for study-related issues, study planning, study progress and the choice of degree programme.
Academic year:	A period of time that starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following year.
Student finance:	A performance-related grant plus 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.
UFC:	University Funds Committee; a committee installed by the Board of the University which advises the Board with regard to decisions made on the basis of these Regulations.
Act:	The Higher Education and Research Act (WHW: <i>Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk onderzoek</i>).
WSF 2000:	<i>Wet studiefinanciering 2000</i> (Student Finance Act 2000).
<i>Wet studievoorschot hoger onderwijs</i> :	Higher Education Student Loan Act. The amendment to legislation including the WSF 2000 (Student Finance Act 2000), following the introduction of a new student finance system: the student loan.
Statutory tuition fees:	The tuition fees as referred to in WHW Art. 7.45 for registration as a student, set by the Minister.

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

Article 2. Conditions for financial support

The University of Groningen provides financial support from the Graduation Fund (*Profileringfondsen*) to students who incur study delay due to extraordinary circumstances, and who

- are enrolled as full-time students in a degree programme and have not yet gained their degree
- have paid the relevant statutory tuition fees to the University of Groningen
- are or were entitled to a performance-related grant on the basis of the WSF 2000 during the period to which the request relates.

Article 3. Extraordinary circumstances

The following may constitute grounds for financial assistance:

- a. illness of the claimant
- b. pregnancy and childbirth of the claimant
- c. physical, sensory or other functional impairments on the part of the claimant
- d. extraordinary family circumstances
- e. an insufficiently feasible study programme
- f. a student's degree programme not being reaccredited while the student has not yet gained his/her degree.

Article 4. Duration of support

1. In addition to the provisions of Article 2, 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 (Ba + 1).
2. In addition to the provisions of Article 2, 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 in Higher Education (Ma + 1).

Chapter 2 Study delay due to force majeure

Article 5. Reporting study delay

1. A student must immediately report to his/her study advisor as soon as it becomes clear that the extraordinary 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. After the initial report to the study advisor, the student must also contact the student counsellor immediately if the study delay increases during the academic year to more than 15 ECTS.
3. 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, and in any case within 4 weeks of reporting to the study advisor.
4. 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.
5. Students who are unable to report to the study advisor and/or the student counsellor themselves must appoint someone to do this for them.
6. Students must follow the advice of the study advisor and student counsellor and make every effort to minimize the study delay.

Article 6. Reporting obligation for functional impairments

In the event of expected study delay due to a functional impairment or chronic illness, the student must report in accordance with the provisions of Article 5.

Article 7. Extension of student finance

1. In the event that the study delay is caused by a temporary or structural functional impairment, the student may in certain cases request an extension of the performance-related grant from DUO after consultation with the student counsellor. 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.
2. Students who are awarded an extension of the performance-related grant received from DUO are not entitled to financial support from the Graduation Fund during that period.
3. The extension period for the performance-related grant is 12 months. Students who have been awarded an extension of the performance-related grant in a certain academic year and in subsequent years again incur study delay due to extraordinary circumstances, will not be entitled to financial support from the Graduation Fund until the total study delay that may qualify for support exceeds the 12 months covered by the extended performance-related grant.

Article 8. Determining the extent of the study delay

1. The link between the extraordinary circumstance as referred to in Article 3 and the study programme will be taken into consideration when determining the extent of the study delay. The number of months of study delay caused by an extraordinary circumstance can thus normally only be calculated at the end of the period Ba+1 or Ma+1.
2. Financial support is only granted per full month.
3. No financial support will be granted for study delays of less than one month (less than 5 ECTS).

Article 9. Amount of financial support

The financial support, related to the amount of study delay, will be € 286 per month, plus any supplementary grants and bonuses that the student received in the last month of the academic year in which the extraordinary circumstances occurred or in the last month of the period of the performance-related grant.

Article 10. Request for provisional granting of financial support

1. The request can be submitted between 1 September and 31 January following the academic year during which the extraordinary circumstance occurred.
2. Students must request financial support by means of the digital request form on the website: www.rug.nl/studievertraging.
3. Students must upload the documentary evidence via the website, and must then fill in the digital request form in accordance with Article 10.2.
4. Students can check the status of the request procedure at any time via the website.
5. Requests submitted on or after 1 February of the year after the academic year in which the extraordinary circumstance occurred will not be processed.
6. If the request is incomplete, the student will be granted four weeks to complete the request. If the request is not completed within this term, it will not be considered any further. The student will be notified of this.
7. 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 8 weeks of receipt of the completed request.
8. The decision will be:
 - a. either the provisional granting of financial support, 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.
9. The decision, and the reasons for it, will be communicated to the student in writing.

Article 11. Request for definitive granting of financial support

1. A request for definitive approval of provisionally granted financial support may be submitted:
 - a. one month before until no more than six months after the end of the period Ba+1 or Ma+1, or
 - b. one month before until no more than six months after graduation or termination of registration.
2. The decision will be:
 - a. either the definitive granting of financial support, 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.
3. The amount of financial support will depend on the amount of study delay actually incurred, which will be determined on the basis of the previously issued statement(s) of provisional granting of financial support from the Graduation Fund and/or the granting of an additional year of performance-related grant by DUO, in combination with the most recent authorized printout of the student's study results.
4. The decision, supported by reasons, will be communicated to the student in writing.

Article 12. Documentary evidence

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

- a. If the request is based on circumstances referred to in Article 3 under a and b, a declaration from a specialist (e.g. a physician or psychologist) specifying the period during which the circumstances occurred, or, in the case of a request for definitive awarding of provisional support, the statement of provisional approval issued previously.
- b. In the event of a structural functional impairment or chronic illness as referred to in Article 3 under c, a declaration by a specialist must be presented stating that there is a structural functional impairment or chronic illness. This declaration only has to be submitted once.
- c. If the request is based on extraordinary family circumstances as referred to in Article 3 under d, written proof of the extraordinary family circumstances.
- d. If the request is based on grounds as referred to in Article 3 under 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 under f, written proof and an explanation to support the request.
- f. A notification from DUO stating the amount of the grant in the last month of the academic year during which the extraordinary circumstances occurred. If relevant, a notification from DUO stating the amount of the last month of the performance-related grant during the loan period.
- g. The most recent printout of the student's study results in chronological order, authorized by the Student Administration Office (i.e. not the student's own printout from Progress WWW).

Article 13. Payment of financial support

Payment will take place close to the date indicated by the student. The date of payment must be within a year of termination of the registration.

Chapter 3. Transitional and final provisions

Article 14. Transitional provision

Students who incur study delay as a result of extraordinary circumstances referred to in Article 3 of these Regulations, and to whom the Higher Education Student Loan Act (*Wet studievoorschot hoger onderwijs*) did not apply on 1 September 2016, are entitled to financial support in accordance with the University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2014-2015.

Article 15. Possibility of appeal

Students can lodge an appeal 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, 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. .

Article 16. Concurrence

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 sport activities as designed in the 'University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2017-2018, Part C', 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 is twelve.

Article 17. 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 18. Deviation from the regulations

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

Article 19. Date of commencement and validity

These regulations will take effect on 1 September 2017 and will remain in force until 1 September 2018.

Article 20. Citation and publication of these regulations

1. These regulations may be cited as: 'University of Groningen Graduation Fund Regulations 2017-2018', possibly with the addition of 'Part A: Financial support for students who incur study delay due to extraordinary circumstances'.
2. These regulations have been sent to the Faculty Boards for reference, published on the internet and included as an appendix in the Student Charter.

Groningen, 17th of July 2017, the Board of the University