

# Regulations for the Binding Recommendation on Continuation of Studies (BSA)

## Faculty of Social Sciences

With effect from 2016-2017

### Article 1 Provision of study advice

1. The Faculty Board shall advise each student of the faculty's Bachelor's programmes on the continuation of their studies no later than at the end of their first year of enrolment. The study advice is issued on behalf of the Faculty Board by the Faculty's Binding Study Advice Committee (BSA Committee).
2. In the Teaching and Examination Regulations, the Faculty Board sets the standard that students must meet in order to demonstrate their suitability for the programme. For the bachelor's programmes of the faculty, the standard is 42 EC.
3. Exemptions are taken into account when determining whether the standard has been achieved.
4. Students who start their programme at the VU in the second or third year of the programme do not receive study advice.
5. Students whose enrolment was terminated before 1 February (request for deregistration before 1 February) will not receive any study advice either.
6. Students who have been granted a postponement of the study advice by the BSA Committee in their first year of study will instead receive it in their second year of study.

### Article 2 Binding negative study advice

1. The Faculty Board may attach a rejection to the recommendation if the student has not met the standard of 42 EC of the first year of study (binding negative recommendation).
2. The binding negative recommendation will not apply if it has been established that the student was not able to meet the standard as a result of personal circumstances. The circumstances in question are set out in Article 2.1 of the WHW Implementation Regulation 2008; see also Appendix 1. In this case, the student will be allowed to obtain the remaining EC to meet the standard for the first year of study during the subsequent year of enrolment.
3. A binding negative study advice entails that the student concerned cannot enroll for the programme the three following academic years.

### Article 3 Student guidance

1. At the beginning of the academic year, the academic advisors, on behalf of the Faculty Board, will inform all students of the regulations concerning the study advice. The study advice itself, the final standard, the mentorship, the role of the academic advisors and the bearing of personal circumstances on the study advice are explained. This BSA regulation can be found on VU.net.
2. In the first weeks of the programme, each first-year student has a number of meetings under the supervision of a student mentor. The mentoring sessions are part of a course in period 1. The student mentor guides the students in the new study environment, offers help with study related questions and is able to refer the student to the right supervisors where necessary.
3. Every first year student is assigned a lecturer mentor. In the first year, the mentor will have at least one individual or group discussion with the students in his/her group.
4. The student will receive:
  - a. information about their study progress provided by the academic advisor in November and April;
  - b. a study progress letter from the BSA committee before 31 January;
  - c. the final binding study advice of the BSA committee by 22 August at the latest.
5. In November, January and April, students receive a green, orange or red study progress advice in accordance with section 4, paragraphs a and b. The Faculty Board has established the following standards for this purpose:
  - a. November (12 EC maximum obtainable): green: 12 EC, orange: 6 EC, red: 0 EC;
  - b. January (24 EC maximum obtainable): green: 24 EC, orange: 12 or 18 EC, red: 0 or 6 EC;
  - c. April (42 EC maximum obtainable): green: 42 EC, orange: 24, 30 or 36 EC, red: 0, 6, 12 or 18 EC.
6. A student who performs below the standard in November, January or April (orange or red advice), is strongly advised to schedule an appointment with the academic advisor to discuss their progress. If necessary, the student will draw up a study plan in consultation with the academic advisor.
7. The student who has obtained between 42 and 60 EC at the end of his/her first year of enrolment will receive a positive study advice.

#### **Article 4 Personal circumstances**

1. A student who expects his or her study progress to be delayed due to personal circumstances, as specified in Article 2.1 of the WHW Implementation Regulation, will contact the academic advisor as soon as possible, but at the latest within three months after the circumstances have arisen or have become known. If possible, the report will be supported by documentary evidence. If applicable, the student must submit a request for postponement of the standard to the Faculty BSA Committee in June using the available web form in VUnet.
2. At the beginning of July, the BSA committee will consider the requests of students who have requested the postponement of the binding study advice. The BSA committee checks with the academic advisor whether the indicated circumstances are known, and assesses whether the circumstances fit in the category 'personal circumstances', as described in the implementing regulations. The BSA committee weighs up the nature and severity of the personal circumstances. If the committee honors the student's request, the student will not receive an intended decision as referred to in Article 5, paragraph 1, but will receive instead a so-called postponement letter.
3. Personal circumstances which the student did not report before 1 July can only be submitted during the hearing, as referred to in Article 5, Paragraph 2.

#### **Article 5 Determining study advice**

1. If a student is eligible for a binding negative recommendation, the BSA committee will send them the proposed negative binding recommendation by 31 July at the latest. If there are factual errors in the determination of the intended decision, the student will have the opportunity to contact the BSA committee within 14 days after the date of the decision via the relevant web form on VUnet.
2. A student who receives a negative binding study advice is given the opportunity to be heard by the BSA committee. The student can register for a hearing via the web form in VUnet within 14 days after receipt of the proposed negative decision.
3. The BSA committee will send the final decision to the student in writing within 14 days after the hearing, but no later than 22 August.

#### **Article 6 Appeals against study advice**

Within six weeks after the announcement of the negative binding study advice, the student may lodge an appeal with the Examination Appeals Board, accompanied by a sound motivation.

## Appendix 1

Article 2.1. Implementation regulation 2008 - Personal circumstances in the event of binding study advice and reference to a specialization in the field of study  
Higher Education and Scientific Research Act

1. The personal circumstances referred to in [Articles 7.8b, third paragraph](#), and [7.9, third paragraph](#), of the Act encompass exclusively:
  - a. illness of the person concerned,
  - b. physical, sensory or other functional impairment of the person concerned,
  - c. pregnancy of the person concerned,
  - d. special family circumstances,
  - e. the membership, including the chairmanship, of:
    1. at research universities: the council, the faculty council, the body established on the basis of the participation scheme, as referred to in [Article 9.30, third paragraph](#), respectively [Article 9.51, second paragraph](#), of the Act, the Board of a study programme or the Study Programme Committee, as well as membership of the Board of a foundation which, according to its Articles of Association, has as its objective the exploitation of facilities belonging to the student services, or of a body which, in the opinion of the Board of the institution, is equivalent to that of a foundation, in view of its duties,
    2. at universities of applied sciences: the participation council, district council, student committee or study programme committee,
  - f. other circumstances in the regulations referred to in [Articles 7.8b, sixth paragraph](#) and [7.9, fifth paragraph](#) of the Act to be indicated by the Executive Board of the institution in which the person concerned develops activities within the framework of the organization and management of the affairs of the institution,
  - g. membership of the board of a student organization of any size with full legal capacity, or of a similar organization of any size, in which the promotion of the general interest of society is paramount and which actually carries out activities to this end.
2. For the application of subsection 1, part g, the institutional board may lay down more detailed rules concerning the maximum number of board members eligible for each organization per academic year, as well as the type of administrative posts eligible.