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

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

**Article 1 Issuing the recommendation**

1. The Faculty Board will issue every student in full-time Bachelor's programmes with a recommendation regarding the continuation of his/her studies (also known as the BSA) no later than the end of the first year of study. The recommendation on continuation of studies is issued by the faculty BSA Committee on behalf of the Faculty Board.
2. The standards that the student must meet in order to demonstrate his/her suitability for the programme will be set by the Faculty Board in the Academic and Examination Regulations. For the faculty’s Bachelor’s degree programmes, this standard is 42 credits.
3. Any exemptions are taken into account when determining whether the standard has been achieved.
4. Students who begin their studies at VU Amsterdam in the second academic year or thereafter will not receive a BSA.
5. Students whose registration is terminated before 1 February (deregistration request submitted before 1 February) will not receive a BSA.

**Article 2 Binding negative recommendation on continuation of studies**

1. The Faculty Board can issue a binding recommendation that a student may not continue his/her programme if the student has not met with the standard of 42 credits achieved in the first academic year (binding negative recommendation).
2. Any binding negative recommendation will be deferred if the student demonstrates that he/she did not meet the required standard as a consequence of his/her personal circumstances. The extenuating circumstances that may be taken into consideration are described in Article 2.1 of the Implementation Regulation of the Higher Education and Research Act 2008[[1]](#footnote-1). Deferment of the negative recommendation means that the student in question is given the opportunity to pass the remaining first-year components during the following academic year.
3. A negative recommendation on continuation of studies means that the student concerned may not register for the programme for the three subsequent academic years.

**Article 3 Student guidance**

1. At the start of the academic year, the BSA Committee, on behalf of the Faculty Board, informs all students of the regulations concerning the recommendation.This includes information about the recommendation itself, the definitive standard that students are required to meet, the role of the academic advisors and tutors, and the effect of personal circumstances on the recommendation. Within the faculty, this information is provided by means of a compulsory mentorship meeting with the academic advisor in September. The latest BSA regulations can be found on VUnet.
2. In the first few weeks of the study programme, every first-year student has a number of meetings under the supervision of a student mentor. The mentor meetings are part of the course entitled Bachelor’s Study Group Part 1.The mentor helps the students find their way in their new study environment, provides help with any study-related questions and may refer the student to the appropriate supervisor(s), where necessary.
3. Every first-year student is also assigned a tutor, who is a teaching staff member. In the first year, the tutor holds two one-to-one meetings with the students in his/her group. The *first meeting* takes place on a date between the beginning of November and mid-January. At this meeting, the emphasis is on whether the student has chosen the right course of study. The *second meeting* takes place on a date between mid-May and early June. If necessary, the tutor will focus on the academic performance of the student, especially in cases where some first-year courses have yet to be completed.
4. The student will be provided with:
   1. information on their study progress after the first examination period (November), and before the final examination period in June;
   2. a study progress recommendation before 31 January;
   3. the final binding recommendation on continuation of studies, no later than 22 August.
5. Students are issued with a green, orange or red study progress recommendation in January and June. The Faculty Board has set the following standards for the progress updates in November, January and June, as referenced in paragraph 4. The standards for November (max. 12 credits possible) are: green: 12 credits, orange: 6 credits, red; 0 credits. The standards for January (max. 24 credits possible) are: green: 24 credits, orange: 12 or 18 credits, red: 0 or 6 credits. The standards for June (max. 54 credits possible) are: green: 42, 48 or 54 credits, orange: 24, 30 or 36 credits, red: 0, 6, 12 or 18 credits.
6. At each of the above stages, any student who has been issued with ‘orange’ or ‘red’ advice is urged to make an appointment with the academic advisor about his/her progress. The student is asked to prepare a study plan, if necessary in consultation with the academic advisor.
7. In order to receive a positive recommendation on continuation of studies, the student must have obtained between 42 and 60 credits by the end of their first year of registration.

**Article 4 Personal circumstances**

1. A student who expects his/her study progress to be delayed due to personal circumstances, as referred to in Article 2.1 of the Implementation Regulations of the Higher Education and Research Act, must notify the academic advisor of this as early as possible, but no later than three months after the circumstance arises or becomes evident. This notification is to be accompanied, where possible, by supporting documents. The student must use the web form available for this purpose on VUnet, in order to submit his/her application for the deferment of the binding recommendation on continuation of studies to the Faculty BSA Committee in June.
2. In early July, the BSA Committee reviews the applications from students who have submitted a request. The BSA Committee contacts the relevant academic advisors for more information on the circumstances described on the form, and then determines whether these circumstances meet the requirements for deferment based on extenuating personal circumstances, as described in the implementation regulations. The BSA Committee considers both the nature and the severity of the personal circumstances and the chances of academic success. If the committee decides to honour the student’s request for deferment, the student will not receive a proposed decision as referred to in Article 5, paragraph 1. Instead, he/she will receive a letter of deferment.
3. The student will only be allowed to inform the Committee of any personal circumstances that he/she has previously omitted to communicate before 1 July during the hearing, as referred to in Article 5, paragraph 2.

**Article 5 Determining the recommendation**

1. If a student is to be issued with a negative binding recommendation on continuation of studies, the BSA Committee will send this to him/her no later than 31 July. The student is then given the opportunity to contact the BSA Committee regarding any factual errors within 14 days of the date of the decision.
2. Students who receive a proposed negative recommendation on continuation of studies will be given the opportunity to attend a hearing with the BSA Committee. The student can register for a hearing using the appropriate form on VUnet within 14 days of receiving the proposed negative recommendation.
3. The BSA Committee will send the student the final decision in writing within 14 days of the hearing, and no later than 22 August.

**Article 6 Appealing against the recommendation**

Any student who disagrees with a binding negative recommendation on continuation of studies can lodge an appeal, stating their reasons, within six weeks of the announcement of the decision, with the Examination Appeals Board, Attn: Ms. A. van Donk, Administration Office, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam. If the matter is urgent, in addition to lodging an appeal, the student can also submit an application for a temporary facility to the Chair of the Examination Appeals Board. This application should also be sent to Ms A.M. van Donk,

1. **Article 2.1** **Extenuating personal circumstances pertaining to the recommendation on continuation of studies and referral to a specialization**

   1. The extenuating personal circumstances referred to in [Articles 7.8b, third paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk7/Titel1/Paragraaf1/Artikel78b/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012), and [7.9, third paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk7/Titel1/Paragraaf1/Artikel79/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012) of the Act are limited to:

   1. a period of ill health
   2. physical, sensory or other impairments
   3. pregnancy
   4. exceptional family circumstances
   5. membership, including chairmanship, of:
      1. at universities: the University Council, Faculty Council, the participatory body established on the grounds of [Article 9.30, third paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk9/TITEL2/Artikel930/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012), or [Article 9.51, second paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk9/Titel3/Artikel951/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012) of the Act, the management or Programme Committee of a study programme, membership of the board of a foundation whose statutes allow for the provision of facilities as part of student services, or any body with equivalent tasks in the opinion of the board of the institution concerned,
      2. at universities of applied science: the participation council, staff and student advisory committee, student committee or education committee,
   6. other circumstances to be designated by the board of the institution in the regulation as referred to in [Articles 7.8b, sixth paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk7/Titel1/Paragraaf1/Artikel78b/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012), and [7.9, fifth paragraph](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005682/Hoofdstuk7/Titel1/Paragraaf1/Artikel79/geldigheidsdatum_31-08-2012) of the Act, whereby the person concerned engages in activities as part of the organization and administration of the affairs of the institution
   7. membership of the board of a student organization of a certain size and with full legal recognition, or a similar organization of a certain size that advocates on matters of social importance and that initiates or participates in activities in that regard.

   2. The institutional board may, for the purposes of the first paragraph, subsection *g*, set specific rules regarding the maximum number of eligible board members per organization per year, as well as which administrative offices are eligible. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)