



PROTOCOL ON
STUDYING WITH A DISABILITY
AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Preamble

The purpose of this protocol is to provide clarity about the possibilities of studying with a disability at Leiden University. It aims to define the responsibilities of both the student and the University as precisely as possible. The co-ordination of all aspects of studying with a disability has consequently been assigned to one centre: the Fenestra Disability Centre, a section of the Department of Study and Student Support, which itself is part of Leiden University's Student and Educational Affairs Expertise Centre.

The protocol provides guidelines aimed at limiting study delay, increasing the feasibility of a studying for a degree and avoiding drop-out in order to allow students with a disability to participate in the teaching on an equal footing with other students. The incentive policy for students with a disability is of great significance here because it can have a considerable effect on the study success of this group of students.

Students with a handicap or chronic illness need extra or special facilities during their studies. Examples of these vary from wider doors and electronic door openers for wheelchair-bound students to extra examination time for students with dyslexia.

Pursuant to the Act on Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Handicap or Chronic Illness (*Wet gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap of chronische ziekte*; WGBHCz), Leiden University is obliged to make effective arrangements for students with a disability by providing them with special facilities. Since 1 January 2011, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) has assessed, during its institutional audit or programme accreditation, whether educational institutions meet these requirements. It assesses whether 'facilities that promote the accessibility and feasibility of the programme for students with a disability' are available. The educational institutions are required to take three conditions into consideration here:

- (1) The modification must actually remove an impediment.
- (2) The modification must be necessary, which means it is not possible to solve the problem in another way.
- (3) The modification may not be too expensive for the educational establishment and should not be overly arduous.

The accreditation is part of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (WHW Article 5a.8a, second paragraph under e).

In order to promote the accessibility and feasibility of the degree programmes for students with a disability, an environment must be created and maintained, in which these students can develop to the full.



This protocol is part of the policy implemented by Leiden University with regard to providing an equal, discrimination-free study environment for students with a disability. It deals with those issues that must make studying with a disability possible:

1. Information (information about studying with a disability should be part of the student information service);
2. Physical infrastructure (accessibility of buildings and lecture rooms, facilities and teaching materials);
3. Supervision (supervision of students during their studies);
4. Expertise (provision of expertise about disabilities and facilities at programme level);
5. Personal learning plans (agreements about alternative learning plans for a programme that the student can feasibly study);
6. Examinations (offering alternative examination provisions);
7. Guarantees regarding quality and continuity (improving and upholding the policy on studying with a disability).

Definition of terms

Student with a disability: student with a handicap or chronic illness as provided for in the WGBHCz.

Student: anyone following a degree programme at Leiden University.

Supervisor: the staff member of Leiden University assigned to a student with a disability, understood at least to mean the study adviser, student psychologist or lecturer.

Fenestra: Fenestra Disability Centre; the University information centre for students with a disability and the student counsellors who are part of Fenestra (<http://studenten.leidenuniv.nl/organisatie/fenestra/fenestra.html>).

Supervision: all measures, modifications and facilities available via Leiden University.

Disability: the presence of one or more visible or invisible disabilities caused by a long-term or chronic physical or psychological disorder.

Scope

This protocol is intended for students with a disability, supervisors, the Faculty Boards, the Programme Boards and the Boards of Examiners at Leiden University. It provides guidelines the provision of the necessary support by the University or the department, and defines the responsibilities of the student and the institution with regard to studying with a disability.

Fenestra: co-ordinating role

The basic strategy is to concentrate the co-ordination all aspects of studying with a disability at Fenestra and to place this in the hands of the student counsellors who are part of Fenestra. The student counsellor has a co-ordinating task that involves going through the application procedure, monitoring



the responsibilities of the student and supervisor, arranging for the necessary facilities and providing information.

Only those facilities that are approved by a particular Board of Examiners in conjunction with the student counsellor can be guaranteed.

If modifications need to be made to buildings in order to improve accessibility, due to the structural nature of the request, the Real Estate Expertise Centre (the Director of Technical Management and Projects) must be involved in the application and should give his or her approval.

Role of Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is obliged to grant facilities to students with a disability on the basis of the Course and Examination Regulations (OER). The OER contains an article about permanent functional disabilities. In general, Article 6.5 is applicable, which states the following: 'Where possible, students with a disability or chronic illness are offered the opportunity to adjust their study programmes in accordance with the limitations resulting from their disability or illness.'

The Board of Examiners in question or, if applicable, the study adviser mandated by the Board of Examiners, makes a decision based on the recommendation by Fenestra about the allocation of the facilities requested by the student. The learning outcomes of the degree programme also help determine whether it is reasonable to refuse certain facilities. The student will be informed in writing of the decision and a copy will be sent to Fenestra.

Application procedure for facilities

Students must report any disability when enrolling via Studielink on a degree programme at Leiden University.

Students with a disability must register with Fenestra in good time for an intake meeting to discuss the necessary supervision, facilities or modifications to buildings. Fenestra can also provide help with applying for these facilities.

A student application for facilities or modifications that need to be carried out will only be considered if it has been submitted to Fenestra.

Students must support their application with a certified report – in the case of dyslexia or dyscalculia from an organisation certified by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W) – on the nature of their disability.

Once Fenestra has been consulted about the application and the facilities have been allocated by the Board of Examiners, the student can be given a facilities card by Fenestra stating which facilities he or she has been allocated. This card can be used as proof that the Board of Examiners has allocated the facilities in question. The facilities card is therefore not a requirement for using the allocated facilities.



It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that an application for facilities is submitted in good time and at least four weeks before the facilities are needed. If the application is too late, the facilities cannot be guaranteed in time. Students only need to apply once for recurring arrangements (such as extra time during examinations). In the case of an application for necessary and reasonable modifications to buildings, the term within which such structural changes are carried out depends on how much time will be needed to effect these.

Responsibilities of Fenestra and the student counsellor

The student counsellor advises the Board of Examiners of the student's degree programme about the modifications that need to be made and the facilities that need to be offered, on the basis of the intake meeting and in consultation with the student.

The student counsellor indicates which arrangements are necessary, suitable and desirable in order to ensure that it is feasible for the student in question to follow the programme. The arrangements may be of a tangible (such as the accessibility of buildings, IT facilities or buddies) or intangible (such as alternative examination forms, flexibility with regard to compulsory workgroups or assignment deadline extensions) nature. The arrangements considered necessary are recorded in a – compulsory – recommendation by Fenestra.

If necessary, the student counsellor helps the student complete and submit his or her request for the required facilities.

The student counsellor draws up guidelines and advises the departments, Boards of Examiners, lecturers and, if necessary, the Real Estate Expertise Centre on applying these guidelines with regard to students with a disability who are registered at the University.

The student counsellor advises the student about possible special financial regulations that may be applicable, and helps secure funding for the arrangements that need to be made.

The student counsellor acts on behalf of Fenestra as the contact person for the Board of Examiners of the degree programme of the student with a disability. The student counsellor monitors the agreements made and records these in the student's file.

At least once a year, at the request of the student, the student counsellor and the student evaluate the arrangements made.

In the event of any differences of opinion, the student counsellor acts as mediator.

Responsibilities of the student

Any student who believes that he or she has a disability that warrants special arrangements should inform Fenestra accordingly in good time. This can be at the start of a degree programme or during the programme if the disability arises at that point.



The student draws up a written application, if necessary with the aid of Fenestra. The application and the recommendation by Fenestra are signed by the student and submitted to the Board of Examiners of the student's degree programme or, if applicable, to the study adviser mandated by the Board of Examiners.

The student is responsible for providing a certified report on the nature or his or her disability, in the case of dyslexia or dyscalculia from an organisation certified by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W).

The student must inform Fenestra as soon as possible about any changes to his or her situation, and must notify Fenestra in good time if he or she believes that new arrangements are needed.

The student keeps in regular contact with Fenestra about the implementation of the arrangements that have been made.

The student reports any complaints about the arrangements to be made in good time to Fenestra.

Role and responsibilities of the supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for the implementation of the arrangements that have been approved and of the applicable legislation.

The supervisor stays in regular contact with Fenestra about the student with a disability.

The supervisor monitors the agreements made between the student and the Board of Examiners to ensure that the facilities granted to the student are decided and implemented with due care, and that the agreements made are met.

The supervisor helps the student apply for the necessary financial support by drawing up and evaluating a study plan.

Entry into force

This protocol enters into force on 1 July 2012.

Adoption

Adopted by the Executive Board on 29 May 2012 following advice from the University Council on 21 May 2012