

Student guidance regulation



Contents

1. Vision on student guidance	3
2. Those responsible for student guidance at the faculty	3
3. Framework for student guidance by study advisor	4
4. General student guidance in the Bachelor's programmes Pre-Master's courses and Master's programmes	4
4.1 General student guidance in the Bachelor's programmes	5
4.1.1 <i>First year of the Bachelor's programme</i>	5
4.1.2 <i>Second year of the Bachelor's programme</i>	6
4.1.3 Third year of the Bachelor's programme (including Bachelor's students enrolled in the programme for over three years)	6
4.2 General student guidance in the pre-Master's courses / pre-Master's programmes	7
4.3 General student guidance in the Master's programmes	7
5. Guidance for special groups of students	7
6. Interviews with the study advisor at the student's behest	8
7. Referral to the study advisor by lecturers	8

Appendix: Table showing the structure of student guidance at the Faculty of Social Sciences

9-13

1. Vision on student guidance

In this regulation the vision on student guidance corresponds to the VU University Amsterdam's Quality Assurance Handbook (version 2011). According to the handbook, student guidance is focused on helping students complete their studies in the nominal time frame. Student guidance is intense, it promotes an ambitious culture of learning and enhances students' academic and social integration. Student guidance also concentrates on helping students who are falling behind with their studies to get back on track for an on-time degree conferral.

The following aspects are central to the concept of student guidance:

- student guidance focuses on the individual student to discuss problems that could influence the student's study progress and to draw up an alternative study plan if necessary;
- student guidance focuses on the individual student who has questions about study regulations, planning and study skills;
- student career guidance, which is an element of student guidance, is specifically geared towards providing students with insight into their own qualities, competences and skills to enable them to make well-considered choices when selecting a subsequent degree programme, deciding on subjects for their free-choice component or for their professional career;
- student guidance also focuses on the way in which programmes are structured, with the aim of preventing study-related problems;
- student guidance is geared towards admissions, selection, student progress from one year to the next and leaving the programme.

2. Those responsible for student guidance at the faculty

The Faculty Board has final responsibility for the provision of an adequate student guidance structure within the faculty. Student guidance is a general task for all those involved in the degree programme and an exclusive task for the professional study advisors working within the faculty's Education Office. The study advisors are primarily responsible for *general (non-subject specific) student guidance*. In addition, a number of other professionals play a role in *general student guidance*: student mentors during the first year of the Bachelor's programme, the staff at the International Office and the thesis and work placement coordinators. The lecturers working in the academic departments have primary responsibility for *subject-related student guidance*.

While the preceding text makes a distinction between two types of student guidance, it is important to clarify that they are not completely independent of one another: effective cooperation between the various professionals is necessary to achieve the aforementioned objectives. At programme level, this cooperation takes the form of:

- regular consultations between the teaching manager and study advisor;
- the provision of programme-specific data to the teaching managers by the Education Office on such issues as student drop-outs, pass rates and subjects that present particular problems for students;

As described above, student guidance is a general task for all those involved in the degree programmes and an exclusive task for the study advisors working for the faculty's Education Office. The study advisor meets with students at the beginning of their first year, holds discussions with students who encounter delays in their studies, drafts a personal study plan with them, conducts interviews with students on study skills, academic planning, study habits, discusses study progress in the case of special circumstances, works with students to find solutions if

any arise during their studies, helps students make choices and is the students' primary point of contact for questions about electives / the degree programme, choice of a Master's programme and faculty, university and national regulations. The study advisor also trains the student mentors.

3. Framework for student guidance by study advisor

In informing, advising and guiding students, the study advisor operates in an area defined by a number of parameters such as the programme curricula and the various faculty regulations (including the Academic and Examination Regulations, transitional regulations where applicable, the Rules and Guidelines of the Examination Board, the Master's Thesis and Work Placement Regulation, the Examination debarment regulation and the Regulation on Recommendation on Continuation of Studies (BSA)).

The study advisor has a number of tools at his/her disposal: the Integrated Student Information System, SAP-SLcM, individual student files, the university and faculty website, Blackboard, the call recording system, the online appointment system and formdesk.

The Course and Career Information Centre at VU University Amsterdam plays an important part in the study advisor's student referral tasks. Where necessary, the study advisor refers the student to the courses offered by this centre and in individual matters also refers students to the Student General Counselling Service, the student psychologist or the university careers advisor. In addition, students can be referred to the Student Ombudsman.

The study advisor is a trained interviewer and receives regular additional training in interview techniques and in relevant subjects or problem areas. Every study advisor at VU University Amsterdam is involved in the network consultations between study advisors, student counsellors and student psychologists, which take place four times a year. During these consultations, information is exchanged and working methods are coordinated. Study advisors adhere to the Code of Conduct of the National Association of Student Advisors (LVSA).

In addition to this, the study advisors meet around three times a year as part of VU University Amsterdam's Platform for Study Advisors. Compared with the aforementioned network consultation, this Platform provides more leeway for the exchange of specific information, for comparing and aligning relevant working methods at the various faculties and for influencing university policy in the area of student guidance. The Platform for Study Advisors also organizes two peer review groups for study advisors at VU University Amsterdam.

4. General student guidance in the Bachelor's programmes, pre-Master's courses and Master's programmes

The extent and type of student guidance provided is different in each phase of study. For example, first and second-year Bachelor's students are monitored more closely by the study advisors than older students with regard to the BSA regulation and the Examination debarment regulation. Pre-Master's and Master's students have already completed a programme in higher education; they may make an appointment with the study advisor on their own initiative. For Master's students, the main emphasis is on the specific guidance provided by lecturers in the various subjects and supervision in relation to the Master's thesis.

Based on the above, the general student guidance activities are shown below for each phase, with an emphasis on student guidance by the study advisor.

4.1 General student guidance in the Bachelor's programmes

4.1.1. First year of the Bachelor's programme

During the formal introduction to the faculty, students are provided with information on studying at the university, on their own degree programme in particular and on all manner of practical matters and regulations, including whom they should contact in various situations. Coordinating the formal faculty introduction is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Communications at the Faculty of Social Sciences. This introduction also involves the study advisors, the teaching managers, the student mentors and a lecturer from each programme who gives a presentation.

During the first semester, students receive study advice from student mentors (among others) within the context of the Bachelor's tutorial. The student mentors work under the auspices of the teaching staff in the Bachelor's tutorial and receive training from one of the study advisors. In the mentor coordinating committee, Bachelor's tutorial coordinators, student mentors and study advisors establish a joint approach to the organization and coordination of the role of mentor.

The Regulation on Recommendation on Continuation of Studies (BSA) applies to all first-year Bachelor's students as of September 2011. Students will be informed about their academic progress four times in their first year. In January and May, students who have a serious delay in their studies will be advised to make an appointment with the study advisor. During this appointment, a personal study plan will be drafted. Students receive the final decision by 22 August at the latest on whether they will be expelled or may continue studying. All first-year students may make an appointment with the study advisor of their own accord.

Students can get to know the study advisors during the faculty introduction and during a meeting of the mentor group. During one of the meetings of the mentor group in September or October, the study advisors will organize an 'active studying' workshop on study skills, the BSA regulation and the guidance that study advisors and other VU professionals can provide. Students will be asked to fill in an online 'initial profile' in November. In this initial profile, open and multiple-choice questions will be asked about the student's motivation, first experiences, expectations, study skills and any special circumstances. The study advisors use the answers to provide students with feedback or explanations of specific regulations that may apply to them. The study advisors provide the teaching manager with any pertinent information arising from the initial profile.

After the first semester, the honours coordinator will alert high-performing students (average grade of 7.5 or higher) to the Honours Programme, which can be taken in addition to the regular programme in years two and three.

4.1.2. Second year of the Bachelor's programme

Students who are subject to the examination debarment regulation (see relevant article in the Academic and Examination Regulations) (second-year Bachelor's students who have earned fewer than 40 credits from the first year) will be notified of this in writing by the Examination Board. Dispensation can be granted at the student's request and in special circumstances.

With effect from the 2012/2013 academic year, second-year students who have not completed the first year will be subject to the BSA regulation. These students will be summoned by the study advisor in September to prepare a study plan. The student receives counselling on his / her academic progress at least once during the academic year. Students receive the final decision by 22 August at the latest on whether they will be expelled or may continue studying.

Between November and February, the Department of Communications of the Faculty of Social Sciences will prepare an orientation on preparing for the free-choice component in the third year. During this orientation, the study advisors, teaching managers, work placement coordinators and staff at the International Office will provide information on the various ways of fulfilling the requirements of the free-choice component and the relevant procedures. Together with the invitation to the orientation sessions, students will also receive an e-mail with information about the faculty's Master's programmes and the admission requirements.

All second-year students have the opportunity to make an appointment for an interview with the study advisor, to discuss such issues as study progress, the choice of subjects for the free-choice component or preparation for the choice of Master's programme.

Students whose marks are above average (who have attained an average mark of 7.5 or higher) are informed of the opportunity to take the Master's in Social Research.

4.1.3 Third year of the Bachelor's programme (including Bachelor's students enrolled in the programme for over three years)

As regards the examination debarment regulation, the same policy applies to third-year Bachelor's students as to second-year Bachelor's students. All debarred students (students who have not yet completed their first year) will be notified by the Examination Board in writing. Dispensation can be granted at the student's request and in special circumstances.

Students with above-average results (an average mark of 7.5 or above) receive a message informing them of the opportunity to take the two-year Master's in Social Research.

In the spring, students receive an e-mail from the study advisor containing information on the faculty's Master's programmes and the requirements for admission.

4.2 General student guidance in the pre-Master's courses

For students in the pre-Master's courses, the formal introduction to the faculty consists of a meeting at which they are informed about their own degree programme and all manner of practical matters and regulations, including whom they should contact in various situations. The Department of Communications of the Faculty of Social Sciences is responsible for organizing and coordinating this introduction. At the sessions, information is provided by the study advisors, the teaching managers and a lecturer from each programme who gives a presentation. For international students, an extensive introductory programme is organized by the International Office in addition to the faculty introduction.

In October / November, all students receive an e-mail from the study advisor with information about the rules regarding admission to the Master's programme, contact points for student guidance at the university and important regulations. All pre-Master's students may make an appointment with the study advisor of their own accord.

Students with above-average results (an average mark of 7.5 or above) receive a message informing them of the opportunity to take the two-year Master's in Social Research.

The department responsible for the pre-Master's course may also offer an *orientation session* on the *Pre-Master's thesis*.

4.3 General student guidance in the Master's programmes

First-year Master's students are offered an orientation during the faculty introduction that is similar to the orientation offered to first-year pre-Master's students. The Communications Department of the Faculty of Social Sciences coordinates and organizes this orientation. For international students, an extensive introductory programme is organized by the International Office in addition to the faculty introduction. All Master's students may make an appointment with the study advisor of their own accord at any time.

The thesis coordinator organizes an information session on the thesis procedure well before this phase of the programme begins.

5. Guidance for special groups of students

The study advisors devote special attention to students who are not able to follow the standard degree programme due to illness (chronic or otherwise), disability (including dyslexia) or other special circumstances (temporary or otherwise). If necessary, the study advisor consults with the Student General Counselling Service or refers the student to this service.

Top-level athletes or students who are high achievers in a cultural area will receive tailor-made study advice insofar as is possible and within certain parameters.

6. Interviews with the study advisor at the student's behest

All students at the faculty may also take the initiative in contacting the study advisor. For this purpose, each study advisor has a weekly open consultation session and there are also telephone sessions for short questions. All study advisors can also be contacted by e-mail. Each study advisor reserves at least two mornings or afternoons per week for discussions with students who have more complex questions or those who, at their own behest, wish to discuss problems relating to or affecting the course of their studies. Students can make an appointment online with one of the study advisors.

7. Referral to the study advisor by lecturers

Lecturers can refer students to the study advisor. This usually happens if the student is having some kind of problem that could compromise his/her studies. Lecturers can also refer students who have doubts about the suitability of the degree programme they have chosen, who want to undertake additional activities within their degree programme or who want to have a careers interview.

Lecturers can also consult the study advisor themselves. If lecturers have doubts as to whether a student is suited to a particular degree programme, they can ask the study advisor to invite the student in question for a study progress interview.

In force as of 1 September 2007. Established by the Faculty Board on 10 July 2007, having consulted the Programme Committees and the Joint Assembly.

Amended as of 1 September 2008. Amended as of 1 September 2009. Amended as of 1 September 2011.

Table showing student guidance at the Faculty of Social Sciences

Phase of studies	Non subject-specific	Person responsible	Subject-specific	Person responsible
First year of Bachelor's programme	1. Formal introduction to faculty: students receive information on studying at the university (regulations, practical matters and whom to contact), their degree programme and the content of the programme	1. Faculty Dept. of Communications (organization and coordination), study advisor, teaching manager and programme lecturer giving presentation	1. Tutorial and project supervision	1. Lecturers
	2. Student mentorship, including 'active studying' workshop	2. Student mentor, study advisor, Bachelor's tutor	2. Subjects specific to programme	2. Lecturers
	3. Initial profile and follow-up; written or in the form of an interview	3. Study advisor		
	4. BSA recommendation (4 times), send proposed negative decisions (July)	4. BSA Committee		
	5. Process BSA norm exemption requests	5. BSA Committee		
	6. Hearing for students requesting BSA norm reduction	6. BSA Committee		
	7. First-year report with information on students who have dropped out / student progress / students' impressions of the programme	7. Study advisor		
	8. Alert above-average students to the Honours Programme	8. Honours coordinator, study advisor		
	9. Speak with poorly performing students following BSA recommendation	9. Study advisor		
	10. Interviews at the student's behest	10. Study advisor		

Phase of studies	Non subject-specific	Person responsible	Subject-specific	Person responsible
Second year of Bachelor's programme	1. Contact students falling under examination debarment regulation applies	1. Examination Board	Subjects specific to programme	Lecturers
	2. Process debarment dispensation requests	2. Examination Board		
	3. Discussions with debarred students / students who fail to meet the BSA norm (from September 2012)	3. Study advisor		
	4. BSA recommendation (2 times), send proposed negative decisions (July)	5. BSA committee		
	5. Hearing for students requesting BSA norm reduction	6. BSA committee		
	6. Process BSA norm exemption requests	7. BSA committee		
	7. Orientation on free-choice component	8. Faculty Dept. of Communications (organization) in cooperation with study advisor, teaching manager, work placement coordinator and International Office		
	8. E-mail on faculty's Master's programmes (including admission requirements)	9. Study advisor		
	9. Interviews at the student's behest	9. Study advisor		

Phase of studies	Non subject-specific	Person responsible	Subject-specific	Person responsible
Third year of Bachelor's programme (and higher)	1. Contact students to whom the examination debarment regulation applies	1. Examination Board	1. Ensure thesis and work placement supervision	1. Work placement and thesis coordinator
	2. Study progress interview with debarred students	2. Study advisor		
	3. Orientation for students about admission to the Master's	3. Master's student advisor during university Master's Day	2. Subjects specific to programme	2. Lecturers
	4. Alert above-average students to the Master's in Social Research	4. Study advisor, MSR coordinator		
	5. Organizing thesis orientation	5. Thesis coordinator		
	6. E-mail on faculty's Master's programmes (including admission requirements)	6. Study advisor		
	7. Interviews at the student's behest	7. Study advisor		

Phase of studies	Non subject-specific	Person responsible	Subject-specific	Person responsible
Pre-Master's course	1. Formal introduction to faculty: students receive information on studying at the university (regulations, practical matters and whom to contact), their degree programme and the content of the programme	1. Faculty Dept. of Communications (organization and coordination), study advisor, teaching manager and programme lecturer giving presentation	1. Supervision of academic skills	1. Lecturers
	2. Additional introduction for international students	2. Staff of the International Office	2. Subjects specific to programme	2. Lecturers
	3. Orientation for students about admission to the Master's	3. Student Advisor by e-mail early in academic year	3. Supervision of pre-Master's thesis	3. Lecturers
	4. Alert above-average students to the Master's in Social Research	4. Study advisor, MSR coordinator		
	5. Orientation on the pre-Master's thesis	5. Thesis coordinator		
	6. Interviews at the student's behest	6. Study advisor		

Phase of studies	Non subject-specific	Person responsible	Subject-specific	Person responsible
Master's	1. Formal introduction to faculty: students receive information on studying at the university (regulations, practical matters and whom to contact), their degree programme and the content of the programme	1. Faculty Dept. of Communications (organization and coordination), study advisor, teaching manager and programme lecturer giving presentation	1. Subjects specific to programme	1. Lecturers
			2. Thesis supervision	2. Lecturers
	2. Additional introduction for international students	2. Staff of the International Office		
	3. Orientation on the Master's thesis	3. Thesis coordinator		
4. Interviews at the student's behest	4. Study advisor			