

Annual report of the Personal Circumstances Committee (CPO) for academic year 2021-2022

February 2023

This annual report provides an overview of the activities of the Personal Circumstances Committee (CPO) during academic year 2021-2022. The remarks and recommendations of this report are presented first.

Remarks

1. The total number of applications assessed by the CPO concerning Force Majeure Allowance is much higher than in academic year 2020-2021 (194 compared to 127). In total 4.7% of the total number of non-EU/EEA students enrolled in academic year 2021-2022 had their Force Majeure Allowance application assessed compared to 2.6% in 2020-2021. In comparison with Dutch and EU/EEA students, non-EU/EEA students submitted an application for assessment of circumstances concerning Force Majeure and BSA considerably more often.
2. Taking in mind the lowering of the standard to 40 EC in both academic years, the number of BSA applications and recognitions are almost similar with academic year 2020-2021.
3. In academic year 2021-2022, most circumstances which the CPO recognized resulted in either a positive or postponed binding study advice (BSA). A negative binding advice was issued in 9.6% of the applications.
4. The CPO noticed that more than 80 percent of applications for activism grants were submitted by Dutch students. This indicates a low level of activism amongst international students (EEA and non-EEA).
5. The CPO noticed that there were multiple BSA and MoMi cases in which students had a study delay due to housing issues. Although housing issues were not recognizable as a category, the CPO noticed that it is was an important issue for students. New circumstances that have influenced the study progress of a large number of international students were the war in Ukraine and other conflicts around the world. In most cases these circumstances were recognized as exceptional family circumstances. Moreover, in academic year 2021-2022 Covid-19 remained very much an issue.

Recommendations

1. The CPO wants to recommend, as in previous year, to adapt the FOBOS regulation regarding the maximal allowance of €8.000 for reasons of equity and financial stress of international students. The maximal allowance under the current FOBOS is based on the restricted lower tuition fee, which Dutch and EU/EEA students pay.
2. Information about the procedures and preparations for international students should be well known to international students. The support system for international students should be inclusive and should be aimed at the various problems international students face, such as housing, financial problems and finding their way to student guidance. In line with the recommendation of the CPO in 2020-2021, safe housing and a stable financial situation should be promoted. A stable financial situation should encompass the ability of students to finance possible study delay. Furthermore, good information on the organization of the Dutch health care system is an important issue. The CPO recommends to continue including these preconditions in the Student Wellbeing plan.

3. Students need to be better informed about the procedures of the CPO regarding FOBOS, BSA and MoMi. Especially Master students and lateral entrants don't have enough knowledge about the processes in place.
4. The current procedure and corresponding number of students puts a high amount of workload in the summer months on the CPO members, student counsellors, study advisors and registrars. For example, each student has an appointment with a student counsellor regarding their personal circumstances for both BSA, MoMi and Force Majeure Allowance. The CPO recommends to evaluate the current procedure.

Annual CPO Report 2021-2022

Introduction

The CPO is an advisory body of the Executive Board of the University of Twente. It implements the financial support regulations of the University of Twente and assesses personal circumstances in the context of the (binding) recommendation rule and the Modern Migration Policy.

1. As part of the **Profiling fund**, the financial support regulations are:

1.1. The [FOBOS Force majeure allowance scheme](#)

On behalf of the Executive Board of the University of Twente, the CPO decides on funds to students under the FOBOS scheme. The recognized circumstances for the allowance are laid down in the Law on Higher Education (WHW art. 7.51) and include:

- Illness and psychological problems,
- Pregnancy and delivery,
- A physical, sensory or other functional disorder,
- Exceptional family circumstances such as illness or death of partner, parents, child, brother or sister, divorce of parents, relationships problems,
- Home, social or integration problems
- An insufficient feasible study programme.

1.2. The [FOBOS Activism grants scheme](#)

The Student Union, together with the umbrella organizations, allocates the available grants to the organizations. The granting of Activism grants is standardized and is officially handled by the CPO registry. Applications are only assessed by the CPO in deviating situations. This was not the case in 2021-2022.

1.3. The [FOBOS support scheme for Top-level athletes and Top-level artists](#)

The committee Top-level Sports and Arts determines whether applicants meet the criteria. The granting of grants is standardized and is officially handled by the CPO registry. Applications are only assessed by the CPO in deviating situations. This was not the case in 2021-2022.

Assessment of personal circumstances:

2.1 [\(Binding\) Recommendation rule for first-year Bachelor students \(BSA\)](#)

The CPO assesses the legitimacy, duration and severity of personal circumstances and advises the Programme Directors.

2.2 [Modern Migration policy Act \(MoMi\)](#)

The CPO assesses the legitimacy, duration and severity of personal circumstances of non-EU/EEA students with a residence permit for study purposes. The CPO advises the MoMi Committee on the assessment of circumstances in relation to the lack of study progress for the purpose of omitting a notification to the IND.

This report will provide information about the assessment of applications concerning regulations of the Profiling fund, such as the Force Majeure Allowance, Activism Grants and Top-level Sports and Arts, and will also provide information about the assessment of personal circumstances for the (Binding) recommendations rule for first-year Bachelor's students (BSA) and the Modern Migration policy (MoMi), respectively.

1. Profiling fund

1.1 Force Majeure Allowance

When students apply for financial support in case of study delay to certain specific circumstances, the CPO assesses these circumstances and decides whether to recognize these circumstances. If the circumstances are recognized as a cause of the study delay, the committee determines the period of delay and determines the extent of the support. Table 1 shows the number of applications, percentages recognized and the total allocated amount of financial support.

Table 1

Force Majeure Allowances 2018-2021

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Applications assessed	73	135	127	194
% granted	93	90	90	86
Allocated amount (Euro)	112.522	271.268	266.028	431.357

As can be seen in Table 1, the number of applications assessed and the allocated amount in Euro's in the current reported period have risen considerably compared with academic year 2020-2021. The percentage of the applications that have been granted has dropped slightly. The awarded amount is a compensation for the tuition fee in the recognized period.

Table 2

Force Majeure Allowances academic year 2021-2022, per category

Category	Months awarded			Applications assessed			Rejections			Amount awarded (€)		
	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA
Illness	583	66	202	69	6	38	8	0	4	92.933	10.938	161.777
Physical, sensory or other impairment	255	8	2	19	1	1	1	0	0	43.511	723	1.382
Special family circumstances	36	17	64	13	3	28	3	0	8	5.106	1.522	66.126
Pregnancy/childbirth	10	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1.433	0	0
Insufficient feasible educational programme	0	0	34	0	1	11	0	1	2	0	0	39.323
Other circumstances	0	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6.585
Total	884	91	308	103	11	80	12	1	14	142.982	13.182	275.193

As can be seen in table 2, most assessed applications included physical and psychological illness, both for EU/EEA students as non-EU/EEA students. Compared to the previous academic year, there was an increase in the number of applications, months and amount of financial compensation awarded to both EU/EEA-students as non-EU/EEA students. The financial compensation awarded to non-EU/EEA students is far more than the amount awarded to EU/EEA students, although fewer applications from non-EU/EEA students were assessed. A reason for this is the higher amount of tuition fee for non-

EU/EEA students. The Force Majeure Allowance awarded is dependent on the amount of tuition fee a student pays, with a maximum of €8.000.

Table 3 shows the number of students enrolled coming from different regions, the number of applications assessed and the number of applications assessed per students enrolled.

Table 3

Force Majeure Allowances academic year 2021-2022, per region

	NL Students	EU/EEA students	Non-EU/EEA students	total
Students enrolled (#)	9707	3016	1699	14422
Students enrolled (%)	67.3%	20.9%	11.8%	100%
Applications assessed (#)	103	11	80	194
Applications assessed (%)	53.1%	5.7%	41.2%	100%
Applications assessed per students enrolled (%)	1.1%	0.4%	4.7%	1.3%

The number of applications assessed as percentage of total non-EU/EEA students has increased (2.6% in 2020-2021 and 4.7% in 2021-2022). Proportionally, non-EU/EEA students submit a request more often than NL and EU/EEA students. Dutch students submit a request more often compared to EU/EEA students.

Table 4 shows the distribution of Force Majeure assessed applications across the faculties.

Table 4

Force Majeure Allowances academic year 2021-2022, assessed applications per faculty

Category	BMS*			EEMCS*			ET			ITC		
	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA
Illness	14	4	6	11	2	22	13	0	3	1	0	7
Physical, sensory or other impairment	5	1	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Special family circumstances	1	1	3	2	2	12	3	0	5	0	0	5
Pregnancy/childbirth	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Insufficient feasible educational programme	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	0
Other circumstances	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	20	6	11	19	4	37	18	0	12	1	0	13

Category	TNW			UCT			Total		
	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA
Illness	30	0	2	2	0	0	71	6	40
Physical, sensory or other impairment	7	0	1	0	0	0	19	1	1
Special family circumstances	7	0	2	0	0	1	13	3	28
Pregnancy/childbirth	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Insufficient feasible educational programme	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	11
Other circumstances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	45	1	8	2	0	1	105	11	82

* 4 studenten zijn zowel bij BMS als EEMCS ingeschreven

1.2 Activism Grants

Activism grants are awarded per calendar year in different domains. The available grants are allocated over the categories by the Student Union in close consultation with the Umbrella Boards. The allocation of these grants is standardized by the CPO. Only in deviating situations, applications are assessed by the CPO. This was not necessary in the calendar year 2021.

Table 5

Activism Grants calendar year 2021, per category

Category	Number of grants awarded			Number of applications			Amount awarded (€)		
	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA
Study	1049	97	54	200	22	15	183.868	17.096	9.450
Arts and Culture	87	10	4	46	5	2	15.225	1.750	700
Social	290	2	22	86	1	12	50.965	350	3.850
Sports	534	19	23	170	8	6	93.593	3.325	4.025
Other	84	12	0	36	6	0	14.700	2.100	0
Pub/Clubhouse/Shop	197	0	0	56	0	0	34.475	0	0
World	34	12	16	11	7	12	5.950	2.100	2.800
Business	98	5	5	28	1	1	17.150	875	875
Category 3	299	29	45	63	7	11	52.654	5.111	7.875
Category 4 Teams	584	58	16	131	21	13	103.138	10.200	2.800
Total	3256	244	185	827	78	72	571.719	42.907	32.375

1.3 Support Scheme for Top-Level Athletes and Top-Level Cultural Artists

The Top-Sports/arts committee assesses the applications for recognition of top-level athletes and top-level artists. Artists and athletes can be recognized in either category 1 or 2. Students in both categories have the possibility for tailor-made study counselling and may use the UT sport facilities free of charge. Students who are recognized in category 1 are entitled to financial compensation. These grants are awarded per calendar year in expected areas. The application for a grant must be submitted by the

student before the 1st of December and the applicant must be eligible for support as laid out in Chapter 1, Article 3 of the FOBOS regulation. The compensation has a maximum of 4 grants per student per academic year, of which one grant consists of 1/12th of the tuition fees paid. The allocation of these grants is standardized and handled by the CPO Registry. Only in deviating situations, applications are assessed by the CPO. This was not necessary in academic year 2021-2022.

Table 6 shows the number of recognitions over academic year 2021-2022 and the number of grants awarded in 2021-2022. Compared with academic year 2020-2021, the total of recognitions decreased from 41 to 38 and the amount of grants awarded decreased from €11.109 to €8929.

Table 6

Top-level sports/arts recognitions and grants in academic year 2021-2022

Academic year 2021-2022	EEA students	Grants awarded	Non-EEA students
Category 1	19	50	0
Category 2	19	0	0
Total / total amount	38	€ 8929	0

2.1 (Binding) recommendation rule first-year Bachelor students (BSA)

Students that are at risk for not meeting the BSA standard due to personal circumstances can submit an application to the CPO for assessment of those circumstances. Based on the application, the underlying evidence and the information of the study advisor and student counsellor, the CPO decides whether they recognize the circumstances as a possible reason for the incurred study delay. The advice of the CPO will be sent to the Programme Director who will take it into account for the final binding recommendation. In academic year 2020-2021, due to the Covid situation, the 14 Universities agreed to lower the binding recommendation rule with a width between 10% - 15%. In line with this agreement, the University of Twente decided to lower the binding recommendation rule from 45 EC till 40EC. This lowered standard still applied in academic year 2021-2022.

2.1.1 Numbers of first-year Bachelor's students UT

The total influx of first-year Bachelor's students in 2021-2022 (cohort 2021) was 2901, based on the numbers of enrolment (students enrolled in two programmes and students that switched programmes are counted twice).

The dropout rate for first year Bachelor's students was 34% in academic year 2021-2022. This percentage includes students who switched to a different programme and students who quit their programme. As can be seen in table 7, the dropout rate of first-year Bachelor's students in academic year 2021-2022 is higher than in previous years. The low percentage of first-year students who dropped out in 2019 can be explained by the one-time general postponement of the BSA in that academic year.

Table 7

*Influx and dropout of first-year Bachelor students, based on numbers of enrolments**

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total influx	2.323	2.649	2701	2901
Total dropout in year 1	29%	23%	32%	34%

* Including students who switched to a different programme and students who quit their programme.

Table 8 shows the amount of first-year bachelor students split out by nationality (NL, EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA). The number of students in table 8 differ from table 7 because, in contrast to table 7, students enrolled in two programmes are not counted twice.

Table 8

*Influx of first-year Bachelor students based on nationality, based on numbers of unique students**

	2018		2019		2020		2021		Increase/decrease in 2021 compared to 2020
Total NL	1439	64%	1547	61%	1586	61%	1504	53%	-5.2%
Total EU/EEA	599	27%	729	29%	687	26%	979	34%	42.5%
Total non-EU/EEA	194	9%	264	10%	331	13%	357	13%	7.9%
Total	2232	100%	2540	100%	2604	100%	2840	100%	9,1%

*Percentages and numbers may differ slightly due to rounding

The total number of students has increased compared to the previous year. The highest increase is in the number of EU/EEA students (42.5%).

2.1.2 Number of BSA-recommendations

As in academic year 2020-2021, it must be taken into account that the standard for which a student could receive a positive recommendation is 40 ECs instead of 45 ECs.

In 2020-2021, the number of positive recommendations issued was 1694, including those issued with due regard for personal circumstances and those for students who were enrolled in previous years for the first time. A negative binding recommendation was issued to 571 students. For 174 students the recommendation was deferred until the end of next academic year because of personal circumstances.

In 2021-2022, the number of positive recommendations issued was 1840, including those issued with due regard for personal circumstances and those for students who were enrolled in a previous year for the first time. A negative binding recommendation was issued to 625 students. For 186 students the recommendation was deferred until the end of next academic year because of personal circumstances. The final recommendation of these students will be included in the CPO annual report of 2022-2023.

2.1.3 BSA-recommendations compared to CPO advices

In academic year 2021-2022, the CPO handled 220 BSA applications. In 178 cases the circumstances of the student were recognized as a possible reason for the study delay and in 42 cases the circumstances were not recognized by the CPO.

Table 9

Types of recommendations issued by the programmes in 2021-2022 after CPO advice

BSA-recommendations	Circumstances recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not assessed by the CPO
Total	178	42	84
Positive recommendation, >40 EC (student has met the norm)	39	13	
Positive recommendation, <40 EC (i.e. with due regard for circumstances or because student is found suitable for programme)	8	0	
Negative recommendation	17	17	
Recommendation was postponed because of switch programme			21
Recommendation was postponed until 2022-2023 because of personal circumstances	114	12	63

Table 9 shows that when the CPO recognizes the circumstances, in most cases the study programme postponed the recommendation. A negative binding recommendation was issued just as often for students whose circumstances were recognized as for students whose circumstances were not recognized.

Students who did not consult the CPO or whose circumstances the CPO did not recognize could make use of a hearing. In 10 of the 12 hearings held, the final recommendation was postponed.

In comparison, in academic year 2020-2021 the CPO handled 196 applications, of which in 158 cases the circumstances were recognized.

2.1.4 CPO BSA applications per type of circumstance and nationality

Personal circumstances can be recognized in one or more categories. Table 10 shows the categories in which the personal circumstances were recognized.

Table 10

BSA recognitions per category

BSA-CPO recognitions	Categories (amount)	Total (%)
Physical illness	47	24,7%
Mental illness	83	43,7%
Physical, sensory or other dysfunction	25	13,2%
Exceptional family circumstances	35	18,4%
Total	190*	100%

* Total exceeds number of recognitions (178) because in some cases more than one category of personal circumstance was recognized.

As can be seen in table 10 most of the recognitions included psychological problems, followed by physical illnesses.

Table 11 presents an overview of the nationality of the students whose applications were handled by the CPO.

Table 11

BSA applications per nationality academic year 2021-2022

BSA-CPO Applications	Circumstances recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not recognized by the CPO	Total	Total (%)	Applications as percentage of first year Bachelor students per nationality on 31-08-2022
NL	101	15	116	52.7%	7.7%
EEA	48	15	63	28.6%	6.4%
Non-EEA	29	12	41	18.6%	11.5%
Total	178	42	220	100%	7.7%

In total 7.7% of all first year Bachelor students who were enrolled on 31-08-2022 submitted an application for an assessment of circumstances. In 2020-2021, this was 6.9%. Following from table 11, more non-EU/EEA students (11.5%, expressed as percentage of the total population on 31-08-2022) submitted an application for assessment of circumstances compared to Dutch and EU/EEA students (7.7% respectively 6.4%).

In comparison with 2020-2021, the number of Dutch students as percentage of the total applications is comparable (51% in 2020-2021; 52.7% in 2021-2022). The number of applications from EU/EEA students rose (23.5% in 2020-2021; 28.6% in 2021-2022). The number of non-EU/EEA applications dropped from 25.5% in 2020-2021 to 18.6% in 2021-2022.

2.1.5 BSA applications per faculty

In table 12, the number of applications per faculty are set out, including the percentage of the total number of first year students per faculty. The faculty ITC is left out because only applications from UCT (ATLAS) were assessed by the CPO.

Table 12

BSA applications per faculty

BSA-CPO Applications	Circumstances recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not recognized by the CPO	Total	Percentage of total applications	Applications as percentage of first year Bachelor students enrolled on 31-08-2022
BMS	68	12	80	37,2%	8.3%
EEMCS	43	11	54	25,1%	6.6%
ET	26	12	38	17,7%	6.7%
TNW	36	7	43	20%	8.2%
Total	173	42	215	100%	7.7%

BMS and TNW have relatively slightly more applications assessed by the CPO than the other faculties.

3.1 Modern Migration Policy Act (MoMi)

The Modern Migration Policy Act requires all non-EU/EEA students with a residence permit for study purposes (known as 'MoMi students') to achieve sufficient study progress each academic year. This study progress amounts to 50% of the ECs the student could have obtained during the academic year, determined by their moment of enrolment. Students with insufficient study progress must be reported to the IND by law. However, if the student has a justifiable reason for the insufficient amount of study progress, such a report can be omitted. To omit such a notification to the IND, the university regulations regarding MoMi state that it is necessary to have a recognition of circumstances by the CPO or that a signed Study Progress Form is submitted to the MoMi Committee.

In total the CPO handled 78 applications for assessment of circumstances of MoMi students. As can be seen in table 14, both the number of MoMi students as the number of MoMi applications increased. The percentage of MoMi students who submitted an application has increased from 5.2% to 6.7%.

Table 14

MoMi applications to the CPO

Academic year	(rounded) numbers of MoMi students*	MoMi applications handled by CPO	% of MoMi students
2017-2018	560	28	5.0%
2018-2019	750	32	4.3%
2019-2020	945	40	4.2%
2020-2021	1070	56	5.2%
2021-2022	1170	78	6.7%

*Monitored MoMi students at the UT for August that year

Table 15 presents the type of circumstances the CPO has recognized and the categories students indicated on their application in case the CPO did not recognize the circumstances. Of the 78 applications, the CPO recognized the circumstances in 60 cases and did not recognize the circumstances in 18 cases. The results show that most of the recognized circumstances concerned mental illness, followed by exceptional family circumstances.

Table 15

MoMi applications assessed by the CPO according to the circumstances

Assessed circumstances	Circumstances recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not recognized by the CPO
Total	60	18
Mental illness	29	10
Physical illness	9	7
Activism	2	0
Exceptional family circumstances	19	11
Infeasible study programme	1	1
Physical, sensory or other dysfunction	0	0

CPO Committee:

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