

Annual report of the Personal Circumstances Committee (CPO) for academic year 2022-2023

February 2024

This annual report provides an overview of the activities of the Personal Circumstances Committee (CPO) during academic year 2022-2023. The remarks and recommendations of this report are presented first.

Remarks

1. Although the influx of first-year Bachelor students dropped with 18.51%, the number of BSA applications and recognitions are almost similar in 2022-2023 compared with 2021-2022. 10% of first year Bachelor students applied for assessment of personal circumstances compared with 7.7% the previous year.
2. The allocated amount of force majeure allowances is €246.990 in 2022-2023 compared with €431.357 in 2021-2022. After peaking in 2021-2022, the amount returned to the same level as in previous years.
3. The CPO noticed that more than 86 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).
4. 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.
5. For 31 students, the BSA recommendation was postponed by their study programme because of personal circumstances, while they had not been assessed by the CPO.

Recommendations

1. 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 2021-2022, 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 Well-being Improvement Programme (SWIP).
2. Students need to be better informed about the procedures of the CPO regarding FOBOS, BSA and MoMi. Especially Master students and lateral entrants seem not to have enough knowledge about the processes in place.
3. 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 the Force Majeure Allowance. Taking into account the UT's financial situation, the CPO recommends that FTEs for carrying out these statutory duties not be reduced.
4. Regarding academic year 2023/2024, the International Student Code of Conduct was updated in January 2024 to include assessment of personal circumstances for Non-EEA Pre-Master students. The CPO advises to include these students in the current MoMi/CPO-procedures.

Annual CPO Report 2022-2023

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;
- Psychological problems;
- Pregnancy and delivery;
- A physical, sensory or other functional disorder (i.e. autism, ADHD);
- 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 2022-2023.

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 2022-2023.

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 2018-2022

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Applications assessed	73	135	127	194	151
% granted	93	90	90	86	87
Allocated amount (Euro)	112.522	271.268	266.028	431.357	246.990

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 dropped compared with academic year 2021-2022. After peaking in 2021-2022, the amount returned to the same level as in previous years. The awarded amount is a compensation for the tuition fee in the recognized period. The 2021/2022 average award per student is €2583 (24 students were awarded €5000 or higher). The 2022/2023 average award per student is €1839 (13 students have been awarded an amount of €5000 or higher).

Table 2

Force Majeure Allowances academic year 2022-2023, 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	619	48	93	73	9	21	7	2	5	80.905	5.692	80.860
Physical, sensory or other impairment	166	0	13	12	0	3	0	0	0	24.194	0,00	12.361
Special family circumstances	83	11	26	12	1	11	2	0	3	10.193	994	24.577
Pregnancy/childbirth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insufficient feasible educational programme	4	7	3	1	2	2	0	0	1	361	632	2.719
Other circumstances	20	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	2.697	0	806
Total	892	66	136	101	12	38	9	2	9	118.350	7.318	121.322

As can be seen in table 2, most assessed applications included physical and psychological illness. The financial compensation awarded to non-EEA students is relatively more than the amount awarded to NL/EEA students, although fewer applications from non-EEA students were assessed. A reason for this

is the higher amount of tuition fee for non-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 distribution of Force Majeure assessed applications across the faculties.

Table 3

Force Majeure Allowances academic year 2022-2023, assessed applications per faculty

Category	Illness			Physical, sensory or other impairment			Special family circumstances			Insufficient feasible educational programme		
	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
BMS	3	4	1	3	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0
EEMCS	8	1	9	4	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2
ET	23	2	4	1	0	2	2	0	3	0	1	1
ITC	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
TNW	38	2	1	4	0	0	7	0	2	0	0	0
UCT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	74	9	20	12	0	3	12	1	11	1	1	3

Category	Other circumstances			Total		
	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA	NL students	EEA students (non-NL)	Non-EEA
BMS	2	0	0	10	5	3
EEMCS	0	0	1	14	1	14
ET	0	0	0	26	3	10
ITC	0	0	0	1	0	8
TNW	1	0	0	50	2	3
UCT	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	3	0	1	102	11	38

Students from TNW and ET submitted most applications.

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 2022.

Table 4

Activism Grants calendar year 2022, 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	1113	79	64	249	26	19	198.663	14.139	11.328
Arts and Culture	114	18	3	49	7	1	20.178	3.186	531
Social	376	5	0	123	2	0	66.807	885	0
Sports	664	29	10	195	9	6	117.710	5.133	1.770
Infra	1	0	0	1	0	0	177	0	0
Other	97	8	10	36	4	4	17.211	1.416	1.770
Pub/Clubhouse/Shop	148	0	0	45	0	0	26.196	0	0
World	0	8	13	0	3	7	0	1.416	2.301
Business	57	4	8	18	1	2	10.089	708	1.416
Subtotal category 2	2570	151	108	716	52	39	457.031	26.883	19.116
Category 3	370	20	28	81	6	8	65.935	3.540	7.873
Category 4 Teams	774	74	36	147	26	16	140.595	13.077	18.040
Total activism	3714	245	172	944	84	63	663.562	43.500	45.029

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 2022-2023.

Table 5 shows the number of recognitions over academic year 2022-2023 and the number of grants awarded in 2022-2023. Compared with academic year 2021-2022, the total of grants awarded increased from 50 to 53.

Table 5*Top-level sports/arts recognitions and grants in academic year 2022-2023*

Academic year 2022-2023	NL students	Grants awarded	EEA/Non-EEA students
Category 1	17	53	0
Category 2	5	0	0
Total / total amount	22	€ 10.075	0

2. BSA

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 consideration for the final binding recommendation.

2.2 Numbers of first-year Bachelor's students UT

The total influx of first-year Bachelor's students in 2022-2023 (cohort 2022) was 2251, 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 32% in academic year 2022-2023. This percentage includes students who switched to a different programme and students who quit their programme. 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 due to COVID-19.

Table 6

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

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total influx	2.649	2701	2901	2251
Total dropout in year 1	23%	32%	34%	32%

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

Table 7 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 6 because, in contrast to table 6, students enrolled in two programmes are not counted twice.

Table 7

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

	2019		2020		2021		2022		Increase/decrease in 2022 compared to 2021
Total NL	1547	61%	1586	61%	1504	53%	1207	55%	-19.51%
Total EU/EEA	729	29%	687	26%	979	34%	692	31%	-27.65%
Total non-EU/EEA	264	10%	331	13%	357	13%	314	14%	-12.03%
Total	2540	100%	2604	100%	2840	100%	2213	100%	-18.51%

*Percentages and numbers may differ slightly due to rounding

2.3 Number of BSA-recommendations

In 2022-2023, the number of positive recommendations issued was 1482, 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 430 students. For 174 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 2023-2024.

2.4 BSA-recommendations compared to CPO advices

In academic year 2022-2023, the CPO handled 222 BSA applications. In 196 cases the circumstances of the student were recognized as a possible reason for the study delay and in 26 cases the circumstances were not recognized by the CPO.

Table 8

*Types of recommendations issued by the programmes in 2022-2023 after CPO advice**

BSA-recommendations	Circumstances recognized by the CPO	Circumstances not recognized by the CPO
Total	196	26
Positive recommendation, >40 EC (student has met the norm)	40	7
Positive recommendation, <40 EC (i.e. with due regard for circumstances or because student is found suitable for programme)	6	0
Negative recommendation	18	6
Recommendation was postponed until 2023-2024 because of personal circumstances **	130	13

**Numbers may differ slightly due to quitters*

*** For 31 students, the recommendation was postponed by their study programme because of personal circumstances, while they had not been assessed by the CPO.*

Table 8 shows that when the CPO recognizes the circumstances, in most cases the study programme postponed the recommendation.

In comparison, in academic year 2021-2022 the CPO handled 220 applications, of which in 178 cases the circumstances were recognized.

2.5 CPO BSA applications per type of circumstance and nationality

Personal circumstances can be recognized in one or more categories. Table 9 shows the categories in which the personal circumstances were recognized.

Table 9

BSA recognitions per category

BSA-CPO recognitions	Categories (amount)	Total (%)
Physical illness	50	23.04%
Psychological illness	91	41.95%
Physical, sensory or other dysfunction	38	17.51%
Exceptional family circumstances	34	15.67%
Other*	4	1.84%
Total	217**	100%

* I.e. pregnancy, top level sports, or with use of the hardship clause.

** Total exceeds number of recognitions (196) because in some cases more than one category of personal circumstance was recognized.

As can be seen in table 9, most of the recognitions included psychological problems, followed by physical illnesses.

Table 10 presents an overview of the nationality of the students whose applications were handled by the CPO.

Table 10

BSA applications per nationality academic year 2022-2023

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 31-08-2023
NL	101	10	111	50%	9.20%
EEA	46	11	57	25.68%	8.24%
Non-EEA	49	5	54	24.32%	17.20%
Total	196	26	222	100%	10.03%

In total 10.03% of all first year Bachelor students who were enrolled on 31-08-2023 submitted an application for an assessment of circumstances. In 2021-2022, this was 7.7%. Following from table 11, more non-EU/EEA students (17.20%, expressed as percentage of the total population on 31-08-2023) submitted an application for assessment of circumstances compared to Dutch and EU/EEA students.

Table 11 show the BSA-CPO applications in relation to the first year student population per academic year.

Table 11

BSA-CPO applications in relation to the first year student population per academic year

BSA-CPO Applications	Applications as percentage of first year Bachelor students per nationality in 2020-2021	Applications as percentage of first year Bachelor students per nationality in 2021-2022	Applications as percentage of first year Bachelor students per nationality in 2022-2023
NL	6.7%	7.7%	9.20%
EEA	4.7%	6.4%	8.24%
Non-EEA	14%	11.5%	17.20%
Total	6.9%	7.7%	10.03%

While student numbers are declining, the relative amount of first year students who apply for assessment of personal circumstances is increasing every year.

2.6 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 31-08-2023
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. 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 80 applications for assessment of circumstances of MoMi students. As can be seen in table 13, this is relatively the same as in the previous academic year, but still higher than the years before.

Table 13

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%
2022-2023	1187	80	6.7%

*Monitored MoMi students at the UT for August that year

Table 14 presents the type of circumstances the CPO has recognized. Of the 80 applications, the CPO recognized the circumstances in 68 cases and did not recognize the circumstances in 12 cases. The results show that most of the recognized circumstances concerned psychological illness, followed by exceptional family circumstances.

Table 14

*MoMi applications assessed by the CPO according to the circumstances**

Assessed circumstances	Circumstances recognized by the CPO
Total	68
Physical illness	8
Psychological illness	37
Exceptional family circumstances	17
Physical, sensory or other dysfunction	8
Other**	6

* Total exceeds number of recognitions (68) because in some cases more than one category of personal circumstance was recognized.

** I.e. pregnancy, top level sports, or with use of the hardship clause.

CPO Committee

Prof.dr. B.J.R. van der Meulen (chair)

Prof.dr.ir. A. de Boer (member)

Dr.ir. A. van den Boomgaard MBA (member)

A.H. Prins (member)

S.S. Spuls MSc (member)

Drs. D. Brandwagt (advisor)

Mr. C. van Dijken (advisor)

Registry

M. van Heijst

M.E. Diender

Policy officer

B. Elferdink BSc