

## **Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes**

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*For information purposes*

The Students' Charter of Avans University of Applied Sciences stipulates the rights and obligations of students enrolled at Avans University of Applied Sciences.

This Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes is part of the Students' Charter.

## **1 Introduction**

In addition to the provisions of the Fund for Financial Support of Students Profileringsfonds Scheme, this scheme offers students who practise top-level sport during their studies a framework for taking advantage of a special arrangement for each school and/or study programme in the form of an individual study plan. It also offers full-time and work-study track students who receive a performance-related student grant the possibility of continuing their study programme with financial support from the University of Applied Sciences after their maximum duration of studies or entitlement to a grant expires in the event of a study delay.

Only those students who are enrolled for a full-time or work-study track study programme at Avans University of Applied Sciences, and who have received financial aid for studying for a bachelor's degree programme in higher education are eligible to receive financial support under this scheme.

### **Article 1. Definitions**

The following definitions are applied in this Scheme:

**Admissibility of the application:** the processing of the application, if the application has been submitted in full (containing all the necessary information) and on time (in accordance with the deadlines set).

**Avans University of Applied Sciences:** the institution (university of applied sciences) based on the Foundation that upholds it.

**Diploma period:** the period referred to in Section 5.7 of the Wsf 2000, being a period of 10 years.

**DUO (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs):** the Education Executive Agency (formerly the Informatie Beheer Groep [Information Management Group]).

**Executive Board:** the board of Avans University of Applied Sciences, also the board of the Avans Foundation.

**Higher education:** academic education and higher professional education.

**Marketing, Communication & Student Relations Unit (DMCS):** responsible for carrying out tasks relating to areas including student affairs.

**Performance-related student grant for higher education:** For full-time and work-study track students who became students on a performance-related student grant before 1 September 2015, this is an interest-bearing loan which, subject to certain terms and conditions, can be converted into a non-repayable grant consisting of a basic grant, possibly combined with a supplementary grant, partner's allowance or single-parent allowance. The performance-related student grant forms part of the Financial Aid for Studying Scheme as set out in Chapter 3 of the Dutch Student

Finance Act 2000 (Wsf 2000). This does not include the interest-bearing part of the loan that cannot be converted into a non-repayable grant.

For full-time and work-study track students who became students on a performance-related student grant after 1 September 2015, this is a part of their financial aid for studying, consisting of a supplementary grant, travel allowance and a single-parent allowance, that can be converted into a non-repayable grant. The performance-related student grant forms part of the Financial Aid for Studying Scheme as set out in Chapter 3 of the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000 (Wsf 2000).

**Performance-related student grant period:** period during which a student is entitled to receive financial aid for studying in the form of a basic loan and a performance-related student grant (as set out above). The duration of the performance-related student grant period is linked to the regular duration of the study programme (as set out in Chapter 5 of the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000).

**School:** the organisational unit (business unit) within Avans University of Applied Sciences that provides teaching for 1 or several study programmes.

**School Board:** the body that manages the school and is responsible for the school's organisation, structure and operations in as far as the Executive Board has delegated the executive powers to this end.

**School Council:** subcouncil as referred to in Section 10.25 of the Whw, which participates in decision-making within a school.

**Student counsellor:** the student counsellor protects the interests of students and has responsibilities in the context of student counselling.

**Students' Charter:** the Students' Charter of Avans University of Applied Sciences, as referred to in Section 7.59 of the Whw, sets out the rights and obligations of students and contains an overview of the schemes and regulations designed to protect students' rights.

**Study programme:** a study programme as referred to in Section 7.3 of the Whw.

**Study finance advance act:** Act which amended the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000 [Wsf], replacing, among other things, the basic grant part of the performance-related study grant with a loan.

**Top-level sports coordinator:** the top-level sports coordinator liaises with sports associations, partner institutions, feeder schools and the Netherlands Olympic Committee\*Netherlands Sports Federation NOC\*NSF. This coordinator submits proposals with regard to Top-Level Sports Policy and the Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes, and is responsible for the implementation of the policy in the broadest possible sense in collaboration with the Student Counsellors' Office. The Top-level sports coordinator is the first point of contact in relation to policy and status assessments for prospective and current students and members of staff.

**Whw:** the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act [Wet op het Hoger onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek] (Dutch Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1992, 593).

**Wsf 2000:** the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000 [Wet Studiefinanciering 2000] (Dutch Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2001, 225).

## **Article 2. Definition of top-level sports**

A student qualifies for the Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes if they possess an official top-level sport status. Avans University of Applied Sciences works on the basis of statuses adopted by NOC\*NSF, by Olympic Networks and the sports associations.

Top-level sports are understood to cover:

1. Athletes who have NOC\*NSF status (i.e. A, B or HP status),
2. Athletes who have NOC\*NSF status (i.e. an International Talent [IT] profile, National Talent [NT] profile or Belofte [B, espoir] profile),
3. Athletes who qualify for Regional Junior Status (RJ) or Regional Senior Status (RS), as awarded by NOC\*NSF and/or the sports associations.

The Olympic Networks also determine a status for foreign students studying at Avans University of Applied Sciences, who train at a similarly high level in the Netherlands or abroad, allowing them to apply for the Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes.

## **Article 3. Entitled parties**

1. Individuals who are enrolled as a student and who practise top-level sports as referred to in article 2, may submit a request to alter their study programme and notify the contact person for the study programme in the event of a potential delay to their studies.
2. Full-time or work-study track students who have received financial aid for studying, and who have incurred or run the risk of incurring a delay to their studies on account of practising top-level sports, may qualify for financial support in the event that they exceed the regular duration of their study programme.  
See article 7 et seq. of this Scheme.
3. To qualify for the Facilitation scheme for students/top athletes for a particular academic year, the student must possess an official top-level sports status. A top-level sports status awarded by NOC\*NSF is valid for **1 academic year**, which runs from 1 September to 31 August.

## **Article 4. Notification procedure for top-level sports activities**

1. Prospective students must state during their intake assessment at Avans University of Applied Sciences that they engage in top-level sports. They will then be sent the top-level sports assessment form to allow Avans to check their status. Following the assessment, the top-level sports coordinator will make an appointment with the student and a student counsellor. Current students must reconfirm they are top-level athletes each year when re-enrolling via Studielink. A new assessment will then be carried out to determine whether the student is entitled to access the top-level sports facilities.
2. A combined study and sports plan is drawn up at the beginning of each academic year at the request of the student and in consultation with the mentor/study counsellor for the study programme, and the student counsellor. The related request must be submitted as soon as possible once the student has enrolled and commenced their studies.
3. The combined study and sports plan includes:
  - a. an overview of the individual curriculum for the academic year in question, including the required alterations as mentioned in paragraph 4;
  - b. the (minimum) study progress for the current academic year;

- c. an indication of the time of graduation;
  - d. a sports plan, which includes the training schedules and competition timetables for the academic year in question.
4. The alterations mentioned below are part of the study plan.
- a. Alignment of teaching to training and competition schedules  
Before the start of every block in the programme, the student will compare their timetable to the training and competition schedules to identify any potential clashes. It is up to the student/athlete to propose solutions. The student/athlete may take classes with other lecturers or groups where possible. The idea is to work with the top-level sports contact person/study adviser/study development coordinator/study development counsellor to find the best possible solution. This solution is recorded in the study plan and adopted by the examination board. The study programme department will then inform all relevant staff.
  - b. Relaxing of compulsory attendance rules  
The student will make arrangements at an early stage for any educational components they wish to take but for which attendance is compulsory. These arrangements are recorded in the study plan. Depending on the nature of the teaching, the student will either take classes with different groups or be exempted from compulsory attendance. The student may be required to complete a substitute assignment.
  - c. Relaxing of group work rules  
If a student is unable to participate in a project as a result of activities such as training camps, matches, competitions or championships, they will consult with their top-level sports contact person/study adviser/study development coordinator/study development counsellor in good time to find alternatives for collaboration in project groups. The project will be executed at a later date if its nature does not allow for any alternative. These arrangements are recorded in the study plan.
  - d. Relaxing of work placement rules  
Relaxing of work placement rules may involve a student/athlete taking a longer time to complete a work placement than the average student. These arrangements are recorded in the study plan.
  - e. Relaxing of test rules  
If a student is unable to take a test at the scheduled time, consultations with the top-level sports contact person/study adviser/study development coordinator/study development counsellor will take place at an early stage to find out if an alternative test date can be scheduled. This alternative test date will be considered the first test opportunity for the student. The student may also agree on an alternative assessment format with their top-level sports contact person/study adviser/study development coordinator/study development counsellor at an early stage. These arrangements are recorded in the study plan.
5. The combined study and sports plan mentioned above must be signed by both the person concerned and the contact person of the study programme department<sup>1</sup> and is a necessary document within the context of the assessment of the application.

## **Article 5. Procedure for applying for study facilities**

1. The application for a combined study and sports plan is submitted to the designated contact person or mentor/study counsellor for the study programme each academic year. The student counsellor will act as advisor in this matter.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the Dean or another designated contact person.

2. The application must always be submitted as soon as possible after the start of the academic year.

## **Article 6. Procedure for applying for financial support**

1. Applications can be submitted using the application form that can be obtained from the student counsellor or via the intranet portal. An application for financial support must include the following, on penalty of inadmissibility:
  - a. details of the surname, first names, address, student ID number and bank/giro account number of the applicant, as well as the study programme for which the applicant is enrolled,
  - b. a statement of enrolment as a full-time or work-study track student at the institution,
  - c. a statement from the applicant, backed up by one or more supporting documents, which shows that they participate in top-level sports activities (article 2),
  - d. a statement from the applicant concerning the means by which they have already received/are already receiving any payment on the basis of top-level sports being practised,
  - e. a sound chronological overview of the financial aid for studying received in higher education,
  - f. a statement from the student counsellor confirming that the applicant reported their participation in top-level sports in good time,
  - g. a statement from the contact person at the study programme department concerning the actual study delay suffered in relation to the curriculum as a result of the student's participation in top-level sports,
  - h. the recommendation from the student counsellor in relation to the application,
  - i. supporting documentation from the Education Executive Agency DUO that the applicant is or has been entitled to a performance-related student grant as referred to in Section 5 of the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000.

## **Article 7. Nature and extent of the financial support**

1. Financial support on the basis of the top-level athletes scheme can last no longer than 12 months.
2. Only full-time and work-study track students who take part in top-level sports, who have completely used up their performance-related student grant and who have exceeded the normal term of their study programme as a result of these sporting activities are entitled to financial support.
3. To full-time and work-study track students who became students on a performance-related student grant before 1 September 2015 and who received financial aid for studying for the first time between 1 September 1996 and 31 August 2015, financial support is provided in the form of a conditional interest-bearing loan amounting to the sum that the student previously received in the last month of the period of the grant entitlement when they were entitled to mixed student financial aid.
4. For full-time and work-study track students who became students on a performance-related student grant after 1 September 2015, financial support equals a monthly amount of €100 for those living at home with their parents, or €250 for those living on their own<sup>2</sup>, increased with - where applicable - the supplementary grant and single-parent allowance the student benefits from or would have benefitted from to pursuant to Chapter 3 of the Dutch Student Finance Act 2000, if the student were to claim this or be entitled to claim

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<sup>2</sup> These amounts are in step with the current higher professional education performance-related student grant system, as part of which the monthly amount for students living at home is €102.77 and for those living on their own is €286.15.

this, as stated in the last DUO-Bericht notification concerning the performance-related student grant period.

5. This loan is converted into a non-repayable grant once the student has successfully passed the final examination of their study programme.
6. In addition to financial assistance, support is also offered in the form of tailored study counselling. The combined study and sports plan drawn up annually in consultation with the mentor/study counsellor and the student counsellor forms the basis for this.

#### **Article 8. Applying for financial support**

1. Using the form provided for this purpose, an application for financial support can be submitted through the student counsellor to the secretary of the Student Financial Support Committee (see article 10).
2. The application must be submitted **during** the performance-related student grant period (including any additional grant year), preferably 2 to 6 months before the performance-related student grant period ends, so that payments can be made immediately following this period.
3. If the application is submitted once the grant entitlement period has ended, it will be declared inadmissible.

**Note: no retrospective payments will be made.**

#### **Article 9. Payment of financial support**

1. The individual to whom support has been granted on the basis of this scheme must submit an application for payment before their grant entitlements cease.
2. Payment is made on the condition that the person concerned is enrolled as a student for one or more study programmes at the institution.
3. The financial support is terminated with effect from the first month following the passing of the final examination for the study programme for which the support has been granted, or with effect from the first month following the termination of enrolment at the institution by the recipient of the financial support.

#### **Article 10. Student Financial Support Committee**

The support is granted to the students referred to in article 3 paragraph 2 by means of a decision by the Executive Board, which is based on a recommendation from the Student Financial Support Committee. This takes place in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 4 of the Fund for Financial Support of Students Profileringsfonds Scheme.

#### **Article 11. Decision-making process**

1. The Executive Board makes a decision on the application, in accordance with the recommendation from the Student Financial Support Committee, within 8 weeks of receiving the application at the latest.
2. The decision will entail:
  - a. a rejection of the application, or,
  - b. the granting of a period of financial support, or,
  - c. a decision not to process the application, because it was not submitted on time, or because an incomplete application was not supplemented within the deadline set.
  - d. The applicant is notified in writing of the substantiated decision. In the decision, the applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that they are entitled to file a written,



substantiated complaint and appeal against the decision in accordance with the provisions of article 14.

### **Article 12. Hardship clause**

Upon receiving a recommendation to this effect from the Student Financial Support Committee, the Executive Board may deviate from the provisions of this Scheme if the strict application thereof would result in excessive unfairness.

### **Article 13. Repayment**

1. If it transpires afterwards that the student was not entitled to receive the non-repayable grant or part of it, then this amount will be converted into an interest-bearing loan and the student must repay the wrongly paid out sum in monthly instalments of €100 or more. The student is required to sign an acknowledgement of debt for the interest-bearing loan.
2. The interest due referred to in paragraph 1 will be equal to the interest applied by the Education Executive Agency DUO in relation to the interest-bearing loan, as applicable from 1 January in the year of the awarding.  
The interest will be due with effect from the first day of the month in which the student no longer satisfies the criteria for the non-repayable grant.
3. In deviation from the above, a different repayment arrangement may be agreed upon in consultation with the student.

### **Article 14. Objection and appeal**

The student may file a reasoned complaint, in writing, against the decision made by the Executive Board. The notice of complaint must be addressed to:

Disputes Advisory Committee  
Attn: the official secretary  
PO Box 90116  
4800 RA Breda  
the Netherlands

For this, the procedure set out in the Student Appeals Procedure must be followed.

The student may file a reasoned appeal, in writing, against the decision made by the examination board. The notice of appeal must be addressed to:

Examination Appeals Board  
Attn: the official secretary  
PO Box 90116  
4800 RA Breda  
the Netherlands

For this, the procedure set out in the Regulations of the Examination Appeals Board must be followed.

### **Article 15. Effective date**

This Scheme has been adopted by the Executive Board and will be reviewed annually.