



Leiden University Regulations on Compulsory Matching

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Introduction

Compulsory matching (hereafter: CM) is a study choice check used by Dutch universities to assess whether a study programme is a good match for a prospective student's expectations, interests and capacities. The aim is to reduce the drop-out rate and ensure that students are well prepared for their studies.

Article 7.31b(5) of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) states that universities have an obligation to establish further rules for compulsory matching. These rules are intended to guarantee transparency, legal certainty and equal treatment of students.

Purpose of the regulations

The Regulations on Compulsory Matching specify in detail how matching can actively provide the most effective assistance to prospective students in making an appropriate study choice. The details of the Regulations on CM and the applicable conditions are presented in Articles 1 to 12.

The purpose of the regulations is:

- To clearly explain the process and obligations for (prospective) students;
- To guarantee uniform implementation within the university;
- To provide a legal basis for enrolment decisions and objection procedures.

The procedure is as follows:

- The prospective student applies via Studielink for a bachelor's programme with CM before the relevant deadline;
- The prospective student is invited to participate in CM activities and completes them within the time period set by the study programme;
- After the prospective student has completed the activities, the study programme issues its advice and records that the prospective student has thus fulfilled the enrolment condition "participation in CM".

These regulations contain:

- A description of matching activities;
- The time periods: announcement no later than 1 October, last opportunity to participate in August;
- Exceptions and *force majeure*;
- The consequences of not participating;
- The possibilities for objection and appeal: procedures and powers are laid down.



Higher Education and Research Act (WHW)

Article 7.31a. Application no later than 1 May

1. No later than 1 May prior to the relevant academic year, an individual who wishes to register as a student for the first period of an associate degree programme with a study load of 60 credits, for a specific first-year phase of a bachelor's programme at a specific institution or, if that phase is not in place, for the first period in a bachelor's programme with a study load of 60 credits, applies to Our Minister, with due regard to [Article 7.31d](#) and in accordance with procedural rules to be set down by Ministerial Order.
3. In the event that an individual wishes to apply for more than one programme prior to the relevant academic year, the obligation referred to in paragraph 1 shall be applicable to only one programme.
5. This article is not applicable to a student who applies after 1 May for a programme other than that for which they were originally registered but can demonstrate that the new application is the consequence of termination of the registration pursuant to [Article 7.8b, fifth paragraph](#), at a time such that they could not apply before 1 May prior to the academic year for which they wish to register.

Article 7.31b. Rights and obligations upon application no later than 1 May

1. In the event that an individual has applied for one or more programmes no later than 1 May, in the manner referred to in [Article 7.31a, first paragraph](#), they shall have the right to participate in study choice activities to be organised by the institution with respect to the relevant programmes. The Executive Board of the institution may decide that participation in the study choice activities shall be mandatory for the individual.
3. With respect to each individual who has applied and participated in the study choice activities, the Executive Board of the institution shall issue study choice recommendations. A maximum number of study choice recommendations to which the individual is entitled may be set down by Ministerial Order.
4. In the event that the second sentence of the first paragraph has been implemented and the individual does not participate in the study choice activities referred to in that paragraph without a valid reason, the Executive Board of the institution may decide to refuse to register the individual as a student.
5. To implement paragraphs 1 to 4, the Executive Board of the institution shall set down further rules pertaining to:
 - a. the nature and the content of the study choice activities for the institution or for each programme;
 - b. the timeframe within which the study choice activities shall take place;
 - c. the timeframe within which and the manner in which the study choice recommendations shall be issued;
 - d. the valid reasons for failing to participate in study choice activities;
 - e. the consequences of failing to participate in study choice activities without a valid reason; and
 - f. the provisions as referred to in paragraph 2.
6. Paragraphs 1 to 4 do not apply to applications for bachelor's programmes for which a selection procedure is in place.

Article 7.31c. Applications after 1 May for another programme

1. In the event that an individual has fulfilled the obligation referred to in [Article 7.31a, first paragraph](#), pertaining to that other programme, and applies for a programme other than the programme referred to in the said provision after 1 May, the Executive Board of the institution may decide that participation in the study choice activities referred to in [Article 7.31b, first paragraph](#) shall be mandatory for the individual.



Implementation of the legal framework

- Prospective students who apply for a bachelor's programme on or before 1 May have the right to participate in study choice activities.
- Participation in matching is not compulsory for prospective students applying as first-year students for a study programme that uses a selection procedure in consequence of having a *numerus fixus* (fixed intake).
- Prospective students who have applied for a study programme at an institution on or before 1 May have the right to change the study programme after 1 May.
- After changing, it is still mandatory to offer participation in CM for this group of prospective students.
- All prospective students who have participated will receive advice.



Leiden University Regulations for Student Registration and Tuition Fees (hereafter “Regulations for Student Registration”)

2.1. Application for first student registration in Studielink

1. First registration on a bachelor's programme is only possible if the individual applies for the study programme in Studielink by 1 May at the latest.
2. If the individual is applying for more than one bachelor's programme, the requirement to apply by 1 May at the latest applies to one of the bachelor's programmes only.
3. The individual is obliged to take part in matching activities. This also applies to applications for second or subsequent bachelor's programmes.
4. If an individual receives negative binding study advice for a Dutch university or university of applied sciences bachelor's programme after 1 May, and as a consequence cannot apply before or on 1 May, they are exempted from the requirement to apply for the bachelor's programme by 1 May.
5. For bachelor's programmes with a Selection and Placement procedure (*numerus fixus*), the individual must apply in Studielink by 15 January 23:59 at the latest.

2.2. Compulsory participation in matching

1. After application for a bachelor's programme in Studielink, the individual will receive an invitation to participate in compulsory matching.
2. Participation in the matching activity of a bachelor's programme is compulsory and is a registration requirement. The matching activity must be completed before the start of the academic year.
3. The individual is exempted from participation in the compulsory matching activity if they have completed the matching activity for the study programme in question in the previous academic year.
4. The first and second paragraphs of this article do not apply for registration on bachelor's programmes for which a Selection and Placement procedure is in place (*numerus fixus*). For these bachelor's programmes, the procedures as laid down in the *Regulations on Selection and Placement* for the study programme in question apply.

2.3. Not applying by 1 May or completing compulsory study choice activity

1. Requests for student registration will be refused if:
 - a. the individual does not apply on time in Studielink for a bachelor's programme with compulsory matching, or
 - b. the individual does not complete all elements of the matching activity.
2. The individual will receive an official decision to this effect on behalf of the Executive Board.

3.1. General conditions for first registration for a study programme

1. The individual must submit a request for student registration for a study programme on time via Studielink. This applies to all bachelor's, master's and post-initial study programmes.
3. Individuals with non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationality must:
 - a. submit a copy of a valid passport; and
 - b. if applicable, submit a copy of a Dutch residence permit or confirmation of receipt of a residence permit request issued by the IND, as proof of lawful residency in the Netherlands;
 - c. meet the payment obligations as referred to in Article [5.7](#).



Implementation of the Regulations for Student Registration

- The Regulations for Student Registration stipulate that all bachelor's programmes must use compulsory matching.
- It is mandatory for prospective students to participate in compulsory matching.
- Prospective students as referred to in Article 3.1, third paragraph, are required to comply with the relevant application deadlines.
- The Regulations for Student Registration stipulate that prospective students must complete all the elements of the compulsory matching, and failure to do so can be a reason for refusing enrolment in that study programme (see point 7 below).
- The elements of compulsory matching are specified by the study programme (see point 1 below).
- The decision to refuse enrolment is taken by the Executive Board (see point 8 below).
- On the basis of the Regulations on Application and Admission to Higher Education (RATHO), Article 4.1, second paragraph, a prospective student is permitted to apply for no more than three study programmes per year. Within these, a prospective student may have no more than four active requests for enrolment at any time.



***Leiden University Regulations on Compulsory Matching
(hereafter “Regulations on CM”)***

1 Nature and content of the elements of compulsory matching

Each study programme determines the content of the activities or assignments and the online or in-person lectures, and how the activities or assignments must be completed (online or in-person). For example, prospective students might follow an online or in-person lecture, watch info clips or complete an online test.

Study programmes must decide and announce the following steps:

- what activities or assignments are involved;
- how the activities or assignments must be performed;
- where the activities or assignments must be performed; and
- when the activities or assignments must be submitted.

These steps must be published on the study programme’s website no later than 1 October in the year preceding the year when the programme will start.

After the matching activities for a bachelor’s programme have been completed, they will also remain valid for the subsequent academic year. If the (prospective) student fails their final high school examination, or for any other reason does not start in the September of the year immediately following the matching activities, then they are not required to participate again in the matching activities for the same study programme the next year; also if a student ends their enrolment before 1 February and enrolls again for the same study programme in the next academic year, they are not required to participate again. This means that matching activities that are completed in a specific academic year, with a view to enrolling for the immediately following academic year, in the above circumstances also remain valid for enrolment for the same bachelor’s programme in that subsequent academic year.

The validity period runs from the academic year for which the application is made until and including the following academic year (i.e. two academic years). This validity period is recorded in uSis, the study progress system.

2 The period within which the elements of compulsory matching take place

After prospective students have applied via Studielink (on or before 1 May), they receive an email about the matching activities. The faculty, in consultation



with the study programme, is free to choose when the matching activities will take place.

A last opportunity to participate in matching activities will be offered at the end of August. This is needed, in any case, for prospective students who wish to change their study programme (and had already applied for a study programme on or before 1 May) and also for prospective students who wish to apply for a different study programme after receiving a negative Binding Study Advice (BSA). The latest application date for this is **22 August**. The deadline for completing the matching activities is **31 August**. After this, it is no longer possible to participate in matching.

3 The period within which the advice on matching is issued

The study programme must issue advice to all prospective students, even if they have already participated in CM for another study programme.

The feedback that prospective students receive from the study programme during or after participation in the matching activities is not binding advice; each prospective student must make their own decision, regardless of the outcome of the matching advice, on whether or not to enrol for the study programme.

The date on which this advice will be issued must be announced in due time by the study programme via its website, where information will also be given on the possibility of discussing the advice.

Decisions and messages relating to compulsory matching are sent electronically to prospective students, to the email address that they have specified in Studielink.

4 Force majeure that prevents participation in compulsory matching

If prospective students are unable to participate in the matching activities, they must withdraw their application as soon as possible. “As soon as possible” means, in any case, before the start of the matching activities.

If *force majeure* prevents prospective students from participating, they can submit a request to participate on an alternative date. A description of how to submit a request for this is given in the email invitation that was sent by the study programme. The programme board of the bachelor’s programme will assess the request and decide whether the reason for being unable to participate is valid. If the request is granted, the prospective student will be invited to participate in the matching activities at another time.



If the request is not granted, the study programme will expect the prospective student to attend the matching activities to which they were invited. If the prospective student is then absent, the enrolment condition “participation in CM” has not been fulfilled and the prospective student will not be able to start that study programme in the immediately following academic year.

Force majeure may be said to occur in, for example, the following cases:

- Illness of the prospective student on the day or in the period of the matching activities;
- Death in the prospective student’s immediate family (first- and second-degree) in or just before the period of the matching activities;
- The prospective student’s marriage on the day or in the period of the matching activities;
- Long-term stay abroad (gap year) and it is not possible to perform activities online.

The basic principle in the event of inability to participate is to offer an alternative time for participation in the matching activities, if this is possible and can be scheduled.

5 Provisions for remote participation in compulsory matching

The study programme is obliged to offer remote provisions (online module) for prospective students who would be seriously inconvenienced by having to participate at the location specified by the study programme, because of the distance between their home and that location. This obligation has been fulfilled if activities are offered online.

6 Valid participation in compulsory matching

Participation in compulsory matching is only valid if the prospective student has participated in all the elements of the study programme’s matching activities and has met the applicable deadlines and obligations.

7 Consequences of late application and non-participation without legitimate reasons

If a prospective student does not participate in compulsory matching and does not have a valid reason (see point 4), submits their application for the first time after 1 May (apart from the statutory exceptions as specified in point 2) or



has not fully completed all the elements of compulsory matching (see point 6), then this can be a reason for refusing the prospective student's enrolment. The decision to refuse enrolment will be taken on behalf of the Executive Board by the Director of Student and Educational Affairs (SEA) (see point 8).

8 Mandate for decision to refuse enrolment

The Executive Board may decide to refuse the enrolment of a prospective student (see Article 7.31b, fourth paragraph, of the WHW).

A decision to refuse enrolment will be made, in any event, in the following cases:

- if valid participation in the compulsory matching activities has not taken place (see point 6); or
- if the application was submitted after 1 May.

However, there are permitted exceptions to this, such as (I) prospective students who wish to change their study programme and had already applied for another study programme on or before 1 May, (II) students with a negative Binding Study Advice (BSA) and (III) prospective students with serious personal circumstances, as referred to in point 4.

The Executive Board mandates this power to the Director of Student and Educational Affairs (SEA) and hereby establishes this mandate.

9 Objection and appeal

An objection can be lodged against the decision to refuse enrolment, within six weeks, to the Appeals and Objections Committee (*Commissie voor de Beroepen Bezwaarschriften*, hereafter: CBB). The letter of objection can be submitted by email (CBB@bb.leidenuniv.nl); it must state why the prospective student does not agree with the refusal of enrolment, and a copy of the contested decision must be attached.

The CBB will issue advice on the objection; after receiving this advice, the Executive Board will take a decision about the objection as soon as possible. If necessary, a (prospective) student can lodge an appeal against this decision to the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State (*Afdeling bestuursrechtspraak Raad van State*, hereafter: ABRvS) in The Hague.

If the prospective student's appeal to the ABRvS is declared well-founded before 1 September of the current academic year, and it is decided that the prospective student can enrol for the study programme, this enrolment will relate to the immediately following academic year.



If the prospective student's appeal to the ABRvS is declared well-founded after 1 September of the current academic year, and it is decided that the prospective student can enrol for the study programme, this enrolment will relate to the academic year immediately following the current academic year. In other words, this means a waiting period of one academic year.

In the event of an objection being submitted, the defence in the objection procedure will be conducted by or on behalf of the Director of Student and Educational Affairs (SEA).

10 Hardship clause

If application of these regulations would result in serious inequities, the prospective student can submit a request to deviate from the provisions of these regulations due to exceptional personal circumstances or demonstrable educational *force majeure*.

11 Privacy

An explanation of how a prospective student's personal data are used, and for how long they are retained, is given in a Privacy Statement. Prospective students are offered the opportunity to read this Privacy Statement in Brightspace before completing the online module as a matching activity. The text of the [Privacy Statement](#) relating to the use of personal data in compulsory matching can be accessed on the website.

12 Final provisions

These regulations were adopted by the Executive Board as the Leiden University Regulations on Compulsory Matching on 23 June 2026.