



PROTOCOL ON
STUDYING WITH A DISABILITY
AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Preamble

The purpose of this protocol is to provide clarity about the possibilities of studying with a disability at Leiden University. It aims to define the responsibilities of both the student and the University as precisely as possible. The coordination of all aspects of studying with a disability has been assigned to one centre: the Fenestra Disability Centre, a section of the Department of Study and Student Support, which itself is part of Leiden University's Student and Educational Affairs Expertise Centre.

The protocol provides guidelines aimed at limiting study delay, increasing the feasibility of studying for a degree and avoiding drop-out in order to allow students with a disability to participate in the teaching on an equal footing with other students. The incentive policy for students with a disability is of great significance here because it can have a considerable effect on the study success of this group of students.

Students with a disability or chronic illness need extra or special facilities during their studies. Examples of these vary from wider doors and electronic door openers for wheelchair users, to extra examination time for students with dyslexia.

Pursuant to the Act on Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Handicap or Chronic Illness (*Wet gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap of chronische ziekte; WGBHCz*), Leiden University is obliged to make effective arrangements for students with a disability by providing them with special facilities. The WGBHCz forbids discrimination against students with a disability. This does not mean that a student with a disability should in all cases be admitted to the study programme of their choice without question. Leiden University has a duty to verify a student's suitability to participate in a study programme. The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) assesses, during its institutional audit or programme accreditation, whether educational institutions meet these requirements. It assesses whether 'facilities that promote the accessibility and feasibility of the programme for students with a disability' are available. The educational institutions are required to take three conditions into consideration here:

- (1) The modification must actually remove an impediment.
- (2) The modification must be necessary, which means it is not possible to solve the problem in another way.
- (3) The modification may not be too expensive for the educational establishment reasonably speaking, and should not be overly arduous.

The accreditation is part of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (WHW Article 5.7 first paragraph, under e, and Article 5.12 first paragraph, under d).



This protocol is part of the policy implemented by Leiden University with regard to providing an equal, discrimination-free study environment for students with a disability. It deals with those issues that must make studying with a disability possible in the following ways:

1. Provision of information on studying with a disability;
2. Physical infrastructure (accessibility of buildings and lecture rooms, facilities and teaching materials);
3. Supervision (supervision of students during their studies);
4. Expertise (provision of expertise about disabilities and facilities at programme level);
5. Personal learning plans (agreements about alternative learning plans for a programme that the student can feasibly study);
6. Testing and examinations (offering concrete alternative examination provisions);
7. Guarantees regarding quality and continuity (improving and upholding the policy on studying with a disability).

Definition of terms

Student with a disability: student with a disability or chronic illness as provided for in the WGBHCz.

(Prospective) student: anyone who is following (or about to follow) education and is registered at Leiden University.

Supervisor: the staff member of Leiden University assigned to a student with a disability, understood at least to mean the study adviser, student psychologist or lecturer.

Fenestra: Fenestra Disability Centre; the University information centre for students with a disability and the student counsellors who are part of Fenestra. Further information can be found on the [student website](#).

Supervision: all measures, modifications and facilities available via Leiden University.

Disability: the presence of one or more visible or invisible disability caused by a temporary, long-term or chronic physical or psychological disorder.

Scope

This protocol is intended for students with a disability, supervisors, Boards of Examiners, Faculty Boards, and Programme Boards at Leiden University. It provides guidelines on the provision of the necessary support by the University or the department, and defines the responsibilities of the student and the institution with regard to studying with a disability.

Fenestra: coordinating role

The basic strategy is to concentrate the coordination all aspects of studying with a disability at Fenestra and to place this in the hands of the student counsellors who are part of Fenestra. The student counsellors have a co-ordinating task that involves going through the application procedure, monitoring



the responsibilities of the student and supervisor, arranging for the necessary facilities, and providing information.

Only those facilities that are approved by a particular Board of Examiners in conjunction with the student counsellor can be guaranteed.

If modifications need to be made to buildings in order to improve accessibility, due to the structural nature of the request, the Real Estate Expertise Centre (the Director of Technical Management and Projects) must be involved in the application and should give their approval.

Role of Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is authorised to issue a decision concerning the granting of facilities to students. On the basis of the Law Governing Higher Education and Academic Research (WHW) and as detailed in the Course and Examination Regulations (OER) and the Rules and Regulations, the Board of Examiners is required to review requests for the awarding of facilities.

The Board of Examiners of the study programme in question makes a decision, taking into account the advice of Fenestra, on the student's request for facilities. When doing so, the learning outcomes of the study programme help determine whether it is reasonable to refuse certain facilities. The Board of Examiners can choose to deviate from the advice issued by Fenestra. The student will be informed in writing of the decision.

Limited mandate requests for extra time

The Board of Examiners can grant the student counsellor a mandate to make decisions on student requests for the provision of extra time for exams, specifically 10 minutes per hour extra. This mandate is limited to requests for extra time for exams only. In this respect, the student counsellor issues decisions on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

This mandate is laid down in the Rules and Guidelines of the study programme's Board of Examiners.

Application procedure for facilities

When registering on a study programme at Leiden University, students can indicate that they wish to receive information about studying with a disability. The student can also request this information at a later date.

The student with a disability must submit a request for additional facilities in good time via the 'Studying with a disability' tile in uSis. Requests for additional facilities and adaptations can only be granted if they are submitted via the 'Studying with a disability' tile in uSis.

The student must support their request by providing an official statement concerning the nature of their disability. In the case of dyslexia or dyscalculia, the statement must be issued by an institution that is recognised by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.



The student is responsible for submitting a request for additional facilities as soon as possible via the 'Studying with a disability' tile in uSis. If a student submits a request at a time when it is no longer reasonably possible to arrange the facility, there is no guarantee that the facility can be made available to the student by the desired date. A recurring facility (such as extra exam time) only needs to be requested once. If additional facilities are granted, these will be visible to the education administration department of the study programme on which the student is registered. For adjustments to buildings that are deemed necessary and reasonably achievable, the timeframe is dependent on the time required to make such changes.

Two decision-making routes

Route for requesting extra time for exams

If a student has requested extra time for exams (10 minutes extra per hour), the student counsellor is authorised to handle the request independently. The student counsellor will issue a decision on the request which will then become visible in uSis. The Board of Examiners, study advisers and examination offices will be able to see which students are entitled to 10 minutes extra time for exams. Requests for extra exam time will be processed within ten working days. Once the student counsellor registers their decision in uSis, the student will be able to view it. The student will receive an automated email once a decision has been issued. If the student counsellor requires additional information from the student in order to make a decision, they will inform the student within ten working days. In this case, the processing of the request may take longer than ten working days. If extra time for exams is granted, it will take ten working days before the student can make use of this facility.

Route for requesting other facilities

If a student requests facilities other than extra time for exams, the student counsellor will first issue advice on the request. In most cases, the student must attend an appointment with the student counsellor before advice can be issued. Within five days of submitting their request, the student will be invited by email to schedule an appointment with a student counsellor. After the appointment has taken place, the student counsellor will issue advice to the Board of Examiners within five working days. Based on the advice, the Board of Examiners will issue a decision on whether to grant the requested facilities. The Board of Examiners can choose to deviate from the advice given by the student counsellors but must state its reason for doing so. Once the Board of Examiners registers its decision in uSis, the student will be able to view it. The student will receive an automated email once a decision has been issued. If additional facilities are granted, it will take at least ten working days before the student can make use of the facility, depending on the nature of the facility in question. Relevant staff members will be able to view any additional facilities granted by way of a query in the system.

Appeal

Students are entitled to appeal against the decision of the student counsellors or Board of Examiners. This is known as an administrative appeal. Appeals must be submitted to the Examination Appeals Board within 6 weeks of the issuance of the decision in question.

Responsibilities of Fenestra and the student counsellor

The student counsellor evaluates requests for extra time for exams and takes a decision on whether to grant this facility.

On the basis of the student's request and the information submitted by the student, the student counsellor advises the Board of Examiners of the student's study programme about the modifications that need to be made and the facilities that need to be offered.



The student counsellor indicates which arrangements are necessary, suitable and desirable in order to ensure that it is feasible for the student in question to follow the programme. The arrangements may be of a tangible nature (such as the accessibility of buildings, IT facilities or buddies) or an intangible nature (such as alternative examination forms, flexibility with regard to compulsory workgroups or assignment deadline extensions). The arrangements considered necessary are recorded in the advice issued by Fenestra.

If necessary, the student counsellor helps the student complete and submit their request for the required facilities.

The student counsellor draws up guidelines and advises the departments, Boards of Examiners, lecturers and, if necessary, the Real Estate Expertise Centre on the application of these guidelines with regard to students with a disability who are registered at the University.

The student counsellor advises the student about possible special financial regulations that may be applicable, and helps secure funding for the arrangements that need to be made.

The student counsellor acts as the contact person for the Board of Examiners of the study programme of the student with a disability. The student counsellor monitors the agreements made and records these in the student's file.

At the request of the student, the student counsellor can evaluate the arrangements made.

In the event of any differences of opinion, the student counsellor acts as mediator.

Responsibilities of the student

Any student who believes that they have a disability that warrants special arrangements should submit a request for facilities in good time. This can be at the start of their study programme or during the programme if the disability comes to light at that point.

The student is responsible for providing an official statement concerning their disability. In the case of dyslexia or dyscalculia, the statement must be issued by an organisation that is recognised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W).

The student must inform Fenestra as soon as possible about any changes to their situation, and must notify Fenestra in good time if they believe that new arrangements are needed.

If required, the student should keep in regular contact with Fenestra about the implementation of the arrangements that have been made.

The student must report any complaints about the arrangements to be made in good time to Fenestra.



Role and responsibilities of the study adviser

The study adviser is responsible for the implementation of the facilities that have been granted and of the applicable legislation.

If necessary, the study adviser should stay in contact with Fenestra about the student with a disability.

The study adviser monitors the agreements made between the student and the Board of Examiners to ensure that the facilities granted to the student are implemented with due care, and that the agreements made are met.

The study adviser supports the student in applying for any applicable financial support by drawing up and evaluating a study plan.

Entry into force

This protocol enters into force on 3 July 2024.

Adoption

Adopted by the Executive Board on 2 July 2024 following advice from the University Council on 24 June 2024.

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