

Annual report of the Personal Circumstances Committee for the academic year 2018 2019

October 2019

This annual report provides an overview of the activities of the Personal Circumstances Committee (CPO). In the first section, the conclusions and recommendations of this report are presented. For recommendations from the annual report of 2017 2018, which are still valid, we refer to the [annual report of last year](#)).

Conclusions

1. Twente University (UT) has increasing student numbers, and increasing numbers of international students and increasing numbers of non-EU/EEA students. This caused in general more applications for assessment of personal circumstances under the terms of BSA and MoMi and more applications for FOBOS regulation Force Majeure Allowances. As a percentage of the total number of students, we do not observe an increase in the number of applications.
2. Among international students, psychological problems are more common than among Dutch students. Especially for the bachelor students, sometimes not even 18 years old, it is a major challenge not only to migrate to a profoundly different country but also to integrate into a new study environment that is often very different. Often, international students encounter housing problems as well. Cooptation makes it more difficult for international students to find appropriate housing. Sometimes, internships are an obstacle for international students.
3. Among students with psychological problems, in many cases, their problems already started before starting the study programme, and due to the high work load at the UT their problems often become more severe. Some study programmes draft adapted individual study plans for these students, but this is not common practice.
4. An increasing number of students mentions financial problems as a cause of study delay. Especially foreign students are dependent on scholarships or sponsors and often face problems with obtaining their scholarships and moral pressure to fulfil the requirements set for the scholarships.
5. In 1 case where the CPO has not recognized the circumstances of a student, the student obtained positive advice from the programme director. For 5 these students where the CPO did assess but has not recognized their circumstances, the study recommendation was postponed. This is only possible in rare circumstances.
6. Students with psychological problems still face waiting lists before they can get psychological counselling. Also, especially non-EU/EEA students need to overcome feelings of shame before they ask for (psychological) counselling.

Recommendations

1. A safe financial environment is a precondition for study success. For all students, but especially for non-EU/EEA students, the support structure should be aimed at having all financial issues settled before the start of the academic year. Grant providers should provide scholarships with reasonable conditions.
2. A safe housing environment is a precondition for study success. For all students, but especially for non-EU/EEA students, housing should be available before the start of the academic year and for more than just the first year of study.
3. After the start of the academic year, the support structure should be aimed at academic and social integration.
4. Study programmes should organize their internships in such a way that no student is delayed in their study programme.
5. Attention should be paid to assisting students in overcoming feelings of shame and in showing them the way in the administrative system when they need help.

Report 2018 2019

The CPO is an advisory body of the Executive Board of Twente University. She implements the financial support regulation of Twente University, namely:

1. [FOBOS regulation Top-level Sports and Top-level Arts](#)
The Top-level Sports Committee and the Top-level Cultural Committee determine whether applicants meet the criteria. The granting of Top-level Sports grants and Top-level Arts grants is standardized and is officially handled by the CPO registry. Applications are only assessed by the CPO in deviating situations.
2. [FOBOS regulation Activism Grants](#)
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.
3. [FOBOS regulation Force Majeure Allowance](#)
On behalf of the Executive Board of Twente University, the CPO decides on payments to students under the FOBOS scheme.
4. The CPO is also responsible for the assessment of personal circumstances under the terms of:
 - a. [\(Binding\) Recommendation First-Year Students \(BSA\)](#)
The CPO assesses the legitimacy, duration and the severity of personal circumstances and advises the Programme Director.
 - b. [Modern Migration Policy \(MoMi\)](#)
The CPO assesses the legitimacy, duration and severity of personal circumstances of students with a study visa. 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 personal circumstances for Force Majeure Allowance, for (Binding) Recommendations First-Year Students and Modern Migration Policy, respectively.

Force Majeure Allowance

When students apply for financial support in case of study delay due to certain specific circumstances, the committee does (or does not) recognize the circumstances, the period of delay and determines the extent of the support. Table 1 gives information about the number of applications, percentages recognized and the total allocated amount of financial support.

Table 1: Force Majeure Allowances 2017-2018

	2017-2018	2018-2019
Applications assessed	75	73
% granted	84	93
Allocated amount (Euro)	53.473,48	112.522,11

After an increase in applications between 2016 and 2017, the number of applications is more or less stable. We observe a general increase of granted applications, as well as an increase in the allocated amount. This is due to both a higher percentage of granted applications and an increasing number of non-EU/EEA students, who applied for financial compensation. In general, we observe an increase of granted applications over time. This is due to the fact that more dossiers are complete and with all available evidence, something the study advisors and student councellors should be credited for. Study advisors and student councellors are crucial in assisting students in the application process.

(Binding) Recommendation First-Year Students (BSA)

For the study year 2018-2019, there were 203 applications, and the CPO **assessed 191** dossiers of first-year bachelor students. 12 students withdrew their application after meeting the BSA requirements. Of the 191 assessed dossiers, in **168 (88%) cases**, the CPO **recognized the circumstances**, and in 23 cases (12%) it did not recognize the circumstances.

Table 2 gives information about the number of applications since 2015-2016, both in numerical terms as well as in terms of the percentage of the total number of first-year bachelor students.

Table 2: CPO applications with regards to BSA, 2015-2016 to 2018-2019

	Number of applications	Number of applications as a percentage of the total number of registered students on August 31 of the study year (end)
2015-2016	90	7,0
2016-2017	150	10,0
2017-2018	175	11,4
2018-2019	191	10,0

We observe an increase in the number of applications, but the percentage of first-year bachelor students asking for an assessment of special circumstances has remained more or less stable. The increase in applications is due to the increasing number of bachelor students enrolled at Twente University.

Table 3 makes a distinction between the type of countries that students come from when starting their study at Twente University. We have no information regarding the country of origin of the drop-outs during the study year; therefore Table 3 cannot present the number of applications by country of origin on August 31 of the study year.

Table 3: CPO applications with regards to BSA, 2018-2019, by country types

	Number of registered students on September 1 of the study year (start)	Number of applications	Number of applications as a percentage of the total number of registered students on September 1 of the study year (start)
Dutch	1440	126	8,8
EU/EEA	596	42	7,0
non-EU/EEA	196	23	11,7
Total	2232	191	8,6

Among the first-year non-EU/EEA bachelor students, a much higher percentage of students enrolling at Twente University apply to have their circumstances for study delay recognized (11,7) than of Dutch (8,9) or EU/EEA students (7,0).

Table 4 presents the number of applications according to assessed circumstances by the CPO.

Table 4: CPO applications with regards to BSA, 2018-2019, by assessed circumstances by the CPO

	Number of applications	Number of applications as a percentage of the total number of applications*
Psychological circumstances	67	35
Medical circumstances	35	18
Social circumstances	63	33
Functional impairment	28	14
Other	4	2

* Students can face multiple circumstances; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100

Table 4 shows that psychological and social circumstances are both mentioned in roughly one-third of the applications as a reason for the study delay. The functional impairment consisted of 22 cases of mental impairment and in 6 cases of physical impairment.

Follow-up of the CPO advice with regards to BSA over 2017-2018

The CPO assesses the legitimacy, duration and the severity of personal circumstances and advises the Programme Director. What happens *after* this advice is shown in Table 5. Table 5 presents the study recommendation given by the Programme Directors for the study year 2017-2018. The follow-up of the CPO advice over 2018-2019 will be stated in the next annual report.

For the study year **2017-2018**, there were 174 applications, and the CPO **assessed 171** dossiers of first-year bachelor students. 4 students withdrew their application after meeting the BSA requirements. Of the 171 assessed dossiers, in **145 cases**, the CPO **recognized the circumstances**, and in 26 cases it did not recognize the circumstances.

Table 5: Binding Study Advice of Programme Directors, 2017-2018, by the advice of CPO regarding circumstances

	Assessed applications by CPO	Circumstances recognized by CPO	Circumstances not recognized by CPO
Positive advice, because student met the norm	50	41	9
Positive advice	6	5	1
Advice postponed	86	81	5
Negative advice	26	15	11
Postponement not possible	3	3	0
Total	171	145	26

Table 5 shows that out of the 145 cases in which the CPO recognized the circumstances, students met the BSA norm in 41 cases. In 5 cases, positive advice was given, in 81 cases the advice was postponed, and in 3 cases postponement was not possible. In 15 cases, negative advice was given, despite the recognition of the CPO of the circumstances. A programme director can give negative advice if he or she is of the opinion that, considering the circumstances, the student is not fit for the program. In 9 out of the 26 cases where the CPO did not recognize the circumstances, students met the BSA norm. In 11 cases, negative advice was given. For **5** students whose circumstances were not recognized by the CPO, the study recommendation was postponed. In 1 case, positive advice was given.

In addition to the figures in Table 5, and **without an assessment of the CPO**, the study recommendation was postponed for **20 students** during a hearing (or another type of consultation) of the Programme. These hearings can be used when circumstances occur after the deadline of July 1, or if the student was not capable of asking the CPO to assess their case. In all other cases, a hearing should not be used to



assess circumstances that should have been assessed by the CPO. We have no information regarding the reasons these 20 cases were not assessed by the CPO.

Modern Migration Policy (MoMi)

The Modern Migration Policy Act is an act to amend the Dutch Aliens Act. It requires all non-EU/EEA students with a residence permit for study purposes at the University of Twente to achieve sufficient study progress every academic year. This study progress amounts to 50% of the study program.

For the study year 2018-2019, there were 40 applications, and the CPO **assessed 32** files of non-EU/EEA students. 8 students withdrew their application prior to the CPO meeting on the grounds of meeting the MoMi requirements or leaving the UT. Of the 32 assessed files, in **24 (75%) cases**, the CPO **recognized the circumstances**, and in 3 cases (9%) it did not recognize the circumstances. In 5 cases (16%) the student did meet the MoMi requirements anyway.

Table 6 gives information about the number of applications since 2016-2017, both in numerical terms as well as in terms of the percentage of the total amount of non-EU/EEA students.

Table 6: Assessed MoMi applications, 2016-2017 to 2018-2019

	Assessed applications by CPO	Number of assessed applications as a percentage of the total number of registered non-EU/EEA students on September 1 of the study year (start)
2016-2017	14	3,5
2017-2018	28	5,0
2018-2019	32	4,3

We observe an increase of MoMi applications, but this is not due to an increasing percentage of eligible non-EU/EEA students who apply but to an increase in non-EU/EEA students. The number of non-EU/EEA increased from 560 in 2017-2018 to 750 in 2018 -2019.

Table 7 presents the circumstances that according to the non-EU/EEA students have led to their study delay.

Table 7: MoMi applications, 2018-2019, by assessed circumstances by the CPO

	Assessed applications by CPO	Number of applications as a percentage of the total number of applications*
Psychological circumstances	15	47
Medical circumstances	3	9,4
Social circumstances	9	28
Student activism	2	6,3
Infeasible study programme	3	9,3

Table 7 shows that psychological problems are observed in almost half of the MoMi applications. Social circumstances are in 28 percent of the applications indicated as a reason for the study delay. The students mentioning an infeasible study programme often referred to the organization of their internship as a cause of study delay.

CPO Committee:

Prof.dr. A. Need (chair)

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

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

Drs. D. Brandwagt (member)

Mr. C. van Dijken (advisor)

CPO Registry:

M. van Heijst

J. Greven, LLB