

Implementation of the Binding Recommendations on Continuation of Studies at TU Delft

This is a translation of the Dutch 'Wijze van uitvoering Bindend Studieadvies TU Delft'. In the case of differences in interpretation between the English and Dutch text, the Dutch text shall prevail.

1. Binding recommendation on the continuation of studies (BSA)

The Higher Education and Academic Research Act (WHW) provides universities with the power to issue negative binding recommendations on continuation of studies (BSA) to first-year students. This means that the university may use BSA to remove a student from the Bachelor's degree programme in which he is enrolled or any other programme: the student will not be allowed to continue on the programme he is enrolled in. The BSA therefore amounts to a ruling.

Every Bachelor's student must obtain at least 45 ECTS in the first year of their Bachelor's programme in order to be able to continue with the programme. These 45 credits represent three-quarters of the total number of credits that can be obtained in the first year. If this minimum is not met, the student will not be able to enrol for the same programme for a period of four years following the year in which the BSA was issued.

2. BSA implementation

The BSA applies to all first-year students who are enrolled on a first-year Bachelor's degree programme for the first time.

- a. No distinction is made between majors or minors or a first or second degree. For each programme on which a student is enrolled, he will receive a BSA for the first year.
- b. Students who terminate their enrolment before 1 February will be exempted from BSA. If the student registers for the same programme in the next academic year, he/she will be regarded as a first-year student and will be subject to the provisions of BSA.
- c. Students who terminate their enrolment after 1 February and have obtained less than 45 ECTS will receive a BSA.
- d. Exceptions can be made for students who have not obtained the minimum number of credits due to extenuating personal circumstances and for students who registered after 1 October (for example, those switching programmes mid-semester) and have not earned the minimum number of credits (see par. 6).

3. Responsibility for BSA

The dean issues binding recommendations on continuation of studies. He is advised by the faculty BSA committee consisting of at least three academic staff members and an Academic Counsellor acting as an advisory member.

4. Information on student supervision

At the start of every Bachelor's programme, first-year students are informed about how student supervision is organised. This plan contains the following:

- How first-year students are introduced to the degree programme
- Further information about mentorship
- The contact details of academic counsellors
- The moments at which formal recommendations are issued
- The criteria for these recommendations
- What a student should do if he or she believes that there are personal circumstances that influence his or her student progress
- Further student support and guidance provided by the department

5. Advice moments

There are three BSA advice moments during the first year:

March: An interim recommendation is given on the basis of the results from the first semester. This gives an indication to the student of whether he will obtain the required 45 credits, with a warning if it looks as though he may not do so.

Early August: The recommendation is based on the results from the first and second semesters. Students who at this time who have obtained at least 45 credits will be given a positive BSA. Students who have obtained less than 45 credits will be informed that it is proposed to give them a negative BSA. They will be given the opportunity to have a hearing by the BSA committee.

End of August: Based on the entire first year, including the August exams, students who have not yet received a definitive BSA will now be issued one. The BSA will be issued by 31 August at the latest.

All recommendations are issued in writing and sent to the student TU e-mail address. Definitive BSAs are also sent by post.

The programme offers students with unsatisfactory study progress a support interview; the letters also include an indication of what facilities are available for support and guidance.

6. Personal circumstances

According to the WHW, the BSA must take extenuating personal circumstances into consideration. These personal circumstances are upheld if it can reasonably be assumed that the student in question would have achieved the standard had the circumstances not been present. This means that personal circumstances do not automatically lead to postponement of the BSA.

Students who enrol after 1 October are subject to the 45 credits rule and their BSA will not be deferred. However, the BSA committee may advise the dean to make such a deferment if the late enrolment has had a significant impact on the student's progress.

Procedure for personal circumstances

1. The student reports to the academic counsellor in good time that there are extenuating personal circumstances that may affect his/her studies.
2. Personal circumstances are defined as follows:
 - a. Illness;
 - b. Pregnancy;
 - c. Physical, sensory or other functional disability;
 - d. Exceptional family circumstances;
 - e. Falling behind in studies as a result of the way in which the institute organised the programme;
 - f. Membership of an administrative body (Student Council, Faculty Student Council, Board of Studies, or of a student association recognised by the Graduation Support Scheme);
 - g. Athletes with a TU Delft top-level athlete status.
3. In the first year at TU Delft, board membership as mentioned in Paragraph 2 is of such a limited scope that BSA deferment due to this category of extenuating personal circumstances is not an option, with the exception of membership of the Board of Studies.
4. Personal circumstances must be reported to the Academic Counsellor as soon as possible after the circumstances arise. In the case of 2.e, the circumstance should be reported to the relevant programme coordinator or director of studies as soon as it manifests itself.
5. Students are themselves responsible for applying for a deferment of the BSA to the BSA committee.
6. If the BSA committee finds that the extenuating personal circumstances have significantly affected the study progress, then the committee may advise the dean to defer the BSA. This means that the student will not receive a negative BSA, but that the BSA will be deferred. In his second year of study, however, the student must obtain 45 credits from the first-year curriculum in addition to any credits already obtained, or obtain any remaining credits from the first year, so that the first year is complete, if he has obtained more than 15 credits from the first year.

7. Personal Circumstances and the Graduation Support Scheme (RAS)

If the student's progress is delayed as a result of personal circumstances he or she can, under certain conditions, make a claim under the RAS. Given the different objectives and assessment frameworks of the BSA and the RAS, a RAS allocation does not necessarily mean a BSA deferment, and vice versa.

8 Exemptions for students switching programmes

Students who switch programmes should, in the first year of their new Bachelor's programme, obtain at least 45 credits from the relevant programme to be able to continue the programme. If a student has curriculum exemptions, these may:

- a. Count towards the BSA minimum if the activity for which the exemption was granted took place in the same academic year as covered by the BSA.
- b. The exemptions may not be counted if the activity on the basis of which the exemption was awarded took place prior to the academic year for which the binding recommendation on the continuation of studies was issued.