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https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2020Z05376&did=2020D11138

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Service document HE - Coronavirus approach COVID-19

Introduction

The purpose of this service document is to provide institutions with practical tools that will enable them to implement the measures announced for higher education (HE) to minimise the spread of the coronavirus. Higher education institutions are concerned about the effects of corona(measures) on students have and are already making maximum efforts to continue teaching and examination. The starting point is to reduce the adverse effects for students of the corona measures as much as possible. This document will be supplemented when new information is available.

1. Interpretation of coronavirus measures for higher education

a. In HE, there will be no educational activities, including examination, at the HE locations until the 6th of April.

We interpret that as follows:

1. No educational activities will take place in our buildings

- We define educational activities as all organised activities that involve a physical encounter between teacher(s) and student(s) at locations of higher education institutions and UMCs. Below we summarise all the activities that take place at different stages of the education chain from enrolment to alumni activities, including contract education.
- All activities that do not directly contribute to the organised education will be scaled down. This also includes activities of study and student associations. What this means concretely is up to the interpretation of the institution.
- Educational activities do not include the defence of theses and doctoral theses in small circles (these will of course take place online if possible) and (final) exam activities in

which the student's physical presence is required. At all times the general instructions of RIVM and GGD will be followed, such as sufficient distance from each other.

- When it comes to the use of campus facilities, such as libraries and research rooms, institutions can make their own choices. Here, too, they must comply with the general instructions of RIVM and GGD.

2. Educational activities outside the building can continue to take place

- Think of internships and (graduation) projects at institutions and companies. In this case, higher education institutions and UMCs will follow the decisions/policies of the host institutions, if necessary in consultation with the institution where the students are enrolled.
- Education that takes place in partnerships outside the locations of higher education institutions and UMCs can continue (co-education, education in companies), provided that the host institution so permits.
- Study activities carried out by students individually are not included in this instruction.

b. As much education as possible in other forms, particularly distance learning

We interpret this as follows:

All forms of education in which there is no physical encounter between student(s) and instructor(s) at locations of higher education institutions. Think, for example, of forms of education such as skype, video lectures, conference calls, guidance in small groups that take place outside the locations of the institutions.

Assessment framework for CvBs:

Even if a discussion arises about the content of the decision in the light of the WHW and/or internal regulations such as the OER, the CvB will apply the following assessment framework:

- Public health
- Comply as closely as possible with RIVM guidelines
- Benefit of students and staff

- Commitment obligation continuity (online) educational process and organisation (i.e. no result obligation) aimed at certification and advancement
- Careful justification
- Feasibility/Administrative manageability
- Focus on core tasks
- Clear and calm

2. Preliminary points of attention

These exceptional circumstances demand flexibility from all parties in higher education, such as institution boards and teachers, as well as students. Moving or otherwise redesigning education and examinations obviously requires a lot from all parties involved (students, teachers, institutions, supervisors, OCW).

OCW and institutions must make a joint effort to find as many appropriate solutions as possible for issues arising from corona(measures). As a general rule, institutions must make an effort to avoid disadvantages for students as much as possible. OCW facilitates institutions to do so as well as possible.

Institutions can implement this commitment obligation by looking for alternatives to physical educational activities, examinations and selection. Institutions determine which interpretation is the most appropriate in the concrete situation. An important notion here is that staff needed for the continuation of the (higher) education is included in the definition of vital sectors.

Where the involvement of the participation [council] is required, institutions will [consult] the participation [council] and the participation [council] will be open to flexible and accelerated procedures.

Generic solutions are needed for a number of issues that are encountered. In this document as many handles as possible are given for this purpose. It may still be the case that individual institutions are faced with specific issues. As a general rule, institutions should look within the usual rules for solutions which will limit the negative consequences for students as much

as possible in the short term. If, within the usual rules, there are insufficient tools to do so, institutions can implement hardship clauses in institutional policy or in the law, amongst other things.

In cases of doubt in specific cases, institutions are advised to contact their respective umbrella organisation that takes stock of questions and concerns and keeps in touch with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science [Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (OCW)] regarding these questions and concerns. OCW will remain involved and will participate in thinking of possible solutions, and the OCW will also coordinate common cases with supervisors where need be.

2.1 What can continue to take place on campus?

- No educational activities can take place at the physical location(s) of higher education institutions. Other activities can continue to take place, provided that they comply with the general instructions of RIVM and GGD.
- As mentioned above, educational activities include all organised activities in which there is a physical meeting between teacher(s) and student(s) at locations of universities of applied sciences, research universities and UMCs. Below we summarise all the activities that take place at different stages of the education chain from enrolment to alumni activities, including contract education.
- This means that even small-scale educational activities at the location of the educational institution cannot continue. If these activities take place outside of the location(s) of the educational institution, it will depend on the extent to which they can be designed within the general instructions of RIVM and GGD
- An exception applies, as mentioned under 1, for the defence of theses and doctoral theses, providing [they occur] in a small circle and within the general instructions of RIVM and GGD. The location(s) of educational institutions can remain open to facilitate students who cannot make use of distance learning at home and thus want to make use of the institution's learning and ICT facilities.
- When it comes to the use of campus facilities, such as libraries and research rooms, institutions can make their own choices, as long as they comply with the general instructions of RIVM and GGD.

Internships

- Internships and other education-related activities outside the institution may continue, unless the employer has reason related to the coronavirus (or related measures) to discontinue the activity.
- Medical and care training and forms of education in which students work in a care institution, such as a UMC, a general hospital or an outpatient care institution as part of an internship or education, constitute a special category. In some cases, it is necessary that trainees and interns go home, because the care institution must be able to focus primarily on the care process. And sometimes it is necessary for interns or residents to stay, because they make an important contribution to patient care.
- The healthcare institution in question is the first to decide whether the student can contribute to patient care. The safety of patients, students and employees in the care facility is paramount. The student will have room to indicate at the healthcare and educational institution whether he/she has personal reasons to continue the internship or residency or not.
- If relevant, it will be agreed if and how the possibly deviating activities fit the objectives of the internship or the residency. The educational institution is leading in these agreements.
- Students may work as a student volunteer at a care institution, even if their internship, residency or other form of education has been cancelled. Separate agreements must be made for this (employment) relationship between the care institution and the student, such as with regard to insurance. In these cases, the healthcare institution is also advised to decide whether the student can continue working. The care institution ensures that it is clear to the student that this voluntary work is not linked to an assessment and does not constitute a continuation of previously carried out educational activities. Coordination about extra efforts by students but also by teachers in the healthcare sector mainly takes place within the regional networks of care institutions and universities.

2.2 International mobility

Students and staff abroad

- Institutions have a duty of care towards their students. This also applies to students studying or doing an internship abroad. What this duty of care entails in a specific case, for example if it concerns the return of students, partly depends on the institution's own rules, and on what the institution possibly has contractually agreed upon with the educational institution abroad.
- The institutions make every effort to maintain close contact with students abroad and to provide them with the correct information regarding the continuation of their education abroad and a possible return to the Netherlands.
- In doing so, the institution must take into account the RIVM advice and the general travel advice that the Ministerie van Buitenlandse [Zaken Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (BZ) has issued regarding the area in question.
- An institution may choose to support students who have to return to Netherlands due to health risks, and do not have sufficient resources to do this. The Ministry of BZ plays a role in the actualisation, wherever necessary and possible, of return to the Netherlands of people who are detained abroad, including students. OCW has set up a contact person for students and staff who functions as a liaison between umbrella organisations and the BZ.

Foreign students in the Netherlands

- Students from abroad residing in the Netherlands may be affected by the consequences of corona(measures), when they run the risk of having to end their studies in the Netherlands prematurely and against their will because of the coronavirus.
- Think of the delay of educational activities, which makes it impossible for the student to complete those activities, because the student's residence permit has already expired. Or students from third countries whose studies are delayed due to corona(measures), resulting in them not being able to obtain the number of credits required to keep their residence permit on time.
- In the above cases, consultation and coordination between OCW and the Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid [Ministry of Justice and Security] is necessary. OCW has set up a contact person for students and staff who functions as a liaison between umbrella organisations and the IND to find solutions to such problems. Together with

JenV, the extent to which the migration laws and regulations accommodate an appropriate solution for students who find themselves in one of the aforementioned situations will be examined. OCW will keep the umbrella organisations closely informed about this.

- There are also students who would like to return to their country of origin - or are obliged to do so because their residence permit has expired - but experience difficulties due to local corona[-related] measures in the country of origin or due to financial obstacles.
- For these students, too, institutions must first and foremost act in accordance with the agreements that have been made regarding this subject between the institution in the Netherlands and the student, and between the institution in the Netherlands and the institution in the country of origin. In any case, the Dutch institution will make every effort to properly inform foreign students about the possibilities of returning to the country of origin. The student must call on his or her own resources and travel insurance when it comes to covering travel expenses.
- OCW is currently also discussing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether and, if so, what role the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can play in actualising the return of foreign students.

2.3 BSA

- As far as possible, institutions will allow teaching and examinations to take place (in alternative forms). However, this will be difficult for some of the study programmes and students. It is therefore possible that students are delayed by the corona crisis in such a way that they don't meet the bsa [binding study advice] standard.
- In order to do justice to possible delays that students may experience, and to provide upfront clarity towards students, institutions are requested to postpone the issue of a negative binding study advice to the second academic year, using the existing legal possibility.

2.3 Application and admission

- The regular application deadline for students (1st of May) will be postponed to the 1st of June. This accommodates students who could not register in time because of the coronavirus. It may be that certain types of study-choice checks cannot occur because they require the physical presence of the student. Therefore, the right to a study-choice check expires for those students who register after the 1st of May. A commitment obligation does remain, and an alternative form of study-choice check should be sought as best as possible. For example by administering a digital test, a questionnaire with a telephone interview or other study-choice activities for which the student does not have to be physically present.
- It must be prevented that an MBO student cannot start their HBO study next academic year due to a small study delay resulting from this corona crisis. This applies to the MBO student who, because this crisis, has not been able to complete one or more small subjects before the 1st of September, or is in the completion [phase] of vocational training and can do so before the 1st of January 2020. The university of applied sciences will admit this student to its education anyway. After MBO-certification, formal enrolment will take place; if the MBO diploma is not obtained before the 1st of January 2020, the student will still have to leave the HBO programme.
- This also applies mutatis mutandis to bachelor students who wish to enrol in a master's programme. This means that the so-called 'harde knip [hard cut]' between the bachelor's and master's degree programme will be approached more leniently. Further agreements will be made with the sector about this.

2.5 (Decentralised) selection (BA and MA)

- The institutions should have completed the selection procedure for the AD and Bachelor programmes by the 15th of April. To do so in current situation with the coronavirus, institutions may have to deviate from planned selection procedure[s] which require physical presence.

In this exceptional situation, institutions may postpone this date to the 15th of June at the latest. If this choice is made, no selections will be made during the period of the final exams for VO and the exam periods in MBO will also be taken into account. Institutions will

communicate about this properly, so that students are aware of this postponement and can still choose to apply for a study programme without a selection before the 1st of May.

- There is no national deadline for the completion of the selection procedures in the master's programme. In these cases, it is also up to the degrees implement alternative selection procedures if this is necessary because of the coronavirus.

2.6 Financial effects (for institutions)

- It is clear that continuing education with observance of the adopted corona measures demands a lot from all parties. This will also have a financial impact on institutions.

- OCW will have a discussion with the education umbrella organisations as soon as there is more clarity regarding the exact extent of the consequences. If acute financial problems occur, the OCW will consider how these can be solved in consultation with the relevant funded institution and the inspection.

- Students who will start in the upcoming academic year, but [whose] file is not yet complete as a result of delays caused by the corona virus will be eligible for funding. The way in which this will be concretely implemented should be discussed with the VH and VSNU.

2.7 Financial effects (for students)

- Because of the corona measures, students may experience acute financial problems, for example because they are temporarily unable to work. It is to be expected that institutions will also be getting questions about this from concerned students.

- In this context, DUO points to the possibility of temporarily borrowing more per month. It is also possible to do this retroactively from the beginning of the academic year. Students can also still apply for tuition fee credit. They can take care of this themselves in mijnDUO. If this is still insufficient, students can contact DUO about possibilities.

- DUO will practice maximum leniency toward students who are struggling with financial setbacks due to the corona measures.

2.8 Accreditation

- Program visits may take longer or be delayed because of the corona virus, for example because restrictions apply, there are objections to a visit or because (international) panellists cannot travel.
- The NVAO has decided that all Dutch assessment procedures under the direction of the NVAO and related visits and site visits will be suspended until the 6th of April.
- For questions regarding this measure relating to the accreditations of new study programmes (tno's), institutions can consult the NVAO website and contact the NVAO process coordinator in question, if desired.
- A hand-in date set for the study programme applies to the accreditation of existing study programmes. Institutions themselves are responsible for organising the visitation and can thus also decide to suspend a visit and location visit. It goes without saying that the institution should meet with the board of experts, the secretary and, where appropriate, the evaluation office.
- For study programmes whose hand-in date is the 1st of November 2020, an extension of 1 year is provided. OCW will register this in the Croho. Institutions do not have to undertake any action for this.
- This extension offers study programmes that are facing re-accreditation in the coming period the possibility to shift the preparation or site visits, for example, if they so desire.
- Moving e.g. a location visit is an option for institutions that can be used, but this is not mandatory. The extended hand-in date is the latest possible deadline.
- It is being investigated whether the above extension is also necessary for study programmes with a hand-in date of May 1st, 2021. It is also being investigated whether prolongation of hand-in dates of large clusters of study programmes can contribute to the prevention of (new) peaks in the visitation schedule.

The website of the NVAO will provide up-to-date information on the adjusted procedures.

2.9 Research

- NWO has taken a number of measures to support scientists:
 - Ongoing rounds in which interaction with applicants is no longer required can take place according to schedule
 - For other ongoing rounds, interviews are postponed and deadlines for submission are extended. NWO is well aware that suspending interviews for the people involved in

the procedure is not a good thing and is therefore looking for ways to proceed with allocations after all. The importance of due care and a level playing field for all candidates means that finding a solution takes time. NWO will come with solutions in April, in consultation with the universities.

- For upcoming calls the deadlines will be postponed by one month and more complex calls with consortiums will be paused and will be resumed one month after the expiry of national measures.

If the second flow of funds is reduced by these measures for a longer period of time, financial problems may arise. At present, there is insufficient insight into the extent of this situation, but OCW will remain in contact with NWO and with the VH and VSNU about this.

2.10 CBHO

- CBHO operates according to the guidelines of the Raad van State [Council of State] where the hearings take place. There can be no video conferencing / conference call hearings.
- The Raad van State has indicated that in connection with the coronavirus outbreak no hearings will take place from Tuesday the 17th of March 2020 until at least Monday the 6th of April 2020, with the exception of matters of extreme urgency.
- CBHO is following this, which means that no CBHO hearings will take place in the period until April 6th. This does not change the fact that CBHO will continue to work. Any possible urgent matters will be dealt with. CBHO can be contacted about this.
- If the parties give their consent, CBHO can also rule without the case being heard at the hearing.
- CBHO will contact parties about new dates for cancelled hearings.

2.11 Quality agreements

- Not all assessments of the plans for the quality agreements have been completed yet. This gives institutions financial uncertainty for the year 2021. This uncertainty is removed by the OCW by granting the amounts [of money] in 2021, even if the institution does not yet have an approved quality plan.
- The institutions will finalise the plans relating to the quality agreements at a later date.

- Institutions will properly take account of participation [council] in the 2021 budget process and the monitoring of the quality funds in 2021. The participation [council] has the right of consent to the budget allocation for the quality agreements on the budget.
- The current situation makes site visits by the NVAO impossible. For current improvement projects, the NVAO will therefore assess with the panel whether the application file is admissible and whether they can give a positive opinion on the basis of this file. If, on the basis of that test, additional information is required or documents raise questions in any other way, a site-visit (or digital replacement thereof) will be made.

2.12 NSE

- All efforts of institutions are currently aimed at ensuring that regular education can continue as best as possible.
- Because organising the NSE also requires efforts on the part of institutions (provision of data, promotion for the completion of the NSE, communication), it has been decided not to proceed with this year's NSE.
- An additional reason for this is that this year's NSE would be held in the period from April 20th to June 20th, with a high risk that the results of the NSE would not be valid in the context of the exceptional measures that are being adopted.