



**Author** Student participation.

**Date**

21-04-2023

**Version**

OO&S-2023-04

Adopted by Executive Board on 16 May 2023 Consent  
granted by the University Council on 5 July 2023

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## **HU Student Support Fund: Elite-level Sports Scheme**

## **Contents**

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Elite-level Sports Scheme</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Article 1: Grounds	4
2.3 Article 2: Elite-level Sports Statement	4
2.4 Article 3: Facilities	5
2.5 Article 4: Application Procedure for Facilities	5
2.6 Article 5: Financial Aid for Delays in Studies (Graduation Financial Aid)	6
2.7 Article 6: Hardship Clause	7
2.8 Article 7: Transitional Arrangement	7

# 1 Introduction

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (HU) offers financial aid to students who incur a delay in their studies for special reasons. This is described in the HU Student Support Fund. Who are eligible for this?

1. Students who, due to certain special circumstances such as illness, family problems, mental health issues, have incurred study delays during the period they are entitled to a student grant, may be enabled to complete or continue their studies as soon as possible.
2. Students who carry out recognised student representation activities during or within 12 months of the end of their entitlement to student grants, may be facilitated to do so from via the HU representation support fund and receive a scholarship for student representatives.
3. Students who do not meet the nationality requirement (i.e. are not from an EEA country) but are resident in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg or one of the federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony and Bremen of the Federal Republic of Germany may receive a knowledge grant, under certain conditions.
4. Students who combine elite-level sports with their studies can claim various facilities. (For this, contact the Elite Sports Coordinator)
5. Students in acute financial distress may be able to request support via the emergency fund.
6. In certain cases, students can rely on the Tuition-free Representation Scheme. Students who perform representation activities may be eligible for a financial allowance. This is a scheme where students are not enrolled for up to one year but receive a financial allowance that they would have received had they been enrolled.

## 2 Elite-level Athletes Scheme

### 2.1 Introduction

Via the Elite-level Athletes Scheme, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht makes a number of financial facilities available to students with an HU elite-level sports statement.

The Elite-level Athletes Scheme was adopted by the Executive Board on 16 May 2023, with the consent of the University Council granted on 5 July 2023, and takes effect from 1 September 2023.

### 2.2 Article 1: Grounds

Eligible for facilities referred to in Article 3 are those who:

- a. are enrolled as a student at the university of applied sciences and owe statutory tuition fees; and
- b. hold an elite-level sports statement, issued by the elite-level sports coordinator of the HU, during (part of) their studies; and
- c. have complied with the procedural requirements.

### 2.3 Article 2: Elite-level Sports Statement

The elite-level sports coordinator issues the HU elite-level sports statement to students who, during (part of) their studies:

1. have been assigned a status by the NOC\*NSF;
2. meet one of the criteria below:
  - Ranked 1-8 at the national Dutch championships for listed sports (on the Topsport- en Internationale Wedstrijdsportdisciplines list of the NOC\*NSF). You are required to provide evidence of this.
  - Attained a medal at the national Dutch championships or participation in the European championships/world championships in other sports not listed as aforementioned. You submit the result or invitation for this as proof, by e-mail.
  - Part of a team playing at the highest level nationally and competing in Europe in a team sport such as volleyball, hockey, water polo, handball and korfbal. These are the clubs that compete at the top of the national league. You need a letter from the club as proof of this status. When in doubt, we make enquiries with the national sports association.
  - Player at FC Utrecht, because of the partnership between the HU and FC Utrecht
  - Player in a so-called 'belofte team' (promise team) playing paid football in the Netherlands, similar to players of FC Utrecht. Young FC Utrecht playing in the Keuken Kampioen division. Note: our students are sometimes not yet old enough to compete for Jong but are talented enough to be granted elite-level sports status.
  - E-sportsperson with a contract with an elite-level professional sports organisation.
  - Athlete playing for a national team other than the Netherlands.
  - Athlete connected to a national sports association other than NOC\*NSF, which makes use of statuses and has the same level. (This is relevant to motocross and cycling, among others.)
  - Athlete in a listed discipline (Topsport- en Internationale Wedstrijdsportdisciplines) playing for the national Dutch Team

- Non-recognised sports if the other sex is listed for the discipline ( Topsport- en Internationale Wedstrijdsportdisciplines ). We intend not to discriminate between male and female athletes.
- If you have always held a status in your junior years, the HU will give you one academic year to join the selection in the senior division as well.
- If you suffered a long-term injury and lost your status as a result, the HU will give you one academic year to get back to your old level. This requires a letter from a (para)medical authority.
- To be determined by the elite-level sports coordinator(s); this always concerns elite-level sports.

The awarding of the HU elite-level sports statement is broader in scope than the NOC\*NSF status policy, but in line with national guidelines with the aim of aligning as much as possible with the *'Actieplan Flexibel Onderwijs en Topsport (FLOT)'* (Flexible Education and Elite-level Sports Action Plan).

## **2.4 Article 3: Facilities**

Facilities available to the student/elite-level athlete include:

- a. flexible education opportunities, insofar as they can be realised within the degree programme;
- b. special expenses: mediation in additional training facilities;  
expense allowance for additional training facilities, if there are no training facilities at the club and this is necessary for the sport in question. This concerns a sports card at Olympos or a swimming card for the Krommerijn swimming pool. This as long as the Elite-level Sports Fund permits such.
- c. special expenses: reimbursement of (part of) travel and accommodation costs for training and competitions abroad;  
A maximum of € 500.00 is reimbursed annually, as long as the Elite-level Sports Fund permits such. For this, the student has to provide evidence such as invitations to international competitions, all receipts and statements of accounts, and so on. The application for reimbursement of these costs must be submitted in the same calendar year in which the costs were incurred.
- d. Financial aid in case of study delays due to elite-level sports.

## **2.5 Article 4: Application Procedure for Facilities**

1. Students who wish to be considered for an elite-level sports statement from the HU submit an application to that end and send the requested proof to topsport@hu.nl.
2. Students who wish to be considered for a facility as mentioned under 3(a) have to request an interview with the elite-level sports coordinator via topsport@hu.nl.
3. Students who wish to be considered for a facility as referred to in Article 3b and c of this scheme must submit an application to the elite-level sports coordinator, in accordance with a form prepared for this purpose, which can be obtained via topsport@hu.nl.  
The application referred to in Article 4(3) shall include at least the following information:

- a. a statement of the student's surname, first names, student number and address details, as well as the degree programme in which the student is enrolled;
- b. a clear description of the elite-level sports activities and elite-level sports status, and the reason why additional training facilities or expenses are necessary;
- c. the (estimated) period of time for which this facility will be needed;
- d. in case of an application for the reimbursement of special expenses: proof that there are no training opportunities at the club and that this is necessary for the sport, or proof that the expenses have been incurred and are not (or only partially) reimbursed by the club or national sports association.

If any of the above items are missing, the application will not be processed.

The elite-level sports coordinator checks that the application is fully completed and the necessary supporting documents have been enclosed, and then forwards the application to the Elite-level Sports Committee.

4. The Elite-level Sports Committee prepares an opinion within two weeks and sends it to the manager of the Education Research & Student Affairs Department (OO&S). The opinion shall include at least:
  - a. evidence of the impossibility of training at a club and the individual need to be able to do so;
  - b. the amount, duration and type of financial support (Olympus card or Krommerijn swimming card);
  - c. proof of the expenses incurred and proof that these expenses are a personal contribution.
  - d. the amount of the reimbursement and the calculation used.
5. The manager of the Education, Research and Student Affairs Department (OO&S) shall make a decision within two weeks of receiving the opinion of the Elite-level Sports Committee. This deadline may be extended once, by a maximum of one week. The applicant will be notified of such an extension.
6. The manager of the Education, Research and Student Affairs Department (OO&S) shall give the reasons for his decision, taking into account the opinion issued by the Elite-level Sports Committee.
7. The decision of the manager of the Education, Research and Student Affairs Department (OO&S), if positive, shall in any case include:
  - a. the type of facility;
  - b. and, in case of financial aid: the amount and time of payment.

In case of rejection of the application, the decision will contain a reference to the option of appeal, in case the student does not agree with the decision of the manager of the Education, Research and Student Affairs Department (OO&S).

## **2.6 Article 5: Financial Aid for a Delay in Studies (Graduation Financial Aid)**

1. Students who wish to be considered for a facility as mentioned in Article 3(d) of these regulations (graduation financial aid for study delays due to elite-level sports) must submit an application in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Graduation Financial Aid Regulations. For elite-level sports, the recognition of delays cannot be requested annually. This is a deviation from the Graduation Financial Aid Regulations. The student should take reasonable measures to minimise any delay in studies, to the extent possible.

2. Before the study delay can be submitted under the Graduation Financial Aid Regulations, a statement by the Elite-Level Sports Committee must be submitted to the Graduation Financial Aid Committee, stating that the student holds an elite-level sports statement from the HU. A request to determine causation should be submitted right before or after four years of nominal study of the current programme. The elite-level sports coordinator corroborates the delay caused by sports over the course of applicability of the elite-level sports statement.
3. Before the study delay can be determined under the Graduation Financial Aid Regulations, a positive recommendation from the Elite-level Sports Committee must be submitted to the Graduation Financial Aid Committee.
4. In order to receive a positive recommendation from the Elite-level Sports Committee, the Elite-level Sports Committee will have to establish that the study delay was caused by elite-level sports (causal link). To this end, elite-level athletes will have to report each academic year to the elite-level sports coordinator and to a student counsellor of the relevant institute. Any academic year for which the student did not report or for which no elite-level sports statement from the HU has been granted will not be included in the recommendation to the Graduation Financial Aid Committee.
5. The supporting recommendation of the Elite-level Sports Committee shall include at least:
  - a. a statement of the academic years for which the student obtained an elite-level sports statement from the HU.
  - b. the number of credits the student has yet to attain;
  - c. the number of credits attained during the period of the HU elite-level sports statement and the number of credits in delay due to elite-level sports.
6. With this supporting recommendation, the student applies for graduation financial aid under the Graduation Financial Aid Regulations.

## **2.7 Article 6: Hardship Clause**

The director of Education, Research and Student Affairs (OO&S) is authorised to deviate from these regulations if their strict application would lead to a case of extreme unfairness.

## **2.8 Article 7: Transitional Arrangement**

If your request regarding the recognition of study delays was submitted before 1 September 2023 and approved by the director of Education, Research and Student Affairs (OO&S) before 1 September 2023, you must apply for Graduation Financial Aid on the basis of the old regulations for graduation financial aid [[LINK to the old regulations](#)].