UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

From study success to talent development for students and lecturers

REPORT ON STUDY SUCCESS 2.0

Members of the Study Success Task Force 2.0

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1. Reading guide and Rationale

In recent years, the UvA has made great strides to improve study success. This led to the question, in the autumn of 2015, whether the ambitions formulated in 2009 had been achieved. In December 2015, the UvA Executive Board formally tasked the University Committee on Education (UCO) with 'evaluating, six years after they were formulated, the twenty measures of the Study Success Task Force'. The present report is the result of this evaluation. **Chapter 2** presents the main conclusions.

The UCO formed a Study Success Task Force 2.0, charged with drawing up an evaluation plan. Upon approval of this plan in March 2016, members from all faculties were appointed to the Task Force. These members were nominated for each faculty by UCO members (see appendix 1 for the composition of the Task Force).

This report is based on three strands of evaluation:

1) a qualitative strand focused on establishing to what extent the Bachelor's programmes have used the 2009 recommendations to optimise the programmes;
2) a quantitative strand aimed at describing the statistical state of affairs;
3) a review of the literature to identify new evidence-based insights.

Chapter 3 contains the results of an extensive evaluation questionnaire distributed among all Bachelor's programme directors. They were asked to what extent they followed up on the recommendations, what their experience of the implementation process has been like and what (side-)effects of the study success policy they identify. The respondents were asked to discuss their response to the questionnaire with the Board of Studies (BoS), so the BoS could supplement the response where needed. Over thirty study programmes completed the questionnaire, and discussions were held with the colleagues from Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science, who had already produced their own evaluation reports. In analysing the responses, the main focus was on gathering and sharing knowledge about study success. Accordingly, chapter 2 provides insight into how those involved experienced the implementation of the study success policy. We specifically look at what they themselves believe is going well or needs improving.

Chapter 3 discusses the statistical extent to which the ambitions were achieved. The only data taken into account have been the University Education Indicators, i.e. data on students with a university preparatory education background who are not enrolled in more than one study programme, in order to ensure the comparability of the data.

Chapter 4 is a reflection by the Task Force on the findings from the questionnaire and from the statistical analysis.

In **chapter 5**, we present the results of the literature review carried out by Task Force members. Recent years have seen many reports on study success in higher education, and the review of the literature has yielded a number of important new insights which have been made accessible. The review is based partly on questions people have at the UvA – and that surfaced during the qualitative evaluation – and partly on current developments in research into higher education.

This chapter deals with the following subjects:

- (High) Expectations
- Support and Supervision, especially in the transition from secondary education to higher education
- Assessment and Feedback
- Involvement

Chapter 6 includes a bibliography followed by a number of **appendices**, including overviews of study success and dropout rates, partly with national comparisons.

2. Introduction and conclusions

You are reading the report on Study Success 2.0, prepared by the Study Success Task Force 2.0. This report offers a qualitative evaluation of the recommendations made by the Study Success Task Force (2009), an insight into the question of whether the UvA achieved its ambitions and performance agreements from a quantitative point of view, a response to the evaluation data and an overview of the main scientific evidence on study success.

The ambitions and performance agreements were aimed at developing a more ambitions study ethos, reducing dropout rates in years 1, 2 and 3 of the Bachelor's programmes and reducing study completion delays so that more students would obtain a Bachelor's degree certificate in the expected amount of time + 1 year. Although these agreements were of a quantitative nature, the goal of the measures has consistently been to generate more attention for education and to improve its quality substantially.

We can conclude that the impact of the study success programme has been significant. All faculties and study programmes have vigorously taken in hand the design of new curricula, learning pathways and courses. When focusing on the 20 recommendations, we find that they have been approached in different ways and that priorities have been set, sometimes partly in relation to the nature and possibilities of the study programme concerned. It is also clear that the mandatory uniform academic calendar has had a considerable influence on the adoption of the other recommendations. What is beyond question is that fostering an ambitious study climate in which students learn more is a complex matter that requires a careful balancing of the various ingredients that contribute to increased success.

Efforts have been made everywhere to stimulate the learning process of students through more student-activating teaching methods, intensification of the teaching (e.g. by having more contact hours) and the use of midterm tests and assignments. The university has also placed a greater emphasis on student counselling, particularly in the first year, partly as a consequence of having introduced the binding study advice (BSA).

Undesired effects have been reported at well, mainly in connection with overly strict regulations, regulations imposed top-down, the 8-8-4 uniform academic calendar and increased workloads. There have been doubts about the balance between structure and independence; about schoolification, obligations versus freedom and about students' attitudes.

All the same, it can be concluded that, in a quantitative sense, the UvA has reached the objectives recorded in the performance agreements: dropout rates in year 1 and subsequent years have been reduced and, given that the UvA achieves an average four-year study success rate of over 70%, there is far less delay in study completion.

The study programmes have also identified new challenges and opportunities, naming the development of a coherent curriculum that includes learning pathways, as well as the planning of tests and resits, workload and the professionalisation of all those responsible for education. In addition, The Study Success Task Force 2.0 sees possibilities for pairing study success efforts with other initiatives at the UvA that aim to improve education. Participants in the Leadership in Education Course (*Leergang Onderwijskundig Leiderschap*, LOL) have previously proposed greatly increasing the exchange of knowledge between faculties and study programmes. The last group of participants have proposed setting up so-called Teaching & Learning Centers. There is also the UvA's decision to let Blended Learning play an important role.

It is tempting to present a new report containing not only an evaluation but also a large number of fresh recommendations. However, the 2009 Report on Study Success contains 20 carefully reasoned recommendations. It was found that many of the study programmes are no longer familiar with the report, nor do they know the rationale behind the aforementioned agreements and recommendations. This is in spite of the fact that study success and an ambitious study ethos are central to the UvA's vision on teaching and learning. In view of this, it seems better to present a limited number of general recommendations in the present report and to use this introduction to identify a number of the subjects covered by the report. In addition, the report will mainly emphasise the agreements made earlier and the backgrounds of the existing recommendations, linking these to new insights derived in part from the evaluation and in part from the scientific literature.

Above all else, the Task Force argues for increased knowledge sharing and the professionalisation of lecturers and those involved in education

At research universities, we devote a lot of time to education and knowledge transfer, offering a lot of material and assistance for the benefit of students. We occasionally despair when we notice that students do not make use of the materials and assistance offered. As confirmed by the findings on study success, this is related to the fact that we are insufficiently involved in shaping and directing the learning process. Lecturers, policymakers and programme directors are no different from students in this respect. Accordingly, this report argues in favour of making a serious effort to professionalise lecturers and other persons with educational responsibilities. There is a lot of material about quality education and a stimulating educational environment, but people tend to forget the information, fail to transfer it and do not share it sufficiently between faculties and study programmes. One of the lessons to be learnt from this evaluation is that in 2009 we were insufficiently aware of the degree to which the success of Utrecht University depended on their targeted investment in programmes for the professionalisation of teaching and supervision. This is why above all we argue for stepping up the professionalisation of teaching

both at the course and at the curriculum level. The report shows that the UvA is doing fairly well as far as study success goes. But we can do better still if we pay more attention to our lecturers and involve our students in our educational philosophy. In view of this, the committee's main finding is that study success means fostering talent development among students as well as lecturers.

Secondly, the Task Force argues for increased flexibility with respect to the uniform academic calendar

There are sound reasons for keeping to a uniform academic calendar. We might be able to be flexible enough with the current academic calendar so as to limit the disadvantages of an overly rigid structure while preserving the benefits. The size of each course could be, for instance, a multiple of 3 ECTS. This would give study programmes the freedom to merge certain courses. They could combine small and larger courses, and limit or distribute assessment times. However, the greatest danger of increased flexibility is the impossibility of exchange. This could be solved by agreeing with each faculty/study programme that they offer enough courses (preferably worth 6 ECTS) that students from other study programmes could take as electives. At the same time, the faculty's/study programme's 'own' students should have enough options to take courses elsewhere, for instance by creating space for minors. Interdisciplinary Bachelor's and Master's programmes that depend to a strong degree on the possibility for exchange will also have to be taken into account.

Thirdly, the Task Force recommends doing more on behalf of student engagement

There is no doubt that the structure of the curriculum and the educational environment offered to students have a great influence on their study success. Students achieve better results in an environment that encourages them to study with greater frequency and regularity. Student involvement and motivation are essential to the success of a study programme. The extent of 'student engagement' has a quantitative effect on study success and on limiting dropout rates as well as having a qualitative effect on students' personal and academic development. The measures promoting student engagement are a good fit with diversity policy, blended learning, internationalisation and the desire to offer students a rich academic and personal development. In this context, the number of contact hours and their quality is important as well.

The Task Force next highlights a number of issues that will be dealt with further on in this report. The ingredients for promoting study success make up a complex arrangement in which decisions have to be made in line with programme-specific analyses. The complexity is due to the need to ensure coherence across measures and because of a number of dilemmas in which the right balance needs to be found. We will touch briefly on the main dilemmas

here, as well as pointing out a number of problems requiring a solution, such as the availability of training rooms.

Planning examinations and resits

In accordance with the UvA's assessment framework, it is recommended to administer a lot of tests but to give limited weight to each test, deriving the final mark for each course from various test results so as to ensure greater reliability. Fewer final marks limit the risk of false negatives, which is especially important in the first year in view of the BSA. In such situations there is a strong case to be made for the resits to cover large course components and to take place in July. After all, resits should be an emergency provision. All the same, there are study programmes that offer more small courses, resulting in a too dense concentration of resits in the summer. In situations like this another option would be to plan resits pertaining to the first study period for the end of the Christmas holiday and to also schedule resits in the May holiday week proposed in this report. Chapter 5.3 looks extensively at assessment.

Schoolification

On the one hand, everybody understands the usefulness of measures that promote regular study habits, such as midterm tests, assignments and hard deadlines. On the other hand, the fear is that these lead to schoolification, meaning students do not become independent and take too little personal responsibility for the learning process. Chapter 5.1 looks at expectations and levels, arguing, among other things, in favour of distinguishing between *content-based* guidance and *strategic* guidance. Content-based guidance involves the intended learning outcomes. Independence and responsibility for one's personal learning process are learning outcomes that study programmes will want to pursue. These need to be operationalised and shaped aiming for a structure to emerge *in the course of* the programme, with different priorities in the first year and later years. Strategic guidance is about providing direction for the learning process. It should serve the content-based objectives students wants to achieve, but these are often not achieved without strategic guidance.

BSA

A number of study programmes are quite happy about the BSA and find it has had positive effects: a proportion of the students study harder and a proportion who would drop out in any case drop out faster. However, there are also study programmes that do not find this measure as useful, as their experience is that weaker students themselves make the decision to drop out and a lot of work now goes into organising the BSA correctly. These programmes believe the negatives outweigh the positives. It also needs to be asked whether each programme is sufficiently well-organised for the BSA to really be the topmost study success measure. Additionally, it would be useful to analyse the subsequent study progress of students who have received a negative BSA, precisely to determine whether these students were rightly turned away from

the study programme. Chapter 5.2 reflects the results of the (limited) research into this.

Quality of UTQ, budgets, workload competition

The answers to the questionnaire show that there are doubts about the quality of the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), that budgets do not always allow for the professionalisation of teaching and that there is competition between professionalisation and other tasks that require doing. As emphasised in chapter 4.3, it is important to free up time for professionalisation and not to regard the UTQ as the final station.

Training room shortage

It has been reported that there is a shortage of training rooms in January and June and that there are not enough suitable examination rooms at the end of the study periods. The uniform academic calendar leads to peaks in the demand for examination rooms. It would be prudent to gain a clear understanding of these issues, especially if the suggestion of a more flexible academic calendar is adopted.

Disabilities and heterogeneity

On the one hand there are calls for an ambitious study ethos in which students work hard, while on the other hand study programmes report that some students would like to have more freedom. We need to keep the heterogeneity of our student population in mind, for instance when carrying out the BSA. It has also been found that solutions for students with disabilities are often of a makeshift nature, not going beyond the allocation of more examination time, which in turn leads to logistical problems. A better analysis of the disabilities and tailored solutions would seem to be in order.

Holiday week

One proposed suggestion is to plan an annual holiday week around the free days in May. Such a week could also be used for resits and an optional study trip.

3. Results of the evaluation

This chapter starts out with the findings from the questionnaire administered among all Bachelor's programme directors. The questionnaire was administered digitally using the survey programme Qualtrics. Most study programmes at the Faculty of Science and part of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences did not complete the questionnaires: as indicated previously, they had just carried out their own evaluation, which was a good match to the questionnaire. Both groups were consulted on their evaluation report in order for their data to be included in the summary of the results.

A number of general points stand out in the evaluation results.

Firstly, the questionnaire was too hybrid in nature, which frequently resulted in dissimilar answers. Respondents often provided answers to questions that were only asked later, or questions were used as an opportunity to praise educational reform on the one hand and to criticise specific policy measures on the other hand. We have attempted to match the answers to the questions as closely as possible.

Secondly, what stands out is that many respondents indicate they are not familiar with the Report on Study Success, have not received instructions from their predecessors and in some cases are not aware why certain recommendations might be useful. Respondents indicate a need for professionalisation and support. It is also remarkable that quite a few answers are not in harmony with the intentions of the UTQ. Additionally, respondents are often not actively familiar with the UvA's vision on teaching and learning, and in quite a few cases answers do not match the UvA's assessment framework. Chapter 4 of the report will look at this in greater detail.

A third remarkable finding is that the study success policy is often reduced to the uniform academic calendar, although this was only one of the 20 recommendations. Especially the choice of 8-8-4 is being contested at certain faculties and study programmes. Chapter 4 will look into this as well.

Lastly, there are important differences between study programmes and faculties, as is also reflected in the results summary that follows here.

3.1 Results of the qualitative study

This chapter explicitly presents the responses of respondents, indicating what they think is going well and what they think could be improved. In chapter 4, you can find the Task Force's reflection on this response.

The questionnaire began with the question of what the biggest challenges were for the study programme when the study success policy was introduced six years ago. The answers most frequently given are increasing the study success rates and/or reducing dropout rates, both in the first year and in later years. Additionally, in many places the introduction of the 8-8-4 semester model prompted a review of the curriculum, especially in terms of its structure (scope and length of the courses) and sometimes in terms of its content (cohesion, synchronisation). Several study programmes increased the number of contact hours, and the programmes began to shape the BSA.

The engagement of lecturers was another area of concern. Study programmes looked for ways to safeguard the programme's continuity in the face of considerable lecturer turnover. The workload faced by lecturers received attention, as it was feared that more midterm tests would increase the workload. Some study programmes have had to devote a lot of time to building support for the measures.

Respondents describe in detail what has been improved at their study programmes in the past years. A number of study programmes, for instance, note that the programme structure has been improved, the first year has an improved profile and provides better preparation for subsequent years, and students find the curriculum to be more coherent. Respondents see changes related to the contents of the programme, such as the introduction of learning pathways and a clearer programme profile, as having been positive. Study programmes have had positive experiences with the BSA and with the introduction of tutorships and mentorships, which have provided a better overview of the progress of individual students.

Most respondents believe these developments have improved the quality of the study programme. Among other things, the assessment policy has been improved, more attention is paid to didactics and innovation and a number of study programmes have been able to improve the curriculum on the basis of educational principles.

The following pages will provide a summary of the responses to each of the 20 recommendations. All recommendations are listed in appendix 3.

Recommendation 1: Give the curriculum a 'now or never' quality

What is going well according to the respondents?
Study programmes regularly use midterm tests to try to stimulate study habits. Programmes that still allowed for second resits have abolished these, and a number of programmes set conditions for taking the resit, such as a minimum mark for the first attempt. Some programmes try to make resits less attractive by scheduling these during the summer holiday, which has the added advantage of avoiding overlap between resits and regular teaching/regular first attempts.

Students are also encouraged to play an active role through student-activating teaching methods and the inclusion of topical issues in the curriculum. A number of study programmes use forms of ICT such as digital workbooks and 'flipping the classroom'.
On two occasions, respondents mention the creation of a close-knit community.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
A number of respondents write that the workload for lecturers has increased because of the introduction of multiple tests per course. Study programmes have a difficult time scheduling resits: these are often scheduled for the next study period – during teaching – leading to continued competition between courses.
Some programmes fear that students will become complacent, with respondents remarking that students are becoming too dependent on the lecturer. The right balance between offering a structure and reminding students of their own responsibility has not yet been struck everywhere.

Recommendation 2: Promote cohesion and synchronisation on all fronts

What is going well according to the respondents?
It is often the lecturers who work together to ensure cohesion and synchronisation. Lecturer teams, for example, are responsible for curriculum components, and lecturer afternoons or meetings are used to discuss student progress, the distribution of the workload, learning pathways or the curriculum as a whole. Lecturer teams develop new curriculum components and/or examine educational innovations such as blended learning. Some study programmes have appointed coordinators across courses, such as year coordinators or track coordinators. In the course of the year, most study programmes organise a meeting for the entire lecturer team on such themes as innovation in education, blended learning, interdisciplinarity or student-activating teaching methods.
Ensuring coherence has been an area of focus for many study programmes in recent years. By working with learning pathways they create a clear, comprehensible structure with a limited amount of overlap. Lastly, the role students play in ensuring coherence gets a number of mentions. Regular contact with students, for instance through student panels and tutorships, provides an ongoing overview of issues with regard to coherence and synchronisation. Study associations contribute by organising activities on programme content or joint study moments ahead of examinations.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
A number of study programmes indicate that synchronisation should occur especially in the programme groups or chair groups, given that the programme groups are responsible for the teaching they provide. In this case, the programme group leaders inform the lecturers about any changes to the curriculum. The risk here is that programme directors do not always have a

proper grasp of how the communication on education is organised within the programme groups.

Recommendation 3: Integrate teaching and studying in a way that enables students to participate actively

What is going well according to the respondents?
The questionnaire asked how study programmes ensure that students have a good understanding of the self-study hours. Students learn what is expected of them in the course of the programme through programme syllabi or talks. Various student-activating teaching methods are in use at the UvA: self-study assignments, midterm tests and portfolios. Lastly, a number of study programmes seek to stimulate students by addressing them as a group and/or bringing them together, e.g. through mandatory teamwork or peer reviews. One study programme made agreements with the study association on facilitating joint study sessions in the week leading up to examinations.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
The vast majority of study programmes place a premium on personal responsibility and believe that students themselves are responsible for planning their self-study hours. The question leads to discussion on the extent to which study programmes/lecturers should organise students' study activities, and the extent to which students themselves need to take responsibility.

Recommendation 4: Replace the 'knock-out race' model (*veldloopmodel*) with a compensatory system

What is going well according to the respondents?

Many study programmes have discussed the desirability of compensatory assessment. Almost all of them write that their compensatory arrangements are course-specific. Where there is compensation there are conditions, such as a minimum mark for a partial test (between 4.5 and 5.5). Sometimes compensation is possible only if test A covers the same educational objectives as test B.

A number of study programmes make very limited allowances for compensation, as they want students to be challenged. There are also concerns about whether the educational objectives will be attained. Other study programmes work with bonus points or tests with which students can improve their final mark.

Where study programmes set conditions with regard to resits, those conditions are usually related to course attendance, sitting the initial examination or previously attained marks (e.g., a minimum mark of 4).

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
The subject of feedback is frequently mentioned. Respondents indicate that while they feedback to be important, there is not always the opportunity for

providing good feedback. Sometimes, for example, there is not enough time due to the large number of assessment times. Other study programmes write that students do not recognise feedback well and that a way should be found of indicating more clearly which feedback already exists.

Recommendation 5: Crack down on the 'no obligations' culture

What is going well according to the respondents?
Ways in which study programmes avoid a non-committal approach include introducing compulsory attendance, compulsory midterm tests, self-study assignments and strict deadlines. The number of resits has been scaled back, or resits have been made less attractive by being scheduled for the summer months.
A number of study programmes refer to the role of the tutor, who discusses study habits with the students and talks to students who regularly miss lectures. Creating a 'community' turns learning into a more natural habit. This can include doing group work, teaching small groups or organising a thesis seminar, which reduces dropout rates for the course in question. One study programme mentions the value of a sitting room, an area in which students can spend the whole day together.
A number of programmes emphasise the importance of student-activating teaching methods or assignments: presentations, group assignments, discussions or debates, posters, authentic assignments in which the student acts as a professional, writing reports or blogs, filling in questionnaires, etc.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
By far most study programmes opt for the use of sanctions or requirements. Some programmes look for other ways of engaging students, but are not always sure where to start.

Recommendation 6: Place particular focus on the first semester for the purposes of binding and referral

What is going well according to the respondents?
Virtually all study programmes organise a mentorship and/or tutorship to help students with their choice of study programme. Several times a year students have an individual conversation with their mentor/tutor. Additionally, some study programmes organise group meetings. The study advisers or academic career coordinators arrange for conversations with students who structurally obtain low scores.
The BSA also gets students to reflect on their study choice, among other ways by frequently informing them about their study progress.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents have not identified any areas for improvement.

Recommendation 7: Present study programme information that is realistic, representative and content-based

What is going well according to the respondents?
UvA Matching will be evaluated separately, for which reason it is not part of the questionnaire. A number of study programmes (rightly) indicate that this recommendation is about more than Matching alone and therefore explain their information system. Study programmes seek to provide realistic programme information, for instance by having first-year students share their study experiences. Prospective students are also advised to participate in shadowing or to visit other universities.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
The evaluation shows there is a wish for a thorough evaluation of UvA Matching.

Recommendation 8: Advance the final application date and consider implementing an intake procedure

This recommendation pertained to the legislation and has been implemented now that students have to enrol before 1 May.
A number of study programmes use the remarks field to point out that they work with intake procedures. The intake consists, for example, of talks with lecturers or study advisers. Some programmes also report positive experiences with this.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Advancing the enrolment date does not have the desired effect, as the applications do not match the actual study choice.

Recommendation 9: Offer programmes that compensate education deficiencies, thereby better accommodating heterogeneity

What is going well according to the respondents?
Although respondents were not asked explicitly about alignment issues they have identified, most study programmes do write something about this. For example, differences in levels have been found in various university preparatory education subjects. A number of programmes (History, Modern Foreign Languages, etc.) note that ‘their’ secondary school subjects cannot be compared with the academic course. Alignment issues are tackled by offering remedial teaching, such as training sessions, workshops and extra study groups. Sometimes the curriculum is structured in such a way as to accommodate special courses or (additional) tutorials aimed at addressing any such issues. If there are arrangements in place for students with disabilities, these are almost always related to assessment, such as the provision of

additional examination time, an additional resit or doing the test in a separate room.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents have not identified any areas for improvement.

Recommendation 10: Expand the content of the university introduction programme

What is going well according to the respondents?
All study programmes organise a day or a session as part of the Introduction Week. Additionally, they often have their own orientation programme during the first study week at which they discuss the content of the programme, the curriculum, supervision, SIS/Blackboard etc. This allows first-year students to get to know the programme management and lecturers. Most study associations have a clear role in the programme. Students are shown around to become familiar with the faculty and the day often ends with an informal meeting, e.g. with drinks provided so people can get to know each other.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
One respondent notes that there is a limited focus on course content during the Introduction Week and that this aspect may be overpowered by the strong focus on getting to know fellow students and the city of Amsterdam.

Recommendation 11: Make the most of the entire academic year

What is going well according to the respondents?
Within the existing 8-8-4 structure, study programmes try to find solutions that enable them to make the uniform semester calendar work for them. Examples include the merger of 8-week and 4-week courses, or scheduling full-time skills teaching in the 4-week study period.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents believe that the Executive Board's decision to divide the semesters into 8, 8 and 4 weeks has led to undesired effects on the teaching. The 4-week study period does not enjoy broad support, as it does not provide enough time for course material to sink in or because it is difficult to schedule full-time education. For this reason, a number of study programmes have decided to join the 4-week study period to an 8-week study period. Assessment is another problematic issue. One faculty does not allow examinations as a form of assessment in the 4-week study period. Study programmes write that it is difficult to schedule resits, as these overlap with the teaching time for the next study period. Another complaint revolves around the pressure of marking that has come with the introduction of shorter study periods. Lecturers have unequally distributed teaching hours (many hours in one period) because only two courses are taught at a time and the number of contact hours has gone up.

Respondents make a wide range of remarks about the organisation/implementation of 8-8-4. In a general sense, study programmes believe central or faculty policy has been imposed too bindingly and that the course content should determine the semester structure rather than the other way around. Especially the Faculty of Science reports that there are not enough training areas available in the 4-week study period, making it difficult to organise practical training.
Respondents express a general desire for an additional holiday in the academic year, for instance around the days off at the end of April and the start of May.

Recommendation 12: Take a critical look at the binding study advice (BSA)

What is going well according to the respondents?
The BSA policy is fairly uniform: students receive an interim recommendation in the post and get an appointment for a talk with the study adviser and/or mentor/tutor. A number of study programmes organise a special BSA information round to increase student awareness and to give some advance information about the possibilities around dispensation for the BSA. Various programmes organise report meetings involving all lecturers on the first-year cohort in order to see where extra attention is needed and whether there might be students who do have the potential but who for some reason or other do not do as well on the tests or have started out weakly.
A number of programmes note that students are taking a better approach to their studies and that they have a greater sense of urgency.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Some study programmes (as yet) see little or no effect. One programme voices the concern that good students are being sent away. A number of respondents note that students are terminating their enrolment strategically in order to avoid the BSA.
In some places the BSA turns out to increase the workload. Students are coping with greater study stress and study programmes have the impression that the BSA entails a lot of work. Some respondents note that in the past, weaker students used to terminate their enrolment on their own initiative.

Recommendation 13: Create a framework for the referring function of the first year of the Bachelor's programme

What is going well according to the respondents?
Study associations play an important role in the first year of the Bachelor's programme, as they organise both curriculum-based and social activities and in this way bind students to the programme. These activities, which take place both during and outside of regular teaching hours, include excursions, symposia, guest lectures and informal receptions/parties.
The UvA has extensive counselling systems in place, such as mentorships/tutorships and/or study adviser consultation hours. A number of study programmes organise meetings to help students make decisions (also see

the earlier questions). There is one mention of a buddy system that couples students.
The teaching itself also seeks to reinforce students' involvement with the study programme. Some programmes point at tutorials that enable working on a small scale, as well as project/group work and skills training. Two programmes have year groups in which students form part of tutorials with the same fellow students over the course of a year, creating a smaller group within the larger whole. One programme has team-based learning as a didactic model, which also has students cooperating in small groups over longer periods.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents have not identified any areas for improvement.

Recommendation 14: Strengthen social and academic integration in all years

What is going well according to the respondents?
Study associations play a large role in later years as well. Social and academic integration is also fostered through the teaching, e.g. through small-scale teaching methods. Respondents refer to their response under recommendation 13. Most social activities are continued in later years. Career orientation is occupying in a more prominent position through visits to potential employers, discussions with alumni, career days, symposia etc. One study programme mentions the professional organisation's student unit.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents have not identified any areas for improvement.

Recommendation 15: Consider introducing more selective Master's tracks [1]

What is going well according to the respondents?
A number of study programmes are already informing students about the possible abolition of follow-on Master's degrees and the increase in the number of selective Master's degrees.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Some respondents seem to be in doubt as to whether or not the UvA is moving in the direction of selective Master's degrees. A number of study programmes anticipate concerns among the student population in the event that more Master's degrees become selective. For this reason they have chosen not to provide information yet.

2. This recommendation has since been adopted in the legislation, which has replaced follow-on Master's degrees with Master's degrees that are allowed but not required to be selective.

Recommendation 16: Structure the diversity

What is going well according to the respondents?
It is almost always the study advisers who supervise students who have study completion delays. They actively monitor students, invite students with delays to a talk and create an alternative study plan together with the student. Sometimes meeting are organised for acquiring study skills. A few study programmes offer additional teaching to students with delays, such as additional tutorials or digital teaching to help them catch up. One programme offers crash courses in the second study year to help them complete courses from year 1 in a reduced period of time.
Ways of avoiding/limiting study completion delays include: sending emails with study tips tailored to the number of credits a student has obtained, actively warning students in case of study completion delays and/or seeking to reinforce their involvement with the study programme.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
One remarkable finding is that it is less clear who occupy themselves with excellent students. There are a few mentions of the study adviser or the mentor, but more often respondents list programmes, such as Honours programmes or Excellence tracks.

Recommendation 17: Make optimal use of optional subjects

What is going well according to the respondents?

Almost all study programmes offer the opportunity to make credits from other programmes count. Sometimes there are additional rules, e.g. that only first-year courses from a related field of study can be counted and/or a cap on the number of exempted points.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?

At the moment, optional subjects have not been uniformly programmed/clustered, which sometimes makes it difficult to take a minor or a semester abroad.

Recommendation 18: Offer greater rewards for teaching excellence and stimulate lecturer training

What is going well according to the respondents?
Half of the study programmes note that academic performance forms part of the annual consultation (performance review). Especially teaching evaluations are used to map academic performance. A much-cited way of encouraging performance is to award academic prizes.

Levels of satisfaction about the professionalisation of teaching vary (see below). Some respondents see options for stimulating lecturers, such as the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), the Advanced University Teaching Qualification (Advanced UTQ) and the course on educational leadership

(LOL), or coaching/peer feedback and the availability of professionalisation funds. A number of study programmes encourage lecturers to apply for grants with which to introduce innovation in their teaching. Some programmes award performance bonuses in case of exceptional academic performance.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
A third of all study programmes explicitly indicate that they (almost) do not or cannot encourage academic performance. They cite the scant possibilities for academic careers, uncertainty about when academic performance is good enough, insufficient possibilities for further training etc.
As a rule, the programme director is not asked to provide input for the annual consultation (between the director or the programme group leader and the lecturer). A number of directors state that they are consulted when a formal decision needs to be made about a person's appointment (assessment interviews).
Over half of the respondents believe that currently there are not enough opportunities for professionalisation on offer. They write that there is a need for forms of permanent further training (refresher courses); training sessions/courses for new lecturers, PhDs or tutorial lecturers; and a UTQ plus.
A number of study programmes state the importance of a central role for knowledge exchange and a practical focus, without any further obligations attached. Respondents would like the professionalisation opportunities on offer to include blended learning, (digital) assessment and new teaching methods.
At present there do not seem to be enough options for professionalisation on offer. A number of programme directors are unfamiliar with the Advanced UTQ or the LOL. Others would like to obtain an Advanced UTQ but fail to get permission for this from the faculty.
Several study programmes believe the current budget does not allow for further professionalisation. Programmes voice their concern about the quality of the UTQ, believing the level to be too low compared to that of other institutions. One programme would like to see the introduction of an accreditation procedure for foreign teaching qualifications.

Recommendation 19: Ensure that the necessary management information is forthcoming

What is going well according to the respondents?
Most study programmes make use of management information system UvAdata, for instance to get an overview of intake and dropout rates and study progress. Some programmes have their own systems to monitor study progress.
A smaller number use management information to draw up annual plans and Annual Reports or for budgeting purposes. A few programmes use it to analyse their curriculum or to look at the strong suits of individual courses (outcomes of course evaluations).
DataNose and UvANose are identified as welcome solutions to a number of problems that occur in connection with UvAdata (see below).

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
Respondents identify a number of issues with current information provision: some study programmes find it challenging to use UvAdata because it is too technical/specific, or they are not sufficiently versed in its use. There is still a need for ready-made study programme overviews and overviews of cost/benefit/study success rates for individual courses.

Recommendation 20: Provide support for study programmes set on improving study success

A third of the study programmes experienced a lot of autonomy while implementing the recommendations for study success, a third experienced autonomy in some areas and a third found the study success policy to be imposed.

What is going well according to the respondents?
Those who experienced a lot of autonomy say they have used the recommendations to take a critical look at their curriculum. For these programmes the report led to reviews they believed to be necessary.
Half of the programmes are fairly positive about the support they received during the implementation phase.

What do the respondents believe could be improved?
A few study programmes believed there was too much autonomy, as a result of which some of the measures taken were not followed up on or monitored adequately. These programmes would have liked to see more faculty policy.
Other programmes believe that part of the policy too compulsory in nature; this commentary mainly concerns the introduction of 8-8-4 and the BSA. One programme writes that there was a lot of leeway on the content but that it was not possible to change the structure. In a number of cases, 8-8-4 appears to have overshadowed the original recommendation (uniformity).
Lastly, there are programmes that did not experience any autonomy at all: they believed the central and/or faculty policy to be imposed and write that a shadow reality has been created in which courses fit the 8-8-4 mould while in fact still being separate courses that are evaluated separately.

Half of the programmes are fairly positive about the support they received during the implementation phase. One programme mentions that the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle for study success has remained stuck at ‘do’ and, to some degree, at ‘check’.
Other respondents are dissatisfied with the level of support, saying that either they did not get any support or it was mainly up to them to implement the changes. Sometimes no internal expertise was available and external parties had to be contracted.
Although a central budget was made available for implementation, a number of programmes were found to be unfamiliar with this. It was also hard to canvass support among lecturers, with initial interest and enthusiasm fading into the background over time.

Positive and negative effects

Positive effects identified by the respondents
A number of study programmes report improved study success rates and some have seen the study ethos among students change. Additionally, awareness seems to have grown of how a good curriculum is structured, and various programmes have used the recommendations to carry out a thorough revision of their curricula. One programme writes that the report has made it clear that organising a study programme is a profession rather than something that can simply be done on the side.

Negative effects identified by the respondents
There is more extensive discussion of negative effects. In particular, the workload for students and lecturers is an area of concern. Students experience considerable study stress due to the multitude of assessment times and a lack of time for relaxation and for catching up. The workload for lecturers has increased as they have to prepare and mark a lot of midterm tests/assignments. The workload has also increased for the programme management given that all of the measures need to be monitored.
Some study programmes remark on the attitude of students: they appear to be less motivated than before, or it seems that only rules can motivate them. At the same time, students experience the programme as having been schoolified, claiming there is less room for creativity, freedom of choice and individual development. It also appears students do not spend more time on their studies than before.

Challenges of Study Success 2.0

Study programmes face a wide range of challenges.

Issues identified repeatedly include:

- Increasing study success
- Preventing student dropout (e.g. in year 1 or the graduation phase)
- Harmonisation between courses
- Clarifying and developing learning pathways
- Working with lecturer teams
- Activating students
- Bachelor’s programmes taught in English and a different type of intake
- Providing a better match between assessment and educational objectives
- Giving more efficient feedback

Other challenges mentioned by respondents include:

- Encouraging the ongoing professionalisation of teaching
- Increasing affinity with the study programme
- Budget cuts versus study success
- Improving the quality of education

- Providing better information
- Alignment with the labour market
- Excellent students

Subjects that respondents want to learn more about include:

- Motivation
- Curricular reform
- Innovations in education (blended learning)
- Setting up learning pathways
- Preventing dropout
- Assessment (including compensatory assessment)
- Changes in society versus study success measures (e.g. loan system)

Response from the Boards of Studies

Boards of Studies were asked to reflect on the responses from the study programme management, so the Task Force could take into account how lecturers and students experience the study success policy. Half of the Boards responded to the questionnaires, most of them confirming the responses of the programme management. They are generally critical about the introduction of 8-8-4 and its compulsory character, and voice their concern about the high workload both students and lecturers face. A number of Boards are happy to see the programme management take a critical approach to answering the questions.

3.2 Quantitative Study

Results of the quantitative study

This section goes into the extent to which the UvA and the various study programmes have lived up, in a quantitative sense, to the ambitions and performance agreements connected with the study success policy. We have made use of the information available in UvAdata. As a reminder: the original ambition was to increase participation in Excellence tracks (10%), increase study success rates (70%) and reduce dropout rates among second-year and third-year students (6%). This last agreement was subsequently abandoned, with efforts going into reducing dropout rates and the switch in the first year. The remainder of this paragraph will look at all of these aspects.

Findings of the review committee on performance agreements

In 2012, the initial study success ambitions were replaced with performance agreements between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the institutions for higher education, with the institutions themselves having the

freedom to set targets. In 2016, a review committee[2] assessed whether it had been possible to implement the agreements. The UvA was rated 'good'. Although the 'switch' percentage (i.e., students who change study programmes within the UvA) was somewhat higher than expected, this is compensated for by the significant reduction in year-one dropout rates. The Bachelor's programme study success rates of re-enrolled students with pre-university education has increased strongly to 70%, and participation in Excellence tracks exceeds 10%.

Table 1: Scores on compulsory indicators of educational quality and study success at the UvA (review committee)

	Baseline measurement	**UvA ambition**	**2015 achievement**
% students who leave the UvA in year 1	23.0	23.0	17.6
% students who change study programmes at the UvA in/after year 1	8.0	8.0	8.6
Bachelor's programme study success rates among re-enrolling students	61.0	70.0	71.6
Participation in Excellence tracks	7.5	8.0	11.8

Note that although all universities have put the agreements into practice (having the freedom, within limits, to define their ambitions), there are significant differences between universities. Results at the UvA have been compared with those at other comprehensive universities, as these lend themselves best to comparison with the UvA in terms of the range of courses they offer. When making this comparison, the following picture emerges:

2 http://www.rcho.nl//asp/invado.asp?t=show&var=1034&fontsize=11

Table 2: Implementation of agreements on performance at classical universities (review committee)

	Dropout rates	Switch	Total dropout rates in year 1	Participation in Excellence tracks	4-year study success students who re-enrol
University of Amsterdam	17.6	8.6	26.2	11.8	71.6
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	19.2	5.4	24.6	10	77.6
Utrecht University	12.8	7.1	19.9	12.9	77.8
Leiden University	13.0	8.2	21.2	13.9	70.6
Radboud University	12.3	6.3	18.6	6.2	81.7
University of Groningen	12.5	9.6	22.1	8.1	75.2

There are differences, although it can be concluded that all universities have made significant strides in countering study completion delays. At all institutions except for Utrecht University, four-year study success rates were (well) below 60% in 2008. At the outset of the study success operation, the UvA was in a shared last position with the University of Groningen.[3]. Several universities believe that the introduction of the BSA has played a large role in improving study success, but in view of this it is remarkable that the university that staked the most on the BSA (Leiden University, since 1996) has the lowest four-year study success rates. When counting participation in Excellence tracks, Utrecht University has the highest overall score, while Radboud University scores best on the study success indicators.

The BSA was introduced among other reasons to improve the selection in the first year, so only selected students remain after year 1. It might be expected that higher dropout rates in year 1 result in a better selection of students for the later years of the study programme and that this could have a positive impact on the study success of students who re-enrol. This, however, is not borne out by the data. Radboud University has both the lowers dropout rates in year 1 and the greatest study success among re-enrolled students. It is this institution, then, that has been the most successful in binding students from the beginning and having them graduate within four years.

The UvA has the highest dropout rates in year 1 (counting students who drop out from a study programme, students who drop out from the university and

[3] Report on study success 2009

students who switch study programmes within the university). This is an indication that there may be room for improvement in the transition from secondary to higher education. We look at this in more detail in chapter 5 of this report.

The quantitative results since the start of the study success programme

At the outset of the study success operation, there were almost no study programmes that achieved a four-year study success rate of 70% among re-enrolled students after year 1. In cohort[4] 2003, 2 out of 26 programmes achieved this, while in 2004, 3 out of 29 programmes did.[5]

This rose to 13 out of 35 programmes for cohort 2010, 18 out of 36 pertinent programmes for cohort 2011 and 19 out of 37 programmes for cohort 2012. A significant number of programmes score just below 70%.

Appendix 4 presents the data from two recent cohorts (2010 and 2011)[6]. We opted for a limited presentation in the appendix, with the main intention of showing that there are considerable differences and fluctuations and that it is not always easy to interpret the data. The appendix seeks to provide study programmes with the data, they themselves being best-placed to decide what the relationship is between the data and academic policy. Of course, complementary data can be extracted from UvAdata.

Both tables show the four-year study success rates and the combined dropout dates (pertaining to the study programme as well as the institution) and switches (switching study programmes within the UvA) in year 1. After all, it is important to know whether the high study success rates among students who re-enrol follow on high or low dropout rates in year 1. The tables show that dropout rates in the first year vary immensely. Some study programmes lose about half of the university preparatory education graduates in the first year, some lose about 10% and most programmes have dropout rates of about 20 to 25% (excepting Medicine and Dentistry). Especially programmes in the domains of Law and Economics have a high dropout rate in the first year. Some Life Sciences programmes also have high dropout rates, which is likely to be due to the presence of a large share of students who failed to secure a place on the[7] Medicine programme. This makes it clear that the data does not permit drawing offhand conclusions; instead, study programmes would do well to analyse the data thoroughly and compare their figures with those of

4. Cohort refers to the starting year. Students from cohort 2003 started the study programme in 2003-2004.
5. Only students who meet the University Education Indicators definition are counted, so data can be compared between study programmes and universities. This definition exclusively comprises students who graduated from university preparatory education and who are enrolled in a single study programme. Only study programmes with an intake of 15 or more University Education Indicators students are counted. This explains the fluctuation in the number of pertinent study programmes.
6. The data from cohort 2012 will only be available in the spring of 2017.
7 This refers to students who opt to do a different study programme while waiting to be admitted to Medicine.

related programmes countrywide. The programmes themselves are probably best-placed to interpret large fluctuations as well.

Appendix 5 presents data pertaining to study success after three, four and five years respectively per *college*. About 30% of re-enrolled students study within the official time period with no delays. Roughly 70% obtain a degree certificate after four years, with percentages climbing steadily in later years. Here, too, there are differences between study programmes. Of course, graduation rates among re-enrolled students do not depend just on their study speed but on dropout rates in years 2 and 3 as well. These dropout rates are included in appendix 6. Dropout rates in years 2 and 3 have declined in the last few years, although they are still high in the case of some study programmes. This may be related to the BSA policy. Programmes without a BSA may lose fewer students in year 1, but lose more in subsequent years.

In order to provide programmes with a better understanding of what the data mean, we have also gathered data on the same study programmes at other universities (appendix 7). If it turns out that all related programmes within a domain have low study success rates, this may be an indication of specific domain problems. If there are large differences between institutions, this suggests that additional measures might be in order. Programmes can also do this benchmarking themselves in UvAdata. Generally speaking, UvA study programmes are not as good at preventing pre-university secondary education graduates from dropping out in year 1 (higher dropout rates), while on average the UvA occupies a lower middle study success ranking, with some exceptions.

4. Reflection on the evaluation and the 20 recommendations

4.1. Introduction

When examining the evaluation data and looking back at the 20 recommendations, the following stands out: in 2009 the previous Task Force reached the conclusion that the UvA was lagging considerably in terms of study success, pointing in particular at Utrecht University as an example of a classical university that had successfully reduced dropout and study completion delay rates by introducing the Bachelor’s-Master’s degree structure. The previous Task Force also made liberal use of the study success website of the Interfaculty centre for teacher training, course development and refresher courses (ICLON), maintained by Leiden University and the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU). In 2009, the approach of Utrecht University and the literature on study success led to the 20 recommendations we have now evaluated.

When looking more closely at these recommendations, we note there is a strong emphasis on *curriculum factors*. These include the didactic learning environment, reducing the 'no obligations' culture, the role of assessment in providing direction to the academic process, promoting consultation between lecturers and coherence within the programme, developing learning pathways, programming the curriculum across all 40 weeks, etc. Some student factors such as motivation and student engagement have not been examined as extensively, nor has lecturer training received as much emphasis, although precisely this last factor was an important factor for success at Utrecht University.

It was also decided in 2009 to opt for a different implementation strategy than the one used at Utrecht University, with implementation by the faculties and study programmes themselves rather than top-down implementation. However, a central action plan on study success was imposed, with a strong emphasis on a uniform academic calendar.

The evaluation shows that many recommendations have been adopted. People have worked hard to innovate education. There is more cooperation between lecturers, more attention is paid to students and student counselling (especially in the first year), there is more frequent assessment and the teaching has become more intensive. The student's learning process now also received more attention. We see this reflected in the results: there is less dropout and there are far fewer study completion delays, even though there continue to be significant differences between study programmes.

At the same time, the evaluation has identified areas of criticism: an undue emphasis on study success can lead to a compromise in quality, and the uniform academic calendar (especially the 4-week study periods) has received some heavy criticism. Respondents also believe that things have sometimes gone too far: more tests lead to a greater workload and people are afraid of schoolification, especially where structuring one's self-study hours is concerned. People object to the compulsory nature of some of the measures, fearing for compromises to the independence and academic development of students. Study programmes are concerned about a drop in quality if students are allowed to compensate. They also worry that the autonomy of lecturers comes under threat if too many regulations are imposed top-down. Many new regulations have been introduced, but their background and the evidence supporting them are not always clear to everyone. The next chapters deal with all of these issues, paying specific attention among other things to the academic calendar, assessment and the relationship between structure, regulations (schoolification, if you will) and quality.

We further note that almost half of the study programmes did not experience support in implementing the study success measures, and that a lot of knowledge was lost over time due to staff changes. Study programmes found a measure of flexibility around the implementation of new rules was lacking.

They also argue that more structure and more obligations can be a good thing at the start of the programme, but this should be followed by greater freedom. In the eyes of the committee, apart from a strong emphasis on curriculum factors it is also important to give subjects such as *the implementation of educational reform, training of lecturers and other persons involved in teaching, and student involvement and motivation* a prominent place on the agenda. This shifts the focus from curriculum reform to training all those involved in education and to engaging students. It is also unavoidable to take a critical look at the uniform academic calendar.

4.2. Implementation of educational reform

When looking at the large-scale educational reform at Utrecht University, as reported on repeatedly in the magazine TH&MA, we see that they have opted for a top-down management approach. Central resources were made available, a lot of people are involved and investments were made in training all persons involved in education at different levels (UTQ, Advanced UTQ and educational leadership). The UvA did not opt for this approach, precisely to give faculties and study programme a chance to develop their own plans on the basis of the 20 recommendations. If we need to go by the response to the mandatory academic calendar, it was probably a wise decision to encourage curricular reform and study success policy *at the study programme level*.

This bottom up approach is supported by the literature (Coppoolse et al., 2014). Precisely the training of all those involved, and the involvement of members of staff in the changes, are important conditions for successful reform. An article asking the question why so much educational innovation has so little staying power concludes: *We need to continue to move education on the path to a more evidence based discipline, with an emphasis on building and using a knowledge base to move the field forward. We need to educate practitioners at all levels in the importance of evidence and train them in ways to use this knowledge. And we need to focus on research questions that have relevance and importance in the lives of learners. In this way we may be able to slow the swing of the pendulum of change*. (Stevens, 2004).

However, another article about the *conditions* for successful innovation shows that several factors are important in order for curricular reform to be successful. It mentions the vision on teaching and learning of an institution or a study programme, the financial means (and their distribution), the organisational structure, the allocation of competences and the necessity, scope and complexity of the changes. Additionally, cooperation, participation, training and leadership play a large role (Bland et al., 2000).

Across all studies, the common denominator seems to be that it is essential to train lecturers and other persons involved in education, so they become owners of the reforms. Important conditions include quality assurance, providing

sufficient funding and a having form of central management (on whichever level). One of the lessons to be learnt from this evaluation is that in 2009 we were insufficiently aware of the degree to which the success of Utrecht University depended on their investment in training and training programmes for lecturers and supervisors combined with HR policy and top-down guidance.

4.3. Towards further talent development for all persons involved in education

The UvA has done much work especially with regard to the UTQ tracks. Advanced UTQ and educational leadership courses have been on offer for some years and are greatly appreciated by participants. At the same time, the evaluation makes it clear that a University Teaching Qualification is no guarantee that knowledge will be retained, given that many respondents make comments that go against what is taught in the UTQ tracks.

The UTQ was introduced on a nationwide scale so that people's qualifications are recognised across universities. Here are some of the BKO requirements:

Lecturers:

- are focused on the student's *academic process*;
- have an *overview* of the curriculum and the programme organisation;
- base their work on the *vision on teaching and learning* of the institution, study programme and/or department when developing a course component;
- develop a *powerful learning environment* with effective and motivating teaching methods, teaching and study materials and multimedia;
- are able to use teaching methods and materials relevant to the specific course that *motivate and activate* students and that are educationally responsible;
- are able to advise individual students adequately in their studies and, where needed, to intervene in case of *stagnation*.

The UTQ is based on a constructivist vision of learning to which the following question is central: How can the *academic process* be stimulated in such a way as to ensure that students reach the exit level? The core of this vision is that study habits can be influenced through the design, programming and application of assessment in the teaching process. The consistence between teaching and assessment (*alignment*) is essential, with the final qualifications being leading.[8] It is not until the Advanced UTQ course that a lot of attention

8 For a brief introduction, see: 'teaching, teaching, understanding, understanding' on YouTube.

is paid to *constructive alignment*; participants learn to apply this at the curricular or learning pathway level.[9] Respondents do not seem to be familiar with this principle, which underpins study success policy. For study success measures there is a similar finding: respondents are often familiar with the measure, but not with its background or the evidence for it. People find it difficult to retain or transfer acquired knowledge. Additionally, the high workload is frequently mentioned as an inhibiting factor. Lecturers are feeling the pressure and understand the urgency to improve teaching, but they often lack the time to improve it or to professionalise themselves, and in the end they are evaluated on their performance in the study. Theirs is not an enviable situation.

As previously indicated, the UvA has taken significant strides in recent years to improve the professionalism of teaching by offering UTQ, Advanced UTQ and LOL tracks. At present, 80% of lecturers have obtained the UTQ, 80 lecturers have an Advanced UTQ certificate and 51 lecturers have completed the LOL. There is also a LOL-based initiative to share knowledge in education, 'Dare to share'. This is a good start, but there is a long way to go. Education should be higher on the list of priorities at all levels. If we take education seriously, we should take the lecturer's profession seriously and make optimal use of our talents. Accordingly, the Task Force has studied the professionalisation of teaching, asking what would be needed to optimise it:

Meet the needs of individual lecturers

Research shows that if professionalisation is to be effective, it should always be linked to the needs and opinions of lecturers (Van Veen et al., 2010). Their needs is twofold. On the one hand, lecturers want to improve their knowledge, attitudes and skills in order to increase their effectiveness, in this way improving learning outcomes (the so-called 'blueprint') (Kelchtermans, 2013). On the other hand, the relationship between lecturers and students is a strong determinant of the quality of education. The lecturer's authenticity and autonomy find expression in this relationship. It is the lecturer's 'fingerprint', as it were, that makes teaching inspiring both for the lecturer and for the student. The professionalisation offer should strike the right balance between 'blueprint' and 'inspiration'.[10]

Create a culture that promotes the sharing and transfer of knowledge

Knowledge sharing and transfer should not happen separately, detached from people's ordinary activities. If it is to be meaningful, it needs to be part of their work and fit into the work culture.[11] This sounds self-evident, but if education in the workplace is considered unimportant or the study programme is not seen as something communal, this is telling about the programme organisation's culture. It will determine the behaviour that lecturers and supervisors consider

9 The appendix on assessment in chapter 5 takes another look at 'constructive alignment'.
10 Also see recommendation 2. Advice on the ongoing professionalisation of teaching issued by the UvA Programme Board on Leadership in Education (28 October 2015)
11 Success factors of lecturer professionalisation

to be normal, turning education into a mostly frustrating experience, as it contrasts starkly with reality. It is essential for the professionalisation of education to cover the entire workplace – from lecturer to supervisor – and accordingly it should be offered to the entire chain.[12] Key terms here are knowledge, autonomy, and shared responsibility and vision.

Appreciation

Teaching is a crucial task of universities, and lecturers are at the heart of teaching. They are intrinsically highly motivated. But just as is the case with students, it is important for lecturers to feel appreciated. This appreciation finds expression in the available time and means for education as well as in HR policy. It cannot be emphasised too much that if education offers no career perspectives, the organisation implicitly gives the message that appreciation is restricted to being a variable in the study and that the appreciation of teaching is only paid lip service. The vision on teaching and learning should find expression in personnel policy so as to ensure the right balance between effort and appreciation.[13]

Shared vision

The professionalisation of teaching also requires that we have a shared vision of what we believe to be quality teaching. Without a vision, professionalisation is rudderless. As a university, we need to have a notion of the type of student we want to see emerge at the end of the process, and how best to work towards that type of student. Lecturers should shape their teaching with this shared vision of quality in mind, as well as having the freedom to place their own stamp on teaching. The right balance between a shared vision and personal flavour can get our students' talents to flourish.

These conditions can be translated into the following specific recommendations, which complement the advice on the ongoing professionalisation of teaching issued by the UvA Programme Board on Leadership in Education[14]:

1. Invest in didactic training across the board for teaching personnel, from student assistants to professors. Think carefully about an organisational structure in which people experience the space and incentives to invest in the professionalisation of teaching. One structure could be the so-called lecturer *communities of practice* (CoPs). There is evidence that lecturers perform better in CoPs, for instance through peer feedback (Steinert, 2010).

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12 Also see recommendation 2. Advice on the ongoing professionalisation of teaching issued by the UvA Programme Board on Leadership in Education (28 October 2015)

13 Also see recommendations 3 and 4. Advice on the ongoing professionalisation of teaching issued by the UvA Programme Board on Leadership in Education (28 October 2015)

14 Also see the advice on the ongoing professionalisation of teaching issued by the UvA Programme Board on Leadership in Education (28 October 2015)

2. Continue to invest in UTQ, Advanced UTQ and LOL tracks and expand the course offering with a UTQ plus track and familiarisation tracks for programme directors.
   The UTQ plus might consist of professionalisation modules on subjects that in part reflect themes that have been demonstrated to increase study success (such as constructive alignment, setting hierarchical goals, student engagement) and in part meet specific lecturer needs (such as coaching in module design). This might be of a compulsory nature and be addressed in the annual consultation. Accordingly, the UTQ plus should be a right that lecturers can claim as part of their career development. In this way it would become part of their brief rather than increasing the workload.
   A familiarisation track should be designed for each programme director, consisting partly of input from across faculties and institutions (e.g. on the annual report/plan, budgeting and participation in decision-making) and partly of themes from across the UvA (such as coherence between goals, educational activities and assessment or student engagement).

3. Ensure a package of professionalisation activities and (the exchange of) knowledge.
   The UvA has always been very hesitant to equip a central location for, among other things, the above-mentioned professionalisation activities. In fact, when the Institute for Lifelong Learning in Education left the UvA these activities nearly came to be hosted by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. If the UvA wants acquired knowledge and skills to be consolidated, it should invest in a structure that guarantees consolidation. A central Education Platform could be a model, with a spin-off at each faculty. We are already seeing such initiatives at the faculty level. These initiatives should be encouraged and given more prominence in an efficient UvA-wide structure.
   More and better use should also be made of existing networks and the expertise of past participants in educational tracks, e.g. to set up lecturer CoPs. Naturally, the working groups that work on knowledge sharing, outgoing mobility and blended learning should also be involved. An important addition would be to stimulate research into education, share knowledge about this and promote this research expertise.

4. Seriously build out the possibility of having a teaching career at the UvA. Research existing initiatives at the UvA and elsewhere, and assemble a university-wide working group that can provide advice on how to give shape to and embed a teaching career.

5. Organise an annual education day at which new themes are presented, old themes are explorer further and people learn from one another by giving the floor to local examples. Such a day makes the vision on teaching and learning tangible as well as turning it into a broadly

supported, dynamic vision, informed by what is happening and required in the workplace.

4.4. (Uniform) academic calendar and contact hours

Another theme deserving university-wide attention is the uniform annual calendar and the contact hour norms. The evaluation has identified a number of difficult issues which we will discuss below.

The starting point is that by law, students spend 1,680 hours a year on their studies. Most universities have chosen to schedule 40 study weeks of 42 hours each. The law also stipulates that a minimum of twelve contact hours per week must be offered in the first year[15].

Uniform academic calendar

The results of the questionnaire show that there is much unhappiness about the uniform academic calendar, and especially the semester distribution in study periods of 8, 8 and 4 weeks. The nature of the criticism varies: some study programmes indicate that there is no ideal academic calendar, some have adapted (well) to it or come up with their own ingenious compromises, and some despise 8-8-4.

The points of criticism, of which especially the first one is often mentioned

- The four-week study periods consisting of short, full-time programmed courses (also called *bermvakken*, road verge courses) are too short to provide meaningful, quality content. Scheduling four-week practical training courses (as was the original intention) may be possible for some study programmes, but for many it is not. Three weeks of teaching with a test in week 4 is hard to put into practice:
- everything is packed tightly together, with little breathing space in the programme.
- Some respondents believe all periods to be too short to ensure that students retain the course material.
- There are few holidays and both students and lecturers face a high workload.
- Some respondents make the case for letting go of the uniform academic calendar in favour of faculty-specific or programme-specific calendars.

[15] When the University Committee on Education discussed a draft version of this report, it expressed the wish for an inventory of academic calendars used abroad. The Dutch situation, with long academic years and no holidays of note, appears to be fairly unique and prompts the question whether things might not be organised differently. The Study Success Task Force 2.0 plans to report separately on this issue later on.

- Especially at the Faculty of Humanities, students enrol in four or five courses anyway instead of the planned two courses, as they want to see if they can manage this.
- From an educational point of view it can be argued that 8-8-4 results in too many final tests. This point is also discussed in the contribution on assessment and feedback in chapter 5 of this report.

The backgrounds of the uniform academic calendar

- The UvA wants to make use of the entire academic year (see the report on study success) and the students have argued for the harmonisation of enrolment dates, placement dates, initial weeks of courses etc., so as to get a much clearer offering.
- Not having a uniform academic calendar would make it harder for the interdisciplinary study programmes (Future Planet Studies, Psychobiology, Amsterdam University College, Natural and Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences) to plan the programme components borrowed from other programmes.
- A uniform academic calendar offers more options for exchanging (elective) courses and taking courses at other study programmes.
- The clear start and end dates of the academic calendar facilitate finishing courses before starting on new ones.
- A uniform calendar is essential for classroom timetabling. If all courses began and ended at different times this would severely hamper the optimal use of rooms. This goes for lecture rooms but not for examination rooms, which by contrast are in too high demand at the end of each period.

Possible solutions and comments on the criticism

Before the introduction of the Bachelor's-Master's structure we had an academic calendar consisting of three trimesters of 14 weeks each, leaving a 40-hour working week during 42 weeks. As the workload for lecturers was considered to be too high (!), the academic year was shortened to 40 weeks, leaving a 42-hour working week for students. This is unfortunate, but as all universities schedule 40 weeks and usually work with two 20-week semesters, it would not seem expedient to return to an academic year of 42 weeks.

The working group sees the following possible solutions:
The UvA could abandon the uniform academic calendar (except for a 2-semester structure), allowing each faculty and/or study programme to adopt their own ideal calendar. Alternatively, a different academic calendar could be adopted, for example study periods of 2x10 weeks per semester. Before the adoption of 8-8-4 this alternative was considered but rejected by the Executive Board in consultation with the Central Executive Council on which all deans are represented. If the weight of opinion is now different at the UvA, the Executive Board might decide differently.

The committee does not offer proposals for a completely overhauled academic calendar, as a lot of work has gone into curriculum development and educational reform fitting the mandatory 8-8-4 format. Additionally, the

predominant opinion is that while the present academic calendar is not ideal, no single format would be. Most faculties and study programmes have learnt to live with 8-8-4, if often by virtue of not applying it too rigidly.

Continuing with the *strict* form of 8-8-4, in which there are only six ECTS courses, does not seem to be an option in view of the widespread and legitimate criticism that four-week study periods are hard to structure. A less rigid implementation of 8-8-4 might be a solution. To begin with, it could be decided that each course always represents 3 ECTS or a multiple of 3 ECTS (3, 6, 9, 12 or 15). Study programmes could then opt for a structure in which certain periods are combined, e.g. 8-12 (2x a 6 ECTS course, combined with 2x a 9 ECTS course in one semester, a solution closely approaching the 10-10 solution) or 16-4, in case the programme also wants to be able to offer a large course of 12 ECTS . Another variety would be to have a 15 ECTS study period while using the other half of the time to offer a 6 ECTS course, another 6 ECTS course and a 3 ECTS course. This provides more flexibility and the possibility to design a meaningful curriculum allowing for a combination of smaller and larger courses. An added advantage would be that the academic year becomes less of a hurdle race in terms of assessment, as there are fewer final review events. In the contribution on assessment in chapter 5 we provide arguments for the preference for (far) fewer than 10 decision points (final tests) (De Gruijter, 1989). This flexibilisation of 8-8-4 does not affect the objectives of the academic calendar. However, the greatest danger of increased flexibility is the impossibility of exchange. This could be solved by agreeing with each faculty/study programme that they offer enough courses (preferably of 6 ECTS) that students from other study programmes could take as electives. Aside from this, the faculties' or programmes' 'own students' should have enough options to attend courses elsewhere. It is also important that any decisions that are made do not affect the interdisciplinary Bachelor's programmes in such a way as to prevent them from organising their curricula.

Examples of the possible structure of semesters:

8 weeks	**8 weeks**	**4 weeks**
15 ECTS		
6 ECTS	**6 ECTS**	**3 ECTS**

8 weeks	**8 weeks**	**4 weeks**
15 ECTS		
6 ECTS	**6 ECTS**	**3 ECTS**

8 weeks	**8 weeks**	**4 weeks**
6 ECTS	**9 ECTS**	
6 ECTS	**9 ECTS**	

8 weeks	**8 weeks**	**4 weeks**
12 ECTS		**6 ECTS**
6 ECTS	**6 ECTS**	

8 weeks	**8 weeks**	**4 weeks**
12 ECTS	**6 ECTS**	**3 ECTS**
	6 ECTS	**3 ECTS**

Of course, other varieties are possible in which the 6 ECTS courses could be offered as electives within the 8-8-4 format, thus safeguarding the possibility of exchanges.

A proposal for a holiday week in the spring

Other universities have holiday weeks around periods such as carnival. As a consequence the nine-week summer holiday is usually shortened by having the academic year begin earlier and/or end later. It is all a matter of choice, but a simple option could be to allow for a one-week holiday in May during the second eight-week period of the second semester. Due to various separate holidays, this period currently lasts nine. In the above-mentioned solution, no teaching would be planned for the duration of a week (in which there are already several holidays), and some other holidays would be surrendered. Another option would be to shorten the summer holiday by a week, resulting in a programme with more breathing space. An additional benefit of a week off is that resits could be planned for that week.

Distributed teaching and knowledge retention

The argument that distributed teaching aids retention of the course material is, in principle, a cogent one. A lot of research has gone into distributed teaching (Seabrook et al., 2005). The same goes for studying: a meta-analysis of study methods found that especially distributed studying over a longer period of time leads to better retention (Dunlosky, 2008). Other research has found that distributing the course material leads to better retention than does repeating the course material (Rohrer and Taylor, 2006). None of these studies offer indications for the ideal length of a course. It is especially evident that students need to study throughout the course, not just at the end (Dunlosky, 2008). It has also been demonstrated that planning several consecutive courses leads to competition (Jansen, 1996, 2004), cancelling out the effect of distribution because the student does not spend (enough) time studying the course material. For this reason, various researchers argue for teaching in study periods, an approach central to, for instance, problem-based learning.

The essence seems to be to create programmes that revolve around a progressive structure, incorporate learning pathways and continually revisit and briefly repeat previously learnt course material. Continual re-activation of acquired knowledge definitely improves study skills and retention (Pashler et al., 2007; Dochy et al., 1999). Thanks to this ongoing re-activation, knowledge is repeated in an ever changing context, which aids learning and the transfer of acquired knowledge (Westhoff, 2009).

This subject, too, should be approached with the curriculum as a whole in mind. It requires lecturers to cooperate on the programme and that the focus should be on the educational objectives not just of each course but especially of the programme as a whole. This can be aided by cooperation on learning pathways. In this way, students are assisted not only to pass examinations but to retain the course material.

In summary:

- Take a more flexible approach to the 8-8-4 structure, providing more freedom within the existing limits by offering not just 6 ECTS courses but 3, 9, 12 and 15 ECTS courses as well, while continuing to ensure that students have no problems taking electives at other study programmes.
- Introduce a holiday week in the spring.
- Think in terms of the curriculum as a whole. Lecturers should cooperate on the study programme and think in terms of the educational objectives of each course but also in terms of the educational objectives of the programme as a whole. This can be aided by cooperating on learning pathways.

4.5. Contact hours

In line with the performance agreements between universities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the UvA adheres to the norm of a minimum of twelve contact hours per study week in the first academic year of the Bachelor's programmes. This norm was formally adopted by the UvA and is included in the frameworks of Teaching and Examination Regulations. Further conditions are not mentioned, although this would be desirable as this guideline can be put into practice wrongly.

Structuring the contact hours

Curricula with a relatively high number of lectures, little opportunity for self-study and few student-activating teaching methods do not 'do as well' as curricula with a limited number of lecturers that do offer student-activating, small-scale teaching. Not only do students take longer to reach the finish line in curricula with many lectures, the high number of lectures is also detrimental to the quality of learning (Schmidt et al., 2009; Severiens et al., 2009).

There is a lot of additional research showing that lectures are a relatively inefficient means of encouraging learning on the part of the student (see, for instance, the recent review study by Freeman et al., 2014). The plea in *Nature* for more student-activating education is in line with the findings of many studies in this area (Waldrop, 2015). It is also in direct agreement with the recommendations by the working group on blended learning.
It is a good idea to dedicate a substantial amount of contact teaching to small-scale, student-activating teaching (Springer, Stanne, M.E. & Donovan, 1999). Self-study time should not only consist of 'reading instructions' (study pages x to y): students should be prompted to engage actively with the course material and to assimilate it, for example by doing assignments (ICT-supported to the extent possible, and so fitting the UvA's blended learning concept).
Increased contact time leads to increased self-study among students, although there is an upper limit (see also chapter 5). When this limit is exceeded, the

contact time is actually detrimental to self-study (Van der Drift and Vos, 1987).
It should also be considered to give students more tools to digest the course material both during self-study and during contact teaching.
A further recommendation is to allow for sufficient self-study time just before or after a lecture or other contact teaching moment while at the same time equipping students with the tools to make good use of their self-study time (Spruijt, Jaarsma, Wolfhagen et al., 2012).

The number of contact hours per week[16]

Although no *upper limit* for the number of contact hours per week is mentioned, it would be desirable to have one. After all, there is considerable evidence for the view that the programme should accommodate sufficient self-study time so as to enable students to learn autonomously (Grave, 2012; Torenbeek, Jansen & Suhre, 2015). Research by Van der Drift & Vos, 1987; Geyselaers & Smidt, 1995; Smidt et al., 2010 shows that having an upper limit of about 12 to 14 contact hours per study week has a positive effect on student learning. Optimal effects are not just obtained by influencing the *number* of self-study hours. Self-study – *provided that it involves assignments etc.* – also has a positive influence on the *quality* of learning (Geyselaers & Schmidt, 1995).

No *lower limit* or *upper limit* is indicated for academic years 2 and 3. It is known from research that having a lower limit for the number of contact hours (about 12 hours per study week) is required to avoid that students are 'insufficiently stimulated' to study, which has an adverse effect on students' number of study hours and so on their learning process (van der Drift and Vos, 1987). Having an upper limit in place is required to provide sufficient opportunities for self-study (Van der Drift and Vos, 1987).

Distributing contact hours throughout the week

Study programmes are free to programme contact hours as they see fit. That said, contact teaching and self-study should be distributed throughout the week as much as possible: this helps spread the workload and encourages regular study habits ('distributed practice'), in turn avoiding peaking habits and improving retention of the course material (Roediger & Pyc, 2012). It also avoids the 'timetabling of lecture-free days' that could lead students to think: 'there are no lectures today, so I have a day off and do not need to study' (Berliner, 1990; Van der Drift & Vos, 1987, Jansen, 2004).

[16] Much of the research on contact hours concerns education to which knowledge goals are central. Practical training, skills training, work placements etc. fall outside of this scope.

5. Study success, the main evidence

In addition to carrying out an evaluation, we have also reviewed recent literature. In view of the importance of knowing why specific measures might be useful, this chapter will take a closer look at the evidence for certain study success measures.

This evidence is not always unambiguous. A *balance* between different principles will often have to be struck. It should also be kept in mind that what works in one programme environment does not necessarily work in another[17] and that different choices can be made in different *study phases*. A first year in which the focus is on the successful transition from pre-university student to university student will not have the same structure as subsequent years. It is precisely in later years or during the Master's study programme that, for content-related reasons, programmes can opt for a freer approach giving students more autonomy.

For this reason, we recommend a measure of flexibility when introducing new educational policy, ensuring that any measures fit in with the study programme and with other choices that have been made. 'One size does not fit all'.

The themes discussed in this part follow the structure of the book 'Completing College, Rethinking Institutional Action (Tinto, 2012)'. This book, strictly speaking a meta-analysis, presents an overview of evidence-based measures compiled by one of the most authoritative study success researchers. Tinto identifies the following four important pillars of study success:

- (High) Expectations
- Support and Supervision, especially in the transition from secondary education to higher education
- Assessment and Feedback
- Involvement

We will deal will these issues one by one in the following paragraphs. The material presented here, including the references to the literature, seeks to provide pointers to study programmes in their quest to further improve the quality of education.

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[17] A noteworthy example of the need for such 'tailored measures' is a Bachelor's programme that does not use a concentric teaching model or learning pathways and in many cases has exit-level assessment as early as the propaedeutic year. In such situations, 8-8-4 is not a very useful structure. Conversely, this structure can be helpful if there is a strong progression in the curriculum and previously acquired knowledge continually forms the basis for the acquisition of further knowledge. Another example is the BSA, which has a different effect in the case of study programmes that perform well than in the case of programmes where dropout rates have traditionally been high.

5.1. Expectations and level

Critical voices are sometimes raised in response to the quest for better study success rates (lower dropout rates and fewer study completion delays). The implicit assumption is that students can only be made to study more and faster at the expense of the quality of studies. The explicit fear is that students will turn from autonomous freethinkers into schoolified pupils who scrupulously observe the rules while expending the least effort required and who, without demur, jump through the hoops held up by the study programme in the most structured and organised way possible.

The social brief for universities is clear: dropout rates need to be reduced and far more students need to obtain their Bachelor's degree certificate within four years (performance agreements, UvA's vision on teaching and learning) while at the same time universities should insist on an ambitious study ethos in which students work harder (quality and diversity, 2014). Are these goals actually reconcilable?

Curriculum factors at least as important as student factors

When comparing study success data of Psychology study programmes, we find that programmes that have the highest level according to the assessment panel are also the ones that have the lowers dropout rates and by far the largest number of students who obtain their Bachelor's degree certificate within four years. This finding is not limited to Psychology programmes: Medicine study programmes, who train very comparable groups according to an identical general plan, also turn out to have large differences in study success rates. These differences can be linked to curriculum factors. A host of other comparative figures, too, show that the structure of the curriculum and the educational environment offered to students have a great influence on their study success. Students achieve better results in an environment that encourages them to study with greater frequency and regularity. This makes it clear that dropout rates and study completion delays cannot be blamed chiefly on the level of the students (also called 'blaming the victim'). This was also the main finding of the first Study Success Task Force, in view of which that Task Force strongly based its findings on the success factors of study programmes with a strong performance.

(High) Expectations

The necessity of (high) expectations and the importance of expectation management are central themes in the above-mentioned book by Tinto. He stresses that clear, consistent and high expectations have a big influence on study habits. Or as Kuh (et al., 2008) put it: *Student success is promoted by setting and holding students to standards that stretch them to perform at higher levels, inside and outside the classroom*.

Tinto is worried about delays among first-generation students. They miss the 'shared knowledge', or cultural capital, that others do have when starting out.

Orientation and introduction are of the essence, and this can include introducing students to the world they will be a part of. The university can familiarise them with scientific standards, explain what plagiarism is and institutionalise them so they identify with the study programme rather than rebelling against it. Social and academic integration are essential to successful studying. Tinto astutely points out the importance of being coherent in word and deed, stating that the programme organisation should speak as one. This involves programme information, good study advice as well as the behaviour (the 'roadmap to success') expected of students. Students should continually be required to achieve that which is 'just above their heads' so they are sufficiently stimulated and aware that they are becoming increasingly competent. They should be challenged and their abilities should be affirmed: this is a precondition for autonomous motivation and self-directed learning. Tinto connects this to the condition of creating an educational environment that encourages students to work hard and with regularity. This environment should also take differences between individual students into account and make good use of their heterogeneity. In other words, there are always two complementary factors: high expectations in the form of educational objectives or learning outcomes and, at the same time, an educational environment that supports students in attaining those objectives.

Curricular and strategic guidance

The above is in agreement with the findings of Cohen-Schotanus (2015), who argues for distinguishing between *content-based* and *strategic* guidance. The level that study programmes aspire to, but also the type of students they want to graduate (for example: creative, self-directing freethinkers) pertains to the domain of educational objectives and learning outcomes. The learning outcomes and objective determine *what* it is programmes want students to end up learning and which level will be reached. This covers knowledge and insight, skills, academic development and attitudes. All of these relate to *content-based* guidance. Study programmes' objectives need to be made explicit and the course content made to match these. Bildung, for example, is a content-based objective that can be pursued, as is academic development.

Strategic guidance relates to the educational environment that is offered and the way the academic process is guided. The educational environment, the quality of education, the way students are encouraged to study and learn, the feedback they receive, the way of being kept on-track: all of these issues determine whether students work more or work less.

In his study, Kerdijk (et al., 2014) demonstrates that if there are several midterm tests during a course, the number of hours students dedicate to self-study increases by nearly 40%. In a meta-analysis of ten study methods, Dunlosky (et al., 2013) show that distributed studying during a course is one of the few proven effective learning strategies, which also promotes retention of the course material. Distributing the material and the study periods is a condition for retention, which takes us back to the content-based objectives.

Study programmes with selected students

When coupled with high expectations, it will be clear that structure, deadlines, effective teaching methods and regular assessments and feedback can make an important contribution to the study programme's content-based objectives. Interestingly, we also see this in the case of programmes with the most stringent objectives, such as Amsterdam University College and several Research Master's programmes. We see that such programmes, as well as programmes such as Medicine that attract selected and highly motivated students, have abandoned the educational environment characterised by freedom and a lack of structure. This seems to indicate that highly motivated students also need strategic guidance and examination regulations that discourage study completion delays and postponement behaviour.

Learning outcomes and constructive alignment

This does mean that curricula and courses need to be structured carefully. In line with the UTQ and the Advanced UTQ, this implies that the focus should shift from *course-based thinking* to *curriculum-based* thinking and additionally, that 'learning outcomes' (and how to achieve these) form a better starting point than the content lecturers want to teach. Thinking in terms of 'learning outcomes' one wants to achieve fits in with solid content-based guidance, after which the desired academic process can be stimulated with the aid of strategic guidance. It is precisely this academic process that was often paid little attention.

Balance between content-based and strategic guidance

It is nonetheless important to maintain a *balance*. Designing a highly compulsory educational structure replete with regulations and deadlines can lead to *moetivatie*, a play on *moe* (tired) and motivation (Vansteenkiste, 2009). It can also lead to a situation where rules are followed for their own sake. The programme organisation has to clarify which didactic concept it represents and why it made the decisions it in the service of this concept. Vansteenkiste emphasises the need for validating and communicating the rules and for lecturers to radiate unanimity and commonality.

In doing so it is important to keep in mind which content-based objective is being pursued. After all, this is what it is about. If a proliferation of regulations and compulsion get in the way of achieving the content-based objectives, something is not right. There also needs to be a degree of leniency. Many students benefit from having to write a thesis in a given period of time, and from stimulation of the learning process through clear deadlines, clear expectations for assignments and transparent assessment. Nonetheless, there may be students whose talents benefit most from a different, freer approach.

It should always be ensured that strategic guidance is provided *in the service of* our content-based (high) objectives. But we should also realise that we often do not achieve these objectives, or only achieve them much later, if we do not

accord central importance to the learning process including the rules and deadlines.

5.2. Support and supervision

When thinking of support we tend to think of study advice and supervision, but Tinto means that many students are ill-prepared for an academic study programme and lack basic skills. The transition from secondary to tertiary education is no simple matter for all students. Of course, this is related to whether prior education has laid the groundwork for a university education as well as to the fact that incoming students have a variety of profiles and form a heterogeneous group – to begin with, because of the different average marks they start with. The Faculty of Humanities, having found part of the pre-university intake to have insufficient language skills, offers a deficiency course. Such courses are offered elsewhere as well in order to bridge the gap between secondary and higher education. Of course, this also includes students who meet admission criteria but who still need to meet prerequisites, such as students with a first-year diploma in higher education with an applied emphasis.

For many students, the availability of academic support (study groups, supplementary education, tutorship, summer courses) is decisive in determining whether they will graduate. Tinto finds that it is especially reading and study skills that are regularly insufficiently developed for successful studying to be possible without additional support[18]. But he also indicates that high expectations and support go hand in hand. He argues for the right balance between challenging students and supporting them. Tinto is sceptical about elective support, arguing instead that support should be a regular part of the study programme so that everyone makes use of it.

He also underscores the importance of organising the first phase of a university study in such a way as to stimulate or require students to study with regularity and to receive regular feedback, so as to get the programme and their study activities going. He refers to Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), which emphasises the importance of competence. Students need to learn what it takes to be successful and competent so as to increase their self-efficacy. It also means that strategic support should be prominent especially at the *start* of the study programme.

In one of the talks we held as a committee this was formulated rather well: 'Our lecturers were on top of Olympus, using a raft of strategies to get students

18. study skills also form part of the Dublin descriptors that are central to the assessment of educational objectives and learning outcomes of Bachelor's programmes

to make it to the top of the mountain. Sometimes we hauled them up the mountain ourselves, but that usually proved ineffective. Since study success, we are more inclined first to go down and work at the student's level, designing a stairway for them to climb. This works a lot better.'

Dutch research by Torenbeek (2011) shows that students are more successful if the approach to education more closely resembles the approach they were previously used to. In connection with this she warns against an early emphasis (i.e., at the start of the first year) on complex skills such as critical thinking and making theoretical connections. She argues for optimal alignment, finding that students express a modest degree of satisfaction with the alignment they experience. The larger the gap between secondary and tertiary education, the less successful students are. It also appears to be the case that a more student-centred approach, paying attention to complementary skills (functional and personal skills that complement professional expertise) has a positive effect on study success and alignment. Contact with lecturers is essential to strengthen students' ties with the study programme. Torenbeek further emphasises the role of expectations: the better and more fully students know what is expected of them, the better the results. Students have to become self-directed, but they need to be supported in this. A student-focused, interactive first-year learning environment with tailored support seems to be the best option for achieving a large degree of self-regulated studying, greater student involvement and the best academic results.

Of course, other forms of student support and supervision such as those provided by study advisers, tutors and mentors are important as well.

Study advice in year 1

As per the Higher Education and Research Act, UvA study programmes issue study advice in the first academic year. However, there are no directives on what to do if a student is not on track. There is evidence for the efficacy of certain interventions (Stegers, 2012; see also see also the website on study success in higher education; Macan, 1994; Prebble et al., 2004).

Study programmes can intervene in case a student is not on track, taking a cue from the Central Student Council's Memorandum on the Study Advice Questionnaire (*Memo Enquête Studieadvies*) of 19 October 2016 as well as its Study Adviser Advice (*Advies Studieadviseurs*) of 20 October 2015. It is important, for example, for the student to have timely contact with the study adviser. A referring function on the part of the lecturer, tutor, mentor, counsellor or Student Desk can help establish this contact. It is also important for study advisers to share their knowledge with each other and with the programme organisation so as to help students as effectively as possible. This can be especially important for improving the referring function; on this, also see the report on knowledge sharing: 'Dare to Share'.

Lastly, a closer look could be taken at the role learning analytics can play in helping students at an early stage.

Referring function in the first academic year

The first academic year also intends to have a referring function: both study programmes that issue a BSA and, emphatically, programmes that do not and where the student personally decides to discontinue, need to have a clear referring function. Students who are referred because of a negative BSA usually do not fare better in their follow-up study (De Koning, 2014). This especially holds for students who start on a new study programme within the same domain (Arnold & Van den Brink, 2009). This is information that can be shared with students.

With regard to the introduction of the BSA, research by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education shows the referring function of many study programmes to be inadequate (Report on the BSA, Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2009). The Central Student Council's Memorandum on the Study Advice Questionnaire of 19 October 2016 as well as its Study Adviser Advice of 20 October 2015 might offer suggestions on how to improve this. The study adviser plays an important role in the referring function. It is recommended for the study adviser at least to discuss with the student how useful it would be to start on a new study programme within the same domain. This will be different for each student.

Binding study advice (BSA)

The BSA has now been broadly adopted by the UvA without leading to an increase in dropout rates and switching percentages. Still, the high dropout rates in year 1 at the UvA stand out. The question whether study programmes with high dropout rates are sending students away who should not be sent away remains unanswered. There do not seem to be large percentages of students who are wrongly allowed to continue, as dropout rates are usually limited in years 2 and 3. The available research data on the BSA is included below. With this we mainly want to point out that here, too, 'one size does not fit all'.

It is known from research by Arnold (2015) that at study programmes with low nominal study success rates the BSA arrangement can have a beneficial effect on study success and early selection, including when the minimum norm is lower than the maximum number of credits that can be obtained. This effect was not found in the case of study programmes with high study success rates (including Medicine and Dentistry). This corresponds with findings about the effects in the research of Stegers-Jager et al. (2012) for Medicine and that of De Koning (2014) for Psychology; both study programmes with high study success rates. The researchers show that a BSA does not have a positive effect on study success when the BSA norm is below 60 credits.

This study also found that students were not selected earlier on in the study programme. There was even a tendency for study success rates to drop after application of the BSA; the minimum norm became a target norm. This was lower than the average number of credits that were already being obtained before the introduction of the BSA, and so had no positive effect on study success.

A BSA with a high norm of 60 ECTS in the first academic year, as was introduced at Erasmus University Rotterdam, has a positive effect on study success (Vermeulen & Scheepers et al., 2012). The same was found in a study by Vooijs, Van de Ven & Buitendijk (2013). Raising the BSA norm to 60 ECTS led to better student performance and got students to improve their study habits. This high norm may also get students to be less calculating about achieving it (Arnold, 2014). However, a higher BSA norm has negative effects as well, for instance on student satisfaction. It may also lead to some students being turned away even though they might be able to graduate (in time) (Sneyders & De Witte, 2015). Lastly, it may affect certain groups of students adversely, such as male students, students from a non-Western background and first-generation students (Vooijs, Van de Ven & Buitendijk, 2013).

5.3. Assessment and Feedback

The UvA has an assessment framework, a new edition of which will be published in 2017. This framework outlines good assessment policy and provides evidence in favour of placing a lot of emphasis on assessment. Our contribution is in agreement with the framework, but goes into more detail on a number of subjects as well as tightening the conditions for good assessment.

Assessment involves more than just administering examinations. It can refer to assignments (including practical and take-home assignments), papers, presentations, practical tests, research design and, of course, theses.

1. When does the test take place?

According to Cohen-Schotanus (2015), this tends to be the first question students ask. The answer should be: in three to four weeks, given that students, like everybody else, are ‘just-in-time’ managers. A large body of research on the way students use their time shows that assessment drives learning and that students will not embark on self-study if a test is still far away. Of course, there are various ways to promote self-study among students. These could include working groups with take-home assignments, a digital learning environment in which students do assignments related to the course material – e.g. on a weekly basis, etc. Regular study habits during a course need to be stimulated or imposed through the design of the course and of the curriculum as a whole. This is in line with the UTQ requirement that the lecturer should

focus on the student's learning process and should design a robust learning environment characterised by effective and motivating teaching methods. Regular study habits with interim feedback are a condition for achieving a good end result which also has some staying power (Dunlosky et al., 2014). This can be achieved in several ways. The assessment framework mentions, among other things, 'start-participate-finish', an educational model in which the study programme encourages students to study regularly, provides them with interim feedback and requires them to make an effort.

2. How do I prepare for it?

This is typically the next question. The answer can only be: master all educational objectives. Here, too, the *average* students is a homo economicus, as we all are. Assessment also drives study habits in terms of the content. As soon as students get the message that they can improve their chance of passing a test by memorising a series of old examinations, or are told that a lecture has no bearing on the test, the majority of them will not be interested in the lecture. Of course there are students who attend lectures out of strong intrinsic interest and who in fact are happy to be taught course material that falls outside of the scope of tests. The teaching should also offer perspectives and inspiration, which is often a goal of lectures, but usually testing wins out to lecturing. This finding is in agreement with the 'constructive alignment' (Biggs, 2011) mentioned in the assessment framework as the method for designing curricula and courses. The idea is to place educational objectives and learning outcomes at the core and to take them as a starting point for elaborating the course design. For the study to be successful, the teaching should be a good match to the testing. That which is tested must first have been taught.

3. What happens if I fail?

This tends to be the third question, to which the answer ought to be: then you have a big problem. Almost all of us have a natural tendency to postponement behaviour if there are multiple deadlines, partly because life is about more than just studying. Resits are often seen as second deadlines, causing students to set other priorities when preparing for the initial test. Of course, there are conditions: the course should be designed in such a way as to enable students to master all educational objectives ahead of the test, and the test has to meet a range of requirements. If this is the case, taking a resit should be exceptional, intended only for students coping with personal circumstances and force majeure and for students for whom the study programme is not suitable or who make an insufficient effort. It is also recommended to make resits unattractive and to avoid resits interfering with the ongoing teaching. One approach is to schedule resits in the summertime only (or at other rare free moments in the year) and to design courses in such a way that accumulated credits (bonuses, partial test results) are cancelled if the student fails.

The first and third items are part of the *strategic* guidance offered to students (the academic process), while the second is part of the *content-based* guidance (educational objectives).

4. Examination questions, the ability to differentiate and difficulty levels

Ideally, examinations would represent the difficulty level of the course material and consist of a combination of easy, average-difficulty and difficult questions. Most lecturers tend to avoid questions to which most students know the answer, so they normally ask hard questions rather than easy ones. After all, questions need to point up the differences between students. Psychometrically it can be defended that answers to questions should represent a neat distribution (so the question differentiates well), but from an educational point of view this is nonsense. If the idea of education is to teach students something and this is done successfully, then all participants will know the answer and demonstrating that the teaching has been quite successful. An examination failed by a majority of students used sometimes to be seen as an accomplishment on the part of the lecturer ('I set very high standards, so everyone fails'). These days, we are more likely to conclude that the teaching has been a failure if the majority of students fail. As per the UTQ requirements, the learning process requires guidance, so it would seem the students did not learn much if a majority fail. Here, too, it is a basic condition that the teaching and the testing should match each other.

5. Setting a cut-off score

In contrast to many other countries, educational institutions in the Netherlands are prone to using absolute cut-off scores for passing tests. Students pass if they answer 55% of the questions correctly, with adjustments being made to account for guessed answers to multiple choice questions. This would be a good approach if every examination had the same difficulty level, but that is never the case in practice.

Accordingly, different cut-off measures are used, such as relative cut-off scores where average results determine the cut-off score. In those cases it is always only a limited number of student who fail. While absolute cut-off scores do not take the difficulty level of a test into account, relative cut-off scores do not take account of students’ actual grasp of the material or of unprepared students who only take a test as preparation for a subsequent attempt. There has been interesting comparative research on this subject. The Medicine study programme at the University of Groningen used the first method; the one at Maastricht University used the second. In Maastricht, students took far fewer resits (17% on average), while the absolute cut-off score in Groningen caused many students to fail and take resits (54%). This resulted in students in Groningen taking a year longer to finish their studies. But comparative research found no indication whatsoever that the Groningen

students had acquired more knowledge, which undermines the argument for an absolute cut-off score.

As a compromise between both methods, Cohen-Schotanus (et al., 2010) proposes basing the cut-off score not on the group average but on how the highest performers score. If there are no students who obtain high scores, this is indicative of an excessive difficulty level and the norm will have to be adjusted. Of course, this is possible only in case of a larger number of participants.

6. How many final reviews in a year?

The first report on study success (2009) mentioned the 'knock-out race' model: different students fail each final test, leaving a limited number of students who have passed every test. This model is not sustainable, given that assessment errors have been shown to occur with each test (De Gruijter, 1989). As a result, if there are more than six tests a year a large share of students will be guaranteed to score at least one undeserved fail. Among other things, this is related to the reliability of tests, which is never optimal. For this reason it has been suggested to introduce an assessment programme consisting of partial tests that, taken together, produce a final mark. This approach has been styled 'many tests, little scoring'. Building in more measurements, which corrects for the unreliability, can be done in many different ways. One is to conclude each successive partial test and determine the definitive final mark at the end. Another method is cumulative testing, where successive partial tests include questions about the same previously covered course material (Kerdijk, 2014). The most extreme solution was introduced by Erasmus University Rotterdam under the motto 'nominal = normal'. It defines the first year as one single course of 60 ECTS that students can pass or fail and where partial marks can be compensated for. Research shows (Vermeulen et al., 2012) that this improves performance spectacularly in terms of study speed, in part because of high pressure. The vast majority of students pass all (partial) examinations and only a limited group make use of the options for compensation (with sevens and eights compensating for fours and fives).

There are less extreme varieties in which courses that fit together are defined as a single course (e.g. research methods and statistics). The idea should be to limit the number of final courses per year in order to avoid a hurdle race effect, but to administer many tests within each course. Frequent assessment has also been demonstrated to contribute strongly to the retention of course material (Karpicke & Roediger, 2008). The current academic calendar often has 10 courses of 6 ECTS, but another option would be to create larger, composite 9-

point and 12-point courses in order to arrive at the desired number of 6 to 8 courses[19].

7. Integral and/or compensatory assessment

The subject of compensatory assessment usually provokes an emotional response. It is feared that students will resort to strategic behaviour, skipping difficult parts, and that some educational objectives will not be achieved. While these are valid concerns in and of themselves, we should note that all tests are compensatory by definition. We also know for certain, not counting students who receive the maximum mark, that students do not have a good grasp of part of the course material, but we usually do not know which part as this tends to differ per student. We should also note that the scope of a course is determined arbitrarily. The UvA norm is 6 ECTS per course, the Utrecht University norm is 7.5 ECTS and the first-year norm at Erasmus University Rotterdam is 60 ECTS. This results in 10, 8 and 1 course(s) per year respectively, which has consequences for the knock-out race effect. When designing a curriculum, decisions can be made relating to the academic calendar; matching components can be put together into a somewhat bigger course so as to arrive at a mixture of courses of 6, 9, 12 or even 15 ECTS. The Medicine study programme at the University of Groningen uses integral, 10-week (=15 ECTS) study periods, with integral assessment and a single marking moment per study period (4 final marks in year 1).

Research has looked at whether compensating for fails negatively affects performance on follow-up courses. This turns out not to be the case, unless resits are weighed as part of the compensation (Arnold, 2011). This also implies that decisions with regard to this depend on the structure of the study programme. Other research (Smits et al., 2014), by contrast, argues against compensatory assessment, among other reasons because educational objectives are not met and because of decisions favouring false negatives over false positives.

Of course, decisions about integral or compensatory assessment are strongly related to the structure of the programme and to the question of whether previously acquired course material is being reviewed on an ongoing basis. It has also been argued that the first year, being a broad, orientation phase consisting of many courses just like university preparatory education, lends itself to compensatory assessment better than do subsequent years.

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19. Some people have suggested it is not that much of a problem if students fail undeservedly; after all, sometimes they pass undeservedly. But failing undeservedly has serious consequences in the first year in particular, when students risk getting an undeserved negative BSA. A single undeserved fail can result in a student being excluded from the study programme. An undeserved pass does not immediately result in a degree certificate, and no one will obtain a degree certificate by virtue of undeserved passes alone. It could be argued that later years require a different balance, as the consequences are less severe than in the first year.

8. Formative versus summative assessment

It is right to distinguish between tests intended predominantly to provide the lecturer and the student with an idea of the student's progress and tests that contribute to the final mark. We refer to this as formative assessment and summative assessment, respectively; today, these two types of assessment are also called low-stakes tests versus high-stakes tests. Assessment should have a goal, or else there is a risk that the test will not be taken seriously. In view of this, it is a better option to make partial tests formative and summative at the same time, for instance by making use of interim (digital) assignments that are scored in some way.

All in all, assessment should aim to strike a balance between the assessment of educational objectives, reliability margins, assessment errors and their effects on the BSA (in year 1) and strategic guidance in developing a sensible assessment and testing programme. Full use should be made of strategic guidance for the assessment and testing programme.

9. Feedback

Feedback during teaching and after assessment is essential. Tests are not just meant to determine the extent to which students meet the educational objectives; they are an opportunity to gain other insights as well. Partly with this in mind it is important to use the various types of midterm test (assignments, partial tests, etc.) to verify whether students are on-track and whether the aims the course set out to achieve have actually been achieved. The assessment framework lists various types of feedback (post-exam discussions, providing arguments when marking papers, etc.). However, giving feedback can be so time-consuming that it ends up taking the place of some of the activities related to educational reform (marking assignments, essay examinations, papers). Clever solutions are required to safeguard student-activating teaching methods and to prevent lecturers being overwhelmed by marking responsibilities.

10. Peer feedback and assessment

Peer assessment is one solution that could be applied more frequently, optionally in combination with self-assessment. Peer assessment and self-assessment are important instruments to encourage self-reflection, critical thinking and problem-solving among students (Dochy and Moerkerke, 1997). They are also important for the development of metacognitive skills and professional skills, and they stimulate cooperation between students, help integrate knowledge, and potentially increase motivation and satisfaction (McDowell, 1995). It does make demands on the educational environment. Students need to be trained in assessment and to be given support. Peer assessment and self-assessment work especially well in the case of formative assessment. Lecturers do require training, and criteria need to be developed (preferably by staff members and students working together). There are also

possibilities for using peer assessment and self-assessment in a more summative way (Dochy et al., 1999). Peer assessment can be a powerful tool, e.g. to stimulate self-assessment, but it will not work automatically. Also, lecturers are reluctant to place assessment in the hands of students. In the present report we confine ourselves to reflecting on the relevant literature, although perhaps workshops on assessment and feedback could be designed that also address peer assessment and self-assessment.

5.4. Involvement: Student engagement and motivation

Motivation is an ever-returning issue in discussions on education and is sometimes spoken of as a silver bullet: if we exclusively had students who are driven to study by intrinsic motivation, education heaven would be within reach[20]. Given that Dutch students are among the least motivated students according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2016), it is little surprise that we dwell on motivation a lot. However, these same students are among the best performers (PISA rankings, OECD, 2015). This raises questions about the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and ways to influence student motivation.

How can students be motivated to dedicate more time and attention to their study? A prominent myth needs to be debunked before we can answer this question: people often speak about intrinsic motivation (good) versus extrinsic motivation (bad). The literature, however, paints a less black-and-white picture. Extrinsic motivation can be effective as well, provided that students experience a sense of autonomy, e.g. by understanding the use of the study activities the programme is asking them to undertake (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007, among others).[21] It also has to be understood that students can have great intrinsic motivation for the study programme as a whole while not having such motivation for each individual course. Precisely in such cases, the objective students want to pursue in doing the study programme can give them the motivation to study (including for courses they are less intrinsically motivated about).

There are various theories about motivation. In the domain of education, authoritative theories include the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) and the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 1999). These theories emphasise both:

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20 For example, see: https://decorrespondent.nl/5445/weg-met-controle-leve-de-intrinsiek-gemotiveerde-mens/716072456385-0eb1fa77

21 The article by Van Steenkiste et al. provides hints for lecturers to bolster the autonomous motivation of students.

- The importance of students *feeling competent*.

  The importance of students having faith in their own competence to complete a task successfully. Self-efficacy[22] has a positive effect on motivation.

- Students also need to see *the importance of making an effort*.

  When they understand the use of their study activities, this will increase their sense of autonomy, which in turn will have a positive impact on their (autonomous) motivation.

Additionally, the Self-Determination Theory emphasises the importance of a feeling of connectedness to lecturers and fellow students. Rather than being a fixed personality trait, motivation can be influenced by the study programme (Kusurkar, 2012). Lecturers can encourage autonomous motivation by providing structure and supporting autonomy, e.g. by:

- setting clear expectations and consistently keeping to guidelines;
- writing a step-by-step plan for assignments, providing positive feedback, giving assistance through hints, identifying areas to work on, providing optimally challenging tasks;
- listening to students, allowing them to express their opinions, asking them what their wishes are, showing empathy;
- providing informative, positive feedback, giving hints and identifying areas to work on, encouraging students unconditionally, allowing them to make decisions;
- providing explanations or rationales. (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007).

In brief, to stimulate autonomous motivation it is important to:

1. listen to students;
2. provide good feedback supported by arguments (on both positive aspects and things to improve);
3. explain why the study activity in question is relevant (avoid students feeling they need to do assignments for the sake of the assignments).

Providing this kind of support requires training lecturers and tutors/mentors in giving constructive feedback (preferably as efficiently as possible), for

[22] Also see Bandura (1986).

example through UTQ courses or supplementary training. The exchange of knowledge and experience is useful, and ideally feedback is a regular element of the didactic concept.

The above-mentioned suggestions for stimulating autonomous motivation can be used not just by lecturers in the context of their courses, but by College and programme directors in the context of the general curriculum as well.

The learning outcomes of study programmes (and sometimes the educational objectives of the courses) have been formulated at a fairly abstract level. Specifying the learning outcomes and educational objectives for the benefit of students and stating explicitly how the various courses contribute to achieving the learning outcomes will make it clearer to students why a given course forms part of the study programme. The course will become more attractive to students and they will be clearer on what they will learn during a specific course or programme.

It is not just the function of the courses within the curriculum that needs to be clear; the function of the various study and assessment activities within the course needs to be made explicit as well. Lecturers should communicate this clearly so that students do not just know something is necessary but also why it is designed the way it is. Something similar applies to the rules used by study programmes. Rather than making rules for the sake of rules, explain the reasons behind them and design them to stimulate students, not to punish them. Apart from being known to students, the reasons behind the rules should be supported by the staff members.

If the goal is to engage students and bind them to the study programme and the organisation, listening to them is a basic condition, both in the course and in the programme. Asking questions of students (through programme evaluations, student representatives, panel discussions etc.) is just as important as communicating about the outcomes and the actions that followed.

Apart from (types of) motivation, student engagement is a frequent theme in the literature on study success. Student engagement involves the time and energy students expend on their studies and the measures taken by study programmes to encourage this engagement. As per Kuh et al., 2008; Kuh, 2009 and others, the measure of student engagement has a quantitative effect on study success and on limiting dropout rates, as well as having a qualitative effect on the personal and academic development of students. Student engagement is an overarching concept that unites all previous recommendations for encouraging student motivation. Moreover, the measures that improve student engagement fit in well with diversity policy, blended learning, internationalisation and the wish to offer students a rich academic and personal development path. The following starting points are important to encourage student engagement:

- The study programme is challenging.

- The study programme is designed in such a way that students learn with and from fellow students, for example through learning communities or year classes in which they work together.
- There is sufficient opportunity for contact between students and lecturers, including outside of lectures.
- Lecturers and support are designed to help students achieve academic success. Among other things, this means offering assistance in case of problems (including non-academic problems) and creating a positive atmosphere within the study programme. There is space for enriching learning experiences such as work placements, exchange programmes, and contacts with alumni and professionals.

The *National Survey of Student Engagement* (see http://nsse.indiana.edu/) developed at Indiana University in the US offers pointers for formulating specific measures for all of these themes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Composition of the Study Success Task Force 2.0

Preparatory Task Force:
Lucy Wenting MSc (Chair, Study Success Task Force; Chairperson, UCO; director, IIS)
Klaas Visser MA (Study Success Task Force 2009)
Guinevere Simpson (CSR)
Mark de Jongh (CSR)
Jennifer Schijf MSc (Secretary, Study Success Task Force; policy officer, Executive Staff)

Enlargement with faculty representatives:

ACTA	Dr Ronald Gorter (College director, ACTA)
AMC	Dr Gerard Spaai (policy adviser, Instituut voor Onderwijs en Opleiden)
Faculty of Law	Dr Jan Herman Reestman LLM (Chairperson, Board of Studies, Bachelor's programme Law)
Faculty of Economics and Business	Ellen de Jong MSc (study adviser, Study Success Task Force 2009)
Faculty of Humanities	Kiki Boomgaard MA (policy officer, Education)
Faculty of Science	Astrid Janmaat MSc (team leader, project office Educational Quality)
FMG	Mieke Sillekens MA (policy officer, Quality Assurance)
CSR	Noa Visser (member, Central Student Council 2016-2017, as of September 2016)

In a personal capacity:
Sicco de Knecht MSc (PhD, Faculty of Science, Study Success Task Force 2009)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Bachelor's programme directors

In 2009, the Study Success Task Force published a report containing 20 recommendations for improving study success at the UvA. In response, the Executive Board wrote an action plan, directing study programmes to work with these recommendations. It was also decided to introduce a uniform academic calendar in order to distribute courses evenly across the academic year and to improve their interchangeability.

With this inventory, the Study Success Task Force 2.0 wants to determine to what extent study programmes have used the 20 recommendations to improve their curriculum, which recommendations do not appear to have had any effect, which difficulties or undesired effects they have experienced and which solutions they have come up with. The Task Force hopes this evaluation will determine which curriculum model, educational approach and assessment method bring out the best in students, and hopes in this way to contribute to improved education.

The questionnaire consists of a number of general questions as well as questions per recommendation. As the Study Success Task Force 2.0 attaches importance to the inclusion of Boards of Studies in the evaluation process, we provide space for their remarks at the end of the questionnaire.

You have until 1 June 2016 to complete this questionnaire.

General

1. For which study programme are you completing this questionnaire?

2. Who is completing this questionnaire (name and position; several names possible)?

3. What was your role during the implementation of the study success recommendations?

4. Who can the Study Success Task Force 2.0 contact in case we have any questions in connection with your answers?

Study success 2009 – 2016

5. What were the biggest challenges faced by the study programme when the study success recommendations were implemented six years ago?

6. At the time, did you contact the Study Success Task Force with regard to their implementation?

7. Which has/have been the most important improvement(s) within the study programme in the past six years?

Recommendation 1: Give the curriculum a 'now or never' quality

Sub-recommendations:

- Encourage students to invest more hours per week in their study
- Programme a maximum of two concurrent components
- Have students work on the course material during the courses
- Distribute tests across courses (partial tests and partial assignments)
- Limit the number of resits
- Avoid postponement behaviour

8. In your study programme, how are students encouraged to work on the course content during the courses?

Questions about the uniform academic calendar (8-8-4 semester structure) are asked under recommendation 11, 'Make the most of the entire academic year'.

Questions about assessment are asked under recommendation 4, 'Replace the 'knock-out race' model (veldloopmodel) with a compensatory system'.

Recommendation 2: Promote cohesion and synchronisation on all fronts

Sub-recommendations

- Coordinate and design study programmes with objectives and learning outcomes in mind
- Give lecturer teams responsibility for academic years and/or semesters
- Make assessment policy a joint responsibility: didactic approach, timetable, assessment
- Discuss and evaluate study progress in lecturer teams

9. How do you ensure coherence and synchronisation within the study programme?

10. Does the study programme work with lecturer teams?

10a. If so, in which way and on which topics?

11. Are lecturer meetings organised on a structural basis (e.g. education days, awaydays)?

11a. If so, in which way and on which topics?

Recommendation 3: Integrate teaching and studying in a way that enables students to participate actively

Sub-recommendations

- Have students work on the course material during the teaching
- Distribute tests across courses (using partial tests and partial assignments)
- Organise self-study hours, optionally timetabling them

12. How many contact hours a week do students have on average?

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

13. Does the study programme organise students' self-study hours (e.g. timetabling them or otherwise making them explicit?

14. Why does the study programme organise self-study hours, or why does it not?

Recommendation 4: Replace the 'knock-out race' model (*veldloopmodel*) with a compensatory system

Sub-recommendations:

- Do not plan more than eight final tests per year
- Make completion of all components within the course period mandatory
- Make assessment policy a joint responsibility: content, didactic approach, timetable, assessment
- Allow compensatory assessment within the course, semester or year
- Allow resits for entire components only, not for parts
- Limit the number of resits
- Offer resits only in case of force majeur
- Only offer second opportunities for assignments to students who have deserved them in view of their commitment

15. How has assessment been programmed within the Bachelor's programme?

The number of assessment times per course is:

The number of resits per course is:

Resits are offered at the following moment:

The number of final tests (decision moments) per year is:

16. Can students compensate for marks WITHIN a course?

16a. If so, on the basis of which considerations is compensation offered? Is there a lower limit? And what have been your experiences?

17. Can students compensate for marks *between* different courses?

17a. If so, on the basis of which considerations is compensation offered? Is there a lower limit? And what have been your experiences?

18. Are resits subject to conditions, such as having sat the initial test or having obtained a minimum mark for it?

18a. If so, which conditions are these?

19. What does the study programme do to try to crack down on the 'no obligations' culture?

20. Which student-activating teaching methods does your study programme use?

Recommendation 6: Place particular focus on the first semester for the purposes of binding and referral

Sub-recommendations

- Make students aware of whether there is a match in the first half year
- Provide speedy feedback on students' academic work ethos ([partial] test moments in the first four or five weeks)
- Offer small-scale education to students (among other types of education)
- Offer an intensive study programme that discourages students from taking on many side jobs
- Organise self-study hours, optionally timetabling them
- Ensure a good match between contact hours and self-study
- Offer tutoring, mentoring and early study advice
- Design Reorientation Programmes

21. Is anything organised in the first year to get students to reflect on their study choice?

21a. If so, how is such reflection organised?

22. At which moments and how do first-year students receive interim feedback on their academic work ethos?

Recommendation 7: Present study programme information that is realistic, representative and content-based

Sub-recommendation

- The consideration whether the prospective student and the study programme are a good match should be leading

As the final leg of the study choice route, the UvA introduced UvA Matching for all non-selective study programmes. UvA Matching has its own evaluation track, for which reason it does not fall within the scope of the present evaluation.

Recommendation 8: Advance the final application date and consider implementing an intake procedure

Sub-recommendation

- Encourage students to enrol and register in time
- Introduce an intake procedure aimed at matching students and study programmes

The enrolment date has since been advanced to 1 May, and all non-selective study programmes now offer UvA Matching.

Recommendation 9: Offer programmes that compensate education deficiencies, thereby better accommodating heterogeneity

- Consider introducing deficiency programmes
- Consider introducing refresher programmes
- Meet each student's entry level

23. Do you experience alignment problems between university preparatory education and the Bachelor's programme?

23a. If so, how do you solve these?

24. Do you find the student population to be heterogeneous?

24a. If so, can you explain briefly what kind of heterogeneity you experience and how the study programme works on this?

25. Has the study programme organised anything for weaker students, students with deficiencies or students with disabilities?

Recommendation 10: Expand the content of the university introduction programme

Sub-recommendations

- In the Introduction Week, ensure a better balance between social activities and activities relating to the study programme
- During the orientation programme, spend more time on the study programme, the approach, expected study habits etc.

26. What does the orientation programme consist of? Are third parties asked to assist with this programme (study associations, faculty, alumni etc.)?

Recommendation 11: Make the most of the entire academic year

- Have 40 working weeks of 42 hours each
- Plan teaching across all study periods, with a maximum of two concurrent courses
- Programme 12 credits for the 8-week period and 6 credits for the 4-week period
- Give courses a standard size of 3, 6 or 12 credits
- Have courses start in week 1, 9 or 17 of the semester

27. How has the Bachelor's programme curriculum been programmed (this question also relates to recommendation 1, 'Give the curriculum a now-or-never quality')?

The curriculum has been programmed as 40 weeks of 42 hours each. Yes – No

Teaching has been planned across all study periods. Yes – No

Twelve ETCS have been programmed for the 8-week study period, and 6 ETCS for the 4-week study period. Yes – No

Courses start in week 1, 9 or 17 of the semester. Yes – No

Courses have a standard size of 3, 6 or 12 credits. Yes – No

A maximum of two concurrent courses have been planned. Yes – No

27a. If you have answered 'No' to one of the above-mentioned programme characteristics, could you explain your answer?

28. The UvA has opted for harmonising the study programmes according to an 8-8-4 semester structure. Do you see the 8-8-4 semester structure as a useful intervention with positive results for your study programme? Which difficulties do you encounter and do you see alternatives?

29. How do you use the 8-week study periods; what type of curriculum has been planned for these periods?

30. How do you use the 4-week study periods; what type of curriculum has been planned for these periods?

31. How well do the 8-week courses and the 4-week courses align?

Recommendation 12: Take a critical look at the binding recommendation regarding the continuation of studies (BSA)

Sub-recommendations

- Only consider the BSA as the final element of educational reform
- Continue to focus on false positives and false negatives on a yearly basis

32. How is your study programme's BSA policy assessed? Which effects do you note?

Recommendation 13: Create a framework for the referring function of the first year of the Bachelor's programme

Sub-recommendations

- Provide speedy feedback on students' academic work ethos ([partial] test moments in the first four or five weeks)
- Design Reorientation Programmes
- Allow students who want to switch study programmes to participate in components of other programmes
- Ensure students have a clear understanding of the study programme and career perspectives

33. Does the first year have a good referral function? Can you explain?

Recommendation 14: Strengthen social and academic integration in all years

Sub-recommendation

- Do not just focus on the first year: improve social and academic integration in later years as well

34. How does the study programme foster the social and academic integration of first-year students?

35. What gets organised in later academic years?

36. What role do the study association, the alumni circle, the professional field and senior students play in fostering social and academic integration?

Recommendation 15: Consider introducing more selective Master's tracks

Sub-recommendation:

- Increase awareness of the effort required during the Bachelor's programme with a view to doing more selective Master's tracks

Recommendation 16: Structure the diversity

Sub-recommendations

- Provide a different form of supervision to students with study completion delays from that offered to students who are ahead
- Design academic plans with regular checks for students with study completion delays
- Stimulate and facilitate students with study completion delays to help them at least finish the study programme in four years
- Challenge students academically within the study programme through minors, Honours programmes, work placements and exchange programmes

37. How do you monitor study progress?

38. What action do you take in the event of study completion delays? How does the study programme challenge students who are capable of doing more?

Recommendation 17: Make optimal use of optional subjects

Sub-recommendations

- Give components from unfinished studies a greater weight in a newly started study programme
- Introduce a uniform level designation for courses

39. Do courses that students took in previous study programmes count in your study programme, for example as electives?

Recommendation 18: Offer greater rewards for teaching excellence and stimulate lecturer training

Sub-recommendations

- Offer better rewards for academic excellence in staff members
- Introduce the Advanced UTQ
- Plan the activities of lecturers in teaching-free periods

40. How do you encourage teaching excellence in lecturers?

41. Is the programme director asked to provide input for the annual lecturer consultation?

42. The UvA offers programmes for lecturers such as UTQ, Advanced UTQ and Leadership in Education. Do you think anything should be added to this range?

Recommendation 19: Ensure that the necessary management information is forthcoming

Sub-recommendations

- Identify why students drop out of the study programme and in which phase
- Identify bottlenecks through management reports

43. To what ends do you use management information? Which data is the most valuable? Which data is still missing?

Recommendation 20: Provide support for study programmes set on improving study success

44. What has been your experience of the way the 20 recommendations have been implemented? To what extent has the study programme had the autonomy to make its own decisions?

45. Did the study programme receive enough support while implementing these recommendations?

In summary:

46. Looking at the package of recommendations, what do you believe have been the positive and negative (side-)effects of their implementation?

47. What study success-related challenges does your study programme currently face?

48. What study success-related subjects would you like to learn more about?

Contribution of the Board of Studies

The Study Success Task Force believes in the importance of involving Boards of Studies in the evaluation process. The space below is reserved for remarks from the Board of Studies.

End

You have reached the end of the survey. If you have any questions or remarks about this questionnaire, please contact the Task Force at studiesucces@uva.nl.

Appendix 3: Recommendations Study Success 2009

1. Give the curriculum a ‘now or never’ quality to discourage postponement.

2. Promote cohesion and synchronisation on all fronts.

3. Integrate teaching and studying in a way that enables students to actively participate in the classroom.

4. Introduce partial compensatory tests in order to diminish the appeal of resits.

5. Crack down on the ‘no obligations’ culture.

6. Place particular focus on the first semester for the purposes of binding and referral.

7. Present study programme information that is realistic, representative and content-based.

8. Advance the final application date for study programmes and consider implementing an intake procedure.

9. Offer programmes that compensate education deficiencies, thereby better accommodating student heterogeneity.

10. Expand the content of the university introduction programme.

11. Make the most of the entire academic year and tackle the distribution of the 1,680 hours of study.

12. Take a critical look at the system for issuing a binding recommendation regarding the continuation of studies (BSA).

13. Create a framework for the referring function of the first year of the Bachelor’s programme.

14. Strengthen social and academic integration in all years.

15. Consider introducing more selective Master’s tracks so that students are encouraged to take their Bachelor’s study more seriously.

16. Structure curricular diversity in such a way that different tracks are available for different types of students.

17. Create more room for freedom of choice so that students switching programmes do not have to start again from scratch.

18. Offer greater rewards for teaching excellence and stimulate lecturer training.

19. Ensure that the necessary management information is forthcoming.

20. Provide effective, professional support for study programmes set on improving study success.

Appendix 4: Study success in 4 years for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012

University Education Indicators cohort dropout and study success rates 2010-2011 (intake cohort > 15 students)

Study programme	10/11 Number of students in year 1	10/11 Dropout rates after 1 year	10/11 Students who re-enrol	10/11 Degree certificate after 4 years
Notarial Law (Ba)	19	52.6	8	37.5
Tax Law (Ba)	32	40.6	19	42.1
Computing Science (Ba)	32	21.9	25	44.0
History (Ba)	161	27.3	117	45.3
Artificial Intelligence (Ba)	36	33.3	24	50.0
European Studies (Ba)	141	22.7	109	53.2
Philosophy (Ba)	61	29.5	43	53.5
Theatre Studies (Ba)	38	23.7	29	55.2
Musicology (Ba)	43	25.6	32	56.3
Chemistry (Ba)	25	24.0	19	57.9
Art History (Ba)	66	24.2	50	58.0
Spanish Language and Culture (Ba)	17	29.4	12	58.3
Natural and Social Sciences (Ba)	168	28.6	120	59.2
Media and Culture (Ba)	317	23.0	244	60.2
Literary Studies (Ba)	29	20.7	23	60.9
Fiscal Economics (Ba)	25	48.0	13	61.5
Political Science (Ba)	176	25.6	131	61.8
English Language and Culture (Ba)	60	33.3	40	65.0
Dutch Language and Culture (Ba)	95	33.7	63	65.1
Sociology (Ba)	71	31.0	49	65.3
Cultural Studies (Ba)	36	16.7	30	66.7
Law (Ba)	427	42.2	247	67.2
General Linguistics (Ba)	23	17.4	19	68.4
Biomedical Sciences (Ba)	233	56.2	102	68.6
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (Ba)	184	27.2	134	69.4
Mathematics (Ba)	23	56.5	10	70.0
Economics and Business (Ba)	606	42.6	348	70.4
Information Science (Ba)	18	22.2	14	71.4
Communication Science (Ba)	299	23.7	228	71.5
Physics and Astronomy (Ba)	58	31.0	40	72.5
Pedagogical Sciences (Ba)	78	19.2	63	73.0
Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (Ba)	114	22.8	88	73.9

Continued: University Education Indicators cohort dropout and study success rates 2010-2011 (intake cohort > 15 students)

Study programme	10/11 Number of students in year 1	10/11 Dropout rates after 1 year	10/11 Students who re-enrol	10/11 Degree certificate after 4 years
Psychology (Ba)	403	30.3	281	
Psychobiology (Ba)	237	36.7	150	
Econometrics and Operational Research (Ba)	71	52.1	34	
Medicine (Ba)	270	4.1	259	
Cult. Anthropol. and Development Soc. (Ba)	94	14.9	80	
Biology (Ba)	40	30.0	28	
Dentistry (Ba)	44	2.3	43	
Earth Sciences (Ba)	18	5.6	17	

University Education Indicators cohort dropout rates year 1 and study success 2011-2012 (intake cohort > 15 students)

Study programme	11/12 Number of students in year 1	11/12 Dropout rates after 2 years	11/12 Students who re-enrol	11/12 Degree certificate after 4 years
Fiscal Economics (Ba)	26	53,8	12	41,7
Artificial Intelligence (Ba)	48	18,8	39	48,7
Natural and Social Sciences (Ba)	137	23,4	105	54,3
Theatre Studies (Ba)	35	17,1	29	55,2
History (Ba)	140	19,3	113	57,5
Computing Science (Ba)	34	23,5	26	57,7
Musicology (Ba)	36	19,4	29	58,6
Philosophy (Ba)	57	35,1	37	59,5
Mathematics (Ba)	28	28,6	20	60,0
Political Science (Ba)	162	21,0	128	60,2
Physics and Astronomy (Ba)	78	24,4	59	61,0
English Language and Culture (Ba)	51	27,5	37	62,2
Art History (Ba)	51	25,5	38	65,8
Literary Studies (Ba)	25	16,0	21	66,7
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (Ba)	131	17,6	108	66,7
Biomedical Sciences (Ba)	124	50,0	62	67,7
Econometrics and Operations Research (Ba)	90	41,1	53	67,9
Economics and Business Administration (Ba)	546	42,5	314	69,1
Media and Culture (Ba)	316	30,1	221	69,2
Pedagogical Sciences (Ba)	66	15,2	56	69,6

Cult. Anthropol. and Development Soc. (Ba)	97	24,7	73	71,2
Law (Ba)	447	45,6	243	71,6

Continued: University Education Indicators cohort dropout rates year 1 and study success 2011-2012 (intake cohort > 15 students)

Study programme	11/12	11/12	11/12	11/12
	Number of students in year 1	Dropout rates after 2 years	Students who re-enrol	Degree certificate after 4 years
Cultural Studies (Ba)	38	21.1	30	73.3
Tax Law (Ba)	53	49.1	27	74.1
Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (Ba)	158	10.8	141	74.5
European Studies (Ba)	132	22.7	102	75.5
Information Science (Ba)	31	19.4	25	76.0
Archaeology and Prehistory (Ba)	15	13.3	13	76.9
Biology (Ba)	59	25.4	44	79.5
Communication Science (Ba)	303	25.1	227	79.7
Medicine (Ba)	286	3.5	276	80.1
Psychology (Ba)	401	26.9	293	80.2
Psychobiology (Ba)	239	41.0	141	82.3
Dutch Language and Culture (Ba)	75	32.0	51	82.4
Notarial Law (Ba)	26	53.8	12	83.3
Sociology (Ba)	54	18.5	44	84.1
Chemistry (Ba)	29	24.1	22	86.4
Earth Sciences (Ba)	22	13.6	19	89.5
Dentistry (Ba)	46	2.2	45	91.1
Medical Informatics (Ba)	18	38.9	11	100.0

Appendix 5: Overview per college degree certificate after 3, 4 or 5 years

College	10/11 Drop out rates after 1 year	10/11 Degree certificate after 3 years	10/11 Degree certificate after 4 years	10/11 Degree certificate after 5 years	11/12 Drop out rates after 1 year	11/12 Degree certificate after 3 years	11/12 Degree certificate after 4 years	12/13 Drop out rates after 1 year	12/13 Degree certificate after 3 years
Humanities	25.6	22	57.2	73.2	25.6	21.1	66.9	24.3	24.9
College of Humanities	25.6	22	57.2	73.2	25.6	21.1	66.9	24.3	24.9
CoH History, Arch. & Area Stud	25	18.1	49.4	67.5	20.6	19.3	66.7	16.4	20.2
CoH Art, Religion and Cult. Sc	22.9	15.9	59.3	71.7	21.1	21.3	63	26.1	26.7
CoH Media Studies	23.2	23.3	60	78.4	30.6	17.1	69.4	25.4	24.8
CoH Dutch Studies	33.7	39.7	65.1	73	32	33.3	82.4	27.3	28.6
CoH Language and Literature	27.7	26.2	61	74.5	22.6	26.8	62.6	32	36.1
CoH Philosophy	29.5	16.3	53.5	76.7	35.1	18.9	59.5	25.8	15.2
Law	42.5	34.7	64.6	81	46.4	29.1	72.3	38.8	22.1
Amsterdam College of Law	42.5	34.7	64.6	81	46.4	29.1	72.3	38.8	22.1
Medicine	6.6	54.1	80.4	88.9	5.6	47.4	80.8	3.7	58.6
Medicine	4.1	52.9	79.9	88.8	3.5	45.7	80.1	1.7	58.4
Medical Informatics	42.1	81.8	90.9	90.9	38.9	90.9	100	28	61.1
Dentistry	2.3	41.9	83.7	93	2.2	57.8	91.1	11.1	55
Science	38.2	39	68.1	78.3	32.2	39.9	68.9	26.8	39.5
College of Science	40.4	46.6	70.6	77.6	34	46.2	72.2	29	42.6
College of Interdisciplinary Studies	28.6	11.7	59.2	80.8	23.4	12.4	54.3	14.1	25
Economics and Business	43.8	25.9	70.3	81.3	42.4	28.4	67.5	41.6	28.1
College of Economics and Business	43.8	25.9	70.3	81.3	42.4	28.4	67.5	41.6	28.1
Social and Behavioural Sciences	25.7	27.6	71.8	84.7	22.2	26.7	74.6	20.3	27.3
College of Child Development and Education	19	42.6	69.1	77.9	19.2	39	69.5	14.9	35.1
College of Communication	23.7	30.7	71.5	82.9	25.1	36.1	79.7	22.4	40.4
College of Psychology	30.3	31.7	76.2	90	26.9	30	80.2	20.9	28.5
College of Social Sciences	24.6	21.6	69.7	83.4	17.9	19	69.4	19.8	20

Appendix 6: Study programme dropout rates

Study programme dropout rates in years 2 and 3 (University Education Indicators cohort) 2010-2011
Only degree programmes on which 15 or more students started (University Education Indicators cohort) are represented.

	10/11	10/11	10/11
Study programme	Number of students in year 1	Dropout rates after 2 years	Dropout rates after 3 years
Earth Sciences (Ba)	20	10.0	10.0
Cultural Studies (Ba)	32	9.4	12.5
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (Ba)	134	8.2	9.0
Natural and Social Sciences (Ba)	122	2.5	2.5
Biomedical Sciences (Ba)	106	15.1	17.0
Biology (Ba)	29	3.4	
Communication Science (Ba)	230	5.7	7.4
Cult. Anthropol. and Development Soc. (Ba)	83		4.8
Econometrics and Operational Research (Ba)	38	2.6	7.9
Economics and Business (Ba)	356	7.6	8.4
English Language and Culture (Ba)	42	2.4	4.8
European Studies (Ba)	117	13.7	15.4
Tax Law (Ba)	28	10.7	10.7
Fiscal Economics (Ba)	15	13.3	20.0
Medicine (Ba)	290	2.4	3.8
History (Ba)	128	10.9	11.7
Computing Science (Ba)	27	7.4	7.4
Art History (Ba)	54	11.1	16.7
Artificial Intelligence (Ba)	24	4.2	12.5
Liberal Arts and Sciences (Ba)	93	2.2	3.2
Literary Studies (Ba)	25	8.0	8.0
Media and Culture (Ba)	251	14.7	15.5
Musicology (Ba)	32	21.9	21.9
Physics and Astronomy (Ba)	56	7.1	10.7
Dutch Language and Culture (Ba)	67	16.4	17.9
Pedagogical Sciences (Ba)	92	10.9	10.9
Political Science (Ba)	146	15.1	18.5
Psychobiology (Ba)	155	6.5	9.0
Psychology (Ba)	289	5.5	5.5
Law (Ba)	273	5.1	4.4
Chemistry (Ba)	20	10.0	20.0
Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (Ba)	91	8.8	12.1
Sociology (Ba)	52	3.8	11.5
Spanish Language and Culture (Ba)	15	26.7	33.3

Continued: Study programme dropout rates in years 2 and 3 (University Education Indicators cohort) 2010-2011

Only study programmes on which 15 or more students started (University Education Indicators cohort) are represented.

Study programme	10/11 Number of students in year 1	10/11 Dropout rates after 2 years	10/11 Dropout rates after 3 years
General Linguistics (Ba)	21	14.3	14.3
Dentistry (Ba)	49		
Theatre Studies (Ba)	33	9.1	12.1
Philosophy (Ba)	52	9.6	7.7
Mathematics (Ba)	25	16.0	16.0

Study programme dropout rates in years 2 and 3 (University Education Indicators cohort) 2011-2012

Only study programmes on which 15 or more students started (University Education Indicators cohort) are represented.

	11/12	11/12	11/12
Study programme	Number of students in year 1	Dropout rates after 2 years	Dropout rates after 3 years
Earth Sciences (Ba)	19	5.3	5.3
Cultural Studies (Ba)	30		3.3
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (Ba)	108	12.0	14.8
Natural and Social Sciences (Ba)	107	1.9	3.7
Biomedical Sciences (Ba)	68	14.7	16.2
Biology (Ba)	46	10.9	15.2
Communication Science (Ba)	229	3.5	3.9
Cult. Anthropol. and Development Soc. (Ba)	75	4.0	5.3
Econometrics and Operational Research (Ba)	57	3.5	5.3
Economics and Business (Ba)	326	4.6	7.4
English Language and Culture (Ba)	40	15.0	20.0
European Studies (Ba)	109	6.4	9.2
Tax Law (Ba)	36	2.8	5.6
Medicine (Ba)	302	2.3	3.3
History (Ba)	124	8.1	9.7
Computing Science (Ba)	31	16.1	22.6
Information Science (Ba)	25		
Art History (Ba)	43	9.3	14.0
Artificial Intelligence (Ba)	41	12.2	17.1
Liberal Arts and Sciences (Ba)	44	4.5	4.5
Liberal Arts and Sciences (Joint degree)	44	2.3	6.8
Literary Studies (Ba)	23	21.7	21.7
Media and Culture (Ba)	226	15.0	15.9
Musicology (Ba)	29	3.4	10.3
Physics and Astronomy (Ba)	79	3.8	3.8
Dutch Language and Culture (Ba)	54	1.9	7.4
Pedagogical Sciences (Ba)	97	10.3	10.3
Political Science (Ba)	138	8.7	12.3
Psychobiology (Ba)	151	5.3	9.9
Psychology (Ba)	308	3.6	4.2
Law (Ba)	261	5.4	8.4
Chemistry (Ba)	22	4.5	9.1
Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (Ba)	144	3.5	6.3
Sociology (Ba)	47	8.5	8.5

Continued: Study programme dropout rates in years 2 and 3 (University Education Indicators cohort) 2011-2012

Only study programmes on which 15 or more students started (University Education Indicators cohort) are represented.

	11/12	11/12	11/12
Study programme	Number of students in year 1	Dropout rates after 2 years	Dropout rates after 3 years
Dentistry (Ba)	51	2.0	2.0
Theatre Studies (Ba)	30	6.7	6.7
Philosophy (Ba)	50	14.0	24.0
Mathematics (Ba)	39	5.1	5.1

Appendix 7: National comparison for 4-year study success

Psychology

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UM	87.9
UU	87.2
UL	82.3
EUR	80.9
TU	78.0
RUN	77.2
UvA	76.2
VU	75.6
RUG	70.0
UT	60.0

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	87.9
TU	83.0
UL	81.5
UvA	80.2
EUR	79.6
VU	79.2
RUN	75.3
RUG	74.2
UM	73.4
UT	69.2

Sociology

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
RUN	93.8
UU	89.2
EUR	77.8
VU	70.6
RUG	68.5
UvA	65.3
TU	57.9

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
TU	95.7
RUN	92.9
EUR	84.6
UvA	84.1
UU	79.5
VU	78.6
RUG	67.4

Computing Science

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
VU	85.0
RUG	75.0
RUN	71.4
UU	57.0
UL	44.4
UvA	44.0

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	65.1
UL	61.9
VU	61.5
RUG	59.1
UvA	57.7
RUN	50.0

Dutch Language and Culture

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	88.2
RUN	84.0
RUG	73.1
UvA	65.1
UL	60.0

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	88.9
UvA	82.4
RUN	80.6
RUG	71.0
UL	68.2

Biomedical Sciences

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	83
RUN	82
UL	82
UM	76
UvA	69
VU	53

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
RUN	88.5
UU	82.8
UL	81.3
UM	79.3
VU	71.3
UvA	67.7

History

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	80.6
VU	73.1
RUN	66.2
EUR	65.5
UL	50.5
UvA	45.3
RUG	44.2

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
VU	79.2
EUR	72.7
UU	67.6
UL	60.2
RUN	59.3
UvA	57.5
RUG	45.2

Economics

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UM	90.0
TU	76.1
RUG	72.7
UU	71.7
UvA	70.4
EUR	69.8
RUN	61.3
VU	59.0

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years3
UM	86.9
TU	79.9
UU	78.8
RUG	77.5
EUR	70.3
UvA	69.1
RUN	69.0
VU	68.7

Law

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
TU	79.0
UU	75.8
UM	73.9
EUR	73.8
UL	70.9
UvA	67.2
VU	64.0
RUN	63.2
RUG	59.7

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
EUR	82.1
UM	75.0
RUN	74.8
TU	74.6
UU	74.0
UvA	71.6
UL	67.1
RUG	64.4
VU	61.8

Pedagogical Sciences

2010-2011

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UL	88.2
UU	87.7
RUG	85.6
RUN	84.4
VU	77.1
UvA	73.0

2011-2012

Institution	Degree certificate after 4 years
UU	93.2
RUN	90.4
UL	88.0
RUG	84.8
VU	75.6
UvA	69.6