



Annual report

2021

National Committee
Code of Conduct
Higher Education

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Introduction

The 2021-2022 academic year saw a record number of enrolments of Bachelor's and Master's students at Dutch institutions of higher education. The numbers rose most at the universities, although the increase was also visible at the universities of applied sciences. The rise is due not just to greater participation among Dutch students; there was a clear increase among international students too. More than 20% of all students enrolled at Dutch universities were not from the Netherlands; international students also accounted for 29% of new Bachelor's students.¹ Partly as a result of this, international students were a notable presence in Dutch media and political life.

The Committee has noticed recently that the debate about international students and the internationalization of higher education is changing. Whereas the emphasis in the past lay on the benefit of internationalization, it is now becoming apparent that the consequences of it are being examined more critically. For example, the high inflow of international students has painfully exposed the shortage of housing in the Netherlands. At the start of their time in the country, some international students had nowhere to live, resulting in protests in a number of student cities, such as Groningen. The Committee is concerned about this development and emphasizes that international students should be properly informed about this, and other unusual situations, in the Netherlands. International students are in a vulnerable position and are often a long way from home. During the next year, the Committee will ask that attention be paid to the vulnerable position of international students on a continual basis. From the institutions of higher education and politicians, meanwhile, the calls to control the inflow of international students are becoming ever louder.

COVID-19 was again a dominant factor in the Dutch higher education sector in 2021. The opportunities for students to receive physical teaching and to enjoy their student lives to the full were limited by the government measures designed to combat the virus. The 'full student journey' that we are so keen to give students is being compromised, as one of the Committee members wrote in a newsletter. It has become clear in recent months that many students are feeling isolated and that they have had to revise their views about their time as a student. Student well-being has reached a low point. The educational institutions are showing greater care and concern for students, with various initiatives being devised aimed at supporting students as well as possible. The National Committee expects student well-being to be a key part of its work in the forthcoming year and will continue to urge special attention to the matter.

To be able to carry out its work effectively, the Committee has met regularly during the past year. It did so physically whenever possible, and online during lockdown periods. It has also carried out various investigations, dealt with complaints, and extended the guideline that provides for a temporary expansion of Article 4.2 of the Code of Conduct (the language overview) for the 2022-2023 academic year. As well as its regular work, the Committee has devoted considerable effort in the past year to the evaluation of the text and effect of the Code of Conduct. An external advisor was appointed in that context to advise on the roles and relationships of the parties involved with the Code of Conduct. Finally, the National Committee has held both formal and informal discussions and carried out activities in its role as a mediator.

In this annual report, the Committee reports in detail on the work it has carried out, on developments relating to the Code of Conduct and the register for which the Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO) is responsible. In the final chapter, the Committee presents its plans and expectations for 2022.

¹ [Universiteiten onder druk door recordaantal studenten | NOS](#)

National Committee

The Committee ensures compliance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct by institutions of higher education contained in the Code of Conduct register. Among the ways in which it does so are holding informal and formal discussions and carrying out informal and formal activities such as conducting research and dealing with complaints by students or other parties with an interest in the Code of Conduct. Through its research activities, the Committee is keen to boost the quality of education and to highlight best practices.

During the past year, the Committee has met seven times, some of the meetings took place online because of the pandemic. The Committee recently decided to continue meeting in this way in the future. A recurring topic on the Committee's agenda was the progress of the evaluation of the Code of Conduct. There has also been much discussion about the consequences of the pandemic on student well-being. Research was also an item that featured on every meeting agenda. This year, the Committee published three research projects and received two formal complaints from students. A notable aspect this year was the increase in the number of emails from students and educational institution employees. The questions asked related primarily to the obstacles encountered by students as a result of the pandemic and about accessibility to teaching. The Committee published two newsletters last year focusing on various developments and policy documents regarding internationalization in higher education.

As well as the aforementioned formal activities, the Committee has been involved with more informal discussions and activities. Examples include mediation talks between international students and their educational institutions, or contributing ideas in the search for solutions to emerging disputes. Various signals from the field received by the National Committee were also responded to. In all its activities, the National Committee seeks to safeguard - and, wherever possible, to improve - the position of international students. You can read more about the work of the Committee below.

Survey

Survey about students below the age of 18

In late 2020, the Committee sent an online survey to each of the institutions of education listed in the Code of Conduct register, containing a questionnaire about international students below the age of 18. Every year in the Dutch higher education sector, there is a number of international students who do not turn 18 until shortly after the start of the academic year. Some are only 16 or only just 17 years old at the time they embark on their study programme in the Netherlands. Indeed, there are also a few students every year who are only 15 years of age when they start their studies. They constitute a young and vulnerable group. Through its report on the survey, the Committee wishes to make a positive contribution towards student well-being by identifying the areas in which students aged below the age of 18 need supervision or help (or extra supervision or help).

In their responses to the survey, the educational institutions stated that there have been, or indeed are, few problems affecting students in this category. Many of the questions raised by the students are dealt with by additional information or slightly more supervision. Nonetheless, some of the institutions stated the importance of looking out for possible psychological, socio-emotional, or physical problems affecting these students. The educational institutions themselves have primary responsibility for developing and implementing policies in this area. One way is the provision of a safety net. The safety net is based on an early-warning system, whereby any international student can contact their student coach with questions or if they need support. Depending on their question, students are referred to the student psychologist or to the student counsellor for the help they need. International students with legal problems or complaints can also use the above points of contact. It is very important that international students themselves report any problems they have. It cannot be assumed that they will 'automatically' do so. The influence of cultural differences, loss of face, or pressures from the home country not to fail are considerable. Although this applies to all international students, it is something that affects students aged below 18 years in particular.

Educational institutions state that practical benefits would be gained from having nationwide agreements with banks and other bodies so that students would encounter fewer or no obstacles in these areas and therefore be able to start their studies without these problems hanging over them. This concerns such matters as registering in the municipal personal records database and opening a bank account. The

institutions currently offer help in these areas, by providing information, for example. With regard to finding accommodation, too, the institutions offer support services. Rental contracts are signed online, which means that students' parents can do this. If they cannot be signed online, the parent or guardian of students below the age of 18 have to be present at the signing of the rental contract.

The Committee believes that a further expansion of the duty of care of the institutions, especially towards this group of very young and vulnerable students, is to be desired, given the specific issues they face and the additional support they need. The Committee also believes the institutions can help each other by sharing best practices.

Investigation into justifiable reasons

If an international student does not meet the study progress requirements set out in Article 5.5 of the Code of Conduct, the educational institution must deregister him or her from the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). However, in the event of a justifiable reason for the student's lack of progress, the institution may excuse the student and will not have to deregister him or her from the IND. In 2018, during a seminar organized by the Committee, it appeared that the institutions sometimes encounter problems when assessing the justification for a student's lack of progress. Educational institutions sometimes have to deal with students affected by personal circumstances that can affect their study progress for several years in succession. The pandemic has also had a major impact on students and the opportunities they have to study effectively. Moreover, the circumstances and the measures taken can lead to an increase in psychological complaints that can cause students to fall behind. The purpose of this investigation is to identify existing problem areas. Another result from the investigation is that of suggestions that the relevant provision in the Code of Conduct be simplified. The proposal to amend the text in Article 5.5 is included as part of the evaluation of the Code of Conduct.

From its investigation, the Committee has established that educational institutions are generally well able to manage with the existing text. The text is entirely in keeping with the provisions that apply to the student support fund and the BSA. Opinions are divided among the institutions about the desirability in certain cases of invoking the same circumstance as a justifiable reason more frequently. It should be possible to take any exceptional situations into account that involve long-term or serious illnesses or other personal circumstances that persist for more than one year of study. The hardship clause in the current regulations allow institutions to accept a justifiable reason for a second time on request, if a refusal could be regarded as unreasonable. However, the institutions point out that simply accepting a justifiable reason is not always the right solution for an international student. It is important that students have a realistic prospect of successfully completing their studies. The institutions have proposed a number of changes to improve the feasibility of the regulations. Among the wishes expressed is a clarification in the Code of Conduct that the option of invoking a justifiable reason in the event of a student falling behind schedule in their studies does not mean that international students will automatically have their reasons accepted. The institutions also say it would be useful if there were a clearer distinction between the duties and responsibilities of the institutions themselves and the IND. The Committee has included these comments in its evaluation of the Code of Conduct text.

Once again, the discrepancy between the Higher Education and Research Act and the Aliens Act 2000 has been highlighted. International students who are deregistered from the IND by their educational institutions because of insufficient progress in their studies without any justifiable reason can re-register for the following academic year, even if the 'study' residence permit has been revoked by the IND. Educational institutions cannot deregister these students. This is an undesirable situation for the institutions and students alike. It has been suggested that a provision be added to the Higher Education and Research Act whereby the option to re-register can be blocked from the time that the deregistration at the IND has been effectuated.

Possible alternatives are the inclusion of a provision in the Higher Education and Research Act enabling re-registration, or the creation in the same Act making a conditional re-registration possible, depending on the student's progress and the assessment of whether their reason for the lack of progress is justifiable or not. In this context, one of the institutions has expressed the wish to increase to two the maximum number of times an international student can transfer part-way through their programme to another institution. As a result of its investigation, the Committee has requested the relevant ministries to consider the matter again.

Periodic investigation into the provision of information

The National Committee considers it important that prospective international students are able to gain a clear idea of the teaching and their educational institution before coming to the Netherlands to study. For this reason, the Committee carries out an investigation every year into the provision of information on the websites of six selected institutions. This year, the Committee has looked at the websites of the following institutions: Driestar University of Applied Sciences, Inholland University of Applied Sciences, Eindhoven University of Technology, VU University Amsterdam, the Global School for Entrepreneurship, and Webster University.

The Committee looked at whether the institutions gave clear information about such topics as the curriculum and the accreditation of the teaching programmes, student housing, the internal complaints procedures, and the complaints procedure for international students in the Code of Conduct. This year, it also considered the provision of information about the pandemic. Although this subject is not explicitly addressed in the Code of Conduct, the Committee feels that it is essential for international students to be informed about any unusual circumstances, such as COVID-19, to give them a reliable impression of the situation in the Netherlands. Accordingly, the Committee sees this as an integral component of its duty of care.

In its investigation, the Committee has made the following recommendations:

1. Make sure that any links to internal parts of the website or to external websites are working properly. Educational institutions are advised to check their websites regularly.
2. Organize corresponding items of key information into clusters, so that students don't have to search the entire website to find them. It has been noted that individual items of information are often displayed in several different parts of the website. The Committee recommends that information (such as details of the services offered by the educational institution in question) be organized into clusters.
3. Offer comprehensive information on every topic covered by the Code of Conduct, rather than just a select few. The investigation found that while some educational institutions do provide full details of the prescribed topics covered in the Code of Conduct, this is not the case everywhere. Step-by-step plans are an effective way of providing students with the information they need.
4. Post details of the institution's internal complaints handling procedure and Code of Conduct on the website. Not only should details of the institution's internal complaints handling procedure and Code of Conduct be available on the website, it is also recommended that such information should be easily findable.
5. Clearly indicate the educational institution's accreditation status and that of the study programme.
Students from the Netherlands and elsewhere need to know whether an educational institution or study programme is accredited. In terms of awarding degrees, a lack of accreditation can have a major impact on a student's future.
6. Be consistent in the range of study programmes offered and with regard to the system of nomenclature used. This also applies to the programmes in the Study in Holland range. Inconsistencies in nomenclature or an inaccurate representation of the programmes themselves can create a lack of clarity about the actual curriculum. This can confuse international students and make it difficult for them to find what they are seeking. A consistent approach is recommended here, to give students a clear picture of the programme they will be taking.
7. Be sure to provide comprehensive details of any exceptional circumstances
You are advised to adopt effective responses to exceptional circumstances, such as coronavirus, to ensure that students are properly prepared for life in the Netherlands.

In its report, the Committee refers to 'best practices' it has identified in the survey. The Committee calls upon the institutions to regularly check their own websites in respect of the points mentioned above.

The investigation reports can be accessed on the [Higher Education Code of Conduct website](#).

Complaints

In the past year, the Committee received two complaints from students. The first concerned the de-registration of a student because of their failure to pay their tuition fees on time. The Committee did not deal with the student's complaint as the institution's own internal complaints procedure had not been used. The Code of Conduct states that students must first exhaust all complaint options available at their educational institution before submitting a complaint to the Committee. The Committee declared the complaint inadmissible and referred the student to their institution's own procedure.

The second complaint was submitted by a student who missed the first period of his study programme due to circumstances. The student did not start on his study programme until November of the academic year in question and only discovered during the course of the year that he would not complete the programme before the end of the set period. In order to successfully complete the programme, he would have to re-enrol on the study programme and pay another batch of tuition fees. The student initially complained to the institution, but is of the opinion that it did not deal with his complaint correctly and that the facts have been assessed in a selective manner. The student also states that the institution did not give him sufficient notice of the consequences of his late arrival in the Netherlands. He claims furthermore that the institution did not inform him about the costs of re-enrolling and that he was treated inappropriately by a number of the institution's employees.

The Committee ruled that the part of complaint concerning inappropriate behaviour was inadmissible, as the Code of Conduct does not contain any provisions about inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour. The remainder of the complaint was ruled admissible and subject to further investigation. The Committee has established that the institution had notified the student about the start date of the programme on several occasions, and about the consequences of his late arrival in the Netherlands. The student had also been informed about the costs of studying for a second year. In the view of the Committee, the institution had therefore fulfilled its obligations to provide information in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The Committee also investigated the treatment of the students' complaint by the institution. Here too, it adjudged the complaint to be unfounded. The educational institution dealt with the complaint carefully and objectively.

The ruling relating to both complaints be found on [the Higher Education Code of Conduct website](#).

Evaluation of the Higher Education Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct states that its text and its impact should be evaluated once every five years. The most recent five-year period started last year. The evaluation of the text and impact of the Code of Conduct is taking place from November 2020 to March 2022. Another part of the evaluation is the performance of both the Commission and the register management, as well as its relationship with umbrella organizations and the internal relationships among these parties. The evaluation is being coordinated by a working group consisting of policy advisors from the umbrella organizations (namely, the Dutch Council for Training and Education (NRTO), the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, and the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL))² and the secretarial office of the Committee. A policy adviser from the IND and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science are co-reading the text proposals in the context of the relationship between the Code of Conduct, the Higher Education and Research Act, and the Aliens Act.

The evaluation consists of two parts. The first took place in the period up to April 2021. During this time, the umbrella organizations invited their members to provide input aimed at improving the text of the Code of Conduct wherever possible. Those institutions not represented by an umbrella organization were asked by the Committee to submit their input in writing. Combined with the recommendations by the Committee last year that were based on its surveys, this resulted in an initial alteration to the text. More complex topics were addressed in the second part of the evaluation. The second part runs until March 2022 and is currently being written up in the concluding phase. A definitive proposal for changes to the text of the Code of Conduct is expected to be ready and put to the umbrella organizations by the end of March for their approval. The Committee itself will be invited to give its approval at the same time. It should be pointed out, however, that each umbrella organization has its own internal decision-making procedures, so it may be some time before the text can be definitively adopted.

² During the year, the Dutch university umbrella organization, formerly the VSNU, changed its name to UNL.

A key theme of the second part of the evaluation is the performance of, the relationships between, and the roles of the Committee, its secretarial office, the registry administrator, and the umbrella organizations, as well as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Ministry of Justice and Security (J&V), and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). This part, too, is aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct. During the past two years, in the pressure-cooker environment of coronavirus, tensions have arisen between the umbrella organizations concerning the implementation of the Code of Conduct. They each had different ideas about approaches to the compulsory language tests, and with regard to the survey report on the preparatory year. The second part of the evaluation focuses on cooperation between the parties involved in the Code of Conduct and on how we might coordinate our efforts in future, while optimizing implementation of the Code and safeguarding our relationship with international students. Because it concerns its own performance, the Committee has invited an independent advisor - Victor Rutgers - to give recommendations. During the past six months, the advisor has held discussions with the various parties associated with the Code of Conduct. A number of meetings have been held with policy advisors from the umbrella organizations and the Committee, and representatives of student organizations. The advisor and chair of the Committee have also taken part in the official inter-ministerial code of conduct discussions³.

The recommendations are expected in January 2022. The next step is for the Committee to enter into discussions with the umbrella organizations concerning the recommendations put forward by Victor Rutgers. Joint discussions will be held to consider which recommendations to follow, and how. Some of the recommendations will be translated into the text of the Code of Conduct, others will be laid down in the form of working agreements. The aim is to submit the new version of the text of the Code of Conduct for approval in March 2022. In the meantime, the umbrella organizations will ensure that their members are consulted and informed about any proposed changes to the text of the Code of Conduct.

Higher Education Code of Conduct guidelines

In 2020, the Committee and the umbrella organizations, in conjunction with OCW, J&V, and the IND, adopted a guideline that provided for a temporary expansion of the Code of Conduct. The first guideline made it possible for prospective students to take an online language test. Many language centres were closed because of the pandemic. The second guideline provided an exemption for students who did not meet the study progress norm as a result of the pandemic. This allowed institutions to exempt larger numbers of students simultaneously in the event of their being unable to attend any lessons.

In 2021, the relevant parties decided to extend the guideline by which an English-language test was compulsory. The guideline also applies to prospective international students whose study programmes start in the 2022-2023 academic year. The reason for this is that the language centres were closed at different times - in other words, they were difficult to access because of measures imposed by local authorities.

Newsletters

The Committee has sent out two digital newsletters in the past year, in which it wrote about its work and informed readers about developments relevant to the Code of Conduct and international students. Readers were kept up to date about the progress of the evaluation of the Code of Conduct. This information can be accessed on the [website](#). A total of 290 people have now subscribed to the newsletter.

The newsletter is published twice a year. If you wish to receive the newsletter automatically, you can subscribe by sending a message to: info@internationalstudy.nl.

Other activities

As well as its aforementioned duties and activities, the National Committee holds a number of activities that are less easy to categorize, but which are an important part of the Committee's day-to-day work. The aim of the Committee is to act, on a wide range of fronts, on behalf of international students and the institutions of higher education affiliated to the Code of Conduct. Its work often involves holding discussions, bringing parties together, receiving or providing information from and to international

³Policy advisors from the following organizations are taking part: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inspectorate of Education, Inspectorate SZW, IND, J&V, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), Nuffic, OCW, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), and the Committee's secretarial office.

students (prospective and current), educational institutions or partners such as the policy advisors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Inspectorate of Education, Inspectorate SZW, IND, J&V, NVAO, Nuffic, OCW, and SZW, as well as those at the umbrella organizations - the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, UNL, and NRTO. Examples include contributing ideas towards solutions to disputes between international students and their institutions, perhaps, or conducting discussions with partners about certain policy or other developments, or situations in the field of education. The Committee also regularly receives specific signals from parties associated with the Code of Conduct alleging breaches of its provisions. Such signals are often incidents that can give rise to further investigation. In these cases, attempts are made to find solutions through dialogue, looking at the causes of the incident in question and the lessons that can be drawn from it. Mediation by the Committee between an educational institution and an international student is a less weighty method than that of a formal complaints procedure, for example. It forms an intermediate layer in the ladder of escalation and can prevent the need to use formal procedures as a means of resolving disputes.

Composition

The Committee consists of five members and an independent chairperson. The members are appointed by the umbrella organizations. The chair is appointed by the members. The Code of Conduct regulations stipulate that a maximum of two four-year terms may be served.



This year, the Committee saw the departure of its chair, Joris van Bergen. Van Bergen is very closely involved with the well-being of international students and has a great deal of knowledge and experience of the field of internationalization in higher education. For six years, van Bergen has devoted much energy to the Code of Conduct and made a significant contribution towards strengthening the Committee's networks and its relationships with institutions of higher education. The Committee is very grateful to van Bergen for his many years of dedication to the Code of Conduct. His successor, Paul Rullmann, was appointed unanimously by the members as

chair of the Committee. Rullmann was previously a member on behalf of the UNL and was also the deputy chair. Rullmann is therefore very familiar with the Code of Conduct and embarked on his new role as independent chair last year with great enthusiasm. The Code of Conduct website has [published an interview](#) with a van Bergen and Rullmann. The UNL has appointed Ed Brinksma as Paul Rullmann's successor. Susana Menéndez has been appointed as deputy chair by the Committee. See the overview of the full membership of the Committee below.

The Committee is supported by a secretarial office that is the responsibility of DUO. There have also been changes of personnel in the secretarial office. On 1 April 2021, Eva-Maria Wijers started as a researcher, succeeding Arno Overmars. Overmars had worked for the Committee since 2006 and had helped create the text of the Code of Conduct and set up and structure the investigative role of the Committee. Jolanda van den Bosch has worked as a secretary for the Committee since 2015.

Composition of the National Committee as of 31 December 2021

POSITION	NAME	UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION
Chair	Paul Rullmann	- ⁴
chair	Joris van Bergen	- ⁵
member/acting chair	Paul Rullmann	UNL ⁶
member	Frans Snijders	UNL
member	Ed Brinksma	UNL ⁷
member/acting chair	Susana Menéndez	Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
member	Rob Verhofstad	Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
member	Karen Penninga	NRTO
deputy member	Tom van Veen	UNL
deputy member	Guido van Leerzem	UNL
deputy member	Janco Bonnink	Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
deputy member	Erik van den Berg	Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
deputy member	Jan van der Heijden	NRTO

Finances

For work done in the context of the Code of Conduct, the chairperson, members and deputy members receive attendance fees at the end of each quarter. To this end, and in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, attendance fee regulations have been drawn up which can be found on the Code of Conduct website. The amount paid out per quarter is shown in the table below.

The Committee has met seven times in the past year. The deputy members were also invited to the online meeting in June 2021, as well as to the event organized to mark the departure of Joris van Bergen in September 2021. Various discussions were organized as part of the evaluation of the Code of Conduct in which a delegation from the Committee took part. This year, the Committee again had to postpone some of its external discussions because of the pandemic. The series of introductions of the new chairperson were particularly affected. Other meetings were held online, or physically, whenever possible.

The discussions the Committee held as part of the evaluation, as well as the resumption of some of the external meetings, explain the difference in the level of the attendance fees in comparison with the previous year. Most meetings in 2020 were online, which cut travel expenses and the cost of renting a room.

Attendance fees, including travel expenses, for 2021 compared to 2020

Period	2021	2020
1st quarter	€3,737.13	€4,266.56
2nd quarter	€6,461.99	€4,918.72
3rd quarter	€3,369.32	€2,077.66
4th quarter	€6,258.11	€4,011.92
Total	€19,826.55	€15,274.86

⁴ Appointed chair from 1 June 2021.

⁵ Departure as chair from 1 June 2021.

⁶ Resigned as member from 1 June 2021.

⁷ Appointed as a member from 1 June 2021.

Register for the Code of Conduct

To show which institutions have signed the Code of Conduct for Higher Education, a register is maintained that is published on the Code of Conduct website. See www.internationalstudy.nl. Requests for inclusion in the register are dealt with by DUO as the administrator of the register. In addition, DUO implements changes to the register on behalf of the Committee. This can involve deletions from the register or the addition of a red flag alongside an institution to indicate a sanction.

During the past year, DUO has added one educational institution to the register: Capabel Hogeschool.

Outlook for 2022

Conclusion of evaluation of the Code of Conduct - student advisory board

In 2022, the Committee will implement the recommendations by Victor Rutgers concerning his evaluation of the performance by, the roles of, and the relationships between the parties associated with the Code of Conduct. The evaluation is expected to lead to the Committee acting in a number of areas in the next twelve months, and may result in alterations to the Code of Conduct text.

Here are just a few highlights. The Committee has expressed its wish that international students should be more actively, and in a more structured way, involved with its activities in relation to the Code of Conduct. After all, the work of the Committee concerns the position of international students. In mid-October 2021, in cooperation with the Committee's secretarial office, Rutgers held a meeting to which international students from the student councils of various educational institutions were invited, as well as representatives of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the Dutch National Student Association (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg or ISO), and the Dutch Student Union (LSVb). Among the options discussed was the setting up of a student advisory board that could give advice, whether solicited or not, to the Committee. Rutgers will further develop this suggestion in his recommendation. The Committee believes that an advisory council could provide it with constructive advice, in the area of research for example, in which the perspective of international students is often crucial. Other - complex - themes can be submitted for discussion, and it is useful for the Committee to be aware of the issues that are exercising international students.



Investigation into collaboration with agents

The Committee will continue to actively fulfil its investigative duties in 2022. One topic that will certainly be addressed is that of collaboration with agents. The Code of Conduct states that educational institutions are responsible for the recruitment and selection of international students, even if part of the process is outsourced to agents. The institutions should also ensure that the agents are in compliance with the Code of Conduct. A big responsibility - how do you fulfil it? As long ago as the seminar organized by the Committee in 2018, it emerged that the institutions were unclear as to what form their working relationships with agents should take. In the past, there have been a number of incidents in which institutions were overwhelmed by applications from students from a particular country. It is likely that agents had a major hand in this. The Committee intends to further prioritize this topic in the forthcoming year. Together with the institutions, the Committee would like to investigate what is needed and how best the institutions can be helped. The Committee believes that identifying best practices and learning from each other can be useful. It hopes to be able to give the institutions more information in its next newsletter about the structure of its investigation and how it proposes to involve the employees at the institutions.

Publishing details

National Committee for the Code of Conduct for Higher Education

Secretarial office contact information:

Email: info@internationalstudy.nl

The annual report can be downloaded from www.internationalstudy.nl