



Protestantse Theologische **Universiteit**

# **Students' Charter 2021-2022**

(Ratified by the CvB on 8 July 2021)

## **Introduction**

This is the Students' Charter as referred to in Article 7.59 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (*Wet op het Hoger onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk onderzoek, WHW*). This Students' Charter informs students of the Protestant Theological University about their rights and obligations and about the rights and obligations of the university.

## **Organization and content**

This Charter consists of two sections: a PThU section and a degree programme section. This section is the PThU section, which is identical for all students of the university. The PThU section contains a description of the rights and obligations of students pursuant to the laws and rules that apply to them. This PThU section also contains an overview of the regulations aimed at protecting the rights of students. The degree programme section can be found in the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the programme in question and applies to the students enrolled in the programme.

## **Scope**

The Students' Charter applies only to students of the PThU.

## **Validity**

Students, teachers and support staff are assumed to know the content of the Charter.

If the Students' Charter conflicts with or contradicts statutory regulations, the statutory regulations take precedence over the Students' Charter.

## **Ratification and availability**

The PThU section of the Student's Charter and the Teaching and Examination Regulations are ratified or changed by the Executive Board of the University every year, after the Examinations Committee has advised on the degree programme section and the Programme Committee and the University Council have advised on the degree programme section and agreed with this section. The Students' Charter and the Teaching and Examinations Regulations are published on the university website before 1 September

## **Date of commencement**

This Charter comes into force on 1 September 2021

# 1. General provisions

## 1.1 Terms

In this Charter the following terms mean:

**Law:** the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (Stb. 1992, 593 and changes thereafter);

**Students' Charter:** the charter as referred to in article 7.59 of the Act, consisting of a. the PThU section with rights and obligations of students and b. the programme section as described per programme in the Teaching and Examination Regulations;

**University:** the Protestant Theological University;

**Degree programme:** a degree programme of the PThU included in the CROHO;

**Academic year:** period from 1 September through 31 August in the following calendar year;

**Student:** enrollee in the PThU as full-time or part-time student, who on the basis of the enrolment has the rights referred to in Article 7.34 paragraph 1 of the Act;

**External student:** enrollee in the PThU who on the basis of the enrolment has the right exclusively to take examinations of the education units forming part of the programme in which the external student is enrolled, as well as take the examinations of this programme, and right of access to the organizations and collections forming part of the PThU, in accordance with the provision in Article 7.36 of the Act and insofar as the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the programme for which the external student is enrolled do not impose further restrictions;

**Executive Board:** the Executive Board of the PThU;

**University Council:** the University Council of the PThU;

**CROHO:** The Central Register of Degree Programmes in Higher Education in which all accredited degree programmes of funded institutions of higher education are registered.

## 1.2 Abbreviations

In this Charter the following abbreviations mean:

**Art.:** Article

**CvB:** Executive Board

**CROHO:** The Central Register of Higher Education Programmes

**DUO:** Education Executive Agency **ECTS:** European Credit Transfer System **OC:** Programme Committee

**OER:** Teaching and Examination Regulations **PKN:** Protestant Church in the Netherlands **PThU:** Protestant Theological University

**UR:** University Council

**WHW:** Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (Stb. 1992, 593 and changes thereafter)

### 1.3 She/he

References in this Charter to he/him can also be read as she/her.

### 1.4 Overview of the university regulations forming the basis of this Charter

The content of the PThU-specific section of the Students' Charter is based on a series of rules and regulations. Insofar as a student wishes to claim the rights due to him vis-à-vis the university, the formal basis for deciding whether this claim is correct by law is determined on the basis of the text of the regulation applying to the situation in question. Insofar as the university wishes to keep a student to the fulfilment of obligations flowing from the enrolment as a student, contract student or external student, the university bases its claim on the text of the regulation applying to the situation in question.

The university regulations can be consulted via the website and the PThU intranet and studentnet. The following regulations are at least applicable for determining the rights and obligations obtaining between the university and the student, contract student or external student.

#### Enrolments

- Application, Admission, Enrolment, Deregistration and Tuition Fees Regulations

#### Admission

- Admissions Board Regulations

#### Finances

- Regulations for Student Financial Support from the Profiling Fund
- Regulations for the Reimbursement of Student Members of Administrative Bodies and Committees

### **Participation in decision-making**

- Management and Administration Regulations
- UR Elections Regulations
- UR Regulations
- OC Elections Regulations
- OC Regulations

### **Protection of rights**

- Examination Appeals Board Code of Order
- Regulations for Lodging Complaints with the Executive Board
- Regulations for Lodging Objections with the Executive Board
- Regulations for Complaints about Undesirable Behaviour

### **Other regulations**

- Code of Conduct for Relationships at work
- Code of Conduct for Teachers and Students within ICT and Teaching
- Fraud Regulations
- Unsuitability Regulations
- Code of Conduct for Language of Instruction
- PThU Regulations for Protection of Personal Data
- Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Reporting Code
- Whistleblower Scheme

## 2. Admission, enrolment and tuition fees

### 2.1 Admission

For access to the degree programmes and university facilities, students are required to enrol in the university every year.

A student can be enrolled for a full-time programme or for a part-time programme. It is also possible to enrol as an external student and – for individual courses – as a contract student or a subsidiary student.

To be able to enrol in one of the PThU degree programmes, students must have a declaration of unconditional admissibility. The Teaching and Examinations Committee of the programme in which a student wishes to enrol states the admission requirements for that particular programme. If the student wishes to enrol in a Master's programme and does not meet the admission requirements, the student can follow a pre-Master's programme. After this programme has been successfully completed, he can apply for a decision of unconditional admissibility with the Admissions Board. Once this decision has been issued, he can enrol and gain admission to the programme.

### 2.2 Enrolment

Every year, students enrol in the university for one year in accordance with the appropriate procedures. The procedure for enrolling in the Theology **Bachelor** programme (joint degree), which the PThU offers together with the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, is provided for in the Application and Enrolment Regulations 2020-2021, which are laid down by the Vrije Universiteit. The procedure for enrolling in one of the **Master's** programmes offered by the PThU is provided for in the Regulations for Application, Admission, Enrolment, Deregistration and Tuition Fees. It is only possible to enrol in the Bachelor's or Master's programme if the student has met the admission requirements *and* after the student has paid the tuition fees or has authorized payment of the tuition fees in full or in instalments.

#### **Period of enrolment**

The enrolment year starts on 1 September and ends on 31 Augustus the following year. Enrolment at the PThU is subject to the relevant legal provisions. Enrolment in higher education is for one year only and therefore needs to be renewed each year.

Only enrolled students receive proof of enrolment from the Central Student Administration and are entitled to use the services of the university.

### **Cancellation of enrolment**

An enrolment cannot be cancelled after commencement of the academic year.

### **Enrolment on the basis of admission**

Enrolment in a programme is only possible if the enrollee has right of admission in the case of a Bachelor's degree or has received a decision of admission for the programme in which he wishes to enrol in the case of a Master's degree. On request a decision of admission can be supplied to the applicant on behalf of the Admissions Board in accordance with the PThU Admissions Board Regulations .

### **Enrolment via Studielink**

To be enrolled from the beginning of the year, it is necessary, before the beginning of that year, to submit a formal request for enrolment via Studielink and to pay the tuition or examination fees due in full or in 6 instalments by sending a transfer or filling in a digital authorization in Studielink.

### **Re-enrolment into programme**

If students are already enrolled in a PThU programme, they are automatically requested via Studielink to arrange re-enrolment for the next year. However, students who have interrupted their studies in the course of the year need to submit – after having received a decision of admission – a new request for enrolment via Studielink.

### **Stopping or interrupting the programme**

A student who wishes to stop or interrupt his studies at the end of an academic year can do this by not re-enrolling via Studielink.

### **No enrolment after 1 September**

After 1 September – barring highly exceptional circumstances and unless the hardship clause is declared valid – students cannot be enrolled in the course of the year for the remaining part of the year.

The need to regulate application and enrolment on time means that students are subject to final dates before which application and enrolment must be arranged via Studielink.

### **Enrolment in Bachelor's programme**

Pursuant to WHW Article 7.31a, students who wish to enrol for the first time in the Bachelor's programme which the PThU offers jointly with the Vrije Universiteit must apply

not later than 1 May<sup>1</sup> via Studielink. Application before this date entitles a student to take part in the matching activities organized by the PTHU in collaboration with the VU. The aim of these activities is to enable students to determine whether their initial choice of the Bachelor's programme will lead to a request for enrolment. A student who applies for the Bachelor's programme after 1 May is not entitled to take part in the matching activities organized by the university. However, by law the Executive Board can oblige this student to take part in a matching activity nevertheless. In all cases the application and enrolment procedure must have been completed before 1 September in order for the enrolment to be valid.

### **Enrolment in Master's programme**

In principle, students who wish to enrol for the first time in a Master's programme are required to have made a request for admission with the Admissions Board before 1 May. Once the Board has decided to supply a decision of unconditional admission, the student may submit a request for enrolment. The enrolment procedure must have been completed not later than 31 August for the enrolment to be valid as of 1 September. If the Admissions Board lays down conditions for a later decision of admissibility, the student is responsible for ensuring that he meets the condition for admission and enrolment not later than 31 August.

Students who wish to re-enrol do not need to make a new request for admission or enrolment. This category of student receives a request for re-enrolment via Studielink.

### **Enrolment in pre-Master's programme**

Students who wish to enrol in a pre-Master's programme and do not take the option of enrolling in this programme during the Bachelor's programme need to use a designated enrolment form on the web.

### **Enrolment for students with a non-Dutch, non-Surinam or non-EEA nationality**

Besides having met the admission requirements for the programme and the obligation to pay the tuition fees, students with a non-Dutch, non-Surinam or non-EEA (European Economic Area) nationality need to have met the obligation to show that they possess a permit for lawful residence in the Netherlands.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the government's corona measures for the academic year 2020-2021, 1 June 2020.



### 2.3 Rights based on enrolment as a student

After enrolling in one of the university's degree programmes, students have the following rights:

- a. to take part in the university's initial course programme, that is, courses within their degree programme and courses offered to the PThU outside of this degree programme, unless they do not meet entry requirements for parts of the programme or the CvB has imposed restrictions for organizational reasons or reasons of capacity;
- b. to take (interim) examinations of the units of study forming part of the degree programme in which the student has enrolled. A more detailed description of these rights can be found in the OER of the programme in question. If the student wishes to sit examinations of a programme in which the student is not enrolled, prior permission must be obtained from the ECTS. Prior consultation with the Student Counsellor is urgently advised in this case;
- c. access to and use of the buildings, premises, collections, educational facilities and student services of the university itself or of the educational institutes with which it is affiliated, unless the CvB judges that this goes against the nature or interest of the study programme or research. Improper use (for instance the causing of damage) may lead to denial of access to the facility or service;
- d. student counselling, in particular for students with a disability or chronic illness;
- e. appropriate teaching or examination for students with a disability or chronic illness;
- f. availability of adequate information about the programme they are following, to be found in sources like the Course Catalogue and Teaching Catalogue;
- g. to vote and be eligible for elections within the scope of participation in decision- making;
- h. if the Executive Board terminates a programme, the right to finish the programme within a reasonable period;
- i. protection of personal data by the university.

If students use the rights mentioned above, they must carry or be able to submit proof of their enrolment.

### 2.4 Obligations based on enrolment as a student

After enrolling, students have the following obligations:

- a. to participate actively in the study programme (including obligations of due effort and compulsory attendance);
- b. appropriate behaviour in the buildings and premises of the university or affiliated educational institutes;
- c. to follow the rules laid down by or on behalf of the CvB to promote safe and healthy working conditions;
- d. to be able to show on request a PThU student pass to a PThU staff member when

making use of educational facilities provided in the buildings of the university or affiliated educational institutes;

- e. to pass on academic results achieved elsewhere to the Office for Student Affairs if these have been achieved for courses forming part the curriculum;
- f. full-time availability for academic obligations in the case of enrolment as a full-time student;
- g. to enrol on time in courses and examinations;
- h. to take note of the Students' Charter and to meet the resulting obligations for students;
- i. to take note of the information that students receive at their university email address and via university information sources;
- j. to report on time any special circumstances as soon as they occur, in connection with a possible study completion delay, to the Student Counsellor.

## **2.5 Rights based on enrolment as an external student**

After enrolling, an external student has the following rights:

- a. to take (interim) examinations within the study programme;
- b. access to and use of the buildings, premises, collections, educational facilities and student services of the university itself or of the educational institutes with which it is affiliated, unless the CvB judges that this goes against the nature or interest of the study programme or research. Improper use (for instance the causing of damage) may lead to denial of access to the facility or service.

## **2.6 Obligations based on enrolment as an external student**

After enrolling, an external student has the following obligations:

- a. to take note of the Students' Charter and to meet the resulting obligations for external students;
- b. to take note of the information that external students receive at their university email address and via university information sources;
- c. appropriate behaviour in the buildings and premises of the university or affiliated educational institutes;

- d. to follow the rules laid down by or on behalf of the CvB to promote safe and healthy working conditions;
- e. to enrol on time in examinations.

## **2.7 Termination of enrolment**

Pursuant to the law, the enrolment for an academic year ends on 31 August. It is possible to request interim deregistration. Such a request is submitted via Studielink. The deregistration takes effect on the first of the month following the month in which the request for deregistration is made.

### **Termination of enrolment at a student's request**

If enrolment has been prematurely terminated at a student's request, a twelfth part of the tuition fees is repaid for every month that remains of that academic year, unless the student is still enrolled in one or more study programmes, or has been exempted from the obligation of paying tuition fees.

If a student deregisters as of 1 July, he is not entitled to repayment of twice a twelfth part of the tuition fees paid concerning the months of July and August.

If a student deregisters after graduating, he is entitled to restitution with retroactive effect as of the first of the month after the date of graduation.

### **Termination of enrolment by the Executive Board**

In a number of special cases the Executive Board may proceed to deregister a student. The cases are the following:

- a. if the tuition fees owed cannot be collected. The enrolment is terminated with retroactive force as of 1 September if no payment of tuition fees has been received at all. In other cases the enrolment is terminated as of the second month following the date of final notice.
- b. on the advice of the Examination Board or the Rector, after careful appraisal of the interests of the student and of the PThU, if the student has shown by his behaviour or statements that he is unsuited to exercise one or more professions for which he was trained by the study programme or by the preparation for the practice of this profession.
- c. on the advice of the Examination Board if the student concerned has committed serious fraud.
- d. at the request of the Rector if the student has seriously misbehaved towards staff members or students of the PThU.

e. if the student has acted or threatens to act in grave contravention of the rules of conduct as laid down by the PThU administration.

If deregistration has taken place because the case named under a was declared applicable, a student can be re-enrolled from the beginning of the next academic year if he has paid all outstanding debts to the university and a possible compensation prior to the beginning of the next academic year.

If deregistration has taken place because one or more cases named under b through e was declared applicable, the Executive Board may decide that re-enrolment at the PThU is not possible.

## **2.8 Tuition fees and examination fees**

Enrolment as a student entails the obligation of paying the tuition fees owing. By law there are two kinds of tuition fees: statutory tuition fees and institutional tuition fees. Enrolment as an external student involves the obligation to pay the examination fees owing.

Part-time students can enrol in the Master's programme Gemeentepredikant en Theology (Church Pastor and Theology programme) of the university if they pay a part-time rate of either the statutory or the institutional tuition fees.

The rates charged by the university are listed in the Decision on Tuition and Examination Fees enacted by the Executive Board. The rates of the statutory tuition fees are determined each year by the Ministry of OCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science).

### **Statutory tuition fees**

A student who enrolls in the Bachelor's programme and has not already obtained a Bachelor's degree in higher education since 1 September 1991 and has Dutch, Surinamese or EEA nationality and a student who enrolls in the Master's programme and has not already obtained a Master's degree since 1 September 1991 and has Dutch, Surinamese or EEA nationality is obliged to pay the statutory tuition fees.

### **Institutional tuition fees**

Anyone who wishes to enrol as a student and does not meet the conditions for paying the statutory tuition fees is obliged to pay the institutional tuition fees.

### **Examination fees**

Anyone who wishes to enrol for the sole purpose of taking examinations, without attending lectures or being otherwise supervised by a teacher, pays examination fees.

**Rate for contract students**

Finally, a contract student may follow individual courses based on a rate per ECTS obtained. € 100 is charged for each unit of credit.

A course can only be taken in its entirety. Students who take part in the regular test subsequent to the course in question will be given a certificate after completing the course and passing the test. Alumni of the PThU and of institutions now forming part of the PThU are given the opportunity once a year to follow a course as a contract student for € 50 per unit of credit.

**Payment of tuition or examination fees**

In general, payment is due prior to the year of enrolment. Apart from exceptional cases, payment takes place by authorization. If the student pays the tuition fees in instalments, administration costs of € 12 are charged. The administration costs are collected simultaneously with the first instalment.

Authorization forms need to be in the possession of the Central Student Administration (CSA) of the university on 1 September at the latest. The authorization cannot be revoked.

**Exemption from or reduction of tuition fees**

A student who wants to enrol in a second study (or parts thereof) at another institution of scientific education (WO) or higher professional education (HBO) can obtain a Proof of Paid Tuition Fees (BBC) from the Office of Student Affairs. On the basis of this declaration the other institution will proceed to reduce (in the case of higher tuition fees) or exempt (in the case of equal or lower tuition fees) from the statutory tuition fees to be paid at that institution.

Students from other institutions of higher education in the Netherlands can follow a programme at the PThU by means of a second enrolment, provided that the student is admissible to the PThU programme. The second enrolment leads to reduction of or exemption from tuition fees, if the student applying for a second enrolment at the PThU meets the requirements for payment of the statutory tuition fees.

A request to take part in individual programme elements as a guest student or contract student can be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

The institutional rate does not apply to students who follow a second – different – Bachelor's programme during their first Bachelor's programme and to students who follow a second – different – Master's programme during their first Master's programme. A student who is simultaneously enrolled in two different Bachelor's or Master's programmes and completes one may finish the parallel Bachelor's or Master's programme on payment of the statutory tuition fees, provided that he completes the programme without interruption.

**Back-payment in cases where non-compliance with conditions of statutory tuition fees has been established**

If after the date of enrolment, but no later than 1 March, data from CROHO show that an enrollee obliged to pay statutory tuition fees has taken a degree in the period prior to the date of enrolment, leading with retroactive force to the obligation to pay institutional tuition fees as of the date of enrolment, the enrollee is obliged to pay institutional tuition fees as of the remaining months of the academic year in question, counting from the month that CROHO data show an obligation to pay institutional tuition fees.

The difference between the institutional rate in proportion to the number of months that the person concerned was enrolled and the statutory tuition fees paid in proportion to the number of months that the person concerned was enrolled is charged to the enrollee.

**Restitution in cases where subsequent compliance with conditions of statutory tuition fees has been established**

If an enrollee who on the date of enrolment did not meet the legal criteria for imposing the obligation to pay statutory tuition fees, and on this basis is obliged to pay institutional tuition fees, at some point during the academic year meets the legally established criteria for the obligation to pay statutory tuition fees, the enrollee can request the Executive Board to convert, starting from the first month following this point, the obligation to pay institutional tuition fees into an obligation to pay statutory tuition fees in proportion to the remaining months of the academic year.

If institutional tuition fees have already been paid as of the date on which the obligation to pay statutory tuition fees has come into force, these are restituted to the enrollee insofar as they exceed the statutory tuition fees.

**Compensation**

If it is found that a student has not been enrolled and has nevertheless taken courses or examinations, the student must subsequently pay the tuition fees (or examination fees) over the period in question. Moreover, the student must pay compensation as determined by the EB: € 100,- per ECTS.

### 3. Financial support of students

Situations may occur in which a student cannot complete his studies on time, or in which there are other reasons for providing financial support. In these cases students can apply for support from the Profiling Fund.

Eligibility for financial support is subject to the following conditions:

I. There are *special circumstances* in the sense of article 7.51 of the WHW. That is to say that a student has fallen behind in his studies as a result of:

- membership of the Executive Committee of a sizeable student organization possessing full legal rights, a Programme Committee, or the University Council;
- administrative or social activities which the executive committee of the institution deem to be partly in the interest of the institution or of the courses which the student is taking;
- illness;
- pregnancy or childbirth;
- a disability (a serious form of dyslexia, functional disability) or chronic illness;
- special family circumstances;
- an unfeasible degree programme;
- other special circumstances affecting a student, to be determined by the Executive Committee of the institution;
- circumstances – other than those mentioned above – which, if a request for financial support were not to be granted by the Executive Board, would lead to significant unfairness.

II. The special circumstances occur during the enrolment in a degree programme for which the student is or has been entitled to a performance-related grant (if the student started his studies before 1 September 2015) or for which the student falls under the Student Loan Act (if the student started his studies before 1 September 2015).

III. When the special circumstances occur, the student is enrolled in the programme.

IV. The student has paid statutory tuition fees for enrolment in the programme and the student has not been exempted from paying tuition fees on the basis of a Proof of Paid Tuition Fees (BBC) given out by another institution of higher education.

V. The special circumstances have been reported on time by the student to the Student Counsellor.

The Executive Board determines how much financial support will be given, when it will be paid out, and how long it will last. The legislator gives the institutional management

latitude to tailor the support to the situation. No fixed amounts are prescribed. The law therefore does not lay down a uniform standard, but the general guideline is the sum of the performance-related grant, calculated on a full-time basis. This is further specified in the Profiling Fund Regulations.

In general the duration and the time of payment will also differ per student. For administrative activities it seems natural to link the time of payment to the actual activities. In the case of non-feasible programmes, however, it is hard to determine in advance what the actual study delay will actually be. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to determining the duration of support. In extending Master's programmes, on the other hand, duration can be clearly determined; it has in fact been statutorily set at the duration of the extension.

A student cannot claim financial support twice for the same circumstance. Naturally a student can request support from the fund more than once if different special circumstances apply. For instance, a student may have fallen behind because he carried out administrative activities and because he subsequently suffered a long illness. *Mutatis mutandis* this also applies if the duration of the claims differs.

## **Administrative grants and subsidies by student organizations**

### **Administrative grants**

Student members of the University Council, the Programme Committees (the university administrative and consultative participation bodies), the Examination Appeals Board, the Complaints Advice Committee and the Arbitration Committee can receive a financial remuneration: an administrative grant.

1. Students who are committee members of a study association or student association, which is included in Part C of the regulations for financial support of student members of consultative/administrative bodies, committee members of student organizations and top athletes of Groningen University 2020-2021, may be awarded an administrative grant from the university's Graduation Fund by the Executive Committee.
2. Students who are committee members of a study association or student association, to whom the Vrije Universiteit in accordance with its regulations for the financial support of students under Article 7.51 WHW can award an administrative grant, may be awarded an administrative grant from the university's Profiling Fund by the Executive Committee.

The amount of the remuneration depends on the average time invested per week and is determined by the CvB.



**Subsidies by student organizations**

To stimulate and support activities by students (organizations, debating societies), the CvB can grant subsidies for activities. Student organizations can submit subsidy applications (with a budget) to the CvB.

**Study grant funds**

In many cases students can request support from private study grant funds. These mostly involve one-off grants of limited scope. The private grant funds are listed on the university website.

## 4. Teaching

### Organization of the PThU degree programmes

The PThU offers the following degree programmes:

- the Bachelor's programme Theology (joint degree) in collaboration with the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- the Master's programme Gemeentepredikant (Church Pastor) in Amsterdam
- the Master's programme Predikantschap (Ministry) in Groningen
- the Master's programme Theology in Groningen

The organization of the programmes and their examination programmes are described in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) applying to the degree programme in question.

### Workload of the degree programmes

The workload of the programmes is expressed in credits of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The workload of one academic year is 60 EC. One EC stands for 28 study load hours. The Bachelor's programme comprises 180 EC. The Master's programme Gemeentepredikant and the Master's programme Predikantschap are 180 ECTS each. The Master's programme Theology comprises 60 ECTS.

The OER lists the workload for the entire programme and for the individual units of study.

### Quality of the degree programmes

The quality of the PThU degree programmes is warranted as follows.

Primarily the PThU degree programmes are subject to external quality care as organized and executed pursuant to chapter 5 of the WHW. To assess the quality of its programmes, the PThU submits its programmes once every six years to an external assessment committee. On the basis of the assessment reported by this committee – resting on the accreditation framework established by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) – the NVAO decides on reaccreditation of the programme by six years. The date of accreditation is stated on the testimony handed out to the graduate on behalf of the Examinations Board.

Besides an external system of quality care, the PThU has established an internal system of quality care. This system covers guidelines on contact hours, academic counselling, quality of testing and assessment. Teacher professionalization forms part of the education quality policy.

Students of the PThU are also involved in quality care. For this purpose the PThU organizes teaching evaluations which students are asked to fill in. The Programme Committee receives the results of the evaluations in the period after the teaching has taken place. The Programme Committee, on which students sit, feeds back the discussion of the evaluation results to the teachers in question and submits the advice based on this to the Board.

### **Appropriate teaching**

Students with dyslexia, a functional disability or a (chronic) illness are entitled to appropriate teaching. Students may claim this right insofar as the exit qualifications remain achievable.

The way in which examinations are taken can be adapted to the student's disabilities. Adaptations must be *suitable* and *necessary*. In this context, 'suitable' means that the obstruction is removed as far as possible. 'Necessary' means that the purpose of the adaptation, i.e. removal of the obstruction, cannot be achieved in any other way. A further condition is that the appropriate adaptation should not carry a disproportionate burden for the PThU.

For questions or advice on appropriate teaching in programmes or examination facilities, students can consult the Student Counsellor.

If a student suffers or threatens to suffer study completion delay as a result of serious dyslexia, functional disability or (chronic) illness or as a result of another special circumstance as referred to in article 7.51 of the WHW, he must get in touch with the Student Counsellor punctually or in any case within three months after the special circumstances have taken effect. This is important in connection with the ability to meet the conditions for a claim to financial support from the Profiling Fund.

**NB:** If a student has registered for an examination using a facility to which he is entitled according to a declaration on behalf of the Board and he fails to show without notice, the PThU can charge the expenses incurred to the student, unless there were valid reasons for not taking part in the examination and not being able to use the facility supplied without prior notice.

## **Costs of teaching**

Only tuition or examination fees are owed for enrolment in a programme. Costs for the PThU following from legal obligations with regard to the provision of education are not to be passed on to the student.

To be paid by the student are costs for educational necessities for his own use such as books, compulsory excursions / exposure visits, work placement activities and materials. The CvB ensures that the costs bear a reasonable proportion to the budget available to the student.

## **Academic student counselling**

The Board bears responsibility for providing academic student counselling during the various study phases, such as Bachelor's and Master's programmes, work placement, graduation and international exchange. For the purpose of specific academic counselling, students can request support from the Student Counsellor. Students can also enlist the services of a student psychologist and academic career advisor of the universities with which the PThU is affiliated.

For questions and problems regarding academic content, students can apply first of all to the Student Counsellor. The Student Counsellor has the task of providing information, advice and counselling on the student's individual situation, for instance with respect to academic planning and advisement.

## **Monitoring students' progress**

Throughout the year students can use the VU-net ID to monitor their own academic progress. It is advisable for students regularly to monitor their academic progress and to check whether the registration of marks contains errors or has not taken place. If a student suspects a mistake, he should get in touch with the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.

## **Binding academic advisement**

At the end of the first academic year of the Bachelor's programme the student will receive a binding academic advisement (BSA) on behalf of the Board. If the Board gives a negative binding academic advisement, the student must leave the programme and re- enrolment is not possible.

If personal circumstances underlie failure to meet the norm, the Board will not give a binding academic advisement. In this context, personal circumstances are taken to mean: illness, disability, special family circumstances, pregnancy and certain administrative activities. The occurrence of special circumstances will only lead to the non-issuance of a binding academic advisement if these have been reported on time to the BSA Committee via a form earmarked for this purpose.

## 5. Interim examinations and examinations

Every interim examination passed by the student is registered in the information system for registration of academic progress. If the student has passed the final examination of the degree programme, the student receives a degree certificate. A diploma supplement is added to the degree certificate. The supplement lists the examination units with the corresponding grades. The degree certificate is awarded to the student by or on behalf of the Examinations Committee.

If a student does not qualify for receiving the degree certificate, but the student has passed one or more interim examinations, the student may, on request, receive a declaration from the Examinations Committee which lists the examinations with the corresponding results

If a student has taken (interim) examinations while enrolment was incomplete or invalid, the (interim) examinations are invalid.

### Interim examinations and examinations

An interim examination and/or evaluation is attached to an examination unit. The interim examination or the evaluation investigates the student's knowledge, insight and skills. Credits cannot be gained in any other way than on the basis of this investigation, unless the Examinations Committee has granted an exemption for the examination unit in question.

The student has a right to inspect the graded interim examination and the grading norms used.

Once all the interim examinations of a degree programme have been passed, the examination of the degree programme has been passed. However, the Examinations Committee may decide that an extra investigation, to be held by the Committee itself, is attached to the examination. The OER lists which (interim) examinations are contained in the degree programme.

At a student's proposal he himself may compose a programme from examination units to which an examination is attached. Such a programme requires prior approval by the Examinations Committee. The Committee also indicates the degree programme of which the programme forms part.

**NB:** The free programme does not grant admission to licensed professions. That is to say, a student who has followed a free programme within one of the ecclesiastical training programmes does not automatically have access to the colloquium of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands.

### **Appropriate interim exam**

If a student has dyslexia, a functional disability or a chronic illness, he is entitled to take an appropriate interim examination, insofar as this is suitable and necessary and may be reasonably asked of the PThU. To use the right to an appropriate interim examination, the student must punctually report the dyslexia, functional disability or chronic illness to the Student Counsellor and must submit on time, prior to registering for the examination, a request to take an appropriate interim examination.

If a student possesses a statement on the basis of which he can lay claim to an appropriate interim examination, the student must be able to show this statement to the invigilator when taking the examination.

## **6. The Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER)**

### **Adoption**

The Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) are adopted by the Executive Board for each degree programme. Before the adoption of the regulations the Programme Committee is given the opportunity to advise or decide on granting approval to designated parts of the regulations. The Examinations Committee is also given the opportunity to advise the Executive Board. Next, the University Council needs to approve those parts of the regulations for which the Programme Committee has no right of approval, with the intention that the regulations be adopted or changed by the Board.

### **Content**

Article 7.13 of the WHW lists the subjects which must be included in the Teaching and Examination Regulations for the degree programmes.



## 7. Administration and Consultative Participation

### Administration of the University

The Executive Board is responsible for the administration and management of the PThU. The Administration and Management Regulations adopted by the CvB regulate the main elements of the administration and organization of the university. Various participation bodies are involved in the work of the CvB.

### University Council

The PThU has an undivided consultative participation system consisting of a University Council (UR), of which students and staff together – both with an equal number of seats – are members. Regarding a number of matters the UR has the right of approval and regarding others the right to be consulted. The powers of the UR are described in the law and in the regulations of the UR.

### Programme Committees

The Programme Committees are representative advisory bodies which have the following tasks:

- advising on the promotion and guarantee of the programme's quality;
- exercising the right of approval for the following elements of the Teaching and Examination Regulations:
  - the system of evaluation;
  - the content of the main subjects within a programme;
  - the qualities in terms of knowledge, insight and skills which a student must have acquired after completing the programme;
  - where necessary, the organization of practical exercises;
  - the workload of the programme and of each of its constitutive course units;
  - the way in which the selection of students takes place for a special track within a programme as referred to in article 7.9b WHW;
- yearly assessment of the implementation of the Teaching and Examination Regulations;
- exercising the right to be consulted on those Teaching and Examination Regulations for which the Committee cannot exercise the right of approval;
- advising or submitting proposals, on request or voluntarily, to the administrators of the programme on matters concerning education in the programme in question.

The PThU has two Programme Committees: one for the university's Master's programmes in the Amsterdam and Groningen branches, and one for the Bachelor's joint Theology degree programme, which is offered together with the Vrije Universiteit.

Half of the members of the Programme Committee for the Master's programmes of the Amsterdam and Groningen branches consist of students enrolled in the programme(s) in question.

The composition of the Programme Committee for the Bachelor's Theology programme is regulated in the regulations for this Bachelor's programme.

The PThU has agreed with the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Groningen that the PThU can provide 45 ECTS of education in the Bachelor's programme offered by the Faculty. On the basis of this administrative agreement the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies contracts out part of its Bachelor's programme to the PThU. In order to harmonize the quality requirements which the Faculty and the PThU impose on education in their Bachelor's programmes, the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies and the PThU have established a Quality Consultation.

## 8. Student services

### **Programme-specific student services**

The first point of contact for students are the Student Counsellors attached to the branches.

For questions or problems regarding academic progress, financial matters, appeal procedures, student grants and loans, registration of study completion delay, financial support from the Profiling Fund, late enrolment or termination of enrolment, students can consult the Student Counsellors. They also help with personal questions and can refer students to a student psychologist, an academic career adviser, a coach or the confidential adviser.

### **(Functional) disability**

In the PThU a (functional) disability is understood to mean a disability or chronic illness which may have a retarding effect on a student's progress. A student with a (functional) disability or chronic illness is advised to report immediately to the Student Counsellor at the beginning of his studies or illness in order to be well-informed about all possibilities from the outset.

### **University student services**

The general university student services include:

- The University Libraries of the PThU in Amsterdam and Groningen.
- Internationalization  
For information about studying abroad and contacting partner universities abroad you can get in touch with the staff member for internationalization.
- Academy pastor  
The university's academy pastor does her work for everybody training at the PThU and everybody enrolled in the Church Album. She is available for everybody who wants a personal talk. She is not in any way involved in the assessment of suitability for the office of minister. Therefore her support can also be requested if problems concerning suitability arise or have arisen.

All students of the PThU – in Amsterdam and Groningen via the partnership agreement with the Vrije Universiteit and the University of Groningen – are entitled to access to the services regulated in this agreement, such as:

- University libraries
- Choice of study programme and career advice service
- Student psychologists
- Studium Generale Office
- Student organizations

## 9. Rules of conduct

### General

Students must abide by the common norms and rules of decency in dealing with other members of the university community and in the use of university facilities. Every student is expected to participate in education in a way that shows respect for fellow students, teachers and other staff members. Students are obliged to follow the directions and instructions of their teachers and of the staff responsible for the management and maintenance of university facilities and buildings.

Furthermore, the following rules apply:

- Smoking is prohibited in all the buildings of the PThU and all the buildings used by the PThU.
- Pets are prohibited in the buildings of the PThU and the buildings used by the PThU with the exception of guide-dogs.

Students who violate these rules may be wholly or partly denied access to buildings and premises by the CvB. This also applies to access to the computer network.

### Desirable behaviour

Besides the house rules and safety regulations applying within the PThU, the PThU expects a certain attitude and behaviour on the part of staff members and students.

The PThU expects from everybody active as staff member or student in the university:

- an open debate in which everyone feels free to contribute their own views, standpoints and philosophical or ideological convictions. The academic climate creates the opportunity and responsibility for this;
- respectful interhuman contact manifested in style and tone of communication, in both personal and virtual contacts;
- interhuman engagement;
- careful use of university resources and facilities.

The PThU expects from students in particular:

- intellectual curiosity;
- active participation in education, research and extracurricular activities;

- optimum exertion with a view to optimum academic results;
- active participation in lectures and other teaching methods;
- interest in social and religious developments and in the role of (theological) scientists in the social debate;
- willingness to discuss their own spirituality.

The PThU expects from its staff members:

- an open and respectful attitude to each other and to students;
- enthusiastic and professional dedication in teaching and research;
- pursuit of excellence and innovation in their field;
- active interest in the developments and achievements of the university;
- willingness to discuss their own spirituality.

### **House rules and safety regulations**

The PThU prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, philosophy of life, political persuasion, race, gender, sexual orientation or on any basis.

Everybody who is present in PThU buildings or premises and/or uses PThU facilities must follow the directions and instructions of the Executive Board.

At the request of a staff member, students who are present in PThU buildings or premises and/or use PThU facilities must be able to show their PThU student pass in order to demonstrate the legality of their use of the facilities offered by the PThU.

Everybody who is present in PThU buildings or premises and/or uses PThU facilities must behave in such a way that:

- no direct or indirect damage or inconvenience is caused to the university and/or third parties;
- no right of the university or of third parties is violated;
- no action is taken in violation of the law or of regulations given under the law;
- no actions are taken or omitted in violation of written or unwritten law;
- no actions are taken in violation of statutory regulations of the PThU.

All students are obliged to follow the directions of the security guards and managers of VU and RuG buildings in connection with the maintenance of order and proper procedure in PThU buildings and premises.

### **ICT Code of Conduct**

The use of email and internet at the PThU is subject to conditions stated in the ICT Code of Conduct.

### **Rules for students with regard to teaching**

Students are punctually present at all teaching activities  
In principle the lecture room may not be left between times.

During all forms of teaching and in the library, all electronic devices for data processing or communication, such as laptops and mobile phones, should be set in such a way – if students are not obliged to switch them on – that they cannot disturb others. Talking via such devices is prohibited during teaching.

### **Image and sound recordings**

1. Recording images or sounds is allowed only if the teacher has explicitly granted permission to do so before the beginning of the lecture.
2. The teacher's permission relates only to individual use of the material by the student making the recordings during the lecture. If the student wishes to make a recording at the request of a fellow student who is registered for the lecture attended by the student requesting permission to make a recording, and who cannot attend the lecture due to illness or for another reason judged valid by the teacher, the recording may be passed on to the student absent from the lecture if this has been explicitly mentioned in the request to make the recording, the teacher has explicitly granted permission and the students present have been informed before the beginning of the lecture.
3. If the teacher has granted permission to the student to record images, the persons shown through photography or film during the lecture must be given the opportunity to refuse to be shown.
4. If the teacher has granted permission to the student to make sound recordings, the persons whose verbal participation can be recorded during the lecture must be given the opportunity to refuse to be recorded.
5. In any case the teacher will not grant a request to record images or sounds if the recordings may disrupt activities with regard to teaching, research and/or operational management.

## **Disciplinary measures**

If a student disrupts proper procedure or acts in violation of the house rules and safety regulations, one or more of the following disciplinary measures may be taken:

1. Warning by a teacher or staff member.
2. Removal from the lecture room by a teacher or other staff member.
3. Denial of access to the lectures or study groups of a teacher at his request by the Executive Board.
4. Written admonition from the Executive Board.
5. Removal for no more than seven days from PThU buildings and premises by the Executive Board.
6. Removal for no more than a year from the PThU by the Executive Board in the case of serious misconduct or repeated violation of the rules of conduct.
7. Definitive removal from the PThU by the Executive Board in extremely serious cases of misconduct.

If the Executive Board intends to take a measure as mentioned under 3 through 7, the Board will not decide on this before the student has been heard, unless the urgency of the case does not allow this.

## **Fraud and plagiarism**

### **Definition**

Fraud is understood to mean every action or omission by a student that is intended to make it wholly or partially impossible to form a correct judgement of his knowledge, insight and skills.

Plagiarism is understood to mean at least that texts, ideas or data are copied from others without adequate acknowledgement of sources and clear marking. Plagiarism is a special form of fraud.

### **Procedure**

If the examiner or invigilator designated by the examiner establishes fraud or has good reason to suspect it, he writes a report on the events and submits it to the Examinations Committee, appending any available evidence.

Within two weeks after the fraud has been reported, the EC hears the student on the alleged fraud.

Within four weeks after the fraud has been reported, the EC decides, on the basis of the documentation and if possible on the information produced by the student at the hearing, whether fraud has taken place.



If the EC is convinced that fraud has taken place, the EC can impose one or more sanctions.

In cases of serious fraud the EC may propose to the CvB that the student's enrolment be definitively terminated.

In the Regulations on Fraud and Plagiarism the Examinations Committee lays down further rules on what is understood by fraud and plagiarism, what procedure is followed in cases of suspected fraud and plagiarism, and what sanctions the EC can impose on the student.

### **Undesirable behaviour**

The university has code of conduct aimed at discouraging undesirable behaviour. This code applies to all employees and students of the university in their behaviour towards other employees, students and visitors of the university. Undesirable behaviour is understood to mean: (sexual) intimidation, bullying, violence, aggression and discrimination.

Students can contact the Confidential Adviser (see the website for more information) if they experience undesirable behaviour. In a confidential atmosphere they can discuss the problem together and try to find (possible) solutions to put a stop to it. It is also possible to lodge a complaint with the Complaints Committee set up for this purpose.

The PThU has Regulations for Complaints about (Sexual) Intimidation, Aggression, Violence and Discrimination.

### **Privacy**

Every student has a right to inspect the data recorded in the PThU administration concerning his person and/or his academic progress. These data are accessible only to the student and to staff members who need to consult and use them by virtue of their position.

A student has a right to request correction, supplementation or removal of his data if these are factually incorrect or incomplete, non-relevant to the purpose of the registration or occur in the registration in contravention of a statutory provision.

Data from a registration of personal data are supplied to third parties only if this follows from the purpose of the registration, is required pursuant to a statutory provision or takes place by permission of the person whose data are concerned.

Other than study-related information may not be sent to a student's email address without his permission. In particular the sending of random email messages, such as requests to participate in research for final projects, requires permission from the student.

## 10. Legal protection

This Charter (and underlying regulations) lays down the rights of students and how the university has regulated this. Despite all efforts to apply the regulations properly and promote appropriate behaviour, this may not always happen. This chapter familiarizes students with what they can do in such cases.

### Informal

If a student has a complaint or a suggestion, there are various options. The student can take an informal route by seeing whether the Office of Student Affairs can find solutions to the complaints, criticisms of teaching and related matters. If short-term solutions are not possible, staff members will ensure that the complaint finds its way to the right person. The student himself can also go and talk with the person who has caused the problem in order to reach a satisfactory solution together.

### Formal

A student who believes that his interests have been prejudiced has various legal options for protecting his rights. The student can lodge a *complaint* and an *objection* or *appeal* on account of a decision taken by a university body or lack of such a decision pursuant to the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW) and regulations based thereon. The legislator has determined which body is authorized to deal with the complaint, the objection or the appeal. To prevent a student from having to determine independently which body is authorized to deal with his complaint, objection or appeal on the basis of the statutory laws and regulations, the legislator has commissioned the higher education institutions to organize an accessible and univocal facility where a student can lodge his complaint, objection or appeal. It is up to the facility to pass on the received complaint, objection or appeal to the authorized body.

The student's legal protection has an internal and external route. Internal means that the student submits a complaint or dispute to an authorized body within the university. The student can follow the external appeal procedure at the Higher Education Appeals Board.

#### I. Internal legal protection

##### Complaint

A complaint by a student is considered by the Executive Board. The Board does not decide before receiving advice from the Complaints Committee.

## Dispute

Depending on the nature and substance of the dispute, a dispute is considered by the Examinations Appeal Board or the Executive Board. If the Executive Board is designated as the authorized body for dealing with the dispute, the Board does not decide before receiving advice from the Arbitration Committee for Student Objections.

Within the group of disputes a distinction can be drawn between disputes which – to put it simply – relate to an assessment of the quality of the student and other, more general disputes. The first category of disputes concerns, for instance, disputes following from a decision by the Examinations Committee or examiner, others may involve a dispute about the amount of tuition fees to be paid.

The first category is submitted for consideration to the Examinations Appeal Board by the facility, the second to the Arbitration Committee for Student Objections.

The Examinations Appeal Board is authorized to make the following decisions:

- a decision regarding a binding study advisement (article 7.8b par. 3 and 5 WHW);
- a decision regarding a referral in the post-propaedeutic phase (article 7.9 WHW);
- a decision of the institutional management regarding a statement to the Executive Agency Organization (DUO) that a student has passed an exam (article 7.9d WHW);
- a decision, not being decisions of general import, with regard to educational entry and admission requirements taken on the basis of title 2 of chapter 7 of the WHW, with a view to admission to examinations;
- a decision in favour of enrolment, based on a supplementary investigation grounded in the institutional management's determination that the possessor of a certificate for university preparatory education not meeting the requirements for enrolment in a PThU programme is nevertheless enrolled, on a content-based judgement, provided that the investigation shows that substantively comparable requirements are satisfied (article 7.2 par. 4 WHW);
- decision by the Board of Examinations or examiner;
- decisions by a committee instituted by the institutional management for the purpose of the entrance examination (article 7.29 title 1 WHW);
- decisions taken on the basis of article 7.30a and 7.30b WHW, relating to follow-on Master's degrees.

By law and by the regulations of the Examinations Committee, the Examinations Committee is authorized to take the following decisions:

- a decision with regard to fulfilment of the conditions laid down in the Teaching and Examination Regulations with regard to knowledge, insight and skills necessary for obtaining a degree;
- a decision with regard to the request of someone entitled to a certificate to

- postpone its conferral;
- a decision with regard to the granting of an exemption from taking one or more exams;
- a decision with regard to a student's request for permission to follow a programme put together by the student himself, consisting of course units provided by the university, and to which an examination is attached, of which the examination leads to the obtaining of a degree, the Committee further indicating to which programme of the institution this programme is considered to belong;
- if a student or external student commits fraud, a decision with regard to depriving the person involved of the right to take one or more (interim) examinations to be indicated by the Committee, for a period of no more than one year, to be determined by the Committee.

A student may lodge an appeal against these decisions with the Examinations Appeal Board.

The Executive Board is authorized by law and the regulations governing administration to take decisions with regard to the following matters:

- reduction and exemption of tuition fees;
- enrolment and deregistration;
- financial support;
- violation of house rules and safety measures

A student may lodge an appeal against these decisions with the Executive Board. For the purpose of dealing with the objection and taking a decision, the Executive Board presents the objection to the Arbitration Committee for Student Objections. Only after receiving their advice does the Board take a final decision. This decision is open to appeal with the Higher Education Appeals Board.

## II. **External legal protection**

The Higher Education Appeals Board is authorized to pronounce on all disputes pursuant to the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) or regulations based thereon concerning the student-institution relationship. However, a condition here is that the options offered by the internal procedure for legal protection have been exhausted. As long as a student can lodge an appeal with the Examinations Appeal Board with regard to a dispute that he has with the institution, the Higher Education Appeals Board will not consider an appeal lodged in connection with this dispute before the Examinations Appeal Board has pronounced on the matter.