

# Conducting a well-prepared support assessment about studying with special needs

Approximately 30% of the students in higher education have special needs. Some 10% of all students experience obstacles during their studies. Studying with special needs is one of the key quality assurance criteria for educational institutions (ITK: *Instellingstoets Kwaliteitzorg*). The Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) addresses the need for provisions to improve the accessibility and study feasibility for students with special needs. This guide will help you prepare and conduct support assessments with regard to studying with special needs. There are five key questions to consider. Additional information is provided for each question.

## 1 How well is the vision on studying with special needs supported?

DID YOU KNOW?

Many higher education institutions view studying with special needs from a medical perspective whereas in primary and secondary education the perspective adopted is increasingly a social one.

## 2 How is the policy embedded in the organisation?

DID YOU KNOW?

Ever more higher education institutions base their policy on the reference framework of the Standards Committee (Commissie Maatstaf).

DID YOU KNOW?

Institutions that have integrated studying with special needs into a wider diversity policy demonstrate greater flexibility in the workplace, as a result of which students with special needs experience fewer obstacles.

## 3 How are students with special needs and staff involved in the policymaking?

DID YOU KNOW?

Many institutions make provisions for students with special needs in response to individual requests. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for proactive policymaking and the routine involvement of students with special needs and the staff of educational institutions.

## 4 What is the staff policy in this respect?

DID YOU KNOW?

Students with special needs experience fewer obstacles if all staff (from members of the Executive Board to facility services staff) are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

## 5 How is the policy evaluated?

DID YOU KNOW?

The 'Studying with a handicap' user test, expressing the views of students with special needs on their degree programme and educational institution, provides insight into where specific policy adjustments are needed.



ECIO, Expert centre on inclusive education, informs, advises and supports universities, universities of applied sciences and senior secondary vocational education (VET) in issues relating to inclusive education and student wellbeing. In this way, students with a special needs can successfully complete their education and move on to a job that suits them. Education for all. Without barriers. [www.ecio.nl/en](http://www.ecio.nl/en).