

University Council

# Election Programme

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**Studenten  
Organisatie  
Groningen**

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## Introduction

Dear student,

The Studenten Organisatie Groningen (SOG) has worked for over 45 years in the interests of students in and outside of the University Council. What matters most for the SOG is the freedom for *all* students to develop themselves during their university life while being guaranteed of high-quality education in a sustainable environment. These interests of students should always be the core consideration in decision-making in the University - and the SOG has always defended these interests and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Within this continuity, the SOG enabled students to do tuition-free board years, we provided internationals with free Dutch language-courses, we extended and created opening hours of the University Library and other study rooms, and we created subsidies for sustainability of study associations. These and many more initiatives over the past years by former SOG-factions, all surpin the efforts of the SOG to guarantee the highest quality of education with as much flexibility as possible to develop yourself.

This candidate faction wants to pick up and prolong the efforts of our predecessors by improving even more in our university. By focussing on sustainability initiatives, coherent policies for integration, inclusion and mobility, and continuing to ensure innovative, high-qualitative and personalised education, the SOG wants to move forward.

It is needless to say that we would be honoured to continue the SOG's actions to improve the education and student life in Groningen and to represent all 30.000 students of the UG coming academic the year.

Your Candidate Faction for 2018-2019,

Gijs Verhoeff  
Emiel Brusse  
Kevin Kelly  
Maarten van Oosterhout  
Lois Veldscholten  
Sebastián Dobrusskin

## Education

The SOG believes that your education should provide you with all the means possible to develop your future opportunities as well as possible. The key terms with regards to education at the RUG are for us: personalised education, academic freedom, and quality of education. We are proud to study at an university that is internationally renowned for its quality of education. To us, this international stance and existing quality means that students should expect nothing less than the best possible education and that the facilities of the university to provide that education should just be in order at all times. Therefore, the SOG will continue its efforts to make the University provide you with the best possible education and all the freedom to develop yourself over the course of your student career.

### Personalised education

We know that your student life cannot solely be quantified by high grades and that your personal development is also a matter of extracurricular experiences. In our opinion, the university should stimulate as much as possible that students also take the opportunity to develop themselves outside of the regular curriculum and provide them with the freedom to do so.

### Restating the value of your diploma

According to the SOG, your education should be relevant, challenging and connected to your future working field. More and more, employers value the experience of extracurricular activities, internship, and exchanges. The University should prolong its efforts to provide opportunities that enrich your diploma, personal development, and career perspectives.

In our opinion, internships should be valued in the same way as exchanges. Currently, it is only possible to earn 10 ECTS through internships in your bachelor. Due to the incredible added value of practical experience in your future field of employment, we believe that it should however be possible to also earn 30 ECTS, as is the case right now for exchanges.

Furthermore, the University should invest in perspectives that enable students to adapt to the dynamic labour market that they will encounter after their graduating. An example of this, that would also be beneficial for the entrepreneurial community of Groningen at large, is the development of 'start-up'-minors where students get rewarded for entrepreneurial projects and business initiatives. Engagement with entrepreneurship should be encouraged and cherished.

## Learning outcomes

Your diploma should not be just a list of grades. It should represent your capacities and both the academic and practical experience that you gained from your education. In order to accomplish this, more attention should be drawn to the learning outcomes of your education. Not only does this help students to better grasp the relevance of their education and prepare themselves better for their future labour market, but it does also force lecturers to constantly reassess the relevance and practical value of the education that they provide.

## Single course opportunities

The SOG has always strived for providing students with as much flexibility during their student career. An important initiative that it has been developing over the past year, has been the initiative of 'single course opportunities' or 'flexstudereren'. It would provide students with the possibility to not pay the full tuition fee when retaking just one course, but having the opportunity to pay per course. As of yet, this form of education is however not allowed by law, but the SOG will continue its' combined efforts with e.g. ISO to lobby for this initiative on a national level and for more awareness in the university.

## Academic Freedom

Part of being a student is your freedom say what you want do say, write what you want to write, but also: learn how you want to learn. The university should provide you with as many ways available to give you the most flexibility to direct your own education and manage it with your own life.

## Seminar attendance

An important element in this regard, is seminar attendance. For many courses, seminar attendance is required if you want to participate in the exam. We believe that this is the wrong approach to encourage students to attend seminars. If you cannot attend a seminar, or any seminar, but you're still able to pass the exam - you shouldn't be prohibited in partaking in that exam and having to redo the course. Rather, we would like to see this system based on 'punishment' be replaced with a system of actual 'encouragement'. Ultimately, this is in the benefit of both the student and the professor: nobody benefits from a student that is only there for his attendance. Besides, a bonus of some sort would be a much stronger encouragement than the ever-looming threat of being kicked out of a course.

## Lecture recordings

Another important element regarding your freedom in education is access to online video recordings of the lectures. The SOG is convinced that the resources for preparation, and thus the results in exams, would significantly improve when students have access to lectures online. Furthermore, in the current situation there is the ridiculous situation that some students throughout the same programme do have access to the lectures of one course, but not of the other. Conclusively, the SOG would like to see that students would have access to the lectures immediately after the lecture has been recorded, rather than never or even three weeks before the exam.

## Quality of education

The SOG is proud that Groningen is one of the Top 100-Universities in the world. It shows the quality of the education that is provided to us, the relevance and output of our research, but above all: the ambitions and performance of our students. Students of the UG should expect nothing less than the best from their diploma - and the SOG will continuously strive to ameliorate those elements in our university that can be even better.

## English language skills

One of the foremost concerns of many students is the quality of English of professors in international programmes of the University. Effectively transposing their knowledge to their students is in the best interests of both the professors and the students. Yet, the transition to English often has the consequence of limiting the quality of education or the interactiveness of lectures. The SOG therefore believes that continuous effort needs to be put into improving professor's English, e.g. through trainings and evaluation of language skills.

## Honours Programme

A second concern is the quality and moreover the relevance of the University's Honours Programme. The Honours Programme is often used as the showpiece of the University and is treated as the *crème de la crème* of its' education. However, many students in the programme find fault with the communication, structure, and relevance of the programme. Often, courses are either disproportionately demanding or otherwise in no-way challenging. The SOG finds that, in order to improve the Honours College more attention should be paid to student evaluation and closer cooperation with the individual faculties, rather than the current centralised approach.

## Examination

It is the responsibility of any institute of a higher education to not only distinguish themselves in the quality of their education but also on their ability to assess the knowledge gained from this education. Examinations constitute a major factor in the final assessment of a students courses, and as such, the SOG recognises the importance of this assessment being as fair, as transparant and as structured as possible. Our belief is that the way examinations are currently held does not reach this capacity, and is lacking in some fundamental areas. We will strive to improve the current status quo in this regard and provide students with optimal conditions for in which they take their exams.

## Communication

A key factor in fairly assessing a students knowledge is allowing the student to understand how they are assessed. There should always be clear instructions and guidelines on how the exams are taken and how the grades are finalized.

## Guessing factor

A students frustration in their final assessment is often due to the guessing factor that is implemented in multiple choice exams. These frustrations do not lie in that this method of evaluation exists, but rather in that the way the system works is often not explained properly, or at all. It is standard practice for any course that uses multiple choices in their exams to not mention the guessing factor on the nestor page or in the course manual.

In order to inhibit further confusion on this matter, there needs to be clear instructions on how and why this element is implemented into the exam process. This can take place in the form of online guidelines where not only the guessing factor is explained but where all stages of examinations are brought to attention. This would allow for students to clearly understand the process of how their final assessments were reached and would also set precedence for the standard on how examinations should be held.

## Exam errors and reviewing opportunities

In order to allow for proper and credible assessment, it is important that students are given adequate explanations for any changes made to the exams post factum. A question being removed due to an error, or not enough students getting the question right can be devastating

news to people who felt that they answered it well, especially if they marginally failed. These type of explanations should not be given so half handedly. Instead proper explanations should be given that satisfy the reasons behind this decision.

It is also imperative that students always have the opportunity to look over their exams, and they should be encouraged to do so. For many courses, this type of feedback is not given. Instead, simply a grade is posted and students are left in the dark on where their shortcomings lie. This could be remedied by having more scheduled viewing hours where students could come in and look at the exam that they wrote and also ask any questions that they might have - or by developing (and more often utilising) resources for students to receive feedback on their exam digitally.

## Availability and Opportunities

The SOG believes that it is of paramount importance for a university of a higher education such as the RUG to always try to optimize the conditions in which a student is able to take their exams. If a student is fatigued and unfocused then their ability to write an exam to the best of their capacity is severely diminished. The times and opportunities of when exams are given can often be a major contributing factor to a students poor performance, and care must be put into restricting these factors as much as possible.

### Timing of exams

As is the case now an exam can go on as late as 09:30 pm, and even longer if the person suffers from dyslexia. For many students, this has severe repercussions on their ability to concentrate and perform well on an exam. A state that is only exacerbated if they have a 09:00 am exam the next day. To prevent situations like this from occurring it is the recommendation of the SOG that exam times are limited to take place no later than 07:00 pm.

Moreover, the SOG feels that exams should *never* take place during the weekends. When facilities for hosting the exams are insufficient, the student should not be punished for this by having to sacrifice their free time, but should the university create more room for examination to let them take place at a reasonable moment.

### Timing of Resits

A big issue in failing an exam is that the opportunity to do it again is often not offered until the next exam period. While a certain amount of delay is of course beneficial in allowing students to adequately prepare for the next exam opportunity, there lies an issue in expecting the student to

maintain this level of preparation for the amount of time given to them (about two months). Students are either required to maintain and continue preparation while being burdened with the courses from the next block, or focus on preparing for the resit along with the next batch of exams. This often causes them to lose the edge of just having done the course, and also interferes with preparations for other exams and can result in a snowball effect. It is the suggestion of the SOG to limit resits to take place to 3-4 weeks after grades are received, giving the student time to prepare, but not interfering too much with the next block.

### Third try Resits

The SOG has recently pushed through a memo that allows Students in their first year to have a second resit opportunity in September for any courses that they have failed, given that they have passed their BSA. This allows students another chance to be able to go into their second year without the burden of having to repeat courses from their first year. A precarious situation that often causes students to fail other courses due to having too high a workload. It is the belief of the SOG that this opportunity will prove to be an invaluable asset for students in enabling them to avoid this type of situation and continue their studies without the risk of a study delay.

### Digital examinations

The SOG understands that digital examination is not for every type of education. However, in light of sustainability, the SOG strives for certain types of digital exams believing that when possible, digital exams outweigh the benefits of written exams in aspects such as efficiency, usability and accessibility. By incorporating a more automated process digital examinations help reduce the workload of both academic and administrative staff, along with potentially reducing the time between taking exams and receiving feedback. This process also helps increase transparency in marking and reduces the potential for errors to be made, if the opportunities for reviewing mentioned before are also further developed in this regard. Moreover, it promotes economic and environmental growth by reducing costs of printing and the transporting, securing, storing, and usage of paper. Our university should invest in the right tools regarding digital examinations and consider the possibilities of digital examinations.

## Internationalisation

Throughout the years, international students have become a vital element of the student community of Groningen and an indispensable addition to the education at the University of Groningen. The SOG cherishes the international character that those students have provided to Groningen and feels that the University should prolong and increase its efforts towards internationals by treating these students as the valuable addition that they are to the student life and university community in Groningen. Students should have access to all university facilities as local students and no student should have to be forced to sleep in the Noorderplantsoen when coming to Groningen. *Ever.*

Currently, the University lacks a coherent, university-wide policy regarding internationalisation and efforts to improve the education, integration and mobility are primarily handled on a faculty-based level. It is of fundamental importance that the University Council in its coming form creates such a policy.

The SOG will continue to fight for qualitative internationalisation of education, the position of international students in the University, and accessibility of international students to all aspects of the university community in Groningen. Besides, the SOG recognises the importance of mobility and international experiences for all students. An internationalisation policy of the SOG would therefore be concentrated around two large pillars: integration - meaning the best possible experience and education for and with international students - and mobility - concerning the accessibility of incorporating international experience into your education.

Improvements for internationals and to internationalisation improve the education and student life of all students.

## Housing

The most pressing and consequential issue regarding internationalisation is student housing. Every year, students are encouraged to come to Groningen for their education without being guaranteed of proper accommodation - or any accommodation at all. This is outrageous and the University of Groningen needs to recognise its responsibility regarding the housing of its (international) students. Therefore, the SOG will continue its efforts to work with the University to find solutions for this issue.

## Housing culture

Many international students are faced with disproportionate shortages in the housing market in comparison to their Dutch fellow students, which was already addressed by the current SOG-faction in the past year in their 'International Student Housing'-memo. It acknowledges that technically housing is not a direct responsibility of the University, but the SOG finds that for the University the well-being of their students should *always* be their highest priority. The memo of SOG and the proposed platform for subletting fits in the long-term ambition of the SOG to eliminate all forms of discrimination on the housing market and create a situation where all students can easily find accommodation. This is especially pressing when hundreds of students are expected not to have accommodation at the beginning of coming year. It will therefore continue its' efforts in the University Council, but also outside of the University environment with its' existing partners, to ameliorate the housing culture of Groningen towards a more inclusive environment for students. The SOG has continuously taken its' responsibility in this regard and will always keep on motivating its' fellow parties and the University to do the same.

## Stichting Studenten Huisvesting (SSH)

These ambitions to change the living conditions for internationals and improve the housing culture in Groningen also involves the existing cooperation between the Stichting Studenten Huisvesting (SSH). As the SSH is a partner of the University of Groningen, we feel that the University should use that leverage to structurally improve living conditions for students - at an affordable price. In principle, we thoroughly believe that students should never be profited from, and should get the value for their money. Especially regarding the underprivileged position in which internationals have to find a room from afar - without knowing the Dutch system and facilities in place - many students end up choosing for (often overpriced) accommodation of the SSH. The SOG believes that rent-prices for students living in SSH-accommodation should be lowered and the SSH should take effort into solving the housing crisis in Groningen by first of all improving its' accommodation but also developing more rooms.

## Initiative from the University

The SOG thinks it's the University's responsibility to provide their students with all information possible regarding the finding of a room - especially in light of the underprivileged position in which international students are trying to find a room from afar. As a matter of fact, your student life and everything that you have to prepare only start, not end, when you get accepted to your university. Students should for example know that they should start looking for a room early on, be aware of the tips and tricks in the Dutch housing culture (e.g. the existence of Kamernet, Lefier, etc.), and be protected from dodgy estate agents and Facebook groups. The SOG will

continuously stimulate the University to take proactive action regarding the room culture - throughout the entirety of people's student life. A correct, complete, and functional amount of information is the bare minimum in this regard.

## Mobility

For the SOG, an important and greatly-valued part of your education is the ability to go on an exchange. Mobility for us is the inflow and outflow of students in Groningen who choose to participate in such an exchange. In general, we find that every student should be granted to do part of their education abroad. Moreover, the exchange students that arrive here should experience a proper welcome, the right facilities throughout their stay, and should also be assured of a qualitative curriculum.

## Facilities

For both the incoming and outgoing students, communication is often the part of the mobility process that students find fault with. Often, these students that choose to participate in an exchange experience chaos, rather than clarity. The SOG believes the University should invest in the facilities that enable, support, and encourage students that want to do a semester abroad. Furthermore, curriculums should be directed in such a manner that every student can go on an exchange if they wish to do so. This requires primarily more assistance and coherent information in the Mobility Office and the information provided online.

## Student feedback

Also in the context of mobility, the SOG believes that education should fit the student. In the end, it's your diploma and your education - and you should expect as a student that your exchange fits your wishes and demands. The SOG believes that it's therefore valuable to invest in proper student feedback and evaluation concerning the exchange, as to improve the possibilities for the coming years.

## Programmes abroad

The SOG considers it to be very important that the University of Groningen invests in qualitative programmes for their students abroad. We believe that it's both in the interests of the University and their students if the University further explores endeavours abroad on a central level, as to meet the interests of faculties and students.

## Integration

Besides housing and mobility, an important factor in the internationalisation of student life is the actual integration of international students into student life. The SOG is extremely proud of the vibrant and diverse student scene that Groningen has, but recognises that often some of these associations, facilities, and activities are not accessible for international students - or that internationals are unaware that these are also accessible and available for them, or don't know where they can be found.

### Introduction in Groningen

For many students, the first introduction to the student life in Groningen is through the KEI-week and even later the ESN-week. The SOG greatly values these weeks, but feels that the University should attract the attention of (international) students more to these weeks and mention the relevance. Either way, both the University and the students profit from students being as much as possible introduced and integration to student life. We believe that the University should thus investigate as many possible ways as possible to involve students in these events, e.g. by investing in more extensive introduction weeks.

### Associations and funding

For the university itself, the best way of promoting internationalisation and ensuring a successful integration is through associations that get funding from the university. Currently, internationalisation funds are available for associations and groups that are deemed eligible for the promotion of integration and organising activities for international students. The SOG regards these associations as indispensable for the integration of international students, but would like to see more guidance in the process of internationalisation and a stronger codecision role for study associations that are part of a programme that is internationalising. Internationalisation of student life should be an inherent part of internationalisation of education, not something that follows afterwards.

## Accessibility

Throughout their student life and education in Groningen, international students (regardless of whether they are here as an exchange student or for their entire programme) should have equal access to all facilities of the university and an equal chance to participate in the student life of Groningen. The SOG therefore wants to invest in accessibility of representation and information.

## Representation

The SOG has a long-standing history of having an international representative in their faction. Our current candidate international representative, Kevin Kelly, describes his motivation for running for the U-council, but also for student representation as a whole, as follows: “There should always be a voice for internationals.” For us, these are words to live by. Sadly though, it’s hard, or even impossible, to fulfill certain representative positions in the University as an international. For example, it would frankly be impossible to effectively fulfill the position of student assessor of in the Board of the Faculty of Arts due to the overwhelming amount of Dutch documents. Furthermore, internationals are noticeably underrepresented in current representative bodies such as Programme Committees, Faculty Councils, and also the University Council. First and foremost, the SOG will continue to defend the interests of all students, not only local but also international students. Secondly, we will continue to strive for more accessibility for internationals in representative organs and stress the importance of involving internationals in the decision making process of the university.

## Information

A large part of the issues mentioned above, is the shortcomings in accessibility of information for internationals. At this point, it should by all means and in all circumstances be a prerequisite that you are free to express yourself in English and that all information should be available in both Dutch and English. Often, however, Dutch information in the University is not so much the problem, but being bombarded with Dutch legal documents when moving to Groningen is. The SOG deems it crucial that students know where to find assistance regarding these issues and the University should use its’ position in the the Groninger community to promote internationalisation of documents. Even the creation of infoclips might help within this context, as is further elaborate upon in the chapter on digitalisation.

## Communication

For all the aforementioned issues, communication is often crucial for a successful implementation of initiatives and policies. First and foremost, it should be clear without any doubt what students can and cannot expect from the university. Secondly, communication is key in (re)evaluating existing initiatives and the University should actively reach out to its’ students. The SOG recognises its’ own responsibility in this regard too, and will develop more extensive ways of maintaining contact with their (international) voters and articulating their interests - both before and especially after the elections.

## Sustainability

Over the past couple of years, sustainability has grown to be one of the main subjects in politics and decision making on a worldwide scale. A lot of innovative research is being done in this area, which provides the opportunity to tackle problems regarding energy and environment. Although our university is already making some serious efforts to improve sustainability and our worldwide position is very good, we are far from where we could be. The SOG believes that the RUG should set an example to the rest of the world how to be truly 'Green'. Especially since we are located in a region where mining natural gas has such a negative impact on the lives many Groningers, the RUG should take its responsibility and send out a positive signal to them. Sustainability is something that can be connected to a lot of the university's decisions and activities. The SOG tries to critically and constructively inspect both new plans and current situations to keep evolving into a 'Green' university.

### Awareness

We would like to increase awareness concerning sustainability amongst students and staff. This can be split into two aspects: awareness of the university's efforts and self-awareness. Starting with the former; our university already has a policy and a vision on how to become more sustainable, but most students are unconscious of this fact. Especially knowledge about concrete plans how the RUG wants to enhance sustainability is lacking amongst students. The SOG wants to change this and make sure that staff and students of the RUG are aware of current policies and future plans.

The SOG also wants to create more self-awareness concerning sustainability. The RUG can set up large projects like building sustainable buildings, but our individual behavior is of great influence as well. The SOG wants the university to get its students more involved in the journey to becoming green. The RUG should make its students more aware of their role in this journey and make sure everyone understands the importance of sustainability.

### Technical improvements

Solar panels have been going through an exponential improvement in efficiency and cost-reduction in the last years and are rising stars in the area of energy production. The university is already making use of solar panels on new buildings like our latest beautiful asset: The energy academy. The SOG promotes usage of solar panels on new buildings, but we want to take it a step further. We strive to implement solar energy in all buildings of the RUG as long as it

is technically feasible. Implementation of solar panels all across the university will make our environmental footprint shrink considerably. Besides solar cells, we also want to keep an eye on other techniques that can produce energy or reduce the overall use of it. Also, the SOG wants to make sure that the spilling of energy or other resources is kept at its lowest. Examples are unnecessary heating, use of electricity and printing. The latter also relates to our vision on digitalization that can be found on page 21.

## Divestment

The SOG supports the existing initiative for 'divestment'. This means that we will encourage the University to move their financial resources to a more sustainable bank (such as Triodos). Initiatives such as this are part of SOG visions that the RUG should play a frontrunner-role in the (inter)national transition to sustainable education. Especially when it concerns the money that is meant for our education, our university, and our future - the RUG should invest its financial resources in places that contribute to a sustainable future. Divestment, in this regard, is a substantial but reasonable step in that transition.

## Student Health and Well-Being

Student well-being is of fundamental importance. A healthy student performs better academically, is happier and has more energy to be involved in extra activities next to his or her study. However, finding a good balance between extracurricular activities and studying is currently becoming increasingly difficult. Too many students have symptoms of a burnout, think about ending his or her life or are suffering from a depression. An excessive amount of these students keep their problems to themselves or only share it with their most intimate circle of friends, not seeking necessary help.

Mental issues and burnouts are topics which do not receive enough attention, but which affect large parts of the student population. Unfortunately, there is still a taboo regarding mental health issues and burnouts. It is fundamental that this does not thwart good attention and help provided by our university. At the moment, the university provides help through student psychologists which are available at the Student Service Centre (SSC). Nevertheless, the assistance provided is not enough and, therefore, we are compelled to take action.

The SOG believes that university should be a place where everyone is able to fully develop himself without having to cope with health issues which impede having an enjoyable student time. To ensure this, two factors must be looked upon: 1) the help provided by the university; 2) the underlying factors.

### Accessibility

When suffering from any well-being related problem, may it be stress, psychological problems or issues relating your identity, the university has psychologists which are there to help you. In many cases, help cannot wait. Unfortunately, students often have to wait to be able to be assisted by a psychologist. Waiting lists must disappear or be shorter, to ensure that students get the help they need at the moment they need it.

Moreover, the university should take a more active role in ensuring that every student has access to the help they need. Especially foreign students may find it hard to find adequate help they need, since the language barrier outside the university remains, making them more dependent on the services provided by the university.

## Awareness

Many people do not know about the existence of the university psychologist. This must change to ensure that everyone receives the care they need. To achieve this goal, awareness must be raised. The university must take an active role in promoting the university psychologist, this can be done through various channels, such as the first-year student mentors, student mail and nestor.

## “Destress” the university

Stress is a state-of-being shared by most students throughout their academic career. Stress is also a factor which affects the well-being of students. Therefore, it is primordial to combat stress. In order to do so, we must look at a wide set of factors, such as workload and the university ‘environment.’

In general, the university deals fine with the workload of students. Nonetheless, students can perceive that workload is excessive. Therefore, feedback regarding courses must be taken seriously to ensure that the workload of every individual course is acceptable. Furthermore, individual cases of students having a hard time coping with the workload must be looked upon meticulously and students should always be assisted by university staff to ensure that they have a manageable workload.

The atmosphere in the university also helps at creating a stressful (or not) environment. University should be a place which feels welcoming and as a second home to students considering that most will spend a lot of their student time at university facilities. Simple changes can make a big difference.

## Staff Well-Being

Not only the mental well-being of students should be taken into consideration, but also the well-being of the university’s staff. The staff currently needs to account for everything they do and expectations are too high. Without them being able to function well, students will also not be able to perform well and will be dissatisfied when, for example, they get their grades back too late. The SOG strives for a better well-being of the university’s staff and wants to decrease their workload. The university already made money available to hire more staff but the SOG wants to keep working on this field to ensure that the staff can work in the best way possible.

## Facilities

In order to reach good study results, adequate facilities should be available for all students studying at the University of Groningen. The university should provide adequate facilities for studying, researching, socialising and other basic necessities. The University of Groningen has excelled in providing students with the necessary tools to prosper, however the SOG believes we can do even better.

### Study facilities

Students should have the possibility to study and prepare for their exams. There should always be enough study space for the students. This is not the case now since there is a lack of study rooms and libraries are overcrowded. We want to extend the opening hours of the university library (UB). Some students prefer to work longer at night and others would like to start earlier in the morning. If the library would open earlier in the morning and would close later, students will arrive at different times which will prevent the long waiting lines around 8.30 during the exam periods.

Besides the UB in the City Centre, the library at Zernike has limited opening hours as well, which makes it impossible for students to study there as much as they would want to. Except for exam periods, the library at Zernike is closed during the weekends. We would want to see it opened on Saturdays as well.

We want to improve the facilities at the libraries and study spots as well. For example, there are nice study places at the Harmonie building, but there is a huge lack of plugs. Currently, students often solely use their laptops for studying so students need plugs in order to study. Plugs should be available everywhere. If we properly use all the space that could be made available for studying, we can ensure a study environment in which every student can perform to the best of their abilities.

### Drinks & Food facilities

Since 2 January 2018, *Beijk Catering* has been the supplier of Food and Drinks of the University of Groningen. There already is more choice in fresh sandwiches and more variable products, but prices have risen as well because of this. The value of money is extremely important to students. While students are in need of an inexpensive assortment, to make it more affordable for students,

the prices should be lowered. Also, we would like to see more healthy options, for example more fresh salads.

We want to improve the drinks and food facilities at the UB as well. For example, for hot water, you have to pay 0,50 cents now. We want it to be free again.

Students should be able to bring their own lunch as well. We want to have sandwich irons and microwave facilities so students can bring some snacks from home and heat them at the University. It is also wise to draw more attention to existing facilities, such as the existing cookers in the Harmony building that are in fact free to use.

## Digitalisation

The SOG strives for the best education. We also stand for the highest flexibility possible to ensure your personal development and that of your studies. To support these beliefs, we prioritise digitalisation and digital support. That is not only due to its practical value but also due to the substantial improvements digitalisation can bring to the education at our university. The SOG sees digitalisation as a big opportunity for ensuring better education methods.

### Digital review of exams

Too few students receive feedback on their exams at the moment, even though such evaluation is an essential part of the learning curve. The SOG recognizes this problem and has therefore already made steps promoting the digital reviewing of exams. The next step must be practical implementation. Therefore, the SOG strives for an online platform on which students can review and assess their exams. In addition, general feedback on exams should, if possible, be recorded.

The digital reviewing of exams will create more transparency and flexibility towards students. Moreover, it will improve the relation between students and professors, the learning experience and grades of students. In the end, the RUG should stimulate practices for digital support at all levels, before, during and after examination and assessments.

### Digitalisation of lectures and info clips

The SOG promotes flexibility and efficiency in the way students take up their studies. Considering this, students should get the best digital support. Therefore, the RUG should encourage the digitalisation of lectures (besides the regular lectures) through a 'lecture capture'-system. This gives students the possibility to study more efficiently and more often, and in the end improve study results.

Another topic the SOG strives for, is the use of info clips. In light of digital support, the use of info clips should be promoted by the university. Info clips are a valuable learning tool for students.

## Accessibility and usability of digital material

The SOG strives for the highest flexibility towards students. In light of this, students should be able to use readers digitally. Moreover, students should have the choice to work in an efficient and flexible manner. Currently, it's ridiculous that students are forced to pay ridiculous amounts of money for readers that they had reader used online.