The student-study fit, selective admission and counselling: the Utrecht Model

Seminar ‘Selective admission in Dutch university education: Emerging policies and practices’

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Utrecht University educational model

The educational model has been developed in 2002 when the Bachelor-Master structure was introduced in Dutch universities.

Principles of the educational model:

- Clear distinction between Bachelor and Master
- Flexibility and options
- Personal and activating education
- Good teachers: focus on teacher development
Utrecht University educational model

The model has proven its success: it leads to a relatively high study success in terms of drop-outs rates and completion rates

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<td>Student drop-out rate</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion rate (after four years of study)</td>
<td>*74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolment in Honours Programmes</td>
<td>9%</td>
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*) already the highest in the Netherlands
Project: Educational model 3.0

Even better education with less teaching load

• Further improve quality of education
• Decrease teaching load
• Increase study success
• Stimulate a more ambitious study culture
• Embed the results of educational innovations
• Reconfirm top position in terms of study success
Focus on the student-study fit

Innovative policy:

- As from 2013-2014, all Bachelor’s programmes will introduce a compulsory ‘matching’ or selection procedure

- This procedure runs from the first contact with university until the end of the first year (BSA = binding recommendation regarding the continuation of studies)

- Participation in ‘matching’ activities before the start of the academic year is a condition to fulfill before one can be definitely admitted to a Bachelor’s programme
‘Matching’ procedure:

Four interconnected parts:

1. Information Activities: open door days, web tools

2. Intake Form that students fill out when applying for admission to a Bachelor’s programme (Studielink)

3. ‘Matching’ or Selection Activities before the start of education

4. Coaching in the First Year: tutorial coaching, mentoring, study counselling (Centrum Studiekeuze UU/HU)
Step one: information phase

- Activate students and make them reflect on their own ambitions, knowledge and competences

- Focus on distinctive features of university education, the programme in Utrecht and the institution

- Organise information days for students who made up their mind early, but also for students that start to orientate

- Introduce interactive and digital (web) tools
Step two: intake phase

- Make students reflect on their own ambitions, knowledge and competences in relation to their application for a specific Bachelor’s programme

- Online questionnaire concerning motivation, interests, extracurricular activities, study results in previous education

- Different purposes:
  - The information will be used in first year coaching and counselling
  - The information can be used in interviews (selective admission, but also during – compulsory - individual study counselling before the start of the academic year)
Step three: ‘matching’ phase

- Three months before the start of the academic year, the Bachelor’s programmes invite their prospective students for a ‘matching’ activity

- Goal: make the student aware of his/her choice, the contents of the programme, educational forms and the competences needed

- Possible activities: representative courses/exams followed by a group discussion or an interview

- Two rounds at least: June and August

- The student can eventually switch between these two rounds. The Centrum Studiekeuze (UU/HU) will coach them in Summer if needed
Step four: coaching phase

- Follow students right from the start

- More emphasis on results of first exams:
  - A student with good results could be referred to a honours programme
  - A student with disappointing results will be interviewed directly by his/her personal tutor (making use of specifically designed software to detect “risk groups”)

- Effective referral to the university’s offer in study counselling and courses in study skills improvement
‘Matching’ in Utrecht University is based on experience of years with selective admission.

- Utrecht University College (UCU)
- Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap (Public Administration and Organisation Science)
- Utrecht Law College (ULC)
- SUMMA (Selective Utrecht Medical Master)
- And many more...