



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap

The BES Study Financing Law

For students from the Caribbean Netherlands





We are the RCN Study Financing Team and our job is to arrange study financing for students from the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius) who want to study in the Caribbean, the US and Canada. We also arrange the start-up allowance for students who are going to study in the European Netherlands. We are accountable to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW).

Where are you going to study and what kind of study programme are you going to enroll in? The answers to these questions determine what kind of financing you can apply for. You can read more about it in this brochure. You may have to repay some or all of the money when you finish your studies and this brochure contains more information on that as well. The brochure is available in Dutch, Papiamentu and English.

If you would like to receive more information about BES study financing or about the start-up allowance, please attend one of consultation meetings, or telephone or email us. You can also visit [our website](#).

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Where are you going to study?

Going to study in one of the following 4 regions?

- Bonaire, Saba or St. Eustatius,
- Aruba, Curaçao or St. Maarten,
- the other parts of the Caribbean region,
- U.S.A and Canada.

You can apply for **BES study financing**. Read more about this from [page 7](#) onwards

The islands/countries which are included in the other part of the Caribbean region are:

<i>American Virgin Islands,</i>	•	<i>Cuba</i>	•	<i>Puerto Rico,</i>
<i>Anguilla,</i>	•	<i>Dominica</i>	•	<i>Saint-Barthélemy,</i>
<i>Antigua and Barbuda,</i>	•	<i>Dominican Republic,</i>	•	<i>Saint Kitts and Nevis,</i>
<i>Bahamas,</i>	•	<i>Grenada,</i>	•	<i>Saint Lucia,</i>
<i>Barbados,</i>	•	<i>Guadeloupe,</i>	•	<i>Saint Vincent and the</i>
<i>Belize,</i>	•	<i>Haiti,</i>	•	<i>Grenadines,</i>
<i>Bermuda,</i>	•	<i>Jamaica,</i>	•	<i>Trinidad and Tobago,</i>
<i>British Virgin Islands,</i>	•	<i>Cayman Islands,</i>	•	<i>Turks and Caicos Islands,</i>
<i>Colombia,</i>	•	<i>Montserrat,</i>	•	<i>Venezuela</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	•	<i>Navassa,</i>	•	

If you are going to study somewhere other than the above-mentioned islands/countries, you will not be eligible for BES study financing.

Going to study in the European Netherlands?

You can apply at the Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO) for monthly study financing and you can apply for the start-up allowance via the RCN Study Financing Team. You can read more about the start-up allowance from [page 19](#) onwards.

Will you have to repay your BES study financing or the start-up allowance?

You can read more about repayments from [page 30](#) onwards.



BES Study Financing

The general terms and conditions

You must meet certain conditions in order to be entitled to BES study financing.

These relate to:

1. Your age
2. The study programme
3. Your nationality and place of residence.

Your age

You must be under the age of 30 when your entitlement to BES study financing starts.

Please note! If you receive BES study financing before your 30th birthday but have not yet finished your studies when you reach that age, you will still be entitled to BES study financing as long as the financing term has not ended. However, you are not allowed any interruptions to your studies once you have passed the age of 30. If you do interrupt your studies, you will be no longer entitled to BES study financing from that point in time.

No minimum age applies. If you are still under age, (under the age of 18) and are attending education at senior secondary vocational [middelbaar beroepsonderwijs] (mbo) or higher education level, you will be entitled to BES study financing.

The study programme

You must enrol at an educational institution in 1 of the 4 above-mentioned regions and you must actively attend education there. The study programme you attend must be a full-time study programme.

If you are in senior secondary vocational education [middelbaar beroepsonderwijs] (mbo) or secondary vocational education [secundair beroepsonderwijs] (sbo), you must attend a study programme in the vocational learning pathway [beroeps-opleidende leerweg] (bol). If you are attending a study programme in block or day release [beroepsbegeleidende leerweg] (bbl), you will not be eligible for BES study financing.

If you are going to attend a study programme at higher education [hoger onderwijs] level, you will be eligible for BES study financing for a full-time associate degree, Bachelor's or Master's study programme. A dual study programme at higher education level is also considered to be a full-time study programme.

All study programmes have to last at least one year and be local government certified.

Your nationality and place of residence

In order to be eligible for BES study financing you must have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands during the 3 months prior to your studies in the Caribbean Netherlands.

You must also have Dutch nationality. If you do not have Dutch nationality, you may still be eligible for BES study financing if you have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands for at least 10 years.

Subsequent study programmes

If you are receiving BES study financing for a study programme outside the Caribbean Netherlands and are going to attend another study programme in the subsequent academic year, you do not need to have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands in the 3 months prior to your subsequent study programme in order to be eligible for BES study financing for your new study programme.

If you are not going to attend a new study programme in the academic year following your previous study programme, but you are going to attend one later, you must have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands for 3 months prior to your new study programme.

For example: You completed a Bachelor's degree in America 2 years ago and now want to do a Master's degree in America. Because your subsequent study programme is not going to start immediately after your last year of study you must have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands for 3 months prior to the start of your new study programme.

BES Study Financing

You must use your BES study financing within 10 years. After that period of 10 years you will be no longer entitled to BES study financing. The information in this section explains frequently asked questions such as: What does BES study financing consist of? How much study financing can you get and for how long?

1. Grant or performance-related student loan

2. Loan

3. Amounts

4. Assistance

Grant or performance-related student loan

You can either receive the BES study financing in the form of a grant or performance-related student loan depending on the level of your study programme.

- You do not have to repay study financing in the form of a grant.
- A performance-related student loan is a provisional loan on which interest is charged. If you graduate within 10 years, your performance-related student loan will be converted into a grant. If you do not graduate (on time), you will have to repay the performance-related student loan and the interest charged. The interest percentage is set annually. You can find the relevant amounts on our web page [Monthly amounts](#).

Mbo/sbo levels 1 of 2

If you are going to attend an mbo or sbo study programme at levels 1 or 2, you will receive BES study financing in the form of a grant for a maximum of 4 years. If you are attending a two-year study programme and have to repeat a year twice, you will be entitled to BES study financing in the form of a grant for those 4 years.

Mbo/sbo levels 3 or 4 or higher education

If you are going to attend an mbo or sbo study programme at levels 3 or 4, or if you are going to attend a study programme at a university of applied sciences [hoger beroepsonderwijs] (hbo) or university, you will receive a performance-related student loan. If you do not graduate within 10 years at the level for which you have been granted the study financing, you will have to repay the performance-related student loan, as well as the corresponding interest.

You will receive the performance-related student loan for the (nominal) term of your study programme, up to a maximum of 4 years. If, therefore, you attend a study programme which officially lasts 3 years, you will receive a performance-related student loan for 3 years.

If you get behind during your studies, that will not entitle you to a performance-related student loan for a longer period of time.

Loan

Besides the grant or performance-related student loan, you can also apply for a loan. Loans always have to be repaid and interest will also be charged. The interest percentage is set annually. You can find the relevant amounts on our web page [Monthly amounts](#).

Loan after your grant or performance-related student loan

If you are no longer entitled to a grant or performance-related student loan, but have not yet finished your study programme, you will still be able to take out a loan for a maximum of 3 years. Once again, you will always have to repay this loan and the interest.

Amounts

The amount you can receive every month depends on the island/country in which you are going to study, as well as the type of education you attend. Every region has its own grant/performance-related student loan and loan amounts. You can find details of the standard amounts on our web page [Monthly amounts](#).

The amounts are adjusted every year.

No separate travel allowance applies because it is already included in the standard amount.

Assistance

If you are going to study on Bonaire, Curaçao, Aruba or Sin-Maarten, the RCN Study Financing Team can arrange for you to receive free assistance from a coach during your first year. The coach will welcome you, help you with things like registering on the island you are going to live on and finding a GP and will show you around your new home.

If you are going to study in the other parts of the Caribbean region, or in America or Canada, you will often receive assistance from the institution you are going to study at.

Assistance

1. When and how?
2. Sensible borrowing
3. Under 18
4. Authorised representation

When and how

If you want to know for sure that you will receive BES study financing when you start your studies, you must submit your application form to us at least 3 months before you start.

Although you can apply for BES study financing retroactively, that only applies for the current academic year. If you are starting your studies on August 1st but only apply for your BES study financing in October, for example, your BES study financing will be awarded as of August 1st.

You can find the BES study financing application form on our web page [All forms](#). You must submit supporting documents along with your application form to demonstrate which study programme you are going to attend.

You can submit the completed form by post or email. Fill in the digital form completely, print it out and sign it. You can, for example, take a photo using your smartphone but it would be even better if you created a pdf of the application form and the supporting documents. Then you will be able to submit these documents to us by email. You can also hand in the form at our office on Bonaire. Once you have submitted all the requested information, you will receive a decision on your application within 8 weeks.

Sensible borrowing

Before applying for BES study financing, you should think about how much money you actually need. Draw up an overview of your expected costs, such as tuition fees, study resources, insurance, rent, telephone, transport, food shopping, clothing, sport and entertainment and compare this with your income. You may be earning money from a part-time job, or your parents may contribute to your study costs. All this will mean you can borrow less and keep your student debt as low as possible. After all, you will have to repay, in any event, the loan and sometimes your performance-related student loan and the interest when you have finished studying. This will give you advance insight into how much you actually need and prevents you from borrowing too much. If you discover that you still need more money while you are studying, you can always increase the loan (up until the maximum amount). You can even do this retroactively during an academic year.

Under 18

You have to sign the application for BES study financing yourself, even if you are under the age of 18. In other words: your parents cannot submit an application on your behalf. If you are not going to study on your home island and are under the age of 18, you should bear in mind that you cannot leave the island for a long period of time without your parents. In that case your parents are obliged to appoint someone as a temporary guardian. A temporary guardian is someone who assumes responsibility for you and for your care and upbringing and performs official acts on behalf of your parent(s), such as signing important documents from various bodies. A temporary guardian will also manage your finances. Your parents can submit a request for a temporary guardian to the Guardianship Council of the Caribbean Netherlands on the island on which you are registered. If the Guardianship Council does not find any objections to the future guardian, your parents can submit the request to the court. The court can then appoint the designated person as your temporary guardian.

Authorised representation

The RCN Study Financing Team is never allowed to pass on personal information about you to someone else, not even to your parents if you are under the age of 18. You therefore have to arrange things with us directly. If you nevertheless want someone else to make the arrangements with the RCN Study Financing Team, you will have to authorise that person. You can find the form you need to use to do this on our web page [All forms](#).

Authorised representation

1. Advance
2. Payment
3. Changes to your situation
4. Checks
5. Graduation

Advance

If you are not going to study on your home island, you can request an advance for maximally the first 3 months of your study financing. This means you will receive the first month, the first 2 months or the first 3 months of your BES study financing as an advance. This can be useful if you have to incur costs for your study programme before it actually begins. The advance is paid out maximally 3 months before your study programme starts. You can only apply for an advance once.

Bear in mind: If you apply for an advance, you will not receive any study financing in the first month, the first 2 months or the first 3 months of the academic year because you will already have received it as an advance. You should therefore make sure that you retain sufficient money from your advance to cover those months.

America, Canada, Barbados, Colombia and Puerto Rico

If you are going to study in America, Canada, Barbados, Colombia or Puerto Rico, you will receive, as standard, the BES study financing twice a year as an advance. The first amount of your study financing will be paid out in August/September. You will then receive the amounts up to December as a single amount. After that you will receive the monthly amounts for January up to and including July in December and then, in July, the monthly amounts for August up to and including December of the next academic year.

If you nevertheless want to receive your BES study financing every month, this is possible but you must indicate this clearly in advance on your application form.

Payment

The BES study financing will be credited to the bank account you have stipulated between the 20th and 30th day of the month. If this is a bank account outside the Caribbean Netherlands, you must bear in mind that bank charges will be payable. The exact payment days can be found on our web page [Payment dates](#).

Changes to your situation

Some changes to your situation must always be reported to us.

Change of address

If you move during or after your studies, or start using a different or new email address, you are obliged to inform us of your new home or postal address. In short you must ensure that we can always contact you. This not only applies during your studies but after that as well, if you have to repay a student loan.

How to proceed if you decide not to start your study after all or if you stop studying

If you decide not to start your study after all, for example because you have failed your exams, please inform us as quickly as possible because you will then not be entitled to BES study financing. If you stop studying, make sure you terminate your BES study financing as of the date of your deregistration.

Informing us of changes

You can inform us of changes to your situation by using the Study Financing and Start-Up Allowance Change Form. You can find this form on our web page [All forms](#). You can also use this form to inform us, for example, that you have changed bank accounts, or have started a new study programme.

Checks

We will make sure that you receive the financing you are entitled to. That is why we check your data beforehand and afterwards, including with other bodies such as the educational institution, the municipal civil affairs department and the Tax and Customs Administration. These checks always take place in accordance with the BES Personal Data Protection Act (Wet bescherming persoonsgegevens BES).

You must respond promptly if we ask you to send us a recent proof of enrolment during the academic year. If you fail to do so, your BES study financing will be halted and you will have to repay the amount you have received! That is yet another reason why it is important that the contact details we have for you are correct.

Graduation

If you have graduated, you must terminate your BES study financing. You can do that by directly informing us of the end date of your study programme.

Graduation at mbo levels 1 or 2

You do not need to send a copy of your diploma because you will have received your BES study financing as a grant and not as a performance-related student loan.

Graduation at mbo levels 3 or 4 or higher educatio

Your performance-related student loan will be converted into a grant if you graduate within 10 years (the graduation deadline) at the level of at least the study programme for which you received the performance-related student loan. Your student debt will then be reduced or even cancelled altogether. How much performance-related student loan is converted into a grant depends on the value of your diploma, or the nominal term of your study programme. You should therefore send a certified copy of your diploma to us.



Start-up allowance

If you are going to study in the European Netherlands, you can use the start-up allowance to pay for your flight, or your equipment (for example winter clothing or bed linen) or furnishings (for example a bed or cupboard) and cover the costs until you receive monthly study financing from DUO in the European Netherlands.

If you are going to study in the region, the compensation for your extra costs will already be settled in the amounts that you receive from Study Financing.

Conditions

You must fulfil certain conditions in order to be entitled to the start-up allowance. These relate to:

1. [Your age and DUO study financing](#)
2. [The study programme](#)
3. [Your place of residence and nationality](#)

Your age and DUO study financing

If you are going to study in the European Netherlands, you can apply for study financing at DUO. To qualify you must be under the age of 30 when your study programme starts. If you are entitled to DUO study financing from the beginning of your study programme in the European Netherlands, you can also apply for a one-time start-up allowance at RCN.

Under 18

If you are not yet 18 years old and are going to attend higher education, you can get study financing from the beginning of the academic year on September 1st. You will then also be entitled to the start-up allowance.

If you are not yet 18, or turn 18 after July 1st and are going to study at mbo level, your entitlement to DUO study financing will not start at the beginning of the school year on 1 August, but as from the quarter after your 18th birthday.

- If you become eligible for study financing as from October 1st, January 1st, April 1st or July 1st during the first year of your mbo study programme because you have reached the age of 18, you will still be eligible for the start-up allowance before you depart to the European Netherlands.
- If you are not entitled to study financing during the first year of your study programme (that runs from August 1st up to and including July 31st) because you are not yet 18 years old on 2 July of that school year, you will not be entitled to the start-up allowance.

The study programme

You can apply for a start-up allowance if you are going to attend one of the following study programmes in the European part of the Netherlands:

- a senior secondary vocational (mbo) study programme at levels 3 or 4 (full-time vocational learning pathway [beroepsopleidende leerweg] (bol)
- a study programme at a university of applied sciences [hoger beroepsonderwijs] (hbo) or university (associate degree, Bachelor's or Master's – full-time or dual).

If you are eligible for DUO study financing for the study programme in question, you will be entitled to a start-up allowance as well.

Please note! The start-up allowance does not apply for vocational education at levels 1 and 2. It is usually better to attend an mbo study programme at levels 1 or 2 in your home region. That is because the study programme will be taught (for a part) in your own language and will link up better with the local labour market. If you are nevertheless going to attend an mbo study programme at levels 1 or 2 in the European Netherlands, you can still apply for DUO study financing (if you are 18 or older), but you will not be entitled to a start-up allowance.

Your place of residence and nationality

In order to be eligible for the start-up allowance you must have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands during the 3 months prior to your studies in the Caribbean Netherlands.

You must also have Dutch nationality. If you do not have Dutch nationality, you will still be eligible for the start-up allowance if you have lived in the Caribbean Netherlands for at least 10 years.

The start-up allowance

1. Performance-related student loan
2. Supplementary loan
3. Amounts
4. Assistance

On this page you will find (partly) the same information as on [page 10](#) and [11](#) (description Study financing BES)

Performance-related student loan

The performance-related student loan is initially a loan on which interest is charged. If you graduate in the European Netherlands within 10 years (counting from the commencement date of the study programme for which you received the start-up allowance), the performance-related student loan will be converted into a grant which you do not have to repay. Neither will you have to repay the interest charged on the performance-related student loan. If you do not graduate, or do not graduate within that 10 year period, you will have to repay the performance-related student loan and the interest charged.

Supplementary loan

You can apply for a one-off loan in addition to your performance-related student loan. Interest will be charged on this loan as well. You will have to repay the supplementary loan and the interest charged no matter what.

Please note! You should borrow sensibly because what you borrow now will have to be repaid with interest at a later date. You should not borrow more than is necessary and, before submitting your application, you should draw up an overview of the costs which you think you are going to incur, such as costs for travel, insurance, resources and your initial accommodation costs.

Amounts

On our website you can find details of the [amount of the start-up allowance](#) and the [interest percentage](#).

Assistance

If you are going to study in the European Netherlands, you will be living in a different type of society, be exposed to a very different culture and a language which you perhaps do not (yet) speak very fluently. That is why you can receive free assistance via the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science during your first year of study. Although you are not obliged to take up this offer of assistance, the Ministry strongly advises you to do so. The aim of the assistance is to increase your level of self-reliance in society in the European Netherlands and to help you make a successful start to your study programme.

The assisting organisation will arrange, among other things, your flight to the European Netherlands, central and regional support, help with taking out insurance policies, support when starting your study programme and they will help you with becoming integrated within the educational institution you are attending. Throughout the first year you will have your own mentor who can help and advise you. Among other things they will show you around the town or city you are studying in. The coach will also help you open a bank account in the European Netherlands and register with the authorities in your new place of residence. The assisting organisation can even arrange accommodation for you for at least one year and they will, of course, pay particular attention to factors such as safety, the neighbourhood, the size of the room, the facilities and the amount of rent.

All these services and assistance are free of charge! All you will have to pay are the normal costs which you would incur without this assistance. This means the costs of an airline ticket, the insurance premiums and a rent deposit. You can pay all of this using your start-up allowance. We will pay part of your start-up allowance directly to the assisting organisation. If the coach has already paid your costs and there was some money left over, the assisting organisation will, of course, pay this into your personal account. The coach will provide you with an overview of all the costs you are required to pay, so you will know exactly what your money has been used for.

You can indicate whether you would like to make use of this assistance on the application form. We will then make sure the assisting organisation contacts you.

Application for start-up allowance

1. When and how?
2. Sensible borrowing
3. Under 18
4. Authorised representation
5. Study financing via DUO

When and how

You cannot apply for the start-up allowance retroactively. That is why you must have submitted your application by no later than the month before your studies begin. If you want to make sure that you receive your start-up allowance on time, you should submit your application form to us at least 3 months before the start of your study programme in the European Netherlands. If you wish to take up the offer of assistance, you should submit your application form to us at least 6 months before the start of your study programme in the European Netherlands.

You can find the start-up allowance application form on the page [All forms](#). You must submit supporting documents along with your application form to demonstrate which study programme you are going to attend.

You can also submit the completed form by post, or hand it in at our office on Bonaire, or submit it by email. Fill in the digital form completely, print it and do not forget to sign it. You can, for example, take a photo using your smartphone but it would be even better if you created a pdf of the application form and the supporting documents. Then you will be able to submit this digital document to us by email.

Once you have submitted all the requested information to us, you will receive a decision on your application within 8 weeks.

Under 18

You will have to sign the application for the start-up allowance yourself, even if you are under the age of 18. In other words your parents cannot submit an application on your behalf.

If you are not going to study on your home island and are under the age of 18, you should bear in mind that you cannot leave the island for a long period of time without your parents. Your parents will then be obliged to appoint someone as a temporary guardian. A temporary guardian is someone who assumes responsibility for you and for your care and upbringing and who performs official acts on behalf of your parent(s), such as signing important documents from various bodies. A temporary guardian will also manage your finances. Your parents can submit requests for a temporary guardian to the Guardianship Council of the Caribbean Netherlands on the island on which you are registered. If the Guardianship Council does not find any objections to the future guardian, your parents can submit the request to the court. The court can appoint the designated person as your temporary guardian.

Authorised representation

The RCN Study Financing Team is never allowed to pass on personal information about you to someone else, not even to your parents if you are under the age of 18. You therefore have to arrange things with us directly. If you nevertheless want someone else to make the arrangements with the RCN Study Financing Team, you will have to authorise that person. You can find the form you need to use to do this on our website page [All forms](#).

Study financing in the European Netherlands

You have to apply to DUO in order to obtain monthly study financing for a study programme in the European Netherlands. At duo.nl/antillen you can find, among other things, a brochure containing all the information about Dutch study financing. This brochure is available in Dutch, Papiamentu and English.

At duo.nl/antillen you will also find the form entitled 'Application for study financing for students of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten or the Caribbean Netherlands' which you can use to apply to DUO for study financing. You should do this at least 3 months before your studies in the European Netherlands begin.

You can also contact the RCN Study Financing Team for general information about applying for DUO study financing. You can hand in the DUO application form to us as well. We will then make sure that your application is sent to the right DUO department.

During and after your studies

1. Payment
2. Changes to your situation
3. Graduation

Payment

The start-up allowance is paid out as a one-off amount. If this is paid into a bank account outside the Caribbean Netherlands, you must bear in mind that bank charges will be payable.

On request the start-up allowance can be paid out as an advance no more than 3 months before your study programme starts. This may be a good idea because many of the start-up costs are incurred before the study programme starts. However, you must have applied for the start-up allowance on time!

If you wish to take up the offer of assistance, a proportion will be paid out to the assisting organisation. The coach will then be able to pay for things that have to be arranged for you. The rest will be paid into your account.

If you not wish to take up of the offer of assistance, the entire amount will be paid into your account.

Changes to your situation

Some changes to your situation must always be reported to us.

Change of address

If you move during or after your studies, or start using a different or new email address, you are obliged to inform us of your new home or postal address. In short, you must ensure that we can always contact you. This not only applies during your studies but after that as well, if you have to repay a student loan.

How to proceed if you decide not to start your study after all

If you decide not to start your study after all, for example because you have failed your exams, please inform us as quickly as possible because you will then not be entitled to the start-up allowance.

Informing us of changes

You can inform us of changes to your situation by using the Study Financing and Start-Up Allowance Change Form. You can find these forms on our website page [All forms](#). You can also use these forms to inform us, for example, that you have changed bank accounts, or have started a new study programme.

Graduation

If you graduate within a period of 10 years (the graduation deadline), the performance-related student loan can be converted into a grant. Your student debt will then be reduced or even cancelled altogether. You will have to repay the supplementary loan no matter what. You will have to send us a certified copy of your diploma or certificate in order for the performance-related student loan to be converted.



After your study programme: repayment

1. Repayment
2. When do repayments start?
3. Reducing the monthly amount
4. Temporarily halting repayments
5. Payment arrears

Repayment

You always have to repay your loan. If you have not graduated (on time), you will have to repay the performance-related student loan as well. Interest will be charged on your student debt. You have to repay your student debt in monthly instalments.

The bank account into which you have to repay your loan is:

Maduro & Curiel's Bank, (Bonaire) N.V.

Kaya L.D. Gerharts # 1

Kralendijk

Bonaire, Caribisch Nederland

Account number: 402.821.10

Swift Code: MCBKBQBN

Under payment reference please state your ID number, followed by L and then your loan number.

If you are repaying your student debt via a bank account outside the Caribbean Netherlands, you should bear in mind that bank charges will often be payable. You will be required to pay these costs. NB: If you instruct the bank to deduct these costs from the payable amount, you will be repaying less of your student debt. This may lead to payment arrears and possibly additional collection costs. You should therefore make sure that we receive the full instalment on time.

You can reduce the bank charges by opting to pay back by year, rather than by month. You should then make sure that you pay the entire annual amount for the year in question in advance in January.

When do repayments start?

You do not need to start repaying your student debt or the start-up allowance immediately after graduation. Your redemption phase will start on 1 January of the year following your deregistration from the study programme. This covers a period of 2 years during which you will not have to repay anything, although you can, of course, start repayments if you wish.

The repayment phase begins after the 2 year redemption phase. From that point in time you will have to start repayments in monthly instalments. You have to repay the entire debt within a maximum of 15 years.

How much you will have to repay per month depends on the height of your debt, the expected interest rate and the remaining term of your student debt. However, the minimum amount is \$ 45.42 per month.

It may be that you received several student loans from us, for example a student loan for an mbo study programme first and later another for a higher education study programme. We register these as separate student loans and that means you will have to repay several student loans and separately repay several monthly instalments at the same time.

Reducing the monthly amount

You can ask us to reduce your monthly amount. We will then calculate how much you can repay per month based on your income. We will use the details of your income from 2 years ago. If the resulting amount is lower than the fixed monthly amount set by us, we will reduce your monthly amount. This process can even lead to a monthly amount of \$ 0. Your income can never cause the monthly amount you have to pay to increase. The calculation of the reduced monthly amount is valid for one calendar year, after which your situation will be reassessed.

If you also have to repay a student debt to DUO, we will take that into account when calculating your earning capacity.

Please note! This is subject to the condition that you have also applied to DUO for a reduction in your monthly amount. The monthly amount that DUO has calculated for you will then be deducted from the monthly amount for your BES student debt(s).

You can apply for a lower monthly amount using the form entitled '[Earning capacity assessment application form](#)'. You should always submit your application before January 1st because then your request will come into effect on January 1st of that calendar year. If you apply later, any reduced monthly amount will come into effect as of the month following the month in which the reduction to the monthly amount was applied for. If, for example, you submit your application on 14 February, the change will only take effect on March 1st. When applying for a lower monthly amount you must also submit an income statement from Tax and Customs Administration as evidence.

After you have submitted your first application for a reduction of the monthly amount, we will try to obtain your income details for the following year directly from the Tax and Customs Administration in the Caribbean Netherlands. If you stay abroad or receive income from abroad, we will usually not be able to obtain your details from the Tax and Customs Administration. You will then have to submit an application for a reduction in the monthly amount for the new calendar year yourself.

Writing off remaining loan

If you have repaid your debt every year according to your earning capacity, you may not have repaid your entire student debt after 15 years. The remainder of debt will then be written off and you will therefore not have to repay it.

Please note! If you have used a repayment-free period (see below), the period of 15 years will be extended by this period. Writing off the debt does not apply to payment arrears. They do have to be repaid.

Temporarily halting repayments

You can also temporarily halt repayment of student debt. You do not have to provide the reason for a repayment-free period. You can halt repayment of your student debt for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 5 years. Please note! The interest on your debt will, however, continue and the maximum repayment period of 15 years will be extended by the number of repayment-free months you use.

TIP! Always apply for a reduction to the monthly amount first. It may be that you will be able to pay the resulting amount and avoid the maximum repayment period of 15 years being extended. If the reduced monthly amount is still too high, you can always opt for a repayment-free period.

Payment arrears

If you do not pay your monthly amounts on time, you will have payment arrears. You should avoid payment arrears because you will not be able to repay them based on your earning capacity. What is more, payment arrears are never written off. Ultimately we will have to engage a bailiff to collect any outstanding payments. This will incur extra costs which you will have to pay.

If you are experiencing payment problems, please get in touch with us! Together we can assess the options and avoid you getting into even more trouble.

Questions?

Contact the Bonaire office of RCN Study financing

Heb jij na het lezen van deze brochure nog vragen? Neem dan gerust contact met ons op. We helpen je graag verder.

If you have any questions after reading this brochure, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be only too pleased to help!

You should also contact us if you have any general questions about study financing or a DUO student debt. Having said that, we will not be able to answer any specific questions. For example, we will be able to help you with your application to DUO for study financing, but we will not be able to tell you why your supplementary grant has not yet been calculated. If you have a debt to DUO, we will be able to help you apply for a reduction to your monthly amount. However, we will not be able to give you any explanation about a specific debt you have to DUO. For that you will have to contact DUO yourself, via duo.nl/antillen.

Our contact details

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Consultation hours

Only by appointment at the times mentioned on our [website](#).

The employees of RCN Study financing regularly visit St. Eustatius and Saba and announce this timely.

TIP! Keep this brochure in a safe place. It also contains information which you may need during and after your studies!

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