

## Duty of care for students - a shared responsibility

In the Duty of Care memorandum (TU Delft, May 2023) we elaborate on the reason, framework and operationalisation of our Duty of Care. This two pager contains a short summary of the interpretation of our duty of care, its elaboration in the Duty of Care framework and the intended implementation. This summary is for basic information for anyone who has a role within the duty of care. (Further information at ESA Policy & Implementation, Young Mi Poppema and Stella van der Meulen, [Y.M.Poppema@tudelft.nl](mailto:Y.M.Poppema@tudelft.nl), [S.J.vandermeulen@tudelft.nl](mailto:S.J.vandermeulen@tudelft.nl)).

### Definition TU Delft duty of care

*TU Delft has a duty of care to design its **education and study climate in such a way as to support student well-being**. TU Delft is responsible for creating an open, safe and inclusive **environment that enables students to flourish** and pursue academic and personal development. Moreover, TU Delft is responsible for making **guidance** available to those students who need it in order to successfully start, follow and complete a degree programme at TU Delft.*

#### 1. Why has TU Delft **now** established the duty of care?

Politics and society make a big appeal to universities when it comes to student well-being. This is reflected in motions in the House of Representatives (e.g. on disability) and also in the OCW Administrative Agreement (July 2022). In this Administrative Agreement, the emphasis is on prevention, early detection, guidance and integrity. In addition, there are cries for help from student organizations and care institutions such as RIVM, Trimbos and GGZ. The Corona period gave momentum for an intensive TU Delft broad dialogue about student well-being. The increased expectations, also from students, lead to pressure on the people within TU Delft who teach, supervise or guide students. More and more often the question arose where the duty of care starts, when we do well and where the duty of care ends.

#### 2. When are we satisfied with our duty of care?

- ✓ If we have a shared view of the quality of information & guidance and can assure that quality.
- ✓ If everyone whom it concerns, knows what to expect when it comes to duty of care.
- ✓ If everyone knows their role in terms of duty of care, performs well and maintains the limits in this.

#### 3. Who is involved in the Duty of Care execution?

**TU Delft as an institution** makes every effort to fulfil the duty of care as expressed in the memorandum and the Framework. The implementation of the duty of care rests with a range of employees, from teacher and study advisor to, for example, contact service employee, integral safety and student psychologist.

**External care chain:** there are all kinds of external parties in the field of care and welfare, e.g. SGZ, GGZ and Brijder addiction care. The functioning of this falls outside the TU Delft duty of care. However, TU Delft is well connected with relevant external parties to point this out to students where necessary. There is a reciprocity: if students do not take their responsibility, it is not possible for TU Delft to carry out its duty of care, this translates into the following.

**TU Delft students** take note of and adhere to the Code of Conduct, they endorse the aforementioned core values in word and behaviour. In addition, students take care of their well-being and pay attention to the well-being of fellow students and staff. Students form a student community in which they support each other. Students take control of their development, e.g. by consulting information about study & well-being and, if necessary, asking for help.

#### 4. What exactly is it about?

TU Delft follows the description of the Universities of the Netherlands in 3 areas of duty of care:

- I. The academic system: the quality of education (in particular content and study ability); The attainment targets of study programmes are guiding in this respect. This is covered by the current education quality assurance system.
- II. Information provision: ensuring findable & accessible information.
- III. The social system: the quality of support, study and student guidance, the study climate and social safety<sup>1</sup>.

The **Duty of Care Framework** describes what we have in mind in domains II and III:

Domain II: Information provision

- A. Information about studying at TU Delft is easy to find, timely, clear, correct & inclusive.
- B. TU Delft communicates proactively and periodically about the preconditions of the study and about the study progress.

Domain III: Social system

- A. Students get a good start at TU Delft.
- B. TU Delft offers an inclusive and socially safe environment and a constructive study climate.
- C. Teachers provide professional educational guidance.
- D. Support staff provides professional student guidance and study support.
- E. The student guidance chain is in order (based on mass customization). The roles & responsibilities within student guidance are clear and sufficiently defined and everyone knows their role, performs it well and respects the boundaries in it.

#### 5. What does the implementation of the Duty of Care imply in the coming period?

- ✓ Improving **communication to students** - on education and guidance aspects, the offer of student support and the possibilities for meeting and relaxation - has the highest priority and is taken up first.
- ✓ In addition, it is important that all employees involved are aware of their role, this requires **conversations** with these **employees** and **communication about responsibilities and boundaries**.
- ✓ We want to clarify what helps students in terms of **attitude and behaviour** to make their study a success and to flourish. In co-creation with students and integrity office, we want to seek out dialogue about this and come up with examples.
- ✓ Without **quality assurance** of the duty of care, risks arise for students and staff. That is why quality assurance is being developed at TU Delft level so that the information provision and the social system are and remain at the right level. As with the education quality system, the implementing parties remain responsible for proper duty of care. Education & Student Affairs (ESA) can centrally provide facilitation and monitoring.
- ✓ **Current new insights** - e.g. from the National Framework for Student Welfare (June 2023) and Research on Performance Pressure of Trimbos/ECIO (May 2023) - are translated into fine tuning our duty of care execution.
- ✓ The above will be initiated from ESA by a (temporary) Coordinator of duty of care and student guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> Aspects such as the safety of e.g. information and buildings are not included, because these are part of regular business operations and related rules.