

*Position paper November 2015
Last revised February 2021*

Harde Knip¹

Situation sketch

Nationwide

The 'Harde Knip' originated in the European Bologna Declaration, with, among other things, the aim of having every university use the same bachelor's-master's structure. Since 2012, the 'Harde Knip' is part of the WHW and therefore mandatory at every Dutch university. The bachelor and master are considered two different programmes, the student can only start a master programme when the bachelor diploma has been obtained. This would make switching between universities and courses easier and also generate an inflow of people with a bachelor's degree into the labour market. These are noble goals, but the Dutch labour market is not at all open to bachelor students. Students experience the measure as a burden that causes a delay in their studies and can sometimes even lead to a delay of a whole year. Moreover, this is a very expensive consequence for the student, with the loss of study financing as of the academic year 2015-2016. In the academic year 2019-2020, a one-time 'Zachte Knip' was added due to corona.

TU Delft

The 'Harde Knip' has been introduced at TU Delft since 2010. There have been many discussions with the student council, which even resulted in two legal disputes. Although both were lost, the preconditions set by the student council were almost all taken into account. Since its introduction, the current discussions about the "Harde Knip" are almost always about its severeness. Where previously there was a so-called 'hardheidsclausule', this was legally abolished in 2013, which meant further hardening of the 'Harde Knip'.

Vision ORAS

A student should never be delayed more than half a year by a measure such as the 'Harde Knip'. Unfortunately, because this is national legislation, there is little that can be done against this measure. The regulation around the 'Harde Knip' is legally tightly framed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. ORAS believes that the TU Delft must actively minimize unnecessary delays caused by the 'Harde Knip':

The results of the August resits should always count towards the measure, so these results should be known in time. Also, each master's programme must offer a second entry moment that can be studied nominally, so that a student can enter halfway through the year and the "waiting time" is reduced. Retakes may not be limited, there must always be two test opportunities per year offered without extra conditions. Finally, compassionate cases must always be taken into account and customised solutions must be applied. ORAS monitors these cases through its hotline hardeknip@oras.nl or https://oras.nl/voor-studenten/#elementor-toc__heading-anchor-5.

¹ Harsh measure to only allow students by a strict number of credits