



# Doing a board year at the



Information booklet 2023-2024

*In this booklet you will find all the information you need to get an idea of Groningen's most fun board. This includes information about the GSB, its working groups and committees, the board positions and the application process.*

*Below you will find all the important contact information.*

### *The Groninger Studentenbond*

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### *Opening hours*

*Monday: 11.00 - 15.00*

*Tuesday: 11.00 - 15.00*

*Wednesday: 11.00 - 15.00*

*Thursday: 11.00 - 15.00*

*Friday: 11.00 - 15.00*

*Saturday: Closed*

*Sunday: Closed*

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# Inhoudsopgave

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## About the Groninger Studentenbond

The Groningen Student Union is an association dedicated to the interests of students in Groningen. For example, by entering into discussions with the Municipality of Groningen, the University of Groningen and Hanze University Groningen, we stand up for student housing, good education and a strong legal position for students. Our vision is that students should experience no or few obstacles in terms of finances and mobility and enjoy the highest possible quality of education.

The GSb has a very broad orientation. Locally, we lobby for good and affordable housing for students. Nationally, we follow all developments in higher education and lobby together with the National Student Union (LSVb) for quality and affordable education.

There are also many working groups and committees within the GSb. We offer free legal assistance to students who, for example, have problems with their landlord, have a dispute with a thesis supervisor or have received a negative BSA. The Legal Help Desk and Rent Support Center offer advice for this and can mediate if necessary. In addition, the *Nait Soez'n*, the opinion magazine for Groningen students associated with the GSb, is published a few times a year.



## What does the GSb do?

The GSb is primarily concerned with four issues: service, information, advocacy and campaigning.

### Services

The GSb helps students if they have problems with, for example, their education, side jobs, DUO or their landlord. The Legal Help Desk has trained volunteers who assist students. If necessary, a student can use the GSb's lawyer network free of charge.

### Information

The GSb informs about the latest developments in student policy. To that end, we have a website, are available by phone, e-mail and in the office Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. We have also been publishing our own opinion magazine, the Nait Soez'n, since 1972. Another way of providing information is the Kamerboek, which is also published in English as the Housing Guide. This contains tips for finding a room in Groningen and your rights and obligations as a tenant. We also ensure that the information provided by the Hanze and the RUG is of good quality. Furthermore, we regularly organize activities, such as a pub quiz, pub lecture or debate.

### Advocacy

The GSb not only follows the entire student policy, but also wants to improve it. To this end, we keep in touch with various organizations. We have good contact with the city council parties and sit in working groups with the municipality and housing corporations. We also talk with the Hanze and the RUG about the central policy of both institutions and with the LSVb about national student policy.

### Action

When students' interests are harmed and consultation no longer serves any purpose, the GSb takes action. Public pressure and press attention force institutions to explain the bad situation and solve problems. Attention is drawn to an issue in a playful way. The goal of taking action is to get things done that are in the interests of students and to put student interests on the map with the

students themselves, the institutions, the media, politicians, and so on.

### Structure of the GSb

The GSb is an association in which the board issues policy and makes the important decisions. You can become a member of the GSb if you are a student in Groningen or if you plan to become one soon.

Within the GSb, the General Assembly (GMA) is the highest body. The GMA appoints the board, committees and coordinators. This means that they are accountable to the GMA. There are two committees that support the GMA in its oversight role, which are the Application Committee and Audit Committee.

### Organs of the GSb

The board may form a working group to support the board in its work. Working groups keep the ALV informed of their activities. Each working group has a coordinator who is appointed by the GMA on the nomination of the board. Each working group has a board member attached to it who is the link between the working group and the board.

### The Application Committee

The Application Committee consists of three people who review applicants for the new board on their letters and interviews. The Soco nominates a candidate board to the GMA, which then has to vote on it.

### The Audit Committee

The Audit Committee consists of two to four people who audit the GSb's finances at least once a year, after which they inform the GMA and give a voting recommendation. In addition, the Audit Committee gives advice on the budget and ensures consistency on financial policies.

### Nait Soez'n

The Nait Soez'n is the independent opinion magazine of the GSb. It is not only a magazine for members, but it is also distributed to all buildings of the RUG, the Hanze and a large number of public

buildings. The topics covered in the Nait Soez'n are education news, culture, background, students, or anything related to this. As a member (and donor), you always get the Nait sent to your home!

### The Legal Helpdesk

The Legal Helpdesk deals with legal issues for students, such as binding study advice and problems with work and product purchases. The working group consists of law students who spend a few hours a week solving legal issues. Students can stop by the GSb, call or email with their questions. In addition, the Support Center is affiliated with the Student Line of the LSVb, which means that calls can come in twice a week from all corners of the country, not just Groningen.

### The Activities Committee

The Activities Committee of the GSb organizes all kinds of fun activities for members and non-members. For example, they organize game nights, pub quizzes and outings such as bowling and jeu de boules.

### The DiscusCie

The DiscusCie of the GSb is a committee that organizes informative and educational activities. Last year, for example, the DiscusCie organized a movie night and a pub lecture on psychedelics.

### Advisory Council

The Advisory Council (AC) provides continuity within the GSb. This council consists of former board members and active members. They advise the board in making and implementing their policies. The board and the RvA have regular contact in joint meetings. In addition, the GSb has a buddy-system where individual advice can be given.

### The Research Team

The Research Team was established to identify relevant problems and situations of students in Groningen. By getting in touch with students, the Research Team collects information and then publishes the results. In the past, studies have been conducted on

the Englishification of higher education in Groningen and study and stress. The latter study had the shocking result that 1 in 3 students experience stress on a regular basis.

### The Board

The board takes care of the day-to-day course of the GSb. The General Member Assembly must ultimately approve the policy, but the board is responsible for implementing decisions and therefore often comes up with initiatives and ideas. Each new board provides a policy plan explaining the plans for the coming year to members and external parties. Each of the board members has a number of tasks in his or her portfolio, which are detailed below.

## What does the board do?

### Representation

The board carries the views and vision of the GSb to the press, to the LSVb, to consultations with other organizations, and so on.

### Staying informed

The board monitors developments that affect students so that it can respond to current events. Among other things, the board is briefed on educational matters at the beginning of the year; after that, the board stays constantly informed to know what is going on.

### Organizing

The board guides the Activities Committee and the DiscusCie in planning and executing activities and takes care of the day-to-day running of the union. For example, as a board member one week organizing the next GMA one week and and the next week organizing an action against education budget cuts. The board takes the lead, but it is also important to motivate members in organizing activities.

### Continuity

The board ensures continuity of the organization and working groups. Board members are contacts for the working groups,



committees and other bodies. Ensuring continuity means that the working groups have enough members and that they are well informed about what their predecessors have done. It is also important in policy and contact with externals to have a clear vision that is used for several years is used.

### National Student Union (LSVb)

The LSVb represents the interests of students at the national level. The LSVb is a federation of local student unions such as the GSb. The task of the LSVb is to propagate ideas and criticism of the local unions. On their behalf, the LSVb maintains contact with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the House of Representatives and the minister or state secretary. Through these contacts, the LSVb influences national student and education policy. In addition, if necessary, action is taken.

As a GSb board member you have a lot to do with the LSVb. Not only do you determine policy with union administrators from other cities, but you also work together a lot. There is a general member meeting six times a year where you deal with a wide variety of issues, such as the policy plan and budget, the annual report, the installation of the application committee and the installation of the new LSVb board. Indirectly, you decide which way the Netherlands will go with education! You discuss important topics with each other, organize actions together and you can make use of the extensive knowledge and courses of the LSVb. Regularly there is a working group of the LSVb on varying topics such as study financing, participation and housing. Attendance is not obligatory, but it is much appreciated and the working groups often produce many new ideas and knowledge.

## Time schedule and portfolios

Each board member has a very individual time schedule. You should count on a time commitment of approximately 20 hours per week. How you organize your time depends on your tasks within the board, the projects you work on and what you like to do.

There are many subjects that the GSb deals with. Within the GSb you have quite a lot of choice in what you will do. That is what makes doing a board year at the Groninger Studentenbond so much fun! Here is an overview of the current portfolios.

### Academic education (WO/RUG).

All matters that concern the University of Groningen, such as contact with the university council parties, strengthening program committees and contact with university student advisors. The portfolio holder is also the contact person for the RUG's employee participation.

### Higher occupational education (HBO)

This concerns issues that are specific to the Hanze. These include the introduction of student advisors, tuition-free administration and the sustainability of the Hanze. The portfolio holder is also contact person for the Hanze's employee participation.

### Housing

Good and affordable student housing is a very important issue for the GSb. The housing portfolio holder goes to a Housing Working Group of the LSVb, has a seat in the Youth Housing Working Group and in the administrative consultation on student housing of the municipality. In short, the GSb is the great expert on housing. As a portfolio holder, you are aware of recent developments at the national and regional level when it comes of housing and rental law. You keep in touch with the housing covenant consisting of several large organizations in Groningen and the MOV about worrisome situations they encounter. You are constructively critical of the municipality and educational institutions about the housing policies they pursue. You maintain contact with as many housing-related parties as possible, such as

city council parties.

### Mobility

A lot is going to change in the coming years with public transport in and to Groningen. The portfolio holder takes a seat on the OV-Consumer Platform Groningen, a statutory body that provides solicited and unsolicited advice to the OV Bureau Groningen & Drenthe. Topics covered include timetables, the accessibility of bus stops and train stations, public transport across the Grote Markt, a possible streetcar line, concessions that determine which carrier offers trains to travel to and from Groningen, and so on.

### Internationalization

Education is becoming increasingly English-speaking and more and more foreign young people are coming to study in Groningen. With the Internationalization portfolio, you will follow developments in this area and make policy on them. Think about visiting seminars Groningen Together, maintaining contacts with Erasmus Student Network (ESN), increasing outreach among international students, and so on.

### Sustainability

Sustainability is becoming increasingly relevant. The GSb believes it is important that students are aware of the need for sustainable living. It is therefore important within the sustainability portfolio to liaise with sustainability bodies such as Blue Skies and the Green Office.

### Diversity

The GSb sees the increasing importance of diversity policies within and outside the university. Within this portfolio, there is a lot of internal consideration of how our organization can be diverse, and as much work as possible is being done on diversity throughout Groningen

### Politics

The portfolio holder for politics keeps in touch with the city council parties in order to be able to influence municipal policy on issues that affect students. In addition, the portfolio holder maintains contact with the political youth organizations,

council members and attends the council meetings of the municipality.

### Wellbeing

The GSb has a strong position to raise issues regarding student welfare can raise issues with the municipality, the educational institutions and national politics. It is important that the GSb remains active in gauging how the current situation is, we do this big time. A year ago, for example, the portfolio holder, for example, established the welfare hotline where more than 700 students gave voice to what they think about mental well-being. You often work within this portfolio together with, for example, participation parties and other agencies.

### Report Point for Unwanted Landlord Behavior (MOV).

The Report Point for Unwanted Landlord Behavior (MOV) was established on July 1 2016 by the GSb in collaboration with the Municipality of Groningen. Here, any tenant who experiences problems experiences problems with his/her landlord can file a complaint. The GSb collects the data and, if requested, supports tenants. The municipality of Groningen uses the collected data to map which landlords are out of line. If an investigation of the complaints reveals that a landlord is structurally misbehaving, the municipality will also take measures against this person and enforce them. Since Jan. 1, the MOV is 2019 also linked to the licensing system. The form of the MOV can be found on the municipality's website, but the GSb is still a co-owner.

### Other

The GSb has a number of partnerships with external organizations, such as Galant Gala, KEI and ESN. One or more board members contribute on behalf of the GSb to the successful running of these organizations' events.

### Board grants

As a board member of the Groninger Studentenbond, you are entitled to a board grant to compensate for credits missed that year. The grant is applied for in the form of board months. The

GSb is entitled to over 800 euros per person.

### Board traits

Some traits, characteristics or interests come in very handy as a GSb board member. Of these, some are important for a particular position, others for the board in general. General traits for board members or the team are:

- Ability to work well as part of a team
- Relatability and perseverance
- Analytical and problem-solving approach
- Initiative and decisiveness
- Good ability to deal with feedback
- Organizational and policy insight

## Functions within the board

The board consists of a chair, a secretary, a treasurer, a commissioner of internal and a commissioner of external affairs.

### Chair

The main task of the chair is to lead the board. You also prepare the agenda for the weekly board meeting and lead the board meeting. You are the face of the GSb to the outside world. You write the press releases and appear in front of the camera when necessary. As chair, you are also the designated person to assist where needed.

Important qualities of the chair are that this person is extroverted and socially adept, has a lot of persuasiveness, a broad interest and can improvise well. In addition, you fit in well with the group and the chair can motivate the rest of the board and the association.

### Secretary

The secretary's responsibilities include mail, email, membership records and archives, and all other administrative tasks. The

secretary manages most information flows and is ultimately responsible for the organization of the GMA. The practical aspect about the secretary is that they have a fixed set of duties.

A secretary can work in a precise and structured way. Because of this, the secretary often knows what is going on in the organization and is very important for continuity and order in the board.

### Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for managing the finances of the GSb. The treasurer ensures that the budget is distributed fairly among the bodies, working groups and activities. The treasurer draws up the budget on the basis of the financial policy. The various subsidies are also requested by the treasurer. For certain GMA's the treasurer makes a financial state of affairs and at the end of the year an annual financial report. This accounts for what has been achieved financially that period/year.

The treasurer has a long-term view, works accurately and can say no to people who want (too much) money. Knowledge of finance is therefore an advantage, but not a requirement.

### Commissioner of internal affairs

The commissioner of internal affairs is mainly concerned with the day-to-day running of the association. This board member takes care of the contact between the different bodies. The commissioner of internal affairs has an important role in the continuity of the association. They also ensures that members feel appreciated and in their place. In addition, the internal is concerned with organizing the induction process for the new board. Once every two months you also take care of the coordinators' meeting, a meeting between the board and the coordinators of the working groups to set the clocks straight and see how the day-to-day running of the GSb can be even better. Finally, the intern attends the evaluation meetings between a coordinator and the corresponding board member.

The commissioner of internal affairs is very flexible and social, able to solve problems within a group and to organise social activities.

In addition, this board member enthuses members to become active in the association.

### **Commissioner of external affairs**

The commissioner of external affairs is mainly concerned with the non-media related presentation of the GSb to the outside world. The external member is responsible for the design promotional materials (think of flyers, posters and fun gadgets like key chains and pens) and organizing the GSb-week, a week in which various activities are organized to promote the GSb. In addition, the commissioner of external affairs ensures that the association has enough sponsors and that membership becomes even more attractive.

The commissioner of external affairs is creative and has a good idea about how to appeal to people. Marketing experience or knowledge and experience with social media is a plus, but not a requirement.

## **Application procedure**

Anyone can apply for any of the five previously mentioned positions. Board experience is not required, enthusiasm is. You will be introduced to the current board, former board members and specialists. They will introduce you to all aspects of the GSb and the student landscape in Groningen. You will also be introduced to the LSVb during a union weekend. Here you will learn more about how the LSVb works and what is going on nationally. It is also a very pleasant weekend where you will meet colleagues from student unions all over the Netherlands.

### **Procedure**

The Application Committee takes care of the application process. Mention in your application letter why you are suitable, what you want to achieve next year, in which area your interests lie and what position you aspire to.

Once the Application Committee has received your application letter and CV, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. Based on your CV and motivation, you may be invited for an

interview. The first interview will focus on your CV, motivation and skills. Then you can be invited for the second round, where you will be presented with cases. If you are elected, the Application Committee nominates you and four others as the candidate board. The GMA then votes on this.

The work-in process begins the week after the GMA. In September, the hand-over GMA takes place and then the current board hands over the baton to the new team. Keep an eye on the website and our social media for all deadlines and dates! Visit [www.groningerstudentenbond.nl/nieuw-bestuur](http://www.groningerstudentenbond.nl/nieuw-bestuur) for the latest updates! After all this information, do you still have questions about the GSb and board life? If so, please contact the current board. Their contact information can be found on the website under Current Board.



