



# Board year at



Information booklet 2025-2026

*In this booklet you will find all the information you need to get an idea of Groningen's most engaged 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.*

## Groninger Student Union

### Address

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## Application Committee

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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

2025-V5-EN, illustrations created by Ward Kuipers

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## About the Groninger Studentenbond

The Groninger Student Union (GSb) is a union 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, 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, as well as 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 different bodies within the GSb. We want to empower students by giving them the resources, knowledge and skills, as well as the community, to stand up for themselves and what they believe in. The board encourages, fosters and facilitates initiatives of members from the bottom up. Everything falls under three main pillars: advocacy, representation and resources.



## **What does the GSb do?**

The student union gives students the means to stand up for their rights. The GSb has three pillars: advocacy, representation and resources.

### **Advocacy**

#### **Lobby**

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 playfully. 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.

### **Representation**

The board and members of the GSb represent their community. For instance, we take seats in various faculty councils of the RUG. Members vote on election candidates and the programme. In this way, we increase participation and interaction with co-governance.

### **Resources**

#### **Services**

The GSb helps students if they have problems with, for example, their education, side jobs, DUO or their landlord. The Legal Helpdesk 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 Room Book. 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.

## **Structure of the GSb**

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 election candidates. This means that they are accountable to the GMA. There are three bodies that support the GMA in its oversight role, which are the Application Committee, the Advisory Council and Audit Committee. The task of the executive board is to ensure the tasks and wishes of the members are carried out. The organization is therefore from the bottom up.

## **Language**

The Groninger Student Union is bilingual. You will be dealing with (board) members of both Dutch and international origin. For this, it is important that you are proficient in English. You are not only able to hold a conversation, but also conduct meetings and write policy documents in English.

## **Bodies 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.

## **Application Committee**

The Application Committee (SoCo) consists of the 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.

## **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee consists of two to four people who audit the GSb's finances, 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.

### Advisory Council

The Advisory Council (RvA) provides continuity within the GSb. This council consists of former board members and external advisors. 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.

### Complaints Committee

Besides an internal and external confidential advisor, the GSb appoints a complaints committee to decide what to do if the social safety policy is violated by a member. This committee thus takes action when a complaint is made. This committee consists of a board member and two externals.

### Multiannual Plan Committee

Besides an annual policy, the GSb also has a long-term vision. Once every five years, the multiannual plan committee, consisting of a mix of former board members and current active members, is therefore created. Over the period of multiple years, they analyze the ins and outs of the union and where improvement is needed on a structural level. These findings they write down in the multiannual plan.

### 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 numerous public places. 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 Legal Helpdesk is affiliated with the Student Line of the LSVb, which means that some cases that come in at the legal helpdesk of the LSVb get solved by our legal helpdesk.

### Social Activities Committee

The Social Activities Committee of the GSb organizes all kinds of fun activities for members and non-members alike. For example, they organize game nights, pub quizzes and the monthly GSborrel.

### Action Team

The action team organizes and mobilizes for actions and demonstrations. To successfully carry out campaigns, it is important to involve all members and students in Groningen. The action team makes sure this happens.

### Education Team

The education working group ensures that the GSb is sufficiently informed about the quality of education at the RUG and Hanze. The working group facilitates an overarching platform for representation in co-governance, and helps the factions organize the yearly election campaign.

### Research Bureau

The Research Bureau was established to identify relevant problems and situations of students in Groningen. By getting in touch with students, the Research Bureau collects information and then publishes the results. In the past, studies have been conducted on the Anglicization of higher education in Groningen and study stress. The latter study had the shocking result that 1 in 3 students experience stress on a regular basis.

### Designers Collective

The Designers Collective is responsible for the look of the GSb. Consisting of art-minded members, this committee is responsible for the design of magazine Nait Soez'n, the websites, posters and more.

## 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 out the views and vision of the GSb and the student community in general 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

By organizing, the board ensures that students who want to do something get to the right place. The board tends to take the lead, but it is also important to motivate members in organizing activities and actions. This ensures that the burden is carried with many shoulders, and students can easily gain knowledge and experience.

## 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 when 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 their own time commitment. You can do your position full-time or part-time. This depends on your dedication and division between board roles. In full-time, you work 40 hours a week for the union. You do not study alongside this. If you are on schedule with your studies, you can apply for a tuition fee refund at the beginning of the academic year ([more info](#)). If you still want to study subjects, you can expect to spend around 20 hours a week in a part-time position. How you organize that time will depend on the tasks you have within the board, the projects you work on and what you enjoy doing. With an unstable political climate, a board year can sometimes get very hectic. It is therefore important to consider your time schedule carefully.

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.

### WO co-governance (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. In addition, the portfolio holder guides the current factions of the GSb in the co-governance councils. This includes having regular contact with them, organizing trainings for them and guiding them in carrying out their duties and searching for a new faction.

### HBO co-governance (Hanze)

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 the contact person for the Hanze's employee participation. It also includes the

same tasks as the WO co-governance portfolio, but for HBO.

### Housing and Mobility

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 addition, the portfolio holder also sits on the peak housing working group. 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 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. Furthermore, you maintain contact with as many housing-related parties as possible, such as city council parties. Lastly, the GSb established and keeps in touch with the Rent Support Centre Groningen (Steunpunt Huren Groningen).

In the field of public transport, the GSb is also actively involved. For instance, we participate in the Groningen Public Transport Consumer Platform (OVCP) and the LSVb's public transport working group. Our commitment is that Groningen remains cheap and accessible for students.

### Campaign

Each year, the board decides to focus on one or more substantively pressing issues that are relevant to all students in Groningen, such as higher education cuts or UNL protest rules. After this, a campaign is developed according to the principle of the escalation ladder. The portfolio holder oversees its implementation. This way, the GSb ensures qualitative and substantive change.

### 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. In doing so, you will also be involved in internationalization and attend the Groningen International Student Platform (GISP) meetings. The GISP consists of all internationally oriented student organizations where experiences, ideas and information are shared. You also keep yourself busy with student welfare and help organize well-being weeks, for example.

### Press and Lobby

The portfolio holder 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. The portfolio holder also addresses the press and writes press releases. This portfolio always belongs to the chair.

### Acquisition

The GSb receives financial support from external parties. The portfolio is responsible for carrying out acquisition. It seeks advertisers for the Nait Soez'n, Chamber book and website. This way, the GSb gets a higher budget.

### Promotion

Promotion is a portfolio of the commissioner of PR. This person creates social media posts, posters, flyers and other promotional materials. They ensure that the GSb is visible and raises awareness about the GSb among students.

### IT

The portfolio holder IT is responsible for the digital housekeeping of the GSb. This includes regularly updating the website and ensuring the digital security of the internal drive. In addition, the telephone

connection is set up during office hours, for the board, the press phone and legal helpdesk. IT is the rock that GSb relies on.

### LSVb

The board member with the portfolio Landelijke Studentenvakbond goes to the General Members' Assembly of the LSVb and represents the Groningen students there. This person may also participate in working groups within the LSVb. This person is also responsible for contact with the other member unions of the LSVb.

### 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 a student organization, 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.

## **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 relations and a commissioner of PR. The role of commissioner of relations can be split up into a commissioner of WO and HBO relations.

### 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. Furthermore, 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 in that period.

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 HBO Relations**

As Commissioner of HBO Relations, you are pivotal in maintaining and strengthening relations between the union and the Hanze University of Applied Sciences. You are responsible for connecting the interests of Hanze students with the activities and objectives of the GSb. You act as a point of contact for both members studying at Hanze and external parties connected to Hanze. Furthermore, you are passionate about participation and student participation and are committed to involving students in decision-making and activities.

The HBO board member has a decisive and critical eye within both the Hanze and the GSb. This board member can challenge students, enthuse and organize like no other.

### **Commissioner of WO Relations**

As Commissioner of WO Relations, you will be responsible for maintaining and building the relationships between the student union and the academic study programmes (WO) within the university. You act as an important point of contact for both students and faculty staff and ensure that students' interests are properly represented. You also play a crucial role in promoting cooperation and communication between the student union and its various groups.

The board member of WO relations has both an affinity with the RUG community and a critical eye for its internal organization. This board member is able to activate and bring students together, both on a theoretical and organizational level.

## Commissioner of PR

The Commissioner of PR is mainly concerned with presenting the GSb to the outside world. For example, PR deals with designing and shaping promotional materials (think flyers, posters and fun gadgets like key rings and pens). In addition, the board member PR is responsible for GSb's social media accounts, and directs the designer collective.

The board member PR is creative and has a good idea on how to appeal to people. Knowledge of marketing and experience with social media is an advantage, but not a requirement.

## Application procedure

Anyone can apply for any of the 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 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.

