

2023

SUPPORT MODEL FOR STUDENT INFORMAL CAREGIVERS

for Educational Institutions

DEVELOPED BY MANTELZORGNL &
ECIO BASED ON THE MODEL OF SAXION
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES.

REVISED IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE EXPERTISE LAB YOUNG CARERS
AND THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE
YOUNG INFORMAL CARERS.





2023

DEVELOPED BY MANTELZORGNL &
ECIO BASED ON THE MODEL OF SAXION
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES.

REVISED IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE EXPERTISE LAB YOUNG CARERS
AND THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE
YOUNG INFORMAL CARERS.

Background Information Support Model Student Informal Caregiver

Students with informal caregiving responsibilities not only make a significant contribution to the quality of life of their dependent loved ones but also make a significant societal contribution in a challenging time where professional care and support are no longer guaranteed. This entitles them to provisions from the educational institution to successfully combine studying with informal caregiving.

Research and stories from young informal caregivers indicate that student informal caregivers miss out on support due to insufficient self-recognition. This is often related to the way they naturally take on care responsibilities and administrative tasks. Sometimes, embarrassment and taboo also play a role. In general, the act of caring for or being concerned about others is not a topic openly discussed by young informal caregivers while interacting with classmates or student advisors. They don't expect understanding and are unaware of the provisions that can make studying and informal caregiving easier.

When it comes to administrative tasks and care responsibilities, these can include:

- Applying for provisions from the municipality and health insurer
- Financial administration
- Attending doctor's appointments
- Acting as interpreters
- Providing emotional support
- Providing personal care
- Taking over household tasks

Negative consequences of care responsibilities for young student informal caregivers can include:

- Feelings of loneliness
- Anxiety
- Study delays
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Lagging behind in socio-emotional development

Consider:

- Offer and possible provisions of the educational institution regarding:
 - Flexible education: adjustments to the education program, changes to attendance requirements, modifications to assignments, internships, assessment, and examination
 - Financial support: utilizing The Student Support Fund (Profileringsfonds for Higher Education, HBO) and The Student Fund (Studentenfonds for Secondary Vocational education, MBO)
 - Internal and external support (within and outside the educational institution): student coach, student dean, social worker, psychologist

Discussing the home situation is often uncomfortable for both the student and the educational institution, possibly due to privacy regulations. Therefore, the student with informal caregiving responsibilities is compelled to break the taboo and initiate a conversation with the teacher or dean. The Support Model serves as a tool to facilitate this discussion.

With the Support Model, the educational institution acknowledges the student's status as an informal caregiver, indicates what the student may be eligible for, and makes mutual agreements accordingly.

Introduction

This support model is concluded between an educational institution and a student. In the support model, the educational institution indicates that the involved student is (temporarily or for an extended period) a Student Informal Caregiver. The support model serves as an internal tool for recognizing the Informal Caregiver status. By signing this support model, you acknowledge this status by describing a number of appropriate tailored provisions of the education or faculty. The aim is to enable the student to continue their studies as optimally as possible. For further explanation, refer to the document *'Explanation of the use of the Student Informal Caregiver support model'*

Definition of Informal Caregiving

Educational institution

The following definition of a Student Informal Caregiver is adhered to:

Action: Check what applies and remove what does not apply.

- A Student Informal Caregiver at our educational institution is a student who provides assistance to an ill family member; someone in their immediate social environment; a housemate; or a resident of an institution.
A student is recognized as an informal caregiver with us when the assistance has lasted for a minimum of 3 months, or when there is assistance provided for a minimum of 8 hours per week. This includes all types of assistance such as 'worrying about' (mental, stress, anxiety) and physical assistance.

Action: adjust the definition where necessary.

- A Student Informal Caregiver at our educational institution is a student who provides long-term care for (or is concerned about) an ill family member; someone in their immediate social environment; a housemate; or a resident of an institution. This can include assistance with psychological distress, addiction care, or care for someone who is physically ill or in need of assistance.
A student is recognized as an informal caregiver with us when they are involved in providing long-term practical and/or emotionally burdensome assistance that may jeopardize or interfere with their studies.

Action: adjust the definition where necessary.

1. Personal information of the student with informal caregiving responsibilities

FIRST NAME:
LAST NAME:
STUDENT ID NUMBER:
PHONE NUMBER (MOBILE):
EMAIL ADDRESS:
COURSE / FACULTY:
OTHER:

2. Information about the person in need of care to whom the student provides assistance

What is the relationship to the person in need of care to whom the student (partially) provides assistance?

Check what applies:

First-degree family member (father, mother)

Second-degree family member (brother, sister, grandparent)

Close relative (housemate, partner, child)

For privacy reasons, I cannot register this information; I will discuss my situation orally with the contact person of the educational institution

Other, namely

3. Information about the nature of the provided assistance

Check what applies:

Caregiving; e.g., administering medication, feeding, bathing, changing, dressing.

Household tasks; e.g., cleaning, grocery shopping, cooking.

Administrative tasks; e.g., paperwork for the municipality, guardianship, financial management.

Emotional/mental support; e.g., being a conversational partner, providing support and comfort, as well as the burden you feel such as “worrying about”.

Other, namely

Please provide an explanation of the above. If possible, indicate the frequency of the actions.

4. Information about the impact of the provided assistance on the student

Check what applies:

The student feels 'always' obligated to be available for this assistance and cannot easily stop providing it.

The request for assistance has come onto the student's path: they do not choose it voluntarily (it is not voluntary work).

Through the provided assistance, the other person (in need of care) can better manage themselves and participate in society to the best of their ability.

Other, namely

Describe the impact of the provided assistance on the student, their studies, and academic progress.

5. Time period and evaluation

For what period should this support model be valid? Indicate (as far as possible) the expected duration or period during which informal caregiving must be provided by the student.

When will the support model be evaluated? *[Advice: discuss the support model annually and adjust it as necessary]*

Period:

Evaluation:

Please note:

When the informal caregiving stops or the student no longer meets the requirements, they have the obligation to report this to the designated officials/ contacts of the educational institution.

Support from the educational institution/program

1. 1st point of contact from the educational institution/program for the student with informal caregiving responsibilities

NAME OF OFFICIAL:
POSITION:
PHONE NUMBER (MOBILE):
EMAIL ADDRESS:
OTHER:

2. 2nd point of contact from the educational institution/program for the student with informal caregiving responsibilities

NAME OF OFFICIAL:
POSITION:
PHONE NUMBER (MOBILE):
EMAIL ADDRESS:
OTHER:

3. List of (possible) discussion points:

- What facilities are necessary for the student to continue their studies optimally despite informal caregiving responsibilities?
- The student proposes solutions themselves and asks the official to brainstorm with them.
- Solutions are sought through joint discussion.
- Optimal solutions are documented in the study plan; this is determined by the examination committee.
- The aforementioned official assists in drafting an adjusted study plan due to the discussed informal caregiving responsibilities.
- The aforementioned official informs other staff members of the study or program in a timely manner and assists the student in this regard. Alternatively, tasks may be divided in this regard.
- What procedure should be followed in case of force majeure?
- Offer and possible provisions of the institution regarding:
 - Flexible education
 - Financial support
 - Internal and external support (within and outside the educational institution)

Additional discussion points:

Agreements and provisions for students with informal caregiving responsibilities

The student with informal caregiving responsibilities can access the following provisions. Please tick what applies and specify agreements made where possible:

A. Flexible Education

A. Adjustments to the study/education program:

Prior to each educational block, the student discusses potential issues related to the education program and assignments in relation to informal caregiving.

B. Adjustments to attendance requirements:

Separate arrangements are made for components with attendance requirements. Other potential solutions include: permission to join physical classes later; permission to digitally attend classes; permission to attend classes with parallel groups or exemption from attendance requirements, with or without an alternative assignment.

C. Adjustments to assignments:

For assignments necessary for earning study credits that pose challenges due to informal caregiving responsibilities, the student may complete a different or modified assignment with the same learning outcomes. This could involve excursions or group work, for example.

d. Adjustments to internships:

An adapted internship arrangement may involve the student taking a longer period to complete the internship; the number of hours remains the same, or within an adjusted number of hours, the same competencies are achieved. Agreements are made regarding this.

e. Adjustments to assessment and examinationg

Informal caregiving responsibilities may coincide unexpectedly with moments when the student has to take a test or exam. In such cases, solutions are sought. Possible solutions include: requesting an additional exam opportunity; requesting an alternative exam format; rescheduling exam dates.

F. Other: Please fill in or adjust the above provisions according to the possibilities within the educational institution

Agreements made:

B. Financial Support

Type of Education	Scheme	Does the student want to make a claim tick
Higher Education · Higher Vocational Education (HBO) · University	The Student Support Fund (Profileringfond s) provides financial assistance to students who experience study delays due to special (family) circumstances, holding a board or representative position, or engaging in top-level sports.	Yes No
Secondary Vocational Education (MBO)	The Secondary Vocational Education (MBO) Student Fund (Studentenfonds) provides one-time financial support to students who experience study delays due to exceptional circumstances and no longer qualify for student finance (including loans).	Yes No

C. Internal and external support (within and outside the educational institution)

A. Internal support

A confidential conversation/regular check-in with...

- i. Teacher
- ii. Student counsellor
- iii. Student coach
- iv. Student dean
- v. Psychologist
- vi. Social worker/youth worker

Other internal options such as a Student Success Centre (SCC), E-health programs, or other well-being activities.

Add applicable options for student informal caregivers at the educational institution. Also consider where specific information about facilities can be found, such as on the intranet or website.

B. External support

Consider municipal options through the Social Support Act (WMO) desk; the district team; social work services; mental health care services (GGZ); options through the local informal caregiver support centre; options through the care office or health insurer. *Additional information has been included in the explanation of the support model*

Add applicable options in the region of the educational institution. Also, remember to document external support with the municipality and care agencies so it's clearly written down. This responsibility lies with the educational institution to manage and record.

Agreements made:

Signing statement for agreement on Informal Caregiver status and appropriate customized provisions:

1. Declaration for student agreement

Signature:	
Name:	Date:
Student ID:	

2. Declaration for official agreement

Signature:	
Name:	Date:
Student ID:	

3. Optional: Declaration for agreement

Signature:	
Name:	Date:
Student ID:	

Explanation of
**SUPPORT MODEL
FOR STUDENT
INFORMAL
CAREGIVERS**
*for Educational
Institutions*

Summary

This is an explanation of the support model for Student Informal Caregivers. In the support model, the educational institution indicates that the involved student (temporarily or for an extended period) is a Student Informal Caregiver. It specifies the provisions the student can access and, if applicable, the duration for which these apply.

The main goal of the support model is to recognize the student's situation and its impact on their academic progress. The support model can be customized by the educational institution to fit their specific needs, providing a starting point with this informal caregiver support model. It is important for the educational institution to work with relevant parties, such as examination committees and deans, to make the support model practical for their own context.

1. Background of the Support model

The Support model for Student Informal Caregivers has been developed for and by participants of the Expertise Lab Young Informal Carers (hereinafter: Expertise Lab). This is a national network of professionals working in education, healthcare, or government. It was established by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and has been facilitated for some years by the Expertise Centre for Inclusive Education and MantelzorgNL (Informal CareNL). The societal goal of the Expertise Lab is to improve the position of student informal caregivers in education by:

- Raising awareness and increasing visibility of (challenges faced by) student informal caregivers.
- Increasing basic knowledge among (educational) institutions.
- Enhancing motivation and providing support options.
- ‘Normalizing’ informal care as a valuable contribution to our society. This goal is to be achieved by exchanging knowledge and experience about ongoing initiatives and activities.

The support model was initially drafted by Saxion University of Applied Sciences and then further developed by the Expertise Lab. Saxion drew inspiration for the content of the document from agreements made with student athletes. They also face additional pressures during their studies, the need to divide attention and energy, and the risk of study delays. Additionally, student informal caregivers typically do not choose their role: it comes their way, and they usually cannot simply stop.

2. Definition: When is a student an informal caregiver?

Not many students recognize themselves as student informal caregivers. Students may consider providing assistance to a loved one as more or less natural. This perception may vary depending on culture. Also, not all students like to be labelled. However, recognition of a complex home situation does help.

The support model includes two definitions of informal care. One definition includes a time indication (assistance for at least 3 months, at least 8 hours per week); the other definition primarily focuses on ‘worrying about’, which cannot be expressed in time.

The Expertise Lab encourages educational institutions to internally discuss both definitions and make a choice that fits their own policy frameworks. Where necessary and desired, the definition can be further adjusted internally.

3. Cijfers studerende mantelzorgers

Research conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) in 2022 revealed that more than a quarter of 16-24 year-olds provide assistance to a sick relative. This involves approximately 500,000 young people. Almost a third of young informal caregivers provide intensive assistance (meaning assistance for at least four hours per week). Informal care is provided by both young women and men. Two-thirds of these young people can manage the caregiving well, according to their own statements. A third feel moderately burdened (33%), and 3% severely. The consequences of providing informal caregiving for academic progress can be significant, although it’s important to note that each student may experience it differently. Therefore, tailored support is necessary. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) calls for more attention and societal discussion on this matter, and the Expertise Lab is happy to contribute by offering this support model.

4. Who Uses the Support model in education?

Student informal caregivers interact with various professionals in the education system. It is important to realize that each professional, from their own position, can influence the student informal caregiver's academic journey. The involved professionals can be categorized into three disciplines: counsellors, decision-makers, and facilitators. Simply by asking a question (How are you?), showing understanding, and offering assistance where possible, every professional can make a difference for the student. The support model was primarily developed for student counsellors. However, the success of using the model depends on collaboration with decision-makers and facilitator.

When are you a counsellor?

You serve as a guiding force in the academic journey of the Informal Care Student if you hold any of the following roles:

- Teacher
- Student counsellor
- Study career counsellor
- Study advisor
- Internship supervisor
- Coordinator for students with support needs
- Student psychologist
- Thesis supervisor
- Graduation supervisor

When are you a decision-maker?

You hold a pivotal role in establishing conditions for the Informal Care Student if you occupy any of the following positions:

- Member of the Examination Committee
- Program Director
- Dean of Faculty, Department, Institute
- Member of the Board of Directors
- Student counsellor (for standard provisions allocation)

When are you a facilitator?

You play a supportive role in the academic journey of the Informal Care Student if you fulfil any of the following functions:

- Marketing and Communication Staff
- ICT Staff
- Study Choice Advisor
- Student Administration Staff
- Facility Services Staff
- Quality Assurance Staff
- Career Service Staff
- Internship Office Staff
- Foreign Affairs Office Staff
- Alumni Office Staff

5. When do you use the Support model during the study process?

The support model is utilized by the counsellor during crucial moments in the student's academic journey. The infographic below illustrates these moments. During these so-called 'key moments,' every student, especially the informal care student, encounters new challenges and is particularly vulnerable. Background information on key moments and the role of the professional can be found [here](#). Additionally, there is a document titled 'Mapping the Study Process' which guides the student through the key moments in the academic journey. You can access it [here](#).



6. Who signs the support model?

The Expertiselab recommends that the support model be signed between the educational institution and the student. Some educational institutions may also require co-signature by the care recipient, the individual receiving informal care from the student. Depending on the situation, this may not always be desired or feasible.

7. What does signing the support model entail?

The support model serves as an internal tool to recognize the Informal Care status and outlines a number of tailored provisions offered by the program or faculty. The aim is to ensure that the student can continue their studies unhindered. General laws and regulations regarding educational accessibility can be found [here](#).

The primary objective of the support model is to ensure that the student feels seen and acknowledged in their role as an Informal Care Student. Attention, understanding, and recognition can alleviate some tension, allowing the student to resume their studies. It is also important for the student to be aware of the available provisions. Finally, financial issues may arise, which also require attention.

8. Validity of the support model

Agree with the student on when the informal care support model will be evaluated. It is advisable to conduct annual evaluations and adjust the support model as necessary. Remind the student that if the informal care ceases or if the student no longer meets the criteria, they have an obligation to report this to the designated points of contact within the educational institution (these are the officials named in the support model).

If possible, specify the period for which this support model is valid: what is the expected start date? Is the duration known until when the informal care must be provided? However, it may not always be possible (or desirable) to specify a time frame. In any case, schedule an evaluation moment.

9. Additional information on internal and external support (*within and outside education*)

Informal care is not mandatory; no one can ‘force’ the student to provide informal care, not even a municipality. However, in practice, student informal carers often feel like they have no choice, for example, due to emotional reasons. For this reason, providing informal care can be very burdensome, both mentally and physically. Besides the assistance and provisions within educational institutions, there are often also opportunities for students outside educational institutions.

a. Internal support

Within an educational institution, there are various avenues to seek assistance. Different counsellors are available, for instance, if the student needs a confidential conversation regularly, or a check-in moment with a student coach, psychologist, or social worker.

As mentioned above, the following educational professionals are available at an educational institution where you can receive guidance or engage in discussions (with low barriers):

- Teacher
- Student counsellor
- Study career counsellor
- Study advisor
- Internship supervisor
- Coordinator for studying with a support request
- Student psychologist
- Thesis supervisor
- Graduation supervisor

Furthermore, educational institutions offer various services to support students. This can include addressing various study-related questions and/or mental well-being. Some educational institutions have a student success centre, offer E-health programs (such as www.caring-universities.com), or organize other well-being support, activities, and events.

b. External support

Depending on the condition of the care recipient, the intensity of the care, and the required guidance, assistance for the care recipient can be provided by volunteers, the municipality, health insurer, or the care office. The application procedure takes a few weeks.

Specific support for informal carers is typically managed by the Caregiver Support Point (Steunpunt Mantelzorg) or the local welfare organization in most municipalities. You can find an organization near you via www.mantelzorg.nl/organisatie-in-de-buurt. *Please note that services are offered by the municipality where the care recipient resides (is registered).*

Do you or the student informal carer have questions about the possibilities and/or the path to suitable external support? Then contact the Caregiver Helpline (Mantelzorglijn). This can be done via this [link](#). Alternatively, refer to independent client support from the municipality. More information can be found [here](#).

Student informal carers sometimes provide care for a dependent person 24 hours a day and for years. To be able to sustain this, it is important to occasionally take a break. Various leave options are available for employees with caregiving responsibilities, such as emergency leave, short-term care leave, and long-term care leave. Leave arrangements for informal carers: www.mantelzorg.nl/onderwerpen/werk/verlofregelingen-voor-mantelzorgers

At **Respijtzorg** (Respite Care), care tasks are temporarily transferred to someone else so that the student can take a breather and focus on studying, work, and friends. It is an important tool to prevent burnout.

There are no reimbursements for informal care from the basic health insurance. However, the student informal carer may be eligible for reimbursement for psychological counselling or occupational therapy. Depending on the health insurance plan, there may be **additional health insurance** options available. From this supplementary insurance, there are reimbursements for substitute informal care, informal caregiver courses, or informal caregiver facilitators. This depends on the selected supplementary insurance.

For a complete overview of support options, consult the Caregiver Guide from MantelzorgNL (Informal CareNL). You can find it [here](#).



2023

DEVELOPED BY MANTELZORGNL &
ECIO BASED ON THE MODEL OF SAXION
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES.

REVISED IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE EXPERTISE LAB YOUNG CARERS
AND THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE
YOUNG INFORMAL CARERS.