

# VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM



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EXAMINATION APPEALS BOARD

No. 2019/59/903

EXAMINATION APPEALS BOARD

Pronouncing judgement on the appeal of Mr [name], the appellant, [residence], against the decision of the Admissions Committee of the Faculty of Sciences of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the defendant, to not admit the appellant to the Biomedical Sciences Master's programme.

## **I. Course of the proceedings**

On 10 July 2019 the appellant lodged an appeal against the decision of the defendant dated 19 June 2019. The notice of appeal was received in good time, and the other conditions were also fulfilled. The appeal was therefore admissible.

On 30 July 2019 the defendant was notified on behalf of the Board that the prescribed procedure requires that the defendant, in consultation with the appellant, will examine whether an amicable resolution of the dispute is possible. The defendant issued an invitation to this end to the appellant in good time. An amicable resolution, however, did not come about.

On 3 September 2019 the defendant submitted a written defence. The appeal was heard at the session of the Board on 8 October 2019.

The appellant did not appear, although he was properly summoned. The defendant was represented by Ms R.J. van Belle-Van den Berg, Programme Coordinator. The defendant explained its standpoint orally.

## **II. Facts and dispute**

On the basis of the documents and the proceedings of the hearing, the Board proceeds on the assumption of the following facts.

The appellant requested admission to the Biomedical Sciences Master's programme. Enrolment was refused to him, because he did not fulfil the grade point average (GPA) standard and had not undertaken a research placement.

The appellant disputes that his GPA would be insufficient for admission. He has taken educational programmes at two universities. His academic results at the first university (Florida) were moderate, however at the second university (South Carolina) the appellant achieved good results. He graduated there with magna cum laude honours. For a good impression of his academic performance the total GPA must therefore be examined. In that case, in the appellant's opinion, he would fulfil the requirements. Moreover, the appellant took programmes at the second university that are relevant for admission to the Biomedical Sciences Master's programme.

The appellant confirms that he has indeed not undertaken a research placement. That was not a requirement at the second university that the appellant attended. He did however carry out laboratory work there.

The defendant states that not all subjects that the appellant has studied in his homeland are important for the GPA that is necessary in order to be admitted to the Biomedical Sciences programme. It is in fact the results for particular subjects that the appellant studied at the first university, where the appellant achieved less good results, that weigh heavily. This concerns the subjects Microbiology, Immunology and Neurobiology. The good results at the second university are only taken into account to a limited extent. Upon once again going through the documents of the appellant, it became apparent that the proportion of subjects relevant for the programme forms a minority of the subjects studied by the appellant. The principal reason for not admitting the appellant to the programme, however, is that a research placement is lacking. Moreover, the appellant gained fewer points for the laboratory work than are required for a research placement.

Finally, the defendant has established that in his covering letter the appellant does not state why he wishes to take this programme in particular.

### **III. Further standpoints of the defendant**

The defendant explains that although the appellant does have knowledge of the subjects that are stated in the admission conditions, the appellant's average grades are inadequate.

The appellant does not fulfil the other requirement (that of a research placement). In his notice of appeal the appellant indicates that he has indeed carried out laboratory work. That is insufficient for the defendant: the defendant has not demonstrated that he is able to personally formulate a research question, for example. The lack of the research placement has been decisive in not inviting the defendant for an initial interview and not enrolling him in the Master's programme. The defendant adds that the appellant has not substantiated why he wishes to take the Biomedical Sciences programme at VU Amsterdam.

### **IV. Considerations of the Board**

Pursuant to article 7.2 of the Education and Examination Regulations, a candidate for admission to the Biomedical Sciences Master's programme must fulfil three types of requirements in order to be admitted. These concern requirements of the knowledge and understanding of the candidate, a research placement and a grade point average (GPA) of at least 7.5. The appellant does not fulfil the second and third requirements. In the judgement of the Appeals Board the appellant was therefore rightly not admitted to the programme.

### **V. Judgement**

The Board dismisses the appeal.

Pronounced in Amsterdam on 4 November 2019 by N. Rozemond, chairperson, and Prof. J.J. Beishuizen, Dr A.J.M. Ligtenberg, Ms T. Mekking and Prof. H.A. Verhoef, members, in the presence of J.G. Bekker, secretary.

Dr N. Rozemond,  
chairperson

J.G. Bekker,  
secretary

The person concerned can submit an appeal against a judgement of the Examination Appeals Board, stating a sound justification, to the Higher Education Appeals Tribunal, Postbus 16137, 2500 BC The Hague. The term for the submission of a notice of appeal is six weeks. The registry fee is €47.00.