

The Flemish Ministry of Education is aiming at enhancing academic success of disadvantaged groups in higher education. The Flemish Finance Decree for Higher Education of 2008 allows additional funds up to 83.6 million euro to universities and colleges according to the number of scholarships students, working students and students with disabilities attending. An additional Incentive Fund of 6 million euro has been founded to encourage universities and colleges to develop policies for the enhancement of academic success of other disadvantaged groups, for example those identified by the Flemish Education Council. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate in how far the criteria for additional funding allocation match underperforming students who are in need of additional support. This evaluation provides insights ex-ante in the effectiveness of the policy in improving the educational performance of weaker students. Quantitative multivariate analyses are conducted on the data of the first Bachelor year student population at Hasselt University for two academic years (enrolment years 2006 and 2007) to find out which disadvantage factors weigh more heavily on academic success and to compare them with policy criteria. The result is a nuanced view of the relevance and the shortcomings of the funding system. The results are discussed in the light of the Finance Decree, the Incentive Fund and university policy.