

# Faculty Council Annual Report 2017-2018

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## Introduction

The Faculty Council of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University is an elected body that represents the interests of the RSM Community, including employees (academic staff, PhD candidates, support staff, and managers) and (Bachelor and Master) students. This Council advises the Executive Board (hereafter: EB) on all issues pertaining to RSM's educational and research activities, as well as its role in society at large. On certain decisions by the EB the Council has to approve beforehand.

RSM's Faculty Council formally convenes about ten times a year with the Vice Dean and the Director of Operations. These meetings are public and can be attended by any interested RSM Community member (this [page](#) shows an overview of the meetings of this year). At least twice a year, the Council meets with the Dean.

The Faculty Council (hereafter: FC) has selected a number of issues that are considered as deserving special attention. These issues in focus include:

- the quality of educational programmes and exams;
- diversity in the broadest sense of the word;
- internal collaboration and cohesion;
- transparency and inclusiveness of hiring and promotion;
- sustainability, and
- facilitating the living conditions of international community members.

The FC is permanently open to issues that are of general interest to the RSM Community. Students and employees are encouraged to flag relevant suggestions, incidents, and other events that can contribute to prioritising issues and providing well-informed advice to the EB.

Feel free to contact the FC through the current Secretary to the Faculty Council, Job Heidkamp ([heidkamp@rsm.nl](mailto:heidkamp@rsm.nl)), or the FC as a whole through [fc@rsm.nl](mailto:fc@rsm.nl).

This annual report serves as a brief overview of the academic year 2017-2018 and by use of hyperlinks, as a portal to the minutes of this year.

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## Members 2017-2018

### Representatives for academic faculty

- Dr Marja Flory (Chair)
- Dr Helen Gubby

### Representative for support staff

- Drs Amy Janssen-Brennan

### Representative for PhD candidates

- Tatjana Schneidmüller, MSc.
- Mohammad Ansarin, MSc.

### Representatives for students

- Elisa Vandensteene (Vice Chair)
- Beatriz Zambrano Serrano
- Gatien Devictor
- Tania Bhulai
- Dimitrios Leros

### Official secretary to the Faculty Council

- Job Heidkamp, MSc. LL.M.

## Reporting per area

### Education

#### Sandwich Year and Add-on year

Adri Meijdam, Executive Director IBA, presented during [meeting 192](#) the so-called Sandwich Year and Add-on year, which should increase the employability of graduated Bachelor students and broaden the choice of students. The plans were well received by the FC.

#### Boost the Bachelor

In [meeting 191](#) the progress of Boost the Bachelor was presented by the Academic Director IBA, Gabriele Jacobs. The FC asked questions about possible peak issues of the demand-driven tracks within the new Bachelor programmes. Gabriele Jacobs indicated that it is still work-in-progress but that they aim for five equally preferred tracks.

During [meeting 196](#) Erik van Raaij updated on the current status of Boost the Bachelor. The FC asked multiple questions. First, given some negative rumours, it inferred how the discussions with the department heads went. Erik van Raaij indicated that with a rebalancing of the curriculum some people will not be content: some gain some and some lose some. There were good meetings with the department heads, but as soon as they got out of the meetings, and the details became clearer, some started contacting the Boost the Bachelor team when ECTS or courses were lost. It is important that the big picture is kept in mind.

Second, the FC wondered what “both programmes need a clear ‘slogan’, showing their identity” entails and how should be distinguished between the programmes. Erik van Raaij indicated that IBA will still make use of smaller groups, with different nationalities, and slightly different methods, but also stressed that they want to ban out the idea of a student of one programme being superior over one of the other. He was not happy with the phrasing. They also aim to merge the two cohorts in the third year. In reaction to the latter, the FC wondered if that would not lead to resentment among IBA students, as they were selected and more ambitious. Erik van Raaij indicated that he thinks that would not be the case and repeated that they want to ban out this idea. Extra-curricular activities will also be offered to all ambitious students.

Third, the FC expressed its concern that with the new design of courses and some becoming short, it might get even tighter for students to get their head around the material. Erik van Raaij noted that the courses, with the same names as before, might actually not be the same courses, they still need to be defined.

During [meeting 197](#) Adri Meijdam, Executive Director IBA, was present to answer the last questions on the updated plan. The FC asked questions about the possible disadvantage for students who go for a different Master programme than the track they followed in the Bachelor programme, the possible legal risks of no Dutch options being available in the second part of the third year of BA, the changes in the amount of FTE departments will have, and possible double work for staff coming from the introduced interdisciplinarity in the courses. The FC was content with the answers that were provided.

- The FC decided to give a positive advice on the Boost the Bachelor programme. At the same time it will check for the financial details in the RSM budget.

### Studievoorschotmiddelen

Last academic year, the FC agreed on more teaching staff for the spending of the structural part of the 'studievoorschotmiddelen' (study advance grants), once it would become certain that this part would be structural. During summer it became clear that from 2018 onwards this would be the case and the EB decided that from these funds €731k (yearly) would be spend to finance eight (senior) lecturer positions, one for each department. During [meeting 191](#) the FC wondered how this is visible in the budget (earmarking) and asked questions about the Dean's letter that contains that discussion will follow with the departments on the exact spending of the funds.

- As the discussion could not come to an end, the FC decided to have a subcommittee of the FC meet with the EB and to await further financial details.

During [meeting 194](#) the Executive Director BA, Jannet van der Woude, provided an overview of the current status of the projects of the non-structural part of the studievoorschotmiddelen and the studievoorschotmiddelen in general. During 2016-2017 a huge amount of projects for both Bachelor and Master courses were developed, of which some are still being implemented in 2017-2018. The funds are almost dried up at the moment and for the coming years the funds are spend on more lecturers, honours, and the Learning and Innovation Team. The overview was well received by the FC.

During [meeting 195](#) Eric Waarts, Dean of Education, updated on the earmarking of the studievoorschotmiddelen. All the departments have lists with positions to be filled or already filled, and that needs to be translated into finance. He indicated that those positions will be teaching only.

### Numerus Fixus IBA

Amy Janssen-Brennan, in her role as Admissions Manager of the Bachelor and Master programmes, presented the Numerus Fixus IBA 2019-2020 during [meeting 196](#). They are not happy with the current system but need a cap to ensure quality. Some small adjustments were made, to improve the selection method. As it proved that the high school grades determine the chance of a student succeeding at IBA the most, the weight was increased to 75%. The other 25% will be based on their CV and the international experience reflected in there. The motivation letter will be transformed into three questions to let the candidate reflect on whether the programme is something for them, like the Dutch 'studiekeuze check' (study choice check). It will lose its weight for the selection. The FC wondered whether the rankings will be published. This was confirmed by Amy Janssen-Brennan, as it still obliged by the government. Additional information will be provided, however.

### Exam Quality

During [meeting 191](#) the FC asked multiple question about the quality of exams, the control systems and guidelines, procedures when incidents occur, and the ratio between TAs and the amount of exams that need to be graded. The FC also asked for a survey among TAs.

- In the end, it was decided that the results of the focus groups with TAs will be awaited.

During [meeting 198](#) Adri Meijdam, Executive Director IBA, was asked about the policies and regulations in place for SAs. Adri Meijdam replied that with regard to the grading by SAs there is no structural difference in grading. With regard to SAs giving instructions, only a limited number of courses send SAs on training. As RSM requires from staff that they are trained, he proposes to require from all courses that all SAs are trained in terms of content and didactics. Subsequently, the FC expressed its concern over the work pressure for SAs.

- As more research was needed, the FC proposed to have focus groups with (experienced) SAs.

#### Study pressure IBA

During [meeting 194](#) the FC expressed its concern over the increased stress and pressure among IBA students as a result of the Numerus Fixus ranking numbers they receive from Studielink, as imposed by the Ministry. It is only revealed to the students themselves but since they communicate it with each other, pressure and problems arise. Amy Jansse-Brennan, in her role as Admission Manager of the Bachelor and Master programmes, indicated that she will push for change at the national level again and that they will improve the communication that is provided to students, in order to stress that the ranking is not about one student being better than the other. The FC indicated that abolishment of this system is desirable.

- The FC also decided to set up a workgroup for the stress and mental health of students.

#### New Master in Business Analytics

During [meeting 194](#) Gabi Helfert, Executive Director Master Programmes, presented the plan for the Master in Business Analytics, a joint effort by four departments. Based on signals from the labour market and students, it seemed the right moment for RSM to step in to come up with this programme, consisting of 90 ECTS. The FC was asked to give advice and provide input. Multiple questions were asked by the FC about the recruitment timeline, the definition of certain courses, the definition of the required experience in coding, and financing and potential staffing problems at one of the organising departments. Although there were still some questions about the details of programme, also from the side from Admissions & Selections, the FC supported the idea of the programme, as it is a strategic fit in the current portfolio of programmes.

- Based on a majority vote, the FC gave a positive advice, under the condition that all the issues raised by FC will be resolved to the satisfaction of the FC.

During [meeting 195](#) Gabi Helfert returned with an updated plan, after several meetings with Admissions & Selections and the presentation of the plan to the Strategic Platform. The FC asked some last questions about the learning goals and outcomes, which were answered in a satisfactory way.

- As the conditions for the positive advice were met, the letter of advice could be send by the FC.

## HR and Finances

#### Retroactive cutting 30% tax ruling

During [meeting 198](#) the FC expressed its concern over the financial situations of the people affected and called upon the EB to take action. The EB indicated that the lobby of the VSNU is already as strong as it can be, and that taking it to the EUR EB does not bring added value.

#### Student evaluations

During [meeting 192](#) Ad Scheepers, policy advisor, presented his findings on the current state of the student evaluations at RSM, some of the practices at other European business schools, and the results of a semi-experiment conducted at eight core courses. From that experiment no clear relationship was found between the grading of exams and the rating of the courses. Subsequently, a discussion followed on the fact that this issue has been raised for a long time, on the amount of people who get

to see the results of the evaluations, on confidentiality, the idea of taking out outliers, the possible relationship between response rates and satisfaction of students, mandatory evaluations, and qualitative assessment. In spring a European benchmark should be created, on which further comparison can be drawn.

In [meeting 193](#) the FC came up with several ideas to improve the issues with student evaluations:

- Inform students about the fact the evaluations are actually being read by the professors, which could decrease abusive behaviour. This could be done at the beginning of each evaluation and during the kick-offs at the start of the academic year.
- Create a system in which the evaluations remain anonymous from the professor, but somebody else will be checking the comments on abusive behaviour and will link this back to the student if necessary.
- Give students the idea that they and their feedback are being taken seriously, to show what is actually done with the feedback.

The EB indicated that it would pass the ideas on. It also stressed that during appraisals no quick conclusions are drawn from the evaluations. There should be a clear pattern over a certain timespan, which, for example, might indicate that the person in question is not suitable for the specific course.

In [meeting 198](#) Ad Scheepers, policy advisor, presented his extensive report on the issues with student evaluations, the findings at other universities and from other research, and opportunities to improve the system. He also explained the set-up of the project that will tackle the issue within RSM and the timeline of that project. The first step is optimisation within the current system, starting in June 2018, the second step is with an HR perspective. The FC asked whether the recommendations can be implemented in 2019. Ad Scheepers answered that some of the recommendations from the first step might be implemented in September 2018 and some later.

#### RSM budget

Despite the requests of the FC, the budget could not be delivered in its complete form before the last meeting. The Chair and the Vice Chair were given the mandate to approve it during the summer.

#### Workload and sick-leave

During [meeting 193](#) the FC expressed its satisfaction with the way RSM handled the survey, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The main issue remains the work pressure for academic staff. The EB indicated that work pressure is not only about hours but also about perception. It is also a challenge how the different departments have to work with the same outline, in order to create a co-productive environment.

In [meeting 196](#) Irene van der Veen-Leegwater, Director HR, presented the RSM action plan on work pressure, also in relation to the EUR Central report by the USC. The plans and actions of RSM are also in the Central report, as this serves as an umbrella for the plans of all faculties of the EUR. The FC asked multiple questions about the consequences for leadership that lacks certain competences, the confidential counsellors, tenure trackers having exemptions for research in order to be able to teach, but also about the use of temporary contracts and education-free weeks. With regard to temporary contracts, the EB indicated that those contracts are most of the time used for thesis peaks and positions that are temporary by nature, such as tenure trackers. With regard to education-free weeks, it indicated that only non-structural teaching-free weeks are a possibility, as with the current 42 weeks of education, cramping the same education in even less weeks, might result in legal problems.



## Diversity

During [meeting 191](#) the Associate Dean of Diversity, Saskia Bayerl, presented the diversity report. The in-depth discussion was postponed to next meeting.

During [meeting 196](#) the FC asked the Dean why RSM did not make use of the Westerdijk funds to appoint a female professor. The Dean indicated that RSM does not need an incentive, also since smaller faculties could use the funds more than RSM does. Moreover, four female professors were appointed recently, with others in the pipeline. The EB also thinks it is stigmatising to hire on the basis of such a fund.

## Temporary Contracts

Following on the discussions on temporary contracts last year, the FC indicated during [meeting 192](#) that it feels stuck. The people affected told their stories to FC members in confidence but the EB indicates that it can only take action when it has names. The EB also indicates that based on more abstract numbers, it has the idea that a sound policy is in place. The FC indicated that it would like to have an anonymous survey to see whether people are content.

- In the end, it was decided that the FC would have a separate meeting with the EB to talk about numbers versus stories, and the representation function of the FC.

## Operations

### Changerism report

In reaction to the Changerism report, the Committee Mols wrote a report, which was discussed during [meeting 198](#). The FC posed two questions: what is the EB going to do with the five recommendations, and how is the EB going to implement the necessary culture shift? The Dean replied that the main assignment of the committee was to investigate whether RSM was fully independent. It found that there is no direct impact on the curricula or on research. However, there are potential integrity risks, for example about the side job register not being fully completed, which is now, with two exceptions, completely filled in. On top of that, to get more insight in what is going on in both the EUR but especially the RSM limited companies, the governance structure of the holding will be changed. With regard to culture, it can happen that people do not feel free to speak up, but one has to note that this is pretty common in the academic world. At the same time, RSM implemented all recommendations from a report on culture from 2013. The task force will itemise and map-out all the recommendations of the committee. Some need to go beyond, as some items are not so explicit and result in difficult dilemmas. The FC wondered whether it was possible to have one of its members in the task force. It also expressed its concern about a culture of faction forming within certain departments, resulting in people, in particular PhD students, not willing to bring up certain issues, and in other cases getting things done way easier compared to others. The Dean confirmed that this issue is on their radar.

### Teaching and Examination Regulations

In [meeting 197](#), Carla Dirks-van den Broek, Managing Director Examination Board, presented the draft of the new Examination Regulations. The FC asked multiple questions about a missing system of enforcement and for complaint, and the fact that feedback is collected afterwards, meaning that enforcement is on a reactive basis. The current process was explained, in which complaints are funnelled through Student Representation or Programme Advisory Committees, and the Examination Board taking action if rules are not followed multiple times. This stems from the system of

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management by exemption.

As the updated draft of the new Examination Regulations came in too late and the FC still thinks it lacks enforcement, it could not approve them during this meeting. The EB noted that the proposed changes and the enforcement are disconnected: the Rules & Regulations are the terrain of the

Examination Board and the FC has no right of consent on that, and the Teaching and Examination Regulations are terrain of the Dean, on which the FC has a right of consent.

- The FC proposed to meet with the Managing Director Examination Board and decided to approve the Teaching and Examination Regulations later.

## Internal and External Affairs

### Student elections

The Faculty Council has elections every year to recruit student members. After the candidacy period five students were elected to be part of the Faculty Council 2017-2018: Elisa Vandensteene, Beatriz Zambrano Serrano, Gatien Devictor, Marcin Nguyen and Dimitrios Leros. As Marcin decided to switch from IBA to a programme at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, the next person from the election results was appointed by the electoral committee: Tania Bhulai. Later during the year, Dimitrios Leros decided to withdraw from his position as FC member. It was too late to organise an additional round of elections.

### Employee elections

This year there were no employee elections, as none of staff members saw his or her two-year term ended at the start of this academic year.

### Committees

The council has decided to work in six committees, with the following members:

- General issues (RSM internal organisation, RSM strategy, reorganisations):  
Elisa Vandensteene, Tatjana Schneidmüller
- Education (general, quality assurance, bachelor programmes, master programmes):  
Dr Marja Flory, Elisa Vandensteene, Beatriz Zambrano Serrano
- Research (general, PhD related issues, scientific integrity):  
Dr Helen Gubby, Tatjana Schneidmüller, Mohammad Ansarin
- HR (general, formation & career development, labour conditions, diversity):  
Dr Marja Flory, Amy Janssen-Brennan, Beatriz Zambrano Serrano, Gatien Devictor
- Finance (budget, other issues):  
Dr Marja Flory, Tatjana Schneidmüller, Gatien Devictor
- FC organisation (visibility, web page, external relations, back office):  
Tania Bhulai

### Member training

In September, a training on the rights and obligations of the FC was provided to FC members by TAQT, a company that specialises in training participatory bodies within universities.

### Meetings

The FC held eight public meetings in total, with an internal discussion preceding each meeting. All public meetings were attended by either the Director of Operations or the Vice Dean, or both, and the Dean participated in at least two of the meetings. Minutes of all these meetings are available [online](#). Other meetings were held to discuss certain specific points that needed clarification or extra fine-tuning.