Harnessing the power of corporate-startup collaboration / Electives / 2026

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FACULTY INFORMATION

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FACULTY BIO

Prof. Dr. Vareska Van de Vrande is Professor of Collaborative Innovation and Business Venturing at RSM. Vareska joined RSM in 2007 after completing a PhD in Industrial Engineering and Management Science at the Eindhoven University of Technology. Her expertise lies within the areas of corporate venturing and open innovation, including external technology sourcing, corporate venture capital, strategic alliances, and corporate-start-up collaboration and she has published numerous articles on those topics in leading academic journals, including the Strategic Management Journal, Research Policy, and the Journal of Operations Management. At RSM, Vareska teaches courses and modules in Strategic Management and Corporate Venturing at the graduate and post-experience levels.

In addition, Vareska was the co-founder and Academic Lead of Erasmus Enterprise (the incubator organization of Erasmus University), a member of the Supervisory Board of YES!Delft (the TU Delft incubator), and co-founder of two web-portals on open innovation (www.openinnovatie.nl and www.openinnovation.eu). She is also a certified LEGO SERIOUS PLAY facilitator and currently acts as a board member at Venture Café Rotterdam (part of the Cambridge Innovation Center) and as a Supervisory Board member at Erasmus Enterprise.

Dr. Christopher Sabel is an Assistant Professor for Strategic Management at RSM. Besides the EMBA elective, Christopher teaches strategic management and consulting methodologies to MBA and MSc students and provides coaching in strategy development and structured problem-solving for managers through executive programs. Christopher's research interests are primarily concerned with resource allocation and investments within multi-business firms. He has published multiple scientific articles in leading academic journals on these topics. Prior to his time at RSM, Christopher worked as a strategy consultant at the Zurich office of Monitor Deloitte and had several academic stops in Norway, Germany, and Denmark.

ABSTRACT

You may be a corporate executive, a senior manager in a consultancy, or an entrepreneur, responsible for making decisions in a complex environment. In this advanced elective, we will deepen your knowledge on corporate-startup collaboration, by discussing real-world cases on how corporates and startups can co-develop business ideas.

RSM Erasmus

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The main objective of this course is to deepen your knowledge of corporate-startup collaboration. This elective builds upon participants general managerial knowledge and applies this knowledge to contemporary topics in co-development of businesses when corporates and startups are involved.

Learning areas	Educational Goals
I. Content- related	Participants understand the different equity and non-equity models of corporate-startup collaboration and how they can affect firm outcomes and strategies.
II. Skills-related	Participants can analyse the impact of corporate-startup collaboration on firm outcomes and strategies.
	Participants devise a strategic plan to address challenges in designing a corporate-startup collaboration strategy that meets their goals.
III. Attitude-related	Participants gain confidence in translating abstract problems into concrete action.
	Participants learn how to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty in strategy design.

TEACHING METHODS AND WORKLOAD

The course consists of 6 content sessions.

1. We focus on **student-centered learning**, meaning that participants can access materials for pre-session preparation individually to forge their own learning path at their own pace.
2. We focus on **collaborative and active learning**, meaning that participants present and discuss their case assignments with the whole class. This allows for a highly interactive classroom presence.
3. We focus on **challenge-based learning**, meaning that participants work on authentic challenges which may include real-life cases.

Description	Calculation	Total
In-Class sessions:	6 x 3 hours	18 hours
Class Preparation:	6 x 2 hours	12 hours
Team Assignment	38 hours	38 hours
Individual Assignment	16 hours	16 hours
3 EC	3 x 28	84 hours

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Course: Corporate-Startup Collaboration	Assessment formats		
After following this course, participants will be able to:			
Educational goals per course	**Individual assignment**	**Team presentation**	**Total**
• Participants understand the different equity and non-equity models of corporate-startup collaboration and how they can affect firm outcomes and strategies.	X	X	
• Participants can analyse the impact of corporate-startup collaboration on firm outcomes and strategies.	X	X	
• Participants devise a strategic plan to address challenges in designing a corporate-startup collaboration strategy that meets their goals.	X	X	
• Participants gain confidence in translating abstract problems into concrete action.		X	
• Participants learn how to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty in strategy design.		X	
Weighting factor	60%	40%	100%
Minimum grade required	5.5	5.5	5.5
When failed, resit option (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	
Form of examination (e.g., MC, open book)	Written	Presentation	
Group / Individual assessment (Group/Individual)	Individual	Group	

In order to pass the course, each assessment or deliverable (component grade) with a resit option, needs to be at least 5.5. Components with no resit option bear no minimum grade required, but to pass the overall course, the final grade needs to be at least 5.5.

Grades are rounded according to the rounding provisions included in the Examination Regulations (ER) of the programme, and are expressed with 1 decimal point. Not meeting the minimum grade required for either a component grade or the overall course grade determines a fail for the course. Participants can resit a failed component only once. Resit grades are capped at 5.5 and students will receive a qualitatively similar but not the same assignment.

For this particular course, the faculty has decided that all assignments allow **for new resit instructions**

Grade penalties for unauthorized late submissions will be automatically imposed. Penalties for unauthorised late submissions range from 10% to 20% deduction from the examination component depending on the hours/days late. Unauthorised late submissions 4 days or longer after the deadline without prior notification and a reasonable explanation for the late submission, will not be accepted.

Attendance is mandatory and a requirement to pass the course. Missing classes and arriving late may result in grading penalties and even a fail for the course.

Fraud, Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism (Appendix B on Code of Conduct, Examination Regulations -ER-)
The Examination Board defines fraud as "*the action or negligence of a student because of which it is impossible, entirely, or partially, to form a correct judgment about the knowledge, insight, and skills of them or another student*" (ER, 2024-2025). Examples of fraud are cheating, cribbing, plagiarism, freeriding in a team assignment, availability of unauthorized (study) material during a test such as mobile phones, contract cheating/outsourcing/ghost-writing, unauthorized use of generative AI, identity fraud, theft.

Confirmed cases of fraud/plagiarism will lead to (appropriate and proportional) sanctions as defined by the Examination Board in the Rules and Guidelines section of the Examination Regulations (ER). Repetitive cases of fraud/plagiarism lead to expulsion from the programme.

Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarising of the work of another person or group without acknowledgment, including submission of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

Using ideas from your own prior work (assignment) without referencing the work in your assignment is considered self-plagiarism.

Participants are required to adhere to the 6 principles outlined in the RSM AI guidelines with regard to the use of Artificial Intelligence Platforms such as ChatGPT and related software/tools. The unauthorised use constitutes violation of plagiarism/ fraud policy.

For this particular course, the faculty promotes **an "*embraced*" use of AI**.

For more information about academic integrity and AI please refer to the Programme's Examination Regulations and RSM AI guidelines documents on the Student Hub.

Assessment / Deliverable:	Individual or group:	(Due) date and hand in location:	% of final grade:
Team presentation	G	TBD	40 %
Individual assignment	I	TBD	60 %

For all Canvas submissions, please make sure to include the student name and programme name in the title of the file submission, as well as within the document itself (on the cover page).

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1:	
Topics:	**Introduction to corporate-startup collaboration (CSC)** In the first part of the session, we discuss the different flavors of corporate-startup collaboration, their uses, and potential outcomes for the corporate and the startup. In the second part of the session, participants have the opportunity to highlight collaboration strategies and discuss them with experienced CSC professionals. Participants also choose the case company for their team presentation.
Preparation:	Ready-to-team-up Assessment
In class exercises:	Mini case
Readings:	TBD
Case:	No

Session 2:	
Topics:	**Equity-based modes of corporate-startup collaboration** In the first part of the session, we discuss equity-based modes of corporate-startup collaboration and how they fit into the venture capital landscape. In the second part, participants work on a case on target selection and the strategic considerations surrounding it.
In class exercises:	Mini case
Readings:	TBD
Case:	No

Session 3:	
Topics:	**Non-equity-based modes of corporate-startup collaboration** In the first part of the session, we discuss non-equity-based modes of corporate-startup collaboration, their characteristics, and how they are different from equity modes in key dimensions. In the second part, participants work on a case on the venture client model and the strategic considerations surrounding it.
In class exercises:	Case discussion
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 4: Friday, October 23: 18.30-21.30	
Topics:	**Presentations** Teams present the strategic challenge of their case company, how corporate-startup collaboration can address this challenge, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen approach. We discuss this within the whole group and develop key learning outcomes together.
In class exercises:	Presentations
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 5:	
Topics:	**Implementation, monitoring, and measurement** In this session we first discuss the implementation and tracking phase of corporate-startup collaboration, such as operating models and KPIs. Participants will receive a mini case to develop KPIs and operating principles for a chosen CSC strategy. We discuss this within the whole group and develop key learning outcomes together.
In class exercises:	Mini case
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 6:	
Topics:	**Ready-to-team-up and reflections** In this session we reflect on learnings from the course and discuss the results of the ready-to-team-up assessment in light of prior learnings. Several formats will be used to present these learnings and to inspire discussions among the participants.
In class exercises:	Final reflections
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

ASSIGNMENTS DESCRIPTION

More information about the assignments and grading rubrics will be made available on Canvas closer to the start of the course.