

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Dr. H. van der Kolk
Chair Faculty Council BMS

FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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SUBJECT		

Dear chair and members of the Faculty Council,

The Board of the Faculty BMS has received the Annual Report for the Academic Year 2016-2017 of the Examination Boards BMS.

The annual report gives a good oversight of the activities that have been performed by the examination boards in that academic year. First, the report makes clear the extensive volume of the educational activities within the faculty BMS, with for example 1086 academic degrees awarded in that academic year. The volume of the educational activities is also reflected in the large number of examiners that were appointed by the examination board after recommendation by the programme directors. In total, the examination boards appointed 199 examiners for the bachelor programmes and 319 examiners for the master programmes. In all cases, the examination boards made a careful review of the required competencies of the staff and the faculty board would like to express its appreciation for performing this extensive task.

The extent of activities of the examination boards is also reflected in the total number of 344 requests that were handled from various types. Although the total number is still large, the faculty board has noted that especially for the examination board Management Sciences the total number of requests has dropped from 1100 in the academic year 2014-2015 to 173 in the academic year 2016-2017. This development towards less requests is welcomed by the faculty board, since it is a signal that the infrastructure and general rules and regulations related to examination are applicable and can cover ever more student cases. This decline in requests allows focusing on and a more proper handling of the submitted requests that require special attention and also may contribute to a lowering of total time needed to process requests. The faculty board supports the suggestion of a careful analysis of the number of student requests

pro-rated to the total number of students per degree programme to get an indication of the balance of the requests over the various programmes.

Also with regard to the focal points for 2017-2018 and beyond mentioned on page 23, the faculty board takes the opportunity to make some remarks. First, the faculty board supports focal point 1, which proposes the streamlining and professionalization of the support provided by the registrars and the executive secretary. The faculty board supports the notion that similar work processes (within a set time framework) should form the basis of the work of the registrars under the overview of the executive secretary. The faculty board supports that steps should be taken to further harmonize the work processes, not only in content, but also in the level of service that is provided to support each of the four examination boards. Together with the examination boards a clear job description for the Executive Secretary will be formulated.

The faculty board also welcomes focal point 2, that proposes that steps should be taken to further harmonize the work process between the four examination boards. This can indeed be achieved by developing templates, not only for the appointing of examiners, but also in relation the student requests. The Faculty board has the opinion that the use of templates (related to the various type of requests), could contribute a further harmonization of the processes, not only in handling the requests, but also in the communication with the students after a decision has been taken. The faculty board also underlines the importance of a timely approval of The BMS Rules and Guidelines, which will be secured by establishing clear and stable annual cycles within (and without) the faculty.

The faculty board supports focal point 3 that improving safe guarding of assessments requires continuous efforts. It should be mentioned here that the policy of the examination boards should not only focus on safeguarding (*borging*) alone, but that it is advisable that the examination boards also themselves in the form of samples investigate from time to time exams and theses. Taking notice of a sample of the exams and the (level of) the theses allows examination boards to convince themselves of the qualities of exams and the end levels that have been reached in particular programs. Here also a clear working relation between examination boards and program directors and management is pivotal, since constant awareness of the importance of screening should be part of programs' working processes.

With regard to focal point 4, financial compensation for members, the faculty board takes the position that there is no apparent need to establish a financial compensation policy for all members of the examination boards. Currently, the departments receive a financial compensation for the activities of the chairs in the examination boards. With regard to the regular members, the current BMS policy is that all staff members with a full time job have 200 hours available each year for non-core educational and research activities. The faculty board has the opinion that these 200 hours can be (partly) used by members for the activities related to the examination board. Thus, members can claim these 200 hours to be used for activities of the examination board.

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With regard to focal point 5, the management board also observes that there are significant differences in granting Cum Laude certificates between degree programs. The faculty board welcomes the initiative of the examination boards to discuss this issue with the programme directors. According to the faculty board, the focus in these discussions should be on making explicit why there is a positive (or negative) deviation from a generally considered reasonable cum laude rate of 10-15%. Students in programmes may differ in academic distinction throughout the years and for that reason a deviation in itself does not need to be problematic, but there should be sufficient arguments to support deviations.



With regard to focal point 6, the rather high degree of exemption or dispensation from the UTQ, the board would like to point out that there are no signs that examiners who have been exempted/ dispensed from the UTQ show significant deviations with regard to the quality of their teaching. Moreover, there are also other means besides UTQ to improve the quality of teaching. Smaller workshops or short courses could be instruments to improve certain qualifications, like for example preparing exams. The faculty board will take steps in cooperation with CES employees within the faculty to investigate the possibilities for providing short courses or workshops for staff members or programs with particular needs or requests.

The faculty board would like to take this opportunity to thank the examination boards for all these efforts, as reflected in the annual report. In the past years, important steps have been taken. The faculty board agrees that additional steps to improve the work are necessary, but the faculty board sees these steps as a continuous sequence of gradual improvements. Professional development of both teaching staff and the members of the examination boards are part of this sequence.

Best regards,
also on behalf of the dean,

Prof. dr. C. Aydin
Vice dean Education BMS