



Annual Report 2008

© Examination Board BSc & MSc Programmes
Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University
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Editor

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Examination Board BSc & MSc Programmes
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I. Preface

I am very happy to present to you the third annual report of the Examination Board. We are still in search of the correct format. This year we have chosen to model the report on the basis of the official tasks. According to the proposed amendment Reinforcement of Government of 18 December 2008 the Examination Board will have the legal obligation to submit an annual report to the Executive Board or the Dean. This emphasizes the fact that the Examination Board is an independent body within the university. Specific demands will then probably be made regarding the setup and content of the annual report.

I am furthermore pleased to report that the Examination Board succeeded in 2008¹ in changing its policies from the more procedural and detailed tasks to supervisory tasks. In this way the Examination Board published its test policy in the spring of 2008 in the announcement *Integral test policy* and in consultation with the Dean of BSc&MSc Programmes the Examination Board implemented the *excellence check and sampled monitoring* of the final examinations.

The Examination Board has put a lot of energy into informing staff and students in 2008 about the supervisory task of the Board. The Examination Board has visited the academic departments and explained the intentions of the supervisory task on the basis of the integral testing policy. The organisation of the fraud symposium has also contributed to the provision of information to staff and students regarding the position of the Examination Board within the organisation. As a result of enthusiastic reactions the Examination Board have decided to organise an annual symposium about a controversial theme.

In this report more explanation will be given regarding the developments mentioned in 2008. From this it will be clear that the end of the chosen path is not yet in sight. Much is going on but much has also yet to be done: the memo regarding integral testing policy needs to be further worked out, the implementation of the *excellence check* and the *sampled monitoring* is still fully in the developmental phase.

This report about 2008 is divided as follows: firstly the tasks list is dealt with, the composition and working method of the Examination Board and furthermore a report is made of the implementation of the core tasks in the calendar year 2008. The annual report ends with a look at future new developments.

I invite you to read our annual report. Should you have questions or suggestions we would be happy to receive these at ec@rsm.nl.

Kind regards,

Prof.dr.ing. T.W. Hardjono
Chair

March 2009



Graag
grotere
afbeelding

¹ Kamerstuk 2008-2009, 31821, Tweede Kamer. Proposed amendment of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW*) and some other laws in order to reinforce government of the institutes of higher education a.o. (reinforcement of government)

Members

Prof.dr.ing. T.W. Hardjono (chair)

Prof.dr. P.P.M.A.R. Heugens

Dr. R. Kuik

Dr. J. van Rekom

Ir. A.J. Roodink

Drs. W.M.J. Schauten

vacancy

Portfolio

Awarding certificates, admission statements, binding study advice BScIBA
MPhil-programme, *excellence check*
MScBA including the General Management programme, *sampled monitoring*, *master electives*, *internships*

BScBA year 2 and 3, bachelor minors, examinations monitor, fraud

Part time MScBA programme (PTO)

BScBA year 1, admission premaster-programmes, binding study advice BScBA, fraud
BScIBA

Secretariat

C.M. Dirks-van den Broek LLM
(official secretary)

I.M. van Essen LLM (deputy secretary)

Drs. A.M. Schey (deputy secretary)

Drs. A.I.S. Accord (secretary)

G.M. den Bakker (secretary)

Drs. I.T.T. Przewoźna (secretary)

Drs. A.W.M. Berndsen

Portfolio

Head of the secretariat; BA-, MPhil- en PTO-programmes, premaster admission; BScIBA- and MScIM-programmes
Admission statements, guest regulation; *tuition fee waivers*; EC-meetings; fraud
General secretary

BA-programme, exemptions

BScIBA-, MScIM- and MPhil-programmes

Administer admission premaster-programmes; examinations monitor



II. The Examination Board BSc & MSc programmes

Tasks

The Examination Board has a broad range of different tasks with regard to the examinations. The tasks of the Examination Boards are based on the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek- WHW*). A summary of the Board's tasks can be found in **appendix A**:

The Examination Board has been appointed by the Dean on behalf of the BSc- and MSc-programmes funded by the government. **Appendix B** shows the BSc- and MSc-programmes concerned and the amount of students per programme. In 2008 the total amount of students was almost 7000.

Composition

The Examination Board consists of seven members of the faculty. The members are appointed by the Dean. In 2008 two members resigned from the Examination Board: Prof.dr. H.J. Oppelland due to reaching pensionable age and prof.dr. A. de Jong due to other tasks within his department. Professor De Jong is succeeded by prof.dr. P.P.M.A.R. Heugens. For professor Oppelland no replacement has been appointed yet.

The Examination Board collectively sets up rules and policy. The Examination Board as a whole meets once a month. Each member has his own portfolio. As portfolio manager a Board member is responsible for taking care of the daily matters regarding his portfolio.

The portfolios are primarily divided on the basis of the educational programmes. Furthermore, tasks not related to an educational programme such as the quality control policy and the fraud prevention policy are added to a few portfolios. The portfolio of professor Oppelland is divided across various portfolio holders for the time being.

Secretariat

The Examination Board is supported by the secretariat. The secretariat prepares the meetings and the decision making of the Board and implements the decisions.

Within the secretariat the tasks are mutually divided. As well as supporting the Examination Board the secretariat also prepares the advice of the Dean with regard to permitting *tuition fee waivers*. In **appendix E** the report concerning the tuition fee waivers is included. Because the *tuition fee waivers* are a *marketing tool* as are scholarships, this task will be transferred to the Admissions Office of the BSc & MSc Programmes Department in 2009.

In 2008 drs. A.W.M. Berndsen was assigned to the secretariat of the Examination Board in order to administer the admission of premasterstudents and to prepare the examinations monitor.

Performance

On the next page the chart shows the performance highlights of the Examination Board over the past few years. In the next paragraphs a brief comment is given on the various tasks.

	2006	2007	2008
Meetings			
Plenary meetings of the Examination Board:	10	10	9
Chair consultation:	4	3	3
Degrees awarded			
BScBA	341	482	429
BScIBA	214	180	250
MScBA	850	813	902
MScBA Double degree		2	14
MScIBA	44	43	26
MScIM			28
PTO	77	82	88
Drs. Business administration		80	0
MPhil		10	3
Total	1526	1692	1740
Examiners appointed			
Total			157
Cheating incidents			
BScBA	58	40	33
BScIBA	74	21	29
MScBA	2	2	3
PTO			4
MScIBA / MScIM	3	0	0
MPhil			1
Total	137	63	70
Incoming post (*)			
BA	1187	1158	1190
IBA:	872	588	481
PTO		32	36
MPhil		34	20
Total	2059	1812	1727
Outgoing post (*)			
BA	1080	1225	933
IBA	886	606	425
PTO		33	40
MPhil		34	20
Total	1966	1898	1418
Appeals			
BA	21	27	17
IBA	67	45	34
Total	88	72	51
Admitted and subscribed premasterstudents			
Dutch language	350	147	119
English language	80	60	34
Total	430	207	153
Granted Admission Statements			
MScBA internal transition	650	954	908
MScBA external direct		144	100
MScIBA (IM-CEMS)	50	53	51
MScBA GM programme foundation year	40	56	49
MScBA GM programme specialization year	n.a.	34	34
Total	740	1241	1142

* not included are the large scale standard decisions such as admission statements for transitional students, Interim study advice, binding study advice etc., or e-mails

III. Performance in 2008

1. The Examination Board as a supervisor

A. The awarding of degrees

According to law the Examination Board establishes whether a student meets the requirements set by the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) with regard to the knowledge, insight and skills necessary for acquiring the degree of bachelor or master². As evidence that the requirements have been met a degree certificate is supplied. With the degree certificate a list of marks is supplied and also a diploma supplement. The chairman of the Examination Board signs these three documents. In 2008 the Examination Board presented **1740** degree certificates and the same number of lists of marks and diploma supplements.

In 2008 the number of double degree certificates rose considerably. These are the MScBA certificates that are presented on the basis of the '*Double Master Degree in Management*' programme. This programme is a cooperative relationship between RSM, ESADE, the Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi, the Groupe HEC and the University St. Gallen. RSM students follow their regular master programme here and do one year at one of the partner universities and thus receive two master diplomas. In reverse the students of the partner schools follow the master programme of RSM and do one year at their own university and receive in this way also two master diplomas. The 14 double degree certificates in the overview are the certificates presented to students of the partner schools.

Ensuring the civil effect of the degree certificate is part of the core task of the Examination Board. The quality assurance of the examinations and thereby the certificates is further elaborated upon in the integral testing policy. In **paragraph C** this is further explained.

B. Appointing the examiners

The Examination Board appoints the examiners. In the Rules and Regulations the Examination Board has established that the members of the academic staff (professors and associate or assistant professors) are examiners for the teaching units for which they are responsible³. Other members of the academic personnel such as for example PhD students are therefore not 'automatically' examination authorised. If a PhD student or another expert from outside RSM wishes to set examinations and evaluations the Examination Board must declare him examinations authorised. In the case that a PhD student is involved the Examination Board will always seek advice from the relevant PhD supervisor.

In the case that an expert from outside RSM would like to be declared temporarily examination authorised for example to sit once in a thesis committee, then the Examination Board test whether the person in question fulfils in principle the demands required to be a member of the academic personnel at RSM: the minimum required is a completed university degree and preferably also a completed PhD or in any case experience in academic research.

² See article 7.11, paragraph 2, WHW

³ See article 1.4 Rules and Guidelines all programmes

If an expert from outside RSM *temporarily* teaches and designs, sets up and corrects examinations the following demands must be met:

- University level (minimum master or similar and PhD or similar proof of familiarity with doing academic research);
- Guest contract or temporary employment at RSM;
- Incorporation in a department for the duration of the guest contract / employment term.

In 2008 the Examination Board provided **157** examination authorisation declarations. Most of these declarations concern a PhD student participating *once* in a thesis committee of a master programme. Hereby it should be remarked that there are 3 PhD students that have been implemented 10 times or more as a member of a thesis committee. In 33 cases it concerned an examinations authorisation declaration for an external expert.

The Examination Board explicitly indicated in its memo *Integral testing policy*⁴ that it can withdraw the examinations authorisation of a teacher as a final measure in the case of apparent persistent dysfunction regarding testing. Certainly the Examination Board will not resort to this without first conducting discussions with the relevant teacher and his superior and after reasonable possibilities have been considered to improve performance. The Examination Board has not yet used this measure.

C. Quality assurance of testing and examinations: an integral testing policy

One of the key responsibilities of the Examination Board is to supervise the quality of testing and examinations of the programmes. In 2008 the Examination Board has published the memorandum *Policy on quality assurance of examinations and assessments*. The memorandum was spread throughout the campus. The testing policy is a transparent system of measures and provisions to promote and monitor the quality of testing and examining.

To create a solid support the Examination Board has paid a visit to all departments to amplify the testing policy. As a result of the responses of the departments the testing policy will undergo further elaboration and concretisation. Some parts of the testing policy got started in particular the checking of the masters theses.

Checking of the masters theses

The Examination Board views the final examinations as the moment of ascertaining whether a student has achieved the desired level. Therefore the Examination Board has chosen to pay extra attention to this. Firstly a procedure has been designed to check the final examinations by sampling whether they fulfil the learning objectives described and procedural rules: the *sampled monitoring*. Furthermore the Examination Board has implemented an *excellence check*. If a thesis committee evaluates the thesis with a 9, this thesis should be presented to the *Council for Distinction Mark*. Finally the Examination Board monitors the composition of a thesis committee and presence during the graduation session.

4 policy document of the Examination Board d.d. 12 February 2008

Sampled monitoring

In consultation with the Dean of BSc&MSc Programmes the Examination Board has chosen to step away from a thesis committee with a second co-reader and implement a dual quality check. The reason for choosing this was double. On the one hand there was much dissatisfaction about the second co-reader system because second co-readers often feel powerless if they disagree with the coach and the first co-reader resulting in a lack of incentive to be a second co-reader. On the other hand there was insufficient insight into the level of the theses of the various *Master Programmes*. The Examination Board as issuer of degree certificates and supervisory body is involved to an extraordinary extent in the graduation process. The thesis is the moment of checking whether the student has reached a sufficient level to be considered eligible to receive a degree certificate. It has been established that by or on behalf of the Examination Board theses are to be monitored in an expert sampling method and monitored objectively. The objective of the monitoring of masters theses is that it will become transparent for the Examination Board how the (examiners of the) programmes deal with the assessment of theses – for the benefit of a judgement regarding the quality of the Master theses including the defence in the MSc programmes. The Examination Board is interested in answers to the questions such as (a) which elements will be included in the discussion / assessment, (b) traces that with the assessment matrix used as a guideline, (c) the matrix offers something to go by in the assessment regarding the quality of the work, (d) what are the most important quality dimensions included in the assessments?"

The Examination Board strives to screen about 10% of the final examinations by external experts.

In 2008 Emeritus Professor prof.dr. H. Oppeland was commissioned by the Examination Board to implement the sampled monitoring. He attended a total of 39 graduation sessions in the months June, September and December for this purpose. In October professor Oppeland set up an interim report. As a result of this report some small procedural points of improvement were detected but for the rest the procedure is as yet insufficiently crystallised to reach all conclusions. An interim format has been set up on the basis of the first report which forms a basis on which the final examinations can be screened. This format as well as the evaluation matrix are included as an appendix in this report.

Excellence check

As well as the implementation of the sampled monitoring the Examination Board have decided that theses that will probably be graded with a 9.0 or higher would first be presented to a Council for Distinction Mark to evaluate whether the thesis is indeed of this level. This procedure is comparable with that of the judicial cum laude for a PhD. In this Council for Distinction Mark are members of the academic staff at full professor level from the various areas of expertise of the programme.

The following members have a place in this committee:

- Prof.dr. B.M. Balk
- Prof.dr.ing. F.A.J. van den Bosch
- Prof. dr. F. Hartmann
- Prof.dr. G.W.J. Hendrikse
- Prof.dr. P.P.M.A.R. Heugens (chair)
- Prof.dr. A. de Jong
- Prof.dr.ir. H.W.G.M. van Heck
- Prof.dr. R.J.M. van Tulder
- Prof.dr.ir. B. Wierenga

Since June 2008 the Council for Distinction Mark has reviewed 31 theses. Three times the verdict was negative.

Supervision composition of thesis committees and presence of the members at graduating

By means of the Examination Administration the Examination Board are informed concerning the composition of the thesis committee and concerning the attendance of the members of the thesis committees during the graduation sessions. If the composition of the thesis committee does not satisfy to the examination regulation for example because one of the members is not examination authorised, then the Examination Board can assess if the person concerned can be authorised or must be replaced. It occurs that members of the thesis committee through circumstances are prevented from taking part in the final examinations. Persons concerned must in that case ensure a replacement or if that is impossible then the department involved must do so. The Examination Board checks if this happens effectively. In the 1000 final examinations which the Examination Board have checked 75 persons have been replaced by departmental colleagues. In sum there are 517 persons who were not present and also did not ensure replacements. Fortunately in no case did it concern the coach. Of 6 of the 17 the reason for absence is unknown.

Examination service point

Development of expertise and training of faculty regarding setting up good tests is part of the quality assurance of testing. Training in testing and evaluation should be structurally embedded in the personnel policy of departments. Starting in 2000, the faculty could receive specific support in examination construction at the Teaching Expertise Centre Rotterdam (TECR). The aim is to enable lecturers to direct their questions there in the course of setting examinations, making score cards, establishing the cut-off scores, evaluating examination questions, instructing marking assistants and the like. The TECR provides feedback to the lecturers, orally and in writing. In 2008 the TECR got 21 support requests.

Examinations monitor

In 2001, the Examination Board set up an examinations monitor system with the Teaching Expertise Centre Rotterdam (TECR). This monitoring system enables the Examination Board to receive information about the examinations established with quality assurance in mind. The examinations are assessed at the end of each trimester (currently only Bachelor's examinations). Also included are factors such as yields, averages, cut-off scores, reliability scores (in case of multiple choice examinations).

Details are also included, such as the manner in which the course is examined, marks are established and *student evaluations* done. The Examination Board deals in a reticent manner with the details of the examinations monitor. Based on the monitor details, it is impossible to establish whether an examination complies with expectations/standards. Certain outcomes lead to further investigation. In some cases, the appropriate examiner is asked for an explanation. This consultation is meant to get further information; it is not an appraisal. After the consultation, based on the core values, the Examination Board decides what further steps will be necessary to improve the quality of the testing. Improvement points are passed on to the lecturer and the department, where necessary.

In 2008, the examinations were monitored twice. In March, the Examination Board discussed the third trimester and the results in August of the study year 2006-2007. Due to lack of capacity the examinations monitor of the 3rd trimester is later than intended as a result of which it was of little use to address teachers about this.

The Examination Board has formulated the following points of attention as a result of this monitor:

- An examination monitor must be discussed shortly after the result of the examinations. The procedure must be applied to this;
 - Of the majority of mc-examinations there is only 1 version. This can lead to "opportunistic fraud". It is suggested to provide the teachers with (a minimum of) 2 versions of an examination;
 - There should be more focus on the formulation of the examination questions by for example consulting a colleague teacher;
 - The Examination Board will conduct a further investigation into the manner in which teachers establish the cuttingscore;
 - Some examinations contain repetitive questions from previous examinations. The Examination Board will set up guidelines in relation to this.
- The portfolio holders Schauten and Van Rekom have subsequently approached a few teachers as a result of this examinations monitor.

In September, the Examination Board reviewed the first and second trimester of the study year 2007-2008. This examinations monitor is slightly adjusted with regard to content and design because the setting up of the monitor takes less time. This new format of the *Quickscan* is approved by the Examination Board. Furthermore the Examination Board has decided that the *Quickscan* should be directly sent to the portfolio holders so that they can immediately take action if the scan should require this. The portfolio holders must report afterwards. Furthermore the Examination Board have decided to extend the scan to open question examinations.

In the framework of the examinations monitor the Examination Board have devoted much attention to the BScIBA module *Foundations of Finance & Accounting*. The Examination Board has received complaints from many students and some parents of students particularly with regard to results. As a result of the complaints the Examination Board has spoken to the Dean of BSc&MSc Programmes and the teachers and departmental chairmen involved. It has been decided to allow an external expert to evaluate the module and the Dutch language variant of the module in the BScBA-programme.

The advice of the external expert has largely been taken on board and handed over to the 5 departmental chairmen involved. The result of this should be that the set up of both modules changes and an extra workshop for repeat offenders.

D. Cheating

The Examination Board can take legal measures in case of cheating pursuant to article 7.12, paragraph 4 of the WHW⁵.

In the graph below the measures taken per student over the past 3 years are shown. Firstly it is evident that in the case of a written examination the fraud comprises having access to a mobile. The rule is that the mobile should not be switched on and not within reach. There again appear to be students that have a mobile at their disposal. In none of the cases could it be proven that use was made of the mobile.

What is also evident is that plagiarism is committed in particular subjects: the first year BScBA-module *Inleiding Bedrijfskunde* (18 cases in 2008) and the second year module BScIBA-subject *Foundations of Business Law* (23 cases in 2008).

	2006	2007	2008						total
	total	total	BScBA	BScIBA	MScBA	PTO	MScIM	MPhil	
Number of students	137	63	33	29	3	4	0	1	70
Type of test									
Group assignment	34	8	17					1	18
Individual assignment	20	24	1	23		4			28
Written test	80	31	15	6	3				24
Thesis	3	0							0
Type of fraud									
Plagiarism	54	32	17	23		4		1	45
Copying	16	18	3	2					5
Mobile phone	64	8	11	4	2				17
Graphic calculator	3	5							0
Other			2		1				3
Measure/sanction									
None	9	2		6					6
Reprimand	65	19	16	4	3	2			25
Mark invalid	14	38		7					7
Mark invalid, exclusion for 1 year	48	7	17	12		2		1	32
Still under consideration	0	1							0

Within and outside the university community it is assumed that much fraud takes place and that punishment is insufficient. To permit further insight into how often fraud occurs and the punishment thereof the Examination Board in cooperation with RISBO organised a fraud symposium for students and staff of RSM in the autumn of 2008.

⁵ The Examination Board sets rules with regard to good implementation of examinations and with respect to measures to be taken in this regard. The measures can include that in the case of cheating by a student the examination board can insist that, during a period of time set by them, lasting for a term of no more than a year, the student will lose the right to sit one or more to be indicated tests or examinations at the institution.

The chairmen of the other Examination Boards of the EUR were also invited and some employees of the administration building that frequently deal with this subject. In the appendix there is a report about this symposium.

E. Ensuring the implementation of examination rules

The Examination Board have the task of ensuring that the examination rules are properly carried out and if necessary deviation of the rules to permit on the basis of the hardship clause.

The Examination Board have adapted the hardship clause in the following cases:

- in the framework of the binding study advice for the subject *Foundations of Finance & Accounting* due to the large number of complaints in combination with a low success rate percentage. See further paragraph 3;
- the application of the transition regulation to the master programme if a student suffers a major delay during studying due to a lack of study facilities. See further paragraph 4;
- the application of the guest regulation with regard to students that do not meet the requirements of the transition norm but have sufficient knowledge to follow the optional subjects of the master programme. See further paragraph 4.

F. Appeals

Students who object, among other things, to a decision of an examiner (e.g. assessments) or the Examination Board may lodge an appeal at the Examination Appeals Board of the Erasmus University (CBE). The procedure is regulated in article 7.60 et seq WHW.

Appeals should be lodged with the Appeals Board within four weeks after the decision. This procedure is an administrative appeal, as referred to in section 1:5 subsection 2 of the Dutch General Administrative Law (Awb). The CBE restricts itself to review the rightfulness of a decision. The review is done in accordance with both statutory⁶ and customary⁷ law.

Most of the appeals of IBA students this year were again geared towards negative binding study advice. The main reason that so many IBA students lodge appeals against this is because half of the IBA students have not mastered the Dutch language. As a result, after having received a negative binding study advice, it is difficult for them to move on to another study. It is therefore more in their interests to reverse the decision, than it is for Dutch-speaking students.

⁶ E.g. the general principles of proper administration included in the WHW, the TER and the Awb.

⁷ E.g. unwritten general principles of proper administration and other general principles of law.

None of the appeals was declared valid. The chart below shows an overview of the appeals in 2007 and 2008.

Appeals	2007		2008	
	BA	IBA	BA	IBA
subject				
Rejection admission to BScIBA		3		
Rejection premaster Dutch	3		4	
Rejection premaster English		4		1
Rejection admission to MScBA	9		6	
Rejection admission to MScGM	1		2	
Negative BSA	3	27	3	23
Rejection registration mark		8		
Rejection Research Project		1		10
Plagiarism	2			
Rejection exemption	6		2	
Rejection extra examination	2	1		
Rejection re-assessment	2	1		
total	27	45	17	34
outcome				
Withdrawn	8	11	4	4
Settled	10	19	13	23
Dismissed	5	3		
Disallowed	4	11		6
Valid		1		
Not yet finished				1

2. Regulation: the rules and guidelines and advice regarding the OER

The Examination Board has the authority of setting regulations. The committee can set order regulations and give guidelines and indications to the examiners. This has an impact on the Rules and Guidelines in which subjects are discussed such as fraud, failure / pass regulation, 'cum laude'-regulation, compensation regulations, registration for examinations, perusal of examinations, the composition of thesis committees. The most important changes implemented by the Examination Board in 2008 concern the composition of the thesis committees⁸ and the elimination of judicial other than cum laude.

Moreover the Dean advises the Examination Board with respect to determining the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) for every programme. The Examination Board can also make independent proposals amending the TER. The most important modifications which have been recommended by the Examination Board in 2008, concerned the reinforcement of the transition from bachelor to master (setting-up of the 'Bachelor before Master' rule or 'harde knip'), the renewal of the bachelor programmes within the framework of 'Boost the Bachelor' and the setting-up of the campus-wide minors and the internships.

⁸ In consultation with the Dean of BSc&MSc Programmes the Examination Board has chosen to step away from a thesis committee with a second co-reader and implement a *dual quality check*.

In the TERs of the Master Programmes little has changed. It is worth mentioning the internship that has been dropped from the MScIM-programme. This internship remains obligatory in the CEMS-programme. Furthermore, the transition regulation of the *foundation year* to the *specialization year* of the MScGM has been adjusted to the transition regulations of the MScBA and MScIM programmes. In the PTO-programme a new subject has been added to the premaster programme.

The Examination Board has not submitted a proposal for the elimination of the possibility of re-sitting a fully completed examination which this was the intention of the Programme Committee. Regarding the judgement of the Examination Board there were no weighty arguments to take on this proposal.

3. Decisions in individual cases

In the TER of the various programmes it is established in diverse articles that the Examination Board in some cases can permit digression from the rules. It concerns permitting exemption by the OER in individual cases due to personal circumstances or on the basis of the hardship clause (if a rule in an individual case leads to an unreasonable consequence) or other specific reasons. A few examples are: granting exemption for subjects, granting of extra and/or accelerated examination opportunities, doing examinations in an adjusted manner due to a certain limitation, adjustment of the norm of the binding study advice in the case of personal circumstances, permitting transition to the Master programme in the case of personal circumstances or hardship, and also granting permission for the following of external (optional) subjects, admission to the premaster programmes for the purpose of the master programme, the interim advice in the framework of the binding study advice, establishing a free master programme, etc. The majority of incoming and outgoing post from the Examination Board has relevance to this. Below you will find a report about the most important subjects. The admission decrees will be dealt with in the following chapter with the granting of the admission statements.

Exemptions

In most examination regulations it is established that the Examination Board can grant exemptions on the basis of knowledge and skills gained elsewhere. However in the regulation of the premaster programmes and the master regulations it is established that *no* exemptions will be granted. In the admission to these programmes of students from outside RSM it is already taken into account that they have a broad and related education and in addition to this these programmes are so short and specific that exemption would not be considered.

In the bachelor programmes exemptions are, however, granted. With the setting-up of the binding study advice it frequently occurs that students change after a rejection recommendation to a similar course. In 2008, 11 students have changed from the IBA programme to the BA programme after a negatively binding study advice. Approximately 30 students changed from the Erasmus School of Economics to the BA programme and 5 students with another initial university study changed to BA. In total these **46** students have received an exemption of almost 13 erts from the BScBA-programme.

The transfer to the IBA-bachelor programme after a negative binding study advice does not often occur because the candidates for this course are individually selected. Exemptions are however requested in particular by students with a foreign education. In total **27** IBA students have requested an exemption to whom 53 exemptions were granted and 19 refused.

Extra examination opportunities

Under certain conditions students can request an extra examination opportunity because of special circumstances such as long term illness but also when the entire study has been completed apart from one subject by which graduation is seriously delayed.

In 2008 **352** students submitted a request for an extra opportunity: 114 IBA students and 238 BA students. Special mention is hereby made of the examination *Financial Accounting* BAD06/BKB0031 on 25 March 2008. On this day traffic throughout the country was brought to a standstill by snowfall. This led to 247 requests (73 IBA and 174 BA students) for an extra opportunity. In April these students were given an extra chance.

M1-5 declarations

Students with temporary or structural forms of limitation or handicap (for example dyslexia or diabetes) can for the duration of this limitation within reasonable borders use special facilities. These facilities, including adjustment of examination provisions, must contribute to enable students with a limitation to have an even chance of study success. An important facility is the taking of examinations with half an hour extra examination time in a separate room: classroom M1-5. In 2008 the Examination Board provided **43** M1-5 declarations: 33 BA- and 10 IBA-students.

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

The Examination Board plays a crucial role with regard to binding study advice. The Examination Board is required to issue so-called interim advice to all students three times during their first academic year. This is followed at the end of the study year by the Dean's final advice. This final advice is prepared by the Examination Board. Each year, the Examination Board determines which students are given exemptions from the norm, based on personal circumstances. For this purpose, individual dossiers are discussed with the student advisers and student counsellors in August.

This year the meetings were held late in the month of August by necessity due to the time of announcement of the results. For the secretariat of the Examination Board this time frame is not easily workable due to the fact that the letters with an adjusted norm arrive by post at the student's home the same week. In the same week the secretariat is very busy processing applications for the premaster courses, providing admission statements, providing *tuition fee waivers* and such. Next year an attempt must be made to plan the time frame earlier.

On 25 August the meeting took place regarding the bachelor programme BScIBA. Because of many complaints and a low success rate with regard to the course *Foundations of Finance & Accounting* the Examination Board has decided that this course should not be included in the determination of negative study advice of the BScIBA programme for the category of students that for this subject this year (regular examination and resit) have achieved a grade of ≥ 3.5 and < 5.5 (this means de facto an imaginable raising of the grade by 2 points).

Meanwhile the subject is externally evaluated and the department is asked to reorganise the subject. On 26 August the meeting was held regarding the BScBA-programme. In the chart below are the files that have been processed and decisions taken during the past two years.

Overview PO files in the framework of the BSA

PO-files BSA	2007		2008	
	BA	IBA	BA	IBA
Senior year cohorts				
Files	46	46	72	61
Exemption due to pers.circum.*	32	26	55	41
Rejecting Bsa	14	20	17	20
First year cohort				
Files	95	60	74	39
Exemption due to pers. circum.*	59	39	38	16
Rejecting BSA	36	21	36	20
Unknown				3

* inclusive exemption due to FFA

4. Admissions decisions

Admission to the premaster programmes

RSM has for many years had a sideward transition of higher professional education (hbo) students. This concerns a group of students with a four year hbo-programme that are allied to the RSM business administration programme. This group of students can after following a year-long introductory programme be admitted into the master programme MScBA. Since the implementation of the so called bachelor-master structure this sideward transition is no longer financed for the school. RSM considers the specific higher professional education (hbo) transition also to be a valuable supplement to the student population and therefore wishes to continue to provide this introductory programme for the group of students that perform best.

Starting with the academic year 2007-2008 a new higher professional education (hbo) premaster programme of 64 ects was established. What was new was that of the admissible programmes the poorly performing programmes have been eliminated and that as an extra demand a grade point average of 7.0 or higher is required. In 2008 it appeared that this formula worked well. Premaster students of the cohort 2007-2008 achieved an average of 57 ects in 1 year. Around 42% have completed the programme in 1 year and 66% can continue after 1 year to the MScBA-programme. On the basis of the grades it is expected that only very few students will not finish the premaster programme in 2 year.

In 2008 there were noticeably less applications compared to 2007. Below is an overview of the applications and admissions in the past two years.

Total overview higher professional education (hbo) premaster

	2007		2008	
	NL	ENG	NL	ENG
Applications	240	160	208	112
Rejections	51	74	52	47
Withdrawals	34	26	37	31
Actually admitted	147	60	119	34

The cohort 2008-2009 of the Dutch language premaster programme comprises 24 students with a hbo-preliminary education Technical Business Administration, 24 students Commercial economics, 11 MER students, 9 Logistics and Economics and 8 Business economics, 8 IBMS and 6 Hotel school students. The rest originates from all kinds of other educational backgrounds. The HES is chief supplier with 41 students, furthermore the Hague School of Higher Education (Haagse Hogeschool) with 11 students and Inholland Rotterdam with 9 students. Brabant provides in total 22 students, North Holland 13 and Utrecht 8. The other students originate from other parts of the country.

This year, a remarkable number of students who had registered for the English language premaster programme have withdrawn. This is probably due to the introduction of the maths test for the IBMS-students. The majority of the rejections is done due to an average that is too low. From the actual registered students there are 28 originating from an IBMS-programme. 14 students have the Dutch nationality, 6 are Chinese and 3 have the Bulgarian nationality. The others have another nationality. The students originate from various schools. There is no noticeable chief supplier.

Admission to the master programmes

The chairman of the Examination Board is mandated by the dean to grant admission statements to the master programmes. Students from the BSc(I)BA-programmes and students switching from another course that fulfil the transition norms requirements receive on request an admission statement to the affiliated master programme. Twice annually there is an opportunity to submit a request: in the period May / June for the start on 1 September and in December / January for the start on 1 February. Internal transition students are processed by the secretariat of the Examination Board.

Furthermore around 200 students from outside the faculty annually receive direct access to the master programmes. From this number around 150 students gained an admission statement on the one side on the basis of their preliminary training that must be equal to the end level of the bachelor programmes of the RSM and on the other hand the scores of their GMAT- and TOEFL-scores. The admission applications of sideward transition are processed by the Admissions Office under the responsibility of the chairman of the Examination Board. In contrast to the internal transitional students, the sideward transition students can only enter the master programmes as of 1 September.

For the internal master transition (from BA and IBA) as of **February** 2008 102 students have applied. 51 of those received an admission statement, 11 received a refusal and 40 a refusal with the suggestion to apply for (one of) the 'guest regulations' of the Master Electives (see further in this document)

For the internal master transition in **September** 2008, a total of 1029 students (BA en IBA) applied. 857 students received an admission statement of which 34 students from General Management, who were able to enter their specialisation year (there were originally 35 GM-students who started, so only one was lost). 172 students received a rejection.

In the master admission of September 2008 the Examination Board received 124 applications on the basis of which **hardship or personal circumstances** can enable digression from the existing rules. In 114 cases they were in agreement with this, of which 95 under various 'reservations' (no extra examination opportunities, excluding participation in the Master Electives block 3 or 4, obligatory English language course at the EUR Language Centre or Talencentrum). These made to measure cases ensured a major peak workload for the Examination Board during the last two weeks of August.

The guest regulation

As well as the official Master admission there is also a **guest regulation** in operation: the Examination Board decides which students may participate as 'exchange student' in a Master Elective, without being admitted to the MScBA. The most important objective of this is to prevent too long a period without an offer of a study course for students that only slightly do not fulfil the master admission requirements in February, but are seen as capable of participating in an optional course (master elective). This is in contrast to the master admission in September which involves participation in the core courses. The core courses demand a greater preliminary knowledge, in order not to disturb progress within the group. An important point in the guest regulation is that the participation in master electives can only occur if there are places 'available'. The regular masters students always have priority. Furthermore, in April there is no transition moment for block 4, because between the end of the bachelor trimester-2 and the beginning of the master elective block 4 there is insufficient time to correct the trimester-2 examinations.

1. Evaluation of the participation of the 24 students in the guest regulation block 3-2008 has shown that two students in September 2008 did not fulfil the master admission requirements, (but did pass their master electives, meaning they had set their priorities incorrectly);
2. Evaluation of the participation of the 89 students (of whom seven based on personal circumstances) in the guest regulation block 4-2008 has shown that 13 (15%) did not fulfil the master admission requirements in September 2008.

On the basis of this it can be concluded that the guest regulations fulfilled expectations. In anticipation of the implementation of the 'Bachelor before Master' rule or 'harde knip' between the bachelor and master programmes it has already been decided that students in 2009 will be the last to be permitted to use this guest regulation.

IV. Preview

In the 2008 annual report there are enough subjects that deserve extra attention in 2009: the further development of the memo regarding the Integral Testing Policy as in, for example, the testing manual for teachers, the *excellence check* and the *sampled monitoring*. Furthermore, the fraud policy remains a point of attention: it must at least contain a coherent process for the prevention of fraud through information, embedding in the teaching process, application of technical possibilities, and feedback regarding punishment.

Meanwhile, within RSM there are processes set in motion that have important consequences for the Examination Board. This concerns for example the pre-sorting in the implementation of the 'Bachelor before Master' rule or 'harde knip' on 1 September 2011. However, the project 'Master the Master' also has possible consequences for the operation of the Examination Board. Which programmes will fall under the auspices of the Examination Board and to what extent should examination regulations for the programmes differ from each other? It can be imagined that the portfolio division of the Examination Board must be adjusted to comply with the new situation: from a division on the basis of educational programmes to a division on the basis of core tasks?

Last but not least: in December 2008 the proposed amendment Reinforcement of government⁹ of the Lower House was submitted. An important issue in this amendment is the consolidation of the role of the Examination Board. A point of departure in the amendment is the increase in independence and expertise of the Examination Board in order that they are in a position to ensure the guarantee of quality and the quality-related policy regarding testing and examinations. The Examination Board has demonstrated in this annual report to have already taken this direction. It thus appears that the university environment recognises and supports this new direction. The provision of information and advice also plays an important role. In 2009 these are the subjects that will remain high on the agenda.

⁹ Kamerstuk 2008-2009, 31821, Tweede Kamer. Proposed amendment of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW*) and some other laws in order to reinforce government of the institutes of higher education a.o. (reinforcement of government)

V. Appendices

Appendix A. Examination Board BSc & MSc Programmes

Generally, the following components can be discerned:

1. *A supervisory responsibility for / with regard to exams and examinations.* This responsibility is manifested in the competence of the Examination Board to:
 - a. award the certificate of the degree;
 - b. appoint the examiners;
 - c. control the quality of exams and examinations;
 - d. take disciplinary action in case of fraud;
 - e. supervise the practice of the examination rules with due observance of the common legal principles like equality, legal security, legitimacy, reasonableness, fair play and so on;
 - f. be a mediator or even a defendant in case of disputes or appeals.
2. *Legislation:* the Examination Board makes Rules and Guidelines concerning the examinations, for example rules for enrolment, rules concerning order during examinations, fraud, assessment criteria, classifications (like cum laude). Once a year new Rules and Guidelines are drawn up.
3. *To grant exemptions from the rules in individual cases. Tasks that are further defined in the Teaching and Examinations Regulation or 'Onderwijs- en Examenregeling' (TER or OER) established by (or on behalf of) the dean.* This concerns the granting of exemption by the OER in individual cases due to personal circumstances or on grounds of the hardship clause (if a rule in an individual case leads to unreasonable consequences). A few examples are: the granting of exemptions for subjects, the admission to the premaster programmes with regard to the master programme, the granting of transition to the Master programme, the interim advice within the framework of the binding study advice, the adjustment of the norm of the binding study advice in the case of personal circumstances, granting an extra and/or accelerated examinations opportunities, the establishment of a free master programme.
4. *In addition, on behalf of the Dean of the Rotterdam School of Management, the chairman of the Examination Board grants admission statements to the MSc-programmes.*
5. *Advisory tasks:* three times a year the Examination Board issues an advice to every first year student concerning his success-rate. Furthermore the Examination Board advises the Dean regarding his Teaching and Examination Regulations.
6. *Other,* such as delegations in selection committees and the 'colloquium doctum' committee.

Appendix B. Students per programme 2007 and 2008

Programme	2007	2008	CROHO	language	ects	ft/pt
BScBA*	2250	2327	50015	Dutch	180	Full time
BScIBA*	1160	1209	50952	English	180	Full time
MScBA**	1930	2175	60644	English	60	Full time
PTO	300	301	60644	Dutch	60	Part time
MScIBA	220	155	60256	English	90	Full time
MScGM	72	103	60644	English	120	Full time
MPhil	30	27	60313	English	120	Full time
Hbo-premaster NL old style	400	184	-	Dutch	85 (ave)	Full time
Hbo-premaster NL new style	150	212		Dutch	65	Full time
Hbo-premaster EN old style	50	62	-	English	70 (ave)	Full time
Hbo-premaster EN new style	60	34		English	65	Full time
total	6622	6789				

Appendix C. Concise summary of key advice and Resolutions 2008*Advice*

Advice regarding bachelor internship manual	January
Advice regarding procedure for graduating	January
Advice regarding Teaching and Examination Regulations bachelor programmes	May
Advice regarding Teaching and Examination Regulations master programmes	June

Decisions

Information round for academic departments	January
Installation of Council for Distinction Mark	January
Installation of sampled monitoring	January
Definitive establishment of memo regarding Integral testing policy	February
Establishing minor list	February
Establishing annual report	March
Extending Guest regulation	April
Establishing Rules and Guidelines for bachelor programmes	May
Establishing Rules and Guidelines for master programmes	June
Establishing Selection procedure PTO	September
Refining regulation duo theses (discouragement policy)	September
Establishing regulation replacement and absence at final exams	October
Establishing premaster regulations 2009-2010 in accordance with the Dean of BSc&MSc Programmes	December

Appendix D. Report of advice to the Dean regarding tuition fee waivers

Since September 2005 it is possible on a limited scale for English language Master Programmes to grant waivers to students from outside the European Economic Area, the EEA: the waiver implies that the student in question is seen as equal to a student having the nationality of a member state of the EEA. The waiver is an extension of the course fee. The quality demands that a student must fulfil to be considered for a waiver are established in the OER. Furthermore, no more than 25% of the intake of students from outside EEA may receive a waiver. These waivers are further supplied by the Dean and up to the present time the Examination Board have prepared the advice and letters.

Due to the increasing intake of external Master students, the implementation of time frames for graduation and the considerable rise in tuition fees for non-EEA students, the number of applications for waivers on the basis of 'financial need' increased. The Examination Board has no proper view of the possibilities that exist for such cases and also no view of the volume/numbers of non-EEA-students. Consequently it is desirable that this decision-making occurs closer to 'the source' and also that discussions take place with the Admissions Office and the MScBA-programme management to siphon off these tasks.

In 2008 there were in total **27** waiver applications processed, including:

- 2 waivers directly refused;
- 11 waivers were provided up to and including December due to the 'time frames' (students that did not quite make it to submit their assignments before the end of August and only have to defend their thesis in December, while they no longer have to apply for educational facilities);
- 10 students 'only' have to pay the IBA-bachelor-, or the master fee from 2007 due to the considerable rise in tuition fees (BScIBA from € 5.500,- to € 6.740,-, MScBA from € 11.184,- to € 13.850,-) which does not comply with the 'expectations indicated';
- 4 waivers for the entire college year were granted due to a GPA of 8,25 or higher.

Appendix E. Short report on the fraud symposium***Ctrl+C, CTRL+V: Mini symposium about plagiarism***

On Thursday 6 November last year the Examination Board organised its first mini symposium in cooperation with Risbo. Since the subject was 'Plagiarism' a regularly recurring subject on the agenda, this seemed a suitable theme to elaborate on during a mini symposium. All staff and students of RSM were invited to attend the symposium, as well as the chairmen of the other EUR-Examination Boards and a few special guests.

The symposium started at 13.30 hrs and closed at the end of the afternoon with drinks in the Faculty Club. There were 30 participants present. The chairman was Dr. M.J.J.M van de Ven from Risbo.

After the introduction by Prof. Dr. Ing. T.W. Hardjono, the guest speaker Mr. T.J. Oudejans of the Law Faculty of the University of Tilburg took the floor. He was asked to speak at this symposium because of his experience with the plagiarism detection programme 'Urkund' and the way in which first year Law students are immediately brought up to date on the various forms of plagiarism. It appears that this approach works: the quality of assignments from this faculty has improved.

After his presentation the participants split into five groups to discuss cases whereby plagiarism played a role. The objective was to search for solutions and to reach a clear definition of the roles of the various involved parties (student, teacher, Examination Board). During these discussions and the plenary session it became clearer how difficult it is to define plagiarism clearly and how time-consuming it is to coax students out of the 'Copy-Paste' era and to 're-educate' them on this subject.

Given the heated discussions it can be assumed that the symposium clearly filled a need and that it by no means constituted the last word on this subject...

One of the outcomes is that the Examination Board will communicate more regarding the instances of plagiarism they have dealt with and that they have emphasised to the programme directors that teachers who spend a lot of time tracing the origins of plagiarism should be given more scope.

The organisation of this afternoon was in the hands of Drs. M.de Jonge from Risbo in cooperation with Drs. A.M. Schey.

Appendix F. Sampled monitoring format

Student name (student number)

Date of defense

Master programme

Coach

1st co-reader

> Assessment process of the committee

- Extent to which dimension has been addressed and discussed in the oral defense
[1 (none) -5 (very much so)]
 - Identify a research question and design a project to answer it
 - Write a critical review
 - Define working concepts and conceptual frameworks to give structure to the work
 - Collect and analyze research data efficiently and effectively
 - Interpret findings sensitively as a basis for making recommendations for action that are practical and sound
 - Write reports and dissertations that are persuasive, well structured and well written
 - Research ethics and management of relationships and processes

Other dimensions notably addressed and discussed in the oral defense:

- Extent to which a dimension has been addressed and weighted in the grade deliberations
[1 (none) -5 (very much so)]
 - Identify a research question and design a project to answer it
 - Write a critical review
 - Define working concepts and conceptual frameworks to give structure to the work
 - Collect and analyze research data efficiently and effectively
 - Interpret findings sensitively as a basis for making recommendations for action that are practical and sound
 - Write reports and dissertations that are persuasive, well structured and well written
 - Research ethics and management of relationships and processes
 - Presentation

Other dimensions notably addressed/discussed and weighted in the grade deliberations:

> Assessment outcomes:

	Awarded by committee	Assessment outcome by observer (see also reverse side)
Grade		

Further comments

Observer's assessment of the thesis project

Observer's assessment of the thesis project	Identify a research question and design a project to answer it	Write a critical review	Define working conceptual frameworks to give structure to the work	Collect and analyze research data efficiently and effectively	Interpret findings sensitively as a basis for making recommendations for practical and sound action that are	Write reports and dissertations that are persuasive, well structured and well written	Research ethics and management of relationships and processes	Presentation and oral defense
Excellent: 9-10	Well-balanced and innovative composition of research question, project design and research method	The literature review is itself a significant contribution to the literature	Significant additions to the theoretical and conceptual understanding of the subject	Contribution to the development and methods for collecting and analyzing research material and/or methodological debate	Sophisticated interpretation of the material. The conclusions are based on the findings but transcend them.	A work of art written with style, wit and strong arguments.	The research and its management has contributed demonstrably to enhanced understanding of concentrated action or two or more parties involved in the research	Superior mastery and power in defending the research in its setup, methodology and execution
Very Good: 8-9	Clear and specific about research question, project design and research methods.	The literature is cogently described and evaluated from novel or complex perspectives	An attempt, not necessarily wholly successful, is made to theorize beyond the current state of literature	Modifies and develops methods for collecting and analyzing research material reflecting methodological understanding	Sophisticated interpretation of findings showing a creative spark.	Clear and persuasive arguments in a well-structured document	Research manages the project carefully and sensitively with open mindedness in the face of interests of parties in the research	Under scrutiny managing to defend, justify and uphold the choices, methods and conclusions made in the project while showing proficiency in transparent communicating
Good: 7 – 8	Well-defined research question. Sensible project design and clear plans for conducting the research	The literature is cogently evaluated using positions already available in the literature	A conceptual framework is developed, or an existing one is adapted, context of an evaluated literature	Uses methods for gathering and analyzing research material well and shows an understanding of methodological issues	Uses techniques for interpretation but in a mechanical way. Conclusions based well on findings.	Either expressed well or technically correct but not both. Clear structure adequately argued	The research has been carried out openly mindedly or sensitively but not both	Answering questions lucidly and candidly but not always seen confidently and well-prepared
Competent Pass Level: 6 - 7	Explicit ideas on design and methods but there are some questions about the fit between question, design and methods	Good description of the appropriate field(s) of literature. Some general criticisms made but no close evaluation of concepts	Concepts are clearly defined and appropriate. They are set in the context of the literature.	Methods for gathering and analyzing research are used competently	Treats the finding as straightforward and unproblematic. Conclusions have some connection with the findings. Action plans are general but prescriptive.	Adequate expression but a noticeable number of mistakes. Argumentation is sometimes replaced by assumption or assertion.	The research is managed straightforwardly and has not explicitly addressed issues of contextual interests and concerns	Taking effort in answering the questions, but sometimes loses focus and has tendency to enter into irrelevant circumlocution
Borderline Fail: 5-6	Identified an interesting topic but the research question is very broad and the details of the project are hazy	Inadequate or limited description of the appropriate field(s) of literature, and/or no criticism or evaluation	Definition and use of theoretical concepts is confused. No attempt at theoretical synthesis or evaluation.	Methods for gathering data and analyzing research material are used in a confused and unsystematic way	The occasional insight takes the place of interpretation. Conclusions have a tenuous link with findings. Action plans are simple exhortations or lacking	Sentences often do not make sense. Uses bullet points to disguise a lack of arguments	There is no understanding of impact, positive or negative, on interest or concerns of parties in the research	Occasionally showing effort in giving precise answers but all too often wanders into feeble excuses showing lack of abstract argumentation.
Fail: < 5	The focus, purpose and method of the project are unclear	The author appears to have read little and understood less	No conceptual or theoretical discussion of any value	No primary research of any value	Provides no evidence that they know what this outcome is about	Scrappy presentation, illogical structure. No arguments or silly ones.	The research has treated interests and concerns of parties in an arbitrary and haphazard way with risk of harm or damage	Giving ambiguous answers showing a lack of systematic, abstract thinking.

Additional notes:



Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University

Examination Board BSc & MSc Programmes

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