



Faculty
Student Council

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

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Dear prof. dr. H.G. van Dissel,

Dear prof. dr. P.J. van Baalen,

The Faculty Student Council (henceforth referred to as “FSR”) at the Faculty of Economics and Business (henceforth referred to as “FEB”) is writing this letter to draw your attention to irregularities in the process of writing the bachelor thesis.

These irregularities appear mostly in the Bachelor of Economics and Business which will be discontinued next year. The FSR would like to make sure that the process will be improved after the Bachelor split in order to ensure the high quality of education at the FEB. Moreover, these guidelines could be applied to all bachelors in the FEB in order to standardize the process of writing a bachelor thesis. The bachelor thesis is the culmination of three years of knowledge accumulation and the FSR believes it is one of/if not the most important part of the bachelor. Therefore, we would like to point out some potential improvements.

Firstly, students find it difficult to find a topic and are sometimes forced to write proposals on uninteresting topics due to the lack of time. The FSR would propose that a plenary lecture should be held before the start of the thesis seminar which would provide basic research ideas to students. This solution has added many benefits in the humanities Master programmes.

Secondly, in assigning a supervisor, there is a gap of more than 10 to 12 days in which students cannot start writing on their thesis after submitting their proposal because they have no input from supervisors. The FSR proposes a preliminary allocation of supervisors after





students had submitted their draft proposal. This would be done by the thesis coordinator when reviewing the preliminary proposal. In this way students can communicate with a supervisor at all times. The process would then be similar as the allocation of supervisors in the FEB Masters. A different approach for this would be to provide students with certain guidelines on how to continue writing the thesis until they are allocated the final supervisor.

Thirdly, the FSR believes that the current format in which students present their final proposal and they give and receive feedback on proposals could be improved. Students conveyed that they find this process tedious and it does not add value to their proposal. Because these classes are at a very early stage in writing the thesis, students cannot relate their problems/potential problems and end up not learning in class. Instead, smaller discussions should be facilitated between students and teachers/supervisors. Thus, the classes in which students present their proposals could be replaced by open hours of supervisors/ seminar teachers. More specifically, the 3 classes of 2 hours each could be replaced by open hours of supervisors/teachers to respond to any questions related to proposals.

Fourthly, students have expressed their dissatisfaction with the process of resitting the thesis. The problem arises due to late feedback from the supervisor in the case of a failing grade. Because of this, students do not have enough time to implement the feedback for the resit. The FSR proposes a pass/fail indication in maximum 5 days after submitting the thesis. In this way, supervisors could focus on giving the necessary feedback for the resit and postpone giving feedback to students who have passed the thesis with their first submission. Alternatively, pushing the resit deadline to a month instead of 2 weeks, after the thesis submission, could solve this issue. Related to this is the time in which students receive feedback after submitting the draft version of the thesis. A maximum of 5 days should be allowed until students receive feedback from their supervisors.



Fifthly, the FSR believes it is of utmost importance that each thesis is read by more than one reader. We understand that as things stand, the second supervisor does not receive compensation for reading the thesis and thus does not put effort into reading and grading the thesis. We would like to ask the management team to allocate funds for this to ensure the quality of thesis grading.

Lastly, and most importantly in the view of the FSR, the quality of supervisors and the quality of relationships between supervisors and students is subpar. Students have complained numerous times about supervisors being allocated on a wrongful basis (qualitative research expert for a quantitative thesis topic). Moreover, there are instances of supervisors not answering emails for more than 7 days or supervisors not giving any or hardly any feedback. The FSR would like to express our concerns regarding this topic and would propose the creation of a working group in each faculty that should oversee the supervision process for the next three years, gather feedback from students and make changes where necessary. What is more, the FSR would like to ask all thesis coordinators to implement a system in which supervisors approach the students and not the other way around - as it currently stands in the master programmes. The students should have a clear overview of what is expected from them and more importantly of what they should expect from the supervisors (nr. of meetings, schedule of meetings, total number of hours, feedback depth, etc.). Supervisors should outlay this overview in an introductory email/meeting no later than 3 days after being assigned supervisees. Another approach to solve this problem on the short term would be to advise students to make use of their supervision cards in order to ensure supervisors provide them with a sufficient number of hours (only as a last resort). We are open to hearing your suggestions or comments on improving this issue.

All in all, the FSR believe there is room for improvement in the bachelor thesis seminars and the supervision process at the FEB and urges the course coordinators and the management team to consider this advice.





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If there are any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. On The Behalf of FSR FEB 17-18,

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E&R committee FSR FEB

Christof Bischofberger

Chairman E&R committee FSR FEB

