



Graduate School of Communication Action Plan

December 2015

The Graduate School of Communication has several ways of evaluating its Master's programmes, among which:

- Students are asked to complete digital questionnaires to evaluate individual courses
- Student focus groups are held at the end of every semester to evaluate the programme as a whole, as well as the learning environment and teaching facilities
- Lecturers also complete questionnaires about the course they taught and indicate whether there are areas in which the course could be improved

Also, all programmes offered by the Graduate School are formally accredited by the Netherlands Central Register for Higher Education Programmes (CROHO) and thoroughly assessed for re-accreditation every 5 years by a committee of experts from the field, including student representatives. Each programme is also assessed annually by the Programme Committee (OC), Board of Studies, and the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences.

Based on the results of student course evaluations and feedback in focus groups in the previous academic year, for the academic year 2015-2016 the following improvement measures will be or have already been implemented:

Education

Research Methods Tailored to the Thesis (RMTT)

The course format of Research Methods Tailored to the Thesis (RMTT) was evaluated in a positive manner by students and lecturers in March and June 2015. Some slight changes were made for the June 2015 edition: Key note addresses and dear prof. assignments were removed, students were allowed to work on their own research question during assignment A (setting up a research question), assessment criteria for assignments were made clear in advance, and datasets were available to students earlier in the course process. The Graduate School is looking for opportunities to organise 'plus modules', optional only for those master students who choose to challenge themselves more in the area of research methods.

A greater focus on preparation for professional practice

In focus groups a wish was expressed for the study programme to have a greater link with professional practice. The Programme Committee, who has taken note of the evaluation results and focus group discussions, has decided to make it their priority area in the upcoming academic year. The Committee stimulates discussion among stakeholders like students and the Graduate School, about what a greater link to the professional practice should look like (1), the role of the programme, looking at the changes in the field of mediated communication (2) and the competences students need to acquire (3). Furthermore, as in the academic year of 2014-2015, the Graduate School continues organising a series of career workshops, preparing students for the professional practice.

Student representatives

In the academic year 2014-2015 student representatives were recruited, because of a wish expressed in focus groups and also in order to get more input from students' perspective. Our student representative project has proved a fruitful base for student initiatives. In this project, each programme and track, including the pre-master programme, has a student acting as a representative for his/her student group. The student representatives, including the Ombuds students, meet with us in monthly sessions to provide

feedback and provide advice on ongoing matters. Besides that, the representatives organised a number of events.

Shared electives

As of 2016-2017 the Graduate School would like to present all electives in a shared list, with no marking of the electives as belonging to specific tracks. This is to encourage students to target their choice of electives based on their content, rather than on the program group they are linked to. Furthermore, this will ensure that students from the smaller specialisations have just as much elective choice as the students from larger specialisations.

Quality care

Evaluation of the Master's curriculum

Per semester 2 2015-2016, students who graduate will receive an online link to the evaluation of the Masters' curriculum. These evaluation results will serve as important feedback for the Graduate School in improving the Masters' programmes and facilities, and is an extra opportunity for you to let us know what can be improved.