

Executive Board
collegevanbestuur@eur.nl

Date
March 6th, 2020

Subject
Application numerus fixus bachelor
Psychology 2021-2022

Our reference
ESSB/VB/20903/nbo

Your reference
E&S/CH/19.0000730

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Appendix
- Proposed selection procedure

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Dear Members of the Executive Board,

In response to the letter of Drs. Lilian Jillissen of December 12, 2019, I would like to apply for a numerus fixus for the bachelor Psychology for the academic year 2021-2022, for an intake of maximum 600 students.

This letter gives insight in our situation and provides the motivation for our request, which largely overlaps with the motivation we provided last year: 1) we perceive the numerus fixus as necessary to preserve our educational quality and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method, and 2) all educational directors of Dutch Psychology programs agreed on implementing a numerus fixus, meaning that if we drop out of this agreement the risk of a higher intake than we can handle, becomes larger.

Current situation

Each year, more students applied for both the Dutch- and English-language tracks of the bachelor psychology, which also led to higher enrollment figures. In 2019-2020, around 920 students enrolled, compared to approximately 700 in the year before. In earlier years, the growth was smaller but already notable: between 2012 and 2018 the number of first-year enrollments increased with 18 per cent per year on average. Given the steady increase in the number of students, in 2019 a numerus fixus was implemented for Psychology and we are currently in the process of ranking applicants.

Educational quality and PBL

The bachelor program uses Problem-Based Learning (PBL), a method that is based on the idea that the student plays an active role in the learning process (student-centered education). The method focuses less on lecturing with the purpose of information transfer (as is the case in traditional educational systems). Instead, the aim is to stimulate active participation of the student in small educational groups who takes ownership of the discussion. While there are a couple of collective lectures in the bachelor program, small-scale tutorials and practical meetings are at the very core of the PBL method. For tutorials to work well, the group consists of 10-12 students at a maximum under supervision of a committed and competent tutor or trainer (for the practical meetings). The growing intake of students in makes it difficult for us to maintain (the quality of) our PBL method. A numerus fixus enables us to keep a grip on the size and quality of our program.

If student numbers would remain too high, several problems with regards to our educational quality and PBL method would arise:

- It would be necessary to hire more academic/teaching staff (including tutors), yet in the present labor market this has proven to be difficult – especially at short notice and for a longer period.
- Coordination becomes problematic if course coordinators would have to guide and supervise increasingly more tutors. For the current number of students, we already had to make less than ideal adjustments in coordination practices.
- Because of the limited availability of rooms suitable for small-scale education, the same holds for schedules; we had to make less than ideal adjustments in schedules.

Nation-wide agreement

In 2019, the “Kamer Psychologie”, a forum of the NIP (Nederlands Instituut voor Psychologen, part of the VSNU) and education directors of all psychology bachelor programs in the Netherlands, agreed upon establishing a numerus fixus (of 600 students) for all bachelor programs in psychology in the Netherlands. The only exception is formed by programs that wish to grow. For now, this only applies to the University of Twente. If our university would drop out of this agreement, the number of applications for our bachelor psychology would probably increase (for example due to students wanting to avoid, or not successfully completing selection procedures at other universities).

A numerus fixus would prevent the intake for 2021-2022 to exceed our capacity and would thus prevent a negative impact on the educational quality of the program. On the other hand, it would also somewhat limit its accessibility, as our bachelor program psychology would no longer be open to all students who are admissible and wish to enroll. However, for the reasons listed above, we consider a numerus fixus a necessary step.

To limit negative outcomes of a numerus fixus as much as possible, we have designed a selection procedure that aims to select qualified students who are motivated to enroll in this particular programme, and who may contribute to a diverse classroom. In this process, we value the results students obtained prior to enrolling in the bachelor program psychology as well as the (untapped) potential of students who are motivated to pursue their diploma in psychology. In 2020-2021, we will closely monitor and evaluate the selection procedure to ensure it fulfills the abovementioned aims, which are described in more detail in the selection procedure that is attached to this letter.

Considering that this application and the proposed selection procedure largely overlap with those of last year, we have asked our Faculty Council and Programme Committee Psychology whether they wish to offer a formal advice on the current application. Their proposal was to give advice on the *next* application and proposed selection procedure, since these will take into account the evaluation of the first selection procedure (that is currently still taking place). We are planning to discuss the first experiences with these participatory bodies and will consider their feedback moving forward.

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In due time, at the latest, April 1st 2020, we will finalize the part of the Education & Examination Rules (EER) that deals with the selection procedure.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. dr. V.J.J.M. Bekkers
Dean

Cc.

- Prof. dr. Bram Steijn, vice-dean education
- Carolien Hennekam MA, policy officer E&S
- Kimberly van Aart MA MSc, policy officer ESSB

Selection procedure for B Psychology

For the *numerus fixus* (600) for 2020-2021 at ESSB, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Short introduction

For the academic year 2021-2022 it is proposed to maintain a *numerus fixus* for the bachelor's programme psychology (both the Dutch and international tracks) for 600 students at most, in accordance with an agreement of the Kamer Psychologie to establish a *fixus* for all bachelor's programmes Psychology in the Netherlands, except for those programmes that wish to grow. For a detailed motivation, please refer to the cover letter.

The proposed *fixus* means that the admission of students will entail two steps:

1. the assessment of the admissibility of applicants (step 1)
2. the ranking of these applicants based on four selection criteria.

These criteria are based on the envisioned profile of our student population and match the objectives that we have.

First, we aim at a student population (in both tracks) that reflects the diverse composition of the Rotterdam population. Many graduates find suitable jobs in the metropolitan area of Rotterdam and surroundings. This means that the program delivers students who are well-equipped for the job market of a psychologist in a diverse society.

Second, we wish to select students with study attitude and motivation of students fit with our method of education, problem-based learning. Problem-based learning is a very active form of education that is particularly suitable for curious, motivated students who can work well with others.

The selection is based on these objectives.

Admission

After registration via Studielink (no later than 15 January 2021) for all applicants their admissibility will be checked. This will be done based on the admission requirements stipulated in Article 2.1 of the bachelor Education & Examination Regulations (EER) for 2020-2021. For the International Bachelor in Psychology track, a language requirement (for English proficiency) is also in place and detailed in the EER.

Selection

Applicants who are deemed eligible for admission will receive an invitation to participate in the selection procedure. This selection is based on the following criteria, that each weigh 25%:

1. school grades
2. scores on an online test (multiple choice)
3. motivation (online questionnaire with open questions)
4. study attitude (online questionnaire with closed and open questions)

Part I Grades

1. School grades

Applicants will submit their grades for the penultimate year of prior education (or for the last year if this has been completed already). For Dutch applicants this will probably be the secondary school grades. For applicants with a foreign prior education, the submitted grades will be recalculated based on a conversion table, that is drawn up mainly based on information from Nuffic, for comparability.

Part II Selection assessment

Applicants receive materials to be studied in preparation for the test and are given access to an online assessment tool, with which criteria 2 to 4 will be assessed.

This assessment includes a total of about 50 questions and will take a total of 6-7 hours of time to complete (this is comparable to the time spent on selection procedures of other bachelor programs psychology). A Dutch and English version is available for all questions. The different parts are described below.

2. Online test

Applicants will be requested to study three recorded lectures and three chapters from basic textbooks on subjects relevant to the psychology programme, that also reflect the educational approach of the bachelor's programme in psychology (problem-based learning). The subjects are personality psychology, biological psychology and clinical psychology. A few questions about the subject of clinical psychology should be answered by performing a statistical calculation. Methodological questions can also be asked.

The materials provided to students will match those included in the bachelor's programme, meaning that they are in English, and will be of a bachelor-1 level, making the test feasible for applicants. In this way, the student will simultaneously prepare for the online assessment and get a better idea of what awaits him / her in the first year if he / she is selected. The answers to the questions can be in English or Dutch. Studying the material in preparation for the exam takes about 5 hours.

The online test will be part of the larger online assessment, which can be interrupted and continued at a later time. However, no earlier or later parts of the test can be seen or changed. The already completed part is saved and you continue with the test. The total time spent on the test is recorded.

The test consists of 15 multiple choice questions (with 3 answer options), 5 for each subject. The applicant must have completed the test before a predetermined date.

3. Motivation

Prospective students must complete an online questionnaire in this part of the online assessment. This consists of open and closed questions in which applicants, among other things, give a motivation for choosing the bachelor's programme in Psychology at Erasmus University Rotterdam, explain how they fit within the (diverse) profile and within a programme with problem-based learning. Motivation will also cover the applicant's growth opportunities and their role in the labour market upon graduating. A maximum number of

words is available for these answers. The answers are tested for quality; the extent to which the applicant clearly and convincingly motivates the choice. In addition, we also assess diversity in motivations, since we aim at a diverse classroom.

In order to properly assess the answers, a calibration session will take place in which evaluators jointly assess a few motivation assessments. After achieving good inter-rater reliability, the evaluators will assess the motivation questions separately.

4. Study attitude

In the last part of the online assessment, applicants must answer an online questionnaire with open and closed questions about their study attitude, approach to studying, and professional conduct. This part is not about the motivation for the program, but about how applicants think about active, small-scale education and how they prepare for studying, and how their study attitudes suit the problem-based learning approach.

An applicant who goes beyond just studying the material, who is curious and has a critical attitude (internalizing behaviour), will score better on this component than a student who primarily learns to pass a test (externalizing behaviour). Also, forms of professional behaviour will be included in this section because it has been shown that these have a predictive value for study success.

Ranking of students

Standard scores (z-scores) will be calculated for each component, so that it is possible to assess how applicants score in relation to each other on the components of the assessment. All z-scores will be summed up to create a total score. In other words, there will be no scores for components of the assessments. Each component assessment contributes equally to the total score.

The total score determines the final rank number for each candidate. When total scores are equal, the score on the motivation questions, within the group of applicants with the same score, determines the final rank number.

When registering in Studielink, applicants choose either the international or Dutch track. However, one ranking will be made for the program, instead of separate rankings per track, as is required by the Higher Education Act (WHW). At first, the rank number determines whether someone is offered a place in the program (when the number is 600 or lower) or not (when the number is 601 or higher).

When an applicant receives a message about the rank number and that rank number means that he / she is selected, this message also includes a confirmation of the track that has been chosen by the applicant and in which he/she is thus placed. After choosing a track, applicants cannot switch from the Dutch track to the international track or the other way around.

In total, an applicant may participate three times in a selection procedure for the bachelor's programme Psychology at the EUR. If students participate several times in a selection

procedure for the bachelor's programme Psychology at the EUR, each participation will be regarded as new.

The selection procedure takes place only once a year. The scores and rank numbers of cannot be transferred to the next academic year (or to a different university). The selection procedure must then be completed by the student in its entirety.

The EUR does not organize an inspection of scores, although an applicant has the right to request the personal data concerning him/her (on the basis of the GDPR, article 15). National laws and regulations and corresponding deadlines apply in this selection procedure (see www.studiekeuze123.nl/selection).

Applicants will find information on the admission and selection procedure on the following web pages:

<https://www.eur.nl/en/bachelor/international-bachelor-psychology/admission>

<https://www.eur.nl/bachelor/psychologie/toelating>