

**Date**

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Subject**

Proposal for maximum capacity master  
Psychology, in 2023-2024

**Our reference**

ESSB/VB/021444/ssa

**Your reference**

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**Appendix**

Selection procedure

**Department**

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Dear Executive Board,

With this letter, I would like to bring forward a proposal for a (continued) maximum capacity for the master Psychology, in 2023-2024. Below, you will find, a detailed motivation, a global outline of the selection procedure, and our proposed maximum capacity.

**Motivation**

We propose a maximum capacity for two reasons. First, we know other universities have also implemented a limitation of new enrolments for their master's specialisations Clinical Psychology, for example the University Leiden. If we do not continue the capacity limitation at the EUR, this would significantly increase enrolments in our master, as we know from experience that students who are not selected elsewhere switch to a programme without a selection procedure.

Second, we feel a capacity limitation is necessary in relation to the labour market, that cannot continue to expand, as more students enrol in, and graduate from the master's Psychology. This is particularly true for our three largest specialisations: Clinical Psychology, Clinical Child & Youth Psychology, and Forensic & Legal Psychology. There is a solid, but not unlimited labour market for graduates of these specialisations, and we feel a responsibility to prevent the number of graduates to exceed the number of job opportunities in the labour market. Also, students value the internship that they may follow as part of the programme, yet this is increasingly difficult when student numbers continue to grow.

We see a real risk that without a capacity limitation, enrolment numbers would exceed our educational capacity – a capacity that we already have increased to the absolute maximum. We simply do not have the staff, nor the campus space to facilitate such a large number of students in the master's Psychology. We also fear the increasingly large scale would put our educational quality at risk. Not implementing a capacity limitation would therefore endanger the quality of our education, and further increase the already high work pressure.

In light of these factors, we feel it is necessary to implement a capacity limitation, to maintain the quality of the programme.

**Selection procedure**

In the appendix of this letter, we have described the selection procedure in detail. With this selection procedure, we aim to select students who are well-suited for the master's Psychology, for the limited number of available

spaces. Our selection procedure is devised to carry out this objective and, in this way, we aim for a constructive alignment between the goals of the programme and selection procedure, and the contents and outcomes of that procedure. For a full description, please refer to Annex 1. Please note that this selection procedure is the same as for the 2022-2023, as we wish to make possible adjustments based on an evaluation.

#### Proposed capacity

The maximum number of students that we propose for 2023-2024 is 650. This is slightly lower than in 2022-2023, as our record-sized cohort of the bachelor Psychology (the final cohort prior to the implementation of the numerus fixus) is expected to graduate and enrol in the master's in 2022-2023. On a national level, the introduction of a numerus fixus for all bachelor Psychology programmes from 2020-2021 onwards, means that fewer students start the bachelor programme, and in the years to come, fewer students will graduate from the bachelor's and move on to a master's programme, as well. We therefore plan to gradually decrease the capacity limitation for the master.

#### Faculty Council advice

The Faculty Council issued a positive advice but raised questions surrounding the weight of the motivation criterium as assessed via questions about motivation. The Council notes that we answered these questions satisfactorily, and considers the procedure is well designed. We appreciate the Council's positive remarks about the procedure. Of course, we also understand the remarks about possibly increasing the weight of the motivation criterium. However, we would like to evaluate the current set-up of the procedure (to be executed for the first time this academic year), before we make alterations. In the evaluation we would like to consider the predictive value of motivation for study/student success. Based on data currently available, we believe the proposed procedure to best match the objectives of our selection procedure. Next year, we will report on possible additional findings.

We hope this letter provides you with clear and sufficient information on our proposal for a limited capacity, and that based on this you agree that such a capacity limitation is a necessary instrument to maintain our educational quality in the academic year 2023-2024.

Yours sincerely,



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

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

## Selection procedure Master Psychology for 2023-2024

13-01-2022

### Introduction

Number of places available: 650

Objectives of selection: For the limited available places in the master Psychology, we aim to select those students (of all students who are eligible for admission) who are most likely to successfully complete the program and graduate within a reasonable time frame. To that end, we select those students that have been most successful in the bachelor program and demonstrated a high level of knowledge and understanding of 1- psychology and its foundations, and 2- of statistics.

Active knowledge of statistics is important for two reasons. First, the statistics course in the master is the one that students find most difficult and most frequently fail to pass (despite extensive investments of our staff). Second, all students need to complete a research internship and write a master thesis. Statistical analyses of the data form an important and integral part of the master thesis. It is essential that students understand the statistical foundations of the most commonly used statistical techniques and are able to interpret the outcome of such analyses. The statistics test assesses these abilities. Third, we aim to select those students who are most motivated and make a deliberate choice for a master program at Erasmus University, as we expect that motivated students will be more successful in completing the program (they are less likely to drop out).

Selection criteria & methods:

- Average grade for all Bachelor 1 and 2 courses (weight 60%)
- Performance on a proctored online statistics test (weight 30%)
- Score on motivational questions (weight 10%)

### Contents of selection process

Students who participate in the selection procedure must meet the admission requirements of the program (see the ESSB (pre-)master Education and Examination Regulations (EER) 2021-2022).

The selection criteria applied are listed above. The methods and procedure for the assessment of these selection criteria is as follows. First, students submit their application, based on which the admissions board will inform the students on whether they are eligible for admission.

Students who are eligible for admission subsequently enter the selection process. The grades obtained for all courses in Bachelor 1 and 2 are taken into account (grades for Bachelor 3 are not yet fully available when students submit their application and, therefore, do not enter the selection process). Grades will be converted to GPA scores using the Scholaro application (a grade converter that is currently used in the selection of students who apply for MISOC (Management of International Social Challenges), another educational program offered by ESSB. The average GPA score is multiplied by the number of EC the student has obtained in Bachelor 1 and 2. In this manner we take into account both the average grade and the study load (i.e., progression through the program) on which the grades are based. Note that the ideal candidate has obtained all 120 EC of Bachelor 1 and 2. Students who are still working

on courses from Bachelor 2 are more likely not to obtain their bachelor diploma by the end of the academic year and consequently not to be allowed to enter the master. Moreover, students that proceed faster through Bachelor 1 and 2 are also more likely to complete the master within one year.

In addition, applicants will take an online<sup>1</sup> proctored test to assess their knowledge and understanding of relevant statistical topics and motivation to study Psychology at Erasmus University. The statistics test consists of multiple choice-questions on topics relevant for the master Psychology (e.g., descriptive statistics, correlation, confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, between-subjects versus within-subjects designs, multiple regression, 1-factor and 2-factor ANOVA, repeated measures ANOVA, GLM, non-parametric testing).

The motivation test will consist of closed questions regarding the student's general motivation to study for a master in Psychology and their motivation to study in Rotterdam more specifically. The contents of motivation test will build on the experiences that the department has obtained in the selection procedures for the numerus fixus of the Bachelor Psychology (which has been in effect since recruitment year 2019-2020 for the cohort 2020-2021). Closed questions will involve (a combination of) multiple choice questions and/or items to be rated on a five-point scale.

Students will have 2.5 hours to complete the online proctored test.

A composite score will then be calculated by applying the different weights of the three selection criteria (GPA – 60%, statistics test – 30%, motivation test – 10 %). All test scores will be z-transformed before they are weighted and combined to arrive at the composite score. Students will be ranked on the basis of this composite score.

### **Detailed timeline of the Admission Process and Selection Procedure**

- October 1  
The ESSB website for the master Psychology will show relevant information about the capacity limitation & selection process (the number of available places, how to apply, admission criteria, details of the selection procedure, etc.). The website will also mention for which of the specializations we expect the set capacity to be exceeded by applications (and: selection to take place).
- Month of October  
All Psychology Bachelor students at Erasmus University will receive an email informing them that as of Academic Year 2023-2024 a capacity limitation will be in effect for the master Psychology.  
We will also communicate via the website to all prospective students when the online tests take place.
- April 1  
Application deadline. Students have to upload all required documents before this deadline.
- Month of April

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<sup>1</sup> In case of an emergency that means a student cannot participate in the test from home, we will do our best to offer such students the possibility to take the test on campus.

MRA assesses the eligibility of prospective students in cooperation with the admissions board. They do so based on the admission criteria for the master, as described in the EER.

- May 13

Students who are deemed eligible for admission<sup>2</sup> will be invited no later than May 13 to take part in the online statistics and motivation tests later in the month of May and informed (again) of the date and time as well as the procedures for taking part in these tests.

- Final week of May (exact date and time to-be-determined)

Prospective students take proctored online statistics and motivation tests. At the time of writing this memo, the date and time of the online proctored test still have yet to be determined, but this will be made public on the ESSB website in October.

- Months of April and May

MRA will process relevant grades of prospective students. Grades will be transformed into a common GPA-scale using Scholaro. Results on the statistics and motivation test will be scored. All scores will be z- transformed and weighted to arrive at a single composite score that determines the rank order of the students.

- June 15

Prospective students will be informed about the outcome of the selection process no later than June 15.

Those with the highest rank order, that lies within the capacity set for the master specialisation of their choice, will be informed that they have 3 weeks to accept the offer, after which it will be rescinded. The next (lower) students in the rank order will then be made an offer that they can accept within three weeks. This process will be repeated until all available places in the master have been filled or all students have been made an offer. The deadline for complete enrollment is August 31. Places will be offered up until August 31.

Students with a rank number that falls outside the set capacity, will be informed of this process, i.e. the *possibility* that they receive an offer in June-August.

Prospective students are informed they can file an objection to the result of the selection procedure and how they can proceed with such an objection, if they wish to do so.

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<sup>2</sup> Provided that they complete their prior education, if that is not yet the case.

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

-Intern-

**Date**  
25 February 2022

**Subject**  
Letter of advice Capacity Limitation  
Master Psychology

**Our reference**  
JvD/FC2122-Uit-005/nbo

**Your reference**

**Page**

**Appendices**

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Dear Prof. dr. Bekkers,

The Faculty Council of the ESSB would like to give a positive advice concerning the continuation of the capacity limitation for the master Psychology. We understand the limitations of the capacity and agree with the 'hidden' capacity division among the specializations.

Our questions posed during the last faculty council meeting, regarding practical matters and the selection procedure, were answered satisfactorily. However, although we think that the procedure is well designed, we would like to ask the management to (re)consider the weight of the motivation letter within the selection procedure. Although we understand the reasoning behind it, we foresee issues in fairness when students with high grades will always have higher chances than students with average grades, various extra-curricular activities, and high motivation. Perhaps the management could consider additional or alternative (efficient) ways of measuring motivation.

This concern will not influence the direction of our advice; therefore, we hereby voice a positive advice regarding the continuation of the numerus fixus.

Best regards,  
Faculty Council ESSB

Josanne van Dongen (chair)  
Marina van den Bosch (vice-chair)

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