

# **Program Advisory**

## **End Report 7<sup>th</sup> Trimester**

2012-2013 Trimester 2



RSM  
**Student  
Representation**

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## Introduction

Program Advisory tries to improve the everyday quality of RSM. Specifically, it tries to improve the overarching topics Examination and Tutoring, Seventh Trimester, and General Studies. The section reports of the Seventh Trimester will focus on the opportunities students have in their seventh trimester. There are two section reports this trimester:

1. Taking a minor and;
2. Going on an exchange.

The organization for the exchange period is quite extensive. Therefore, it would not be surprising that there are certain parts which are lacking and could easily be improved. For this reason, Program Advisory is writing this report.

Moreover, the minor is one of the possible choices during the 7th trimester. A minor is worth 15 ECTS. The minor could be followed at Erasmus University within your own faculty or another faculty, or even at another University. A minor aims at increasing the understanding of a specific subject and offers students the possibility of choosing a subject to their liking.

As the committee members of Program Advisory Seventh Trimester, we hope that this report will be found informative and useful for further decision-making with regards to the exchange process.

With kind regards,

Committee members 7<sup>th</sup> Trimester Committee  
Program Advisory

## Methodology

During the course of the trimester, the committee members of the Seventh Trimester Committee have gathered feedback through a variety of ways. To begin with, quantitative surveys have been posted online to ask students about their experience of the exchange process. Important questions include whether there has been given enough information before the subscription process started, whether support of the International Office has been adequate, and whether there have been certain problems during the entire process of specific students. Moreover, there has been a distribution of qualitative surveys which go more in-depth to find out whether there are certain specific problems which might be generalizable. Additionally, qualitative feedback has been gathered during the Focus Group held by Program Advisory during this trimester.

## Section 1: Exchange

Each academic year second year BA and IBA students have the possibility to try to go on an exchange to one of the partner universities of RSM. There are several important features in this process: gaining enough information to decide whether someone is really interested into going on an exchange, going through the application process (gaining information from the partner universities is an important step in this), hearing the results, making sure all necessary documents are filed, going on the exchange itself, and finally, making sure that the necessary documents are filed to get the credits for the exchange.

The research conducted on the topic has been divided up into three subparts:

1. Awareness and Information;
2. Procedure, and;
3. Exchange Period.

The feedback generated will be used as the main source of information. However, because much information has been generated without the efforts of the surveys, it is rather difficult to create a real distribution of votes. We will therefore explain the main opinions first and after that some small side-notes will be given explaining the smaller opinions.

### 1.1 Subject: Awareness and Information

The gathered feedback in combination with several other sources gave the following outcomes about the awareness and information of the exchange.

To begin with, the information given by RSM was well informative and was brought already from an early moment on. Many students found the Going Abroad booklet to be extremely useful. Even students who did not go on an exchange knew what the requirements and the deadlines were for applying. The only problem for several students was the fact that the information regarding the English requirement was sometimes not given in advance enough. This created much stress under students who were not entirely sure whether they would pass the test and who would have appreciated it if this information would have been given on an earlier notice. They could then already from an early time point on take measures to get to the desired level of English. Also, questions regarding expired TOEFL scores popped up several times. This was also in relationship to the question whether it is really necessary to get another TOEFL if you are applying to universities in non-English speaking countries. It might be useful to add a symbol behind the universities who required a valid TOEFL score.

Secondly, most students first learned about the exchange program via SIN-Online or via rsm.nl. A minority of students learned about the exchange program via Blackboard. The first point of reading the information was in all cases prior to starting studying or in the first year

of studying. The amount of information was also spread well over the year. Students appreciated the regular updates.

Moreover, what some students would find helpful would be some additional facts. First and most important is the information about the amount of students applying for a certain university in the year before the student himself or herself applies for that university. In this way they get to know what some of the popular destinations are and give students who are not entirely sure about their position the chance to make use of the information to choose wisely. It would also be greatly appreciated by students if the Study Abroad Guideline online version could be updated when changes with regards to language requirements and availability of spots would occur.

## **1.2 Subject: Procedures**

The gathered feedback in combination with several other sources gave the following outcomes:

To begin with, almost all students found the application procedure to be clear. Information was given in advance and the requirements and documents needed were explained in a clear way via the online registration site. Some students would have appreciated if the importance of the interview could be stressed out more. It would also be appreciated if there was a better explanation of what to expect during the interview.

Furthermore, the selection procedure was explained very clearly during the Information Session in November. Especially students who were not sure whether to apply valued the information given on the Going Abroad Fair.

Moreover, the selection criteria were found to be rather vague by several students. Additionally, it would help if RSM could explain certain implications of putting a popular university on the top of your list, as this might influence the overall chances of the specific student.

Finally, an almost unanimous comment from student was the fact that it was extremely stressful to not get an e-mail when you were accepted. Students would extremely value an implementation of an acceptance e-mail. That e-mail does not even have to contain the university, but purely to let all students know what their situation is.

### **1.3 Subject: Exchange Period**

First of all, the information session prior to the exchange was found to be very helpful to students. It helped many students get a hold on all the necessary documents and application procedures needed to be conducted.

Moreover, the exchange period has been experienced in a positive way. Students greatly value the opportunity RSM gives them to spend a trimester abroad.

### **Conclusions**

The main problems which surfaced during the feedback collection were:

- The information about the language requirements;
- The fact and insecurity on the fact that student who got selected did not get an acceptance e-mail
- The fact that some students found the selection criteria to be arbitrary and that it was not explained that the biggest focus would be on the interview.

In general, students were very content with the current way of giving information and the procedure of applying for an exchange. With some minor tweaks, however, the process could be substantially improved, to the benefit of all.

### **Solutions according to PA**

The solutions that PA would like to advise:

- It might be advisable to give this information in a specific slide during one of the kick-off sessions, as the students then have enough time to achieve the desired level.
- Creating a uniform e-mail for acceptance of the exchange. This would not cost much additional time and would be greatly valued by the students.
- It might be useful to add the selection criteria into an 'Important Facts' slide or page when explaining about the exchange.

## Section 2: Minor

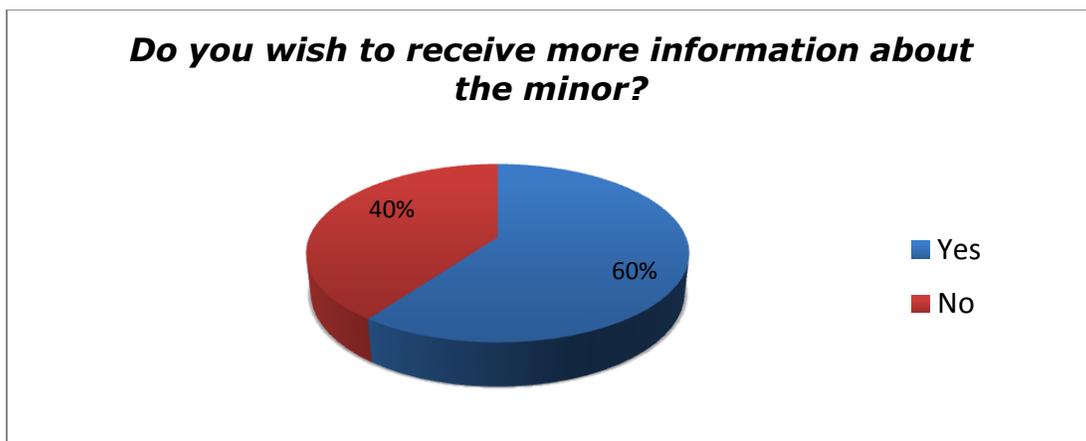
"A minor is more. A minor is a fun way to expand your knowledge and skills. You can easily get acquainted with courses that are offered at other faculties, or you can deepen the knowledge of your own field at your own faculty." (EUR Minor website, 2013)

The minor is one of the possible choices during the 7th trimester. A minor is worth 15 ECTS and can be taken at Erasmus University or another University. A minor aims at increasing the understanding of a specific subject and offers students the possibility of choosing a subject to their liking.

### 2.1 Subject: Information and Awareness

*Feedback 1: The information flow about the Minor could be improved*

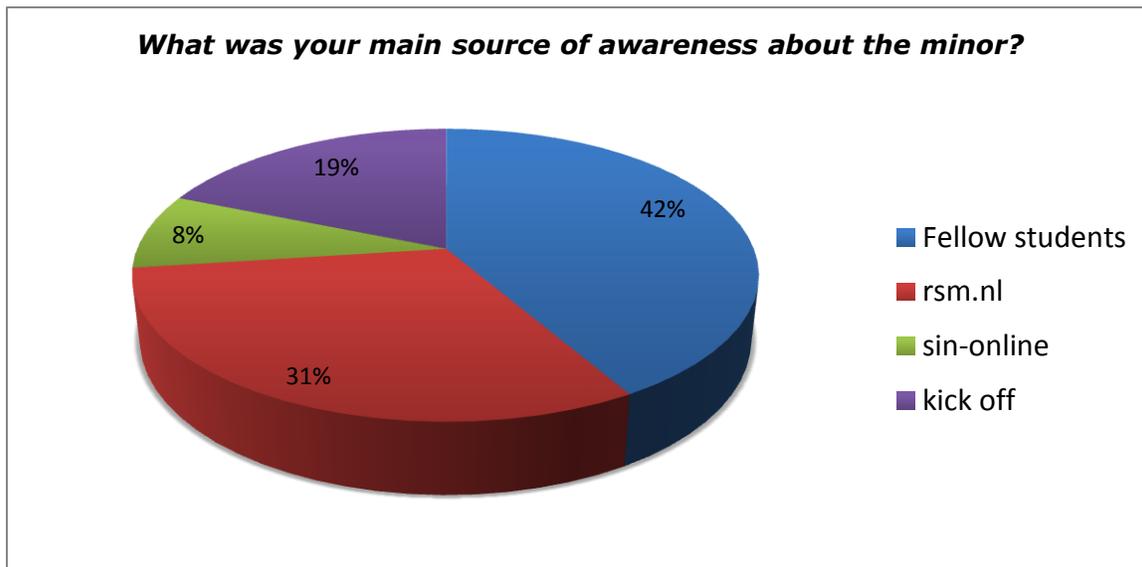
A big part of this problem seem to be that, although the students indicated the desire for more information, only 35% of the respondents visited the minor lecture and only 15% are subscribed to the minor sin-online-channel. Additionally, students clearly indicated the desire to already be informed about the minor during the first year of studies and in general wish to receive more information.



#### Solution according PA:

A solution to this problem could be to advertise the minor information session during lectures, in order to make sure the students are aware of it, especially during IBA lectures, since majority of the IBA respondents indicated a lack of awareness about the minor lecture. The data analysis indicates that word of mouth appears to be the most popular form currently of finding out about the minor; promotion during lectures would enhance this form

of information dissemination. If it is possible to automatically subscribe all second year students to the minor channel, this might be a possibility to consider. Additionally an email informing about the minor should also be sent out to first year students.



**Checklist to improve the problem:**

- Promote the minor information session during second year lectures;
- Check possibility of automatically assigning all second year students to the minor channel;
- Send out an information email to first years.

## 2.2 Subject: Workload of Minors

*Feedback 2: Workload of various minors not standardized*

While most students said that they liked their minor and considered the classes to be good, there is some dissatisfaction with the degree of time and difficulty of the diverse minors. In fact all the respondents who had completed a minor indicated that they perceive there to be a lack of standardisation amongst the different minors in terms of the workloads. Some minors are perceived as more difficult and time intense than others, but all are credited the same amount of 15 ECTS points, even if though different minors run for different amount of weeks.

### **Solution according PA:**

In order to clarify this problem, a listing of the amount of time assigned to each task in a minor might be helpful. For example: 'Minor X' assessments include 60 lecture hours, 2 assignments (one of around 20 hours and other of 25 hours' workload). This way, a clear comparison between the amounts of time necessary would be possible and students could give clear feedback about whether the scheduled time reflects reality.

Another possible solution is to partially standardize all minors so that they run for an equal period of time, for example 2 months.

### **Checklist to improve the problem:**

- Create detailed time schedule for each minor in order to enable a quality comparison between the different minors.
- Make this information available on the minor website.
- Collect feedback from students after the completion of the minor about the accuracy.

OR

- Standardise the amount of weeks that a minor runs for to a certain amount X.

### **Conclusion:**

Most students are satisfied with the minor they chose, however most of them would prefer it if the information about the minors are already provided within the first year. The information provided during the second year is quite well organized only a lot of students don't attend the lectures that are given about the minors, that's because some students don't know that there is an information lecture. A general email to every second (and possibly first) year students can be helpful. A lot of students think that the workload of different minors are not equal, maybe a list with the amount of hours involved for various tasks of every minor will be useful for the students when they have to make their choices which minor they want to do.

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## Appendix 1: Qualitative Feedback Form Exchange

StudentRepresentation: Program Advisory  
Subject: Bachelor Exchange

The Student Representation is an independent organization that represents students of BA and IBA program. The Program Advisory provides the Programme Management with advice based on feedback they have gathered from their fellow students during the trimester. By filling in this form you can help the Student Representation to improve the quality of your education!

### **SPEAK YOUR MIND!**

With this form, you are giving feedback about the **Bachelor Exchange**. We are interested in both positive and negative feedback and suggestions.

#### **Awareness and Information**

How was your awareness regarding the opportunity of applying for the Bachelor Exchange program? Were you aware of important deadlines (e.g. language tests and final application)?

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*When and how was the first time you were informed about the Bachelor Exchange program? Do you consider that early enough?*

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*How often and by what means (SIN online, blackboard, RSM.nl, e.g.) did you receive information about the Bachelor Exchange program? Was the information clearly understandable? Would you have liked to receive more/different information (if yes, please elaborate)?*

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*Did you miss any information in the Study Abroad Guidelines (the information folder provided by the RSM International Office)?*

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**Procedure**

*How was the application procedure for the Bachelor Exchange program organized? Was it made clear where/when/how to sign up?*

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*Were you aware of the selection procedure? Please elaborate.*

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*How was the selection for the Bachelor Exchange? How did you perceive it?*

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**Exchange Period**

*How was the period between the selection procedure and the actual Bachelor Exchange organized? Was it made clear what needed to be done in order to finalize your exchange (e.g. visa, nomination at Host University)?*

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*How did you experience the Exchange? Do you have any specific comments?*

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*Was the Bachelor Exchange program what you expected it to be? Did the prior information align with the content?*

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*General feedback (any feedback that you would like to give, which has not been mentioned before):*

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Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd, mm, yyyy)

*Thank you for your feedback. We will handle it with privacy.*

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## Appendix 2: Qualitative Feedback Form Minor

StudentRepresentation: **Program Advisory**  
Subject: **Minor**

The Student Representation is an independent organization that represents students of BA and IBA program. The Program Advisory provides the Programme Management with advice based on feedback they have gathered from their fellow students during the trimester. By filling in this form you can help the Student Representation to improve the quality of your education!

### **SPEAK YOUR MIND!**

With this form, you are giving feedback about the **Minor**.  
We are interested in both positive and negative feedback and suggestions.

*How was your awareness with regards to the opportunity of doing a Minor, and what was the main source of the awareness?*

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*When were you first made aware of the possibility of doing a minor and in your opinion was this early enough?*

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*How is/was your awareness of the application procedure with regards to criteria, deadlines, e.g.?*

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Were you satisfied with the amount/quality/distribution of the information that was available with regards to the Minor, and how can it be improved?

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*The following section is to be completed by those respondents who have completed the minor*

How was the quality of the organization of your minor course, and how could it be improved?

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In your opinion was 15ECTS for the completion of the minor, an accurate representation with regards to the workload? If not, in your opinion how many ECTS should the minor count for?

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Would you say the minor was a valuable and educational experience? Did it match your expectations and if not how could it be improved?

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Other comments and general feedback:

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Minor (If completed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date:                    \_\_ \_\_ // \_\_ \_\_ // \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Year of Study:                    \_\_\_\_\_                    BA / IBA

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.  
*Thank you for your feedback in this survey. We will handle it with privacy.*

## Appendix 3: Quantitative Feedback Form Exchange

### StudentRepresentation: Program Advisory Subject: Bachelor Exchange

The Student Representation is an independent organization that represents students of BA and IBA program. The Program Advisory provides the Programme Management with advice based on feedback they have gathered from their fellow students during the trimester. By filling in this form you can help the Student Representation to improve the quality of your education!

#### SPEAK YOUR MIND!

With this form, you are giving feedback about the **Bachelor Exchange**  
We are interested in both positive and negative feedback and suggestions.

You are:  BA  IBA 1 / 2 / 3  
Did you apply for an exchange?  Yes  No

#### General Information

Do you know what the Bachelor Exchange Programme is?

Yes  Partly  No

By whom/how have you made aware of the Bachelor Exchange Programme?

During a kick-off of the year.  Via SIN-Online.  By fellow students.  
 Via BlackBoard.  Via www.rsm.nl.  Otherwise.

Do you feel like you have received enough information about the Bachelor Exchange?

Yes  No

Have you attended the Study & Internship Abroad Fair on November 1st 2012?

Yes  Partly  No

Are you subscribed to the RSM Bachelor Exchange channel on SIN-Online?

Yes  No

Do wish extra information concerning the Bachelor Exchange Programme?

Yes  No

If yes, what information would that be?

#### Application & Selection (for students who applied for an exchange)

Were you aware of the initial selection criteria (e.g. GPA, passed courses and language proficiency)?

Yes  Yes, but I would have liked to have gotten the information earlier  No.

Where did you get your language proficiency certificate?

- Language & Training Centre at the Erasmus University (ITP-TOEFL).
- Official TOEFL test.
- IELTS test.
- I didn't pass/apply for a language test.

Students have to complete their application at [www.rsm.nl/exchange/application](http://www.rsm.nl/exchange/application). When did you start working on your application form? Deadline for application was January 10<sup>th</sup>.

- During the 1<sup>st</sup> year
- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, month \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't remember

Did you get enough information to fill in your application form (e.g. where to find the course manuals of the host universities)?

- Yes
- Partly
- No

If partly or no, what information did you miss?

Between Selection and Exchange (for students selected for an exchange)

Did you receive adequate information about what would happen and what was expected of you between selection and exchange?

- Yes
- No

What do you think of the information provided by the International Office? Give a score.

Bad

Really Good

1

2

3

4

5

Did you receive adequate information about how to apply at the partner university?

- Yes
- No

Did you experience any problems with the application procedure at the partner university?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what problems were they?

If yes, was the International Office able to help in solving those problems?

- Yes
- No

**During Exchange (for students who were selected for an exchange)**

*Did you experience any problems with the application procedure at the partner university?*

Yes       No

*If yes, what problems were they?*

*If yes, was the International Office able to help in solving those problems?*

Yes       No

**General feedback**

Here you can leave additional information and/or suggestions.

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd, mm, yyyy)

*Thank you for your feedback in this survey. We will handle it with privacy.*

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## Appendix 4: Quantitative Feedback Form Minor

## StudentRepresentation: Program Advisory

### Subject: Bachelor Exchange

The Student Representation is an independent organization that represents students of BA and IBA program. The Program Advisory provides the Programme Management with advice based on feedback they have gathered from their fellow students during the trimester. By filling in this form you can help the Student Representation to improve the quality of your education!

#### **SPEAK YOUR MIND!**

With this form, you are giving feedback about the **minor**  
We are interested in both positive and negative feedback and suggestions.

*You are:*  
*In what year are you?*       1<sup>st</sup>       BA       IBA  
*Did you apply for an exchange?*       2<sup>nd</sup>       3<sup>rd</sup>  
       Yes       No

#### General Information

*Do you know what a minor is?*  
 Yes       Partly       No

*By whom/how have you made aware of the minor?*

During a kick-off of the year.       Via SIN-Online.  
 By fellow students.       Via BlackBoard.  
 Via www.rsm.nl.       Otherwise.

*Do you feel like you have received enough information about the minor the last few years?*

Yes       No

*Have you attended the minor lecturer on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2012?*

Yes       Partly       No

*Are you subscribed to the RSM minor channel on SIN-Online?*

Yes       No

*Do wish extra information concerning the minor?*

Yes       No

*If yes, what information would that be?*

#### **For second years**

*Do you know when the deadline for the application, which minor you want to do, is?*

Yes       No.

*Do you know which minors are offered?*

Yes       No.

Did you know that you can already do your minor after your first year (when you gained at least 60 ECTS you can apply for a minor)?

Yes       No       Yes and I did the minor in my second year.

Do you think they should provide information about the minor already in your first year?

Yes       No

**For Third years**

Which minor did you choose?

Did you like the minor you choose?

Yes       No

Do you think all the minors are equal in difficulty?

Yes       No

If no, explain why you think the minors are not equal in difficulty.

Was the amount of time you had to spend on your minor 15 ECTS worth?

Yes       No

If no, what do you think is fair?

Where the classes of the minors good?

Yes       No

If no, how can they make the classes better?

**General feedback**

Here you can leave additional information and/or suggestions.

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd, mm,yyyy)

Thank you for your feedback in this survey. We will handle it with privacy.