

End Report

Program Advisory General Studies Committee

2014-2015 Trimester 2



RSM
Student
Representation

Table of content

- Introduction 2**
- Methodology 3**
 - Survey 3
 - Focus group 4
- Subject: Digital learning environment 5**
 - Findings..... 5
 - Findings from the focus group 5
 - Solution according to Program Advisory 6
 - Checklist to improve the problem..... 6
- Subject: Extracurricular activities 7**
 - Findings..... 7
 - Solution according to Program Advisory 9
 - Checklist to improve the problem..... 9
- Appendices 10**
 - Appendix A: Survey questionnaire 10
 - Appendix B: Focus group case..... 10

Introduction

To contribute to the overall educational climate, the General Studies Committee of Program Advisory aims to address points in which enhancement could be possible. Students know as no other what could possibly help them in achieving even better than they are currently doing. Through extensive research like surveys and focus groups, the students' opinion was captured.

This trimester, the General Studies committee has decided to look into two main subjects. These are: the organization of webcasts, and the extracurricular activities in which students participate. Of course, the current generation of students does everything online. Program Advisory strives to capture the opinion of students and to boost effectiveness of the digital learning climate at RSM. Our 115 respondents to the online survey gave significant information on the students' wishes. To enhance the insight even further, the main topic of the focus group was the digital learning area. Within two independent focus groups, students shared their opinions on the organization. This gave more in-depth information on what the students want, and it opened up room for discussion.

The second topic for this trimester is the extracurricular one. Many headhunting bureaus state that the extracurricular activity is one of the most important assets regarding graduates that want to get a job in their chosen field. For this reason the General Studies committee choose to research how active students are regarding extracurricular work.

On behalf of the General Studies Committee of Program Advisory, I hope the gathered feedback and researched areas can possibly be of value in the continuous enhancement that the Rotterdam School of Management seems to be in.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the General Studies Committee of Program Advisory,

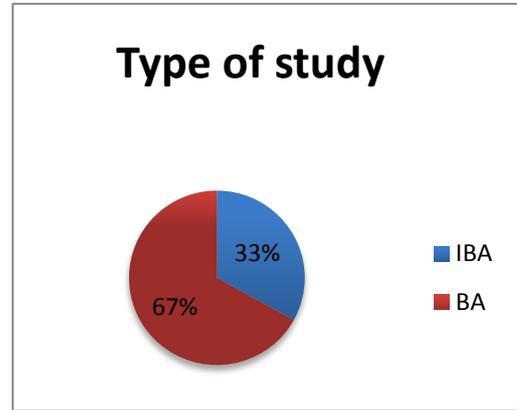
Jan-Willem Roeloffs,
Commissioner for the General Studies Committee of Program Advisory

Methodology

For the different issues discussed in this report, the two main pillars of feedback come from the survey and the focus group. The two subjects that were looked into this trimester are the digital learning area and the extracurricular activities.

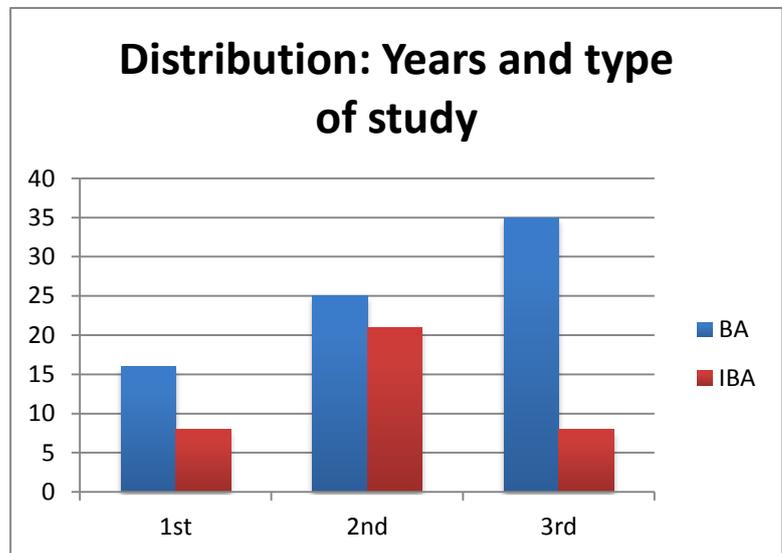
Survey

During this trimester, the committee has gathered responses and feedback from students through surveys. The survey was digitally accessible. Normally, one of the biggest challenges a Program Advisory committee has to overcome is the gathering of enough respondents to the digital survey, in order to validate conclusions from it. This trimester, a total number of 115 students responded to the General Studies committee online survey. In comparison to the first trimester, this is more than a doubling of the survey respondents. This is part due to the Open Feedback Days that were held from 16-2 to 20-2 as well as a more direct approach in online survey distribution.



In total, the number of responding BA students is 77, over a total of 38 IBA students. This is exceptional because normally the number of responding IBA students is much higher.

The commission is satisfied with the distribution of the survey and the well-balanced respondents' rates of BA and IBA students. As can be seen in the diagram on the right, only seven IBA-1 and seven IBA-3 students responded. Although this is relatively low in comparison to the high respondents in the BA counterpart, the absolute rate of response is still satisfying.



The focus in the questions of the survey lay on the avoiding of biased conclusions, due to poorly asked questions. Regarding webcasts, the committee checked the validity of the students' opinion regarding their wish to have more webcasts by the checking of the students' attendance rates. Since there a difference exists between BA and IBA students, this factor was weighted-in as well. Partly the same can be said for the extracurricular subject as well, since BA students are more commonly active in particular societies that IBA students may not be widely active in and vice versa. This factor was also weighted-in.

Focus group

The focus group was held with a total number of fourteen students. Due to the high number of participants, we decided to hold two independent focus groups at the same time, with the same subjects. A committee member led each focus group while another committee member took notes. Four respondents were BA students and the rest IBA. Although this unbalance, we do not believe that this affected the results, since far more BA students than IBA students responded to the online survey, and since the voice of the four BA students was captured greatly.

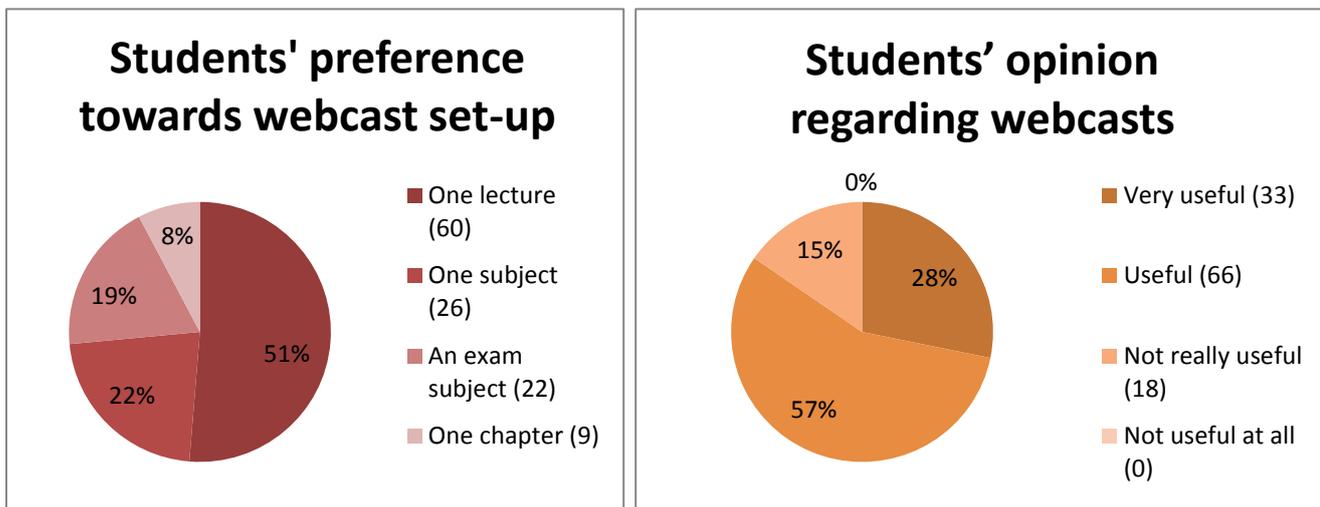
The aim of the focus group lied within the webcast existence, accessibility, and sufficiency. Even though most courses do not have any sort of webcast available yet, we tried to find how students currently use the webcast; as a replacement or addition of the lectures? Furthermore we asked what the students' preference is relating the form of the webcast; per lecture or per subject? On top of that we took a broader look into lecture and workshop set-up to relate that to webcasts and e-learning.

Subject: Digital learning environment

In the survey of trimester 1, students got the possibility to choose either one or more possible reasons for them to watch webcasts. In this trimester we tried to figure out for which courses the students would like to have webcasts for and in what form. We also looked into more non-traditional ways of webcasts that students might use or would like to use.

Findings

Most students answered that they would like to have webcasts for quantitative subjects, such as Operations Managements, Accounting, Mathematics, Finance, Statistics et cetera. As reason they gave that the calculations of the exercises are sometimes unclear and that they would like to redo them by their selves before the exams. The current set-up of the webcasts – one lecture is one webcast – is ranked as very useful; more than 50% of the 117 respondents are content with the current set-up. More than 20% of the respondents would like to see another set up per subject instead of per lecture.



The right chart shows that 85% of the 115 respondents experience webcasts to be useful or very useful. This correlates with the opinions of the participants of the focus group, of which a couple of students stated that they watch webcasts purely as an in-addition tool. Multiple participants said that they cannot always follow the lecturer, and for that reason they watch the webcasts and take additional notes.

Findings from the focus group

A more in-depth analysis of the students' wishes regarding the restructuring of the webcasts was inquired in the focus group. The participants believed that the webcasts should be a more important tool than they currently are. The participants discussed the change in set-up of the webcasts and they reached a compromise. The students of the focus group want the lectures to be (partly) replaced by the online available webcasts. This should give the RSM free space in hiring professors that are more research-interested and do not like the lecturing part of it that much. Most of the webcasts, for both qualitative and especially quantitative courses are good for multiple years. The participants believe this saves work, energy and potentially costs. In exchange for the reduction in lectures, the students want more workshops, since they think these are of

more practical value. Students think that this would improve the educational climate at RSM, and it would be practically and financially feasible as well.

Since this is quite an extreme restructuring, Program Advisory might want to have a closer look into this solution in the following trimester, since the questionnaire was not focused on such a specified solution. For now, students want more webcasts and more workshops.

Additional videos outside RSM

The majority of the students watch educational videos outside RSM besides the current available webcasts made by RSM. Most of the students watch additional videos to gain additional/in-depth information about a subject, in particular quantitative subjects like Microeconomics, Operations Management and Quantitative decision-making. Another reason to watch videos outside RSM for students is to redo the exercises by themselves. The pace of the lectures depends on the professors and for quantitative subjects it could be more complicated for students to follow the professor. If students do not immediately understand the subjects in the lecture, they are able to enhance their understanding of the material due to videos with a different explanation of the concepts than the lectures. Moreover, students believe that all courses should try to implement e-learning, because this gives student the possibility to be more flexible and to learn on their own pace and be more efficient.

Solution according to Program Advisory

The findings show that students want to see more webcasts on quantitative courses. This allows students to study at their own pace. Combining this with the preferences of workshops over lectures, we recommend to invest in high-quality webcasts (recorded lectures or other forms of audiovisual explanation), that can be used for several years and create more workshops where the learned theory can be put into practice.

Secondly, many students stated that they watch explanatory educational videos online, e.g. Khan Academy. Thus, we recommend looking into the creation of a list of approved external educational videos. This will be cost-free, give the professors a look into what students use to prepare for the exam, and it will give students more security regarding to relevance of the external videos.

Checklist to improve the problem

- Make webcasts available for all quantitative courses
- Look into possibilities to provide a list of university-supported external educational videos

Subject: Extracurricular activities

The amount of years that students study decreases, and it is commonly heard of that a graduate's chances on the labor market are not only dependable upon the type of study and the average grade; also the previous experience of students is important. These extracurricular activities can be university-related, business-wise, or sports-/socially-based. Within the questionnaire, the respondents were also asked how much they actually know about the available master programs at RSM, and whether students prefer to do their masters degree at RSM or somewhere else.

Findings

Out of 115 respondents, 87 (76%) stated to be involved in at least one extracurricular activity with ties to the university. Interesting to see here is that the proportion of people that were inactive does not differ a lot in BA (29%) and IBA (21%), as it is normally perceived that IBA students are more active due to their shorter residence in the Netherlands. Furthermore, when having a look into how the inactive students are distributed over the years (1st, 2nd or 3rd), we see a perfectly even distribution in IBA, whereas as the years progress, there are more inactive people in BA.

Important characteristics for companies

On the question of what employers would consider to be most important when hiring BA/IBA graduates, some characteristics were largely agreed upon. These include social and communication skills, ambition and discipline. There was some disagreement on the importance of two factors: GPA and extracurricular activities & development. Many students noted that they believed their GPA was of the utmost importance for future career prospects, where some also said they believed that this did not really matter in comparison to the extracurricular activities participated in during their stay at the university. This division in opinions could be an interesting point of research, when similar surveys would be held with employers answering the same question.

Stimulation entrepreneurship

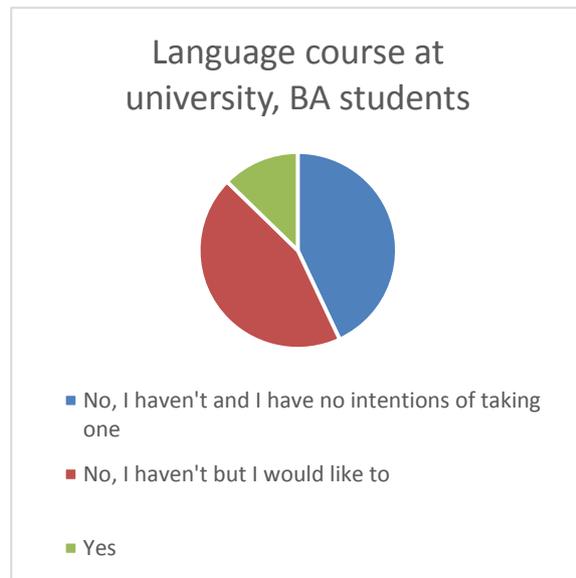
In the focus group we had heard multiple students express their interest in more guest lectures given by successful entrepreneurs in order to boost entrepreneurship in students. Yet the students that took the survey do not seem to agree at all. Only 35 out of 115 agreed with the statement that RSM could do more to stimulate entrepreneurship. The percentage of students from IBA that did not agree with this statement was 63%, against 76% of BA students. So even though certain students expressed their enthusiasm for more lectures with entrepreneurial guest speakers to stimulate students, the results of our survey show a negative consensus on this part.

Language courses at RSM

Because the RSM offers refunds for IBA students after two completed language courses, we were interested in how many students take this opportunity and how it compares to BA students taking language courses. To our surprise not even half of IBA students said to have taken a language course so far, with an equally large part of students noting that they would like to take one. This confirms one of our thoughts; students are not informed enough on the opportunity they have with the language courses. Many seem to not even know about the refund system, which would probably propel them to taking up on a

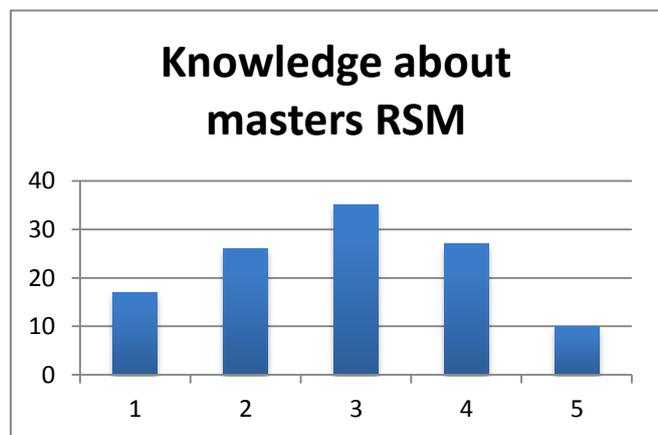
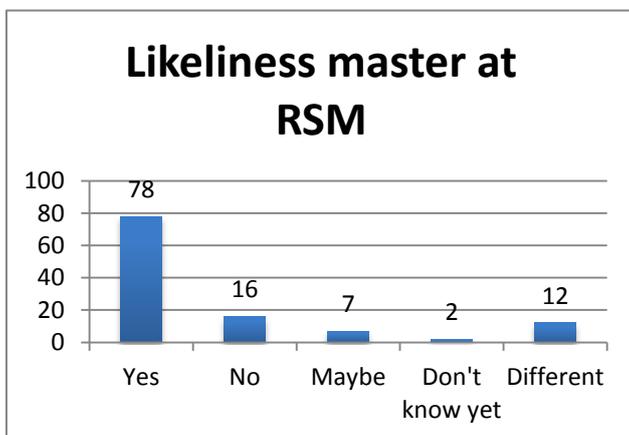
language course. This means that more promotion for the refund system could mean a lot more participation in the language courses.

When looking at the results from BA students, who are not refunded for two completed courses, we can see they are much less prone to taking up on a new language, only 13% says to have done this at the university. Yet 45% think of taking a language course at the university. It is therefore clear that the refund system helps getting students to learn a new language, so the RSM could think of starting the same system for BA students.



Master at RSM

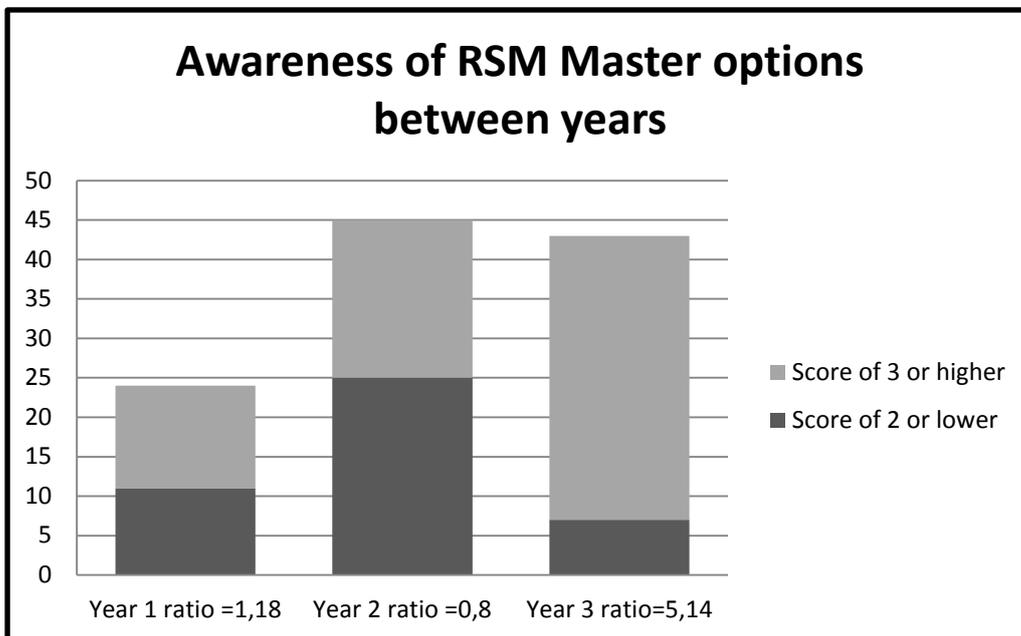
Program Advisory asked students about their master knowledge and preferences. First, the level of knowledge about the available master programs at RSM was questioned. The distribution of 115 responding students almost shows a normal distribution around the score of three out of five on knowledge about the masters. In total, 72 (63%) of respondents have a moderate, good or excellent knowledge about the available master programs, as they fell into the highest three categories. Nearly 15% of respondents have almost no clue about the available masters, and 22% of students know quite little about the available masters at RSM. This means that there is still a significant group of students that have little knowledge about the master options.



Since the knowledge among responding students about the available master programs at RSM is normally distributed, the fact that by far the majority of undergraduate students want to continue their studies at RSM is extra remarkable. In total, 78 students (67%) want to do their master degree at RSM, against a significantly smaller 16 respondents that do not want to achieve their master program at RSM. A relatively small percentage of students (18%) don't know where they will obtain their master diploma.

Difference between years

The bar chart below represents the ratios on awareness over unawareness in all three years. Clearly 3rd year students have a better knowledge about the master options than the 1st and 2nd year students. This is not surprising, what is surprising is the ratio of 2nd year students. Apparently in this group more than half of the students are not well informed about the possible masters at RSM. Especially due to the upcoming new requirements for the master (minimum of 7.0) we believe that students in the second year should already be more aware of the different master options.



Solution according to Program Advisory

By far most students intend to obtain their master program at RSM. However, Program Advisory believes that the overall knowledge about the available master programs at RSM, under students, is not good enough. Of the nearly 38% of students that do not have moderate knowledge about the available master programs, a big part came from the 2nd year students. Thus, Program Advisory believes the overall knowledge of students about the available masters will benefit from earlier master introductions. Perhaps it is a good idea to have introductory talks about some masters in the second bachelor year, so that students have a global idea before their third year as well as being aware of the possible requirements one might face.

Checklist to improve the problem

- Introductory master talks in second year of the bachelor

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey questionnaire

The online survey that has been distributed can be accessed through the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xbWilcmMJNNVnfqezoK-RN4kL1R6dgMiUWBjFR3TmlQ/edit#>

Appendix B: Focus group case

General Studies

Topic: E-learning and the use of webcasts/educational videos

Dear students, thank you very much for your attendance and participation in the focus group organized by SR Program Advisory! Your opinions are of crucial value to our research and effort towards bringing positive changes to the study environment of RSM.

This case report is aimed at providing you with some background information on the topic:

E-learning and the use of webcasts/educational videos

Program Management is looking into changing the way the webcasts are structured. Currently there is a limited amount of webcasts available for certain courses. These are usually recorded lectures, however in some cases there are also recorded explanation videos. The digital learning climate of the RSM needs restructuring. Currently, the webcasts consist mostly out of recorded lectures, which is not really an in-addition tool for studying. One possible restructuring could be that the webcasts will be replaced by educational videos, which help you with more difficult study areas. Another would be that all 'normal' lectures will be recorded and placed online, and the real-life sessions become more workgroup-oriented.

As you have probably noticed, there's a lot of free space regarding the restructuring of the digital learning climate. We would like to see what kind of content students prefer to see in webcasts/educational videos, and what students prefer regarding the real-life sessions.

In the first round, we will gather feedback and brainstorm about the positive and negative aspects of the language topic. In the second round, there will be thought about possible solutions for the problems.

All input is appreciated; please be open, honest, and speak your mind!