

Initiative
Edubadges for Student
Board Members



FRONT

FOR THE ACTIVE STUDENT

February 9th 2023

Introduction

Tilburg University is a university that wants to encourage its students to develop themselves beyond the current curriculum, as other skills are increasingly valued beyond the knowledge gained in further careers. For this reason, it is important that students are encouraged to be curious¹ and want to continue to develop themselves during and beside their studies. Thereby, it is important that both the student is courageous² to actually take this step and the university is courageous to continue to encourage, support and where possible, reward this. Front believes that the university should support students who want to go the extra mile. We believe that in addition to facilitation and support from the university, recognition and appreciation in particular has a positive impact on students who develop alongside their studies. For this reason, Front submitted an initiative regarding a certificate of recognition for student administrators in February 2021. This is because it encourages students to participate in extracurricular activities, but also because it contributes to recognition and appreciation. Although this is a nice first step, we have also stated in this initiative that for the appreciation of participation in extracurricular activities - which officially fall outside Tilburg University's education programme - we see a future in awarding Edubadges. In view of feasibility and measurability, we specifically target student boards in this initiative. However, we would like to see this way of digital awarding implemented for other extracurricular activities in the long term.

Proposal

SURF has developed an infrastructure that allows Dutch educational institutions to issue Edubadges³. These are digital certificates that demonstrate that students have acquired certain knowledge or skills. In 2019-2020, SURF ran a pilot period with 16 educational institutions, including Tilburg University. In 2020, Tilburg University was able to issue the first Edubadges to students⁴. To date, the university has been using these Edubadges. These are deploying them mainly on post-initial education, such as the online offerings of TST and the Language Centre. Extracurricular education is also included. However, these are only extracurricular education activities that fall under a department, programme or programme of TiU.

1 *Strategie op weg naar 2027*. (januari 2022). Tilburg University.

<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over/bestuur-en-beleid/strategie>

2 *Strategie op weg naar 2027*. (januari 2022). Tilburg University.

<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over/bestuur-en-beleid/strategie>

3 *Geleerde lessen pilot Edubadges - Ervaringen met digitale badges in het Nederlandse onderwijs*. (2020). SURF.

https://www.surf.nl/files/2020-05/edubadges_lessons_260520-def_lr.pdf

4 *Edubadges als digitaal bewijs van competenties*. (n.d.). Tilburg University.

<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over/onderwijs/innovatie/edubadges>

Front has learned that the Executive Board has yet to give a decision on the pilot and the continued implementation of Edubadges. We believe that at this time, it is precisely important to continue developing within this project, as this way we can give students an extra token of appreciation for having developed alongside their studies. By awarding the badges, we not only appreciate the student's effort, but above all recognise it. Moreover, as stated earlier, we see that employers increasingly see the importance of personal and professional development alongside the theoretical knowledge gained by the student. A great way to record these developments, in our view, is through the awarding of Edubadges.

Front's proposal is to set up a working group to start looking into the possibilities regarding the granting of Edubadges for students who have done a board year at a student, sports or study association. The working group would consist of the following parties, also keeping in mind interests, ongoing questions and elaboration:

- Student board members (for example TiGeAk)
We see added value in involving student board members as they are the target group targeted by this initiative. We would ideally like central allocation with the implementation of Edubadges. However, we recognise that there should actually be a distinction between a part-time and a full-time board year. Although our aim is to start awarding these Edubadges in general, we do need to take stock and discuss what the requirements are for this, what learning objectives need to be achieved (see point Vice Dean of Education) and how we want to bring this to the attention of the student boards.
- EDUiLAB
Following the conversation with EDUiLAB, we realise that Edubadges and microcredentials is a complex, technical system. Therefore, we would like to involve EDUiLAB in the discussions to look at the feasibility of certain ideas, including regarding the meta-data in these badges. Moreover, EDUiLAB is in the process of further developing these Edubadges for new target groups with the requirements that need to be met and other associated responsibilities. In this respect, we consider it crucial that their expertise will be included in the working group to support us during the process, in the development and implementation of this digital recognition.

- Education specialist & Vice-Dean(s) Education
For the target groups post-initial and extracurricular education, two important requirements are that the learning objectives must be described in consultation with an educational expert. In addition, there must be some form of assessment. For this reason, an education expert is indispensable in this working group.
The responsibility for determining whether Edubadges can be issued for a learning activity lies with the Vice-Dean. While we understand that the Vice-Deans have busy schedules, we do think it would be valuable to engage with them (perhaps outside the working group) and discuss whether there should be an element of testing associated with receiving a badge. In addition, it is of general interest to agree how this can be applied as ideally as possible, as it is up to the lecturer within a given faculty to check whether all criteria have been met.
- Committee Board Grants & Stimulation Fund (CBS)
The final practical elaboration, as in the case of the certificate of recognition for student board members, may fall to the Governance Scholarships & Endowment Fund Committee. Before this task is actually assigned to this committee or any other team, we think it is important to engage with CBS on how they would envisage this.

Conclusion

Front asks the Executive Board to see the value of the pilot concerning Edubadges and asks the Board to expand this by including recognition and appreciation for student boards within the digital badges. In our view, awarding digital badges is a follow-up step to the certificates that student board members currently receive. Through the implementation of badges, the university develops further within the aspect of digitalisation. Moreover, the university helps students to digitally demonstrate to future employers that they have committed to the university community, what they have learnt from these experiences and is actually appreciated and recognised. We are aware of the challenge, as the quality of a board year and what the student does not necessarily lies with Tilburg University itself. It is important to start exploring how this can be realised in terms of responsibilities, who determines what the learning outcomes are, what the earning criteria are and who determines whether the student has met them. To realise this, Front is asking the Executive Board to set up a working group to be able to put the ultimate goal of awarding Edubadges to student board members into action and allow it to be pursued. We hope the Executive Board will consider this initiative.



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