

Initiative
Master Specialization



FRONT

FOR THE ACTIVE STUDENT

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Introduction

Tilburg University offers a variety of master programs. These master programs often consist of a fixed curriculum, in which students take a fixed number of courses. Students are increasingly interested in gaining experience in addition to their master program. Students are looking for intersections between different disciplines and in this way more cross-fertilization takes place between different areas of study.

The core values of Tilburg University describe that as a university, we want to be curious and courageous. We want to challenge each other and give one another the space to not only be curious within our own discipline, but also give students the opportunity to develop themselves within other areas of study. In our view, this means that the university should welcome students who have these values with open arms.

In addition, employers increasingly expect that students are broadly educated and have knowledge of multiple areas of study. Nowadays, students are expected not only to obtain a diploma, but also to develop themselves alongside their studies. This can for example be done by doing an internship, volunteering, doing a board year or taking extra courses. Therefore, students want to prepare themselves more broadly for the labour market. Students are curious about the possibilities and insights that can be found within other areas of study. However, if you are currently taking courses outside of your curriculum, these subjects will not be optimally recognized on your diploma. This is because these subjects are displayed separately on your diploma. Front would like to see this changed through a better form of recognition.

Proposal

Front proposes to give students more recognition when they decide to take courses outside their own curriculum during their master's degree. The university can accomplish this by facilitating and recognizing "course bundles". A course bundle is a collection of existing courses that fall within the same program. If course bundles are to be introduced, it means that a fixed package of courses will be compiled for each possible master's program. When a student from another master program takes these specific courses, it means that he has an additional specialization in this study direction.

As an example, a student who follows the master's program 'Work and Organizational Psychology' can follow a specialization in 'Economic Psychology'. Within the master's program in Economic Psychology, a course bundle is compiled with courses that students who are studying a different master's program can follow. These students will be able to take a number of courses in the field of 'Economic Psychology', after which a specialization will be obtained in this field of study. By following this course bundle in addition to the regular master's program, students can better prepare themselves for the labor market, because the different areas of study on the labor market are not completely separated, but intertwined.

At this moment it is already possible to take courses from other master programs, however, there is no recognition given for this on the diploma. Front proposes that on the diploma, in addition to the original master's degree, the specialization should also be mentioned, so students are recognized for taking additional courses. In this way, the extra courses will not only be named separately on the diploma, but the specialization will also be displayed. It can be compared to the composition of minors, currently offered in bachelor programs. A label is given to certain courses in the same study area, which is called a minor and this is also recognized on your diploma. We would like to see a similar construction in master programs.

To bring this about, we would like to see the schools first look at the possibilities of forming these 'course bundles' per program. Which master programs could offer such a course bundle? Which bundles are attractive to the labor market and which combinations are already chosen often? The bundles created should be clearly communicated and officially recognized. When students subsequently graduate from their master program with an additional bundle of courses, this specialization will be recognized on their diploma.



Motivation Tilburg University

We believe that course bundles within master programs could be a way to make Tilburg University a more attractive place to study. By offering the possibility for students to take recognized bundles of courses outside their own master program, Tilburg University will be able to distinguish itself from other universities. To make this happen, it is important that the option to follow a course bundle next to your master is actively promoted on the website of Tilburg University, so students from inside and outside Tilburg are aware of this possibility and masters at Tilburg University will become more attractive amongst students.

The master's degree in Law within TLS has a somewhat similar concept. Here students also have the possibility to do an additional specialization. Students choose a direction within their master's program in which they want to specialize, however, they can also choose to extend their master's degree by half a year and follow an extra specialization in another field of law. Partly because of this change that TLS made a year ago, student numbers in the master of law program have increased by fifty percent. We believe that offering a similar option in multiple programs can become a unique selling point for Tilburg University and that, in line with the 2022-2027 concept strategy, this would be a courageous plan to supplement the master programs.

Conclusion

By means of this initiative, Front would like to realize a start in the investigation of extension opportunities in the master offer. Through conversations within the schools, a start can be made in the exploration of the options for creating course bundles, in which Front would like to actively participate. The purpose of this initiative is to increase opportunities for students to develop themselves within other areas of studies apart from their own master's program, which will be beneficial for Tilburg University.



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