

Annual report Examination Board

2024-2025

Erasmus School of Philosophy
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

Preface

The Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil) is doing well, yet inevitably it has to deal with challenges. Some of those concern the university, such as financial austerity, and the political vicissitude concerning English-language programmes. A challenge of a different order is the further advance of generative AI, the availability and use of which seems almost commonsensical for many students nowadays. Opinions differ on the educational value of such software. However, for the reliability of (unproctored) examination – essays and theses - it constitutes a ‘real and present danger’. Issues around generative AI will be dealt with specifically in §2.9. Another continuing fraud concern is plagiarism, which should be understood in a wide variety of forms including invalid or insufficient referencing.

2024-2025 was the second operational year of the master Societal Transitions: an interdisciplinary programme hosted by ESPhil. The master Philosophy Now is at present in its fifth year, while the Research Master in Philosophy and Economics has a long track record. The ‘Second Degree’ programme (Bachelor in Philosophy of a Specific Discipline) remains the most important programme within ESPhil; it attracts students from all academic disciplines, also from outside of EUR. Of course, ESPhil also maintains its fulltime bachelor programme, as well as a parttime equivalent. Finally, we recently also started a premaster programme.

In accordance with Dutch law (WHW art 7.12b.5) the EB draws up a yearly report and sends this to the Dean of the Faculty. The present report deals with the activities of the Examination Board of the Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, 1 September 2024 through 31 August 2025. It was established and approved by the EB on 22 January 2026.

Dr. Bart Leeuwenburgh
Chair Examination Board
Erasmus School of Philosophy

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1. The Examination Board

1.1 Context

Pursuant to recent legislation, but also to aspirations and desiderata from the Inspection on Education (Onderwijsinspectie) and the accreditation organisation NVAO, the role of Examination Boards in academic education has transformed considerably over the past ten years or so. Crucial here is the strengthening of the position of the Examination Board (EB), especially in its relation to the director of education and the board of the university. The EB has been provided with more tasks to perform, and more legal powers to do so.

The EB deploys its activities within the framework of the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the bachelor and master programmes offered by the Faculty, and the Rules and Guidelines (R&G) drawn up by the EB itself. It should be noted that ESPhil is a relatively small Faculty, which to a greater extent than other Faculties needs to pool its resources and administrative functions. At the same time, however, it is essential to safeguard the autonomy of the EB. As an independent administrative body endowed with its own legal powers, it does not have to answer to Faculty management, representative bodies, or the Executive Board of EUR – other than in the form of this annual report.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the EB aims to fulfil a threefold role: facilitate, signal, control. The EB facilitates by informing examiners about relevant rules and regulation, and by constructively responding to any questions or requests they may have. It signals by relating in an open and active way with Faculty processes and practices concerning examination. It controls by supervising the correct application of procedures, and by deciding on a variety of requests from staff and students. Together with the Programme Management Team (PMT), the EB aims to actively contribute to the development of measures and procedures that positively influence the quality of examination.

1.2 Scope

The EB has authority over the BA philosophy (fulltime and parttime), the BA Philosophy of a Specific Discipline, the Philosophy premaster, the master Philosophy Now (fulltime and parttime), the Research Master in Philosophy and Economics, and the master Societal Transitions.

The Teaching and Examination Regulations (TERs) of the programmes offered by the Faculty, have been established on September 1, 2024, by the Dean, after consent given by the Faculty Council and the Programme Committee.

1.3 Powers and responsibilities of the Examination Board

The law (WHW art. 7.10-7.12) determines that:

- The exam can encompass an investigation initiated by the EB itself.
- The EB can extend the validity of exams passed, in individual cases.
- The EB provides a diploma to those who have passed the exam, after having received testimony from the Executive Board that the relevant procedural demands have been

fulfilled. It also provides – on request - a certificate to those who have taken one or more partial examinations but have not passed an exam.

It furthermore determines that the charges and powers of the EB include:

- Securing ('borgen') the quality of examinations (tentamens) and exams (examens), including the bachelor and master theses.
- Establishing binding guidelines to determine the results of examinations and exams, within the framework of the TER.
- Granting permission for a 'free curriculum' (as mentioned in WHW 7.3j).
- Granting exemptions for passing one or more examinations.
- Securing the quality of the organisation and procedures concerning examinations and exams.

In addition, the law determines that the EB is empowered to:

- Impose sanctions in cases of academic fraud;
- appoint examiners;
- draw up a regime for compensatory examination ('compensatieregeling').

The Faculty Regulations (ESPhil Faculteitsreglement) furthermore charge the EB with:

- Advising the Executive Board of EUR about the iudicium abeundi, after consultation with the Dean.
- Deciding on requests concerning the colloquium doctum.

The TERs determine that the EB decides on requests for admission to the master Philosophy Now, and the master Societal Transitions.

In addition, the EB monitors the results of all examinations. Whenever necessary, it informs the Programme Committee and the director of education about its findings.

1.4 Composition of the Examination Board

The EB consists of four members (Faculty Regulations art 4.2.3). The Dean appoints the members on the basis of their professional competence and ensures the independent functioning of the EB.

The composition of the EB during 2024-2025 was as follows:

- Dr Giulia Napolitano (member, assistant professor) (on leave September-May)
- Dr Julien Kloeg (member, assistant professor)
- Marit Nieuwenhuys MSc (member, Risbo examination expert)
- Dr Bart Leeuwenburgh (member, assistant professor)
- Dr Gijs van Oenen (chair, associate professor)
- Drs Ticia Herold (secretary)

Secretary Ticia Herold deals with the day-to-day administrative business and the correspondence of the EB. Together with the chair she constitutes the executive committee of the EB; they confer frequently on issues like student's requests, suspicions of fraud,

possible CBE-appeals (Board of Appeals for Examinations), and consultation with education management. In exceptional cases, the full EB is consulted. All issues of principle and policy are discussed in the regular meetings of the EB.

1.5 Time allocation and support

The chair has been allocated 0,2 fte; the other members 0,05 fte each. The external member (from Risbo) participates on a contract basis, calculated at 32 hours per year (approx. 0,02 fte).

The secretary on average spends one and a half day each week on administration, like handling student requests, correspondence, exam requests, and exam administration. This can rise to two or three days per week in particularly busy times, for instance when BSA advice must be issued, or deadlines for the organisation for exams have to be met. The exam administration of ESPhil, together with the central student administration of EUR, takes care of the administrative organisation of centrally administered written exams.

1.6 Facilities

The EB makes use of the material facilities at the disposal of ESPhil.

1.7 Meetings and consultation

The executive committee of the EB convenes whenever necessary. The chair joins meetings of the Programme Committee and the Faculty Council, whenever pertinent. There is regular consultation between the Vice-Dean of Education, the Policy Officer Education, and the EB chair.

The EB held plenary meetings on:

September 17, November 11, January 14, March 3, April 15, June 3 and July 8.

The minutes of these meetings are shared with the Programme Committee and the Faculty Council.

The chair participates in the regular meetings of the OVE, the informal council of chairs of EUR Examination Boards. A representative of the secretary participates in the OSE, the informal council of the secretaries of EUR Examination Boards.

2. Exercised Powers and Responsibilities

2.1 Regulation

EB regulations

The EB Rules and Guidelines for the BA and MA programs for 2024-2025 have been textually modified.

Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER)

The EB has given advice on the TERs for the bachelor- and master programmes offered by ESPhil.

Examination Plan

Examination Plans¹ have been drawn up for all programmes of ESPhil by education management. These plans explicate the Faculty's vision on examination and show how the intended learning outcomes relate to the learning goals formulated for all courses in the programme. The plans also indicate why the particular combination of examination forms has been chosen for each programme, fitting the learning goals, the intended learning outcomes and the set-up of the programme; it also describes in detail the examination forms for each part of the program.

In the Examination Plan, the following quality requirements are used:

- Validity (does the examination measure what it intends to measure).
- Reliability (is the examination objective; does it differentiate between students who studied well and students who didn't; is the examination well-adjusted to the knowledge level of the students).
- Transparency (do the students know what to expect).
- Standardization (are clear criteria used for assessing the examination).

In 2023, education management has drawn up new examination plans.

Assessment Policy

A new Assessment Policy has been formulated in 2022-2023, in a joint effort by education management (in the lead) and the EB. This document has been finalized in the fall of 2023, as the policy had to be amended to include examination forms employed in the master Societal Transitions.

Examination Protocol

The [Examination Protocol](#) provides instructions and advice for examiners regarding the construction and assessment of examinations. It contains separate chapters for all forms of examination used in the programmes of ESPhil. The Protocol has been drawn up in 2017 and has been revised in 2020 and 2022. A new thorough revision is in the making. The Examination Protocol is considered to be part of the R&G. All ESPhil course examiners are informed about the protocol.

Fraud Protocol

The EB has established a [Fraud Protocol](#). The latest version is from July 2025.

¹ The terms 'Examination Plan' and 'Assessment Plan' are used interchangeably within ESPhil.

2.2 Appointing examiners

Examination is by law a prerogative of examiners. No one can ‘second guess’ the findings of an examiner; the Board of Appeals for Examinations of EUR though can invalidate a decision by an examiner on procedural grounds. The examiner constructs examinations and determines grades independently and objectively, within the framework of assessment plan, assessment policy, and the TER. Examiners for courses [‘onderwijseenheden’] are appointed by the EB, after a nomination by the director of education. Examiners for theses [scripties] are individually appointed by the EB. The EB has established a document with criteria for who can be appointed as an examiner.

When an examiner repeatedly and gravely fails in the execution of responsibilities, or chronically fails to comply with the TER, the EB is empowered to withdraw the appointment as examiner. In 2024-2025, one examiner has been invited for a hearing with the EB concerning their apparent views on the (lack of) legitimacy of the EB.

2.3 Examination and quality assurance

From 2021-2022 on, centrally administered written exams all use the ANS software. Exams are now much easier readable (not handwritten!), more readily available, and easy to grade for examiners. Moreover, statistics about the exam results are readily available, for examiners and EB.

Quality assurance examinations

The EB informs examiners about the quality requirements for examinations and their responsibilities as examiners through the Examination Protocol, the EB Rules and Guidelines, and informative email messages. The EB facilitates examiners in the construction of valid and reliable exams and model exam answers through two informative leaflets [handreikingen] available at MyEUR (one in Dutch, one in English).

Exams are constructed by the examiner responsible for the course and are checked by a second reader (who must also be qualified, and appointed, as examiner). They both fill out a form, the Peer Review Check List. This contributes to safeguard the quality of written examinations. The checklists have to be handed in with the EB.

All written exams are also evaluated by students. The results of these evaluations form part of the EB Exam Monitor. A new version of this monitor has been developed by the EB. Sources are ANS, student evaluations, and the (exam) info on Canvas for each course. EB members have access too all relevant information through ANS, Canvas and the EB Teams environment. See §2.10.

2.4 The quality of the assessment of bachelor and master theses

The procedure

For the bachelor thesis students work on developing their topic idea in Milestones Trajectories. Based on an assignment the students hand in during this trajectory, the Thesis Coordinator (in collaboration with the Programme Coordinator) assigns the supervisors and the advisors. Within the master the students are free to approach a potential supervisor, which is more feasible due to smaller student numbers. This arrangement appears to work well; there are not many problems any more for the EB to address in terms of matching students with either supervisors or advisors. It should however be noted that some examiners still fulfil a disproportionate number of advisorships. This is a consequence of the ‘task model’ specifying the number of hours available for thesis examination, and of the fact that other examiners being asked more often for supervision than others. The most readily available alternative is to limit the free choice of a supervisor, and consequently topic, for students. This is not an attractive option however.

It should also be noted that in the present system, there is no guarantee that either the supervisor or the advisor has specific expertise on the topic of the theses. Especially for BPSD theses, this raises concerns; if we require the student to ‘manifest the relation to substance and methods of the main discipline’ (item 7 on the assessment form), at least one of the assessors should be able to competently judge on this.

For the sake of objectivity, all theses are assessed by two (or in the ReMA: three) examiners. All thesis examiners independently fill out a thesis assessment form. In the BA, advisors and supervisors preferably do not belong to the same disciplinary (sub)field. The appointment of advisors for BA theses is a task mandated to the EB. In the MA, the student can propose both the supervisor and the advisor, and there is no restriction as to disciplinary background. The MA thesis examiners together constitute the graduation committee which organises the ‘viva’ exam. The MA Societal Transitions has a different arrangement for the Graduation Project, however still two assessors are required, and the arrangement is analogous with that of the regular master.

The thesis assessment form

These forms have been further improved this year (latest version March 2025 for the BA forms). A new version of the forms – with now different versions for BA and BPSD – is introduced, in coordination with education management, for 2024-2025; this also following up on comments made by the visitation committee.

The EB – in this case the executive committee – checks all thesis forms handed in, and returns them to the examiners when they are not correctly filled out, or insufficiently argued, or otherwise leave important issues open. This happened in about one out of every four cases. Moreover, all theses are checked by (the executive committee of) the EB on compliance with formal rules, and on signs of fraud, especially plagiarism and the use of generative AI. This oversight is intensified because of the widespread availability of ChatGPT and similar software. Turnitin reports are always reviewed (not just the plagiarism

percentage) – by the supervisor, and by the EB. Where signals of possible fraud have been encountered, a further investigation has been carried out. For more details and results, see §2.7 and §2.9.

Examiners regularly do not pay enough attention, or time, to filling out the form in a meaningful and detailed way. Especially, they do not always indicate (sufficiently) whether and why the research question is adequate, and/or whether the argument and the conclusion match the research question. Also, they do not always address whether and why a thesis is sufficiently philosophical, and/or has a plausible and convincing link with the student's main field of study, for BPSD theses. If the examiner was not elaborate enough in their feedback to the student, the executive committee of the EB required the examiner to revise their feedback and hand in an adequately filled in form.

Thesis review and calibration project

In the autumn of 2024, the EB organized a thesis review and calibration project. Eight theses were chosen, which were reviewed by eight groups of three or four members of the Faculty. Each group reviewed one thesis. The selection consisted of 1 BA, 1 MA, 1 ReMA and 5 BPSD theses. A full report was published in March 2025.

The report contained (in summary) these conclusions:

- Guidelines for (the degree of) BPSD integration should be formulated by the PMT.
- The PMT should share examples of good BPSD integration with examiners.
- The PMT should organize a follow-up 'pre-calibration' session.

Other matters

In six cases, the judgments of supervisor and advisor of an MA thesis differed 1,5 point or more. Pursuant to the R&G, a third examiner has been assigned. In one case, the assessment forms were handed in so late that there was no more time to assign a third examiner. In two cases, students who intended to rewrite a thesis judged sufficient could not do so due to assessors not respecting the thesis procedure.

2.5 Awarding diplomas and certificates

By awarding a diploma, the EB establishes that a student has met the learning outcomes and the conditions the TER lays down regarding knowledge, understanding and skills required for the acquisition of the degree.

In the year 2024-2025, 84 bachelor exams and 65 master exams have been awarded. The organisation of the exams is a responsibility of the EB.

The EB yearly organises an occasion – this year on September 15 - in which BA exams are officially (and festively) handed out, and students are given an opportunity to publicly present their thesis before a live audience. Attendance is not compulsory; students can also collect their diploma at the ESPhil exam administration. Master diplomas are handed out after the individual viva exam session.

The number of diplomas handed out is as follows:

- Bachelor Filosofie (fulltime and parttime, Dutch): 54
- Bachelor Philosophy of a Specific Discipline: 60
- Master Philosophy: 22
- Research Master Philosophy and Economics: 15
- Master Societal Transitions: 29

In addition, 9 students successfully completed the premaster programme.

2.6 Binding study advice (binded studieadvies, BSA) bachelor Philosophy

Introduction

Starting September 1, 2014, the binding study advice at ESPhil followed EUR policy 'Nominal = Normal' (N=N). This implies that at the end of the first year of enrolment, a fulltime student must have earned the 60 EC of the full first bachelor year. For parttime students this must be achieved at the end of the second year of enrolment. EC's granted by the EB because of exemptions are included in this count.

Cohort 2024 fulltime (first year of enrolment)

BSA issued in August 2025: 10 positive, 10 negative, 7 postponed, 9 discontinued

Cohort 2023 fulltime (first year of enrolment)

BSA issued in August 2024: 10 positive, 4 postponed, 15 discontinued

Cohort 2022 fulltime (first year of enrolment)

BSA issued in August 2023: 19 positive, 8 negative, 5 postponed, 9 discontinued

Cohort 2022 parttime (first year of enrolment), BSA after two years of enrolment

BSA issued in August 2024: 6 positive, 2 postponed, 4 discontinued

Cohort 2021 parttime (first year of enrolment), BSA after three years of enrolment

BSA issued in August 2024: 12 positive, 0 postponed, 6 discontinued

Cohort 2020 parttime (first year of enrolment), BSA after three years of enrolment

BSA issued in August 2023: 10 positive, 1 negative, 0 postponed, 35 discontinued

2.7 Fraud and sanctions

The EB is charged with investigating and sanctioning fraud. In most cases, invigilators or examiners suspect fraud and report this to the EB. The EB itself can also establish a suspicion of fraud. The EB investigates the suspicions—which always involves asking the student to

provide their view—and can impose a sanction, in accordance with the rules and procedures of administrative law. The specific procedure is laid down in the [Fraud Protocol](#).

Preventing fraud is also important. The EB therefore encourages, partly in cooperation with education management, that instructors and examiners foster a correct understanding of the rules of plagiarism, and other forms of fraud, by students; and also, that students arrange their work processes in such a way that fraud is being avoided or prevented.

All essays and (written) assignments must be handed in through the Turnitin software and checked on plagiarism and the use of (generative) AI. The current problem with Turnitin are false positives/negatives, a problem which can hardly be avoided (see section 3: *Looking ahead*).

Fraud is explicitly understood to include ‘ghost writing’, defined as ‘having someone else (or something else, like generative AI software) write a text, wholly or in part, which constitutes part of an exam, or thesis.’ For the problems involved here, see §2.9.

Fraud in examinations

In 2024-2025, 7 cases of suspected plagiarism have been formally investigated by the EB; in 4 cases, this suspicion has been found to be justified. Also investigated was 1 case of dubious referencing; no fraud was found here. In another case, the suspicion was about both plagiarism and AI; no fraud was found here either.

There is still a sense that examiners are insufficiently alert or motivated regarding the detection of plagiarism and incorrect (fraudulent) referencing practices, or perhaps insufficiently aware of how to implement this. Examiners do seem more aware of the need for concrete referencing (e.g. Foucault 1976, 134 rather than just Foucault 1976) – with the exception of the MA Societal Transitions.

A few dozen cases of possible generative AI use were brought to the attention of the EB. In 24 cases, a formal investigation followed. In 8 cases, the exam product was declared invalid. In 3 cases, the exam product was declared invalid, but the case was settled after appeal was filed. In 2 cases, a warning was given.

Some examiners are considerably more alert on this issue than others. Many have no clear sense what to look for, or where to look. For more on AI-related fraud, see §2.9.

Fraud in thesis writing

On both Ba and MA assessment forms, the Turnitin plagiarism percentage must be stated by the supervisor. For the 2024-2025, the procedure was changed, so that students upload their thesis *before* the assessment so that the supervisor can thoroughly check the thesis for both plagiarism and generative AI use.

In 2024-2025, no problems were found with (BA of MA) theses regarding plagiarism or generative AI fraud.

It should be noted that there are many other ways in which students can acquire assistance in writing their thesis or essay, fraudulent or not. Commercial providers also operate in this field. Rates vary from 10-17 euros per page, 'guaranteed plagiarism-free'. This kind of fraud is very difficult to detect; the best prevention here is consistent writing supervision and discouraging the simple handing in of manuscripts without any process of supervised writing.

Also, students can of course receive many other kinds of assistance in writing, for example from friends or family. It is a difficult question at which point such assistance could be deemed fraudulent, however it clearly complicates, or even obstructs, to some extent the ability of the examiner and the EB to assess the skills and knowledge of the student. See also §2.9.

Proctoring

The EB received a small number of reports by the university exam organisation of possible fraud in centrally organised exams. It found no reason for further investigation or sanction. Online proctored examination was allowed only in exceptional individual cases.

2.8 Other activities and decisions

Declaration concerning students with function restrictions [functiebeperkingen]

Students with temporary or chronic forms of function restrictions can make use of special facilities, within bounds of reason. These facilities, like modified examination facilities, intend to equalize the chances of study success. Students with dyslexia may a) take exams in special rooms, with added exam time or the use of Textaid. For students with a temporary function restriction, individual solutions are sought, such as taking the examination in a designated room at ESPhil. In 2024-2025, 30 declarations concerning function restriction have been issued.

Advice on the valuation of non-Dutch diplomas regarding PhD applications

No such advice was needed.

Legal issues, complaints and controversies

Two appeals have been lodged with the EUR Board of Appeals for Examinations (CBE) against EB decisions. Both cases involved sanctions concerning generative AI fraud. Both cases were settled.

Two students filed a complaint against the way their exam product was assessed by an examiner; in both cases, this concerned an "Action Research Report" produced as part of the Graduation Project in the MA Societal Transitions. These complaints were treated as appeals lodged with the EB. One was deemed justified, and the assessment declared invalid. The other was deemed not actionable by the EB; the student was informed of the reasons behind

this appreciation and advised of their right to lodge an appeal against the assessment of the examiner with the CBE.

Quantitative overview of actions

Action or issue	Number
Exemption requests granted	22
Exemption requests denied	15
Internships approved	0
Request and approval increased study load course	1
Request and approval studying abroad	7
Declarations on functional restriction issued	30
Number of EB meetings	7
Number of fraud sanctions imposed	11
Number of (new) appeals cases with CBE	1

2.9 The use of generative AI and other software as research and writing assistants

The use of generative AI is now everywhere: both widely used by students and increasingly integrated into mainstream in-house software such as Microsoft, or through platforms like EduGenAI. Different commercially available tools bring ever-novel functions with them almost on a weekly basis, some more pernicious to philosophical education than others.

Almost always exclusively if one is paying for the service, current tools can, for example:

- Guide understanding with Socratic-style questions.
- Break concepts into easy-to-follow sections starting simple and increasing complexity.
- Personalized responses using examples and tips tailored to the user.
- Judge level of understanding with open-ended prompts and feedback.

Work with study materials by referencing images or PDFs one uploads.

- Upload documents, websites, YouTube videos, audio files, etc., to summarize, rework, discover new sources, etc.
- Append information based on sources with in-line citations (which are not always accurate).
- Transform sources into other formats such as essays, study guides, briefings, audio overviews, mind maps, etc.
- Proofread, edit, and all tasks related to the production of texts.

We should note that there is no university-wide, nor currently faculty-wide consensus on the desirability or acceptability of student use of such software. Moreover, there is such a wide variety of application – spelling correction, grammar correction, style advice, paraphrasing, editing, ghostwriting – that a straightforward answer to what should and what should not be allowed is not easily found. While in many cases it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between what is written by a student, and what has been produced through assisted writing, or ghostwriting, it is still possible (to the discerning examiner, and

particularly through formative assessment practices) to judge the quality of student work. Therefore: careful attention by examiners, as well as clear assessment guidelines and policy for students, are a necessity.

As a variety of generative AI software can provide summaries of texts or even enable, e.g., ‘discussions’ with documents, Generative AI finds its way – edited, checked, paraphrased, or not – into exam products handed in. This further complicates the distinction between exam preparation and actual exam writing.

In any case, the EB has a clear responsibility to set rules for what is and what is not fraudulent use of such software, and to enforce those rules. Its view may not always align with that of education management. Yet students have a legitimate interest in knowing what is expected from them. To that end, the director of education and the EB have sent around in April 2024 a joint statement about the use of generative AI to both staff and students, holding that “we do not allow any use of generative AI for any work that will be handed in for assessment”.

Until now, no guidelines or criteria have been developed in jurisprudence by CBE’s or Raad van State (RvS) either. As of August 2025, a mere three cases of fraudulent AI use have made it to the RvS. Two of those concerned ‘hallucinated sources’ rather than generative AI-text writing; the third was decided based on extraordinary circumstances adduced by the student (and thus cannot be generalized).

In April 2025, the EB has notified the Dean that it can no longer be sufficiently sure that the Turnitin AI-scan produces no false positives/negatives. Two cases appealed to the CBE had to be settled for this reason. The EB advised the Dean to make sure that from 2025-2026 on 70% of the examination in the BA programmes is generative AI-proof. Otherwise, the value of the exam can no longer be guaranteed by the EB.

In 2024-2025, the EB encountered its first case of an *examiner* using generative AI while assessing an essay. A student suspected such use and filed a complaint with the EB, which investigated the case, and declared the assessment of the examiner invalid. Although of course the (legal) positions of student and examiner differ – *quod licet lovi not licet bovi* - fairness requires that examiners and students are treated equally where generative AI use is concerned: when the use of generative AI can be shown up in their product they hand in, this product is invalidated. Another examiner was suspected of using generative AI for filling out a thesis form, but denied such use.

2.10 The Exam Monitor

In 2023-2024, the EB started to implement systematic monitoring of exams; it continued to do so in 2024-2025. All examination taking place at ESPhil is monitored and evaluated. To this end, EB members have access to all courses in ANS and in Canvas. ANS provides statistical data on written centrally administered exams – both on the exam, and on separate exam questions. In Canvas, the EB assesses whether clear and timely information on the examination is provided, and whether exam products (assignments, essays) have been properly filed; for instance, it checks whether Turnitin has been properly activated. It also looks at student exam evaluations, grading (when available), and the actual exam products

(assignments, essays). Depending on a variety of indications regarding the exam, such products are inspected through sampling, or in a more thorough, systematic manner. In some cases, this may also lead to suspicions of plagiarism or generative AI fraud that have not been reported by examiners.

Not all examination conforms to the rules laid down in the Rules and Guidelines, or the Examination Protocol. Individual examiners have been notified when relevant. This can apply to e.g. (insufficient) information on resit options, unclear criteria used for assessment, insufficiently objective assessment criteria, or a too high percentage of the grade allocated to collective examination or (unspecified) 'participation'. For some courses, the examination (information) is flawed or lacking to such an extent that the EB has determined that it cannot guarantee the quality of the examination. In most cases, the relevant examiners have been informed that they need to adjust their examination (information). A (confidential) report on the results of the Exam Monitor for 2023-2024 has been shared with the PMT in September 2024; a new report on 2024-2025 will be compiled, and shared.

The EB is currently working on several generative AI issues: to establish and communicate policy and best practices; to demand of our software providers that they assist our education predicament (rather than create it, as is currently the case with, e.g., Microsoft CoPilot); to innovate assessment methods as well as decide upon the use of tools such as Turnitin.

The MA Societal Transitions

Because of its inter- and transdisciplinary character, the master Societal Transitions, which started in 2023-2024, could be considered as an atypical curriculum for ESPhil. The whole programme is geared towards students turning knowledge into action, which is best exemplified by the final assignment, the 'Graduation Project', where all the transition development competences acquired in the regular courses serve as a springboard to effect societal change. In other words, in our regular philosophical curricula, we do learn our students to think and reflect, but not so much to act and connect. Initially this more practice-oriented training and examination led to concerns about the academic level of the curriculum amongst the members of the EC, especially with respect of the fact that it turned out to be almost impossible for students to fail an exam as long as some nominal effort was made.

Nevertheless, by communicating our concerns to the programme management and staff, in the meanwhile serious progress has been made in improving the academic standards and examination, of which a thorough revision of the Graduation Project Manual by the programme coordinator, dr. K.M.E. Bauer is a perfect example. More generally speaking, the EC admits there is a fundamental difference in content between our regular curricula and our inter- and transdisciplinary master Societal Transitions, whereas at the same time we are also convinced that a more practice-oriented curriculum can meet the same high academic level. With respect of examination standards this level can only be upheld by constant monitoring and giving advice to the PMT.

This programme started in 2023-2024 and is atypical in several ways: it is an interdisciplinary programme, hosted by ESPhil; it can be entered with any academic BA diploma, and without any philosophical training. The EB has concerns about the academic level of this programme

in its current form, as exhibited in the level of the examination. As reported to the PMT, the first two courses in the academic year seem to be designed in such a way that it is near impossible to fail the exam as long as some nominal effort is made. The same goes for the two 'track' courses. This means that some 20 EC in this programme can be acquired with little serious academic effort.

3. Looking Ahead

3.1 Generative AI

The use of generative AI and cloud-based software as writing (and research) assistant. This will remain a point of ongoing (and increasing) concern. It will be increasingly difficult to guarantee the quality of non-proctored examination.

3.2 Exam Monitor

The Exam Monitor will be continued in 2025-2026. The EB aims to optimize this procedure, as performing the monitor is a lot of work. It also aims to cooperate with education management so as to optimally disseminate the outcomes of the monitor and implement the measures based on the findings of the monitor.

Courses and/or examiners that are found seriously wanting receive a notification on the findings of the EB. When no sufficient remedies are implemented, the EB will issue a warning, or in serious cases of noncompliance may take stricter measures.

3.3 The master Societal Transitions

The examination in the courses of this programme, as well as in the Graduation Project, will be monitored to validate the academic level of this programme.

3.4 New dual degree track with Willem de Kooning Academy

In 2025-2026, ESPhil will start a new dual degree track with the Willem de Kooning Academy. The EB will closely monitor the examination taking place in this context.

3.5 Programme Assessment Plans

The EB intends to prioritize a review of the examination plans for 2025-2026, in which the validity threats caused by generative AI will receive special attention.

Appendix I: Student Enrolment and Graduation Figures

New student enrolments 2010 - 2020

Start cohort	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>BA Wijsbegeerte VT</i>	48	35	25	22	37	37	38	46	38	32	50
<i>BA Wijsbegeerte DT</i>	36	21	18	34	32	46	24	21	21	45	46
<i>BA Philosophy of a Specific Discipline</i>	81	29	41	62	98	214	234	258	261	242	206
<i>MA Philosophy</i>	14	26	10	10	16	18	20	20	18	29	33
<i>MA Filosofie van een Wetenschapsgebied</i>	3	5	6	10	8	4	3	-	-	-	-
<i>ReMA Philosophy and Economics</i>	5	4	4	7	11	6	9	7	15	10	13

Diplomas 2011 - 2021

Issued diplomas per programme	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
<i>BA Wijsbegeerte VT</i>	31	8	11	12	8	17	11	12	13	13 +6*	12+10*
<i>BA Wijsbegeerte DT</i>	4	1	7	10	8	8	7	6	4	1	1
<i>BA Bachelor Philosophy of a Specific Discipline</i>	24	2	16	20	13	12	13	36	57	56+3*	79+1*
<i>MA Philosophy</i>	11	-	7	16	11	5	13	16	12	7	21
<i>MA Filosofie van een Wetenschapsgebied</i>	2	-	2	3	5	5	6	4	-	-	-
<i>ReMA Philosophy and Economics</i>	6	1	8	6	4	6	10	5	7	5	11

* the second number refers tot he “50%” theses (adjusted regulations during Covid)

New student enrolments 2021 – 2031

Start cohort	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<i>BA Filosofie VT</i>	54	41	40	37	31						
<i>BA Filosofie DT</i>	48	30	32	26	21						
<i>BA Philosophy of a Specific Discipline</i>	164	195	248	201	159						
<i>Premaster Philosophy</i>	-	-	7	18	20						
<i>MA Philosophy</i>	39	22	14	18	21						
<i>ReMA Philosophy and Economics</i>	16	14	14	11	11						
<i>MA Societal Transitions</i>	-	-	45	28	27						

Diplomas 2022 – 2032

Issued diplomas per programme	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2033	2030-2031	2031-3032
<i>BA Filosofie VT</i>	18	12	14	22							
<i>BA Filosofie DT</i>	7	3	6	3							
<i>BA Bachelor Philosophy of a Specific Discipline</i>	66	46	62	60							
<i>Premaster Philosophy</i>	-	-	2	9							
<i>MA Philosophy</i>	23	16	16	22							
<i>ReMA Philosophy and Economics</i>	7	10	19	15							
<i>MA Societal Transitions</i>	-	-	27	29							