

Annual report

Programme Committee

Faculty of Philosophy

2015-2016

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## 1. Preface

This is the second annual report of the Programme Committee [*Opleidingscommissie*, or OC] of the Faculty of Philosophy.

Because of the introduction of English as the language of instruction in the new 'Double Degree'-programme, allowing also English-language students to study philosophy at Erasmus University, these reports are published in English, so that all those interested will be able to consult them. Whenever necessary, the Dutch equivalent of technical terms used will be given, in italics, between square brackets – see the example in the first sentence. Throughout, the Dutch abbreviation will be used (e.g. OC, not PC).

In 2015-2016, the Faculty initiated or continued many initiatives for curriculum innovation, mostly through ad-hoc committees outside the purview of the OC (although the OC chair was a member of these committees). A considerable part of the curriculum is now taught in English; the use of English will be extended further in 2016-2017, also in the Master curriculum. Teaching assistants are employed more often than in the previous years, and a further, considerable increase in their employment is expected in 2016-2017. Additionally, many administrative changes and innovations have been introduced, concerning e.g. the use of Blackboard and Turnitin, the course guide, grade registration, scheduling, Reader Repository.

Together with the considerable rise in student enrollment, especially in the Double Degree programme, these combined changes have put a considerable strain on faculty, as well as on the administrative support team.

Of course, this rise in enrollment is also a sign of success! Not only are there much more students pursuing a (double) degree in Philosophy, the student population is also much more diverse than before, both with regard to academic disciplines and with regard to ethnic and cultural background.

Furthermore, the management team of the Faculty has been in frequent consultation with the University's Board of Directors concerning a new model for the allocation of teaching (and research) resources; one of the important variables in this model concerns the number of students that enroll in (and eventually successfully graduate from) the new DD curriculum.

The faculty reorganization has been 'on hold' for most of the academic year 2015-2016, pending (mostly) the success of the new DD curriculum. As of June, it seems that reorganization is off the table. Concerns remain prevalent whether sufficient (qualified) staff will be available over the next few years to cope with the expected large increase in student population.

An extensive reorganization of the Faculty support staff had been carried through this year, resulting in important changes in both personnel and support structure. Much effort of both the new support staff and the teaching faculty has gone into ensuring that this transition was effected without negatively affecting the quality of education and administrative support.

## 2. What is the OC?

The OC is a committee consisting of an equal number of faculty members and students; in our case, four of each. It meets between six and eight times each academic year. Its purpose is to advance and secure the quality of the philosophy curriculum: its design and the way it is taught. In addition to its regular members, the OC has advisory members, such as the coordinator educational affairs [*medewerker onderwijszaken*] and

the chair of the Examination Board [*voorzitter van de Examencommissie*, or EC]. The program director [*opleidingsdirecteur*] normally also joins the meetings to keep the committee abreast of new and important developments. Through this set-up, the meetings allow for democratic participation while having most relevant expertise at hand.

The Faculty of Philosophy is a relatively small, independent Faculty. Other Faculties may employ quite a number of OC's for their various educational programmes, which may only rarely meet with programme directors, and whose members represent only a small percentage of the total faculty and student population. The Faculty of Philosophy has less than 20 permanent faculty, meaning that in a typical meeting of the OC, almost one third of the whole faculty will typically be present! This is of course different for the student population, yet we can say in general that our Faculty is characterized by easy access, small-scale lines of consultation, and informal practices of democratic participation.

The number of four members from both faculty and student population for our OC is fortunate in that this allows all four sections [*leerstoeelgroepen*] of the Faculty to be represented, while simultaneously allowing representation of four important subgroups within the student population: Double Degree, fulltime philosophy, part-time philosophy, and (research) master. While both faculty and student members thus in a way represent a certain 'constituency', this is an informal arrangement and all members participate on their own merit and with the general interest of the Faculty at heart. Members are appointed by the dean of the Faculty, for a set term: one year for students, four year for faculty. The dean also appoints the OC chair. All appointments take place after close consultation with the respective 'constituencies'.

The formal regulations concerning our OC can be found in the Rules and regulations of the Faculty [*Faculteitsreglement*], articles 12 and 13.

### 3. What the OC does

The Faculty offers educational programmes [*opleidingen*] in both philosophy, and philosophy of a certain EUR discipline [*Wijsbegeerte van een Wetenschapsgebied*], in both bachelor and master.

National law (WHW article 9.18) provides that the OC should:

- give advice on the Teaching & examination regulations [*Onderwijs- en examenregeling, ofwel OER*];
- provide a yearly evaluation of the way the OER is implemented;
- provide the dean with solicited or unsolicited advice on all matters concerning the Faculty's educational programmes.

The topics that the OER must cover are set out in WHW article 7.13. Generally speaking, the OER deals with:

- the structure of the educational programmes, such as the language of instruction;
- the content and organization of the curriculum as a whole;
- criteria for admission to the programmes;
- regulations concerning examinations
- regulations concerning student counseling and quality assurance

Pursuant to WHW 9.18 sub 3, article 13 of the Rules and regulations of the Faculty [*Faculteitsreglement*] more specifically formulates the following tasks for our OC:

- monitoring whether it is feasible to accomplish the curriculum in due time [*studeerbaarheid*];
- the regular production of reports on education [*onderwijsverslagen*];
- (contribution to the) preparation of curriculum visitations [*onderwijsvisitaties*]

Starting in 2015, the OC organizes a yearly *Onderwijsmiddag*: an informal afternoon discussion meeting of about 3 hours, in which teaching staff discuss their experiences, share best practices, and look ahead at new developments in the next curricular year. This year's *onderwijsmiddag* was organized on June 3, 2016.

The OC brings its advice to the attention of the dean and/or the programme director (depending on relevance); the EC and the FR also receive its advice and, if desired, the minutes of its meetings.

It is worthwhile mentioning that other bodies in the Faculty are also charged with specific tasks, responsibilities, and competencies concerning the education programme, the curriculum, and the OER. Next to the dean and the programme director, these are the Faculty Council [*Faculteitsraad*, or FR] and the Examination Board [*Examencommissie*, or EC]. The exact division in competencies and responsibilities is set out in the WHW and in the Rules and Regulations of the Faculty [*Faculteitsreglement*]. As a general rule, the FR deals with general Faculty policy, the OC with educational policy, and the EC with how the rules and regulations concerning examinations are applied. Note that the EC is not designed as a participatory organ; its responsibilities are more of a formal and legal nature. The OC, as mentioned, only has advisory powers.

In the spring of 2016, an ad hoc committee including the OC chair, produced thoroughly revised and updated drafts for the Teaching & examination regulations (OER-en) of the Faculty, as well as for the Rules & regulations of the Examination Board. When approved by the appropriate authorities (the Dean and the Faculty Council, and the Examination Board, respectively), these will go into effect on September 1, 2016.

New legislation will grant a – qualified – right of consent to the OC, effective (probably) 2016-2017. This will change the OC's status from an organ with only advisory powers to one that is empowered to participate in formal decision-making [*medezeggenschapsorgaan*], on a par with the Faculty Council [*faculteitsraad*, or FR].

#### 4. The members of the OC

As mentioned, membership of the OC rotates. Members are appointed for a set term: one year for students, four year for faculty.

Dr Gijs van Oenen (chair)  
Prof dr Wiep van Bunge  
Dr Awee Prins  
Willem van der Deijl MA MSc

Huub Brouwer (until December 2015)  
Sam van Dijck (from January 2016)  
Lena Schots (until April 2016)

Marlijn Mulder (from June 2016 on)  
Esther Didden  
Arthur Prince (until January 2016)  
Jamie van der Klaauw (from January 2016 on)

*Advisory members:*

Drs Frans Schaeffer (EC)

*Programme director:*

dr Bart Leeuwenburgh

*Secretary:*

Lena Schots (coordinator educational affairs) (from June 2016 on)

The secretary can be consulted for general questions about the OC and for requests concerning the minutes.

The secretary's office is in H5-21; email [schots@fwb.eur.nl](mailto:schots@fwb.eur.nl).

Mailaddresses for the other OC members, as well as other relevant and up to date information, can be found at the OC webpage:

<http://www.eur.nl/fw/faculteit/medezeggenschap/opleidingscommissie/>

## **5. How the OC meetings work**

The chair sets the agenda for the OC meetings, usually after consultation with the programme director and the curriculum coordinator; all members can propose topics for discussion to the chair in advance. Agenda and relevant documents are sent around to members by email 7-10 days before the meeting.

Recurring points on the agenda are: announcements (short news items, by the chair or other members), mail sent & received, and the programme director's report on current developments and plans. This last item is usually of considerable interest to the members and will often give rise to questions and debate.

Throughout the year, the course evaluations are a particular topic of attention for the OC. When evaluations give rise to concern or suggestions for improvement, the programme director and/or the OC chair contact the instructor responsible for the relevant course to discuss these remarks and suggestions.

Once a year (normally in the spring), the course descriptions for the new curriculum are being discussed, as well as (the new version of) the OER.

Meetings of the OC are public; everyone is welcome to come and join in, as a spectator. And, when recognized by the chair, to participate in the exchange of ideas and opinions. Only regular OC members have the right to vote.

The chair can determine that certain topics on the agenda are to be discussed confidentially; that is, with only (regular and advisory) members present. This can be the case when sensitive issues, e.g. concerning specific members of staff, are to be discussed.

Minutes of the meetings are prepared by the OC secretariat, in cooperation with the chair. Minutes are semi-public; non-members can consult them on request (contact the OC secretary).

## 6. What the OC did in 2015-2016

The following contains a concise summary of main issues and advice given. For more detailed information about the OC deliberations, you may want to consult the minutes of the meetings.

### 6 november 2015

- A) Positive **advice** on the proposal of the EC concerning compensation rules for examinations.
- B) Discussion on the plans (not yet formalized) for a **new Master curriculum**. The OC is generally positive about the new plans.
- C) Discussion on the introduction of intervision among faculty, or other options to (better) organize **internal faculty exchange and feedback on teaching**. The chair will explore the feasibility of the several options once more.

### 29 januari 2016

- A) Positive advice on the plans - now formalized and worked out in more detail – for a **new Master curriculum**, requiring considerably fewer courses than the old curriculum and featuring two attractive distinguishing 'tracks' (Continental Philosophy and its History, of CPH; and Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, or PPE). There is also no need any more for a separate "Philosophy of a certain EUR-discipline" master; this is now integrated in the new master curriculum.
- B) Discussion on the overhaul of the forms used for course **evaluations**. Points of special attention are: increasing the number of forms returned; the experiences with English as a language of instruction; and the experiences with seminars. It is **decided** that henceforth evaluations will be scheduled in the last 10-15 minutes of the last meeting of every course; students can use their smart phones to fill out the form.
- C) Discussion on **course evaluations**. The 'n' (number of forms returned) is often still (much) too low (see point B). Although evaluations are generally satisfactory, or even excellent, (particular aspects of) five courses evaluated give cause for concern. OD and/or OC chair will contact the instructors responsible for these courses to discuss options.

### 18 march 2016

- A) The **annual report** 2014-2015 is **approved**.
- B) Discussion on the content and procedure for the **Onderwijsmiddag**
- C) Discussion on **teaching evaluation reports**.

### 15 april 2016

- A) Discussion on how to best organize the new **seminar** set-up in the 2016-2017 curriculum, based on a discussion paper by the OC chair;
- B) (Continuation of the) discussion on the content and procedure for the **Onderwijsmiddag** on June 3.
- C) Discussion on **teaching evaluation reports**

### 17 june 2016 and 24 june 2016 (extra meeting)

- A) Extensive discussion on the new **Teaching & examination regulations** [*Onderwijs- en examenregeling, ofwel OER*] for 2016-2017 (in separate versions for



Double Degree, fulltime, parttime, and master curricula), as well as on the corresponding **Rules and regulations of the Examination Board** [*Regels en richtlijnen van de Examencommissie*]. Salient observations concerning the OER-en have been communicated to the Faculty Council. A special point of discussion was the division of clauses and stipulations between OER and R&R, as this impacts students' rights and their say on how these are formulated. Students have (some) influence on this formulation in the OER through the right of consent of the Faculty Council, while they have no say in the formulations used in the R&R. However, changes made to the R&R in the course of the year cannot affect students' rights negatively.

B) Discussion on the **course texts** and the **curriculum** for the next academic year. The available **course evaluations** are discussed in connection with the new course texts.

Observations and concerns regarding the level of difficulty of one Ba1 course, and the philosophical caliber of a Ba2 course, are communicated to the respective instructors, through the representatives of their sections [*leerstoelgroepen*] in the OC.

C) Short evaluation of the very recently (14 June) compiled **Double Degree curriculum evaluation for 2015-2016** (not covering the whole academic year yet, obviously), which in general looks very encouraging.

### **Activities outside of committee meetings**

- The University Department of Academic Affairs organized two meetings for members of EUR programme committees. The purpose of these meetings was to strengthen OC's by promoting knowledge sharing and supporting professionalization. On behalf of the Philosophy OC, Wiep van Bunge and Gijs van Oenen participated in the first meeting, and Jamie van der Klaauw in the second meeting.
- An external consultancy company, Schellekens & van Kan, offered a training on how to read and discuss OER-en, for members of participatory organs such as Faculty Council and OC. Jamie van der Klaauw participated.
- bEURs, Digital Online Education ('digital = normal') organized a meeting to share user experiences with platforms Turnitin and Gradescope. Gijs van Oenen attended.

## **7. Looking ahead to 2016-2017**

Several challenges facing the Faculty in the coming academic year will be of concern to the OC. The following seems particularly important:

- the introduction of the second bachelor year of the new Double Degree curriculum, of the several courses constituting the "Philosophy of a certain EUR-discipline" part of the DD-curriculum, and of the new master curriculum. Furthermore, many new educational and administrative procedures and systems will be employed, or much more extensively employed, such as grade registration by teaching staff in Osiris, and the Turnitin feedback and anti-plagiarism system integrated in Blackboard.
- many new courses have been designed and will be implemented in the next year

The OC will closely monitor all these developments, through reports of the programme director, course evaluations, and faculty lecture and seminar experiences. Of particular interest will be the course of events concerning the seminars, the use of English as language of instruction, and the number of DD students remaining on track in the curriculum [*rendement*].



A particular point of attention will be the use of student-assistants and other tutors in our educational structure. As before, student-assistants may be employed for many different substantial and administrative tasks, while tutors will be newly recruited to assist in teaching the new, small-scale seminars. While this is of course implemented to improve the quality of teaching, the OC will closely monitor both the positive and the possible negative effects of this design (such as a possible 'downgrading' of teaching, as experienced by students).

A second particular point of attention will be the form and method of giving feedback to students. Feedback is one of the most important determinants in the process of learning, and therefore it is of the highest importance that students receive regular, high-quality feedback – on examination results, but especially on papers, and other writing. The OC will try to chart, track, and evaluate the way in which feedback is given in the separate courses, and in the curriculum as a whole.

As mentioned in §3, changed national legislation will grant a certain qualified right of consent to the OC; this change will probably take effect at some time during 2016-2017. This will change its status from an organ with only advisory powers to one that is also empowered to participate in formal decision-making [*medezeggenschapsorgaan*], on a par with the Faculty Council [*faculteitsraad*, or FR]. This will have (formal) consequences both for the way the OC operates, and for the way it is constituted.

## 8. Coda

We hope you found this report useful!

If you have any suggestions or comments, with regard to either this report or the OC in general, please let us know.

Or perhaps you have become interested to join the OC yourself – student membership rotates frequently, so places become available at regular times.

For these matters, or anything else you think we should know about, you can contact the secretary, the chairman, or any of the other members listed in §4, and mentioned on our webpage at [www.eur.nl/fw/faculteit/medezeggenschap/opleidingscommissie/](http://www.eur.nl/fw/faculteit/medezeggenschap/opleidingscommissie/)

## Appendices

### 1. Relevant national law

#### **Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek**

(Tekst geldend op: 1 januari 2016)

#### **Artikel 9.18. Opleidingscommissies**

1. Voor elke opleiding of groep van opleidingen wordt een opleidingscommissie ingesteld. De commissie heeft tot taak:
  - a. advies uit te brengen over de onderwijs- en examenregeling, bedoeld in artikel 7.13,
  - b. het jaarlijks beoordelen van de wijze van uitvoeren van de onderwijs- en examenregeling, en
  - c. het desgevraagd of uit eigen beweging advies uitbrengen aan het bestuur van de opleiding, bedoeld in artikel 9.17, eerste lid, en de decaan over alle aangelegenheden betreffende het onderwijs in de desbetreffende opleiding.

De commissie zendt de adviezen, bedoeld onder a en c, ter kennisneming aan de faculteitsraad.
2. Op een advies als bedoeld in het eerste lid, is artikel 9.35, aanhef en onderdelen *b* en *c*, van overeenkomstige toepassing.
3. In het faculteitsreglement worden regels van procedurele aard met betrekking tot de toepassing van het eerste lid gesteld en wordt de wijze van benoeming en samenstelling van de opleidingscommissie geregeld, met dien verstande dat de helft van het totaal aantal leden van de commissie voortkomt uit de voor de desbetreffende opleiding ingeschreven studenten.
4. Indien een faculteit slechts een opleiding omvat, kan het faculteitsreglement bepalen dat de taken en bevoegdheden van de opleidingscommissie worden uitgeoefend door de faculteitsraad, bedoeld in artikel 9.37.

#### **Artikel 7.13. Onderwijs- en examenregeling**

1. Het instellingsbestuur stelt voor elke door de instelling aangeboden opleiding of groep van opleidingen een onderwijs- en examenregeling vast. De onderwijs- en examenregeling bevat adequate en heldere informatie over de opleiding of groep van opleidingen.
2. In de onderwijs- en examenregeling worden, onverminderd het overigens in deze wet terzake bepaalde, per opleiding of groep van opleidingen de geldende procedures en rechten en plichten vastgelegd met betrekking tot het onderwijs en de examens. Daaronder worden ten minste begrepen:
  - a. de inhoud van de opleiding en van de daaraan verbonden examens,
  - b. de inhoud van de afstudeerrichtingen binnen een opleiding,

- c. de kwaliteiten op het gebied van kennis, inzicht en vaardigheden die een student zich bij beëindiging van de opleiding moet hebben verworven,
- d. waar nodig, de inrichting van praktische oefeningen,
- e. de studielast van de opleiding en van elk van de daarvan deel uitmakende onderwijseenheden,
- f. de nadere regels, bedoeld in [de artikelen 7.8b, zesde lid](#), en [7.9, vijfde lid](#),
- g. ten aanzien van welke masteropleidingen toepassing is gegeven aan [artikel 7.4a, achtste lid](#),
- h. het aantal en de volgtijdelijkheid van de tentamens alsmede de momenten waarop deze afgelegd kunnen worden,
- i. de voltijdse, deeltijdse of duale inrichting van de opleiding,
- j. waar nodig, de volgorde waarin, de tijdvakken waarbinnen en het aantal malen per studiejaar dat de gelegenheid wordt geboden tot het afleggen van de tentamens en examens,
- k. waar nodig, de geldigheidsduur van met goed gevolg afgelegde tentamens, behoudens de bevoegdheid van de examencommissie die geldigheidsduur te verlengen,
- l. of de tentamens mondeling, schriftelijk of op een andere wijze worden afgelegd, behoudens de bevoegdheid van de examencommissie in bijzondere gevallen anders te bepalen,
- m. de wijze waarop studenten met een handicap of chronische ziekte redelijkerwijs in de gelegenheid worden gesteld de tentamens af te leggen,
- n. de openbaarheid van mondeling af te nemen tentamens, behoudens de bevoegdheid van de examencommissie in bijzondere gevallen anders te bepalen,
- o. de termijn waarbinnen de uitslag van een tentamen bekend wordt gemaakt alsmede of en op welke wijze van deze termijn kan worden afgeweken,
- p. de wijze waarop en de termijn gedurende welke degene die een schriftelijk tentamen heeft afgelegd, inzage verkrijgt in zijn beoordeelde werk,
- q. de wijze waarop en de termijn gedurende welke kennis genomen kan worden van vragen en opdrachten, gesteld of gegeven in het kader van een schriftelijk afgenomen tentamen en van de normen aan de hand waarvan de beoordeling heeft plaatsgevonden,
- r. de gronden waarop de examencommissie voor eerder met goed gevolg afgelegde tentamens of examens in het hoger onderwijs, dan wel voor buiten het hoger onderwijs opgedane kennis of vaardigheden, vrijstelling kan verlenen van het afleggen van een of meer tentamens,
- s. waar nodig, dat het met goed gevolg afgelegd hebben van tentamens voorwaarde is voor de toelating tot het afleggen van andere tentamens,
- t. waar nodig, de verplichting tot het deelnemen aan praktische oefeningen met het oog op de toelating tot het afleggen van het desbetreffende tentamen, behoudens de bevoegdheid van de examencommissie vrijstelling van die verplichting te verlenen, al dan niet onder oplegging van vervangende eisen,
- u. de bewaking van studievoortgang en de individuele studiebegeleiding, en
- v. indien van toepassing: de wijze waarop de selectie van studenten voor een speciaal traject binnen een opleiding, bedoeld in [artikel 7.9b](#), plaatsvindt

## 2. Relevant Faculty regulations

### **Faculteitsreglement** (version 3 november 2008)

#### **Artikel 12. De opleidingscommissie; samenstelling; zittingsduur.**

(art. 9.18 WHW)

1. Voor elke opleiding binnen een faculteit wordt door de decaan een opleidingscommissie ingesteld. De decaan kan voor meerdere opleidingen dezelfde personen in de opleidingscommissies benoemen. De facto fungeert er dan één opleidingscommissies voor alle opleidingen.
2. De opleidingscommissie van de opleidingen wijsbegeerte en wijsbegeerte van een wetenschapsgebied bestaat uit acht leden en is voor de helft samengesteld uit personeelsleden (bij voorkeur uit verschillende leerstoelgroepen) en voor de helft uit de voor één van de desbetreffende opleidingen ingeschreven studenten. De studieadviseur en de medewerker facultaire introductie, werving en voorlichting wonen de vergaderingen als adviserend lid bij. Ook doet de Opleidingsdirecteur verslag van de lopende zaken en nieuwe ontwikkelingen. De decaan ziet toe op een evenwichtige vertegenwoordiging van beide opleidingen in de commissie. Een van de personeelsleden, bij voorkeur een hoogleraar of UHD, fungeert als voorzitter.
3. De leden van de opleidingscommissie worden benoemd door de decaan. De personeelsleden worden benoemd na overleg met de hoofden van de leerstoelgroepen. De studenten worden aangewezen op een door de studenten (in overleg met de decaan) te bepalen wijze.
4. De zittingstermijn van de leden van de opleidingscommissie bedraagt voor wat betreft de personeelsleden vier jaar en voor wat betreft de studenten één jaar. Zij zijn opnieuw benoembaar.

#### **Artikel 13. De taken van de opleidingscommissie.**

(art. 9.18 WHW)

1. De opleidingscommissie voert, in nauw overleg met de eindverantwoordelijke opleidingsdirecteur of decaan, de volgende taken uit:
  - a. het geven van advies over de o.e.r.;
  - b. het jaarlijks beoordelen van de wijze van uitvoeren van de o.e.r.;
  - c. het bewaken en waar nodig helpen verbeteren van de kwaliteit van het onderwijs;
  - d. het bewaken van de studeerbaarheid van de opleidingen;
  - e. het regelmatig opstellen van onderwijsverslagen;
  - f. het voorbereiden van de onderwijsvisitaties;
  - g. het desgevraagd of eigener beweging geven van advies aan de opleidingsdirecteur en/of decaan over alle aangelegenheden met betrekking tot het onderwijs in de desbetreffende opleiding.
2. De opleidingscommissie wordt door de opleidingsdirecteur of decaan zo spoedig mogelijk schriftelijk in kennis gesteld van de wijze waarop door deze aan het uitgebrachte advies gevolg is gegeven.
3. De opleidingscommissie vergadert ten minste zes maal per jaar.
4. De opleidingsdirecteur pleegt ten minste tweemaal per jaar overleg met de desbetreffende opleidingscommissie over de uitvoering van de o.e.r.