

*Position paper January 2017
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Master selection

Situation sketch

Until 2014, almost all master's programmes at TU Delft were so-called "transfer masters", whereby the diploma of a corresponding bachelor's programme gave direct access to the corresponding master's programme. Since 2014, the transfer master's has been abolished, which means that the universities have since been allowed to select for each master's programme based on self-established criteria. In 2016, this hardly ever happened in Delft. However, there could be reasons for TU Delft to introduce selection.

Due to a growing number of students (Dutch bachelor's and international master's intake), the current master's programmes are becoming increasingly full. In some cases, the programme cannot grow fast enough and the master's programme simply becomes too full, which endangers the quality of education. This may be a reason for selection to limit intake. At the moment, TU Delft hardly ever selects for master's programmes, although there was a pilot master's selection for the year 2019-2020 for Architecture and Aerospace (only for non-EU students).

Besides, TU Delft has expressed a desire for top-level education in which 'the best students strengthen each other'. This could be a reason for the TU to select to distinguish students based on their qualities. The third purpose of selection could be to get the student in the 'right place'. The reason for applying this form of selection is to ensure that students fit in with the Master's programme that they are going to do.

This position paper discusses these three forms of selection.

ORAS's vision

ORAS opposes all forms of selection, including master's selection. TU Delft has a social obligation to deliver engineers because there is a huge demand for them in the labour market. At the moment, a bachelor's degree does not provide enough opportunities to move up in the labour market. Therefore, a student must be able to transfer to any Master's programme for which he/she has sufficient prior knowledge and which he/she wants to do. The position paper will now explain the various purposes of selection.

Inflow limitation

A master's programme may have an excessively high intake, thereby jeopardising the quality of the programme. Alternatively, there may be extremely low demand in society for certain graduates, making it impossible for them to find a job. In these two cases, selection to limit enrolment is a stopgap measure. Other solutions to these problems must always be sought. A selection must never become a long-term solution.

Distinguishing between students

The university should not distinguish between students at the master's intake, ORAS has the following reasons for this:

- Selection based on results in the bachelor's phase causes students to feel increased performance pressure. Moreover, it is an obstacle for students to develop themselves alongside their studies.
- Selecting "better" students is the wrong way to make a master better. A master's programme must be good in itself. Moreover, top tracks and Honours programmes are already enough to increase the quality of a master's programme.
- TU Delft should not neglect its bachelors. A bachelor's degree at TU Delft should be of a high enough level to be able to transfer to a subsequent master's programme.

Student in the right place

Selection is not a way of getting a student into a programme that best suits that student. After all, following a bachelor's course is already enough to be able to make a good master's choice. A student should be able to choose what he or she wants to do after the bachelor.

When the TU still wants to take measures, ORAS prefers things like matching and informative activities. This ensures that the student is better informed and is better matched to a master's programme.

Conditions to master selection

In the extreme case that the TU decides to make a selection prior to a certain master's programme, the selection must certainly comply with several conditions:

- The Delft Bachelor's student must be able to do a TU Delft Master's, as a TU Delft Master's is a continuation of the Bachelor's. Therefore, Delft's bachelor students should not be excluded.
- It is important that a good ratio of Delft and external students is sought in admission. ORAS believes that a certain international intake is important for an international culture in education, where students can learn a lot from each other. The ratio of Delft and international students should be looked at per master programme.
- There should be no minimum grade attached to admission to the master's programme. When selecting, several factors must be considered simultaneously. Extra-curricular activities or the motivation of a student is at least as important as the grades a student has obtained.
- In the case of selection, switch students must already be admitted to the desired master's programme before their switch year. If this does not happen, the student invests an extra year with no guarantee of admission.
- In the extreme case of selection, students must be informed prior to their bachelor's programme that they can be selected based on the results they achieve in their bachelor's programme.