

Dear Executive Board,

Student parties Front and SAM would like to express their concerns regarding COVID-19 and the upcoming examination period.

Part of the students at Tilburg University feel unsafe taking their exams on campus. The Covid-19 infections are very high at the moment. Because of that students have to keep a distance of 1.5 metres from each other at the university, wear masks, and a maximum capacity of 75 people per room is enforced. However, during the exams there is no maximum capacity and no 1.5 metres distance required. Additionally it is hardly possible to keep distance from each other while entering the exam room. A part of the students feels unsafe taking on campus exams, because of their own safety, but also that of their families with regards to the upcoming period of festivities. That is why a group of students took the initiative to start a petition on online examination and education, which has been signed by over 650 students by now.

Our student parties, Front and SAM, have expressed their concerns about on campus examination before. Now that the infections keep rising, we want to stress these concerns once again. We understand that the university wants to follow the policy that is advised by the government with regards to examinations. We believe however that we have come to a point where the university should put the safety of her students above the advice from the government. We can no longer assume that students with Covid-19 related symptoms and infected students will not come to campus to take their exams, since there is proof that they are actually doing so right now.

When a student is currently infected or showing symptoms it is unclear whether this student has a third opportunity to take the exam. There is no single policy on this which is causing a lot of insecurity. Students wonder when they can appeal for a third opportunity and how this opportunity is subsequently granted. Students who are here on exchange during the fall also express concerns about having to travel back here in the summer to retake their exam. Though TSB and TiSEM offer distance exams there is no university-wide policy. The insecurity goes hand in hand with time-bound stress which students experience because they usually, only just right before the exam, hear that they will have to go into quarantine. Next to that they themselves can also develop symptoms right before the exams. Due to this there is barely any time to get a decisive opinion on a third opportunity before the exam. The system for requesting of a third opportunity is complicated and creates stress among students. The urge to come to the exam, even with symptoms, rises. We hope that a third opportunity can be offered to all of these students, so that they won't have to feel this pressure to still show up to their exams which can put their peers at risk. TSB is already offering this opportunity for the coming exam period and we hope that this policy can be enforced university-wide so that it also counts for students from other faculties.

We want to ask the university to consider the option of online examinations once again, or to facilitate a university-wide third exam opportunity. Additionally we ask the university to clarify the policy around the third exam opportunity to students and communicate this in time. We hope that our concerns will be heard so that the upcoming examination period will go smoothly.

Yours sincerely,

Student Party SAM & Student Party Front