

April 8, 2020

Re: 1st Y RMa student electives and future research internships

Dear Research Master students,

Due to the corona virus we're all facing many uncertainties. This letter is directed specifically to the first-year RMa students in response to questions from your student representatives, and is meant to give some guidance with respect to your ongoing *electives* and upcoming *research internships*.

- (1) Electives.** Students should contact their supervisors about ongoing research electives to find a solution for any problems. The supervisors have been briefed on a number of alternative formats and can help. These alternative formats include possibilities to stick to a research elective (e.g., using available data or online data collection), or switching to a review elective. The possibility of still initiating a research/lab elective after the summer holidays is uncertain and cannot be guaranteed. If conducting a research/lab elective is still considered, students must be ready to switch to a review elective should their research elective no longer be possible, and contingency plans must be discussed with the supervisor. Thus, the strong suggestion is to use a review elective as the ultimate fallback plan, and collect the elective credits in time. This is because **all credits must be obtained before starting the internship period in November**. A possible exception to this rule may be a case in which a delay in collecting the required credits was incurred despite adhering to the above-suggested guidelines. The Exam Committee FPN will judge the merits of such a case.
- (2) Research Internships in 2020-2021.** The main suggestion to handle the uncertainties surrounding upcoming internships is to put in place a contingency plan. You may stay in contact with a lab outside EU if the contact was already made before the crisis, but seeking any form of commitment at present is not advised. Initiating new contacts with non-EU labs is not recommended either, again because presently commitments cannot be made. Even if the situation improves in a few weeks/months so that commitments can be made, difficulties with visa applications should be anticipated, and a second wave of the virus cannot be excluded. So, any ideas to go outside the EU should take a backseat, and instead you should create a couple of safer options to fall back on. Safer options may include a local lab at Maastricht University, or a lab in NL, BE, or other nearby countries, which would agree (conditionally for now) to take you on as soon as the virus situation permits. The idea is to build your contingency plan in close cooperation with your intended UM supervisor, your mentor, or any staff member in your specialization that you feel is best-placed to help you with this.

A lot of information can be found on AskPsy (<https://www.askpsy.nl/covid-19>) and in the regular Covid-19 updates of UM. However, your specialization coordinators, mentors and all other members of the RMa staff are always happy to answer any questions that matter to you. Your questions and our answers will also be posted on AskPsy whenever they add to the already available information there. If you have any questions directly for me or Bernadette, feel free to ask.

We appreciate the patience and wisdom of all of you in helping to handle the current crisis!

Kind regards,

Peter De Weerd & Bernadette Jansma
(your RMa and Ma directors)