

# Results survey UM Minor Sustainable Development among Bachelor students

## Background

Maastricht University (UM) launched the Sustainable UM 2030 programme in 2018. Under the programme an Education for Sustainable Development team was set up to help facilitate the process of making UM a more sustainable institution through various education projects and activities. One of its current ambitions includes the development of a UM-wide Minor Sustainable Development (SD) which holds the vision of being an effective way in the broadening of UM's education portfolio on sustainable development.

Between April and July 2019, a survey took place investigating if Bachelor students were interested in having a Minor SD. Whilst the survey was available via the UM Sustainability website, barriers were encountered with regard to its distribution. Most notably, being that related to the idea of having the survey sent to all UM Bachelor students email accounts, which was rejected on central level. Therefore, other means were used to inform students about the survey which included actions conducted by the Green Office, contacting education and programme directors, contacting participants of the Sustainable Research and Education Kickoff, and the use of personal contacts.

## Results

Whilst the outcome of the survey cannot be considered representative due to the fragmented manner of distribution, the 400 responses do provide some insightful results for the Minor SD. From the 400, 335 were Bachelor students and 65 indicated others. The results include students from all six faculties and limited here to the answers of the Bachelor students.

### *Faculty*

The results show that the lowest number of respondents comes from FPN and the highest number from FoL. The distribution (N = 337) between the faculties was as follows: FPN 5% (17 students), SBE 11% (36), FHML 14% (46), Fasos 20% (69), FSE 22% (74), FoL 24% (81), and unknown 4% (14).

### *Programme*

The survey population consists of students from 19 different programmes, which included European Law (69), University College Maastricht (68) and European Studies (52) representing more than half of the total (N = 349), whilst other programmes such as Medicine (5), Data Science and Knowledge Engineering (5) and Tax Law (2) are represented by only a few students.

### *Year of study*

The survey showed that of the (N = 329) responses, 43% (141) were in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study, 31% (103) in their 1<sup>st</sup> year, and 24% (78) in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Whereas, 2% (7) selected other options (such as 4<sup>th</sup> year student).

### *Interest*

Regarding interest, the survey population (N = 328) indicated that 45% (146) is extremely interested in a Minor SD, 28% (92) very interested, 16% (54) moderately interested, and 8% (28) slightly interested. 2% (8) were not interested at all.

#### *Room for Minor*

Additionally, of the students (N = 327) 88% (87) indicated that their programme offered room for a Minor (or study abroad), and 4,5% (15) highlighted that this was not possible. 7.5% (25) of the students do not know.

#### *ECTS*

In relation to the question of how many ECTS the Minor SD should have in scope with their programme, of the (N = 286) students, 27% (77) say 24 ECTS, and 25% (71) say 30 ECTS. A few students preferred 25 ECTS (13), 26 ECTS (5), 27 ECTS (1), 28 ECTS (4) or 29 ECTS (0). Further, 28% (81) said they don't know, and 12% (34) said it doesn't matter.

#### *Preferred topics*

The topics which students would like to be included within the Minor SD - whereby students had the option to select 5 topics from a fixed list - showed a wide variation. The highest rankings included Global Challenges, Environmental Change, Public Policy, International Law, Human Behaviour, Human Health, and Production and Consumption; all in the context of sustainability. It should be taken into account that the number of respondents from a certain faculty or programme most likely played a role in the choice of topics.

If the student's preferred choice of topic would not be included in the Minor SD, 67% (202) would still consider taking the Minor, 8% (25) not, and 25% (74) don't know.

#### *Signing up*

If UM would be offering a Minor SD (N = 285), 68% (193) would be interested in taking the Minor, 26% (76) indicated maybe, and 6% (16) not.

#### *Other study options*

Considering the Minor SD, other minors offered by UM, or the option to go abroad - the students' order of preference were as follows (N = 243). Their first preference: another minor 8% (19), Minor SD 32% (77), studying abroad 60% (147). Their second preference: another minor 27% (66), Minor SD 50% (121), studying abroad 23% (56). Their third preference: another minor 65% (158), Minor SD 19% (45), studying abroad 16% (40).

#### *Involvement*

Finally, from the respondents (N = 301), 68% (205) said that they can be contacted at a later stage for further questions (email addresses available), and 32% (96) indicated no.

#### **Next steps**

The results of the survey are very informative and useful for a UM-wide Minor SD. The results are part of a project plan that will be presented to the Sustainable UM 2030 taskforce for approval and support. For

more information about the UM Minor Sustainable Development, you can contact Ron Cörvers ([r.corvers@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:r.corvers@maastrichtuniversity.nl)) and Ceren Pekdemir ([ceren.pekdemir@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ceren.pekdemir@maastrichtuniversity.nl)), members of the Education for Sustainable Development team.