

Impact

Policymakers can quickly determine whether planned legislation would affect **border regions**. Thanks to ITEM.

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Language policy

Opinions are divided within UM about the working language and the broader discussion about internationalization. "I hope that this does not lead to **polarization**."

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NEW PLAGIARISM DETECTOR FOR UM

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More than 200 students committed plagiarism last year

Two hundred Maastricht students copied passages from someone else's work without mentioning the source or handed in texts that were generated by AI. This is shown by the latest plagiarism figures by the Maastricht Examination Committees.

Students from the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASoS) overstepped the mark often; 89 of them were punished because of plagiarism, said Jo Wachelder, head of the Examination Committee. "This can be done by issuing a formal warning or exclusion from exams. It depends on the seriousness, the extent, and the number of times that the student plagiarised."

Of the 89 FASoS students that overstepped the bounds, 25 submitted texts that were generated by AI. Wachelder: "These students often get caught because their literature references are incorrect. In a lot of instances, ChatGPT invents them."

A total of more than two hundred students at UM have been punished for plagiarism. It is impossible to give an exact

number, because some Examination Committees do not register plagiarism and fraud separately, but lump all cases together. The number of 'plagiarisers' at UM is higher than ever. In 2002, the number was ninety, in 2012, it was 145. The actual number is always much higher, because students invent new tricks to mislead antiplagiarism software and because not all lecturers report it. Some just stick to a firm talking-to.

The faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences rapped 49 students on the knuckles, most of them from Health Sciences (23). At Psychology and Neuroscience, there were twenty cases. Economics and Law do not differentiate between plagiarism and fraud. SBE punished 93 students last year, while Law did so in 101 cases; the work of the students concerned was mostly declared invalid. Fraud was often committed with a mobile phone or a smartwatch.

The Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE) covers the University Colleges in Maastricht and Venlo, and the Maastricht

Science Program, which do not have current figures yet. In the 2021/22 academic year, they caught a total of 76 students, who either committed fraud or plagiarised.

In the other FSE study programmes, secretly copying texts hardly occurs; last year, there were 4 cases. What does happen often is a different form of plagiarism: cutting and pasting programming code. Students pull them from the Internet or hand the task over to AI. Last year, this happened 22 times.

At the end of 2022, a whopping eighty students simultaneously cheated with computer codes. This happened in the Business Engineering programme, for SBE and FSE students. The programme comes under SBE's Examination Committee. The exam was declared invalid.

Maurice Timmermans

Read about UM's new plagiarism software on pages 6-7





editorial

A stolen Bazooka

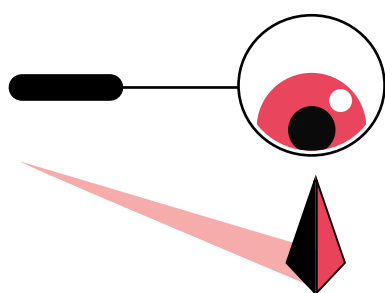
Riki Janssen

I was seven years old. At the small supermarket in my village, my eyes kept being drawn to Bazooka bubble gum – rectangular pieces of pink chewing gum with a red, white, and blue wrapper that came with a small comic strip. One day after school, I hung around the shop for a while, mustering the courage to step inside. I slowly made my way down the aisles to the spot where the Bazooka gums lay staring at me. I grabbed one, clenched it in my fist, and walked out with my heart in my throat. I can't remember if I actually enjoyed the gum, but I do recall feeling like my chest would explode. I avoided the supermarket for days or even weeks, terrified that someone would be able to tell by looking at me that I'd stolen a piece of bubble gum that sold

for 5 cents. That fear has stayed with me my entire life. It turned me into a goody-two-shoes when it comes to stealing, cheating, or plagiarism. Just the thought of it makes me break out in a cold sweat. So, as far as I'm aware, I've never cheated on a test or copied even part of someone else's paper. Back when I was a student, today's ChatGPT and other generative AI tools were still a long way off. But I suspect I wouldn't have used them anyway, even if only for fear of getting caught. It would be a nightmare for me. I'd be mortified. Not everyone shares that fear, judging by the number of fraudulent students who have recently been caught. The Boards of Examiners of the different faculties counted some

200 plagiarists last year, our editor MT found out. The odds are that this number will only increase in the new academic year. This month, UM started using plagiarism detection software that is not just faster and more advanced, but also able to detect ChatGPT and AI plagiarism. Pocketing one stick of bubble gum is nothing compared to using ChatGPT to write your essay, paying a fellow student to be your ghostwriter, or copy-pasting entire pages together. And the consequences can be severe, down to being denied your degree.

Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the Observant office



splinters

A funny incident, a striking piece of news, something interesting that happened elsewhere in the country: it is in this column. With contributions from: Lotte van de Loo, Dennis Vaendel, Simon Wirtz, HOP

Paper please

Not all graduates of the University of Groningen (RUG) have actually 'pocketed' their diplomas this month. Due to the worldwide paper shortage, RUG cannot actually print all the diplomas, sister newspaper *Ukrant* reports. The university newspaper has in its possession a congratulatory e-mail that a bachelor's student received. In it, he was presented with three options. The student could go to the regular ceremony in October with family and friends, but will not receive a diploma then. A second option is to postpone the celebration until the next opportunity in March, which would be with a printed diploma. The last option is to collect the diploma from the student administration as soon as it has been printed, but in doing so skipping the ceremony. Graduates in Maastricht need not fear. UM does not expect any problems due to paper shortages, a spokesperson informed us.

Prize for boredom

Are you expecting a boring lecture? Then the chance is greater that you will be bored, showed research that was awarded one of the Ig Nobel Prizes last week. These are presented annually for research that will initially make you laugh and then make you think; a comic variant to the Nobel Prizes. The prize for education went to, among others, Dutchman Wijnand van Tilburg, who actually studied in Tilburg and who did a PhD on boredom in Ireland. He now works in England at the University of Essex. Together with colleagues, he studied a self-fulfilling prophecy: if students think that they will be bored, will that indeed be the case more often? The answer was yes. They also wanted to know what happens if students think that their lecturer is bored. This appeared not to have any stimulating influence. By the way, being bored is not always a bad thing, said Van Tilburg to university newspaper *Univers* at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Someone who is bored, wants to do something useful and is more willing to help others. (HOP)



Shrinking grannies

UM researcher Kasper Bormans is exhibiting more than 800 children's drawings in Leuven this month. Not created by his own children. No, the drawings, which were previously exhibited in Tilburg part of the travelling exhibition 'Wat Alz - van Oei tot Waw', are the results of Bormans' research into the mental environment of children.

The scientist visited various schools during the Covid period and asked children to draw older people. He noticed that children drew their grandparents larger before the lockdown than during the period in which they had to maintain a distance from them, he says to *De Limburger*. The content also changed: children who initially drew active elderly people, would draw an 'elderly man watching television' during the second round, for example. "But we also drew a hopeful lesson from the research: that you can definitely change the mental environment of children. Covid did that in a negative sense, but positive interventions, in which you bring children in contact with inhabitants of assisted-living centres, can do that too."



Increase in UM's first-year numbers mainly due to Computer Science

Again, more new students for Maastricht University than in the previous year. The new bachelor's of Computer Science smashed it with three hundred first-year students. The share of internationals has also increased.

Maastricht University has about 22.500 students at the moment. That is more than last year, but the growth is not very strong, said spokesperson Koen Augustijn. A mere 2 per cent. He does emphasise, however, that these are temporary figures, which "require caution. There is always a shift at the last moment. one way or another." Students often register with several institutes. It is only halfway through the academic year that the figures tally with reality. The influx (first-years) at UM rose by 6 per cent; the exact proportions between bachelor's and master's programmes, is not clear yet. The growth is mainly due to the new study programme of Computer Science. About 300 students signed up for this. That is more than for the other programmes at the Faculty of Science and Engineering, which include (among others) Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. At the same time, there was also a decline: there

are fewer first-year students at Biomedical Sciences (BMS), only 175, whereas there were twice as many before. As there was in the past so much interest in this programme – and all other BMS programmes in the Netherlands had *numerus fixus* – the Maastricht Executive Board decided to also start selecting from the beginning of this academic year. With an intake restriction of 400 places, the Maastricht BMS programme is still the largest in the Netherlands. Yet, only 175 people registered. How is this possible? Augustijn: "A *numerus fixus* usually has the effect that fewer students enrol or attempt to do so." Director of Education Jan Theys acknowledges this. "Students have to register by 15 January, which is very early and because future students are (still) not used to this, it may be overlooked by some. Also, students have the idea that a restriction is often a selection based on knowledge within the field, something that can scare them away." But that is not the case here, he said.

In addition, BMS is often used as a 'temporary study programme' for students who have not been picked for medicine. Last year, the faculty council of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences

(FHML) was afraid that a restriction at BMS would cause an overspill to Health Sciences (HS). But if you look at the temporary figures, you will see that there is no gigantic increase at HS. It is likely that students have eventually chosen a different programme or another university.

By the way, Mirjam Oude Egbrink, scientific director of the Education Institute at FHML, also informed the faculty council last year that – should the expected influx fail to occur – the measure could always be abolished again.

More and more Germans, Belgians or students from other European and non-European countries are finding their way to Maastricht: of all first-year students, 64 per cent does not have Dutch nationality. According to Augustijn, the increase (60 per cent last year) "is relatively large because the decreasing number of registrations at BMS is largely due to the lack of Dutch students, who may have embarked on the programme while they were waiting on their preferred programme to become available."

Wendy Degens



More activities than fingers

“

It's Tuesday afternoon and I am running late to my 4 pm class. Just moments ago I was deep into a lecture on Film Narratology, and now I have to shift gears to American Foreign Policy. As I am sprinting down the hallway my phone starts buzzing. My calendar reminds me that there is a Film club meeting at 6:30 pm that I could go to, a column that was due yesterday, and a message from my friend asking me if I am still up for going to a panel discussion on global security tonight. So many choices, and I'm left slightly breathless, hands trembling. That must be the 'dizziness of freedom' that Kierkegaard was talking about, or just the result of five hours of sleep and four espressos?

It's the first week of the new semester, and I've already committed to more activities than I have fingers. Book club? Check! Theatre? Check! Column writing, internship, and sports? Check, check, check. That's where growing up with advice like "follow your heart" and "you can be everything you want" will get ya. In a world dominated by FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), the pressure to do it all can be overwhelming. The question of what comes after college lingers, choices seem endless and each one feels like it could be life's defining moment. Do I go into law or literature? Do I sign up for everything because I am genuinely interested or because I've given in to the idea that staying busy equals self-worth?

After class, I go over to my friend's house. We cook dinner and chat about our day. I go on about a film from my media class that I really liked. "I would love to be a screenwriter." She frowns, "I thought you wanted to go into journalism". I shrug, still figuring things out. "Well, journalism is on the radar for sure. But law might be too. Honestly, I have no idea." Her face lights up, and she suggests, "You know, there's this screenwriting class coming up. We should totally sign up."

In the end, we skip the panel discussion to stay in, share ice cream, and rewatch our favorite show. Sometimes, you've got to appreciate what you've got and resist the urge to pile on more.

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Line-Marie Eichhorst is a student at the University College Maastricht



Photo: Joey Roberts

Finding peace in a green library

It will be a while yet – certainly up to the beginning of 2024 – but by then the University Library in Randwyck will have undergone a true metamorphosis; at least, that is what the designs stuck on the wall promise. We see a lot of wood, green, light colours and round shapes. Those who look through the window today, won't see much yet, apart from some bookcases covered in plastic (see photo). Students are being referred to the temporary University Library (UL) on the Endepolsdomein 150, the building formerly used by the Maastricht School of Management, which is now

owned by the university. "But the third floor of the University Library at the Universiteitssingel 50 is still open. We have 200 study spaces up there. Together with the ones on the Endepolsdomein, there are 700, just as many as before," Meike Kerkhofs, project leader of innovative learning spaces, adds.

The library renovations are part of the renovations of Universiteitssingel 50, a building that is over thirty years old. Outdated materials are being replaced and spaces are being set up differently to meet modern-day lab and other requirements.

The new library should exude "tranquility", says the architect in a brief video on the UL site. In the choices of materials, colours and shapes, they primarily had the user in mind, he explains. The users are mainly students. In various working groups, the latter, as well as the education offices and management from the various faculties, were invited to have their say in the creative process, says Kerkhofs.

To conclude, a question about all that green. In the design, entire walls have been transformed into green carpets and balustrades have been 'decorated' with ferns and hanging plants. There will most likely not be a watering system. Who is going to maintain all those plants? "That is still being investigated, but central management has a maintenance contract with an external party." And otherwise, students may pick up a watering can to help out. That can also be soothing.

Wendy Degens

new series societal impact of research

In today's world, the societal impact of research findings seems more important than getting published in an academic journal like *Nature* or *The Lancet*. What impact has research conducted at UM had in recent years? **This week: how assessing the cross-border effects of new legislation became standard procedure thanks to UM research.**

Assessing the impact of new legislation on border regions



Martin Unfried and Pim Mertens Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it became abundantly clear that a ban on consumer use of fireworks results in fewer injuries, fewer patients, and lower demand for health-care services. This prompted two members of parliament to propose a nationwide fireworks ban. The bill is now ready to be discussed in the House of Representatives. However, the question remains whether such a ban can be enforced effectively. And also: how would it affect border regions? "Just look at what happened in the Dutch village of Baarle-Nassau last year", says Pim Mertens, scientific coordinator at the Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross-border cooperation and Mobility

(ITEM), which is affiliated with UM. "Massive traffic jams were caused by Dutch people flocking to Baarle-Hertog, just across the border in Belgium, to buy fireworks. The situation was so bad that streets had to be closed, and portable toilets were set up along the roads to deter public urination. It created a lot of tension in the region."

Research by ITEM shows that a nationwide fireworks ban would be almost impossible to

enforce in the Dutch border regions. "This is because regulations differ between countries. In Belgium, you can buy fireworks year round; in the Netherlands, you can't. Countries also have different regulations about what types of fireworks are permitted. That's why Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg should make joint agreements. I'd say it's good timing that the Netherlands is chairing the Benelux Union this year."

"Members of the Senate suggested that assessing cross-border impact should be standard procedure for introducing new legislation"

Motion

ITEM has been studying the effects of national policy and legislation on border regions since 2015, often commissioned by provinces or municipalities. Examples include flexible working legislation (which has long been an issue for UM employees living in Belgium or Germany), cannabis policy, and VAT increases. "In 2019, we examined the impact of the Act on the Standardisation of the Legal Status of Civil Servants (WNRA), which meant that university employees were no longer civil servants as of January 2020. We found that it had significant implications for cross-border workers, particularly when it came to health and retirement plans." That's what got the ball rolling, says Martin Unfried, a German researcher who is one of ITEM's twelve employees. "Members of the Senate suggested that assessing cross-border impact should be standard procedure for introducing new legislation or policy. Shortly after that, the House of Representatives adopted a motion to give greater weight to cross-border effects in policymaking. The Ministry of the Interior then asked us to devise a method to assess cross-border impact."

Bureaucratic monster

ITEM developed a tool and, since 2021, ministries have been required to assess the cross-border impact of planned legislation. The Netherlands is the first EU country to impose this kind of assessment on itself. Mertens: "The tool consists of a short list of questions. Policymakers can use it to quickly determine whether planned legislation would affect border regions and therefore require further consideration. We were careful not to create a bureaucratic monster." How seriously are policymakers taking the tool? Mertens: "Last summer, we organised a workshop for various ministries." This was quite necessary, as evaluation has shown that policymakers rarely think the cross-border impact of planned legislation necessitates further consideration. "They almost invariably conclude that further consideration is not required. They either don't see the problem or think it's too much work. We're looking into it."

Cannabis tourism

ITEM doesn't just work for the Dutch government, but also for the European Commission and currently for the German government. Unfried: "Germany plans to legalise cannabis. This will undoubtedly affect the Netherlands and Belgium, but we don't yet know how exactly. It's safe to assume that fewer Germans will come to the Netherlands to buy weed." Mertens: "The same may go for Belgians. They may start going to Germany instead of the Netherlands. We'll study the plan from various perspectives. Will Germany attempt to avoid becoming a popular destination for cannabis tourism?"

Country-wide reactions to the proposed internationalisation legislation



Letschert:
“I hope that
this does
not lead to
polarisation
within UM”

More than 200 reactions are received to a draft bill intended to better manage the intake of students from abroad. Some organisations and individuals are enthusiastic, but higher education institutions are against it. There are also worries and questions at Maastricht University.

The first version of the ‘Internationalising in Balans’ bill was available online for a process called internet consultation. Outgoing minister Robbert Dijkgraaf of Education was allowing everybody to give their opinion. In a nutshell, it boils down to the following: universities are receiving more opportunities to manage the intake of international students, but the government also wants to

re-evaluate the working language in Bachelor’s programmes. Moreover, international students are required to gain some knowledge of the Dutch language.

Shortage of teachers

Universities have a number of issues with the current version of the proposal, according

to the reaction of the umbrella association Universities of the Netherlands (UNL). They think that the plan isn’t feasible. Where, for example, are they going to find the teachers who will provide Dutch language tuition to international students? After all, there is already a shortage of teachers. The government should not be interfering with study programme curricula in the first place. And that includes language teaching.

Furthermore, some study programmes cannot continue without the international intake. “The continued existence of a number of unique small study programmes is under threat if there is an obligation for them to be taught in Dutch,” warn the universities. Leave language policy to us, they advise.

Hoops

Maastricht University is also sending its own message out into the world. It does so “because of UM’s unique position as the most international university of the Netherlands”, its statement on the website says. It is not an unfamiliar story, because President Rianne Letschert has been hammering on about ‘having its own profile’ for months: an institute in a border region and a region with a shrinking population, which benefits tremendously from attracting international talent. In other words, if the bill is passed (which is by no means certain), UM with all its bachelor’s programmes in English will be facing an enormous problem.

This was also clear last week during a University Council committee meeting in which the proposed bill was discussed. If two thirds of the bachelor’s programme is in Dutch, the programme will be classified as ‘Dutch’, Daphne van Dongen, policy advisor at UM, explains. Is it less than two thirds, it will be classified as ‘in other language’ and the institute will have to submit an application to the minister and “jump through all kinds of hoops”.

Does this only apply to new study programmes, a student council member wants to know. No, Letschert emphasises, this applies to *all* UM bachelor’s programmes. An exception is made for the master’s programmes. Teun Dekker, University Council chairman, wonders what they mean by ‘Dutch’: is it the language used in lectures, the literature, or the talks in the tutorial group? That is still not clear, was the answer.

Dutch language lessons

International bachelor’s and master’s students will have to learn Dutch (5 credits in the bachelor’s, so 140 hours, and 2 credits in the master’s). “Can the Dutch language lessons be taken *after* graduation, before one enters the labour market?”, was asked during the committee meeting. No, the Dutch language lessons must be incorporated into the curriculum.

Letschert emphasises the complexity of the ‘internationalisation dossier’, certainly now that we’re about to have new elections. The fourteen universities in the Netherlands are trying to come up with a solution together, she said (sending a single joint proposal to The Hague is easier than fourteen different ideas), but there has to be more or less a consensus and we are not there yet.

Letschert: “Let me be clear: I am not against study programmes being in Dutch, absolutely not. Sometimes, it is very evident that they are in Dutch, think of Dutch Law or Dutch Language, Dutch Culture. But if you are asking me whether *all* universities should be offering these, I would say: ‘I don’t think so.’”

Polarisation

Letschert has noticed that opinions are divided within UM: “I hope that this does not lead to polarisation. Our foreign employees feel stigmatised and unwelcome because of this discussion in the Netherlands. Also, Dutch employees are frustrated because they can no longer teach in their own language.”

Brain drain

International talent is highly desirable in Maastricht and the region, says Letschert. But that course of action is also “selfish”. It causes a brain drain. “We have a responsibility to all those countries, Bulgaria, Spain, Croatia, you name it. How do you go about that in the right way? Let us think about that.”

Wendy Degens/ HOP

Individual reactions

Quite a few reactions can also be read online. “This is a great load off my mind,” writes one of them. “I think it’s very important for my children to pursue the studies of their choice in Dutch. This is necessary to bring their language skills – in a broad sense – to the right level.”

One international student reacts indignantly, however, to the proposed legislation. “Discontinuing small programmes that cannot function without internationals and teaching Dutch to students who will, by and large, not have anything to do with the language, will be an even greater burden on the system.” The student prefers to pay higher tuition fees to enable greater investments in education and housing.

The proposal offers “no solution whatsoever”, writes one anonymous Dutch graduate. “I have myself completed a primarily English-language Bachelor’s programme. The language allowed for the creation of an international learning environment in which both the course material and the diversity of students and lecturers gave me fresh insights that a predominantly Dutch-language study programme could not have offered.”

Lotte Jensen, a professor of Dutch Cultural and Literary History in Nijmegen and an outspoken critic of anglicisation, calls it a balanced proposal that provides an answer to a “broadly shared desire”. In her view, it is definitely practicable. “Certainly when you consider the pace at which study programmes have transferred to English. A change in the other direction is just as conceivable and practicable.”

HOP

The new plagiarism checker recognises Ghost writing and ChatGPT

The new plagiarism checker recognises Ghost writing and ChatGPT

Bad news for students who have put their bets on ChatGPT. From September onwards, UM will be using a new plagiarism detector, which can also detect AI. But how great are the chances of being caught?

Text: Maurice Timmermans

Illustration: Bas van der Schot

Since 2020, UM has worked with the plagiarism checker Ouriginal, but many lecturers and Examination Committees complained about it. It was never proven beyond doubt, but it was suspected that Ouriginal did not meet requirements, says Charles Bollen, co-ordinator of UM's digital learning environment. "This plagiarism checker missed a couple of cases of plagiarism, because it did not have access to the journals from which the texts were copied."

Another disadvantage of Ouriginal is its lack of user-friendliness. "Checking a paper required a lot of clicking," says Maarten van Wesel, plagiarism expert at the university library. "That takes a gigantic amount of time when you have hundreds of papers to check."

With the UM's new plagiarism checker, Turnitin Originality, Van Wesel believes that things will be a lot faster. "This software is from the American company of the same name that is dominating the market at the moment. After a tender procedure, UM signed an agreement with this company. From September onwards, Turnitin Originality will be used to check all papers and theses for plagiarism."

Trade secrets

Plagiarism is defined as copying one's own or someone else's ideas or words without any reference, so without mentioning the source. Using ChatGPT or other forms of artificial intelligence, it is strictly speaking not a case of plagiarism, because an original text is being generated. But this is also impermissible because it was not written by the student.

Turnitin Originality is capable of detecting texts from ChatGPT and other AI. "According to the company, the software is very good at doing so," says Van Wesel, "but this should become apparent when we use it in actual practice. Chances of it succeeding, are at any rate greater the more AI has been incorporated in the text."

How the detector goes about detecting AI, is a trade secret, says Bollen. "The producer is not revealing much." It is known, at any rate, that an analysis of the sentence structure plays a role.

The question is, however, how important is the detection of AI, if the majority of lecturers do not want to prohibit chatbots, but rather integrate them into the curriculum. "That is correct," says Bollen. "As far as I know, there is not a single UM faculty that wants to ban AI. If you use ChatGPT as an aid and write your own story afterwards, you can learn from



If you use ChatGPT as an aid and write your own story afterwards, you can learn from it. Although AI texts are not always correct



it. Although AI texts are not always correct.”

Self-plagiarism

Students will also no longer get away with ghost writing, which is handing in a paper that was made by someone else. Or from a so-called paper mill, where you can order and pay for a paper or thesis.

A former student of Arts and Social Sciences used different alphabets in her thesis. She used Cyrillic letters such as the P and the R, which are also in the western alphabet. Ten years ago, you could fob off the plagiarism software by doing this, but that is also a thing of the past. Turnitin Originality can detect this. Researchers have their own plagiarism checker, called iThenticate, also from the Turnitin company, which allows them to check their articles (and theses) themselves before they submit them to journals. Students are not permitted to do this. Why not?

Bollen: “They would then be able to check beforehand whether they are going to get caught. If it doesn’t detect anything, they can safely plagiarise.”

Van Wesel: “The check is more understandable for researchers. They often work in teams with colleagues living abroad, whom

they don’t know very well. By checking, you can prevent problems caused by someone else’s mistake. Researchers who write a lot, can check whether they are not guilty of self-plagiarism. That can easily happen when you continually publish about the same subjects.”

Literature references

There are also disadvantages to Turnitin Originality. This detector is twice as expensive as Ouriginal, and much more expensive than SafeAssign, which UM used for a long time in the past. SafeAssign was free of charge, because it was part of Blackboard, but had another huge advantage. If the plagiarism score was 10 per cent, this meant that chances of plagiarism in this paper was 10 percent. Anyone who had to check four hundred papers, could accept this paper with an easy mind. Turnitin Originality (and Ouriginal) works differently. If it shows 10 per cent, this means that 10 per cent of the text is plagiarised. Van Wesel: “You cannot just leave such a paper unchecked, because maybe the entire conclusion has been copied literally.”

Bollen: “During the negotiations for tender, we had additional discussions with Turnitin about this. We wanted to know if the

percentages could be presented in the style of SafeAssign, but that wasn’t possible.”

Guilty

Are the chances of being caught higher with Turnitin Originality? “I could not say,” they both say in chorus. Van Wesel does think that “it does have a greater deterrent effect”. “Compare it to traffic lights. When there is a police camera close by, you will think twice about crossing the line.”

Researchers have to swear an oath, in which they publicly promise to abide by the rules of academic integrity at all times, before they embark on a PhD, says Bollen. “Maybe we should ask the same of students. It already happens at some universities.”

Van Wesel: “But the question is whether it will help. There are two kinds of plagiarising students. Those who have no moral problem with committing fraud. This group won’t pay much heed to an oath. And there are students who cross the line due to lack of time or stress. The latter group has other problems and will probably feel extremely guilty.”



news

Higher tax on tobacco; smoking gets more expensive again “We get our cigarettes from Luxembourg”

It was the day of the King's speech Tuesday. The day on which King Willem-Alexander presents the governments annual draft budget. It contains all kinds of plans and choices made by the government for the coming year. One of the plans is raising the excise duty on tobacco. Will smokers quit smoking from now on? *Observant* asked students outside the University Library in the city centre.

A packet of twenty cigarettes is going to cost more than €10 next year. Despite the strict smoke-free policy in and around university buildings, students manage to find their way to just outside the grounds to meet their nicotine needs. One of them is Martino Oliveri from Italy. He rolls his own cigarettes from loose tobacco, because it is cheaper. When he hears about the excise duties being raised, he grins. “Again? Well, I will have to make my packet last longer.”

“Only when the excise duties are raised drastically, will people notice it,” reckons Italian fellow student, Emma Villa. She uses an IQOS device, which heats tobacco sticks. “People say it is healthier, because it doesn't burn the tobacco, just heats it. It is very popular in Italy.” The price increase, however, will not make the two Italians quit smoking. For Villa, the price increase is a reason to smoke less. “My parents support me financially, but they don't know that I smoke. The budget is therefore purely based on the cost of living.”

Two German International Business students (who do not want to have their names in the paper) think that the measure will have no effect at all. “People will buy cigarettes anyway, and if it becomes more expensive, they will get them across the border.” Which is exactly one of the problems of the measures: border effects. Because of the



Photo: *Observant*

international location, Maastricht students can easily get their cigarettes on the other side of the border. “Friends from Luxembourg bring cigarettes when they come. By buying in bulk, you only pay €5 per packet.” They also feel that the government decision is taking away a piece of autonomy. “Ultimately, I want to be the one who decides what I do with my own body. Not

everything should be decided by the government.”

“People with a little less money may quit,” says Kevin van Wesel, student of Economics and Business Economics, but he also mentions the point of a ‘border region’. For people from Limburg and Brabant, the increase of excise duty won't have much effect. They will just get their

cigarettes from Belgium,” he says. Van Wesel himself, who is an occasional smoker, won't reduce the number of cigarettes he smokes. “My mother already buys her tobacco in Belgium. Next time, I will ask her to bring some back for me too.”

Lotte van de Loo, Simon Wirtz

Agenda academic ceremonies Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6

21-9, 10.00 h Samantha-Lisa Crans	26-9, 13.00 h Samuel Yaw Lissah
21-9, 13.00 h Floris Kees Hendriks	27-9, 16.00 h Johanna Schmitz-Peiffer
21-9, 16.00 h Clara Ducimetière	28-9, 10.00 h Johan Martijn Nobel
22-9, 10.00 h Eveline Johanna Maria Vandewal	28-9, 13.00 h Marieke van der Gaag
22-9, 13.00 h Lidewij M.F.H. Neeter	28-9, 16.00 h Cintia Denise Granja, Double
22-9, 16.30 h Dr. Pieter Jelle Visser, Inauguratie	Doctoral Degree University of
25-9, 13.00 h Casty Njoroge	Campinas and Maastricht Uni-
26-9, 10.00 h Anika Schumacher	versity
27-9, 13.00 h Yam Fung Hilaire Cheung,	29-9, 10.00 h Maite Machteld Schroor
Double Doctoral Degree	29-9, 13.00 h Babette J.A. Verkouteren
University of Birmingham and	29-9, 16.30 h Mr. drs. Joost Sillen, Inauguratie
Maastricht University	

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