

Course Societal Relevance of your PhD Research

Date:	30 October 2017
Time:	10:00 – 15.00 h.
Location:	TU Delft
Course leaders:	Prof. Bert van Wee and Dr. Jan Anne Annema
Guest lecturer:	Emiel Reiding (Min. I&M)
Days:	0.5
ECTS:	0.25 (attendance) - 1 (assignment)
Course fee:	Free for TRAIL/Beta/OML members, others please contact the TRAIL office
Registration:	www.rstrail.nl

Objectives

General: help PhD students to understand and describe the social (including policy) relevance of the results of their PhD thesis.

Specific:

- To gain insights into the (policy and wider societal relevant) impacts of the transport system;
- To gain insights into the determinants for the impacts of the transport system;
- To gain insights into the relevance of the PhD Students' own research for society and policy.

Purpose and homework per item in the program *(see next page)*

- Introduction. **Purpose** to get to know each other a little bit. Name, thesis subject, your favorite book and why this book is your favorite. **Homework:** none
- Debate about an example. **Purpose:** by starting with a discussion we want to direct the course atmosphere to a 'self' and an 'each other' learning course. We have some knowledge but we are sure that the PhD students have superior knowledge themselves which is worth sharing. **Homework:** read the document 'Meta-analysis and Price Elasticity' beforehand. Think about the answers to the questions posed on top of page 1 of the document beforehand also.
- Policy relevance of research: an overview. **Purpose:** giving PhD student some theoretical background. **Homework:** read 'traffic and transport system' beforehand. Read 'policy relevance transport' beforehand'.
- Tips and tricks. Purpose: giving some tips and tricks which can be used in the exercise. **Homework:** none
- Exercise. **Purpose:** practicing with 'policy relevance'. We have chosen to let you make a press release because this forces you to explain the main results to a non- specialized audience. In our view relevance has to do with contents but also with language and communication. **Homework:** none. Each student will have half an hour to write a press release (conclusion do not have to be true per se in case you just started your research. Just suppose some likely conclusions in that case. This exercise is not about truth but about relevance). A colleague PhD student will review your press release (10 minutes). Finally, we will discuss the results plenary.

Program		
10:00 – 10:30	Introduction, topics of theses of participants	Bert / All participants
10:30 – 11:00	Discussion: does every thesis have to be relevant for society and policy? What is societal and policy relevance? What do you like about the policy related texts?; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you dislike?; - How could the conclusion section be improved to make this section more policy relevant? 	All participants, discussion
11:00 – 12:00	Societal and policy relevance: the perspective of a policy maker	Emiel Reiding (Min. I&M)
12:00 – 12:30	A conceptual model for the impact of the transport system on society. Relationship with research of PhD students	Bert / All participants
12:30 – 13:00	Lunch	
13:00 – 13:15	Policy relevance of research: an overview Discuss paper Ben-Akiva and Bonsall related to your theses	Jan Anne
13:15 – 13:45	Tips and tricks , inspiration to make your thesis policy relevant	Bert and Jan Anne / Interactive
13:45 – 14:00	Break	
14:00 – 14:45	Exercise: summary of PhD thesis	Bert / Interactive
14:45 – 15:00	Assignment, questions and discussion	Bert and Jan Anne / Interactive

Assignment

PhD students write a section for their PhD thesis about policy relevance of their research, or even societal relevance. If the section is at the level of what is needed for their thesis they will get the diploma. Read the sections of some other theses for inspiration (positive or 'negative').

Course material

Distributed one week before the start of the course.

Prerequisite

No specific requirements. PhD students in their final year might benefit most from the course because they probably need to report on the societal relevance of their work in their thesis. But all PhDs are welcome. The course can even provide inspiration to recently started PhD students who write their research proposal.