

CRITICAL REFLECTION

ON GHENT UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATION POLICY



GHENT
UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2022

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List of Abbreviations¹

AAP	Assistant Academic Staff (in Dutch: Assisterend Academisch Personeel)
ACTIVO	Action Plan for Active Education (in Dutch: Actieplan voor Activerend Onderwijs)
ATP	Administrative and Technical Staff (in Dutch: Administratief en Technisch Personeel)
Ba	Bachelor
BoG	Board of Governors (in Dutch: Raad van Bestuur – RvB)
CKO	Faculty Quality Assurance Committee (in Dutch: Commissie Kwaliteitszorg Onderwijs)
COP	Institutional Programmes Committee (in Dutch: Commissie Programma's)
CSL	Community Service Learning
DLR	Domain-specific learning outcomes (in Dutch: domeinspecifieke leerresultaten)
DORA	San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment
DOWA	Education Department (in Dutch: Directie Onderwijsaangelegenheden)
EB	Executive Board (in Dutch: Bestuurscollege - BC)
EC	Education Council
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ERGO	Quality Conduct 1.0 (in Dutch: Eigen Regie in Gents Onderwijsbeleid en –kwaliteitszorg)
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
EQB	Education Quality Board
EUA	European University Association
FCI	Faculty Committee for Internationalization
FDO	Faculty Education Support Services (in Dutch: Facultaire Dienst Onderwijsondersteuning)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
Ghent Uni	Ghent University
GSR	Ghent University's Student Union (in Dutch: Gentse Studentenraad)
GUGC-K	Ghent University Global Campus - Korea
HR policy	Human Resources policy
HRM system	Human Resources Management system
ICP	International Course Programme
IPPI	Integrated Policy Plan for Internationalization
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
Ma	Master
MCU	Magna Charta Universitatum
ManaMa	Advanced Master's Programme (in Dutch: Master-na-Master)
NVAO	Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders
OAP	Other Academic Staff (in Dutch: Overig Academisch Personeel)
OASIS	Education Administration and Student Information System (in Dutch: OnderwijsAdministratie en StudentenInformatie Systeem)

¹ Please note that these abbreviations/acronyms mostly refer to Dutch designations or titles. Dutch equivalents are given between () where relevant. Higher education institutions may also refrain from adopting an English name equivalent. These have been left untranslated. Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) is a case in point.

OER	Education and Examination Code (in Dutch: Onderwijs- en Examenreglement)
OLR	Programme-specific Learning Outcomes (in Dutch: opleidingsspecifieke leerresultaten)
PC	Programme Committee
PDCA-cycle	Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle
SID-ins	Study Information Days
SIMON	Study Skills and Study Interests MONitor
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering en Mathematics
UGI	Ghent University's Integrated Business Intelligence System
UNU-CRIS	United Nations University – Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
UPC	University-wide Policy Choices (in Dutch: Universiteitsbrede beleidskeuzes - UBK)
UTOP	Ghent University's Training Platform (in Dutch: UGent Training- en OntwikkelingsPlatform)
UZ Gent	Ghent University Hospital (in Dutch: Universitair Ziekenhuis Gent)
VLIR	Flemish Interuniversity Council (in Dutch: Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad)
VLUHR	Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (in Dutch: Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad)
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
VVS	Flemish Students' Union (in Dutch: Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten)
WP	Research Staff (in Dutch: Wetenschappelijk Personeel)
ZAP	Professorial Staff (in Dutch: Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel)

Faculties

LW Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
RE Faculty of Law and Criminology
WE Faculty of Sciences
GE Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
EA Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
EB Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
DI Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
PP Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
BW Faculty of Bioscience Engineering
FW Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences
PS Faculty of Political and Social Sciences

Interesting websites

[Ghent University Homepage](#)
[Ghent University Education](#)
[Ghent University's Education Policy and Quality Assurance](#)
[Education Tips for Lecturers and Study Programmes](#)
[Ghent University's Business Intelligence System](#)
[Faculties' and Study Programmes' Education Monitors](#)
[The Institutional Education Monitor](#)
[Vade-mecum for Study Programme](#)

INTRODUCTION

We are submitting this Critical Reflection to the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) in the context of the upcoming Institutional Review at Ghent University in the autumn of 2022.

With it, we aim to give insight into Ghent University's vision on education, our education policy, and our organization structure. We explain how in the current social context with its concomitant challenges, we implement, review, and adjust our education policy in order to keep realizing our objectives. In addition, we outline the Quality Conduct (in Dutch: Eigen Regie) we have developed to guarantee the quality of our study programmes. This includes the participation of internal and external stakeholders, peers, and experts, as well as the "publicly available information" on (the quality of) our study programmes. Finally, we use this Critical Reflection to prove that a quality culture is present at all policy levels of our university.

This Critical Reflection consists of three chapters and an illustration. The **first chapter** contextualizes Ghent University's position in the Flemish and international (education) landscape, with reference to our social embedding and ensuing challenges, and the strong interdependence of research, education, and internationalization. This chapter also outlines the structures and processes of our education policy (implementation) alongside three important preconditions, each of which has a strong impact on our (education) policy context, i.e. human resource management, the existing financing model for education funding, and Ghent University's Business Intelligence System. The **second chapter** sketches our education vision, education policy (implementation), the translation of our strategic objectives into operational ones, as well as our review and improvement processes. We use the PDCA methodology as our guiding principle in these matters. The **third chapter** discusses Ghent University's current quality assurance system (Quality Conduct 2.0), which came into being after consultation rounds with all our stakeholders, and the ensuing comprehensive systems review of our initial internal quality assurance system (Quality Conduct 1.0). The chapter also looks ahead at the future, at a system based on trust and a fully-fledged quality

culture (Quality Conduct 3.0). Each of the chapters outlined above concludes with a critical reflection of its own, pointing out marked strengths and weaknesses.

An **illustration** of how we shape and implement our education policy and quality culture follows the three chapters described above. It focuses specifically on actions our study programmes undertake to reach the operational objectives, and it reveals how we use our study programmes' self-assessments to synthesize and aggregate information on a university-wide scale. We use web links to refer the reader to underlying processes and further information.

The content of this Critical Reflection, including the strengths and weaknesses, enjoy wide support within our university. For this purpose, we called into being an ad hoc steering committee with external members as well as representatives of all the university staff sections. The Education Council and the Education Quality Board discussed successive versions of the text, as did the Directors of Studies, the Deans, the quality assurance staff at faculty level, the students and policy officers at the Education Department. In March 2022, we organized breakfast sessions to gather feedback from Programme Committee chairs, and we held a lunch session to exchange ideas with student representatives. In June 2022, we brought the Critical Reflection before the Board of Governors for ratification.

CHAPTER 1

ABOUT GHEENT UNIVERSITY

Ghent University was founded in 1817 by William I, King of the Netherlands. In the early years of our existence, we offered education at four founding faculties. From 1876 onwards, research became one of our university's core missions, together with education. Making the State University of Ghent (as we were known then) a Dutch-speaking establishment in 1930 was a significant step in the democratization of university education and further academic-scientific development. In 1991, the Flemish higher education landscape was remodelled: the State University of Ghent became known as Ghent University (in Dutch: UGent). From that moment onwards, Ghent University also received more autonomy.

Nowadays, we welcome almost 50,000 students and are home to over 15,000 staff members (including Ghent University Hospital – in Dutch: UZ Gent). [Ghent University](#) is a comprehensive university. Our [eleven faculties](#) offer more than 200 study programmes and conduct research within a wide range of academic disciplines. Our faculties have strong collaborative ties with university management, and with the nine departments that, together, constitute our [institutional administration](#). Our faculties harbour 85 departments. They are the driving force of **education**, **research** and **social services** at our university. Various Ghent University departments and research teams are renowned worldwide.

1.1 Mission Statement and Social Context

Ghent University occupies a unique position in the Flemish higher education landscape. True to our [mission statement](#), we take on the role of a **socially engaged and pluralistic university**. This pluralism reveals itself in, among other things, our ambition to be open in every respect: vis-à-vis our students and staff irrespective of their ideological, political, cultural or social backgrounds, vis-à-vis our (academic) partners, vis-à-vis society and the world at large, and vis-à-vis all research and education topics, ideas and opinions.

Grappling with such acute **challenges** as climate change, social exclusion, increasing income inequality,

authoritarianism and populism, etc., today's society expects universities **to be in the forefront in the search for solutions**. And rightly so. At the same time, however, society has ever-growing expectations vis-à-vis those very same universities: they have to contribute to economic growth and job creation, take on social responsibilities, contribute to the sustainability issue, promote diversity and inclusion, guarantee research ethics and integrity, commit to lifelong learning, etc. Conversely, though, as contemporary crises such as climate change and the corona pandemic have shown, universities in general, and academic experts in particular, are no longer seen solely as a crucial factor in solving complex social issues. Upon entering the social debate or offering potential solutions, they are treated with increasing criticism and even hostility.

However much our current times clamour for solid knowledge and unwavering certainties, universities must keep mustering the courage to point out the exact opposite: the inevitability of uncertainty and not knowing. Taking our cue from **the university credo** "[Dare to Think](#)", we at Ghent University want to encourage everyone to keep challenging what we think we know. Indeed, knowing is just as fundamentally important as the recognition of not knowing. At Ghent University, we encourage students and staff to do precisely that. "Not knowing", and admitting as much, is not a weakness. On the contrary, it is a fundamental element of research and education. The same holds true for uncertainty: by teaching our students how to deal with complex times and the complex world in which they live, we want to equip them with the tools and skills necessary to deal with, and capitalize on uncertainty. In our [vision on education](#), we have elaborated the "Dare to Think" credo into the catchphrase "**Multiperspectivism**". We want to train down-to-earth (re)searchers with an aptitude for thinking outside the box. We do so by confronting students and staff with a multitude of perspectives on their academic discipline. And we do so because each perspective, each way of knowing, is also a way of not-knowing.

The current social context furthermore calls for a harking back to the three guiding principles of what constitutes a modern university, as laid down by the [Magna Charta](#)

[Universitatum](#) (MCU): **academic freedom, institutional autonomy** and a **strong interconnection of education and research**. We continue to endorse these guiding principles, not only by simply signing the updated MCU, but by explicitly embedding them in our policy. Recent examples to that effect are, for instance, our [new career model and promotion policy for members of the professorial staff](#), comparable changes in HR policy vis-à-vis [other staff sections](#), our [vision on research assessment](#) and our signing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), our encouragement of an institutional culture based on trust in our (academic) staff, and our holding a strategic debate on Ghent University's core tasks.

This self-awareness vis-à-vis our own basic values and core tasks is our point of departure for taking on the broader, additional responsibilities and commitments, as laid down by the updated MCU. When it comes to this **deeper social embedding**, we are pioneers at Ghent University too. Witness the equal value we attribute to diverse forms of social services as part of an academic assignment, as well as various recent policy initiatives like our [human rights policy](#) and our policy on dual use research; our [academic integrity policy](#) (including research data management) and open science; our [policy on social valorization of research](#); and our [strategic policy plan on Lifelong Learning](#). Every four years we choose specific challenges to which we commit ourselves. These are the so-called [university-wide policy choices](#) (in Dutch: universiteitsbrede beleidskeuzes – UBK). The current topics are active learning, a strengthened social identity, our [sustainability policy](#), [diversity and inclusion policy](#), alumni policy, and our active support of talent and career management.

To be able to perform this important social duty to the fullest,

and at the same time realize our ambitions of international excellence in terms of education and research, Ghent University consciously opts for a **pan-institutional co-operation model**. Recent examples to this effect are the establishment of [Nova Academy](#) for Lifelong Learning together with Antwerp University and Vrije Universiteit Brussel; Ghent University's role as co-ordinator of [ENLIGHT](#), a consortium of nine universities established as part of the European Commission's European Universities Initiative; our active participation in [international organizations](#) such as [EUA](#), [EUF](#), [SGroup](#), [The Guild](#) and [CESAER](#). In addition, the further development of Ghent University [Global Campus](#) in Korea also attests to our ambition to take on a leading role in society that widely surpasses the local context.

1.2 Research, Education and Internationalization

Ghent University is a research-intensive university. We invest in fundamental, high-risk, as well as applied, and demand-driven [research](#). Over the years, we have established for ourselves an excellent academic reputation: several international [rankings](#) count Ghent University among the 'world class universities', various research disciplines at our university are internationally renowned for their expertise and excellence, and we are home to world class researchers in specific academic disciplines. In addition, we continue to broaden our horizons in terms of interdisciplinary research. In Flanders, Ghent University plays a key role in a number of strategic research centres such as [imec](#) (nanoelectronics and digital technology), [VIB](#) (biotechnology) and [Flanders Make](#) (manufacturing

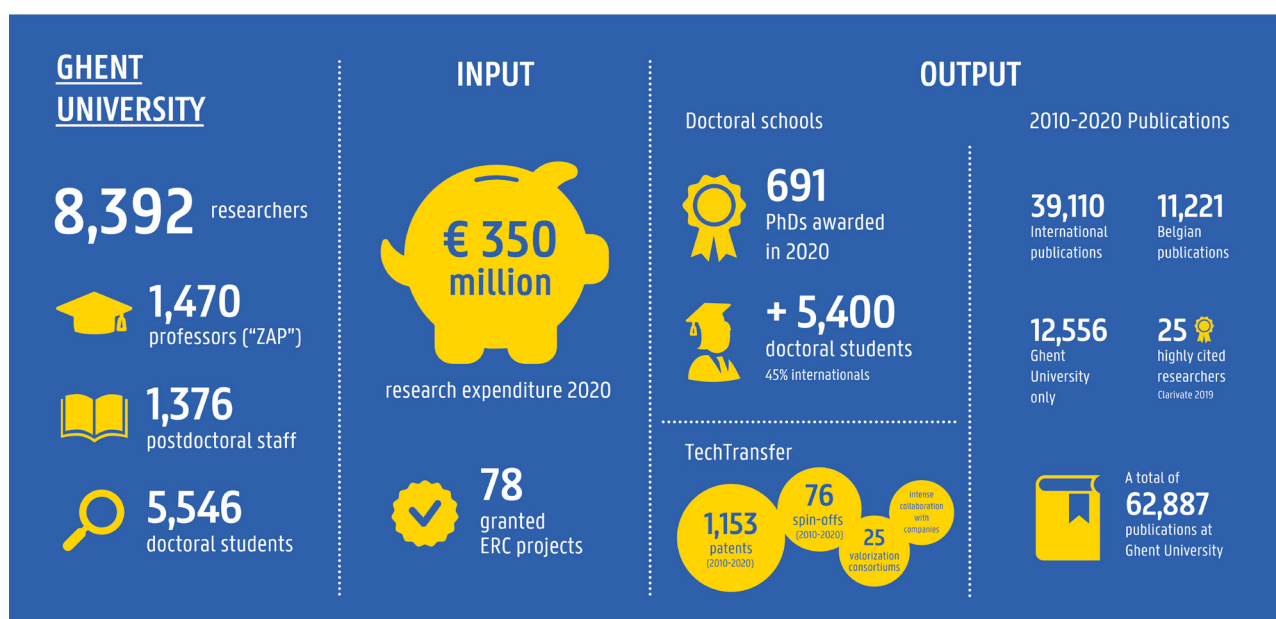


Figure 1: Ghent University Research in Figures

“ GHENT UNIVERSITY IS A SOCIALLY ENGAGED AND PLURALISTIC UNIVERSITY.
A UNIVERSITY WITH A RESOLUTE COMMITMENT TO TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY.
WE CHALLENGE AND ARE CHALLENGED.
WE ARE AN AMBITIOUS UNIVERSITY: NOT ONLY DO WE TAKE PART IN SOCIETY
BUT WE MAKE PARTS OF THAT SOCIETY. ”

- Rik Van de Walle, Vice-chancellor

industry). Our intense collaboration with Ghent University Hospital results in state-of-the-art clinical research. Together with VUB, we have a structural partnership with UNU-CRIS (United Nations University-Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies, based in Bruges). And last but not least, Tech Lane Ghent Science Park and Ostend Science Park are among Europe's leading science parks.

Ghent University is home to over 5,000 [doctoral students](#), which means, in other words, that our top-level research has a strong basis. At our university, bottom-up research policy goes hand in hand with a deep-seated quality culture, giving these young researchers every possible growth opportunity. Our Doctoral Schools have a broad training offer to support [doctoral students](#) in preparing their PhD. In turn, our doctoral students do their share in daily teaching practice by assisting in practicals, (lab) exercises, etc. Offering these complementary competencies and skills allows our doctoral students to prepare for their future career, which, for the majority of them, lies outside of academia.

It goes without saying that our comprehensive research activities are an important added value to the [education](#) we offer. Practical and demonstrations carried out at our research facilities, Master's dissertation topics derived from state-of-the-art research, and work placement opportunities

at companies, healthcare institutions, government agencies in our network are only a few examples of the continuous cross-fertilization of research and education at our university.

[Education](#) at Ghent University is highly diversified, as the [overview](#) of initial Bachelor's and Master's programmes shows (see Appendix One). Our main offer is situated at campuses in the larger Ghent area, with an additional but more limited offer at campuses in Kortrijk, Bruges, and Oudenaarde. We complement our initial Bachelor's and Master's programmes with a set of more specialized [advanced Master's programmes](#) and a broad range of [lifelong learning initiatives](#). Taken together, what we have to offer is a well-considered and complementary range of study programmes, all on the balance point of broad competency development and specialization. Our overall education offer has an **international focus**, to which our diverse range of [specific international study programmes](#) is a clear testimony. The latter exist in the context of structural partnerships and often include international partner universities (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, International Course Programmes or ICPs with their focus on topics relevant to development, programmes associated with the United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies or UNU-CRIS, etc...). Other clear proof of our international focus is the embedding of international/intercultural competencies

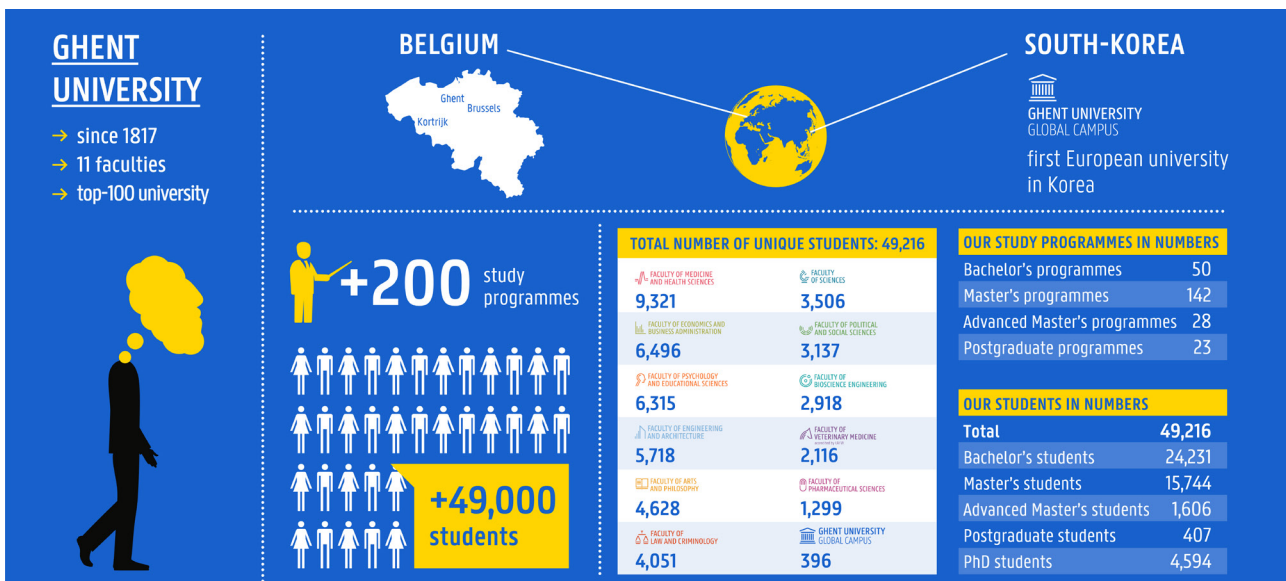


Figure 2: Ghent University Education in Figures

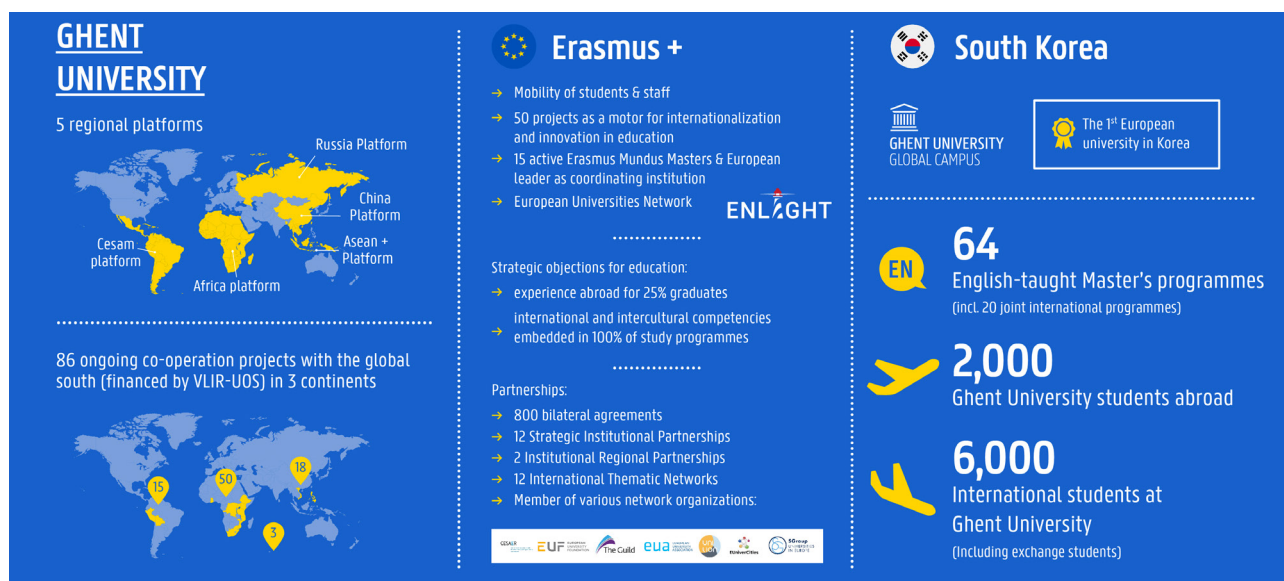


Figure 3: Internationalization at Ghent University in Figures

in *all our study programmes*. Such an international focus (partnerships included), we firmly believe, is an essential quality criterion for any academic study programme. It is also a prerequisite for topicality and for catering to a broad student group.

1.3 Education Policy: Structures and Processes

Education Policy – quality assurance included – falls under the shared competence of three distinct policy levels,

i.e. the **university**, the **faculty**, and the individual **study programme**, whereby each policy level ensures the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders. It goes without saying that a university with a diversified education offer such as ours needs clear policy frameworks and direction on the part of university management, as well as maximal support services for our faculties and study programmes. Apart from a uniform and university-wide policy-making and policy implementation, such centrally developed frameworks ensure a continuous alignment with Flemish legislation. They are also a guarantee for an institutional quality culture. This is not to say that we have no eye for specific education-related needs, social changes, innovations and special

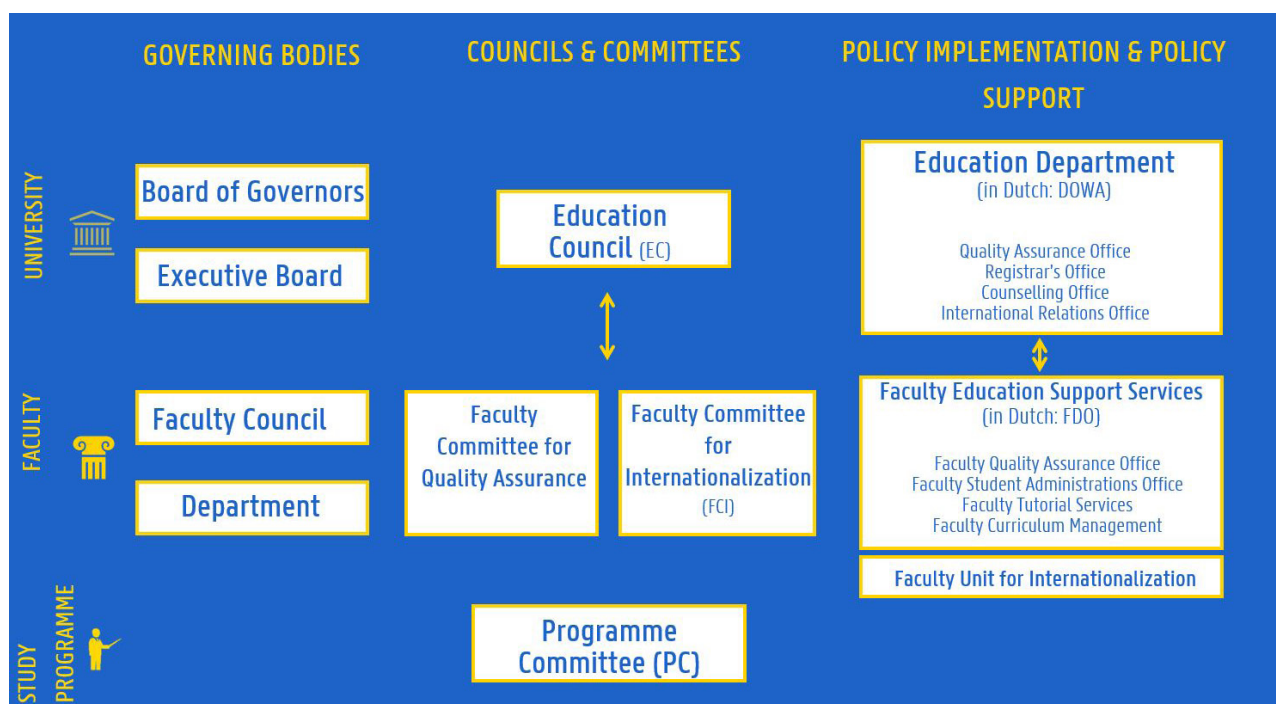


Figure 4: Ghent University Structures of Education Policy and Policy Implementation

opportunities. The closer to the actual teaching practice (i.e. education providers and education users), the better we can detect those needs. Herein, of course, lies an important role for faculties and study programmes. Education policy-making, in other words, necessarily involves a balancing act between **faculty and university competences**. A partnership built on trust between the different policy levels, however, leaves ample room for differentiation.

In what follows, we explain the internal distribution of competences among study programmes, faculties and university management, how each of these policy levels shape education policy, and how it all comes together into a coherent whole (see figure 4). For the sake of clarity and coherence, we will discuss processes of **policy-making** together with actors and processes of **policy implementation**. **Putting education policy into practice** requires the involvement of various actors at all three levels. The university and faculty levels use well-wrought consultation structures to support study programmes in pursuing and implementing education policy and quality assurance. Chapter Two focuses more on the content-related aspects of our policy-making.

1.3.1 University Level

Board of Governors and Executive Board

The [Board of Governors](#) (BoG) is Ghent University's **strategic decision-making body** with a scope of authority that includes education and internationalization. The BoG

ratifies the [Education and Examination Code](#), decides on the [education offer](#), determines [language of instruction policy](#), [education agreements](#) between Ghent University and (one or more international) partner institutions, and outlines the [internal quality assurance system](#). The Executive Board (EB) is Ghent University's **operational decision-making body** with a scope of authority that includes amending education agreements, approving university-wide electives and honours programmes, deciding on increased tuition fees, and changes to the language of instruction.

Education Council

The Education Council (EC) is Ghent University's **advisory body for education policy and quality assurance**. It is an institutional think-tank and consultation forum for all aspects related to quality of education, education practice, education innovation, education policy, and our university's education strategy. Among its members are representatives of all staff sections and of all faculties. This makes the Education Council into a forum for 360 degree assessment of all and any proposal or idea on the agenda. With their membership in the EC, the faculties' Directors of Studies and representatives from university management and administrative offices guarantee that proposals acquire sufficient endorsement before being submitted to the BoG or EB for ratification. Our students are well-represented in the Education Council as well, and come to meetings well-prepared. Their contributions are as constructive and prominent as they are crucial. Follow this [link](#) to take a look at a number of **important policy documents** that have been discussed by the Education Council in recent years.

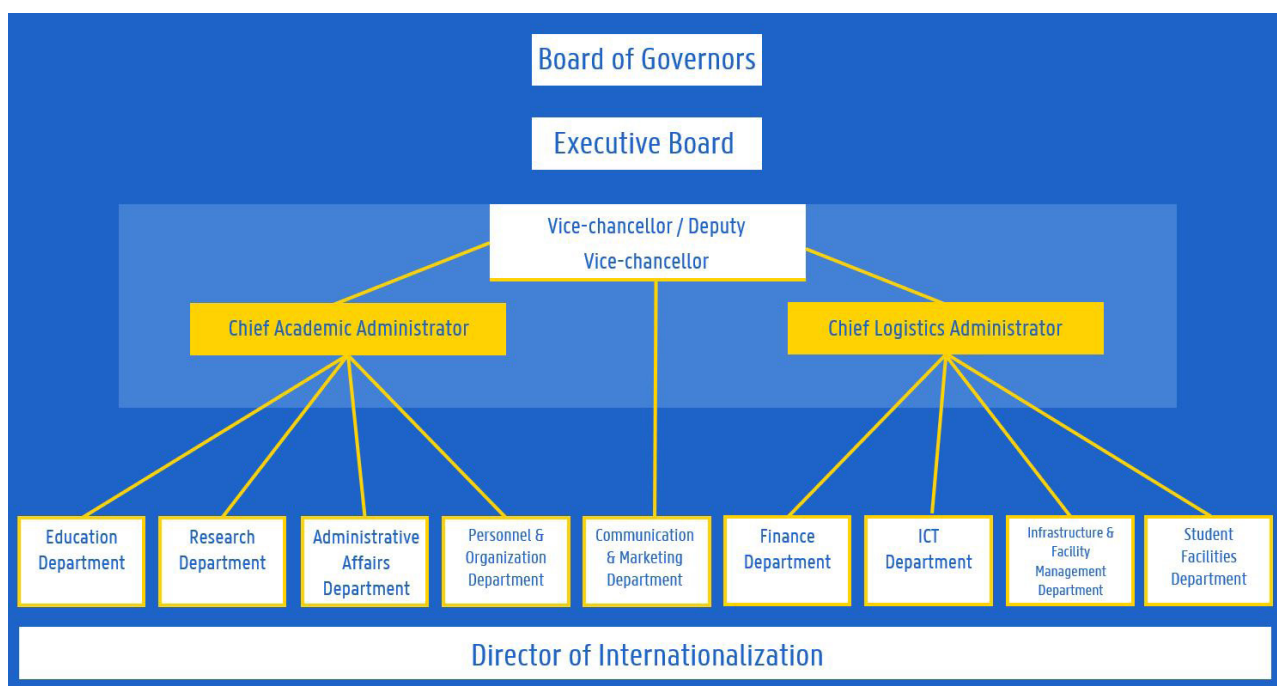


Figure 5: Ghent University Organization Chart

Education Department and Other Departments

The [Education Department](#) (in Dutch: DOWA) develops university-wide policy actions, processes, procedures, policy practice and tools. Vis-à-vis the different stakeholder groups involved in the education process, DOWA takes on a connecting, coaching and supporting role. In addition, DOWA is an important player when it comes to stimulating good practice sharing across faculty and study programme boundaries.

At the head of the Education Department is the Director of Education (a member of the professorial staff with the rank of senior full professor), who is in turn assisted by policy officers. The department is home to some 120 staff members.

DOWA consists of four offices:

- the **Quality Assurance Office** provides education-related professional development and support services, oversees and is instrumental in internal quality monitoring processes, the Quality Conduct (cf. Chapter Three), and external programme and faculty reviews;
- the **Counselling Office** is responsible for student intake, study progress and student outflow initiatives, provides study support services, and education communication. Throughout their entire study career, students can apply to the Counselling Office for information and advice, psychological assistance, as well as career counselling (albeit to a lesser extent). The Counselling Office pays due attention to diversity and inclusion, and has specific support services in place for students with a disability;
- the **Registrar's Office** is responsible for student (re)enrolment, delivering diplomas, organizing the education offer, Ghent University's digital registration system, and tuition fees;
- the **International Relations Office** provides support for international education activities for students and staff, co-ordinates, manages and puts into practice internationalization projects, and it supports internationalization using specific tools such as regional platforms (Africa, ASEAN+, China, Latin-America and Russia), participation in European networks, strategic partnerships (esp. in the context of ENLIGHT) and international alumni outreach.

In addition to the Education Department (DOWA), Ghent University has **eight other departments, and a Director of Internationalization** (see figure 5). [All of them](#) are to some extent involved in implementing our education policy, and in guaranteeing premium-quality education.

1.3.2 Faculty Level

Faculty Council

At faculty level, the Faculty Council has advisory authority (e.g., curricular revisions) or decision-making authority (e.g., the appointment of lecturers) on education-related matters. The Faculty Council is chaired by the Dean. The Faculty Quality Assurance Committee, the Faculty Committee for Internationalization, and the individual Programme Committees (ut infra) all act as advisory bodies to the Faculty Council.

The Faculty Council appoints a Director of Studies (a member of the professorial staff) to shape the faculty's education policy. As part of faculty management, the Director of Studies advises the Faculty Council on education-related matters. S/he is responsible for study programmes' form and contents, their coherence and their realization. The Director of Studies also sets new education initiatives. In addition, s/he takes active part in education-related (staff) evaluations, monitors the results, and takes remedial action if necessary. The Director of Studies sits on various faculty committees in which education-related expertise is required. S/he is also member of the Education Council, and as such, is an important liaison between education policy at faculty level and at university level.

Department

All members of staff involved in education, research or academic service are affiliated with a specific department, of which each faculty has several, and of which Ghent University houses 85 in total. They are the smallest administrative unit responsible for organizing academic education in (a coherent whole of) specific disciplines. In addition, departments play a co-ordinating role in research matters and academic service.

Departments are responsible for the annual appointment of candidate lectures on the recommendation of one or more Programme Committees, and for the investment in/recruitment of new lecturers in disciplines relevant to education/the programme. This, of course, calls for close consultation between department and faculty management.

Faculty Quality Assurance Committee and Faculty Committee for Internationalization

The Faculty **Quality Assurance Committee** (in Dutch: CKO) has a dual responsibility: it monitors education quality, and it develops and implements education policy at faculty level. The Quality Assurance Committee is chaired by the Director of Studies. Each faculty employs one or more policy officers to support the Quality Assurance Committee in its day-to-day business of developing, monitoring, supporting and guiding quality assurance processes at faculty and study programme level. The Quality Assurance Committee usually consists of Programme Committee chairs, delegations of other staff sections and students, which makes it the perfect faculty body to bring education providers and education users together. It is within the faculty Quality Assurance Committee that cross-programme education-related matters and quality assurance processes are discussed.

The **Faculty Committee for Internationalization** (FCI) is responsible for internationalization of education. It supports the development of sustainable international education partnerships, (incoming and outgoing, student and staff, credit and degree, short- and long-term) international mobility and internationalization@home initiatives. It also supports information flows on education projects (esp. Erasmus+) and calls, and functions as a liaison between study programmes and the International Relations Office (part of DOWA, ut supra).

Faculty Education Support Services

Each of our faculties has **Education Support Services**, in charge of education policy implementation. Headed by the Director of Studies, the Education Support Services are home to all education-related offices. Structured in such a way as to facilitate optimal alignment and communication between the different offices, the Education Support Services are the faculty's single point of contact for students and lecturers on all education-related questions.

The **Faculty Education Support Services** consist of four clusters, that correspond to the four DOWA offices (at university level):

- the responsibilities of the **Quality Assurance cluster** include education (innovation) and quality assurance policy, with an advisory and supporting role vis-à-vis lecturers and study programmes;
- the responsibilities of the **Tutorial Services cluster** include study track counselling, tutorial services, study choice, exemptions, diversity projects, etc.;
- the responsibilities of the **Curriculum Management**

cluster include planning, organizing and co-ordinating lectures and exams, curricular revisions, course sheets, appointment of lecturers, etc.;

- the responsibilities of the **Student Administration cluster** include following up administrative processes related to students' individual curricula, diplomas, deliberations, certificates, etc.

In some faculties the support staff involved in internationalization are part of the Faculty Education Support Services; in other faculties they are an autonomous unit, i.e. the Faculty Internationalization Unit.

1.3.3 Study Programme Level

Programme Committee (PC)

Every study programme or group of related study programmes has a Programme Committee (PC), and almost every faculty has several Programme Committees. The PC is the most fundamental body in our university's education system. Headed by a member of the professorial staff (in Dutch: ZAP) with a special affinity for education, the PC consists of a delegation of professorial staff involved in education (accounting for at least half of the members), a student delegation (accounting for at least one-third of the members), and members of the Other Academic Staff section.

The Programme Committee is the venue where primary education providers and education users meet. Its **role in education policy and quality assurance can therefore hardly be overestimated**. At Ghent University, the competences of the Programme Committee are laid down in the [Education and Examination Code](#). Programme Committees advise the Faculty Council on, among other things, the range of study programmes on offer and the appointment of lecturers as proposed by the departments.

Programme Committees fulfil a guiding role in quality assurance: they take on **policy-making and policy implementation duties, as well as a supporting role vis-à-vis lecturers**. As such, the PC's responsibilities largely determine the quality of education at study programme level, and thus at faculty and university level.

A key role to play in study programme quality assurance is that of Programme Committee chair. At the request of our faculties and study programmes, we installed [learning networks for Programme Committee chairs](#) a few years ago. In these learning networks, external consultants guide

and bring together newly appointed and more experienced PC chairs and allow them to exchange experiences, mutual advice and new ideas, look for solutions together, and to reflect on their own performance as chair.

1.4 Human Resource Management, Human Resource Policy and Education

At Ghent University, shaping education is a common project that transcends staff section boundaries. Our education thrives on the involvement of members of the professorial staff, academic assistant staff (academic assistants, doctoral assistants and teaching assistants), as well as of members of the administrative and technical staff, educationalists, tutors, research staff and doctoral students. For each of these staff sections our university in recent years has invested in [better career plans and/or career modalities](#). Our starting point in this has always been creating and/or strengthening a climate of trust, in which everyone at Ghent University feels appreciated. An important additional motive has also been a reduction of the administrative burden. This HR policy, including a wide range of [professional development opportunities](#), contributes to a specialized and motivated workforce.

By far the most prominent of HR-related changes is our [new and innovative career and promotion plan for members of the professorial staff](#), which has been in place since late 2018. This new career plan contains the following key elements:

- **collaboration, collegiality and teamwork** lie at the basis of the new evaluation plan: members of the professorial staff commit to integration into, and contribution to the objectives of, a larger entity, i.e. the department/research group/study programme/faculty/university. (This is evaluated by means of a concise integration document at the start of each evaluation cycle);
- abandoning the old evaluation plan equals abolishing the personalized objectives with their focus on quantitative indicators, annual task descriptions, multiple activity reports, evaluation files, and faculty evaluation committees for full professors. This goes to show that HR-related interventions can also tie in perfectly with the objectives of the '[Enlightened University](#)' project for **reducing the administrative burden**;
- embedding these principles into a larger whole goes hand in hand with **a differentiated approach**

tailored to individual talents. Our plan is **not a competitive one**. Rather, it is based on exploiting our professorial staff's complementary strengths and qualities when it comes to research, education, and other institutional or social engagements. Acknowledging these differentiated professorial profiles leads to a higher-quality and more efficient implementation of our core responsibilities, not only by individual staff members but by the university as a whole;

- evaluation now takes place in **five-year cycles** (which is the minimum term laid down by decree) instead of two-year or four-year cycles;
- the **evaluation cycle has been simplified**. It now consists of (1) a staff integration session (at the start of each cycle – see the bullet on 'integration' above); (2) an interim feedback session (at least one mandatory feedback session after the first two years; holding more sessions is optional), and (3) a performance interview (at the end of the five-year cycle). By way of introduction to the performance interview, the member of the professorial staff writes a reflection report, in which s/he looks back on past achievements in relation to our university's core responsibilities, and in which s/he looks ahead at objectives for the upcoming cycle. **A combination of maximal freedom and responsibility** is our *leitmotiv* here;
- more than ever before, we invest in **talent-centred career counselling and coaching** of our professorial staff at every stage of their career path. For all our professorial staff members, we have set up personalized HR committees, consisting of the Head of Department, a professorial staff member of the Faculty Quality Assurance Committee, a member of Faculty Management, a colleague (in the rank of full professor or senior full professor), and an HR policy advisor. These HR committees maintain a balance between a faculty's 'helicopter perspective' and the individual staff member's specific professional context;
- additionally, the new evaluation plan pays conscious attention to **leadership and interpersonal skills**. As such, it not only benefits members of the professorial staff but also a larger group of young researchers and other staff sections;
- the new evaluation plan also provides a biennial **fast track procedure** to facilitate promotion from the rank of associate professor to full professor based on exceptional research and/or education merits.

This fast track procedure is competitive and is held university-wide.

The aim of the new career and evaluation plan is to re-establish **trust** in our professorial staff instead of excessively measuring and monitoring their activities. **Those who perform well, are promoted** – that is our baseline. And we do so with as few formal accountability procedures and red tape as possible. In so doing, the old system with mainly quantitative targets and a focus on output makes way for **collaboration, professional development and growth**. Vision development and strategy are given priority, on a personal as well as on group level. Quality trumps quantity. Needless to say that we, at Ghent University, believe in the **intrinsic motivation of each of our professorial staff members**. Rather than a set of a priori objectives, it is this that ensures high performance on our core responsibilities: education, research, and institutional or social engagement.

With our new career and evaluation plan, we are pioneers among the Flemish universities. We create a positive and stimulating professional environment, including a feedback culture that is beneficial rather than patronizing. We are taking important steps towards becoming a caring employer, we offer talent-centred people management, and offer a solution to signals of increased pressure on our current professorial staff (*Van de Walle, R. & Van Herreweghe, M. (2019). Vertrouwen werkt beter. UGent lanceert nieuw loopbaan- en bevorderingsmodel. Th&ma Hoger Onderwijs 2019-3, pp. 31-35*). For more information on the new career plan for professorial staff, please consult [this website](#).

The career plans for other staff sections underwent thorough revisions as well. Here, too, trust is an important guiding principle, in addition to offering more security and comfort to members of staff in temporary positions. These are important elements in our staff's well-being and feeling valued.

- **research staff**: we have eliminated the old practice of employing doctoral and post-doctoral researchers on short, successive fixed-term contracts. Instead, we now give our research staff open-ended contracts with terms of employment and wage conditions aligned to those of assistant academic staff. Research staff working on a PhD (comparable to academic assistants) and research staff with an opportunity to engage in deepening or broadening post-doctoral research (comparable to post-doctoral assistants) receive contracts with a clause clearly stipulating the end of their employment. For research staff, too, we have adapted the evaluation plan according to the principle of trust;

- **academic assistants/doctoral students**: an important monitoring tool for our doctoral students is the so-called self-reflection report. It is an annual report based on the progress report of old that supports doctoral students in their research progress and their professional development. This monitoring tool, together with an introduction and development trajectory for all Ghent University doctoral students, caters to the needs of this specific staff section;

- **administrative and technical staff**: similar to what is in place for the professorial staff members, two-year cycles of formal evaluation make place for a five-year cycle (which is the minimum term laid down by decree). We introduced an appreciative feedback culture with the possibility of holding interim feedback conversations if deemed necessary by either superiors or staff members. Remedial action is possible if necessary. The administrative burden is kept to a minimum;

- **doctoral scholars (pre-doc)** receive a more secure employment with contracts based on the 1+3 principle. This means that after positive evaluation at the end of the first year, they gain job security for the remaining three years and the opportunity to complete their doctoral training;

- **post-doctoral scholars (post-docs)**: until recently, we had no regulatory framework for this staff section. This was formally put into place in early 2022. The new framework guarantees ample opportunities for conducting unfettered academic research. The scholarship is the same for all, and equated with the net wages and salary scales of post-doctoral assistants.

1.5 Financing Model for Education Funding

Ghent University receives funding from the Flemish government via an allocation model. These resources are used to finance, among other things, statutory staff (professorial, academic assistant, administrative and technical staff).

We have an internal points system to fix the personnel costs of the various mandates. The system is calibrated by allocating one personnel point to the mandate of an academic assistant (one personnel point equals the fixed sum of €66,000 in 2023). Personnel points then range from 0.65 (administrative and technical staff, job ranking D) to 1.85 (professorial staff from the rank of associate professor onwards to (senior) full professor). The system's advantage

is that it makes faculties and departments' accounting much easier: there is no need for keeping accounts in euros, selection procedures are not biased by the impact of awarded seniority, and faculties suffer no financial consequences from promotion cycles (professorial staff from the rank of associate professor onwards are allocated 1.85 personnel points, so faculties are not penalized for their staff's high performance and promotion).

Each faculty and department is also granted an annual quota of personnel points, which allows them to pursue their HR policy. They use these quota specifically to hire professorial, academic assistant, and administrative and technical staff to realize the university's education and research responsibilities. The Board of Governors lays down these quota annually, using a specific internal allocation model for faculties. This allocation model, in turn, is based on two capacity parameters (number of students and researchers), four output parameters (number of diplomas, publications, PhDs, contract revenue), and on the implementation of university-wide policy choices.

What follows is a concise explanation of how education comes into play in this model:

- the number of students determines the annual evolution of a faculty's personnel points to the rate of 44%. A rise (resp. fall) in student numbers leads to an increase (resp. decrease) of personnel points. This allows faculties to strengthen their teaching capacity if student numbers rise. Implementation of the internal allocation model specifically for this parameter led to a net injection of a little more than 25 additional personnel points into our faculties for the period 2020-2023;
- the number of awarded diplomas determines the four-yearly evolution of a faculty's personnel points to the rate of 5.50%. An increase (resp. decrease) of awarded diplomas leads to an increase (resp. decrease) of personnel points. Implementation of the internal allocation model specifically for this parameter led to a net injection of 6.45 additional personnel points into our faculties for the period 2020-2023;
- a number of university-wide policy choices is linked to the teaching activities. Since their implementation is a parameter in the internal allocation model, they naturally have an impact.

Ghent University uses various flows of funds to invest in premium-quality education:

- a considerable part of the Flemish operation grant is spent on personnel costs (an annual sum of €285 million for professorial, academic assistant, and administrative and technical staff taken together). Another €40 million is spent on operational costs for education;
- the personnel costs mentioned above represent only part of the human capital involved in education. Staff members funded by projects, scholarships or service contracts - i.e. outside the operation grant – also play an important role in education (support). Looking at our group of doctoral students alone, 4,000 of them are involved in education (Dehousse scholarships, FWO funding, external funding, independent means). At Ghent University Hospital (in Dutch: UZ Gent), staff also contributes to academic education;
- the operational costs mentioned above represent only part of our investment in (education) infrastructure. Internal (Ghent University's Special Research Funds) as well as external means (projects) are invested in infrastructure that is used for education purposes;
- in the context of the Advancement Fund Ghent University received a one-time additional injection of €9.5 million, to be spent in the period 2021-2023;
- Ghent University receives an annual allowance amounting to €8 - €14 million for setting up and implementing international exchange programmes;
- Ghent University receives additional tuition fees from advanced Master's programmes, post-academic and postgraduate programmes amounting to €7 million;
- in the context of the integration of academic study programmes formerly taught at university colleges in 2014, the Flemish government has been allocating additional resources to the universities. These resources are divided among those faculties who contribute significantly to education in these so-called integrated study programmes. From 2014 until the present, these resources have been used mainly to create over 100 additional personnel points in faculties. It goes without saying that this too has a (positive) impact on these faculties' education capacity.

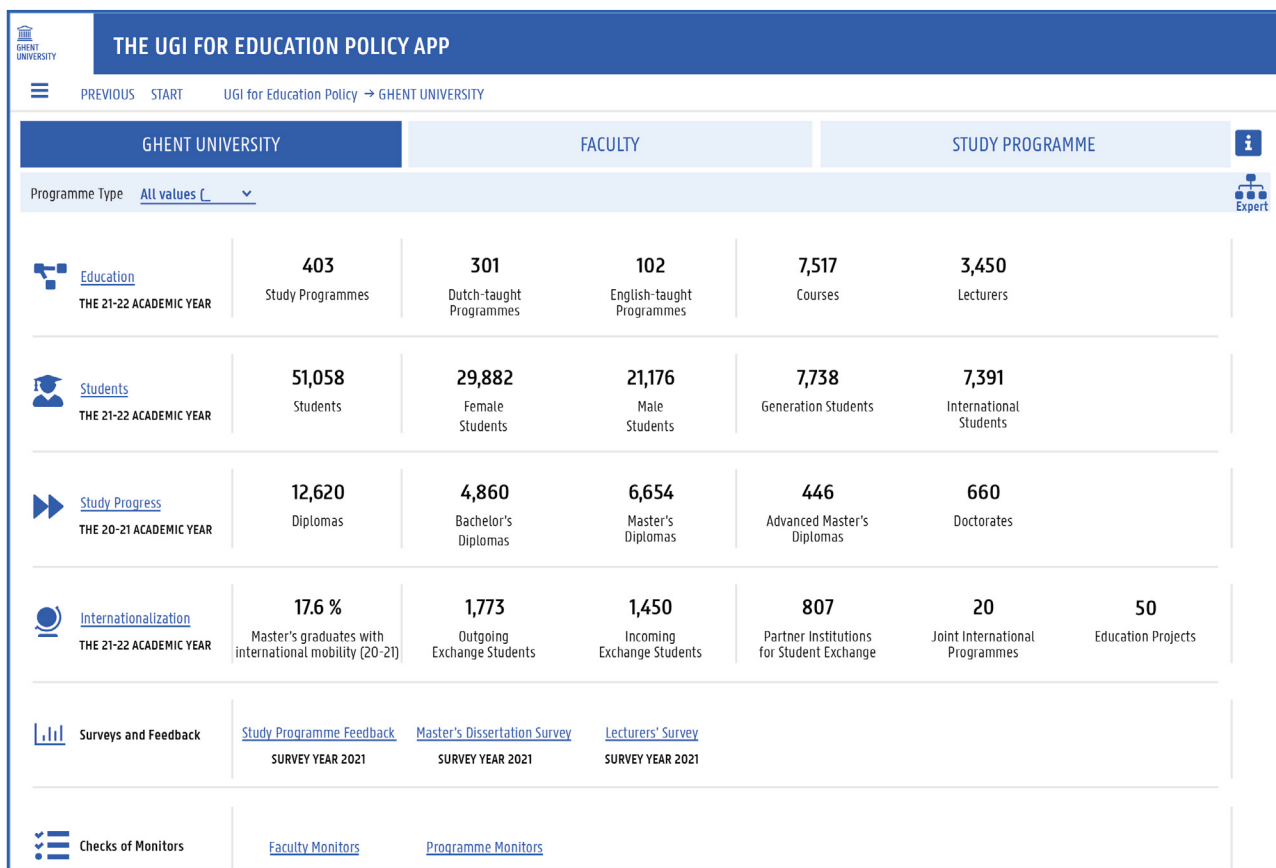


Figure 6: Homepage of the UGI for Education Policy App (Ghent University's Integrated Business Intelligence System. The application is only available in Dutch)

1.6. Ghent University's Integrated Business Intelligence System UGI for Education Policy

In 2014, we decided to invest structurally in Business Intelligence (BI) software in order to give university management systematic access to relevant policy data. The software identifies, extracts, and analyses business data and generates quantitative policy reports. Since 2015, [Ghent University's Integrated Business Intelligence System \(UGI\)](#) is a household name at our institution. We use UGI to manage processes related to education, research, service and institutional organization (allocation model and HR policy).

From 2015 onwards, we have invested in developing UGI for Education Policy further and enhancing its performance. UGI sources its data from various systems. The Education Administration and Student Information System (in Dutch: OASIS) contains data related to study programmes, competencies, our lecturers' teaching assignments, and students' curricula, study career and exam results. OASIS is UGI's most important source system for generating policy data. UGI also uses various other databases (personnel,

finances, internationalization, professional development, etc.) to generate additional policy information.

The UGI for Education Policy app provides faculties and study programmes with information in a simple and user-friendly manner. It gives all staff members and all student representatives access to all education-related information on three policy levels: the university, the faculty, and the study programme. In addition, UGI Education Policy also has an expert environment for policy advisors at university and faculty level to make more exhaustive and more complex analyses.

The UGI for Education Policy app is a high-performance data tool for generating and presenting quantitative data. What is more, UGI stands for **an evidence-based approach to policy-making and policy assessment**. For the past five years, UGI has played a crucial role in our education policy and policy implementation, as well as in **quality assurance and monitoring our quality culture**. Please find a concise manual [here](#).

CHAPTER 1

Strengths and Weaknesses



STRENGTHS

- Ghent University takes on the role of a socially engaged and pluralistic university vis-à-vis our students, staff and external partners. Taking our cue from the university credo 'Dare to Think', our education vision 'Multiperspectivism', and the strong interconnection between our education and research, we occupy a leading position when it comes to finding solutions to **current social challenges**. In so doing, we widely surpass our local context and want to realize our ambitions at international excellence by means of a pan-institutional co-operation model;
- Ghent University education is founded on research and recent scientific insights into the discipline. Our lecturers are (also) researchers, and most of our researchers also take on a teaching assignment. Think, for instance, of the many doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers involved in our education (practice). Ghent University research is of premium quality and internationally renowned. The **strong interconnection between research and education** guarantees the continuous presence of an external perspective in the shape of international peers. In so doing, we keep (the contents of) course units, main subjects, and study programmes up to date and socially relevant;
- our strong ties with Ghent University Hospital and strategic research centres such as imec, VIB and Flanders Make contribute to our research excellence. We also co-ordinate [ENLIGHT](#), a consortium of nine universities established as one of the European Universities networks. Our leading role in, and commitment to, various other European university networks (vice-chancellor Rik Van de Walle is president of [CESAER](#), and Ghent University takes active part in [The Guild](#) and [EUA](#)) results in a strong integration into **European education and research policy**.
- in recent years, **our faculties' policy-making capacity has increased** and strengthened. Our faculties play an important role in translating institutional policy frameworks into faculty-specific policy lines and implementing them on study programme level. As such, the faculty policy level takes on an important liaison function between study programme level and university level. This liaison function results in a dual partnership with efficient communication lines, bringing together study programmes on the one hand, and the university's policy-making bodies on the other;
- the [new career and evaluation plan for professorial staff](#) and the **new allocation model** have trust, intrinsic motivation, collaboration, growth and administrative ease as their baseline. Far from being competitive, these plans and models emphasize differentiation and individual choices. Taking into account the team of which they are part, members of the professorial staff can choose their own focus when it comes to the university's core responsibilities. The new model allows us to give short shrift to the unwanted side-effect of overvaluing quantifiable objectives (and with those, specific types of research) while undervaluing education. Together with an inclusion of education excellence (in analogy of research excellence) in fast-track promotions to the rank of full professor, the new model ensures that education-related endeavours are valued sufficiently;
- our [business intelligence system UGI](#) ensures continuous monitoring and an **evidence-based approach to policy-making and policy assessment**. UGI plays a crucial role in our education policy and policy implementation, as well as in **quality assurance and monitoring our quality culture**. In addition, it is the bedrock of our education policy plans at all policy levels, i.e. the university, the faculty and the study programme;

- at Ghent University we can count on the **continuous involvement and enthusiasm of thousands of staff members** to teach, coach, facilitate and support education practice year after academic year. This includes professorial and postdoctoral staff, who function as lecturers(-in-charge), on the one hand, and other (support) staff such as teaching assistants, tutors, administrative and technical staff, doctoral students, postdocs;
- education policy at Ghent University is **highly participatory**: any decision-making requires endorsement. The active role that all (staff) sections play in vision and policy-making is not only typical of our university, it is an explicit characteristic of our quality culture.

WEAKNESSES

- Ghent University's highly participatory governance model has its limits: decisions require clearance by many different policy levels, councils and committees, which makes decision-making difficult at times, and certainly slows it down. The balance between **sufficient endorsement and sufficient effectiveness** in the decision-making process is a delicate one. We will need to reconsider this;
- there is **room for more explicit links to Ghent University's excellent research in the education we offer** by organizing specific study programmes. For us to become a truly **international university**, this is a crucial step to take. We must invest further in education that is closely interconnected with excellent research, which offers learning opportunities to a Flemish and international target audience. There are a number of important conditions to be met, though, such as accessibility, financing, housing, support, language, integration, ... for/of international students. In addition, an innovative education offer can only be realized after a thorough and well-considered rationalization and optimization of our current offer. We need to review existing study programmes, main subjects, and course units thoroughly in order to make way for the future;
- we have **nearly reached our limits in terms of student numbers** (over 45,000 students in initial study programmes). This steady rise is partly due to Flemish education policy that allows a fully open access to co-exist with suboptimal reorientation and study efficiency. University funding in general, and education funding in particular, insufficiently follows rising student numbers. Tuition fees for initial study programmes are laid down by decree, and as such, do not generate much additional income per student. An exception are the increased tuition fees for international study programmes (OESO study). Taken together, the above elements have a major impact on our staff's work load and work pressure, and on investment in, and maintenance of university patrimony. They can also hold consequences for (certain types of) education innovation, in terms of education offer as well as education practice. At Ghent University, we try to cope with rising student numbers by means of evidence-based study (track) counselling, reorientation, and study progress monitoring. In addition, we continue to plead our case before the Flemish government for reasonable funding in relation to rising student numbers, and for the need to catch up on the investment envelope. The latter is currently thoroughly insufficient in the face of rapidly rising student numbers and researchers, and especially since climate legislation and insulation standards have tightened.

Chapter 2

Education Vision, Education Policy and Quality Culture

2.1. Multiperspectivism and Ghent University's Six Strategic Education Objectives

Our vision on education is derived from the concept of **multiperspectivism** and can be broken down into six solid and sustainable [strategic education objectives](#). Since 2015 these objectives have been guiding principles in pursuing our education policy. That is not to say that these objectives have not been updated since. On the contrary, under the impulse of internal and external developments in recent years we have continued to strengthen and redefine them to suit the current education context. Taken together, these six strategic objectives make up the framework for high-

quality education at Ghent University. They are, in other words, important guidelines for education policy choices today and in the future.

1. THINK BROADLY

By means of the strategic objective 'Multiperspectivism', Ghent University trains students who dare to think

Of our six strategic objectives, multiperspectivism is the first, the broadest, and in a sense also the most important one. The remaining five objectives all naturally ensue from here. The concept of multiperspectivism captures our mission statement (pluralistic, independent, critical) and our university credo '[Dare to Think](#)'.



Figure 7: Ghent University's Six Strategic Education Objectives

Combining perspectives or disciplines with insights from other disciplines results in new insights. This is why we at Ghent University want to stimulate students and staff to look beyond disciplinary boundaries (a broadening of perspective), and to confront them systematically with alternative perspectives (a change of perspective). After all, all knowledge is temporary and learning is never 'complete'. By means of our various study programmes, we offer our students solid knowledge of a specific discipline. Neither knowledge nor discipline, however, stand alone. Indeed, it is that solid knowledge of their discipline which our students need to be able to engage with other perspectives in a meaningful way.

At Ghent University, we aim for our students to become creative and critical problem-solving citizens, able to think outside the box and to tackle complex problems from different perspectives. In the face of current social challenges, these are indispensable competencies. Put into education practice, multiperspectivism specifically refers to, and focuses on, the following values: critical thought, open-mindedness, change in perspective, pluralism and tolerance of differing points of view. We want to teach our students to be curious about other perspectives, and to work together across disciplinary boundaries. Critical thought and change of perspective are embedded in our study programmes' learning outcomes, their teaching and assessment methods.

By means of 'Multiperspectivism', Ghent University trains students who dare to think. Of our six strategic objectives, multiperspectivism is the first and foundational one, from which the other five objectives logically branch off.

*"One problem, but 99 ways of approaching it.
Multiperspectivism is what we call it here."*

2. KEEP RESEARCHING.

Education at Ghent University is based on excellent research

Education at Ghent University is based on excellent research and the most reliable academic insights. As such, the academic education we offer our students is optimally aligned with the dynamic development of academic/scientific research. It is this cross-pollination between education and research that encourages students to adopt an academically justified and honest attitude throughout their study trajectory, to look at problems from different angles, and to organize known data in new ways.

The strong interconnection of education and research is an important element in every aspect of Ghent University

policy-making, and of course especially vis-à-vis education practice. Almost all of our lecturers are researchers who integrate innovative and state-of-the-art research into their teaching practice, but also teach their students academic norms and values, a research attitude and research skills. Our strong and comprehensive research activities are a clear added value to academic education.

3. CULTIVATE TALENT.

Ghent University education contributes to student and staff talent development

Diversity as it is embedded in our education policy, is to be understood in the broadest possible way. We offer [premium-quality study programmes](#) that encompass programme-specific as well as generic competencies. We strive towards optimal orientation, remediation, supervision and challenges for all **students** throughout their entire study trajectory. Taking our cue from the principle of equal treatment and the principle of second chance, we believe that all students have an equal right to maximum talent development. Students with a less straightforward study career are given a second chance, albeit in combination with strictly binding requirements. For the purpose of an optimal acquisition of competencies we place great store by active learning, adequate learning environments as well as adequate and easily accessible facilities, using the possibilities provided.

Staff diversity offers ample opportunities as well. For that purpose, we promote and support the professional development of our staff. We encourage our staff to engage in a wide range of [support and career development initiatives](#), and our career plans stimulate a climate based on maximal autonomy and trust.

4. CONTRIBUTE.

Ghent University education is fuelled by the participation of stakeholders

Ghent University is an important hub where various stakeholders and their interests meet: students, university staff, alumni, the professional field, and other external parties. We want these stakeholders to participate in our education as critical partners who help monitor education quality. We invest in close interaction by means of [sustainable networks](#) with social partners such as policy makers, companies, knowledge and other institutions, and private partners. We ensure, in other words, that social challenges and evolutions (and the needs of an ever-evolving professional field) are adequately translated into our study programmes, and that students never stop broadening their perspectives. In so

doing, we strive for a sound balance between independence and social relevance.

"Ghent University navigates a sea of knowledge, but is by no means an island. Our premium-quality education is carried out by many partners."

5. EXTEND HORIZONS.

Ghent University education integrates an international dimension

As partner in a broad international network, we integrate an international perspective into our education. For us, internationalization is not a goal in and by itself but a means to give students and staff an opportunity to acquire international and intercultural competencies, and to increase the academic quality of our education. For this purpose, we aim to give (at least) 25% of our students an international exchange experience, we attract international students and lecturers, we integrate international teaching contents and teaching methods into our (online and on-campus) teaching practice by means of 'Internationalization@Home' and virtual mobility, and we benchmark our internationalization policy with academic institutions abroad and with international umbrella organizations. A recent example is our participation in ENLIGHT.

"Internationalization is a means to ensure that students, researchers and the university itself are better able to fulfil their important social mission adequately."

6. OPT FOR QUALITY.

Ghent University's premium-quality education meets internationally recognized standards for solid quality assurance

We place great store by education quality assurance, which is a vital element of any sound education policy. Our [quality assurance system](#) guarantees ambitious study programme competencies, study programmes of the highest quality, well-structured curricula and a proper alignment of teaching and assessment methods. It goes without saying that our system is in line with the Flemish and European standards and guidelines for quality assurance.

At Ghent University we aim for continuous quality assurance based on trust in the expertise held by study programmes and faculties, and on shared ownership that

facilitates and stimulates faculties' and study programmes' self-management. Lecturers, education (support) staff, and students join hands to guarantee that each study programme is of the highest quality.

2.2. Education Vision and Education Policy: Looking Ahead

Changing economic, social, ecologic and social needs have brought universities to an important tipping point. Desperate times call for desperate measures, as the corona pandemic has gone to show. However, in addition to the serious challenges and emergency procedures the pandemic brought, it also led to rapid digitalization and (education) innovation. Taking our cue from the European Union policy agenda (Higher Education Area, 2020; Skills Agenda, 2020; ...) and European vision texts such as '[Universities without walls. A vision for 2030](#)' (EUA, 2021), we started a co-creation process to think about 'future-proof education' and how to align that with Ghent University's six strategic education objectives. This **co-creation process** involved a wide cross-section of professorial, academic assistant, administrative and technical staff, as well as students and external parties. Their combined efforts resulted in a vision text, which was ratified by the BoG in July 2021. In what follows, we describe two additional opportunities that contribute to this future-proof education.

2.2.1. Future-proof Education

Our brainstorm on 'future-proof education' has resulted in a continued commitment to Ghent University's Six Strategic Education Objectives as the bedrock of our education policy. To meet future challenges, however, we must also take into account three additional key strategies: (1) future-proof curricula, (2) lifelong learning, and (3) Blend@UGent. Embedding these key strategies into our current education vision, our strategic education objectives and our education policy will be a substantial enrichment. It is our ambition to train students into becoming lifelong learning citizens. Instead of simply living tomorrow's society, our alumni must take up the challenge and act as proper agents of change to give shape to the future. Our alumni will be ready to take on a leading role in society, offering solutions to challenges such as climate change, social exclusion, growing income disparity, authoritarianism and populism...

1. Future-proof curricula

In the next five years, our study programmes will review their curricula and determine whether or not they live up to five future-proof criteria:

- does the programme offer a well-considered mix of learning opportunities for acquiring essential research-based and discipline-specific competencies on the one hand, as well as for acquiring **generic competencies** based on the concept of the T-shaped professional on the other?
- does the programme offer sufficient experiences for **multi- and interdisciplinary learning opportunities**, allowing students from different disciplines to interact with each other?
- does the programme systematically integrate the **stepping stone principle for internationalization** into the curriculum, allowing students to acquire international and intercultural competencies?
- is the programme sufficiently **embedded in society** and does it offer students an opportunity to come into contact with social players, are they encouraged in taking up social engagement, does the curriculum answer future societal needs based on/using real-life challenges?
- is the programme sufficiently student-centred? Does it offer **flexible learning opportunities and learning paths**, allowing students to tailor the curriculum to their own needs?

2. Lifelong learning

Staking on lifelong learning is an important challenge for higher education of the future. After all, one does not stop learning after obtaining one's initial degree. By issuing its [Strategic Policy Plan for Lifelong Learning](#) (2020), Ghent University has explicitly chosen to become a travelling companion for anyone with a wish to acquire further qualifications throughout their professional career. Our mission is to transfer to society the newest innovations and developments in academic research. We will provide an extensive offer of lifelong learning initiatives based on **state-of-the-art research and reliable academic insights in the field**. In so doing, we will welcome returning alumni, professionals looking for new career opportunities, students working their way through university, transfer students, senior citizens, and all those who are interested in

developing their competencies for whatever reason. We will welcome them and offer them state-of-the-art knowledge and skills.

Our lifelong learning initiatives are integral part of our education offer, and as such, will be embedded in our **(inter)faculty Academies for Lifelong Learning**. These academies, in turn, are fully embedded in our university and our academic research. They will offer advanced Master's programmes, premium-quality postgraduate programmes, short- and long-term programmes, lectures, symposia, as well as a yet to be developed offer of **microcredentials** (microdegrees). Obstacles that prevented initializing such an offer are being eliminated. The Academies can count on maximum support from university and faculty management.

Strong collaboration ties between the University of Antwerp, VUB and Ghent University in the context of lifelong learning will result in an optimized offer, joint initiatives and joint communication to the general public through the [Nova Academy](#). Unique in its kind, the Nova Academy will give lifelong learners in Flanders direct access to a wide range of education options at university level with as few thresholds as possible.

3. Blend@UGent

The [Blend@UGent](#) vision that was developed in times of corona offers a framework for a **well-considered and well-aligned mix of online and on-campus education**. This well-considered mix can be applied, not only by individual lecturers or in individual course units, but can also be applied in entire study programmes and in each standard study track.

Achieving a balanced ratio of online and on-campus education depends on content-didactic, socio-psychological, practical as well as technological factors, including the competencies that need to be acquired, student group composition, safety measures, classroom capacity, and the available technology. On-campus presence will never cease to be a key property of the (inter)active education Ghent University wants to offer its students. Digitalization, however, will continue to gain importance, too. This blended learning environment calls for increased independence and self-management on the part of our students. At the same time, it also promotes inclusiveness of, and flexibility for students. This is why we want to invest further in student support initiatives in the broadest sense: supporting their learning process, encouraging interaction, and creating a warm(er) learning environment, while staying true to the tenets of active education, in which students participate actively throughout their lecture series and interact with the learning

contents, learning materials, fellow-students and lecturers.

Putting this new vision into practice in the future requires thorough discussion by study Programme Committees and by the entire teaching and support staff, and the students. This process will take time, but we invite and encourage lecturers and study programmes to take this time in the upcoming years.

2.2.2. The Apollo 8 Project: Opportunities

Via a so-called Advancement Fund, the Flemish government has released funds for higher education to use in the context of a post-corona recovery plan. At Ghent University, we decided upon a co-creation trajectory involving key figures at the faculties, university management and several university departments to write [eight strategic projects \(Apollo 8\)](#). This resulted in €9 million project funding to be spent over the period of November 2021-October 2023. The launching of Apollo 8 allows us to take (big) steps in education innovation. The eight projects all incorporate the three key strategies mentioned above with the purpose of strengthening our six strategic education objectives in the future. For quality assurance policy, Apollo 8 is an important opportunity.

Three projects deal with **future-proof curricula**. A rationalization and optimization of our education offer should create room for innovation (project 1). An optimized collaboration with university colleges should result in well-aligned learning ladders, bridging trajectories, trajectories

designed for a smooth transfer between study programmes after a successful first year (in Dutch: *ritswegen*), as well as (re)orientation (project 2). We will set up twenty Ghent University study programmes as pilots for an accelerated implementation of future-proof criteria. They will pave the way for further university-wide implementation ([project 3](#)). In the context of **lifelong learning** we invest in strengthened (inter)faculty Academies of Lifelong Learning in collaboration with the University of Antwerp and VUB (project 4).

Four projects seriously invest in digital teaching methods and, as such, they closely tie in with **Blend@UGent**. We undertake significant infrastructural efforts vis-à-vis active, hybrid and interactive future-proof and on-campus education (project 5), and we invest in the digital learning environment for future generations (project 6). This set of innovations is backed by extensive professional development and support (project 8). Finally, project 7 will allow us to invest in the development of various virtual science labs to be used in skills training.

2.2.3. European University Network ENLIGHT: Opportunities

[ENLIGHT](#), a consortium of nine European universities co-ordinated by Ghent University linked to the **European Universities** network (Erasmus+) saw the light on 1 November 2020. The network is home to the University of Basque Country (ES), the University of Bordeaux (FR), Comenius University of Bratislava (SK), the National University of Ireland Galway (IE), the University of Göttingen



Figure 8: The ENLIGHT Student Learning Experience

(DE), the University of Groningen (NL), the University of Tartu (EE), Uppsala University (SE) and Ghent University (BE). ENLIGHT stands for 'European university Network to promote equitable quality of Life, sustainability and Global engagement through Higher education Transformation'. Its purpose is to contribute to **higher education innovation** by offering students (and by extension anyone who wants to learn) the appropriate knowledge and skills to become committed citizens and professionals who are able to confront the complex 21st century challenges.

ENLIGHT clusters these challenges into five large domains: health & well-being, digital revolution and impact of digitization, climate change, energy & circular economy, and equity.

In due course ENLIGHT wants to create an open space between its nine participating institutions, **a so-called European University System in which obstacles to international learning experiences are removed**. European University Systems aim to give students and staff access to the best education and research environments, and strive for excellence by means of knowledge and funds sharing. For that purpose, they invest in a number of specific actions: developing a shared quality approach allowing for an automatic recognition of study periods spent at ENLIGHT partners; developing and increasing international research-oriented and challenge-based learning and education approaches; fostering students' generic competencies and global involvement; developing a structural and technical framework for inclusive, seamless and green mobility that can be physical, blended as well as virtual (like e.g. a common course catalogue), and developing frameworks for structural dialogue with local, European, and global stakeholders.

At Ghent University, we see ENLIGHT as **an important engine of future-proof education innovation**. We consider the European University System to be an international laboratory for a number of the strategic projects of Apollo 8, more specifically the project on **future-proof curricula**. In line with our strong tradition of student participation, Ghent University students are also highly active contributors to the ENLIGHT Student Network.

2.3. Policy Implementation: from Strategic to Operational Objectives

After the explanation of our education vision and policy above, we now provide an overview of our **policy implementation, monitoring and improvement policy**.

Since the discontinuation of external study programme reviews in 2014, and the switch we made to institutional reviews, which gives higher education institutions full responsibility for their education policy and quality assurance, Ghent University has chosen to apply the **Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology** on all three policy levels (i.e. university, faculty and study programme).

Running the **PDCA cycle** means translating our education policy with its **six strategic objectives** into more specific **operational objectives**, which describe what is expected from all the policy levels in order to realize our education policy.

Translating our university's strategic objectives into **a uniform set of operational objectives for all faculties and all study programmes** has been a process of co-creation between the Education Department, the faculties, and the study programmes, and ultimately, the Education Council, which ratified them. A set of 28 and 39 operational objectives were set at faculty and study programme level, respectively. They take into account (1) the government's Quality Code for Higher Education (dated 18 May 2018), and (2) its **eight quality features**, and (3) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the [European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG dd. 2015). A mapping between the operational objectives and the eight quality features can be consulted [here](#). By using these uniform operational objectives as a basic framework for both faculty and programmes, we guarantee that **legislative requirements are met on all policy levels**.

For all these operational objectives, we expect our faculties and programmes to determine and document their vision and policy (Plan), the actions they undertake to operationalize this policy (Do), to what extent they achieve the objectives (Check), and which improvement actions are necessary (Act).

2.4. The Education Monitor: an Engine of Quality Culture

Running the PDCA cycle is a continuous process in the course of which the university, the faculties and the study programmes develop and implement education and quality assurance policy in a structural manner. To facilitate this continuous process we avail ourselves of digital technology. A collaboration between the ICT Department and the Education Department has resulted in an online platform in a SharePoint environment, enabling study programmes and faculties to monitor their policy plans, processes and

actions, results of these actions, and points for improvement properly. **We have termed this digital data-driven reflection instrument ‘Education Monitor’.**

We developed and implemented Education Monitors at all three policy levels, i.e. for each of our study programmes and faculties, and for the institutional level. These monitors are a data-driven reflection tool, a digital document repository, and a dashboard and follow-up tool for improvement processes. Specifically tailored to each policy level, be it the study programme, the faculty or the Education Department, the Education Monitor enables **a continuous reflection on (complex) processes of education policy, implementation, monitoring and improvement.** The competent councils or committees at each policy level (i.e. the Programme Committee, the faculty’s Quality Assurance Committee, or the Education Council) are in charge of checking, and making sure that information in the monitor is endorsed.

2.4.1. Operational Objectives in the Education Monitors

The **institutional monitor** (at university level) contains [44 operational objectives](#). The Education Department sets out an overarching vision and policy for these objectives (Plan), carries out the actions to achieve these objectives (Do), checks whether each objective has been achieved (Check), and, if necessary, formulates improvement actions (Act). Faculty staff working with their faculty’s and/or study programmes’ monitors can consult the institutional monitor for university-wide education policy decisions and implementations. They can also link to the institutional monitor from their own monitor(s).

The **eleven faculty monitors** and underlying 103 **study programme monitors** – the latter each being linked to a Programme Committee – have an analogous structure. The faculty and study programme monitors contain [28](#) and [39 objectives](#), respectively. These objectives are binding in the sense that we expect our faculties and study programmes to pursue a policy to achieve them. **How** they do so, which actions they set out, and with which focus, and whether or not these actions are organized at faculty or programme level, is the **responsibility and autonomy** of the faculty/study programme. Each faculty/study programme implements processes and actions that are in line with their **identity and culture**. Ownership is crucial, albeit within the contours and frameworks that have been set out at university level.

2.4.2. Education Policy Plans (PLAN) and Their Implementation (DO): the Stable Part of the Education Monitor

In the Education Monitors there is a clear distinction between a relatively stable ‘[Plan-Do](#)’ phase and a more dynamic ‘Check-Act’ phase. To this end, various operational objectives were clustered under overarching chapters. Chapter per chapter, study programmes/faculties/the university describe their vision and general policy intentions (Plan) together with any current actions that put vision and policy intentions into practice (Do). **This is the Education Monitor’s relatively stable part.** We recommend that Plans and Dos are elaborated in a sustainable and easily accessible way, so that outsiders leafing through the Education Monitor can form a clear picture of a study programme’s/faculty’s/the university’s vision, policy, and policy implementation relatively quickly. The best approach to avoid overlap and unnecessary repetition is for the three policy levels to refer to information in each other’s Education Monitors as much as possible.

Ghent University’s **education policy plan**, which is the responsibility of the Education Department (DOWA), is contained in the institutional monitor. The institutional monitor consists of nine chapters and is freely accessible to Ghent University staff. Each chapter describes an essential element of our education policy and contains a ‘Plan’. The ‘Plan’ amounts to an elaborated vision on our policy intentions, and contains specific policy actions for the Education Department as well as our university-wide education policy.

The faculty **education policy plans** are contained in the eleven faculty monitors. A faculty monitor consists of three parts: the faculty’s education vision and policy, permanent quality assurance, and Ghent University’s strategic objectives. Each faculty pursues its education policy in line with the ‘Plan’ that is incorporated into the monitor.

Study programme education policy plans are contained in their respective monitors. These monitors follow the same structure as the faculty monitors: the ‘Plan’ contains a study programme’s education vision and education policy.

Table 1 shows an example of what the PDCA cycle’s ‘Plan’ phase looks like in the monitors at each of the policy levels. The institutional monitor contains a ‘Plan’ for each of the nine chapters. As described above, the faculty and study programme monitors consist of three parts. (By way of example, this link shows the ‘Plan’ of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration monitor and of the monitor Business Engineering).

Table 1: Chapters from the Institutional, Faculty and Study Programme Monitors.

1 INSTITUTIONAL MONITOR: PLAN	11 FACULTY MONITORS: PLAN	103 STUDY PROGRAMME MONITORS: PLAN
1. Education Vision and Policy 2. Education 3. Permanent Quality Assurance 4. Teaching Staff and Programme Support 5. Internal Communication and Collaboration with Ghent University Staff and Other Staff 6. Counselling Services for (Prospective) Students 7. Student Support 8. Administrative Support for Students 9. External Profiling and Collaboration	PART 1: The Faculty's Education Vision and Policy 1.1. The Faculty's Education Policy 1.2. Faculty Education Support Services (FDO) PART 2: Permanent Quality Assurance 2.1. Embedding the External Perspective 2.2. Faculty Quality Assurance Committee (CKO): Procedures and Improvement Policy 2.3. Transparency and Communication PART 3: Ghent University's Strategic Objectives 3.1. Dare to Think and Multiperspectivism 3.2. Education Based on Excellent Research 3.3.1. Student Talent Development 3.3.2. Staff Talent Development 3.4. Stakeholder Participation 3.5. Internationalization	PART 1: The Study Programme's Education Vision and Policy 1.1. The Study Programme's Vision and Learning Outcomes 1.1.1. The Study Programme's Vision, Mission Statement and Context 1.1.2. Study Programme Competencies (Programme-specific Learning Outcomes - OLRs) 1.1.3. Critical Reflection 1.2. Study Programme 1.2.1. Implementation of Competencies/Learning Outcomes in the Study Programme 1.2.2. Teaching Methods and Active learning 1.2.3. Master's Dissertation 1.2.4. Internships 1.2.5. Critical Reflection 1.3. Assessment and Exit Level 1.3.1. Assessment Policy and Practice 1.3.2. Critical Reflection PART 2: Permanent Quality Assurance 2.1. Embedding the External Perspective 2.2. Study Programme Committee: Procedures and Improvement Policy 2.3. Transparency and Communication PART 3: Ghent University's strategic Objectives 3.1. Dare to Think and Multiperspectivism 3.2. Education Based on Excellent Research 3.3. Student and Staff Talent Development 3.3.1. Student Talent Development 3.3.2. Staff Talent Development 3.4. Stakeholder Participation 3.5. Internationalization

In other words, the university, faculty and programme-specific education policy plans are integrated into the monitors. All the Plans (vision and policy) taken together give shape to an integrated, university-wide education policy plan.

In line with their vision and policy, study programmes, faculties and the university set up actions to implement their policy plans (**this is the 'Do' phase**). This means that each operational objective has specific corresponding policy actions, processes, procedures, and practices, that all contribute to the implementation of the university-wide policy framework.

The 'Do' section in the institutional monitor contains actions (mainly) carried out by the Education Department to implement education policy. This section in the monitor corresponds to the annual report on education that we submit to the government. Similarly, the 'Do' section in the faculty's and study programme monitor contains activities, actions, procedures and practices they carry out to realize the operational objectives.

By way of illustration, we will delve deeper into this 'Do' section at the end of this Critical Reflection, including the processes and actions study programmes set up to realize the operational objectives. This illustration contains the **operational aspects of education policy and quality assurance from the perspective of a study programme**, which is the policy level par excellence that gives shape to our education.

To support the faculties and study programmes in developing and writing their education policy (Plan), as well as implementing it (Do), we initially provided them with a [quality manual](#). It came about as a result of broad consultation rounds with all the stakeholders and was approved by the Education Council in 2015. It has since been **fully integrated into the Education Monitors**. For each chapter, one click of the mouse leads directly to content-related input and food for reflection in the relevant part of the quality manual. In addition, the digital quality manual is accessible online via the Education Monitor dashboard. The quality manual has also been fully integrated into [Onderwijstips.ugent.be](#), and can be consulted via underlying links for the [faculty](#) and the [programme](#).

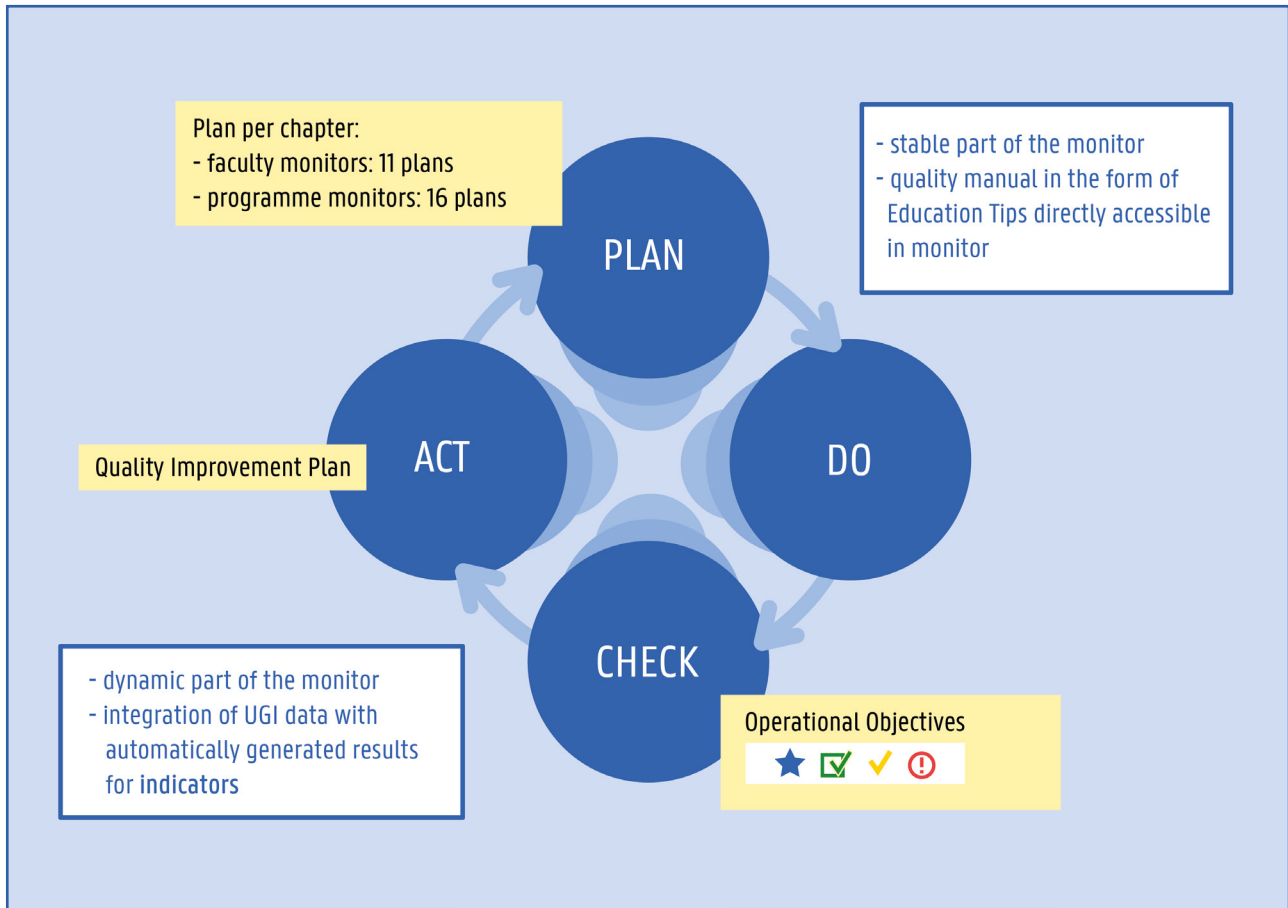


Figure 9: Running the Education Monitor

2.4.3. Monitoring (Check) and Improvement Policy (Act): the Dynamic Part of the Education Monitor

The Education Monitor's Plan-Do part encompasses the various operational objectives that have been defined per chapter. These operational objectives must be assessed (Check) and, depending on the outcome, can result in specific improvement actions (Act). This, in other words, is **the Education Monitor's dynamic part**. We expect each study programme and each faculty to reflect at least annually on the extent to which they have met the operational objectives at least annually. One way of substantiating this 'Check' is to make use of the indicators that are generated automatically by Ghent University's [Business Intelligence System UGI](#). A number of UGI reports are displayed automatically in the Education Monitor. These UGI reports show figures and progress reports for specific objectives, as well as specific frames of reference. A study programme's results can for instance be compared to those of the faculty, or of the entire university. In addition to these pre-set indicators, a faculty/study programme can also use

its own data as an indicator in the Education Monitor (e.g. the results of a survey they organized themselves). For many objectives, the 'Check' can and will (also) be done based on quantitative as well as qualitative information (see 2.5 Review and Monitoring).

In other words, study programmes/faculties/the university keep their own tabs on the extent to which a particular operational objective has been achieved. For this purpose, we have developed the following four-point scale.

★ BLUE	We largely meet the objectives. There are good practices that are exemplary and worth following.
☑ GREEN	We meet the objectives in a demonstrable way. Improvement measures are planned where necessary.
⚠ YELLOW	We meet the objectives on the main issues. Clear actions are identified to remedy deficiencies.
❗ RED	We do not meet the objectives. Critical intervention with a strict follow-up is needed.

Depending on this analysis, study programmes/faculties/the university then define the necessary improvement actions

(Acts). These acts, in turn, are the basis for a study programme's/faculty's future improvement policy. SharePoint allows for an automatic aggregation of any validated acts into a **quality improvement plan**. This quality improvement plan contains an action plan, an actor, a timing and progress report for each act. The quality improvement plan can be 'extracted' from the Education Monitor at any time so that it forms the basis for the improvement policy at each policy level: the Programme Committee (study programme level) and the faculty's Quality Assurance Committee/the Faculty Council (faculty level), and the Education Council and the Education Department (university level).

The Education Monitor for faculties and study programmes is a **working tool** for monitoring education policy and quality assurance. The Monitors are not an open repository for a plethora of information, or a platform for window dressing. They are a dynamic and useful tool that supports and stimulates a **structured reflection** on education within the faculty/study programme.

Taken together, the processes, actions and quality indicators offer a set of **possible ways** to meet each strategic and operational objectives in a high-quality manner. In so doing, the faculties/study programmes make their **own well-considered choices**, and they regularly compare these choices, processes and results to the available **quantitative and qualitative data**. Far from being a mathematical system, policy implementation is an internal

self-assessment process in the course of which faculties and study programmes check their objectives and actions against their achievements. Based on this self-assessment, they take remedial action if necessary.

2.5. Review and Monitoring

Over the past 30 years, while building our education policy, we have developed a whole range of **review and monitoring instruments** that can be used in the 'Check' phase. These instruments are attuned to the operational objectives at university, faculty and programme level discussed above.

At Ghent University, we believe in a multiperspectivistic approach to reviewing and monitoring: the realization of our education policy and education quality should be reviewed by students, lecturers, and external stakeholders. It should also be based on centrally developed tools and objective data. The emphasis here is on **an integration of quantitative data (especially via the UGI for Education Policy app) and qualitative information** gathered in focus group meetings or consultation rounds in councils, committees, task forces or ad hoc meetings. The result is a **360° feedback** (figure 10), which is in turn the bedrock for developing improvement actions and for making policy adjustments.

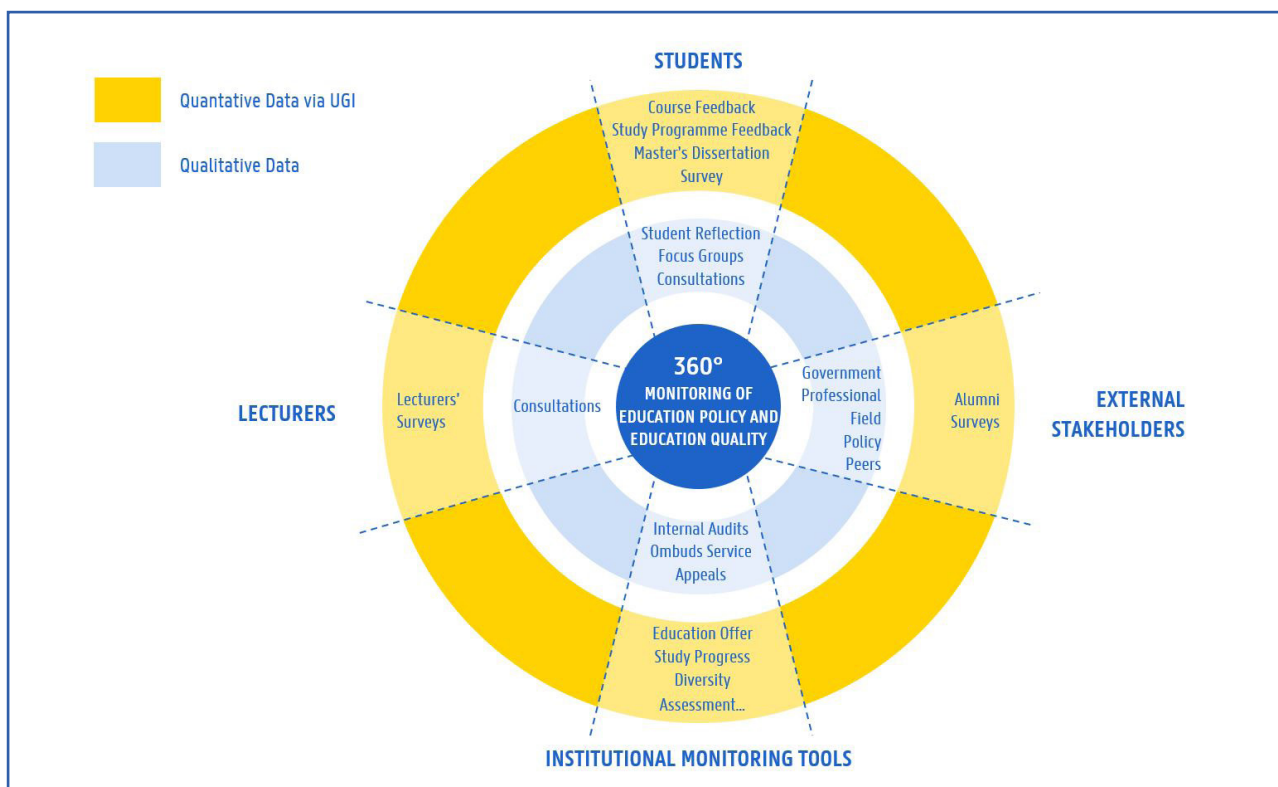


Figure 10: 360° Monitoring of Education Policy and Education Quality

As we discussed in Chapter One, **the UGI for Education Policy app** gives access to education-related data from the Education Administration and Student Information System (in Dutch: OASIS) and other databases. It is also via UGI that we bring together all input from institutionally managed surveys in the context of 360° feedback. When developing the Education Monitors in a SharePoint environment, we built in **a direct and real-time link between the UGI dataset and each specific Education Monitor**. In other words, study programmes and faculties wishing to perform a check on their operational objectives can use the direct UGI feed (in addition to other, qualitative data) to inform their decisions. In terms of **evidence-based reflection** as well as **administrative ease and workload**, this integration has meant great progress.

Below we describe the **most important monitoring instruments** we use at Ghent University for the purpose of education policy, policy review, and quality assurance. Between mid-2018 and late 2019, the majority of these tools were given a thorough review and update by the Monitoring Task Force, an ad hoc task force appointed by the Education Council. We provide illustrations specifically applied to the study programmes' operational objectives at the end of this Critical Reflection.

2.5.1. Student Surveys

Course Feedback by Students

We organize [course feedback](#) by students after each term, in which we ask students to provide feedback on the general organization, and certain aspects of the teaching practice with which they have come into contact in **specific course units**. For this purpose, we use a [generic question set containing 33 items](#) and a five-point scale indicating the participants' degree of agreement. The question set covers aspects of the **course unit** as well as of the **lecturer**. "Course feedback by students" is the new term that was adopted by the Education Council in the 2019-2020 academic year. It refers to the course evaluations of old. The choice for the term "feedback" is a conscious one, as it ties in with the [new career plan for professorial staff](#). Individual lecturers use the output generated by the course feedback for personal reflection and for optimizing their teaching practice. We want to avoid an all too stringent quantitative assessment with (faculty) reference frameworks. Instead, we want to focus on self-reflection, personal development and trust in our lecturers in addition to integration, mutual trust and collaboration within a team of lecturers and within a study programme.

After an automatic processing, individual lecturers immediately receive the results of their course feedback. At the same time, the results also become available to the faculty's Director of Studies and the faculty's quality assurance staff. Lecturers have two weeks to react and/or add action points. At the end of this period, the results become available to the Programme Committee Chair and the Department Chair. In case a lecturer does not recognize a particular problem alerted by the students, and/or does not propose to undertake remedial action, a **meeting takes place** between the lecturer and the Programme Committee Chair and/or the faculty's Director of Studies. If necessary, **individual coaching** is set up and the lecturer/course unit is monitored closely. This coaching becomes part of the lecturer's **HR committee**.

Programme Feedback by Students

We organize [study programme feedback](#) by students annually, in which we ask students to assess **(the quality of) their entire study programme**. We hold this survey for all Bachelor's, Master's, advanced Master's and academic bridging and preparatory programmes. We use [a generic question set containing 40 items](#) and a five-point scale. In addition, students answer three open-ended questions (describing positive and negative aspects, and suggestions for improvement). Due to the sensitivity of the information, answers to the open-ended questions are only available to the Programme Committee Chair and the faculty's Director of Studies.

Programme Committees discuss the results of the study programme feedback annually. As mentioned above, the results are **incorporated** into the UGI for Education Policy app, and thus also **into the Education Monitor**. As such, they can be used to assess specific operational objectives. Study programme feedback, in other words, generates a set of important indicators. In combination with a five-year evolution and reference frameworks (faculty and university), these results are important for performing the 'Check' on many operational objectives in the Education Monitor.

Programme feedback results in UGI are accessible via this [link](#).

Master's Dissertation Survey

The [Master's Dissertation Survey](#) contains [13 items](#) and is held annually. Students in their final year give feedback on the learning effect, organization, assessment, workload and supervision of their Master's dissertation. Via UGI the results are also integrated into the Education Monitor and discussed by the Programme Committee annually.

Student Reflection

To honour our long-standing tradition of student involvement, and to anchor it even more firmly in our quality assurance policy, Ghent University's Student Union has asked us to set up **an additional quality assurance tool in the form of so-called 'student reflections'**. This new tool is entirely complementary to existing forms of student involvement. Student reflections are in essence focus group sessions for the purpose of introducing into the study programme a broader and more diverse student perspective than the one obtained through student representatives. They generate **a qualitative reflection** on the entire study programme that goes beyond the individual course feedback, and adds additional in-depth information to the quantitative study programme feedback, course feedback, and Master's dissertation survey.

In other words, the purpose of student reflections is to collect in-depth and constructive feedback, identify points of concern, strengths, and possible improvement suggestions from a student perspective. These insights culminate in a **critical yet constructive reflection report** that takes into account individual lecturers' privacy and is included in the Education Monitor. Student reflections take place at least every three years. The output is **discussed at Programme Committee meetings** in the presence of student representatives.

Acting on a proposal by Ghent University's Student Union, student reflections are co-ordinated and monitored by **student-co-ordinators**. In consultation with **local student representatives**, they organize focus group sessions in all study programmes. Student-co-ordinators are employed on a part-time basis by Ghent University's Student Union and the Education Department, who are also responsible for support and professional development initiatives.

2.5.2. Lecturers' Survey

In order to compare our education practice to Ghent University's six strategic education objectives, we organized a lecturers' survey for the first time in 2015. In 2021 we held a new survey. The **lecturers' survey** contains **40 items** and a five-point scale measuring the participants' degree of agreement. Lecturers' survey results are accessible in UGI via this [link](#).

2.5.3. Stakeholder Surveys and Consultations

The embedding of the so-called **external perspective** in faculty and study programme policy takes the form of structural alumni outreach, and input from the professional field (companies, institutions, private partners), policy makers and (independent) peers. Such consultations usually take place in professional field committees, strategic advisory boards or other specific consultation structures. External input is crucial in assessing content-related aspects of a study programme. A more detailed elaboration is given in Chapter Three on Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0.

In addition to structured consultations, we organize **surveys of external stakeholders** as a way to embed the external perspective. Some study programmes survey the professional field, work placement supervisors or external experts. Such initiatives, however, are too faculty- or programme-specific to be co-ordinated at university level. The programmes and faculties include these survey results in their Education Monitor themselves.

Alumni are a specific group of professional field representatives. Recently graduated alumni bring a unique perspective to the programme. Not only do they offer a view on the relationship between their education and the professional context, they can also shed light on the link between their job and their education, identify possible strengths and shortcomings, ponder on their satisfaction with the chosen education, the path to a first job, the need for additional training or education, their perceived employability and career control, and reflect on the most important acquired competencies in light of their current job.

In the past ten years, faculties and study programmes have been carrying out their own specific alumni surveys. In recent years, though, the demand to reintroduce **centrally co-ordinated and university-wide alumni surveys** has increased. We gave heed to this demand in 2021. The new alumni survey consists of a generic question set, and a more specific one compiled by our faculties/study programmes. The alumni survey targets two groups: (1) recent graduates, i.e. the three most recent cohorts (outflow group), which will be surveyed on a three-year basis, and (2) earlier graduates, i.e. a broad group of all known alumni, which will be surveyed on a six-year basis. The university-wide alumni survey results are accessible in UGI via this [link](#).

2.5.4. Monitoring Tools at University Level

Education Administration and Student Information System (in Dutch – abbr. OASIS)

OASIS contains all education administration data at university, faculty and study programme level. In recent years, we have worked hard to make information from OASIS systematically available to study programmes, faculties and university administration [via UG](#). This information includes data about our [education offer](#), [student characteristics](#), [study progress](#), [internationalization](#), [evaluation and assessment](#). The UGI for Education Policy app's 'expert environment' allows for more in-depth analyses of OASIS data. The expert environment is accessible to staff members with policy responsibilities upon request.

Internal Audit

The [Internal Audit Office](#) carries out assessment tasks for the Board of Governors regarding the organization, processes, internal inspections and the extent to which the organizational and financial risks are managed within the legal framework. The Internal Audit Office focuses on the various content-related aspects of our university's academic operation, including its education processes. Each assignment results in a report, which is then submitted to the auditees. The report, including a management response, is then forwarded to the Board of Governors for further follow-up. Education-related audit reports have for instance dealt with the integration of academic programmes formerly housed at university colleges, students' study costs, and the administrative processes for students.

Ombuds Services and Internal Appeals

Information collected by the [faculty and institutional Ombuds services](#), and [internal appeals](#) can uncover suboptimal processes. As such, they are an important source of review and monitoring. It goes without saying that these services play an important role in internal quality assurance. Ombuds reports containing potential risks to the quality of our education are always discussed with the parties involved at faculty and/or study programme level, and are an integral part of quality monitoring in the context of Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0. In addition to remedial action, the Ombuds services also take preventive action by questioning and optimizing the procedures that led to a certain problem.

2.5.5. Qualitative Feedback

If the information above gives the impression that education policy monitoring at Ghent University – i.e. the 'Check' on our operational objectives – is a purely objective or quantitative exercise, this impression needs qualifying. **Qualitative, in-depth information** is crucial, and we have the necessary procedures to gather it. Examples are the focus groups with students after a curricular reform, the student reflection mentioned above, reflection days with the professional field, alumni consultations, embedding the external perspective of international peers by means of benchmark sessions, annual quality assurance meetings between the study programme and the faculty, ...

In addition to these structural actions, qualitative information from various (staff) sections reaches us **during discussions and consultations** in various councils, committees, task forces or steering groups. Such reflections on (the quality of) education are at least as important to guarantee continuous monitoring of the education policy at all levels.

2.6. Improvement Policy: Quality Improvement Plans at All Levels

In the context of continuous quality assurance and improvement policy, **closing the PDCA cycle** in the 'Act' phase is particularly important. Essentially, this phase encourages reflection on what is going well and should be maintained, as well as on what is not. Study programmes, faculties and the university administration must be confirmed in continuing and sharing their good practices, in supporting excellent lecturers and in encouraging all initiatives that lead to premium-quality education.

The bedrock of our improvement policy are of course **our individual lecturers**. We encourage them to reflect on their day-to-day teaching practice and to take remedial action based on course feedback, focus groups, professional development initiatives, stakeholders consultations, international contacts, and research and innovation results. This (self-) reflective attitude forms the broad basis of our quality culture. The **new career and promotion plan for professorial staff** explicitly encourages this form of reflection on education. As mentioned above, each member of the professorial staff can bring this into their individual HR-committee.

Each study programme, faculty as well as the Education Department carries out **an annual check** of the operational objectives. As a result, they can formulate one or more

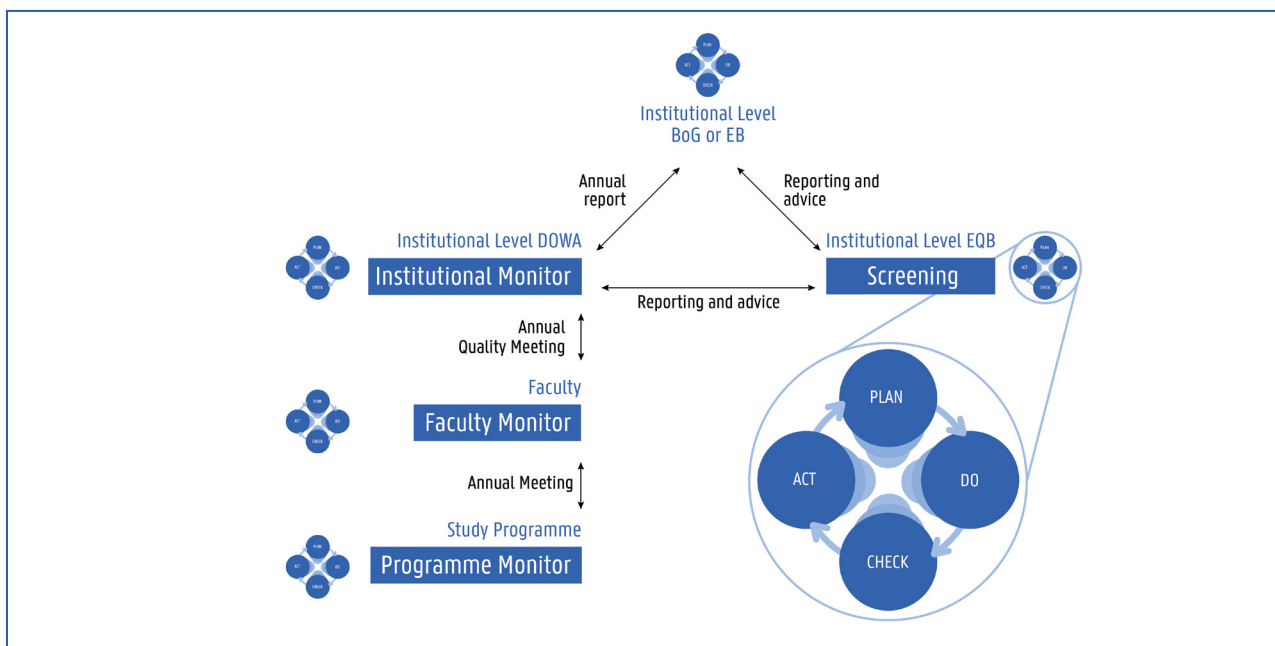


Figure 11: the PDCA cycle at the Three Policy Levels

'Acts' in their respective Education Monitors. This is mandatory for each 'Check' that results in a yellow or red flag. Formulating 'Acts' for operational objectives that have not been met to a sufficient degree guarantees a follow-up of that 'Act' and, possibly, a better future result. Many study programmes and faculties also formulate 'Acts' for a green or blue flag. Taken together, these 'Acts' make up an action plan or **quality improvement plan**, which also identifies actor(s), a timing, and a progress report for each act. This quality improvement plan is generated automatically by the

Education Monitor and is the basis for a study programme's/ faculty's improvement policy for the coming year or years. The plan is updated and adjusted annually.

At **study programme level**, the Programme Committee Chair plays a central role in monitoring the quality improvement plan. Personal information is treated with the necessary confidentiality and is only discussed in mutual consultation between the Programme Committee Chair/ Director of Studies and the lecturer involved (e.g. course feedback results) with the purpose of further remediation.

CASE STUDY

A Reliable Education Policy and Quality Assurance System in Times of Corona

In March 2020, the pandemic forced us to go into crisis management. We set up short communication lines between the different policy levels and installed a single point of contact. The various institutional departments worked closely together to offer our study programmes tools and methods for online teaching.

In addition to this crisis approach, we also developed a sustainable [vision on blended education](#), which allowed us to make swift but informed choices vis-à-vis the constantly changing corona safety measures. We used our Ghent University homepage and our online repository of [Education Tips](#) to inform our Ghent University community of these changes/choices, and linked them to specific [professional development initiatives on digital didactics](#).

Quality culture in our Programme Committees became especially visible in these times. Programme Committee chairs, lecturers and students consulted with each other even more to identify and solve problems. Student representatives organized surveys and set up efficient communication channels to consult their base, to determine problems and to offer solutions. Good practices, points to consider, and support initiatives were discussed. From September 2021 onwards, we incorporated the lessons learnt into our ideas for futureproof education.

At **faculty level**, the Director of Studies together with the faculty's Quality Assurance Committee are responsible for monitoring information gathered from surveys among students, lecturers, external parties, or from any other source such as the Ombuds service or the professional field, to ensure that a concrete action plan and remediation follow.

At **university level**, various consultation bodies and offices are responsible for closing the PDCA cycle. The Education Department is the competent department in this case, together with the Education Council, the Education Quality Board, the Board of Governors and the Executive Board. The Education Quality Board is Ghent University's specialist executive body for monitoring quality assurance and guaranteeing the quality of our education (see Chapter Three for an extensive discussion). Figure 11 shows how the PDCA cycle interacts with, and is closed at all three policy levels.

2.6.1. Global Improvement Actions at Study Programme Level

Each programme reviews its operational objectives (Check) annually and formulates corresponding improvement actions (Acts). These form an automatically generated quality improvement plan in the Education

Monitor. At the end of this Critical Reflection, we will take a closer look at how study programmes rate themselves on realizing the operational objectives, how they are achieving this in terms of content, and at a few examples of their monitoring. We will also discuss in more detail the **aggregation of the checks**, i.e. [the self-assessment exercise of all 103 study programme Education Monitors](#). Operational objectives that were flagged yellow or red by a significant number of study programmes will be followed by improvement actions. The most important improvement actions formulated by all programmes for the coming year or years can also be found in the illustration at the end of this Critical Review.

In addition to this self-assessment by our study programmes, **the Education Department (DOWA) conducts a thorough analysis** of the extent to which study programmes meet the operational objectives. This analysis is based on all quantitative and qualitative monitoring data that are available. The result can be found in the [first chapter of the institutional monitor](#). Emerging from this analysis are the following important points of concern:

- realizing international and intercultural competencies for students by integrating internationalization into the study programme by means of incoming and outgoing student mobility, and internationalization@home initiatives;

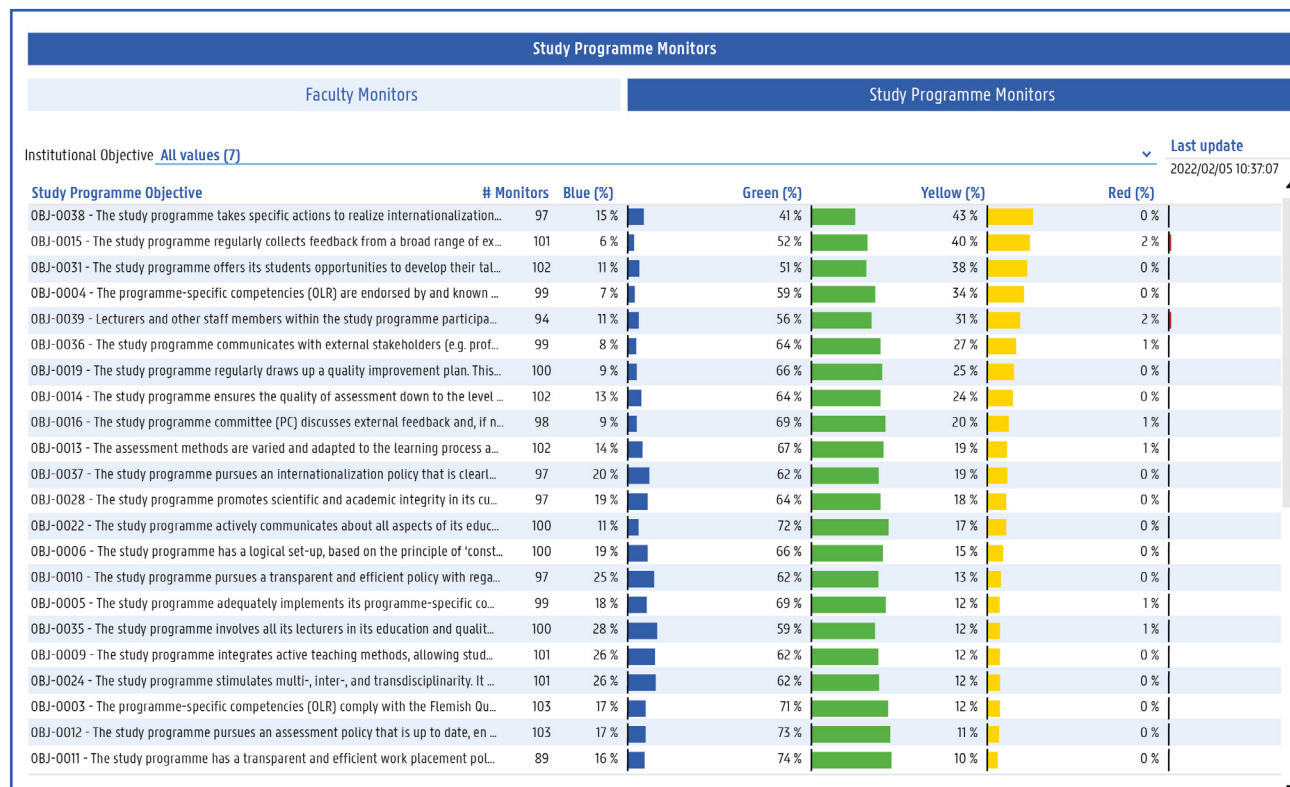


Figure 12: Aggregation of the Checks of Operational Objectives in the Study Programme Education Monitors

- creating optimal opportunities for students to develop competencies related to sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment;
- gathering feedback from a wide range of external stakeholders and international peers;
- encouraging lecturers' participation in staff mobility or international professional development initiatives;
- communicating with external stakeholders about the programme, and keeping abreast of social developments in the discipline;
- drawing up a high-performance quality improvement plan that gives rise to permanent quality assurance, and translates into improvement measures;
- guaranteeing high-quality assessment, applying the four-eye principle and providing regular (interim) feedback;
- integrating the principles of scientific and academic integrity into the programme.

Both analyses (study programme self-assessment and the Education Department's analysis) reveal **similar and congruent** results. In other words, study programmes are

an excellent judge of what their points of improvement are. This congruence is also an important criterion for assuring study programme quality, as described in Chapter Three.

2.6.2. Global Improvement Actions at Faculty Level

Similar to the process that is in place for study programmes, each faculty reviews its operational objectives (Check) annually and formulates corresponding improvement actions (Acts). Figure 13 shows the colour codes the eleven faculties have assigned themselves on each operational objective. The same information is accessible in UGI via this [link](#).

The most common improvement actions identified at faculty level are:

- creating opportunities for students to develop competencies related to sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment;
- aligning the quality improvement plan with the HR and research policy plans, making optimal use of education resources and optimizing the investment in education at study programme level;



Figure 13: Aggregation of Checks of the Operational Objectives in the Faculties' Education Monitors

- recognizing the commitment to education and corresponding compensation for those who take on education policy-related assignments in the course of their career;
- communicating with external stakeholders about the programme, and keeping abreast of social developments in the discipline;
- ensuring adequate and easily accessible facilities for all students on the various campuses.

2.6.3. Improvement Actions at University Level

In the [institutional Education Monitor](#), a total of 44 operational objectives account for twelve blue flags, 24 green flags and eight yellow flags. An overview of the checks for the institutional monitor can be found [here](#).

The most important improvement actions at university level to achieve the university's education objectives are:

- a stronger involvement of alumni, the professional field and international stakeholders in education and education policy;

- a further optimization of the new lifelong learning policy;
- an adjustment of our objectives for student mobility in the future;
- an optimization of curricular reform procedures;
- a strengthening of the international dimension with a special focus on international profiling;
- a better alignment of supply and demand in terms of education-related professional development, and a more efficient communication;
- a further development of our policy on labour market entry;
- more focus on diversity in the teaching practice, especially regarding students with migration background, international students, and students working their way through university;
- better-known and easily accessible support services for students;
- an investment in prevention with regard to e.g. students' mental well-being.

CHAPTER 2

Strengths and Weaknesses



STRENGTHS

- our university credo '**Dare to Think**' is well-endorsed and captures our university's uniqueness. This straightforward catchphrase is developed further in our '**multiperspectivistic**' education philosophy. A continued living up to this philosophy and method ties in perfectly with the transformation towards future-proof education;
- our **six strategic education objectives** are the result of a bottom-up process in the run-up to the 2016 institutional review. They have since come together in a well-endorsed, simple yet clear framework that reflects our university's DNA. Our education policy ensures that this framework does not lapse into dogma. For that purpose, we strive for a sound **balance between centralized university regulations and faculties' autonomy**. We shape our vision and (new) policy by means of interaction, stimulating our faculties' responsibility, ownership and motivation. This balance requires a continuous alignment of university frameworks and centralized regulations, and faculties'/study programmes' unique culture;
- that we are a university with **an education quality culture** is a substantiated fact. At Ghent University, we can boast strongly involved Programme Committees – the beating heart of our quality culture. Programme Committees are responsible for developing the underlying study programme's education policy, and for systematically monitoring education organization and the implementation of their improvement policy. Running this continuous PDCA cycle is guaranteed and monitored in the online Education Monitors. They bring together and visualize all aspects of the PDCA cycle for all those involved in the study programme and the faculty;
- at Ghent University, we can boast **passionate teaching staff** who put their weight behind premium-quality academic education. Our lecturers are also **excellent researchers**. Students and alumni both confirm that Ghent University has trained them to become academic and critical thinkers. Our strong **interconnection between education, research and critical thought** is much appreciated, and becomes clearly apparent in the excellent scores on the relevant operational objectives in the Education Monitors;
- we are proud of our **long-standing tradition of student involvement**. Student representatives contribute to and participate in the decision-making process on all policy levels (university, faculty, study programme). Our student representatives are committed members of all education-related councils, committees and task forces. They appreciate the fact that their voice is heard;
- we have succeeded in translating our six strategic objectives into a **common set of operational objectives on the level of the university, the faculty and the study programme** by means of co-creation. As a result, it is clear to all parties concerned what Ghent University stands for and strives for in terms of education. In other words, at Ghent University we all speak the same language. There is strong congruency between study programmes' and faculties' self-assessment in their Education Monitors (Check) and the available data (quantitative as well as qualitative evidence). This means that these self-assessments have been carried out very minutely and accurately. Study programmes and faculties show great self-awareness when it comes to identifying points for concern and formulating effective improvement policies. In other words, they show no tendency whatsoever for window dressing. Our future-proof education is a continued commitment to our six strategic objectives as the bedrock of our education policy, with three additional key strategies: (1) future-proof curricula, (2) lifelong learning, and (3) Blend@UGent. They will undoubtedly lead to future adjustments of our operational objectives at all three policy levels;

- our institutionally developed and university-wide **monitoring instruments** (course feedback, study programme feedback, Master's dissertation survey, lecturers' survey, alumni survey) in combination with data reports and frequent education consultations result in highly useable data and indicators. This integrated information (thanks to the UGI for Education Policy app) supports and informs **systematic self-reflection, dialogue, and improvement actions**. Thanks to a transparent and open data sharing – a characteristic we are proud of – among faculties and study programmes, we can perform benchmarks on each policy level;
- the Education Monitors automatically generate **quality improvement plans**, clearly visualizing actions, actors, timing and progress reports;
- our university boasts a **strong partnership** between its Education Department and its faculties. This partnership is based on trust, dialogue, critical reflection and co-creation. It ensures an excellent alignment in the implementation of university-wide education processes and their translation to the faculty context. We invest heavily in learning from each other by bringing people from different faculties but with similar education-related responsibilities together (staff members from the various faculty offices such as the tutorial services, study track counselling, student administration, internationalization, quality assurance), by consulting with the Directors of Studies regularly, and by organizing learning networks for Programme Committee Chairs. Faculties carry out a critical reflection in their Education Monitors at least annually, which is discussed during Annual Quality Meetings with the Education Department. The information gathered from these meetings in combination with aggregated data gathered from the faculties' and study programmes' Education Monitors feed the institutional Education Monitor. This, in turn, inspires the Education Department to take supportive action vis-à-vis faculties and study programmes;
- **the improvement policy of the three policy levels is interconnected** via the Programme Committee Chair, the Director of Studies, the Director of Education, the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Board of Governors and the Executive Board. This interconnection ensures a quality culture in which all parties contribute to quality improvement and innovation;
- during the **pandemic**, the formal and informal consultation structures, the lines of communication and partnership at the three levels, the qualitative and quantitative monitoring and review tools, the quality culture and risk management proved to be **reliable enough** to take appropriate crisis measures.

WEAKNESSES

- our **range of study programmes** should be more proof of the **multiperspectivism** we want to realize. Although research at Ghent University has become more and more multidisciplinary in recent years, initiatives to embed this in study programmes are few and far between. The way in which Ghent University is organized, with separate structures, HR and finance policy plans in every faculty, creates barriers here.
In line with the criteria for future-proof education, it will be key to have every study programme integrate into their curricula generic competencies as well as multi- and interdisciplinary learning opportunities, internationalization opportunities, social embedding and flexible learning pathways. We have selected twenty study programmes which will serve as pilots for an accelerated implementation of these criteria in the period of 2022-2023. As such, they will be laboratories for implementation of these criteria in other study programmes in the upcoming five years. This forces us to rethink our organizational structure, an exercise we have initiated;
- in many study programmes, the structural input of external stakeholders, especially **international and independent peers** who can assess study programme content, is still in an embryonic phase. Although we have developed clear frameworks and support services, implementation is lagging. This is partly due, of course, to the pandemic. In the upcoming three years, the faculties in collaboration with the Education Quality Board will have to ensure that the international external perspective be effectively used to assess whether or not a study programme is up to par with (inter)national standards. Study programmes with an interest in expanding their opportunities, will find those within the ENLIGHT network;

- strong involvement on the part of our students, lecturers and support staff on all levels of policy making and policy implementation entails a risk of **survey fatigue** and **overburdening** of these groups. This, in turn, can lead to decreased involvement or even a discontinuation of their involvement altogether. Not only do we need to establish a sound balance here, we also have to provide a fair recognition to students and lecturers taking up policy mandates. As far as lecturers are concerned, such a recognition is now built into the new career plan for professorial staff. For students, we have initiated a system of awarding badges for voluntary commitments. Specific badges are also being developed for student representatives;

- a few years ago, we set ourselves the ambition that 25% of our students should graduate with an international exchange experience. Making this target explicit in the context of student mobility and the continuous reporting via UGI has created a positive dynamic since 2016. However, for several years now, the number of graduates with international experience has stagnated, which tells us that international mobility is still far from self-evident for many students. Targeted actions are still necessary.

More generally, students indicated that they are not yet encouraged sufficiently to go abroad, that they do not come into contact with international students enough, and that they do not experience enough internationalization@home initiatives. It is clear that not all students graduating from Ghent University acquire the necessary **international and intercultural competencies**.

Students indicate, moreover, that they have little contact with international lecturers. The proportion of international staff among our doctoral students and post-doctoral staff is relatively balanced (48% and 38% respectively). Students come into contact with these staff members through practicals and the supervision of Master's dissertations. However, the number of international members of the professorial staff is still limited. This staff section is also little involved in international education mobility. There is still room for improvement here;

- students themselves, but also study programmes and faculties, indicate that students should be given more opportunities to acquire competences on **specific themes** such as sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment. In recent years, many steps have been taken in this direction, but the visibility and impact are still too limited in many programmes.

Students also feel that they are lacking **diversity** competencies. A more outspoken focus on diversity in teaching practice, more attention to students with a migrant background, lower socio-economic status, international students and students working their way through university is a must. The challenges here are not only a lack of diversity in our student intake – i.e. a student population that is a better cross-section of social diversity - but also the study progress of these student groups;

- faculties express a wish for better co-ordination between the different policies (HR, research and education). A more integrated approach of the **quality improvement plan** for education, incorporating HR and research, should ensure a more optimal use of resources and optimize the investment for education at programme level as well;

- ensuring sufficient investment in and maintenance of adequate **infrastructure and facilities** on our various campuses is a major challenge. Ghent University has more than twenty campuses in the larger Ghent area, encompassing over 400 lecture halls and classrooms often located in historical heritage buildings. These exceptional locations come with their very specific logistical challenges, including rostering classes. At present, our education infrastructure is still quite traditional and focused on ex-cathedra teaching. The evolution towards the 'campus of the future' with flexible (education) spaces aimed at active learning, encounters and connectedness, and Blend@UGent, needs to accelerate. In the context of the [Apollo 8 project](#), special infrastructural efforts are being made towards an active, hybrid and interactive on-campus future-proof education, in addition to investments for the next generation digital learning environment.

Chapter 3

Quality Assurance: Quality Conduct 2.0

This chapter describes Ghent University's [quality assurance system](#), the so-called Quality Conduct 2.0. It is a system that came into being after a thorough review of the original internal system (known as the [Quality Conduct 1.0](#)) and under impulse of the new Flemish Quality Code in 2018.

The changing legislative contours in Flanders have allowed Ghent University to take far-reaching steps towards a structural quality culture for education. In so doing, we have boldly departed from models and procedures aimed at momentaneous quality control as they only produce intensive but short-lived boosts to quality improvement. Instead, we want to evolve towards a fully-fledged and university-wide quality culture "in which all stakeholders naturally strive for *continuous* quality assurance as well as quality enhancement" (my transl.).²

Our [Quality Conduct 2.0](#) is built on the following basic principles (ut infra for further details):

- **trust:** the new approach is premised on trust in the expertise held by study programmes and faculties;
- **shared ownership:** the new approach aims at facilitating and stimulating self-management. After all, the study programmes and faculties are the principal engine for generating and monitoring quality;
- **continuous monitoring:** the new approach aims at furthering a positive quality culture, in which faculties and study programmes are stimulated to monitor (the quality of) their education continuously;
- **efficient tools:** the new approach offers a set of "quality performance tools" to support existing quality assurance procedures, and to substantiate policy-making in faculties and study programmes;
- **lean administrative processes** according to the principles of **Enlightened University** (in Dutch: UGent Verlicht). Where possible, we implement

simplified administrative processes, reducing reporting and documentation requirements and overhead to an absolute minimum.

Installing a fully-fledged university-wide quality culture implies a framework containing a growth path with short-term and long-term goals. This is exactly what the new quality assurance model provides. In the period of 2020-2024, Ghent University aims at instilling in its study programmes an attitude of **data-driven critical reflection** and **systematic follow-up** of improvement actions. We elaborated on this in Chapter Two of this Critical Reflection. This is the phase of **Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0**, during which the [Education Quality Board](#) (EQB) screens and ensures the quality assurance processes of our study programmes.

In a next phase, from 2024 onwards, faculties' and study programmes' self-management will have been sufficiently boosted: they will be able to refer to the varied education support services at their own discretion in order to ensure a **continuous and continual monitoring and improvement of education**. This phase will be Ghent University's **Quality Conduct 3.0** (ut infra).



Figure 14: Growth Path for Quality Culture

² <https://www.nvao.net/nl/procedures/vlaanderen/instellingsreview>

3.1 Quality Conduct 1.0 (2015-2019): Focus on Peer Learning Visits

Legislative changes in Flanders (2014), gave higher education institutions (HEI) an opportunity to take quality assurance of study programmes into their own hands. A transitional decree suspended the external quality reviews (in Dutch: onderwijsvisitaties) that had been customary up until then, and in their place introduced the **institutional review**. Supervised by the NVAO, the institutional review and its concomitant procedures aim at gauging the HEI's policy and so-called quality conduct. The changing legislative contours provided the incentive for the development and implementation of Ghent University's first internal quality assurance system. In the period between 2015-2019, the new system put into place PDCA-based monitoring processes on all levels of policy-making: the individual study programmes, the faculties, and the institution. A description of Ghent University's Quality Conduct 1.0 as it was presented to the Institutional Review Committee in 2016 can be consulted [here](#).

At the **level of the study programmes** the new system introduced **peer learning visits**: a team consisting of three Ghent University Programme Committee chairs, an external expert and a student representative visited another Ghent University study programme and met with teaching staff, students, alumni and study programme management. A policy officer of the Education Department – Quality Assurance Office prepared and co-ordinated these visits. In those days, each study programme had a **digital portfolio** built in our former digital learning environment Minerva. An online repository in which study programmes outlined their day-to-day operation, the portfolios included all underlying (quality assurance) processes and practices. A crucial information feed in the portfolios was the data made available through UGI, and the study programme's critical analysis of that data. The information in the portfolio, then, was the starting point for the peer learning visits. Every peer learning visit resulted in a written report that was brought before the **Education Quality Board** (hereafter EQB; ut infra).

Parallel to the processes for study programmes, the new system also introduced various monitoring processes at **faculty level**, including a **portfolio** and an **annual quality meeting**. The faculty portfolio logically focused on faculty-specific policy lines and actions, and faculty-specific quality assurance processes. **Every faculty also takes part in the Annual Quality Meeting**, involving the following parties: the Dean and Director of Studies, the Director of Education, the Head of the Quality Assurance Office and their immediate

staff. Main subject of these meetings are the principal policy and quality assurance developments at faculty level (ut infra 3.2.2.).

At **institutional level**, a specialized committee was installed to **monitor the efficiency of quality assurance processes, and to guarantee the quality** of each Ghent University study programme. The **Education Quality Board** (EQB) operates under supervision of the Board of Governors and the Executive Board, but has been granted decision-making power in all matters related to education policy and quality assurance.

In the years 2015-2017, NVAO conducted a **first round of institutional reviews** at Flemish universities and university colleges by way of baseline measurement. As such, the outcome had no legal effect but resulted instead in an advisory report with specific recommendations. Ghent University's advisory report – delivered after the site visit in May 2016 – emphasized the Quality Conduct's clear stimulus towards self-reflection on quality assurance. Additionally, the report commended, among other things, the **thorough process-based check** that was built into the peer learning concept; the **focus on reciprocal learning** between study programmes, and the **strong student involvement** on all levels of the new quality assurance model. At the same time, however, the report advised **further investment in international benchmarking**, and a **strengthened check on study programme content**.

Other advice given during the 2016 Institutional Review included (1) a warning concerning the operationalization of indicators and their role as a support tool vs. a mechanization of improvement policy; (2) a recommendation to keep reviewing the tools and processes that are part of education policy, even when there is no external pressure (e.g. an upcoming institutional review); (3) a suggestion to continue monitoring the investment of time required by the new system, and to be as economical as possible with formalities that have no added value to content; (4) a review of the peer learning visits, specifically their purpose as 'process assessment' vs. 'content assessment', and the role of the external experts.

NVAO's advisory report (in Dutch) can be consulted [here](#). A systematic overview of how we addressed the various recommendations can be found [here](#).

In the immediate aftermath of the institutional review, we **subjected the Quality Conduct 1.0 and the peer learning concept to a thorough review**. In the course of the 2016-2017 academic year, meetings were arranged with the eleven faculties' Directors of Studies and quality assurance staff. Among other things, the ensuing talks established that the digital portfolio was considered to be too passive an

instrument for integration into the study programmes' day-to-day operation. Performing a systematic check on all 55 processes and the more than 100 indicators that lie at the heart of the portfolio had turned out to be a highly complex exercise, not in the least because study programmes had to delve into UGI themselves to uncover the relevant data. The system, in other words, raised (too) many impediments to systematic, data-driven decision-making and quality assurance.

With the purpose of formulating specific improvement measures, the Education Department launched a survey and organized focus group meetings in the spring of 2018, targeting every stakeholder group that had up until this point participated in the peer learning visits. Together with a **general appreciation** for the peer learning concept, this internal systems review uncovered a number of **positive aspects**, for instance: an outspoken interest in the development of support services, which would come into effect after the peer learning visit, and which would consist of tailor-made coaching initiatives. The responses **also** revealed several **points of improvement**, for instance: the fact that during peer learning visits, peers were asked to assess and score each other was found to be overly judgmental, and therefore too reminiscent of the external reviews of old. This approach might also unintentionally pave the way to more institutionalized window dressing. Moreover, for many respondents the focus of peer learning visits proved to be muddled, holding an ambiguous middle between process assessment and content-specific assessment. Finally, the peer learning visits were shown to bring about a considerable administrative burden, not in the least because the majority of "peer visited" study programmes was not expected to present any major problems – as was afterwards confirmed by 90% of the peer learning reports. A more extensive memo on the Quality Conduct 1.0 under Review can be consulted [here](#).

A review of the transitional decree by the appropriate government echelons resulted in a **new Quality Code for Higher Education** in May 2018. The Flemish legislators decided to **maintain the process of institutional reviews** in a six-year review cycle. The Quality Code lays down a set of **assessment criteria for future institutional reviews**, and a number of quality features which all study programmes are expected to meet. The institution's own quality conduct must guarantee the following aspects: **programme-specific content** (learning outcomes, curriculum, exit level), the quality culture in each study programme, and the extent to which study programmes implement their institution's education policy. At Ghent University, this means that our Quality Conduct must guarantee an implementation of our six strategic education objectives at study programme level.

In addition, the Quality Code places strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement: higher education institutions are expected to structurally involve **internal** (lecturing staff, students) **as well as external** (alumni, the professional field, independent international peers) **stakeholder parties** in their quality assurance. Finally and crucially, the Quality Code explicitly holds higher education institutions responsible for pronouncing a **formal quality assurance resolution** (QAR) for every individual study programme, and for the publication and follow-up of those QARs as "**publicly available information**".

3.2. Quality Conduct 2.0 (2020-2023): Focus on Quality Reflection

The developments outlined above prompted policy makers at Ghent University to bring our quality assurance model up to date, and in compliance with the new legislative guidelines. In the course of one year (late 2018 – end of 2019), we developed the Quality Conduct 2.0 in close consultation with internal stakeholders and **external experts**. We held **reflection sessions with national and international colleagues**, addressing positive elements as well as potential risks and possible adaptations. On a Flemish level, we had management meetings with the University of Antwerp and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, in addition to several co-ordination meetings with NVAO.

We also took our Quality Conduct 2.0 to **international forums** such as the European Quality Assurance Forum in 2019, the Peer Support Group on QA Peer Learning Activity in Bologna in January 2020 (in the context of the European project [ESQA](#) with other European Quality Assurance Agencies), and the ENLIGHT Teaching and Learning Conference in 2021. Our contribution at the ENLIGHT conference resulted in a [publication](#). In February 2020 we met Tia Loukkola, the Director of Institutional Development at EUA for a consultation meeting. Between 2019 and 2022 we had various meetings with international colleagues who had shown an interest in getting to know our Quality Conduct 2.0.

3.2.1. PDCA-based Quality Reflection

In Chapter Two we gave a comprehensive overview of how all policy levels at Ghent University engage in **quality reflection based on the PDCA principle**, including such supporting tools as the Education Monitor, UGI, and our monitoring processes and quality improvement plans.

In our new Quality Conduct quality reflection and quality assurance go hand in hand naturally. To facilitate collaboration on quality assurance, and to stimulate team meetings we added [‘team sites’](#) to each study programme and faculty monitor. We also built in links to our [‘online document management system’](#) for better access to meeting minutes of Programme Committees and faculties’ Quality Assurance Committees, among others. Figure 15 visualizes the quality reflection process on study programme level, with at its heart the Programme Committee, what is being reflected upon, and by means of which tools this can be realized efficiently.

3.2.2 Quality Assurance

The External Perspective

In 2016, the institutional review committee advised further investment in **international benchmarking** and **a strengthened check on study programme content**. When the new Quality Code came into effect, this advice became law for all higher education institutions: the external perspective becomes crucial for the assessment of programme content (e.g. programme competencies/learning outcomes, curriculum, exit level). Ghent University’s Quality Conduct 2.0 structurally embeds [the external perspective](#) and gives it a very prominent role.

The Quality Code identifies two stakeholder groups as

“carriers” of the external perspective, i.e. **independent international peers/colleagues/experts** on the one hand, and **professional field representatives, alumni, relevant other external parties** on the other. Most of our study programmes and faculties regularly involve stakeholder parties to bring in an external perspective. In some cases, however, these initiatives have a rather informal character and are, therefore, not as systematic and/or traceable in terms of impact as they should be. With our Quality Conduct 2.0, we want to implement the external perspective in all our study programmes in a **systematic, formal and traceable manner**, as is currently laid down by the Quality Code.

What follows are minimal requirements for each study programme:

1. each study programme seeks out **a broad range** of external stakeholders to review its content-related components – including (at the very least) its programme competencies/learning outcomes, curriculum, assessment and exit level;
2. on an annual basis, the Programme Committee is to discuss the results of **programme-specific surveys** of the professional field, or of other structurally involved stakeholders, and of **institutionally organized** alumni surveys, as they become available in the Education Monitor via UGI. These surveys form a starting point for **self-reflection** and further in-depth analysis;

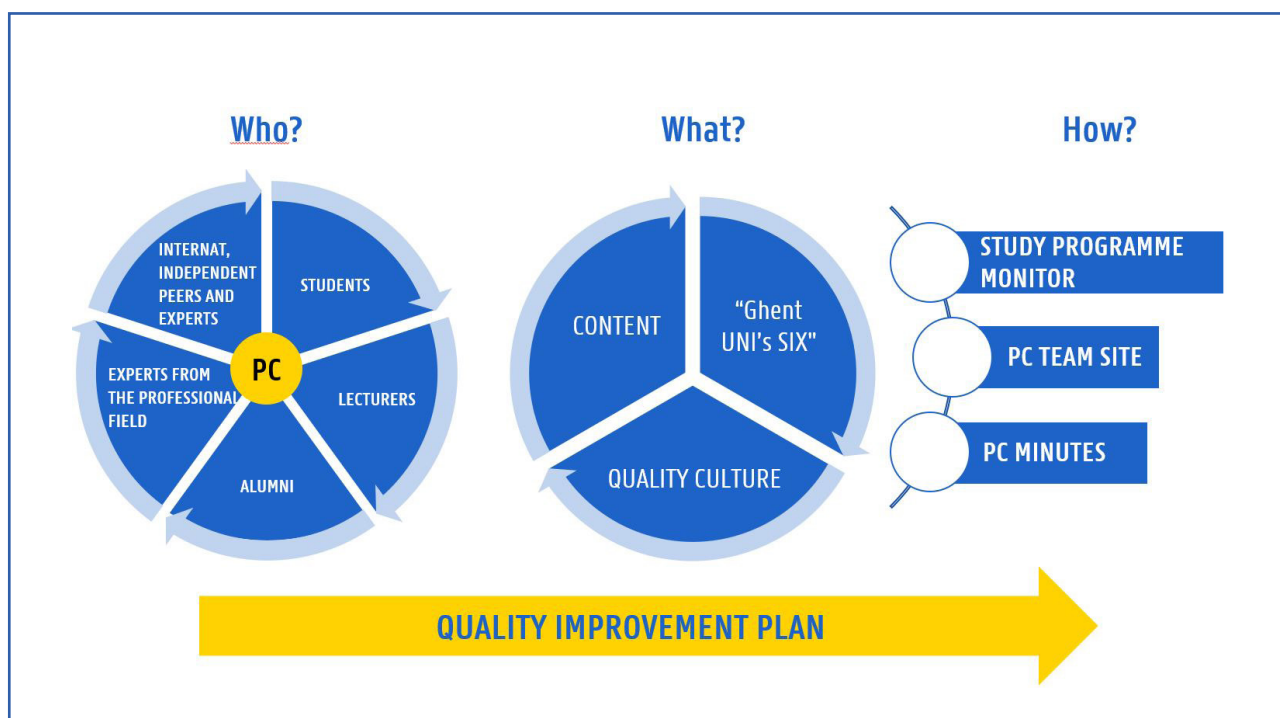


Figure 15: Quality Reflection at Study Programme Level

3. the programme is to conduct a programme review. This entails that at least **three academic peers** with international acclaim and with a broad view on the programme review programme content quality, either individually or in a panel. Such a programme review is to take place once every four years or in the context of a major curriculum revision. The focus of the programme review is to check whether or not programme competencies/learning outcomes, curriculum, assessment, and exit level are up to standard.

The Education Department provides a policy framework and supporting information on possible **actions and (teaching) methods** to this end. The actions aimed at introducing the external perspective must always be **traceable** in the sense that study programmes discuss their policy, (planned) actions and the result of those actions – the input obtained and whether or not that input is acted upon – during Programme Committee meetings and keep records in their Education Monitor.

Annual Quality Meetings

At faculty level, the **Annual Quality Meeting** fulfils an essential part in quality monitoring and quality assurance of study programmes. These Quality Meetings take place between the Dean and Director of Studies, on the one hand, and the Director of Education and the Head of the Quality Assurance Office, on the other. Principle focus of

these meetings, based on information available in the faculty's Education Monitor, are its education policy, quality assurance, quality culture, points for improvement and support questions. These open dialogues underscore the partnership between the individual faculties and the Education Department: strengths, weaknesses, as well as potential actions and support initiatives are discussed in all honesty. We introduced the **Annual Quality Meeting** as a format in 2014 in the context of our Quality Conduct 1.0. Over the past eight years, it has resulted in our faculties' taking up a more active role in developing an overarching education policy for their study programmes. It also generated more uniformity and strengthened the partnerships between study programmes, faculties and the Education Department.

The Education Quality Board (EQB)

Since 2015, the [Education Quality Board](#) (EQB) has been **Ghent University's specialist executive body** responsible for **monitoring** the efficiency of **quality assurance** processes and guaranteeing the quality of our study programmes. As such, the EQB takes on the task of the external review panels of old, and uses its helicopter view to monitor all of Ghent University's study programmes. It collects and analyses quality assurance data and translates that information into specific actions for study programmes. In the Quality Conduct 1.0, the EQB supervised and gave consequence to (the reports of the) the peer learning visits and the Annual Quality Meeting. In other words, the EQB is the governing body

CASE STUDY

Alumni Outreach at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEB) aims for a strong partnership with their alumni. The faculty has got an active alumni association, which unites all alumni of the faculty by organizing events, workshops, lectures, company visits, ... Alumni are kept up to date with the FEB's developments via a [website](#), a [magazine](#) and an interactive LinkedIn group.

This community allows the study programmes of the faculty to tap into on a strong network of alumni, e.g. by encouraging them to propose Master's dissertation subjects and work placements, to be guest lecturers or to hand out awards at proclamations. Furthermore, alumni are invited to share their experiences at several student information sessions, e.g. on internships, experiences abroad, majors and study choices.

On top of that, each Programme Committee consists of at least two alumni, providing feedback on the curriculum based on their professional activities. At faculty level, alumni are involved in strategic decisions via an alumni committee, advising both Programme Committee as well as the faculty board.

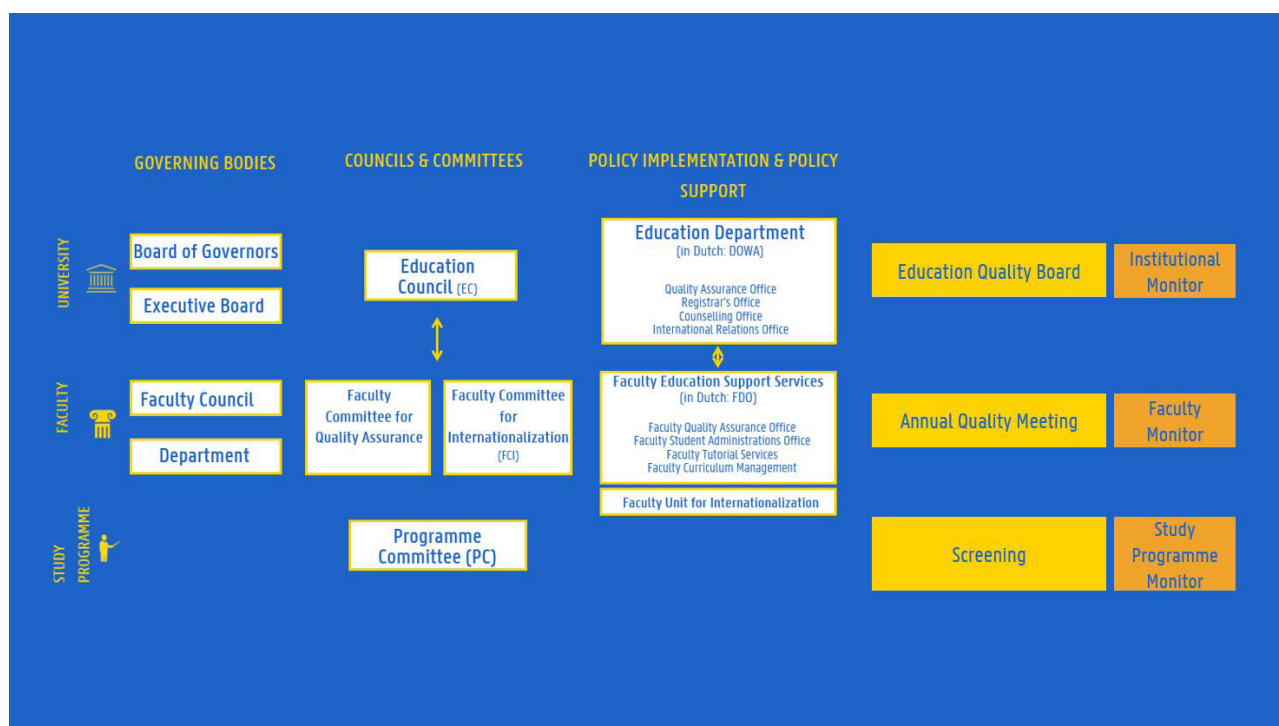


Figure 16: Ghent University's Structures for Education Policy-making, Policy Implementation and Quality Assurance

responsible for **closing the quality cycle at top level**. The EQB retains its **monitoring and quality assurance responsibilities** in the Quality Conduct 2.0. This means that the EQB needs to check whether the study programmes are able to pursue an efficient and shared education policy, and to perform quality assurance processes. In this light, the EQB is **carrying out a once-only screening of all the Education Monitors in the years 2021-2023 in order to gain clear insight into the study programmes' quality culture and improvement capacity**. Based on that screening, it will pass a **quality assurance resolution** (positive, positive with crucial points of improvement, negative) on every study programme's education quality and quality culture, and will publish these resolutions as part of the so-called 'publicly available information'.

It is important to note that the EQB does not aim at assessing programme-specific contents - after all, that aspect is covered by the external perspective, but rather at gaining clear insight into the study programmes' quality culture and improvement capacity. For the screening purposes described above, the EQB has **unmediated access to the Education Monitors**. Considering the scale of our university, this screening exercise is an elaborate one.

With the new role for the EQB as detailed above naturally follows a **new composition**. A body as is the EQB should consist of members with complementary expertise, as did the external assessment panels of old. To achieve this

complementarity as well as create sufficient capacity for the elaborate screening exercise described above, we chose to enlarge the EQB. For one, the external delegation was doubled (i.e. from two to four). This allowed us to strengthen the external perspective and to assign an external screener for every study programme screening. An additional representative of the assistant academic staff (two in total) and two members of the technical and administrative staff joined the EQB. This way, the EQB wants to validate the expertise of this section with regard to education quality assurance, while increasing its screening capacity at the same time. As far as the in-house experts are concerned, the aim is to achieve a **balanced constellation of experts who can contribute ideas and take quality assurance decisions independently of their statute**. The members do not act as representatives of their section or faculty, but become part of the university's monitoring and guiding body. The diversity of statutes offers added value in terms of complementary expertise

Currently, the EQB **counts among its members** Ghent University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (who acts as Chair), the Director of Education, four members of the professorial staff, two students, two members of the assistant academic staff, two members of the administrative and technical staff, and four external experts (profit and non-profit). For more information, please consult this [website](#).

The EQB Screening Procedure

To organize the screening of more than a hundred study programmes/Education Monitors in a systematic manner, the EQB avails itself of a **screening calendar**, which schedules a screening of four Education Monitors per month. Preferably, these four Education Monitors/study programmes all belong to the same faculty, allowing the EQB members to include relevant information from the faculty's Education Monitor while they are screening. Each Education Monitor is assigned three screeners who have a four-week period to finish their screening. One week before the EQB meeting all screeners are given read-only access to each other's templates. By way of preparation, they are asked to read the Education Monitors and concomitant templates.

It goes without saying that screening Education Monitors is a standardized process, in the course of which the same set of criteria is applied to all study programmes, and the screeners receive an accurate and nuanced insight into a study programme's actual quality culture. Screening Education Monitors, in short, should be a smooth and efficient, as well as an utterly transparent process.

To meet these criteria, the Education Department provides EQB members with a user-friendly template as well as a fully automated and digitized screening process, inclusive of the written reports, summaries, EQB discussions and quality assurance resolutions. In the run-up to the screenings in June 2021, the EQB devoted various meetings to further fine-tuning its procedures, as well as optimizing and standardizing the way in which the criteria were to be applied. Using "mock" Education Monitors, EQB members could practice their screening skills. The ensuing debriefings allowed for a solid inter-rater reliability.

The Education Quality Board performs the [screening of each Education Monitor](#) based on **three general domains/criteria** built into a uniform and easily manageable digital template provided by the Education Department. The template gives screeners immediate access to any additional relevant data (UGI data, PC minutes, the faculty's Education Monitor, etc).

The following three criteria are assessed:

1. Data Congruence

The first question that needs answering is whether or not the picture study programmes have, and give of themselves (in the self-assessment, among other things) in their Education Monitors is accurate and in accordance with the available data from (e.g.) UGI.

2. Embedding the External Perspective

The second question that needs answering is whether or not the actions planned and/or undertaken by a study programme to embed the external perspective guarantee a structural, content-related check of (at least) study programme competencies, curriculum, assessment and exit level by international peers and representatives of the professional field.

3. Quality Culture

The third question that needs answering is whether or not, and if so, to what extent a study programme is able to do a proper bottleneck analysis and set up improvement actions if necessary. In addition, the Programme Committee's and other policy bodies' efficiency is examined, as are the structural processes they have in place to ensure an efficient follow-up of quality assurance, and to ensure well-informed and involved stakeholders.

Quality Assurance Resolution

On the basis of the screenings, the EQB will pronounce a **quality assurance resolution** for each study programme (and its education quality and quality culture).

There are three possible outcomes:

1. basic (education) quality is guaranteed, with confidence in the study programme's policy-making capacity: positive quality assurance resolution.

The EQB can advise to follow up on certain improvement actions, and to participate in specific education support initiatives, and the study programme might be invited to share one or more good practices with other study programmes/faculties;

2. basic (education) quality is guaranteed, though improvement actions are needed: positive quality assurance resolution

with a compulsory referral to specific coaching tailored to the identified points of concern. The study programme delivers a three-monthly progress report to the EQB. More information on tailored coaching is available [here](#). The EQB identifies the crucial points of concern and lays down specific actions that need to be addressed during the coaching programme. In addition, the study programme is free to participate in specific education support initiatives;

3. basic (education) quality is not guaranteed: negative quality assurance resolution with urgent measures, and if necessary, immediate discontinuation of the study programme.

For every quality assurance resolution it passes, the EQB also issues an accompanying synthesis report, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to quality assurance and recommendations vis-à-vis the study programme. Study programmes may find inspiration on [Ghent University's Training Platform \(UTOP\)](#), which inventories all our education support services, or in our Education Tips repository. In addition, the EQB asks of study programmes to update their publicly available information within a two-month term, if necessary.

Reply to an EQB-issued e-mail detailing the screening results of a study programme (December 2021): "As Programme Committee chair, I wish to thank you for your confidence in our study programme, and especially also for the useful suggestions and recommendations. We will discuss them at our upcoming PC meeting, and integrate them into our improvement plan."

If the EQB is of the opinion that a positive quality assurance resolution with a tailored coaching programme is required, or even a negative quality assurance resolution, it will always invite the parties involved (study programme and faculty management) to discuss its conclusions. More information on this right of reply procedure can be found [here](#). In case of a negative quality assurance resolution, a study programme can initiate an appeals procedure. More information on the appeals procedure can be found [here](#).

3.2.3 Specific Quality Assurance Procedures

External Accreditation at Study Programme Level

Some of our faculties/study programmes continue to participate in external accreditation procedures. Their choice of doing so is often informed by the prestige such external accreditations bring, their international renown and/or their impact. The following faculties/study programmes participate in external accreditation:

- the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration is currently running the accreditation procedure to obtain recognition from the

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) for all its study programmes. In addition, the Public Administration and Governance programme (Bachelor's and Master's) obtained the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) and the American International Commission on Accreditation of Public Administration Education and Training (ICAPA) in 2017;

- the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture obtained an accreditation ('State Admission') and a EUR-ACE label from the Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur (CTI) for its civil engineering programmes in 2016. They are running a second procedure in 2022 in order to renew both the accreditation and the EUR-ACE label;
- the Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Veterinary Medicine (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine) are accredited by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) since 2013. A new procedure follows in 2023. This label guarantees that these programmes meet the European Directive 2005/36 on professional qualifications and is a requirement for alumni to be able to pursue their profession.

In our Quality Conduct, these external accreditations can be used in the context of the external perspective, more specifically the international benchmark and the international programme review.

International Study Programmes

Joint international study programmes organized by a Flemish higher education institution in partnership with one or more higher education institutions abroad, and resulting in a joint degree or multiple national degrees do not follow the Quality Conduct 2.0 as such. These study programmes are assessed by means of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, approved by the ministers of the European Higher Education Area (2015). The European Approach provides one overarching framework with standards and guidelines for the assessment of joint international programmes. All quality assurance agencies registered in the European Register can conduct assessments of international joint programmes if they use this framework. More information on the European Approach at Ghent University can be found [here](#).

In the context of our own Quality Conduct 2.0, we apply

the European Approach to all our international study programmes, including the ones who hold external accreditation. We do so in a six-year cycle with interim follow-up sessions.

Quality Assurance of Lifelong Learning Initiatives

Our Quality Conduct 2.0 applies to all Bachelor's, Master's, advanced Master's programmes, as well as academic bridging programmes and preparatory programmes. Lifelong learning initiatives like postgraduate programmes, short- or long-term programmes and microcredentials resulting in an assessment and a Ghent University certificate follow a different, lighter quality assurance procedure. More information can be found [here](#).

3.2.4 Publicly Available Information

Every Ghent University study programme, including the international ones, is expected to render account to the general public about the quality (assurance) of their education. Higher education institutions are additionally expected to publish meaningful information on their study programmes, curricula, profile, This is the so-called "publicly available information".

After every Quality Assurance Resolution passed by the Education Quality Board, the faculty and the study programme concerned will be asked to update their **publicly available information** and include that update into their Education Monitor. This text contains an overview of the **main strengths and points of improvement together with a feasible timing** for addressing the latter. This overview is open for consultation by the general public on a [separate education policy and quality assurance webpage](#) on the Ghent University homepage. From there, it is also possible to link to the [Study Guide](#).

This means that prospective students and their parents, as well as external parties, can find **all the available information** on any particular study programme in one single location, i.e. our Study Guide website. The website gives access to **integrated information** on study programme content (including target audience, structure, professional field, curriculum, information for study orientation, ...) and study **programme quality**. In addition, our webpage also links to the ["Study Programmes: Facts and Figures"](#) (in Dutch) website run by the Flemish Government.

3.2.5 Peer Learning Visits and Screening at Study Programme Level: Outcome

The peer learning visits on study programme level (Quality Conduct 1.0) had a running time of four years (2015-2019), in the course of which we "peer visited" **34 study programmes**. The Education Quality Board pronounced **a positive quality assurance resolutions for 26 programmes**. **Eight study programmes** received **a positive quality assurance resolution with a need for improvement actions**, six of which were included in a shortened quality cycle of three years (instead of six). After three years, the EQB determined whether or not the study programmes had been able to resolve their problems. Two study programmes became "wards of the EQB" and as such, were given a strict schedule of quarterly progress reports on their quality improvement plans. One of these study programmes received a negative quality assurance resolution for one of their main subjects, which resulted in an immediate standstill of new enrolments. This decision was taken in close consultation with the faculty involved.

From September 2021 onwards, the EQB started screening Education Monitors (Quality Conduct 2.0). Between 2021-2023, the EQB will have screened all 103 Education Monitors, and will have pronounced quality assurance resolutions for all study programmes. This will allow us to move on to the Quality Conduct 3.0 from 2024 onwards. Between **September 2021 and June 2022**, the EQB screened 41 Education Monitors: 36 study programmes received a positive quality assurance resolution and 4 received a positive quality assurance resolution with a mandatory coaching programme. The EQB found one Education Monitor to be inadmissible for screening and decided to reschedule the screening to the autumn of 2022.

In the meantime, of course we also continued to follow up **those study programmes who received a quality assurance resolution with the need for immediate improvement actions (Quality Conduct 1.0)**. For two of those study programmes, the EQB had little confidence in their actual improvement capacity, and entered them into a mandatory coaching programme. They are also included in the EQB screening calendar.

It is important to keep in mind that the Quality Conduct 2.0 is a relatively new system that has yet to be fully implemented. The process of cultivating endorsement among all study programmes is still ongoing. What we see at this point,

CASE STUDY

Study Programme in a Tailored Coaching Programme

A peer learning committee visited the study programme in April 2018 and presented its report with recommendations to the Education Quality Board. The EQB took the study programme as its ward and placed it in a tailored coaching programme.

A distinguishing feature of the study programme was its strong interconnection of clinical and academic education, which resulted in a number of infrastructural, organizational and content-related challenges. Education (organization) in this study programme was a highly complex matter, and the study programme struggled with some long-lasting issues in need of resolving.

Faculty management in collaboration with the faculty's education support services took the lead in this coaching programme and started individual sessions with all parties involved, including student representatives. These sessions resulted in a detailed quality improvement plan identifying various "domains" that needed improvement, and accompanying improvement actions. A broad group of lecturers took up and divided the responsibilities. They regularly reported back to the Programme Committee. This *modus operandi* ensured that the coaching programme was broadly endorsed and was considered to be a shared responsibility.

The faculty played a supportive role: it provided funding, shared good practices, working documents, ... and also took on the role of process monitor. Together with the study programme they gave shape to the coaching programme in co-creation. While the lecturers reported regularly to the Programme Committee, the faculty reported to the EQB on a monthly basis.

After this intensive co-creation trajectory (between faculty and study programme), the EQB was able to determine in 2020 that the study programme had taken to heart all the recommendations and resolved most of the points for improvement successfully. Subsequently, the EQB officially released the study programme from its wardship and restored confidence in its ability to ensure its own education quality.

is that the degree to which study programmes have implemented the new quality assurance in their Programme Committees still varies. Not all study programmes have come to understand the added value of running an Education Monitor, not seeing how it would reflect their "real" quality. We will have to continue supporting these study programmes, focusing on their ownership in creating a permanent quality culture and on how the Education Monitor is a means to visualize this. Ultimately, we hope that the system will no longer be perceived as an administrative burden but as a tool for shaping improvement policy and quality culture.

3.2.6 System-wide Analysis

The new Quality Code (2018) also prescribes that every higher education institution participate in two so-called "system-wide analyses" between 2020-2026, with the purpose of sharing good practices on education policy and

equation quality among the participants. At Ghent University, we chose (1) curriculum design/futureproof curricula (2023-2024) and learning outcomes/twenty-first century skills (2025-2026). We made this choice based on our own vision on futureproof education with a focus on education that is flexible and adaptable to (future) social changes, designing futureproof curricula, balancing generic and research-based domain-specific competencies, and constructive alignment.

3.3 Quality Conduct 3.0 (2024 and Onwards): Towards a Continuous Quality Culture

The Quality Conduct 2.0 phase forms a necessary step towards the next phase, in which education (policy) and quality assurance processes are to be further developed within a fully-fledged quality *culture*.

Between 2020-2024, the faculties' and study

programmes' policy-making capacity will be honed further through a continued promotion of systematic critical reflection on the objectives in the Education Monitor and a variety of support initiatives organized by the Education Department. As described above, **faculties** will have an increasingly important role to fulfil in monitoring their study programmes' education: our faculties must **gradually grow in this role** in order to become **self-managing entities** with 'primary care services' as far as continuous quality monitoring and quality improvement are concerned. In this context, the Education Department becomes a 'secondary care' partner, offering support to study programmes and faculties.

From 2024 onwards, the Education Quality Board will carry out its tasks based on processes and procedures that enable continuous monitoring, e.g. based on permanent random checks of the education monitors (instead of a cyclical calendar). That way we will keep a finger on the pulse continuously with regard to our study programmes'

quality of education. Specifically, the EQB will focus on study programmes' action plans and the progress they make on resolving their points for improvement. This switch to **continuous monitoring based on random checks and orange or red warning lights** (risk management) is only possible once all the necessary tools are fully operational, and no additional efforts are required on the part of study programmes and faculties to gather their quality assurance data. This means, among other things, fully operational Education Monitors for study programmes and faculties, the integration of UGI into the Education Monitors, the integration of all monitoring data into UGI, fully-fledged support and professional development services for lecturers, study programmes, and faculties, and full digitization and automation of these background processes. Last but not least, the Quality Conduct 3.0 will have to serve as a vehicle for a further reduction of the workload for our study programmes, lecturers, and education support staff.

CHAPTER 3

Strengths and Weaknesses



STRENGTHS

- we developed the Quality Conduct 2.0 with its focus on a permanent quality culture based on a long participatory process with our faculties, study programmes, and an external benchmark. The system is based on trust in our faculties and study programmes, and on monitoring and self-reflection. It requires no additional efforts on the part of our study programmes in terms of reporting obligations or the organization of (peer learning) visits. Based on the first screening results we can confidently state that **the system works**, that a broad quality culture is present, and that points for improvement come to light so that appropriate coaching initiatives can be provided;
- the Quality Conduct 2.0 is a good breeding ground for cultivating trust and autonomy. Our study programmes and faculties look forward to the Quality Conduct 3.0, a system in which **quality assurance processes will run in the background**, fed by a quality culture that is made sufficiently visible by the available tools. Thanks to the administrative capacity of our faculties we are truly able to leave quality control behind us and focus on trust and support;
- the **Annual Quality Meeting** has shown itself to be a highly performing monitoring process in the past few years. It will continue to exist as a process based on mutual trust and partnership for following up our faculties' and study programmes' education policy, their fulfilment of the operational objectives, actions and improvement policy systematically;
- similarly efficacious has been the **mandatory/tailored coaching programme**, much more so than the peer learning visits. Various case studies have allowed us to determine that the coaching programme is a powerful remedial tool for education quality. Whereas the system of peer learning visits largely left study programmes to their own devices to address their points for improvement, the coaching programme focuses on professional development of Programme Committee members and results in a sustainable quality improvement;
- the Institutional Review committee (2016) advised a stronger student involvement in formulating study programmes' strengths and weaknesses. We have realized this by means of the so-called **student reflection**. At this point already, the first screenings have clearly proven the student reflection to be an important and useful tool. It offers an in-depth perspective on study programmes and gives students an additional means of making themselves heard;
- the screenings, as they are now being performed by the EQB members, go well. **The EQB is a highly performing policy body** and its screenings and recommendations show great consensus. The composition of the EQB allows for complementary expertise and multiperspectivism. Its external members are an invaluable addition. The integration of the Education Monitors, the UGI data sets, the quality improvement plan and the Programme Committee minutes paint an accurate picture of a Programme Committees day-to-day operation;
- the real-time link between the Education Monitors and programme-specific data in UGI allow study programmes to identify their **weaknesses and points for improvement** much better than before, and to take subsequent action. The screenings have revealed a high degree of congruence between study programmes' self-reflection and the available data. The ensuing quality improvement plan ensures that study programmes commit themselves to a specific timing, actors and actions.

WEAKNESSES

- the transition from external six-yearly quality reviews to a permanent quality culture by means of our own Quality Conduct has led in our study programmes to an increase of continuous (as opposed to momentaneous) quality assurance. Launching the Quality Conduct 2.0, however, exacted **a high investment** of our study programmes and faculties: they had to discuss, validate, and describe the entire PDCA in their Education Monitors, i.e. the stable (P&D) as well as the more dynamic (C&A) parts in one stretch, while at the same time reckoning with education organization in times of corona. It will be of paramount importance to keep our study programmes motivated to perform their checks and adjust their improvement plans (at least) annually;
- a group of study programmes and lecturers still feels that the Quality Conduct 2.0 causes **too high a workload** and **too much of an administrative burden**. They perceive working with the Education Monitor and the concomitant self-reflection exercise as a purely administrative task with little or no added value to the quality of education. We must not lose sight of these grievances. We must also continue our dialogue with this group of study programmes and lecturers in order to reduce the work load as much as possible, and to consolidate those aspects that really contribute to the quality of our education;
- study programmes and faculties have indicated that the **wealth of data** (being updated regularly and bringing together different perspectives) can be **overwhelming** and stressful, giving the impression that self-reflection processes have to be restarted with every new data update. Expectation management – or in other words, explaining that an annual check/reflection is sufficient – therefore, is crucial. It is also important not to dwell too long on the analysis of the data, but to focus on the related improvement actions, whereby study programmes and faculties have the autonomy to determine priorities in their own improvement actions. Making our digital information systems even more efficient and keeping the administrative burden to an absolute minimum is also an important element;
- as far as the **external perspective** is concerned, we need to move away from the idea that it is a requirement generating excess workload and imposed by external forces by **emphasizing its important and integrated role** in our Quality Conduct 2.0 and 3.0. Integrating it systematically into a study programme's operation will require further attention, time, and coaching;
- from experience, we know that even in a climate of trust, the quality culture in a study programme depends strongly on the **Programme Committee's policy-making capacities** and the **Programme Committee chair**. In addition, of course, faculty management – i.e. the Director of Studies, the departments that appoint lecturers, and policy support on programme/faculty level is just as crucial. The new career plan for members of the professorial staff values education policy assignments more than before, and gives more autonomy to those who wish to take up such assignments. In other words, we have done away with the negative impact that was linked to investing in education and education policy on promotion opportunities (either fast-track or regular promotion). Investment in education policy from our professorial staff is crucial but not always self-evident. Education policy assignments entail great impact, responsibility and fulfilment, but they also generate a heavy work pressure. An important point for improvement on the part of the university is continued recognition and appreciation of those who take on these assignments, complemented by sufficient support, coaching and professional development initiatives at faculty and university level;
- during the Quality Conduct 2.0 phase, the **EQB's role altered and the workload for its members increased**. Screening more than 100 Education Monitors, followed by a synthesis report, a quality assurance resolution, and an updated publicly available information results in a continuous workload. Containing this workload is a point to consider.

AN ILLUSTRATION:

Education Policy and Quality Culture Put into Practice

In what follows, we will illustrate the actions our study programmes undertake to meet the operational objectives. This section of the Critical Reflection, in other words, delves deeper into the **operational aspects of our education policy and quality assurance** from **the point of view of our study programmes**. This choice is deliberate: after all, giving shape to education happens first and foremost at study programme level.

This illustration follows the **structure of the Education Monitor**. We have synthesized and aggregated the results of the self-reflection (Check) of our 103 Education Monitors. We discuss each chapter of the Education Monitor and **its underlying operational objectives**. For each operational objective we provide aggregated data based on our study programmes' self-assessment vis-à-vis the operational objectives, and **the extent to which they realize them** (blue, green, yellow, red). Since these data are the result of our study programmes' annual self-reflection exercise (Check) based on (among other things) the indicators of our 360° monitoring, the analysis is not an objective one. It is also important to keep in mind that the percentages below are aggregated percentages of **all our study programmes taken together**. These data can also be consulted in [UGI](#). The data we describe below have been timestamped February 2022.

Next, we briefly discuss the actions our study programmes undertake to realize their objectives (Do). Our [Study Programme Monitor's Quality Manual](#) and our [Education Tips](#) webpage are important information sources. This allows us to simply refer to these sources, instead of describing the information here. We also describe support services/actions at faculty and/or university level on which our study programmes can rely. For each section we use **specific examples** to explain the underlying quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Education Monitor PART ONE: Education Vision and Education Policy

Part One of the Education Monitor pertains to study programme content. First, study programmes convey their mission and vision, and determine how, and to what extent they are in line with the university's mission and vision. Second, they describe how their mission and vision find expression in their programme competencies/learning outcomes. Third, they examine to what extent the curriculum is an apt translation of those programme competencies/learning outcomes, and whether they are assessed in a valid manner.

The Study Programme's Vision and Learning Outcomes

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme has a clear and endorsed mission and vision that reflect the study programme's specificity and characterization. This mission and vision are in keeping with Ghent University's mission, vision, and strategic education objectives (cfr. §3 Strategic Objectives).	28%	69%	3%	0%
The study programme has a set of programme-specific competencies (OLR) that embodies the vision and mission, strategic choices, specificity, and characterization of the programme as well as Ghent University's competency model. These predetermined competencies are up to date and topical, and form a clear and coherent whole.	28%	67%	5%	0%

The programme-specific competencies (OLR) comply with the Flemish Qualifications Framework (FQF) requirements, and with the existing domain-specific learning outcomes (Dutch: DLR) with regard to level, content and orientation. They are also in accordance with the current professional demands as they aspire to prepare students for future professional profiles. In addition, programme-specific competencies meet international standards (cfr. §2.1 Embedding the External Perspective).	17%	71%	12%	0%
The programme-specific competencies (OLR) are endorsed by and known to all the relevant stakeholders (cfr. §3.4 Stakeholder Participation).	7%	59%	34%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- 97% of our study programmes have a mission/vision that is widely endorsed, and 95% of them find that their programme competencies/learning outcomes are topical and coherent;
- 88% of our study programmes believe that their programme competencies/learning outcomes are up to standard, and benchmarked internationally. A little over 10% of them feel that there is room for improvement when it comes to an international benchmark;
- 34 % of our study programmes indicate that making their programme competencies/learning outcomes known to their stakeholders leaves much to be desired. There is clearly room for improvement here.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- study programmes translate their mission, vision, strategic choices, unicity and profile into [programme-specific competencies/learning outcomes](#);
- study programme competencies are linked to [Ghent University's Competency Model](#) and/or a profession-specific competency model;
- study programmes review their programme competencies/learning outcomes (at least) in the run-up to a curricular review, using the [external perspective](#) (e.g. a programme review);
- study programmes publish and/or announce their programme competencies/learning outcomes on the [Study Guide](#) website, in newsletters, on study information days, ...

Programme

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme adequately implements its programme-specific competencies (OLR) through several different course units (competency matrix).	17%	69%	13%	1%
The study programme has a logical set-up, based on the principle of 'constructive alignment'. The study programme forms a consistent whole (e.g. by means of learning pathways), in which lecturers make sure that the various course units are both horizontally and vertically aligned. The study programme also ensures a well-balanced planning for the students in terms of deadlines and work density.	19%	66%	15%	0%
The study programme aims at allowing students to acquire the predetermined exit level (as formulated in the OLR), which guarantees the students' optimal opportunities for advanced studies or introduction into the professional world.	31%	61%	8%	0%
The study programme uses a variety of teaching methods that is attuned to the programme-specific competencies.	27%	69%	3%	1%
The study programme integrates active teaching methods, allowing students to take responsibility in their individual learning process.	26%	62%	12%	0%
The study programme pursues a transparent and efficient policy with regard to the Master's dissertation. This policy guarantees that every student (a) is granted the opportunity to write a high-quality Master's dissertation that is linked to the programme, and (b) receives high-quality coaching throughout the process.	25%	62%	13%	0%

The study programme has a transparent and efficient work placement policy, which guarantees that every student (a) is granted the opportunity to undertake a high-quality work placement that is linked to the programme, and (b) receives high-quality coaching throughout the process.	16%	74%	10%	0%
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Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- 85-97% of our study programmes are of the opinion that they (largely) meet the objectives related to programme content;
- 10-15% of our study programmes want to focus more on scheduling deadlines and students' workload, the competency matrix, guidelines for and supervision of the work placement and the Master's dissertation, and the integration of active teaching methods.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- study programmes use [constructive alignment](#) as their guiding principle to translate their programme competencies/ learning outcomes into the curriculum;
- lecturers use the [digital competency matrix](#) to show how their course competencies contribute to the programme competencies;
- there is a special focus on [activating and motivating teaching methods](#). Since 2018 the [university-wide policy choices](#) place great emphasis on active learning by means of the [ACTIVO project](#). This project came into being after inclusive stakeholder consultations and is a good example of the culture of dialogue and debate at our university. A ten-person team of ACTIVO staff (university level) and ACTIVO liaison officers (faculty level) are in charge of increasing [active teaching at study programme level](#);
- in every Master's programme, the [Master's dissertation](#) is the crowning achievement. It focuses on the integration of education and research, achieving the desired exit level, and critical, creative and academic thought;
- most study programmes choose to introduce their students to [authentic learning and work environments](#) by means of a [work placement](#) or [community service learning](#) (CSL).

The figure below is an illustration of two of the underlying indicators in this section of the Education Monitor:

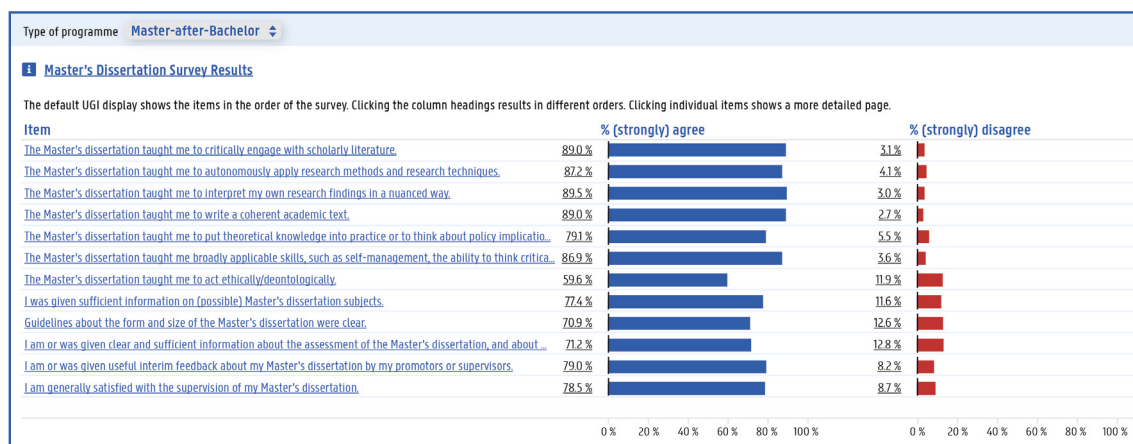


Figure 17: Items Taken from the **Master's Dissertation Survey**. Data Aggregated at University Level.

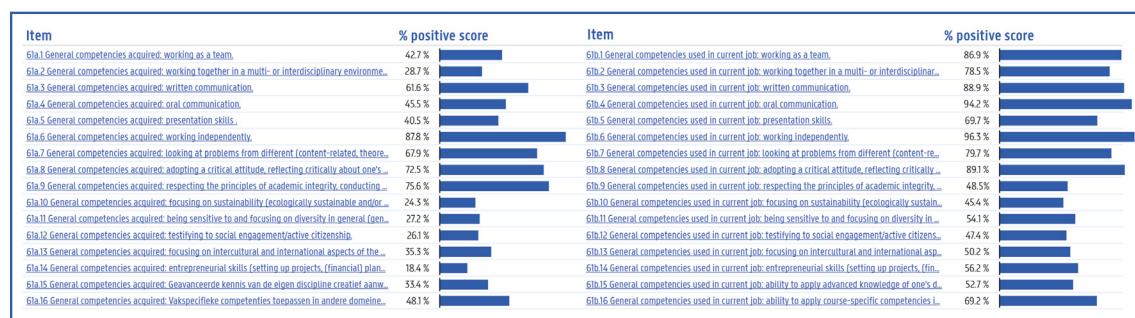


Figure 18: Items taken from the **Alumni Survey**. Data aggregated at University Level.

Assessment and Exit Level

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme pursues an assessment policy that is up to date, endorsed and in accordance with Ghent University's assessment concept, assessment model, and the 17 assessment principles, as well as with the faculty's assessment strategy. Within this framework, the study programme is free to place idiosyncratic emphases.	16%	73%	11%	0%
The assessment methods are varied and adapted to the learning process and the teaching methods. If necessary, the study programme schedules interim feedback and/or integrates other active assessment methods. Throughout the study programme, the various programme-specific competencies are assessed in several different course units (competency matrix).	14%	67%	18%	1%
The study programme ensures the quality of assessment down to the level of each individual course unit. This means that the programme ensures that lecturers use clear assessment criteria to evaluate the various teaching methods, and that they give appropriate feedback. The study programme also makes sure that lecturers apply the four-eyes principle when drawing up exam papers and assignments.	13%	64%	23%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- 90% of our study programmes have an up-to-date assessment vision;
- 20-24% of our study programmes want to focus more on assessment in the form of (interim) feedback, applying the four-eye principle to exams and assignments, providing a clear set of assessment criteria, and promoting more varied assessment methods.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- study programmes develop their own [assessment vision](#), which is in line with Ghent University's assessment concept, assessment model and assessment principles;
- a study programme's set of [assessment methods](#) is varied and based on the competency matrix and the principle of constructive alignment. There is a specific focus on [active assessment methods and feedback](#);
- the Programme Committee (or a specific Assessment Committee) is in charge of [assessment quality assurance](#), taking into account validity, reliability and transparency. The [new 'assessment reflection' tool](#) in UGI for lecturers, study Programme Committees and exam committees can be useful here;
- our graduates' exit level is guaranteed by the [external perspective](#) and by the entire set of assessment (method)s.

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level related to learning outcomes, curriculum and assessment:

- in times of corona we developed a vision on blended education, [Blend@UGent](#). Many of our lecturers participated in professional development initiatives on digital didactics topics;
- Programme Committees as well as individual lecturers can rely on their faculty's Education Support Services as well as on the Education Department (DOWA) when designing course units and/or whole curricula. We provide more information on our wide range of [education-related professional development initiatives](#) in the section 'Staff Talent Development' below. The Institutional Programmes Committee is responsible for the formal **approval of** (new or redesigned) **curricula based** on the [Vade-Mecum for Study Programmes](#).

The figure below is an illustration of one of the underlying indicators in this section of the Education Monitor:

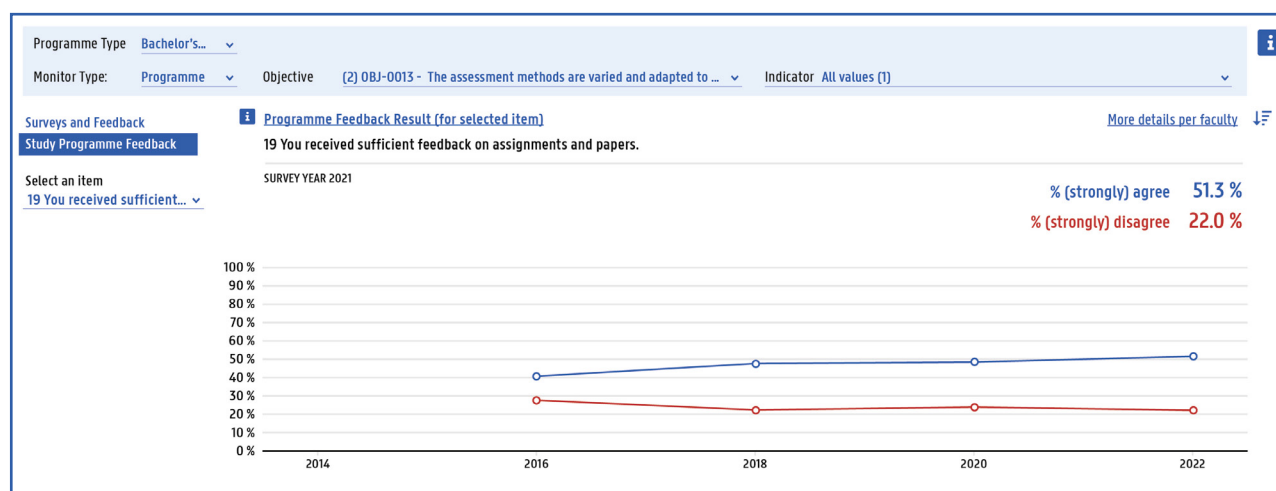


Figure 19: Items Taken from the **Study Programme Feedback** – Bachelor's Programmes. Data Aggregated at University Level, Evolution Chart.

Education Monitor PART TWO: Permanent Quality Assurance

Part Two of the Education Monitor pertains to a study programme's quality assurance-related objectives, actions and (self-) assessments. First, study programmes determine whether or not they undertake sufficient action to strengthen their quality assurance by means of the external perspective. Second, they examine whether or not the Programme Committee operates properly. Third, they verify whether or not their communication vis-à-vis all stakeholder parties (students, lecturers, general public) is transparent.

Embedding the External Perspective

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme regularly collects feedback from a broad range of external stakeholders (peers, professional field, alumni, collective industrial organizations, ...) at least covering (a) the study programme competencies (including programme profile), b) curriculum content and curriculum design, (c) assessment and exit level. In addition, the study programme consults (at least) three international academic peers to gauge programme quality at least every four years or in the run-up to important curricular revisions.	6%	52%	40%	2%
The study Programme Committee (PC) discusses external feedback and, if necessary, translates this feedback into improvement measurements (cfr: OBJ-0022 Quality Improvement Plan).	9%	69%	21%	1%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- nearly half of our study programmes (42%) wish to focus more on a structural embedding of the external perspective in the future;
- over 20% of our study programmes indicate that there is room for improvement when it comes to integrating external stakeholder feedback into their quality improvement plan.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- there is a range of initiatives study programmes can set up for [embedding a broad and varied external](#)

[perspective in a structural manner](#) (ut supra 3.2.2);

- study programmes can participate in (existing) [internationalization initiatives and networks](#) (staff & student mobility, international peers, partner programmes, international research networks, international programmes, ENLIGHT). [EQuaTIC](#) gives an overview of premium-quality external partnerships. We also have available various (international) [financial means](#);
- study programmes discuss the input of a broad range of external stakeholders, and substantiate whether or not they act upon it in the form of improvement actions.

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level:

- in 2020, we developed a [policy framework and a set of \(digital\) inspiration cards](#) as a tool for embedding the external perspective. We devoted an online kick-off session to the importance of the external perspective, the (minimal) expectations and a number of good practices, we organized workshops tailored to study programmes' specific needs/questions, and set up trajectories and faculty initiatives.

Many study programmes saw their 2020 and 2021 plans thwarted by the pandemic. At this point, however, all study programmes have specific plans to realize the external perspective in the current or upcoming academic year, and to integrate these plans into their improvement plan if necessary.

Programme Committee (PC): Procedures and Improvement Policy

Study Programme Objective				
The study Programme Committee (PC) is composed, and functions in accordance with Ghent University's Education and Examination Code. The PC meets regularly and uses as its working tools the PC team site and the study programme monitor. In this set-up, the PC team site is the PC's operational working tool. The study programme monitor is the PC's (education) policy instrument. PC meeting minutes are included in Ghent University's Document Management System.	26%	66%	8%	0%
The PC analyses and discusses the results of the study programme quality measurements and other forms of evaluation on a regular basis. It goes without saying that the PC respects the confidentiality of personal results.	34%	62%	4%	0%
The study programme regularly draws up a quality improvement plan. This plan is based on checking the study programme objectives and indicators on the one hand, and analysing other (programme-specific) evaluations on the other hand. The quality improvement plan can be automatically generated by the monitor. It sets out actions, determines priorities, allocates responsibilities and timelines. The study programme sees to the implementation of that plan. Ultimately, the programme should be able to prove that quality improvement plans result in permanent quality improvement.	9%	66%	25%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- our Programme Committees perform (very) well and regularly run the PDCA cycle;
- the quality improvement plan is a relatively new tool. 25% of our study programmes want to develop it further, use it more as a guideline and create wider endorsement with (more) shared responsibilities within the programme.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- the PC gives shape to policy, policy implementation, quality assurance monitoring and improvement policy. It is the body par excellence to implement the PDCA cycle by means of the [Education Monitor](#) and the PC [Teamsite](#). PC minutes are published in [Ghent University's Document Management System](#);
- based on the most recent quantitative and qualitative monitoring data and feedback (ut supra 2.4), the PC checks the operational objectives in the Education Monitor (at least) annually and sets up improvement actions. The ensuing [quality improvement plan](#) serves as guidance for the PC's improvement policy.

Find out [here](#) how the Programme Committee brought about a thorough curricular revision of its Bachelor's curriculum in Pharmaceutical Sciences (in Dutch).



I READILY ADMIT THAT WE ASKED MUCH OF OUR COLLEAGUES. IT IS THANKS TO THEIR OPEN PERSPECTIVE, THEIR GENEROUS COMMITMENT AND THEIR STRONG BELIEF IN A SOLID BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME IN PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES THAT WE HAVE



ACHIEVED THIS CURRICULAR REVISION.

- Stefaan

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level:

- in the '[Learning Networks for Programme Committee Chairs](#)', external consultants guide and bring together newly appointed and more experienced PC chairs and allow them to exchange experiences, mutual advice and new ideas, look for solutions together, and to reflect on their own performance as chair.

Transparency and Communication

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme sheet and course sheets are topical, complete, and informative for the student, and available in both Dutch and English.	20%	76%	4%	0%
The students, lecturers, education support staff and other stakeholders all have access to complete and clear information about every phase of the curriculum, such as the available teaching and learning materials, the possibilities for education services, and the organization of the study programme.	24%	69%	7%	0%
The study programme actively communicates about all aspects of the education strategy and the education quality assurance, thereby informing all students, lecturers, support staff and external stakeholders. The study programme also makes information on education quality available to the general public, as is requested by the Education Quality Board (EQB).	11%	72%	17%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- communication on education policy and quality assurance runs smoothly;
- 17% of our study programmes want to invest more in information sharing with their stakeholders, including quality assurance.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- study programmes and lecturers use the [digital learning environment UFORA](#) to communicate with their students. UFORA has been in use at our university since 2019. UFORA is home to all courses, calendars, course sheets, announcements, and info sites. It also integrates all digital education tools (virtual classroom, peer assessment, online assessment, lecture recordings, ...);
- the PC sets up [initiatives to communicate with all lecturers](#) involved in their study programme using newsletters or web pages, organizing lecturers' meetings, task forces, sharing meeting minutes, ...;
- our [Study Guide](#) website contains information for current and prospective students, and for **the general public**. The information is available in Dutch and in English. It includes curricula, course sheets, information days, enrolment, advanced studies, professional field and quality assurance (ut supra 3.2.4 **publicly available information**).

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level:

- in 2020, we launched our online (international) alumni platform [Infinitum](#). **Alumni** can come into contact with former fellow students, can be invited to [alumni activities](#) and be informed of interesting vacancies. The platform is a supporting tool for a better and more structural alumni outreach.

The figure below is an illustration of one of the underlying indicators in this section of the Education Monitor:

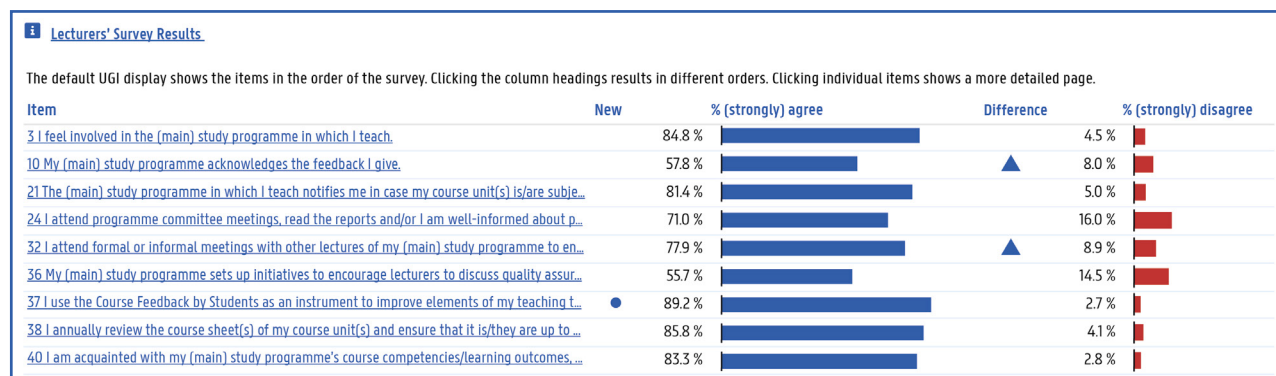


Figure 20: Items Taken from the **Lecturers' Survey**. Data Aggregated at University Level.

Education Monitor PART THREE: Ghent University's Six Strategic Objectives

Part Three of the Education Monitor pertains to Ghent University's Six Strategic Education Objectives. Study programmes investigate how their curricula and their methods fulfil five of the six university-wide education objectives. As we explained, the sixth objective on quality assurance is fully covered in PARTS ONE and TWO.

Dare to Think and Multiperspectivism

Study Programme Objective				
A critical mindset, different perspectives, open-mindedness, pluralism, and tolerance of other opinions are key elements in the study programme's education policy and practice.	37%	55%	8%	0%
The study programme stimulates multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity. It also encourages (service) education in the study programme, either sourced from other faculties, or from other study programmes within the same faculty. The study programme sees to the integration of sustainability issues into the (service) education it offers.	26%	62%	12%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- critical thought, and multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity take centre stage in our study programmes and education;
- in general, our study programmes indicate that they pay sufficient attention to sustainability issues. About 12% of our study programmes want to develop this further.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- critical thought, open-mindedness, change in perspective, pluralism, tolerance of differing points of view, and multi- and interdisciplinarity are integrated into study programme competencies/learning outcomes and embedded into [Ghent University's Competency Model](#). Opting for active teaching and assessment methods ensures an attitude of inquisitive and confrontational learning, critical reflection and change in perspective;
- each study programme creates a curricular window for the inclusion of [university-wide electives](#). These electives enable students from different programmes to learn about, and collaborate on a specific theme. Many study programmes include minors from other study programmes/faculties, or multi-, inter- or transdisciplinary course units. Various study programmes have specific trajectories for the [integration of sustainability issues](#);
- for some study programmes, multiperspectivism is an inherent part of their structure, their specific target audience

and/or their teaching staff (e.g. international students, lecturers from different study programmes). Ghent University is home to [20 international joint programmes](#).

Education Based on Excellent Research

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme's education practice is at all times based on innovative research and the most recent academic insights in the field.	48%	49%	3%	0%
In the allocation of teaching assignments, the study programme ensures an adequate match between the lecturers' expertise and the course units they teach.	37%	62%	1%	0%
The study programme makes sure that all students are granted the best opportunities to develop their research competences.	41%	52%	7%	0%
The study programme promotes scientific and academic integrity in its curriculum.	18%	64%	18%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- Ghent University education is research-based and our lecturers have research expertise in the discipline they teach;
- 18% of our study programmes find that there is room for improvement when it comes to integrating academic/scientific integrity.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- the [strong interconnection between education and research](#) reveals itself in all our study programmes, and nearly all our course units. It guarantees a continuous presence of external perspectives (in the form of international peers) to keep course units, curricula, and main subjects topical and socially relevant;
- **departments** are responsible for [the annual appointment of lectures](#), and for the investment in/recruitment of new lecturers in disciplines relevant to education/the programme;
- integrated [research learning pathways](#) bring students into contact with research literature, and teach them to conduct their own research. An additional action can be to introduce a [learning pathway on academic/scientific integrity](#). If possible, lecturers can integrate own research findings into their course units;
- the [Master's dissertation](#) is a student's crowning achievement: it gives them an opportunity to display their high-level critical-reflective skills, and their skills as an independent researcher, either in the context of current (doctoral) research or not.

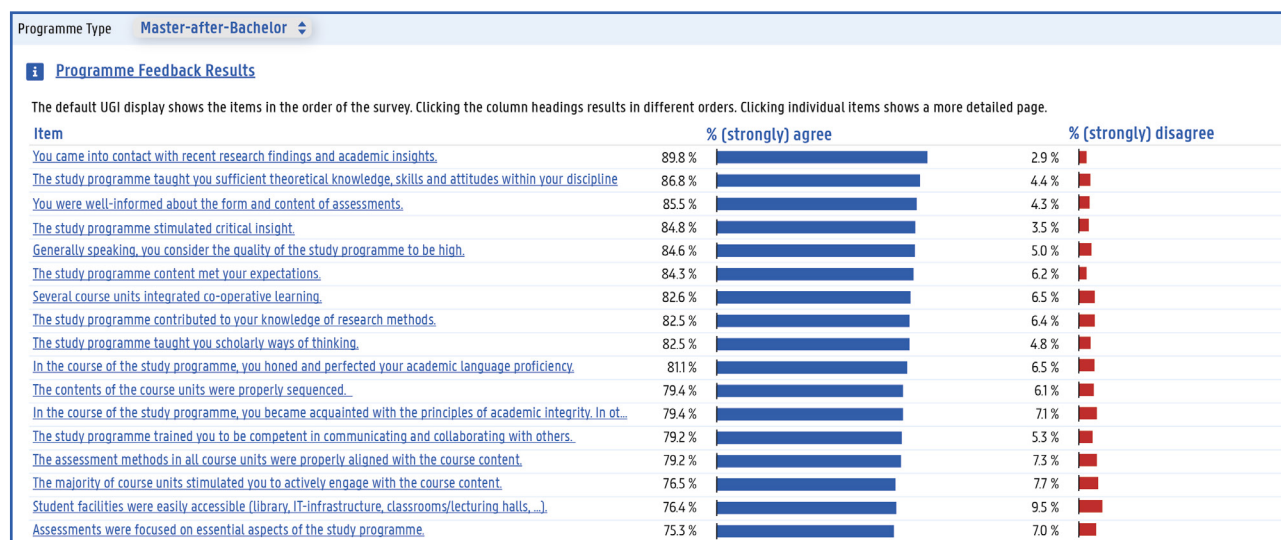


Figure 21: Highest Rated Items (>75% (highly) agree) Taken from the **Study Programme Feedback**. Data Aggregated at University Level.

Student Talent Development

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme analyses and optimizes student intake, outflow (employability), and study progress with special attention to the student population's diversity.	19%	71%	9%	1%
The study programme grants students the possibility to choose from different curricular options with regard to elective course units, elective modules, minors, work placement, dissertation topics, etc.	42%	57%	1%	0%
The study programme offers its students opportunities to develop their talents in relation to Ghent University's core topics of 'sustainability, entrepreneurship, and social engagement'.	11%	51%	38%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- 90% of our study programmes pursue a policy to optimize student intake, study progress and student outflow. 10% of them want to focus more on the diversity of their student populations;
- a large group of study programmes – almost 40% - are of the opinion that they offer their students too few opportunities with regard to sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment.

Actions to meet the objectives in which **study programme, faculty and university** each take on an active role:

- we invest in [student orientation](#) by means of brochures, our presence at Student Information Days (SIDins), information evenings at secondary schools, faculty information days, Open Classes and Try-outs. Our [Study Guide](#) website is an important communication tool;
- we developed and validated our own [orientation tool SIMON](#). Students use it to determine which study programme suits their personal skills and interests. In addition, SIMON also has **remedial purposes** for generation students. After a first run at the very start of the academic year, SIMON generates individual feedback reports containing remedial actions and the possibility of individual sessions with our tutorial services. Admission into some study programmes is regulated by **entry exams** (medicine/dentistry). A number of STEM-oriented study programmes organize (mandatory) **benchmark tests** for students to gauge their starting competencies, and to suggest tailored remedial actions;
- the UGI for Education app makes thorough and continuous **monitoring of study progress** possible at university, faculty, and study programme level. An annual report is submitted to the Education Council with possible ensuing adjustments to the [Education and Examination Code](#). Our four guiding principles on the matter of study progress are: (1) quick remedial action for first-year students; (2) maximal investment in first-year students; (3) a second chance for everyone albeit in combination with strictly binding requirements; and (4) avoiding an increased study duration. Study programmes monitor their students' study success after each exam period, which can give rise to specific actions. We have a supporting tool for this: the [Assessment Reflection Tool](#);

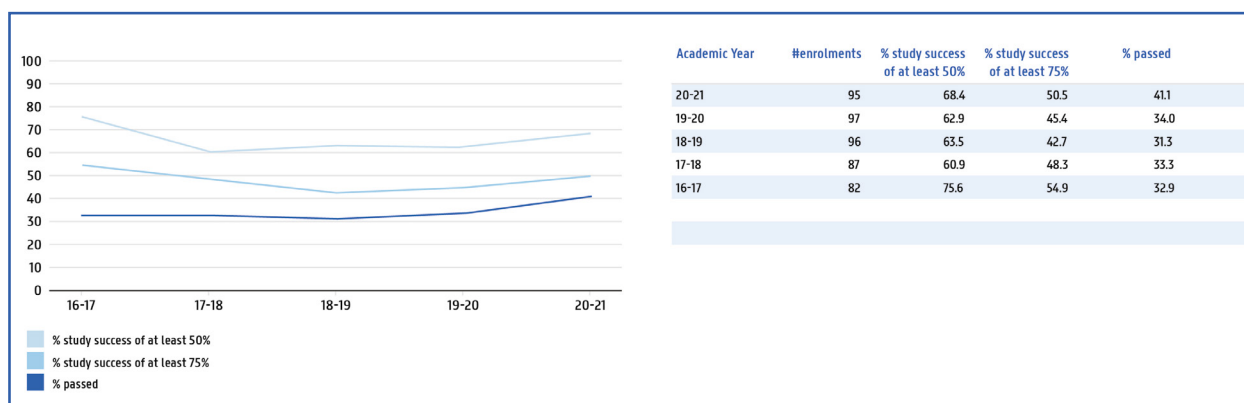


Figure 22: an Evolution of Success Rates Based on the **Assessment Reflection Tool**. Bachelor's Programme in Mathematics.

- for course-specific guidance, student and study track counselling, students can apply to individual lecturers or their [faculty's Tutorial Services](#). We refer students with specific study-related issues (procrastination behaviour, fear of

failure) or personal problems to our student psychologists (at **university level**) for individual or group counselling;

- in recent years, the focus on the well-being of students has intensified. We hired more student psychologists and increased our counselling sessions. In addition, we developed the online platform “[Wellbeing at Ghent University](#)” (in Dutch: Wel in je vel) bundling all the available initiatives;
- we guide our graduating students to the job market (e.g. [Student Career Hub](#) and [Ghent Uni Career Centre](#)) or to advanced studies. Our Academies for Lifelong Learning have a high-quality offer of post-initial study programmes with a focus on specialization and lifelong learning. All communication on lifelong learning takes place via [Nova Academy](#), the platform jointly organized with the University of Antwerp and VUB;
- cultivating students’ talents includes taking into account [diversity in the student population](#). Our priority target groups are students with a migration background and [students with a disability](#). At Ghent University, we pay specific attention to increasing the presence of disadvantaged groups, to improve their study progress and transfer possibilities, and the range of support measures that come with a [special status](#), We work with role models and initiatives like Ghent University Ahead (in Dutch: UGent in Zicht), the Preparatory Higher Education Programme, Study programmes and faculties also make efforts to achieve a certain degree of **gender heterogeneity** of student groups. We also want to foster our students’ [academic language skills](#) by means of a well-considered language policy with a focus on higher-order skills such as structuring, substantiation, critical thought, analysis and synthesis. At Ghent University, we opt for an [inclusive approach](#);
- cultivating students’ talents also means offering them choices during their studies, as well as building in extra challenges. At Ghent University we have four cross-faculty [honours programmes](#) with a focus on research and education. We invite exceptionally talented students to take up additional course units, to join specialized research teams or to attend lectures by leading academics/scientists. As such, these students are able to acquire competencies outside their chosen field of study. Some faculties also offer their own excellence programme for outstanding students;
- at Ghent University, we want to be in the forefront when it comes to stimulating **three specific themes**, i.e. sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment. We encourage our faculties and study programmes to integrate these themes into their education practice, their mission, culture and specific discipline(s);
 - we want to be a leading knowledge institution that invests in an ecologically, socially, and economically **sustainable** future, both at a local and a global level. For that purpose, we rally support for sustainable development, we integrate sustainability issues into our education, research, and academic service, and we implement sustainability in our management and organization. [Sustainability in education](#) is also one of our university-wide policy choices;
 - our [Centre for Student Entrepreneurship DO!](#) (in Dutch: Durf Ondernemen) supports student entrepreneurs in launching their own start-up and honing their entrepreneurial skills. They offer coaching sessions, events, workshops, boot camps, community service, role models, There is a [learning pathway on Entrepreneurial Action](#) (a set of four electives), and many other course units in which entrepreneurship is stimulated;
 - at Ghent University, we place great store by a structural integration and recognition of **social commitment** in academic education. Some of our study programmes organize [Community Service Learning](#). Students are rewarded for their [social commitment](#) (student representation, among other things) by means of badges.

Since 2020, we organize [training initiatives](#) for study programmes on how to put sustainability, entrepreneurial action and social commitment into (their teaching) practice.



Hanne Maudens: "The freedom you have makes it possible to combine it all"

Hanne Maudens does athletics and is in her first year masters studying clinical special needs education and disability studies: "I did heptathlon for years, but recently switched to 400 and 800 meters running. I hope to compete in the 4x400 meter relay at the Olympics in Paris. I currently have the third fastest time, so that should be possible. I chose Ghent University because you have a lot of freedom, you can choose when you go to class and the professors are very flexible. That way I can combine it with my training, which takes at least 20 hours a week. As long as I can do high-level sports, I want to focus on that. I hope to be able to do it until I am 30, but I also think about what is possible after that. For example, I found my internship last year in special education: very cool!"

Programme Type	Master-after-Bachelor	Faculty	BW	Indicator	All values (2)
Monitor Type	All values (2)	Objective	(2) OBJ-0029 The study programme analyses and optimizes student intake, ...		
Programme Feedback Results					
The default UGI display shows the items in the order of the survey. Clicking the column headings results in different orders. Clicking individual items shows a more detailed page.					
Item	New	% (strongly) agree	Difference	% (strongly) disagree	
8 There was ample opportunity for student counselling, study track counselling, tutorial service or ...	74.3 %	<div></div>	▲	8.1 %	<div></div>
32 The study programme stimulated you to develop entrepreneurial skills (like e.g. starting up a pro...	40.1 %	<div></div>	▲	29.2 %	<div></div>
33 The study programme stimulated you to think about ecologically sustainable and/or socially equ...	74.0 %	<div></div>	▼	5.2 %	<div></div>
34 The study programme taught you how to apply yourself to social engagement within the context...	53.5 %	<div></div>		10.7 %	<div></div>

Programme Type	Master-after-Bachelor	Faculty	RE	Indicator	All values (2)
Monitor Type	All values (2)	Objective	(2) OBJ-0029 The study programme analyses and optimizes student intake, ...		
Programme Feedback Results					
The default UGI display shows the items in the order of the survey. Clicking the column headings results in different orders. Clicking individual items shows a more detailed page.					
Item	New	% (strongly) agree	Difference	% (strongly) disagree	
8 There was ample opportunity for student counselling, study track counselling, tutorial service or ...	85.8 %	<div></div>	▲	5.5 %	<div></div>
32 The study programme stimulated you to develop entrepreneurial skills (like e.g. starting up a pro...	11.7 %	<div></div>	▼	68.9 %	<div></div>
33 The study programme stimulated you to think about ecologically sustainable and/or socially equ...	44.8 %	<div></div>	▲	22.0 %	<div></div>
34 The study programme taught you how to apply yourself to social engagement within the context...	40.3 %	<div></div>	▼	12.6 %	<div></div>

Figure 23: Items Taken from the **Study Programme Feedback** – Master's Programmes in Two Faculties: Bioscience Engineering (BW) and Law and Criminology (RE)).

Staff Talent Development

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme adequately allocates its lecturers to the various course units, thereby taking into account the lecturers' experience, profile, and expertise in order to grant its students the best opportunities to acquire the intended programme-specific competencies (OLR).	25%	70%	5%	0%
The study programme pursues a professional development policy. It encourages lecturers to take part in professional development initiatives and it stimulates educational innovation in the teaching practice. Active learning methods merit special attention.	16%	75%	9%	0%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- 95% of our study programmes assign their lecturers adequately;
- 91% of our study programmes encourage education-related professional development initiatives.

Actions to meet the objectives in which **study programme, faculty and university** each take on an active role:

- the annual [appointment of lecturers](#) takes into account their individual talents. Elements we consider, among other things, are the different teaching levels (Bachelor's vs. Master's), the heterogeneous (e.g. gender-wise) student population, lecturers' positions as role models, and diversity in the teaching team. The new career and promotion path for the professorial staff allows lecturers to decide whether or not to focus more on education vs. research, depending on their personal interests and in consultation with the faculty and the teaching team. This is beneficial to their well-being. Faculties pursue an HR policy that takes into account the [well-being](#) of its staff;
- we encourage lecturers and other staff involved in education to participate in **professional development initiatives** either organized at university level (ut infra), and/or at faculty level (education days, conclaves, study days), or by third parties. Lecturers with less positive [course feedback results](#) can count on various specific initiatives or a coaching programme tailored to their individual needs.

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level:

- faculties receive an annual **education innovation** budget. They develop a plan containing innovation projects that are in line with their education innovation policy. To promote peer learning, we disseminate the results of all [education innovation projects](#) via [Education Tips](#);
- at Ghent University, we have a long-standing tradition (of more than 20 years) of **education-related professional development**. Our offer underwent a thorough make-over in the past five years (due to, among other things, the pandemic, the Quality Conduct 2.0, Blend@UGent, Apollo 8, ENLIGHT), and was reborn as a new range of Education Support Services 2.0.

Our [Education Support Services 2.0](#) aim at individual lecturers as well as study programmes and faculties. Ownership of the learning and innovation processes, however, always firmly remains with the different target groups. Participation in professional development initiatives is registered and built into UGI as an indicator for integration into the Education Monitor. This process facilitates study programmes' and faculties' policy-making with regard to education support. Our Education Support Services 2.0 are shaped in a supply-driven manner in the sense that they dovetail with the didactic competencies for Ghent University lecturers, and with the operational objectives in the Education Monitor. We combine this supply-driven approach with a demand-driven approach in the sense that there is an annual update of the course offer, which is based on needs assessments the Education Department carries out among the faculties and their quality assurance staff during annual planning sessions.

We have only recently introduced our new university-wide training platform UTOP (in Dutch: UGent Trainings- en OntwikkelingsPlatform), which contains the entire support offer. This offer is highly diverse: it comprises once-only initiatives as well as learning tracks; uses face2face and blended formats; focuses on expert and peer learning; contains the university-wide annual Education Day as well as faculty education days; consists of a basic offer focusing on essential didactic competencies and an in-depth offer focusing on specific needs or interests. Our entire course offer is available here.

In addition to our Education Support Services, we also refurbished our online repository of didactic and other education-related information [Education Tips](#). It contains primary information on how to put education and quality assurance into practice and is accessible to all Ghent University staff. Since its refurbishment, Education Tips has a much improved search engine, it now also contains information for study programmes and faculties, it has been translated into English, and has become largely accessible to the general public. Via the 'Weekly Updates' button, lecturers and PCs find a clear overview of newly added tips. These updates, moreover, are also sent to our faculties' Directors of Studies for further dissemination. Finally, the refurbished Education Tips also contains a brand-new collection of Ghent [University Good Practices](#) with cross-faculty examples of education practices and innovation projects.

CASE STUDY

2021 – Education Tips as an Inspiration for Knowledge Clips

The course unit Statistics I is taught at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. It is attended by first-year students from different study programmes. Taken together, there are about 1,500 students in this course unit, for many of whom it is the very first time they come into contact with any form of statistics.

In times of corona, streaming our traditional lectures was not the approach we wanted to take. We reduced the total number of lectures from 30 hours to 8 hours, during which we explained the basics and aimed to increase our students' data literacy. Inspired by what we found on Education Tips we set to work with knowledge clips: short video clips on a single topic and with a focus on more technical information.

"I have learnt so much simply by watching how other colleagues went about on Education Tips, by familiarizing myself with scholarly literature on blended education and by consulting colleagues", the lecturer was recorded saying.

Source: <https://www.ugent.be/nl/actueel/blend-at-ugent-2.htm>

Table 2: Number of Sessions and Participants in our Education Support Services in 2020 (via UTOP).

Number of training sessions from 01/01/2020 till 31/12/2020			
Training Session Title	Sessions	Participants	
How to Teach Large Groups in an Active and High-Quality Manner	1	46	
Faculty Actifora Sessions	9	48	
How to Use the Online Voting System TurningPoint8 for Active Teaching	1	15	
Teacher Training	2	30	
How to Coach (Online) Writing Assignments	5	85	
Bongo VC	24	696	
The Secret Ingredients of a Successful Group Work	2	23	
The Power of Collective Feedback	1	10	
DIY Redesigning Your Course Unit + Comeback Session	23	499	
Lecturing Skills in English	2	34	
Inspiration Sessions	1	44	
Introductory Teacher Training	1	16	
Learning Track for Assistants	5	76	
Teaching in a Hybrid Setting	4	147	
Motivational (Blended) Teaching	7	54	
MS Teams	14	293	
Multiple Choice Training	1	15	
Learning Track for Recently Appointed Lecturers	1	11	
Online Interactive Teaching	2	124	
Online Assessment	23	410	
Peer Scholar	3	74	
Presentation Techniques: A Theatrical Approach (Levels 1&2)	4	25	
Faculty Quick Win Sessions	6	49	
How to Make Learning Paths in Ufora	2	62	
Camtasia – the Basics: a Two-Day Training	4	25	
The Online Voting System WOCLAP	3	187	
ZOOM	4	380	
TOTALS	155	3,504	

Stakeholder Participation

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme actively involves students in various commissions and boards, whereby students have a true impact on educational policy and quality assurance. The study programme stimulates these students to act as 'representatives' and encourages them to be in close contact with their fellow students. The students also help determine the study programme monitor and assist in defining and executing the quality improvement plan. The Programme Committee (OC) discusses the results of student reflections that are carried out at least every three years in the presence of student representatives. This is recorded in the monitor.	29%	63%	8%	0%
The study programme involves all its lecturers in its education and quality assurance policy. The study Programme Committee (PC) regularly surveys their concerns and makes an active effort to meet their wishes.	27%	60%	12%	1%
The study programme communicates with external stakeholders (e.g. professional field, alumni, policy makers, (inter)national experts, etc.) about its vision, mission, specificity, and characterization. This ensures that stakeholders are able to inform the study programme about new developments in the field, about the professional field itself, and about the study programme's social relevance.	8%	64%	27%	1%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- in about 90% of our study programmes, student and lecturer involvement runs smoothly. For the remaining 10%, this involvement shows clear room for improvement;
- in 30% of our study programmes, external stakeholder involvement is an important point to consider calling for improvement actions in the near future.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- **students** have a strong voice at all policy levels at Ghent University (ut supra, Chapter One). Programme Committees always consist of a student delegation accounting for at least one-third of the members. As full partners, students have the opportunity to propose new policies or policy adjustments. [Ghent University's Student Union](#) unites student representatives at university and at faculty level, and defends the interests of our students within and without our university walls. Student representatives automatically receive the special status '[mandate holder](#)' and the accompanying facilities;
- **lecturers** are directly involved stakeholders in our education policy. Study programmes include all lecturers in their policy-making and quality assurance (ut supra, Transparency and Communication);
- the structural involvement of **external stakeholders** in education policy and quality assurance is covered by the external perspective (ut supra, Chapter Two – 2.3.3; Chapter Three – 3.2.2, this chapter – 4.2);

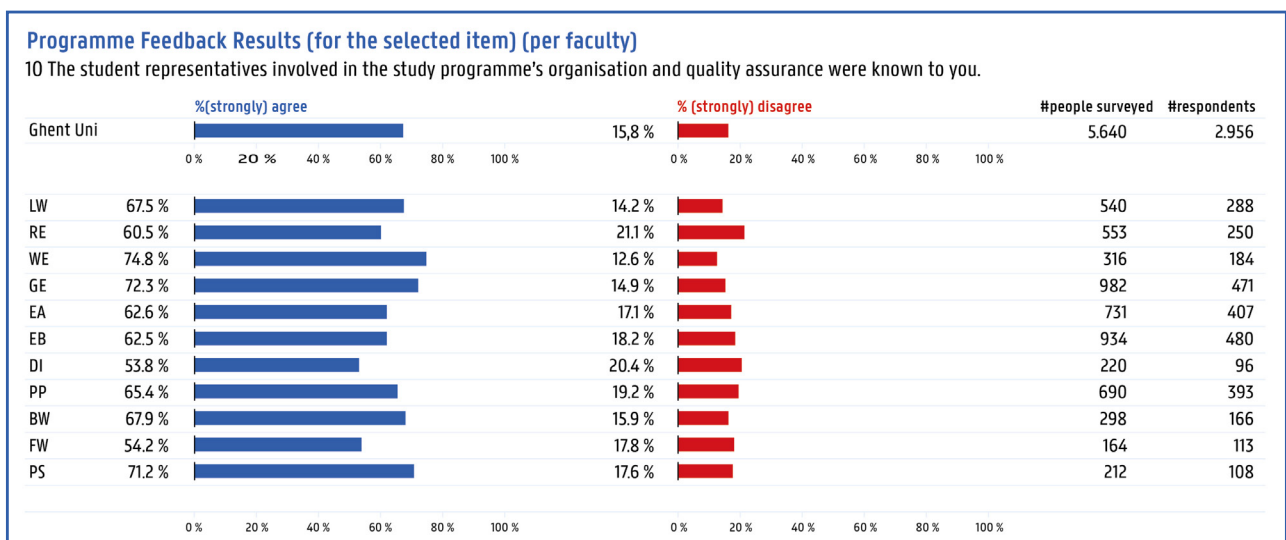


Figure 24: Items Taken from the **Study Programme Feedback – Bachelor's Programmes**, Data Aggregated per Faculty.

Student and Staff Internationalization

Study Programme Objective				
The study programme pursues an internationalization policy that is clearly and visibly embedded in the programme's vision, mission, programme-specific competencies (OLR), and in the curriculum.	20%	62%	18%	0%
The study programme takes specific actions to realize internationalization by means of incoming and outgoing student mobility and additionally ensures the development of international and intercultural competencies of all students via internationalization@home initiatives.	16%	41%	43%	0%
Lecturers and other staff members within the study programme participate in staff mobility and make use of internationalization opportunities for professional development purposes.	11%	56%	31%	2%

Our study programmes' **self-assessment** as depicted in the table above reveals the following elements:

- a larger number of our study programmes pursues an internationalization policy and has embedded international/intercultural competencies in their learning outcomes and curriculum. In 17% of our study programmes, this is still an important point to consider which calls for improvement actions;
- nearly half of our study programmes still consider the acquisition of international and intercultural competencies by students as an important weakness;
- in 33% of our study programmes there is room for improvement when it comes to teaching staff mobility and professional development initiatives related to internationalization.

Actions to meet the objectives:

- an internationalization policy comprising such initiatives as [student mobility](#), [teaching staff and support staff mobility](#), participation in [international education projects](#), internationalization@home, virtual or short-term mobility, and [international joint programmes](#) ensures that students acquire the necessary international and intercultural competencies, and that lecturers hone their professional skills further;
- a qualitative partner portfolio supported by UGI and [eQuaTIC](#) is currently under development. In the context of Erasmus+, English-taught study programmes can set up [project-based international co-operation](#) and [bilateral education co-operation](#);
- a **team of lecturers with active contributions from international colleagues** guarantees an international perspective being embedded into the programme. Study programmes can promote **staff mobility** to encourage exchanges/guest lectures abroad.

Specific actions at faculty and/or university level:

- two initiatives we realized with specific relevance to our education internationalization policy are [ENLIGHT](#) and [Ghent University's Global Campus](#) in South Korea;
- **ENLIGHT** will be developed further into a higher education area with a focus on inclusive and sustainable student mobility, allowing them to participate seamlessly in horizontal as well as vertical [mobility opportunities](#), which are either short-term or longer-term (term or whole programme) and take place on campus, online or blended (ut supra, 1.8.2);
- in 2014, we started with our offer of fully accredited four-year Bachelor's programmes in [food technology, environmental technology and molecular biotechnology](#) in Songdo, **South Korea**. We have flying faculty as well as staff members (professorial and academic assistant staff) who are permanently based there. Our flying faculty, consisting of Ghent-based staff, teach course units in compact modules. Currently, we are working to set up a graduate school for a more in-depth and broadening education offer. Each student enrolled at our campus in South Korea spends at least one term at Ghent University. Conversely, an increasing number of Ghent-based study programmes send students to spend a term in South Korea, e.g. to work on their Master's dissertation.

Item	New	% (strongly) agree	Difference	% (strongly) disagree
32 The study programme stimulated you to develop entrepreneurial skills (like e.g. starting up a proj...		29.3 %		42.8 %
21 You were stimulated to embark on a foreign study experience.		40.9 %		35.8 %
23 In the course of the study programme, you became familiar with the intercultural and internation...		46.7 %	▼	31.0 %
22 In the course of the study programme, you were brought into contact with foreign (guest) lecture...		56.5 %	▼	28.5 %
38 In the course of the study programme, you were introduced to the idea of diversity, or inclusive e...		46.0 %		27.9 %
33 The study programme stimulated you to think about ecologically sustainable and/or socially equi...		55.5 %		22.4 %
19 You received sufficient feedback on assignments and papers.		55.7 %		21.6 %
34 The study programme taught you how to apply yourself to social engagement within the context...		50.0 %		20.4 %

Figure 25: 20% Highest Rated Items ('strongly) **disagree**' Taken from the **Study Programme Feedback** – Master's Programmes. Data Aggregated at University Level.



Figure 26: Number of Incoming and Outgoing Exchange Students, **UGI** - Evolution Chart.

Please note that the pandemic made previously planned exchange initiatives impossible to carry out for a large number of students.

Study Programmes' Improvement Actions

Below, we sum up the most important improvement actions that have been identified by our study programmes as a whole. This is the closing of the PDCA cycle. Since the overview is generated based on aggregated data, however, not every improvement action is necessarily an 'issue' in every study programme.

PART 1 The Study Programme's Education Vision and Education Policy	PART 2 Permanent Quality Assurance	PART 3 Ghent University's Strategic Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informing a broad group of stakeholders of study programme competencies/learning outcomes; • monitoring deadlines and students' workload; • introducing more interim feedback and a variety of assessment methods; • applying the four-eye principle consistently when drawing up exams and assignments; • embedding generic competencies into the curriculum, the teaching methods and assessment methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting feedback from a broad range of external stakeholders and international peers (programme review); • drawing up a highly performing quality improvement plan that enables permanent quality assurance; • communicating to all stakeholders on all aspects of education policy and quality assurance; • stimulating consultations among lecturers and increasing their involvement in education and quality assurance policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stimulating multi-, inter-, en transdisciplinarity in the curriculum; • integrating scientific/academic integrity into the curriculum in a structural manner; • giving students maximum opportunities for talent development on the themes of sustainability, entrepreneurship and social commitment; • launching initiatives to increase the visibility of student representative vis-à-vis the larger student population; • communicating to external stakeholders on the study programme and keeping in touch with those stakeholders for social developments in the field; • stimulating internationalization initiatives in order to increase students' international and intercultural competencies; • encouraging lecturers to participate in staff mobility or international professional development initiatives.

Appendix One

Overview of Initial Bachelor's and Master's Programmes in the 2022-2023 Academic Year as Published on Ghent University's Study Guide

ALPHA FACULTIES

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Bachelor in de Afrikaanse talen en culturen
Bachelor in de archeologie
Bachelor in de geschiedenis
Bachelor in de kunstwetenschappen
Bachelor in de moraalwetenschappen
Bachelor in de Oost-Europese talen en culturen
Bachelor in de Oosterse talen en culturen
Bachelor in de taal- en letterkunde
Bachelor in de toegepaste taalkunde
Bachelor in de wijsbegeerte

Master of African Studies (English)
Master in de archeologie
Master in gender en diversiteit
Master in de geschiedenis
Master of Arts in Global Studies (English)
Master in de historische taal- en letterkunde
Master in de kunstwetenschappen
Master in de meertalige communicatie
Master in de moraalwetenschappen
Master in Oost-Europese talen en culturen
Master in de Oosterse talen en culturen
Master in de taal- en letterkunde
Master of Technology for Translation and Interpreting (English)
Master in het tolken
Master in de vergelijkende moderne letterkunde
Master in het vertalen
Research Master of Philosophy (English)
Master in de wijsbegeerte

Faculty of Law and Criminology

Bachelor in de criminologische wetenschappen
Bachelor in de rechten

Master in de criminologische wetenschappen
International Master of Advanced Research in Criminology: Border Crossing, Security and Social Justice (English)
Master in de rechten

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Bachelor in de bestuurskunde en het publiek management
Bachelor in de economische wetenschappen
Bachelor handelsingenieur
Bachelor in de handelswetenschappen
Bachelor in de toegepaste economische wetenschappen

Master in de algemene economie
Master in de bedrijfseconomie
Master in de bestuurskunde en het publiek management
Master of Business Economics (English)
Master of Business Engineering (English)
Master of Economics (English)
Master of Economics of Globalisation and European Integration (English)
Master in de handelswetenschappen

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Bachelor in de pedagogische wetenschappen
Bachelor in de psychologie

European Master of Clinical Linguistics (English)
Master in de pedagogische wetenschappen
Master in de psychologie
Master in het sociaal werk

Faculty of Political and Social Sciences

Bachelor in de communicatiewetenschappen
Bachelor in de politieke wetenschappen
Bachelor of Social Sciences (English)
Bachelor in de sociologie

Master in de communicatiewetenschappen
Master of Conflict and Development Studies (English)
Master in de EU-studies
Master in gender en diversiteit
Master of Arts in Global Studies (English)
Master in de politieke wetenschappen
Master in de sociologie
Master of Sociology (English)

BETA FACULTIES

Faculty of Sciences

Bachelor in de biochemie en de biotechnologie
Bachelor in de biologie

Bachelor in de chemie
Bachelor in de fysica en de sterrenkunde
Bachelor in de geografie en de geomatica
Bachelor in de geologie
Bachelor in de informatica
Bachelor in de wiskunde
Bachelor of Environmental Technology (Global Campus South Korea – English)
Bachelor of Food Technology (Global Campus South Korea – English)
Bachelor of Molecular Biotechnology (Global Campus South Korea – English)

Master of Biochemistry and Biotechnology (English)
Master in Bioinformatics (English)
Master of Biology (English)
Master of Chemistry (English)
Master in de fysica en de sterrenkunde
Master in de geografie en de geomatica
Master in de geologie
Master of Geology (English)
Master in de informatica
Master of Marine and Lacustrine Science and Management (English)
International Master of Marine Biological Resources (English)
International Master of Agro- and Environmental Nematology (English)
Master of Sustainable Land Management (English)
Master in de wiskunde

Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Bachelor in de industriële wetenschappen
Bachelor in de industriële wetenschappen: industrieel ontwerpen
Bachelor in de ingenieurswetenschappen: architectuur
Bachelor in de ingenieurswetenschappen

Master in Bioinformatics (English)
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: bouwkunde
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: chemie
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: elektromechanica
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: elektronica-ICT
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: elektrotechniek
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: industrieel ontwerpen
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: landmeten
Master in de industriële wetenschappen: machine- en productieautomatisering
Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: architectuur
Master of Biomedical Engineering (English)
Master of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research (English)
International Master of Science in Biomedical Engineering (English)
Master of Chemical Engineering (English)
Master of Civil Engineering (English)
Master of Computer Science Engineering (English)
Master of Electrical Engineering (English)
Master of Electromechanical Engineering (English)
Master of Engineering Physics (English)
Master of Fire Safety Engineering (English)
International Master of Science in Fire Safety Engineering (English)

European Master of Nuclear Fusion and Engineering Physics (English)
 European Master of Photonics (English)
 Master of Photonics Engineering (English)
 Master of Sustainable Materials Engineering (English)
 International Master of Textile Engineering (English)
 Master of Textile Engineering (English)
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: bedrijfskundige systeemtechnieken en operationeel onderzoek
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: biomedische ingenieurstechnieken
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: bouwkunde
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: chemische technologie
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: computerwetenschappen
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: elektrotechniek
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: fotonica
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: materiaalkunde
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: toegepaste natuurkunde
 Master in de ingenieurswetenschappen: werktuigkunde-elektrotechniek
 Master in de stedenbouw en de ruimtelijke planning

Faculty of Bioscience Engineering

Bachelor in de bio-industriële wetenschappen
 Bachelor in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen
 Bachelor in de biowetenschappen
 Bachelor of Environmental Technology (Global Campus South Korea – English)
 Bachelor of Food Technology (Global Campus South Korea – English)
 Bachelor of Molecular Biotechnology (Global Campus South Korea – English)

Master of Aquaculture (English)
 Master of Bioscience Engineering: Cell and Gene Biotechnology (English)
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: bos- en natuurbeheer
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: chemie en bioprocestechnologie
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: land, water en klimaat
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: landbouwkunde
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: levensmiddelenwetenschappen en voeding
 Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: milieutechnologie
 Master in Bioinformatics (English)
 Master in de biowetenschappen: land- en tuinbouwkunde
 Master in de biowetenschappen: voedingsindustrie
 Master of Environmental Science and Technology (English)
 International Master of Environmental Technology and Engineering (English)
 Master of Food Technology (English)
 International Master of Health Management and Aquaculture (English)
 Master in de industriële wetenschappen: biochemie
 Master in de industriële wetenschappen: chemie
 Master in de bio-industriële wetenschappen: circulaire bioprocestechnologie
 Master in de industriële wetenschappen: milieukunde
 Master of Nutrition and Rural Development (English)
 Master of Pharmaceutical Engineering (English)
 International Master of Science in Rural Development (English)
 International Master of Soils and Global Change (English)
 International Master of Science in Sustainable and Innovative Natural Resource Management (English)

GAMMA FACULTIES

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Bachelor in de biomedische wetenschappen
Bachelor in de geneeskunde
Bachelor in de lichamelijke opvoeding en de bewegingswetenschappen
Bachelor in de logopedische en audiologische wetenschappen
Bachelor in de revalidatiewetenschappen en de kinesitherapie
Bachelor in de tandheelkunde

Master in de bewegings- en sportwetenschappen
Master of Biomedical Sciences (English)
Master in de ergotherapeutische wetenschap
Master in de geneeskunde
Master in de gezondheidsbevordering
Master in de logopedische en audiologische wetenschappen
Master in het management en het beleid van de gezondheidszorg
Master in de revalidatiewetenschappen en de kinesitherapie
Master in de tandheelkunde
Master in de verpleegkunde en de vroedkunde

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Bachelor in de diergeneeskunde

Master in de diergeneeskunde

Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Bachelor in de farmaceutische wetenschappen

Master in de farmaceutische zorg
Master in de geneesmiddelenontwikkeling
Master of Pharmaceutical Engineering (English)
International Master of Sustainable Drug Discovery (English)