



SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020



READING GUIDE

This sustainability report is based on data from 2018 and 2019. The report shows which measures Ghent University is taking to help shape and accelerate the transition to a more sustainable society and as well as the successes we have achieved. The various sustainability themes are discussed in separate chapters, but they are of course interdependent and we should always strive for synergies.

The report is the result of a broad participatory process in which many academics and policy staff made a constructive contribution. This process not only resulted in well-founded and substantiated thematic chapters, but also stimulated an open and fascinating debate about the direction in which Ghent University should evolve.

In our pursuit of a more sustainable university, we are confronted with different speeds. On the one hand, we are seeing great results based on well-founded and ambitious policy plans and achieved through allocating resources in terms of personnel, operations and/or investments. Here, the next steps to take are clear and can be described in concrete terms. On the other hand, we have mature ideas that come from numerous thought processes and experiments, that still need to be developed further with the help of the respective authorized people. It is a conscious choice to include both the completed initiatives and specific actions as well as mature ideas (and the many ideas in between) in this sustainability report. This way, we have tried to portray all of the interesting and informative dynamics of change.

The agenda items in bold are those we consider to be most essential on the path towards the transition to a sustainable university and therefore deserve the most attention. The report follows the G4 guidelines of the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)**, an international organization creating guidelines for sustainability reporting. The report investigates Ghent University as a whole.

An extended version can be found at
www.ugent.be/duurzaam > duurzaamheidsverslag

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VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY & GUIDELINES FOR GHENT UNIVERSITY

Ghent University aims to be the leading knowledge institution for a sustainable future - ecologically, socially and economically - within a local and global context.

For this purpose:

- Ghent University **generates substantial support** for sustainable development.
- Ghent University integrates sustainability in **the education, research and service it provides**.
- Ghent University implements sustainability in its **management and organisation**.

This was the vision supported by Ghent University at the end of 2013. Much has happened since then. The sustainability framework acts as a guide and generates a positive image, inspiring more and more people to get involved and to launch more and more initiatives.

This publication is a collaboration between the Sustainability Policy Committee, Green Office Ghent, the Center for Sustainable Development, the think tank Transitie UGent and the various directorates of the Central Administration of Ghent University.

FOREWORD

2020, The Great Pause. The coronavirus functions as a powerful reset button. Our university empties out, the country goes into lockdown, the world comes to a standstill. The virus shows us how globalisation connects us worldwide, but also how vital many undervalued jobs are, how inequalities are still increasing, how vulnerable our economic system is, and how limited our way of consuming and producing is.

The Covid-19 crisis also emphasized the role of science in society. Think only of the importance of having the right scientific knowledge as a basis for effective policy making. The importance of experts who can explain exactly what we know. The importance of researchers who are given the necessary space to investigate what we do not know yet. The importance of academics who look beyond this acute crisis and who, across boundaries of groups and disciplines, map out paths to a distant future. This importance was not always evident in 'normal times'. Or at least we did not act as if it was.

In the meantime, we are cautiously getting back on our feet and many people want to return to those 'normal times'. The coronavirus may have driven the climate truants out of the news, but it has not solved the problems they brought to our attention. Should we even aim for an identical copy of our former patterns of consumption and production and our humanity-nature relationship? Does the Covid-19 crisis not teach us that we should take experts' warnings seriously? The challenges in terms of climate, biodiversity, scarcity of resources, social inequality, poverty, etc. remain immense. Moreover, they are deeply connected and have many different spatial and temporal scales because of which, among other things, no ready-made answer can be formulated.

As a result of the sudden standstill, CO2 emissions will show a dip in 2020. The deepest dip in years. But it will not bring about a turnaround. Collective standstill is not a climate plan, and certainly not a just solution, but a structural transformation of our fossil economy and society is. That is what we want to focus on.

After all, universities have a prominent role to play in tackling these sustainability challenges. At universities, new knowledge and expertise are developed and exchanged, and turned into powerful answers to complex issues. This way, we can give governments informed advice and win the trust of society. Even though we are confronted with controversies, uncertainties and normativity, as a scientific institution we must strive for robust knowledge on sustainability issues, get involved in the public debate, point out the urgency even more and draw even more attention to 'the why'. We have more legitimacy and knowledge on this subject than politicians. In the coming years, we want to strongly encourage them to work with us and with non-academic experts to map out the desired paths towards a more sustainable world.

In addition, we need to familiarise our students with complex sustainability issues, provide them with enough experience to deal with them and encourage their commitment to resolve them. As large and respected institutions, universities to lead by example: in their own



operations they can make it clear that other models are possible, both by providing space and opportunities for upscaling to promising bottom-up projects and by showing leadership in transitions of structures and cultures.

The Ghent University sustainability report is both a report of the efforts made and a plan of action. With this report, we show the outside world what steps we are taking as an institution to shape and accelerate the transition to a sustainable society, and what results we are achieving. Because one thing is clear: the ecological and social challenges we face require a very ambitious and vigorous attitude from everyone. The community of Ghent University has shown more than ever during the Covid-19 crisis that it knows how to handle itself. Let us take the same approach to the even greater challenge of climate change.

Rik Van de Walle en Mieke Van Herreweghe
Rector and Vice-Rector of Ghent University



Rik Van de Walle and Mieke Van Herreweghe, Rector and Vice-Rector of Ghent University.

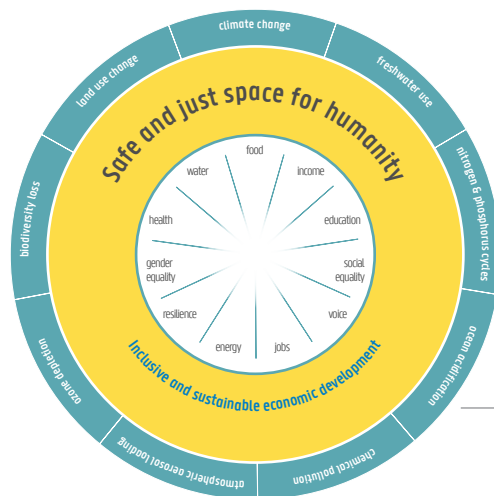
HOW DOES GHENT UNIVERSITY INTERPRET THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG'S)?

Sustainability is a popular concept that covers many aspects. It is therefore essential to think about how we, as Ghent University, position ourselves towards sustainability frameworks. In this section, we briefly discuss our thoughts on working with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While there may be a lot of discussion about both the context of a specific sustainability problem and the best strategy to resolve it, sustainability is not a purely arbitrary or relativistic concept. After all, we cannot ignore some fairly widely accepted basic principles, in particular intra- and intergenerational justice and respect for the carrying capacity of the earth. Or to put it in less fancy words: it is all about a decent life in a society in which all people are treated fairly and all that within planetary boundaries. The already influential illustration of Raworth's donut economy reflects this reality in which we must tackle ecological and social challenges in combination with sustainability issues. In this donut economy, sustainable societies flourish between an ecological ceiling and a social basis.

[1] Block T. & Paredis E. (2019) "Het politieke karakter van duurzaamheidsvraagstukken" In: Coene J., Raeymaeckers P., Hubeau B., Marchal S., Remmen R. & Van Haarlem A. (red.) Armoede en Sociale Uitsluiting, Jaarboek 2019 Acco: Leuven/Den Haag, pp.47-66.

[2] Raworth K. (2017) Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist.



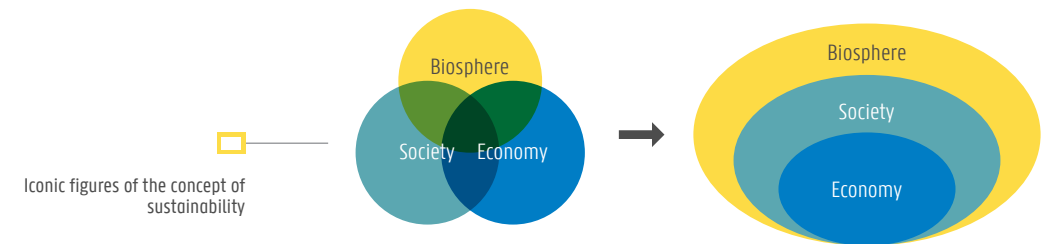
A donut economy between an ecological ceiling and a social basis (Raworth 2017).

Sustainability: living a decent life between an ecological ceiling and a social basis

Multiple perspectives and interpretations

It is however undeniable that the general description above mainly consists of broad normative concepts without unambiguous definitions and concrete solutions. What exactly is "fairly"? When are the planetary boundaries exceeded? Usually everyone has a different interpretation of these subjects, which they then apply to introduce a narrative that meets their own interests. Through these observations, we have distilled different perspectives present in the sustainability debate. It is important to always check which concerns and assumptions are brought to the table and which blind spots (consciously or unconsciously) are allowed.

There are also several general visual depictions of the concept of 'sustainable development'. A dominant interpretation is found in the so-called "Triple P Model", which summarizes the dimensions of sustainable development as "People, Planet & Profit". This often translates into an iconic figure (see figure below - left) in which striving for a sustainable society is presented as a balance between the social, ecological and economic objectives of sustainability. We can still appreciate the theoretical part of this representation, but because the reality is that the economic pillar gets the upper hand, becoming a goal in itself, we prefer the nested model (see figure below - right). This hierarchical representation fits within a strong interpretation of sustainable development, fits in Raworth's donut economy and starts with the idea that an economy must serve a socially just society and all this within the earth's capacities. Within this model, there are ever ongoing scientific and social discussions going on about the ecologically sustainable borders of what is an acceptable distribution of resources between people.



Sustainable Development Goals: nested model provides an SDG pie

An important political result of recent UN procedures on sustainable development are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN conference on sustainable development 'Rio + 20' in 2012 was the start of negotiations concerning the SDGs and led in 2015 to the creation of 17 global sustainability goals that are linked to 169 sub-goals or targets.

Naturally, we must regard the development of the SDGs as an important global diplomatic success and we cannot underestimate the added value of an internationally shared agenda. It is also important that it contains a wide range of goals, aiming at poverty, inequality and gender, as well as at climate, water and peace. At the same time, it is at least as important to point out some pitfalls that could cause the role and impact of the SDGs to be modest at best and counterproductive at worst. For example, the



The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals

open and non-binding nature of the SDGs (and the whole logic behind this model) leaves a lot of room for actors to only pretend to be committed to sustainability. Smaller actors (e.g. companies and NGOs) would then, for example, only promote SDGs that are already central to their own operations ('cherry picking') and larger actors (e.g. governments and universities) would simply stick SDG labels on their current initiatives. Because of this, the search for real transformations of structures, cultures and practices continues. SDGs therefore lend themselves perfectly for a management culture in which the reversion of ends and means gradually increases.

We strongly recommend avoiding cherry picking and simply ticking off one or more SDGs. In fact, in our research, education and our own operations, we must recognize and study how the SDGs relate to each other and interact with each other in complex ways. The SDGs are an indivisible whole. Consequently, better mapping and understanding of these interactions are important research goals. More concretely, we think of the following questions: how, to what extent and for what period of time does an action within one SDG generate a positive or negative effect on other SDGs? For example, a UN study shows that SDG 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production" is connected to as many as 14 other SDGs [5]. And as already mentioned in this text, SDG 8 "Fair work and economic growth" should not be pursued separately, but in conjunction with 10 other SDGs. Efficient use of raw materials is seen here as an integrated part of SDG 8 and it is therefore requested to respect this connection in solution strategies and policy.

The figure above presenting the 17 SDGs in 3 rows seems to ignore the complex interactions between the SDGs. The SDGs are simply juxtaposed. Every SDG always seems equally important. And when everything is labeled "strategic," there

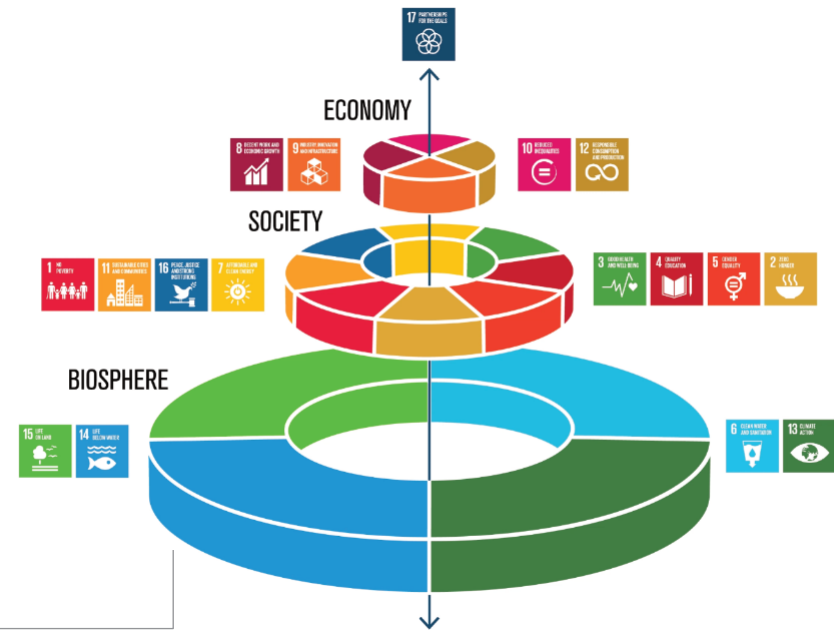
may be no strategy at all. That is why we keep advocating for layered models, using the same logic used for the donut economy and its nested sustainability model. Folke et al. propose to present the SDGs as a large wedding cake. For inspiration we present below a nice example of this "wedding cake model" regarding sustainable and healthy food. This model developed by Rockström and Sukhdev shows, among other things, that goals concerning the reduction of poverty (SDG 1) and combating hunger (SDG 2) are inextricably linked to gender equality (SDG 5), decent work (SDG 8) and reduced inequality (SDG 10).

[3] United Nations (2018) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

[4] Nilsson M., Griggs D., Visbeck M. (2016) "Map the interactions between sustainable development goals" *Nature* 534:320–322.

[5] Le Blanc D. (2015) Towards integration at last? The sustainable development goals as a network of targets UN DESA, 19 p.

[6] Folke C., Biggs R., Norström A., Reyers B. & Rockström J. (2016) "Social-ecological resilience and biosphere-based sustainability science" *Ecology and Society* 21(3):41.



SDG pie graph concerning sustainable and healthy food ?

[7] Rockström J. & Sukhdev P. (2016) How food connects all the SDGs. Stockholm Resilience Institute, 2 p.

Creating space for an interesting debate

With this text we recognize the presence of conflicting perspectives on sustainability and the complexity of sustainability issues, which is certainly relevant as well when implementing the SDGs. The lack of solid, generally acceptable definitions and strategies may be seen as problematic at first glance, but when we embrace this reality of fluidity, we instantly create the necessary space to have an interesting social debate, about both relevant scientific knowledge as well as normative visions of our future. After all, the sustainability concept makes it possible to discuss fundamental choices: what does it mean to have a decent life within an ecologically safe and socially just space? What kind of world do we want to live in? And of course: how and in which direction should our university evolve?



GUIDELINE 1 GENERATING SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“ Exploring together to make this sustainable vision of the future a reality on a small scale: that's what we like to do with Transitie UGent and the Green Office Gent, with staff and students. But we have to make sure that we don't explore to explore. We are experimenting to show that a certain action is possible, in order to then scale it up and accelerate its implementation. So, bring on the widespread launch of parking makeovers, plant-based catering, multidisciplinary student projects on sustainability issues, ...”

Riet Van de Velde, environmental coordinator of Ghent University

Transitie UGent, a think tank of some 200 committed students and staff, experts and policy makers, identifies challenges during a meeting and looks for possible sustainable solutions.

Our sustainability policy is guided and monitored by our Sustainability Policy Committee and is influenced by input from different corners. For example, sustainability was put forward by Ghent University as a university-wide policy choice, alongside the policy choices of diversity, activated learning, social identity, talent management and alumni association. Faculties and departments were asked to formulate action plans for at least three of these subjects. Eight faculties and six departments took up the challenge of improving sustainability and integrating it more explicitly in their curricula and/or focusing more on efficient use of space and energy. Two commissioners support them in achieving this.

In addition, many students and staff are actively involved in sustainability projects. The Green Office is the point of contact, it connects and strengthens the sustainability policy by setting up partnerships between policy staff, researchers, students, volunteers, the city.. There are regular awareness-raising campaigns and the Sustainability Pact calls on departments to make active commitments in the field of sustainability. The committed students meet each other in the 'Making Tomorrow' project, in which they are challenged to take the lead in sustainability projects and experiments, or during the 'Sustainights', which are information sessions or trainings about various sustainability topics. Within the framework of Global Minds, lectures are organized on multiple occasions, during which prominent speakers highlight a different SDG in every session.

The think tank Transitie UGent keeps the pressure on in an enthusiastic and constructive way. It consists of about 200 committed staff members, students, experts and policy staff and serves as an open innovation network that brings forth a great number of innovative suggestions. Through new policy proposals, small-scale experiments and actions, the participants try to tackle the system changes necessary for the transition to a sustainable society by making them a topic of discussion and by visualising them.

However, despite all these commitments, the gap between what needs to change and what actually changes is very big. In the past year many people have protested in the streets: Students4Climate, Scientists4Climate, Fridays for Future, ... This mobilisation was very tangible at Ghent University as well. Over 1,800 people signed a petition asking Ghent University to declare a climate emergency and to work on a climate plan, using the climate objectives to define their ambitions for the various policy areas. The 'Run the Climate' campaign also drew attention to a number of very specific points for improvement.



SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Strengthening the sustainability policy in the organisation

ACHIEVED

The Green Office, the Urban Academy and many other actors working towards a more sustainable university were given a permanent space in the Green Hub in the UFO building. The location has a creative and sustainable look, is visible and easily accessible for students.



ONGOING

Eight faculties and six departments formulated action plans for 2019-2023 in order to integrate sustainability more explicitly in their curriculum and/or to focus on a more efficient use of space and energy. Two special commissioners support them in realising these plans.



NEW

Ghent University, under the rector's authority and supported by many scientists, takes the lead in the public debate and strives for an ambitious sustainability policy that deals with uncertainty and complexity and transcends the 'status quo' thinking, both in regard to the climate crisis and the recovery plans after the Covid-19 crisis.

NEW

Inspired by the scientific insights, as well as the demand to declare a climate emergency and other similar initiatives such as 'Run the Climate', Ghent University recognises this 'sense of urgency' and acts on it with additional specific and effective measures. All relevant policy plans will be aligned with the climate objective, as has already been done for the themes of energy and biodiversity. All these aligned policy plans will be combined to form Ghent University's climate plan, comprised of short, medium and long-term objectives. The realisation of this plan will be monitored. This way, adjustments can be made whenever necessary (see also: sustainable campus development).

TBLR Global Minds programme, with lectures on SDG subjects; Climate statement by Nic Balthazar in the Aula; Campaign 'Oceans are rising, so get informed' during the climate summit in Madrid; Climate marches including the Students4Climate and the Scientists4Climate; Student entrepreneurs experiment with DRIPL, flavoured water dispensers without disposable packaging, based on tap water; Ecomarket; Award ceremony of the sustainability award 'Groene Ruijter'; Sustainability visit of Queen Mathilde; Students work out sustainability projects during a 'Making Tomorrow' event.

Strengthening internal network



ONGOING

The Green Office Gent, the Centre for Sustainable Development, the environmental committees of the faculties, the sustainability and environmental working groups, the student working group, D'URGENT, ... boost themselves, grow stronger and get started on new sustainable projects.

ONGOING

Experts, policy staff and committed staff and students join forces to tackle specific sustainability themes (circular building, internationalisation, water...) to try to influence policy making (e.g. biodiversity, energy, mobility).

Strengthening the external network



ONGOING

Relationships with other Green Offices, the Ghent University Association, The Shift, International Sustainable Campus Network, ENLIGHT... are further developed.

Fossil free



ACHIEVED

The three financial portfolio managers of Ghent University have aligned themselves with the ambition of the sustainable investment policy of Ghent University. This means no longer investing in fossil fuel, weapons, gambling, tobacco or pornography industries and actively investing in renewable energy and companies with a small carbon footprint. A tender is currently being launched to attract new portfolio managers under these same conditions in order to achieve a sustainable and diversified portfolio.



ONGOING

Ghent University is leading the way, informing and supporting other institutions to align with this ambitious sustainable investment framework.



GUIDELINE 2 INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

EDUCATION

“ Because controversies often arise when discussing sustainability issues and each perspective necessarily creates its own blind spots, we must remain modest in providing objectively correct solutions. Let us confront students with different interpretations and perspectives, without lapsing into relativism. After all, the urgency of sustainability challenges requires committed positions and scientifically based solutions. Students have to learn to develop that too. (And now read the first sentence again).”

Thomas Block, director of the Centre for Sustainable Development and special commissioner Sustainability



Students organised a Climate Summer School, in which the climate problem was studied from different angles for an entire week.

Higher education is seen as an important catalyst for sustainable development, because of its educational mission. Educating 40,000 young people annually, can and should strengthen the way we conceive sustainability. That is why, through education, Ghent University wants to contribute to a more sustainable society and make its students sufficiently familiar with (the interconnectedness of) ecological and social sustainability problems and possible solutions.

Building on the growing number of courses with a sustainability focus and the success of a number of pilot programmes in which sustainability was integrated into the entire education offered, Ghent University decided to speed up the pace by placing sustainable education at the centre of the university-wide policy choice 'sustainability'. Six faculties formulated ambitious objectives to make their students more familiar with the complexity of current sustainability issues.

At the same time, other exciting education initiatives were set up. A first Climate Summer School was organised for and by students, the idea for a new master's in sustainability for social scientists took shape and received content (complementary to existing master's programmes with a sustainability focus in the exact sciences), the meetings of the learning network 'Sustainability in my course' were always well attended... Further consideration was given to a dynamic platform for socially embedded research by students, the Urban Academy, received structural support for a relaunch, a train-the-trainer session for study programmes was developed and Ghent University collaborated on an interuniversity online learning programme for lecturers.

More information at: www.ugent.be/duurzaam > onderwijs

Substantive integration of sustainability in the curricula



ACHIEVED

Within Ghent University, the number of courses with a sustainability focus is growing.

ACHIEVED

Five study programmes went through a pilot project with lecturers, students and experts to embed sustainability more strongly: the study programmes Commercial Sciences, Civil Engineer Mechanical Engineering-Electrical Engineering, Law, Industrial Engineer Electromechanics and Social Work. In addition, a scaling up process was started within the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration to investigate how to integrate sustainability into all the faculty's study programmes.



ONGOING

Supported by a special commissioner, six faculties are applying the strategy concerning the university-wide policy choices to anchor sustainability more firmly in their education programmes. After a pilot project in one or more study programmes, each faculty then begins an upscaling trajectory for all study programmes.



NEW

In the Social Sciences study programme, a new interdisciplinary master will be developed with a focus on (the governance of) sustainability transitions.

NEW

Ghent University focuses on support for and coordination between educational practices whereby students in a transdisciplinary setting work with sustainability challenges from within or outside the university (Community Service Learning, Urban Academy, Daring Entrepreneurship, Living Lab Campus Sterre etc.). A task force will be set up to map out the various initiatives and educational practices, coordinate them, support them, make them more visible and scale them up whenever they can. One of the options this task force will explore is the participation of Ghent University in the renewed concept of the Science Shop (together with the VUB and the University of Antwerp).

Professionalisation of lecturers: towards better courses with a focus on sustainability



ACHIEVED

A learning network helps individual teachers to integrate sustainability into their course.



ONGOING

Every year, design workshops are organized for about three course units in order to (re)develop (parts of) these courses so that the focus comes to lie on the complexity of sustainability issues and interactive working methods.



NEW

A course catalogue is being developed involving sustainability education within the regular and renewed support programme for teachers and assistants. There will be a train-the-trainer session for study programmes and a blended training course for individual assistant professors, of which the online learning path - the result of intensive interuniversity collaboration - is planned to launch in the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Embedding sustainability projects in Ghent University's education policy

ACHIEVED

The department of Educational Policy regularly discusses educational projects with a sustainability focus and the embedding in policy with sustainability experts. The university-wide policy choice 'sustainability' reinforces this process.

ACHIEVED

A Sustainability officer has been appointed within the department of Education Policy.

ACHIEVED

Ghent University investigates sustainability aspects in all study programme evaluations. For example, students are asked to indicate to what extent they were given the opportunity to think about ecologically sustainable and socially just solutions to challenges.

Support of education initiatives by students



ACHIEVED

The Climate Summer School for and by students is organised annually and supported by the institution (although it was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19).



ONGOING

Committed students experiment with 'Student-led education' and further develop this approach.

ONGOING

A university-wide survey is conducted among all students to assess the extent to which sustainability challenges and issues are (sufficiently) addressed in all Ghent University study programmes (cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19).



NEW

Multiple options are explored to better valorise insights from master theses on sustainability issues on the one hand and to award a prize to the best master thesis on sustainability on the other hand.



RESEARCH

“ Sustainability is a theme to which the whole Ghent University community can contribute. Let's turn Ghent University into a testing ground where our own development regarding sustainability can be tested. Research in action, in other words.”

Korneel Rabaey, full professor of the Department of Biotechnology and Chief Technology Officer of CAPTURE

The Mobble' is a modular construction component developed by a team of students from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture as part of the international Solar Decathlon competition. This modular building system with sustainable and energy efficient techniques is widely applicable and affordable when renovating high buildings. The concept won 5 prizes.

Ghent University wants to further stimulate opportunities for research into a more socially just and ecologically sustainable future, without losing sight of the efficient economic system that can be reconciled with this. Such research applies a wide variety of scientific approaches, often using multi-, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and envisioning a high societal impact.

Such research must fit in the prevailing evaluation and career context. Academics must be given the freedom and confidence to conduct excellent research on a variety of subjects. At the same time, they must be given opportunities for talent development. Thanks to the new perspective on research evaluation and the new career and promotion policy, a model that led to a predominantly quantitative and output-oriented interpretation made way for a qualitative approach that creates space for social impact and Open Science (see also 'Working at Ghent University'). Open Science states that scientific research is transparent, reproducible and, as far as possible, reusable. Sustainable access to scientific output (not only publications, but also other components such as research data) is crucial. This requires respect and an open mind, as well as flexible and coordinated collaboration between many disciplines. It also requires professional sharing and exchange of information, not only within the research world, but where possible also with the general public.

In the coming years, Ghent University will continue to invest in stimulating and supporting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research collaboration and societal value creation. After all, a fertile breeding ground is necessary to allow bottom-up research initiatives to grow. The fact that this context is present is shown by the presence of and support from Ghent University in new promising research networks, such as interdisciplinary consortia 'Urban Academy' and 'Human Rights Research Network of Ghent University', the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees (CESSMIR), the International Thematic Networks 'Sustainability Education' (SEDwise), 'Green-Chem' and 'Bioresource recovery from organo-biological residues and wastes' (Infinity), the strategic investment of 3 professorships involving 'Urban waste and circular economy', Business Development Centres 'Cleantech for sustainable chemical production' (CleanChem), 'Biobased production systems' (Biomolecules), 'Innovative technologies for sustainable building materials and structures' (DuraBUILDmaterials), 'Energy research and innovation community' (EnerGhentIC), Innovations for sustainable aquaculture production' (Aquaculture) and 'Valorisation of industrial by-products' (End-of-Waste), the International centre of excellence for the African Great Lakes' Natural Capital (CAFRINAT), the Centre for Advanced Process Technology for Urban Resource Recovery (CAPTURE), etc.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



A stimulating research environment based on freedom, trust and talent development

ACHIEVED

Ghent University has a new career and promotion policy for professors since October 1st 2018. Since the end of 2019, similar principles are also being implemented during the careers of specific academic staff (IOF Business Developers and IDC coordinators).

ACHIEVED

By default, Ghent University grants core funding to each starting professor (with an appointment percentage of at least 50%). The BOF Starting Grant amounts to 210,000 euros.



NOT ACHIEVED

Within the Research Council, the possibilities to strengthen the core funding (e.g. by analogy with the BOF Starting Grant) were discussed, but it was concluded that the relatively limited BOF resources are insufficient for expanding this funding at the moment.



Further strengthen multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research

ONGOING

With recurring calls for 'interdisciplinary projects', 'interdisciplinary research consortia with social impact', 'Concerted Research Actions' (GOAs), 'IOF business development centres', 'international thematic networks', 'the strategic investment in 21 professors' posts', ... interdisciplinary research and collaboration aimed at (social) impact was stimulated.

ONGOING

Research groups and consortia within Ghent University are inventoried and registered in the research information system GISMO, making the scientific expertise of Ghent University researchers accessible to both internal and external users by the end of 2020.



NEW

Several departments of the central administration together with interdisciplinary research initiatives investigate the wishes and possibilities to provide physical space, possibly for the duration of a project, that avoids the dominant and (infra)structural compartmentalization (ranging from shared office space across faculties to shared research labs).

Stimulating and supporting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research into sustainability issues



ACHIEVED

Through recurring calls, Ghent University supports numerous research consortia that focus on complex sustainability issues.



ACHIEVED

A Ghent University vision and approach has been developed to deal with sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



NEW

The Research Department provides support in the implementation of the Ghent University vision on sustainability and SDGs (see above) within project proposals for European research, Strategic Basic Research ... A general webpage is available as well as tailor-made feedback.

NEW

Ghent University focuses on 'living labs' involving e.g. circular construction, energy transition, water-robustness, sustainable mobility, green and biodiverse campuses, etc. A reflection is started on the (structural) financing of this operation (e.g. innovative tendering, IOF resources, investment budget, etc.).



NOT ACHIEVED

Opportunities are explored and experiments are supported to integrate sustainability within the Doctoral Schools. Within this programme, competences such as interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, societal valorisation and dealing adequately with complex sustainability issues and socio-technical transitions can be addressed.

Societal valorisation of research



ACHIEVED

In the H2020 project ACCOMPLISSH, tools were developed to support co-creation, impact and valorisation. The results will be implemented, among others, by the IDC coordinators.

ACHIEVED

Societal valorisation is embedded in research evaluations of BOF calls and career models in order to create sufficient appreciation and incentives for researchers investing in societal valorisation.



NOT ACHIEVED

Societal valorisation was not embedded in internal financial allocation keys.



ONGOING

The GISMO research information system allows researchers to register not only their research themes, methods and infrastructure, but also their activities in the context of impact and valorisation.



NEW

In addition to an Open Access policy for publications, Ghent University wants to use Open Data (research data) in line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). This way, availability, reusability and applicability as well as transparency, verifiability and reliability will increase.

NEW

Within the framework of the university-wide policy choice 'societal impact', Ghent University is developing a societal valorisation fund. With these resources, researchers are stimulated to valorise their research activities socially. Here, societal impact does not only mean economic impact, but also the challenges related to ecological sustainability and social justice.

Internationalisation



ONGOING

The integrated policy plan 'internationalisation' incorporates sustainability within various lines of action. In this context, several projects are running at Ghent University financed with federal development cooperation funds (VLIR-UOS) on themes such as health care, agriculture, environment, education... that can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Various strategic partnerships are also being further developed:

- Regional platforms to centralise and broaden knowledge on activities with/for/in/on specific regions (Africa, CESAM (Central and Latin America) and ASEAN platform),
- International Thematic Networks, which create academic networks on key research themes impacting the Global South (e.g. on mycotoxins (MYTOX-SOUTH), sexual and reproductive health (ANSER), governance in conflict and development, natural resources (CAFRINAT)), and
- Strategic Institutional Partnerships with partners in the Global South (Can Tho (Vietnam), ESPOL (Ecuador), Jimma (Ethiopia) and UWC (South Africa)).



GUIDELINE 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

“ Every new construction site or renovation paves the future of research and education for decades. That's why outlines are drawn. Principles that guide the choices and ensure that unity is created in diversity. A clear vision on providing education and research is defined, with the challenges of the 21st century in mind, in particular digitality, mobility and sustainability. Investing in thinking about bricks is at least as important as investing in the bricks themselves.”

Koen Jonckheere, professor of Art History and project sponsor of the project 'Spatial Masterplan Ghent University 2050'

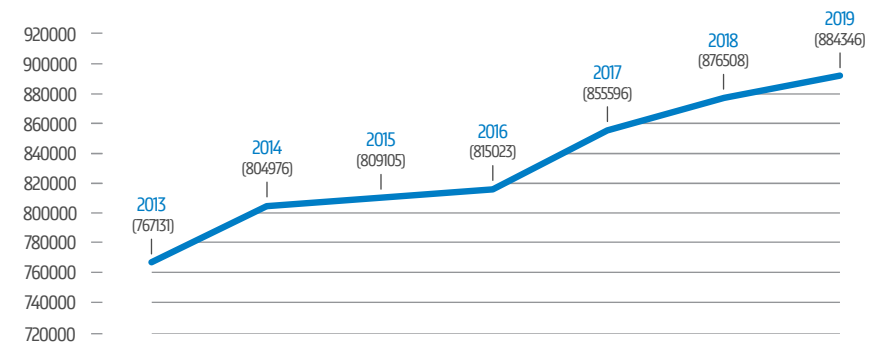
Ghent University is working on a long-term vision for its collection of built heritage and is asking the following questions: How do we achieve a sustainable campus development? Which buildings are still in a decent enough state to be renovated? How do we use the available space optimally? How do we evolve towards CO2-neutral campuses?

Ghent University is a dynamic university where the demand for space is constantly changing. There are more and more students and staff members, new needs for research due to new technologies or new priorities, new forms of teaching, ...

A lot of new buildings were built to fulfil these needs. But space is becoming increasingly scarce and is not always used optimally. That is why, in its real estate policy plan 2019-2028, Ghent University committed itself to creating a compact university with efficient and economical use of space. Functional grouping of e.g. similar activities facilitates building management, process management and access control (in the case of high-risk activities), is more energy-efficient, promotes cooperation and flexibility... Moreover, there is pressure to become carbon neutral, to not consume the little open space that remains, to deal with mobility in a more intelligent way...

In order to further develop our campuses in a sustainable way, we are working on a master plan 2050 for the built heritage. This plan outlines the direction, clearly defines the policy choices, sets certain boundaries and works out steps for the next 10 years. This way we avoid lock-ins that would force us to bear the consequences of unsustainable choices for decades. This reflection involves policymakers, administrators, experts and the City of Ghent. The conclusions drawn from this plan can be used to adjust the multi-annual budget of the investment plan.

Evolution of the net surface area of buildings



The evolution of the net surface area of buildings (m²) since 2013.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



A high-performance, compact and inspiring university

ACHIEVED

In order to reduce the ecological footprint of Ghent University and make more efficient use of space, the surface standard for laboratory space was adapted and the central auditorium management system optimized. The concept of location- and time-independent work was also expanded. We also experimented with core-facilities, wherein infrastructure, materials and/or services are shared across different departments and research groups, possibly even externally.



ONGOING

A 2050 master plan is being drawn up for the built heritage, in which a guiding vision for the future is set out with clear policy choices. Based on this, a road map will be drawn up, which will allow future campus development and investments to be (re)directed.

ONGOING

Five departments and six faculties set operational objectives to contribute to sustainable campus development within the framework of the university-wide policy choice 'sustainability'.

Ghent University Climate Plan



ONGOING

Sustainability and the climate objectives will become fundamental and far-reaching requirements during the further development of the built heritage of Ghent University in the coming years. In order to render these outlines clear, all relevant policy plans of Ghent University will be aligned to these objectives, as was already done for the themes of energy and biodiversity. This will become the Ghent University Climate Plan (see also guideline 1, support).



ENERGY USE

“The proposals from the ongoing energy transition studies for campuses illustrate the major challenges Ghent University will have to face to adapt buildings and energy infrastructure so that campuses will not depend on fossil energy anymore. However, large-scale adaptations are necessary if we want to realise the ambition to be climate-neutral in 2050.”

Arnold Janssens, full professor of building physics and structural applications and special commissioner for sustainability at Ghent University

In October 2019, a 154 kW peak solar panel installation was inaugurated on the roof of the GUSB sports complex.

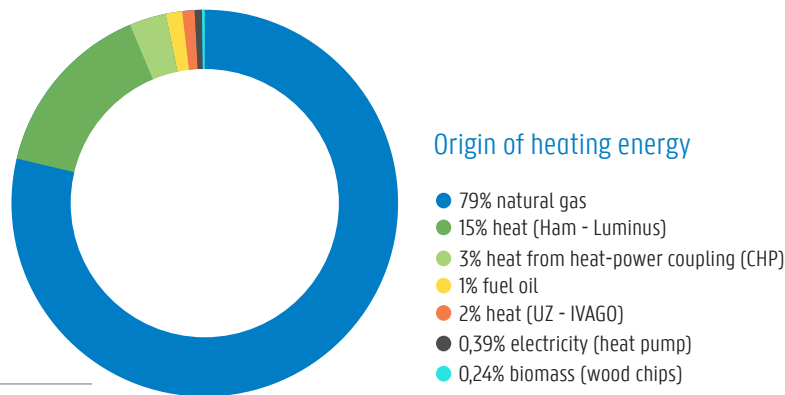
Ghent University supports the EU's ambition to be climate-neutral by 2050 and develops a new Energy Policy Plan 2020-2030 to concretize the path for the next 10 years.

One of the objectives of this plan is to build and renovate in a fossil-free way. The design plans for the new student dorms and the new research buildings on the Heymans and Sterre campuses were aligned to this. In addition, we are investigating which steps can be taken the next few years to decouple some campuses entirely from fossil energy.

In addition to investments, measures to achieve a behavioural and system change in order to improve the use of space and energy efficiency in the buildings are needed as well to change. New policy measures are aimed at increasing the occupancy rate of newly furnished offices and auditoria. In addition, 'core facilities' have been set up in recent years. A new management system for reservation, cost allocation etc. should facilitate the joint use of research infrastructure across departments and faculties.

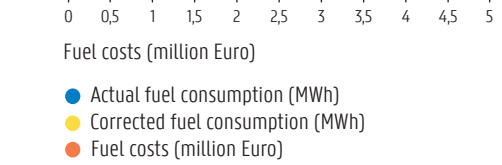
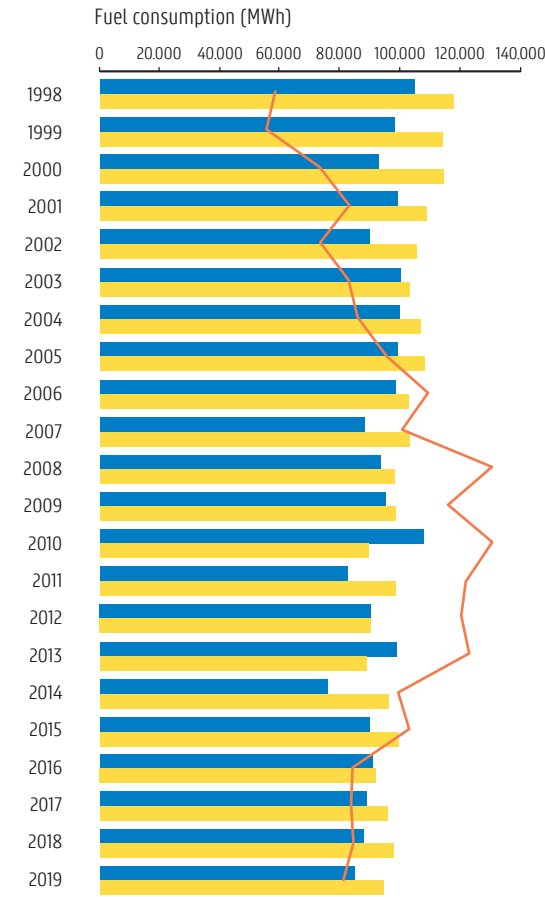
With the university-wide policy choice 'sustainability', various faculties and departments also want to make efforts to increase energy efficiency.

www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/duurzaamheidsbeleid/projecten/energiebeleidsplan



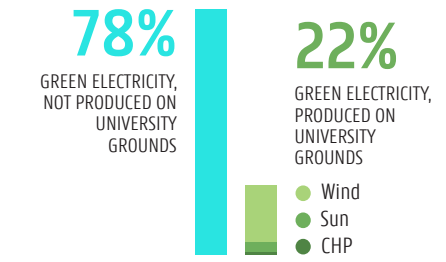
The buildings are mainly heated by natural gas and heat from the heat network. Heating via heat pumps, co-generation and biomass is still minimal.

Evolution of fuel consumption & costs



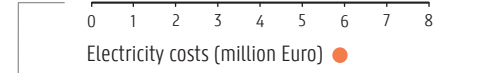
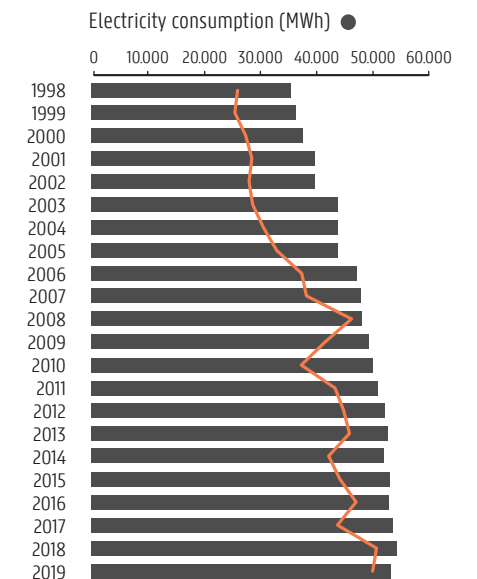
Adjusted fuel consumption decreased by 20% since 1998, while fuel costs increased by 40% (from 2.1 m to 2.9 m €/year). Compared to 2018, actual and corrected consumption decreased by 3% in 2019.

Green electricity



The consumed electricity consists of purchased green electricity (78%), electricity generated by three wind turbines on the Proefhoeve campus (18%), electricity produced by cogeneration plants on the Coupure and Ledeganck campuses (3%) and solar panels (0.7%).

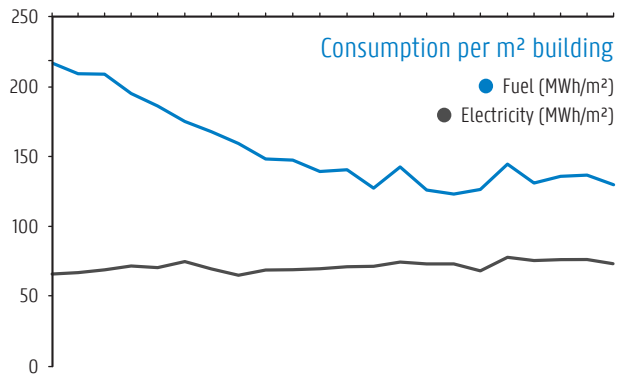
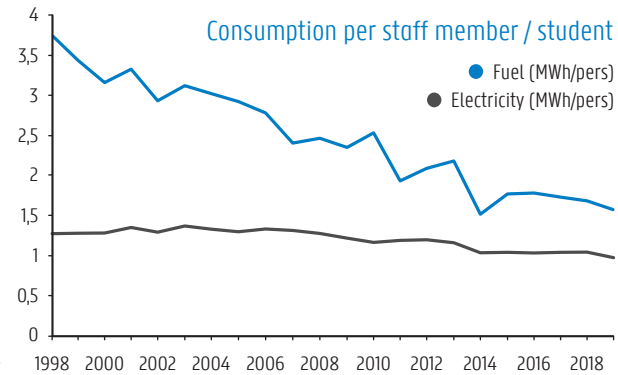
Evolution of electricity consumption & costs



Electricity consumption has increased by 50% since 1998; the electricity bill increased by 94% (from 3.4 m to 6.7 m €/year). Compared to the previous year, consumption fell by almost 2% in 2019.

Fuel consumption per m² of building area has fallen by 40% since 1998; electricity consumption per m² has risen by 11%.

Fuel and electricity consumption per Ghent University member (staff + student) fell by 58% and 23% respectively.



SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



NEW

Since 2015, Ghent University has been striving for nearly complete energy neutrality in new construction and renovation projects. Now, Ghent University goes one step beyond by focusing on making new buildings and renovations fossil free.



ONGOING

In ongoing energy transition studies on the campuses Sterre, Proeftuin, UZ Gent, Kortrijk and Ostend Science Park, we investigate how the campuses can be decoupled from fossil energy and what adjustments of planned investment projects are required.



ONGOING

In order to speed up the installation of photovoltaic installations, a collaboration is being set up with the Flemish Energy Company. They act within the law of public procurement as a central purchasing body, which exempts Ghent University from having to publish its own tendering procedure.

ONGOING

A permit application has been submitted for the installation of a wind turbine on the Proeftuin campus.

Optimisation of occupancy and utilisation of existing infrastructure



ACHIEVED

The organisation of auditorium reservations has been optimized, allowing those auditoria to be used more efficiently.

ACHIEVED

Occupancy measurements showed that the surface area standard for laboratories of 21 m² per full-time equivalent (FTE) was too large. To this end, it was lowered to 18 m² per FTE.

ACHIEVED

A clear vision and guidelines were formulated regarding the cross-faculty use of confined spaces for biotechnological activities and animalia.



ONGOING

The first 'core facilities' are now operational, including the COREs Flow cytometry and Infinity (preclinical imaging) in the faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. As a result, infrastructure, materials and/or services are shared across different departments and research groups, possibly even externally. This concept will be further optimised and will be implemented in the coming years.



NEW

A reflective process has been launched to investigate the creation of a multi-purpose chemistry practice room that can be shared and efficiently used for all scientific bachelor's programmes. This requires an alignment of timetables and good and reliable management.

NEW

A study will look into generic, future proof basic concepts for different types of lab activities, which should be able to accommodate changing users and activities to a certain extent. Furthermore, the timing in the planning process during which users can make their specific needs known will be reassessed. At present, this is experienced as too early, which means that far too often the design is tailored to a specific user.

NEW

The available specific expertise, infrastructure and equipment at Ghent University will be inventoried using the Ghent University research information system GISMO. By the end of 2021, this useful data on infrastructure should and will be delivered to the Flemish Research Portal FRIS.

Good building management



ONGOING

The building systems of the student restaurant at the faculty of Veterinary Medicine were screened after completion by a commissioned agency to evaluate and possibly adjust it, now that the building is in use. This method of working will also be applied after completion of the Dunant 1 renovation project and future projects.

ONGOING

In a new version of the Design Directive, various aspects of GRO, the Flemish government's manual for sustainable building, were integrated. This is a step towards good, future-oriented building management. These guidelines include the chosen location, the location of the buildings and installations, applications for interior and exterior arrangement, cleaning conscious design...



NEW

The proactive monitoring of building management systems will become a focus point in order to adjust regulations where necessary. This will result in savings in energy consumption.

Raising awareness and accountability



ONGOING

The awareness-raising project 'thinking about space together' rewarded departments that voluntarily donated unnecessary space. Although this resulted in approximately 1,400 m² being taken out of use within the faculty of Science, the project showed that raising awareness alone is insufficiently effective to create additional functional space. Follow-up steps will be taken in the short term. For example, using the freezer capacity of the professional Bioresource Center Ghent will be encouraged instead of continuously adding decentralized -80°C freezers to the existing capacity. Further steps will also be taken in the long term, among others a test project that passes on the costs of space usage to the users.



MOBILITY

“ The best way to get around in Ghent is on foot or by bike. Do I have a meeting at the central administration building? Campus Dunant - Rectoraat: that's 3000 steps one-way or feeling the wind in your hair with the service bike. And I dream of an overcrowded underground parking lot. Filled not with cars, but with bicycles and creative students, staff and neighbours who are doing business together, co-creating, being culturally active...and go underground!”

Ann Buysse, Dean Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences



More and more staff and students are commuting by bike to and between campuses, which causes a shortage of bicycle sheds in various places

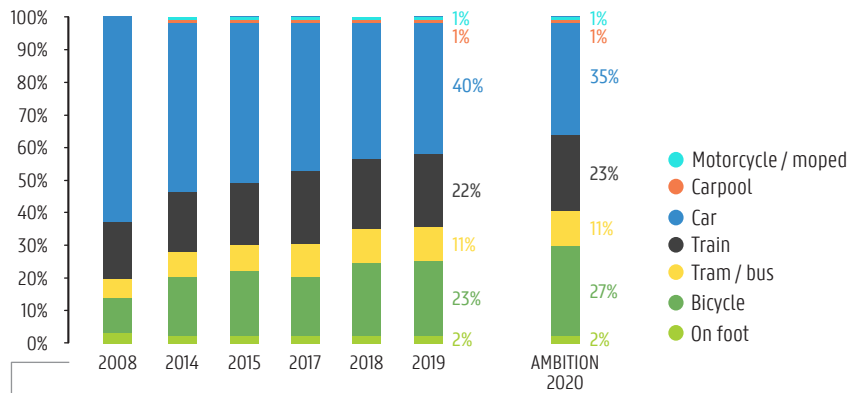
Ghent University pursues an integrated mobility policy in which campuses are easily accessible, road safety is improved and the environmental impact of staff and students' commute is reduced. By 2020, Ghent University aims to reduce car use for commuting to 35% and car use for students' commute to 10%. In 2019, 40% of staff still commuted by car. Since then, many measures to stimulate sustainable travel have been introduced, but a guiding sustainable parking policy is still lacking.

For many years, the 2020 objective has been taken into account for new construction projects and renovation works, developed around the different campuses and in function of their location. This means that no extra parking space will be provided if there is still sufficient capacity available within 15 minutes walking distance according to this 2020 objective.

The reducing need for parking space allows us to create extra space for recreation in a greened environment in the middle of the city. As a statement, a number of smaller parking lots have already been transformed by staff and students into green spots. This way, we show the attractive alternatives for street parking if we are willing to park a little further down the road.

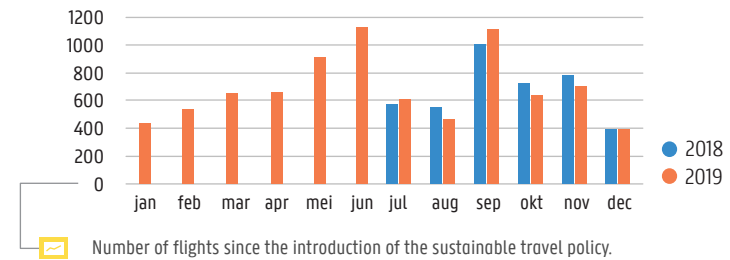
In recent years, Ghent University has laid the foundations for a sustainable travel policy. The well-developed framework and the associated guidelines on commuting became an example for many organisations and higher education institutions. As a university, we now need to seriously focus on the next steps and continue to lead the way. The integrated 'internationalisation' policy plan can help to point out the direction.

Modal shift commute transport | ambition



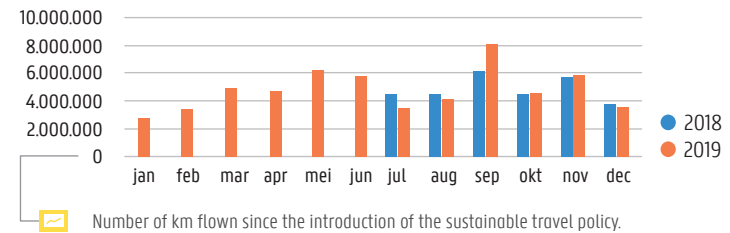
Staff's choice of mode of transport for the main route of their commute in 2008 (start of count), 2015, 2019 and 2020 (ambition).

Number of flights (extrapolation) since the introduction of the sustainable travel policy



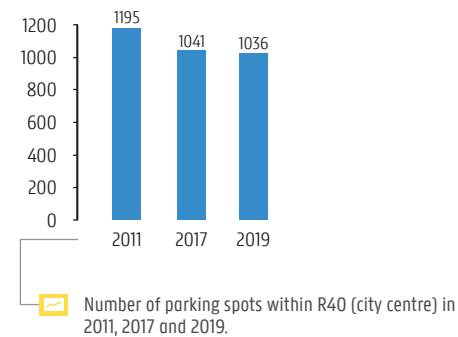
Number of flights since the introduction of the sustainable travel policy.

Number of km flown (extrapolation) since the introduction of the sustainable travel policy



Number of km flown since the introduction of the sustainable travel policy.

Number of parking spots within the city centre



Number of parking spots within R40 (city centre) in 2011, 2017 and 2019.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Encouraging sustainable transportation choices



ONGOING

A mobile bicycle repair service, bicycle parkings reserved for commuters at the train station, bicycle compensation and reimbursement of public transport costs, service bicycles and shared cars, rent and hire-purchase system for e-bikes, extension of bicycle parking and the necessary adaptations to new needs with regard to bicycle trailers, cargo bicycles, e-bikes, ... These services and facilities have proven their worth and are continuously being expanded. For example, when restarting after the corona crisis, we will strongly focus on tailor-made advice for commuting by bike.

ONGOING

Additional mobility measures are required to enable further densification of the Ardoyen campus. Ghent University is working with the Ghent Transportation Region on new cycling infrastructure and a better offer for public transport.



NEW

Anyone who commutes sustainably will receive an allowance equal to the maximum tax-exempt cycling allowance, starting from a distance of 1 km. This way, all sustainable means of transportation will be equated: bicycle, on foot, scooter, skateboard...

Discouraging car use



ONGOING

A parking policy to discourage car use through which a parking card would not be automatically given to staff who live close to the workplace has not yet been implemented. This is still ongoing.



NEW

To date, staff who commute using their own bicycle are not compensated and material damage is not insured. This in contrast to staff commuting with their own car. Work is underway to equalise the situation, with no compensation for service trips of up to 5 km by a privately owned car. For service trips both with your own car as well as with your own bicycle to destinations further than 5km away, compensation will be provided. Both modes of transport will also be insured.

NEW

The number of parking spaces at the student dorms will be limited to spaces for people with disabilities, technicians and for loading and unloading. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. for furnishing or clearing out the dorm rooms) extra parking spots will be provided at the campuses. The vacated space will be stripped of concrete and transformed into green meeting places.

NEW

New electric service vehicles will be made available as shared cars for local residents after working hours.

NEW

About 80 people will move to Eiland Zwijnaarde in 2021 and about 400 people in 2024 will move to campus Proeftuinstraat, two relocations from a central location to sites outside the city center. Additional mobility measures (tailor-made travel advice, the "test caravan", connections between the existing network of cycle highways and the various industrial zones, ...) should ensure that the car use of these people does not increase again. To this end, SPITS, the mobility coordination centre for Gent-Zuid, is working with Ghent University.

More efficient use of available parking lots, so that freed up - ground level - parking can be arranged differently (greenery, bicycle sheds ...)



ONGOING

The redundant parking lots at student dorm Bertha and on campuses Proeftuin, Gontrode and Heymans will be transformed into green spaces and those underneath the sports research building on campus Dunant will turn into bicycle sheds.

ONGOING

Whenever an opportunity arises (renovation, relocation etc.), the number of parking spaces in the city centre will be reduced, such as the ground level parking lots at the Rectoraat, the Muinckelde, campus Coupure and the Centerparking. Cars will be redirected to available underground car parks with overcapacity nearby.

Air travel



ACHIEVED

For destinations that can be reached in less than 6 hours by bus/train, air travel is no longer allowed. A contribution is collected for the carbon emissions of each flight. Good communication ensured broad awareness of the policy, both within and outside of the university.

ACHIEVED

Various videoconferencing tools are available. These were introduced early due to the Covid-19 crisis.



NEW

For study trips, the sustainability aspect is also evaluated against the educational added value, and the sustainable travel policy is applied to study trips organised by Ghent University itself.

NEW

The carbon contribution is only 15 euro/tonne, which is only a fraction of the actual amount of compensation. A proposal is being developed to collect a higher contribution, which could then partly be used for e.g. subsidising train tickets...

NEW

The integrated internationalisation policy plan helps pave the way to a more sustainable travel policy.



AIR EMISSIONS

“As a scientific institution, we owe it to ourselves and to society to play a leading role in the fight against climate change, even more than is already the case today. The quite massive response to our petition on declaring a climate emergency shows there is broad support at the university for a more ambitious climate policy that further reduces greenhouse gas emissions in line with what is considered scientifically necessary to prevent disastrous climate change.”

Stef Craps, full professor of English Literature and co-initiator of the petition 'Ghent University must declare a climate emergency'

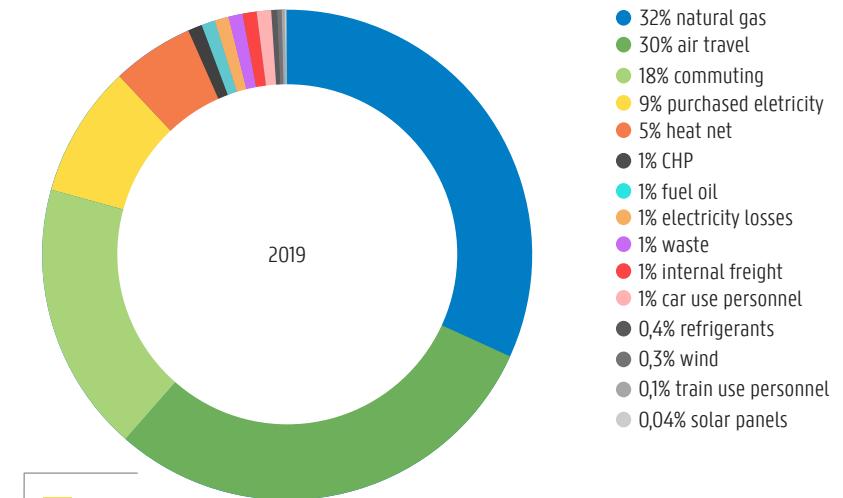
Through its campaign 'Oceans are rising - so get informed', Ghent University triggered students and staff to further inform themselves about global warming and take action.

The air emissions of Ghent University come from burning fossil fuels:

- for the heating of the buildings, the self-produced electricity and for the service vehicles (scope 1)
- for the production of purchased electricity or district heating (scope 2)
- for commuting, service travel by private car, by train and by plane, student travel to and from the campus, water consumption, waste, the manufacturing of all goods purchased, ... (scope 3).

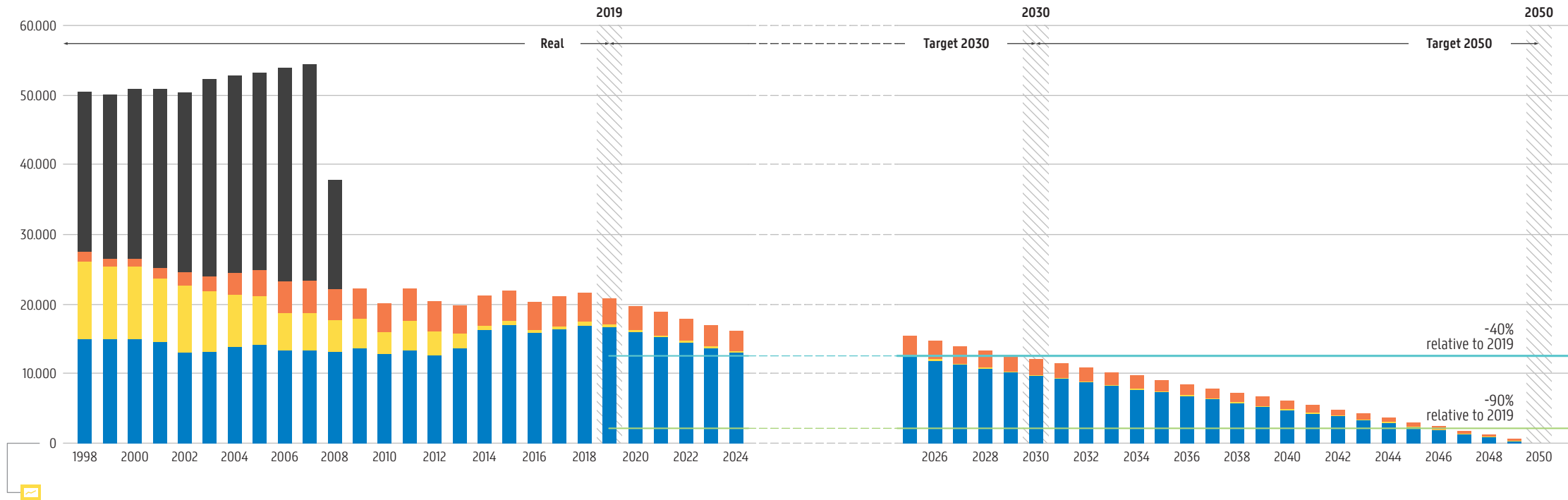
Ghent University makes an annual estimate of its carbon emissions for scope 1 and scope 2. For scope 3, information is only available for commuting, service travel, water consumption and part of the waste generation. It is particularly important to draw up a transition plan for each sector in order to drastically reduce these emissions in the coming decades.

Carbon emissions of Ghent University



The carbon emissions of Ghent University (total: 47.572 tonnes of CO₂ in 2019) (Bilan Carbone v8) - Source: Climate Lab.

Carbon emissions from heating and electricity: evolution + targets



The carbon emissions halved since 1998, mainly due to the purchase of green electricity since 2008. The European target is an additional reduction of 1.5% per year until 2030, and from then on a reduction of 4.6% per year. However, the IPCC calls for faster progress towards carbon neutrality in order to keep the global temperature rise below 2°C.

● Grey electricity ● Fuel oil
● Heat ● Natural gas

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Formalizing our carbon footprint



NEW

The carbon footprint calculated over the past 4 years in the context of internship projects is formalized in accordance to ISO 14064-guidelines. This makes a comparison with similar institutions possible. To this end, a collaboration has been set up with EthioTrees, a non-profit organisation founded by researchers from the Geography department with the aim of enabling positive climate action and climate neutrality.

Reduction of carbon emissions



NEW

In order to significantly reduce carbon emissions, the climate objective must be anchored in the various policy areas. All policy plans will be tailored to the climate objective (see also sustainable campus development).



GREEN SPACES & BIODIVERSITY

“ Thanks to the selfless efforts of a lot of people at Ghent university who are concerned with the living environment, as well as experts in the field of biodiversity, our institution now really has a direction to go towards an ambitious and future-oriented greening policy that will benefit both people and nature.”

Kris Verheyen, professor of Forest and nature management and connected to the natural capital research platform

‘Baanbrekers’ turn a parking lot on the campus Sterre into a city orchard and break out some of the paving to be sown with a mixture of flower seeds. Not to create a finished garden. But to make a statement. Redundant pavement can get a completely different function.

In 2019 Ghent University will have some 250 hectares of land in use. About a quarter of this is paved, the rest consists of grassland, forest, water, thicket and arable land. The Aelmoeseneiebos of campus Gontrode and parts of campus Proeftuinstraat are officially protected. The valuable grasslands on campus Sterre, the green zone of Tweekerken, the Botanical Garden and a green zone of campus UZ are protected by the Spatial Implementation Plan (RUP) Green. A climate forest is growing in Melle. In addition, more and more efforts are being made in ecological greenery management, several zones are being managed more extensively and several small green elements have been added.

On the other hand, 3 new building projects will be constructed in green open space, where part of the existing and sometimes very valuable nature will have to give way. Depaving projects to make superfluous pavement greener are also hardly financed.

In response to this, a biodiversity plan was drawn up with the following objective: Ghent University will retain green space and strengthen biodiversity in areas for which it is responsible. In doing so, we achieve quantitative and qualitative progress at institutional and campus level. As such, a net gain in terms of green space and biodiversity is used as starting point.

This means that Ghent University:

- preserves the available green areas and biodiversity on its sites
- is working on expanding and improving the quality of the greenery on its campuses
- uses green areas and biodiversity as a fully-fledged guideline in policy decisions.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Ecological greenkeeping

NEW

After developing green maintenance plans for campuses Sterre, Ardoyen and Ostend, there are now plans for the campuses Merelbeke, Farmacie and Proeftuinstraat as well.

NEW

A toolbox of new or alternative ways of green maintenance to benefit biodiversity is being developed.

Nature conservation



NOT ACHIEVED

The loss of green areas and biodiversity was insufficiently taken into account when constructing new buildings. Moreover, during the design process, no attention or money was spent on compensation projects on campus or on other sites of Ghent University. The approved biodiversity plan should change that in the future.



ACHIEVED

A procedure has been drawn up for limiting and restoring impact on nature during the construction phase.



NEW

A tool is being developed, based on the mitigation hierarchy (avoid > minimize > restore > compensate), to support decisions. This instrument provides a 'biodiversity check' in the planning phase of the construction process and green area compensation and should ensure net gain.

Green area expansion



NOT REACHED

The climate forest in Melle was not further expanded. However, a piece of farmland in Afsnee (approx. 3 ha) was sold to Natuurpunt, who will afforest it.



ONGOING

Together with staff and students, ideas were developed to create small green spaces, such as a garden on campus Dunant, flower boxes on the terrace of home Fabiola, a pop-up garden on the parking lot of S4, ... Part of this pop-up garden was designed as an experiment involving the creation of flowery grassland after depavement. In the years to come, we will invest in facade plantings on the Universiteitsstraat and Pharmacy buildings, flower meadows at student dorms Kantienberg and Bertha, trees at student dorm Astrid, ...



NEW

Redundant pavements (e.g. excess parking spaces) are broken up and made greener. On the Muinkschelde and on campus Proeftuinstraat parking spaces will be transformed into a green zone; in the Plateau building 2 internal gardens will be restored.

NEW

Ghent University creates frameworks and space in which its own, bottom-up initiatives can be realised. On campuses Sterre, Heymans and Gontrade, students and staff will experiment with low-budget solutions in depaving and greening projects.

Measuring & monitoring



NEW

A meaningful indicator to monitor the evolution of biodiversity is being developed.



WATER MANAGEMENT

“ At the moment, all eyes are on the Covid-19 crisis which is taking a heavy toll. In the meantime, we remain partly blind to a crisis that we as a society saw, or should have seen, coming for years, namely a water crisis. There is only little communication about it whilst we have been in code yellow for a while now. Already one year ago we sounded the alarm, but now it's really time for action. Concretely, this means Ghent University needs to maximise depavement, use rainwater wisely, use grey water and continue to focus on sustainability in all its aspects.”

Marjolein Vanoppen & Ingmar Nopens, water experts Ghent University



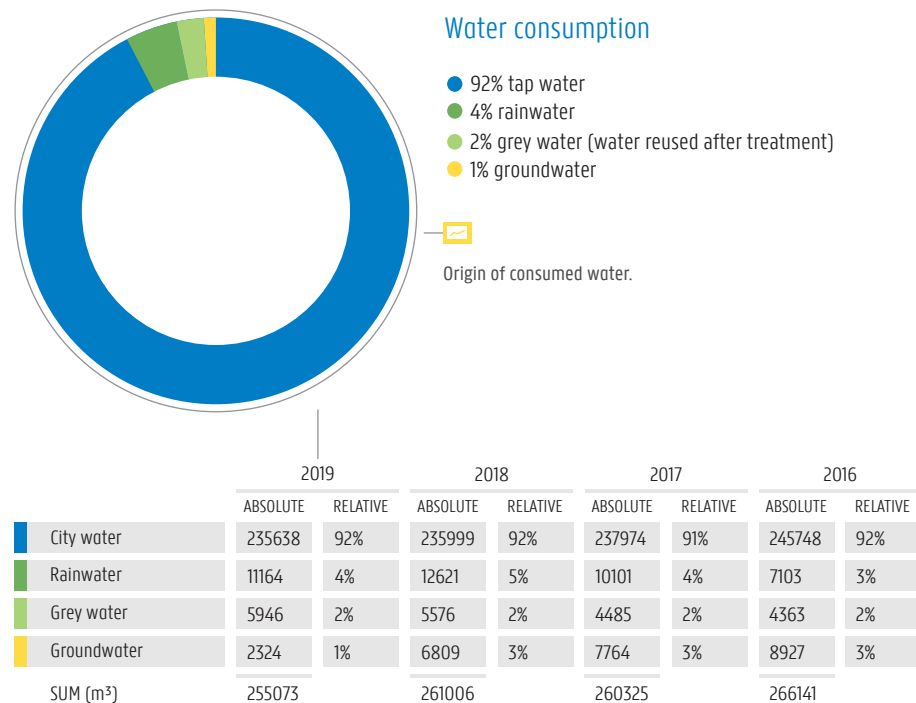
Pond at Campus Merelbeke.

Ghent University has saved about 40% of city water over the past 20 years. Besides water-saving techniques in the laboratories and the reuse of rainwater, more and more attention is now also being paid to the use of greywater (treated wastewater).

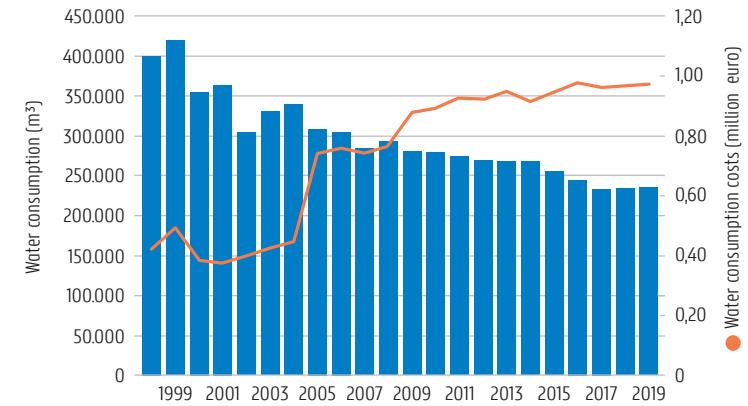
For example, on Campus Merelbeke and at the GUSB University Sports Centre, treated wastewater (grey water) is reused for cleaning stables and flushing toilets, and studies on this subject have been started in the ongoing new building and renovation projects of the sanitary facilities.

Water emissions are monitored by measurement campaigns at the various lab sites. If the emission limit values are exceeded, the different departments involved investigate the cause together. The Veterinary campus has a wastewater treatment installation. At other campuses, it is released into public sewage systems, whereafter it is only released into surface waters after purification. This way, the environmental impact on the receiving surface water is minimal.

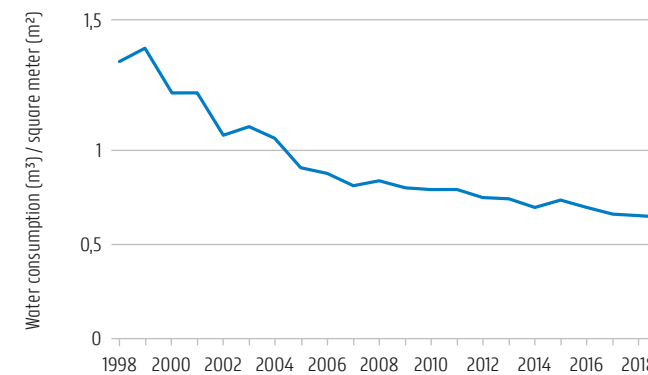
When constructing areas outdoors, the pavement is limited whenever possible. However, there is still a great deal of unnecessary pavement, especially in oversized streets and car parks.



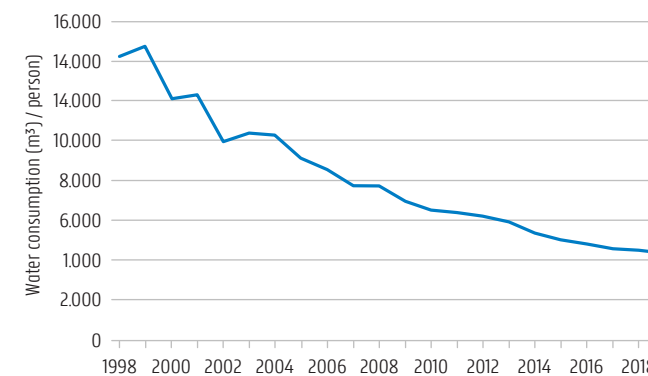
Evolution of water consumption & costs



Water consumption per square meter



Water consumption per student/staff member





Water policy

NEW

Ghent University has saved about 40% of city water over the past 20 years. However, we are also facing enormous challenges in this domain in the coming decades. A lot of progress still needs to be made on the reuse of grey water, rainwater supplies, depaving, use of groundwater, the reuse of groundwater from drainage during construction works, drinking tap water and so on. A water policy plan defines our ambitions and maps out our path for the next 10 years

Closed water cycle



NEW

The feasibility of purifying and subsequently reusing waste water is always investigated and, if possible, implemented in new building and renovation projects of the sanitary facilities.

Water collection



ONGOING

Water-permeable materials are used as much as possible when building necessary pavement, e.g. for bicycle sheds, footpaths, fire brigade entrances, ... When it comes to roofing, the option of installing a green roof is also investigated every time.



NEW

Redundant pavement (e.g. redundant parking spaces) will be demolished and replaced by grasses, plants and trees (also see 'Green and biodiversity').

Water-independent campus



NEW

At site 'Eiland Zwijnaarde' various stakeholders, including research centre Capture, are preparing research projects and experiments to turn Tech Lane Ghent Science Park into a water independent campus.



PURCHASING & MATERIAL POLICY

“Progress usually seems to be slow and steady. Crises show that this is an illusion. Every little step forward creates new problems. Better medicine creates overpopulation, increased prosperity creates overconsumption, technology creates complexity. And so the corona crisis illustrated that the sum of all this steady progress has created a new world, with new problems. In order to continue to build our future on the foundations of the past, we need to turn these problems into new solutions. If we want mankind to take responsibility for its world again, that world must be scaled to mankind again. If we use our prosperity to create the technology to do so, a new synthesis of prosperity without alienation lies at the end of this tunnel.”

Rogier De Langhe, philosopher of economics

Reusable cups are now the norm at events. In the meantime, experiments are already underway with follow-up steps, such as at the Ecomarket, where lemonades are made on site by mixing syrups with tap water.

Ghent University strives for a sustainable purchasing policy. Where relevant, sustainability criteria are integrated in new or renewed framework agreements. Social, ecological and economic criteria must play an important role in all phases of the procurement process.

For example, the framework contract for office materials includes many products made with FSC material or recycled plastic. The focus shifts more and more towards reusable as well, e.g. by proposing refillable ink cartridges. In addition, lab staff and researchers from the department of Textile Science teamed up to choose a lab coat made from recycled polyester and biocellulose.

For the purchase of PCs, Ghent University is looking for TCO-certified devices. TCO is an international label for IT products and guarantees that production takes place in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Control is carried out by independent inspection bodies. In addition, we started a dialogue with our new supplier concerning the entire production chain in order to identify the risks of human rights violations and to work on improvements.

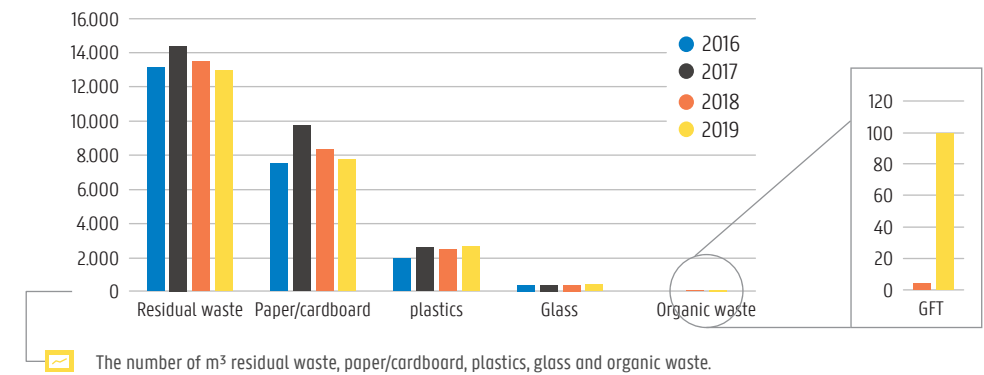
Aside from that, the requirements for e.g. 'on-desk-delivery', speed of delivery, freedom to order where and from whomever, ... generate a high (environmental) cost as well. With the 'LOOP' project we are investigating the possibilities to make the order and delivery processes more optimal and sustainable.

More and more waste streams are being kept out of the residual fraction. Soft and hard plastics and organic waste are collected separately. Circular waste islands were rolled out in public spaces to now allow every student, staff member or visitor to separate paper and organic waste in addition to plastics and residual fraction.

At events, disposable waste has to make way for more and more reusable material. Events such as the Happy Hour set a good example by using only reusable materials and applying a rental system for reusable cups. Students of D'URGENT organize a clothing sale during the Ecomarkt and every semester the students of the student dorms make sure that useful material of the outgoing international students is brought to the new arrivals through the Swapshop, avoiding a lot of useless new purchases.

In recent years, more than 50 drinking water fountains have been installed in the public space. This way, students can easily get free, tasty, cooled and filtered water, without the need for disposable materials.

Household waste streams



SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Supporting circular economy

ACHIEVED

With the support of Flanders Circular, a circular alternative to the commonly used carrier materials out of PVC was sought for temporary signs, information panels and banners, among other things. Polypropylene panels and banners were chosen. Now we are trying to work with these circular materials ourselves as much as possible.

NEW



In recent years, insufficient attention has been paid to circular construction due to a lack of manpower. In the meantime, several researchers and policy workers have been chosen to gather knowledge on this issue. A task force is brought together, them included, to collect this (fragmented) knowledge and develop new knowledge and expertise. In addition to research questions, they can also formulate policy recommendations and monitor the high ambitions of current projects.

NEW

We are trying out small-scale but ambitious 'living lab' experiments on circular construction, such as the layout of a materials passport, a circular material (concrete, gypsum cardboard, lighting...), an alternative way of tendering...



ONGOING

A sharing platform will be developed, that allows to borrow, rent or buy materials, like reusable catering applies, textbooks, practical class supplies, lab material... within the Ghent University community and possibly outside it. The Ghent University second hand shop can also be integrated in this platform and thus get more publicity and rotation.

Adding sustainability criteria in public procurement



ONGOING

Sustainability criteria play an increasingly important role in the evaluation of tenders (office materials, furniture, lab coats, chemicals etc.). In the coming years, extra sustainability aspects will be integrated in the framework contracts for sandwiches, coffee, cleaning and IT materials. In addition to choosing more sustainable products and services, criteria with regard to packaging, return obligation, circularity... will also be integrated.

ONGOING

Ghent University opted for TCO certified PCs and wants to launch a study with the supplier to map the entire production chain in order to increase social and environmental sustainability. These conditions will also be thoroughly considered in the next calls for tenders for IT equipment and infrastructure.



NEW

A working group is being set up within Transitie UGent to gather even more expertise on the social, economic and ecological aspects of sustainability within our framework contracts.

Making ordering and delivery processes more sustainable



ONGOING

The 'LOOP' project investigates how orders and deliveries can run more optimally and sustainably. Pilot projects are being started up with the city of Ghent on city distribution centres (e.g. last mile in a sustainable way, transshipment sites...). Some faculties will also experiment with internal logistical reorganisation (grouped orders, central delivery points...).

Campuses without single use materials



ACHIEVED

Since January 1st 2020, it is forbidden in Flanders to use disposable cups at events. For large staff and student events we mainly work with reusable cups, for smaller events we use glass and porcelain.



ONGOING

We are working on a guide on organising sustainable events, on a rental system for reusable cups and on cooperation agreements for the renting and washing of reusable catering material.

ONGOING

In the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, a coffee corner has been set up without disposable cups under the motto 'bring your own cup'. This principle is now being rolled out throughout the entire university.



NEW

No new vending machines will be installed in new building projects or renovations. Existing vending machines will be phased out, possibly replaced by machines using syrup and city water.

NEW

In 2021 plastic water bottles will disappear from the existing vending machines. Drinking water fountains form a good and healthy alternative.



NOT ACHIEVED

Alternatives for disposable material used at Ghent University (soup cups, salad bowls etc.) are being investigated. We keep on looking for solutions.

Reduction of residual waste



ACHIEVED

Waste islands have been installed in public places.



ONGOING

The collection of organic waste is further rolled out. From 2021, all kitchen waste will be processed in a bio-fermentation plant. Until now, this is only the case for the food waste of student restaurant De Brug.



NEW

We are working on a prototype of a resources collection wall, where all useful household waste streams can be collected (mobile phones, cork, batteries...).



FOOD

“ You can have a lot of impact by making sustainable food choices. On a personal level, but also as Ghent University. My example? For years, all lunches at Utrecht University are vegetarian by default. Only if you specifically ask for meat you get your meat sandwich or meat lunch during the meeting. That's quite the sustainable statement.”

Marie Romanus, Green Office student

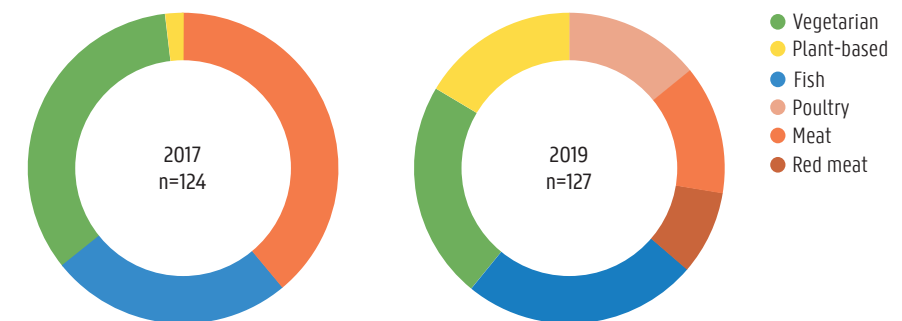
At the Student Kick-off festival, students could choose their favourite vegan spread to become an extra plant-based sandwich choice on the menu of the student restaurants and canteens.

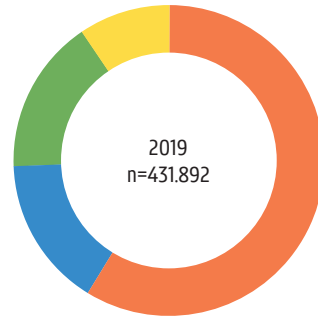
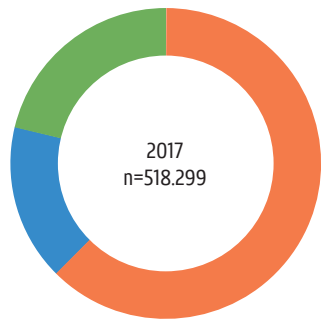
Ghent University strives for a healthy, tasty, affordable and ecologically responsible food policy, with less meat and less non-sustainable fish consumption. For example, in 2025 half of the menu options will consist of vegetarian and plant-based options. To gradually reach this goal, we have added to our Thursday Veggie Day (having three vegetarian dishes on the menu, in addition to one meat or fish dish) an expanded vegetarian menu on Tuesday (with two vegetarian dishes on the menu, in addition to two meat or fish dishes). On top of that, we expanded our list of plant-based options.

In order to further expand the sustainable food options, many selection and tender criteria relating to sustainability and health are included in the purchase dossiers. For example, only certified fish is accepted (MSC, ASC or Global Gap), the sandwiches are entirely plant-based and the salt content of the soups and a number of prepared dishes has been reduced. During the new market consultation, the suppliers were also asked about sustainable variations of the requested meal components. For example, a lower meat content, the use of local or organically grown vegetables, meat with a lower carbon footprint, plant-based alternatives etc.. The suppliers were also asked to propose new creative dishes (e.g. stews, world cuisine...). These are now being tested in order to find their way onto the menu.

In addition, departments and central services were sensitised and supported to make their catering for meetings or events more sustainable. A general guideline at Ghent University for sustainable catering states we only use certified fish, we opt for meat with a low carbon footprint and attention to animal welfare, and we always provide at least 50% varied vegetarian options. This guideline was also smoothly applied to the central Ghent University events.

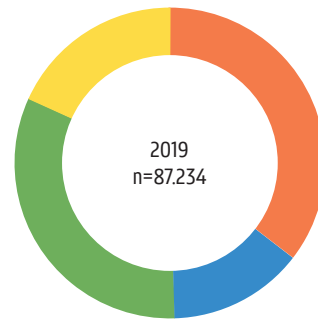
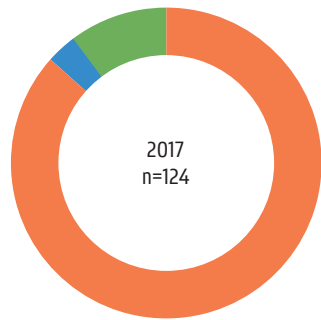
Meal options provided





Meals sold

- Vegetarian
- Plant-based
- Fish
- Poultry
- Meat
- Red meat



Meals sold on Thursday Veggie Day

- Vegetarian
- Plant-based
- Fish
- Poultry
- Meat
- Red meat

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



50% vegetarian options by 2025



ONGOING

On Tuesday we have 2 vegetarian dishes and 2 fish or meat dishes on the menu, on Thursday Veggie Day the ratio is 3 to 1. In order to grow to a 50-50 menu, the following path is chosen: 50-50 offer on Fridays from academic year 2021-2022 / 50-50-offer on Mondays from academic year 2023-2024 / 50-50-offer on Wednesdays from academic year 2025-2026.

ONGOING

A market survey for sustainable variations of the requested meal components led to nine additional sustainable meal options on the menu. This methodology will also be continued in the next purchase dossiers.



NEW

When renewing the purchase contracts, dishes with beef and lamb will be scrapped. Only a few popular dishes - such as meatballs in tomato sauce and spaghetti bolognese - remain on the menu, although alternatives with a lower ecological footprint are being sought

NEW

The sandwiches sold in the restaurants and canteens are aligned with the guidelines of sustainable catering at Ghent University, which means a varied offer of at least 50% vegetarian, fish with a sustainability label and a plant-based diet, and only meat with a low carbon footprint and focus on animal welfare.

NEW

A framework contract for sandwiches during meetings and events is being developed, including the guidelines for sustainable catering and delivery.



NOT ACHIEVED

There have been no adaptations to the subsidy system, which aims to offer significantly cheaper sustainable and healthy meals compared to the least sustainable and healthy ones, have not yet been applied. Now that the cost analysis of the student restaurants has been completed, this new subsidy system can be implemented.

More plant-based dishes



ACHIEVED

On Thursday Veggie Day, the only available spaghetti is plant-based. The evaluation of this experiment has yet to be made.



ONGOING

The plant-based options on the menu are gradually being expanded in function of the availability on the institutional food service market.



NEW

Soups without meat or fish component will be made completely plant-based.

Fair Trade



ACHIEVED

The rice on the menu has the Fair Trade label.

Sustainable food in the spotlight



ACHIEVED

The meals receive health and ecological impact scores and through nudging, e.g. by showing the vegetarian dishes first on the menu boards, the customer is tempted to make a sustainable choice.



NEW

For catering at public events, such as the Happy Hour or the New Year reception, we expect more than just the baseline of sustainable catering. In this way, Ghent University can show off its sustainable character. The offer will be 50% plant-based, 25% vegetarian and 25% with a meat or fish component.

Limiting food waste



ONGOING

The food waste in the restaurants is analysed and a new stock management tool was introduced which allows better planning of purchases.

ONGOING

Before each holiday period, the restaurants organize a 'Sustainable Week', a 'leftovers' week, during which they prepare as much meals as possible with the food still in the fridges or freezers. Left-over unopened and chilled products are afterwards donated to the Food Bank or to social projects.



NEW

Student restaurant Dunant is experimenting with the 'Too Good To Go' concept, whereby unsold but prepared meals of the restaurant are offered to neighbours at closing time.

NEW

Strategies are being explored to reduce food waste, such as two portion sizes for pasta, student-friendly doggy bags.

Experimental space



NEW

With the closure of student restaurant Sint-Jansvest, the experimentation lab for vegetarian large-scale meals also disappeared. Depending on the type of project, new experimental space will be created in one of the remaining student restaurants to test new sustainable ideas with the restaurant staff. For example, an experiment with organic dairy products to ensure a larger focus on animal welfare, local products and better landscape quality, or replacing them with plant-based substitutes. Or maybe juices, fruit or soup made partially with produce from a local farmer.



WORKING AT GHENT UNIVERSITY

“ The new career model for our academics received a lot of acclaim, also internationally. A dominantly quantitative and output-driven academic assessment system had to make way for talent development and growth. Because if you evaluate researchers on the basis of quantitative output indicators, it is inevitable that there will be an implicit assumption that more is better than less. Academics should be given the freedom to work on excellent (high risk) research on themes that interest them. Quality above quantity.”

Rik Van de Walle & Mieke Van Herreweghe, rector and vicerektor of Ghent University



Opening procession from Saint Bavo's Cathedral to the Aula.

In the province of East Flanders, Ghent University is by far the largest employer with approximately 9,000 employees. UZ Gent employs another 6,100 people.

Ghent University wants to be a committed and caring employer that strives for maximum talent development. It wants to create an inspiring and stimulating working environment in which, besides results, people are at the centre of attention. This commitment has been translated into a new career model for researchers and independent academic staff. An open and supportive organizational culture is a priority, in which colleagues are not each other's competitors for scarce promotion opportunities, but allies in supporting and stimulating everyone's further development and the development of the team to which they belong.

Ghent University also takes care of the development and guidance of its staff. Continuous training is encouraged and the guidance of new staff members is high on the agenda. Talent development is important in recruitment and selection, career development, training and education, and internal and external mobility.

With its psychosocial welfare policy, Ghent University aims to prevent psychosocial risks such as stress and relational difficulties at work as much as possible. A 'Trust point' has been set up, a central point of contact for staff for all psychosocial risks and for students for transgressive behaviour. In addition to confidential counsellors, the 'Trust point' consists of a network of confidential contacts at the faculties and UCare, the reception and critical incident stress management team in case of shocking events in a Ghent University context. 'Trust Point' focuses both on policy-making and preventive actions and on dealing with reports of psychosocial risks and/or transgressive behaviour. It has an important signal function to draw the attention of the directive board to structural bottlenecks and to formulate policy advice.

Continuous and open feedback



ONGOING

In the framework of the career policy an evaluation model is being developed that is more based on a relationship of trust between employees and their managers and sharing open and immediate feedback.

Leadership development



ACHIEVED

A leadership trajectory will be developed for (new) managers, including a trajectory for PhD supervisors and department chairs. This programme includes trainings and coaching amongst other things.

Focus on well-being - Further development of a psychosocial welfare policy



ACHIEVED

The team of confidential counsellors has been expanded and transformed into a 'Trust point'. In addition, during the period when corona measures are applied, the confidential counsellors and trust contacts keep their ear to the ground and provide employees with information and tips on resilience, worrying, sleep ... via articles in the staff newsletter.



ONGOING

In order to make everyone working at Ghent University responsible for well-being at work, all faculties and departments with sub-entities have been asked to draw up an action plan as a follow-up of the university-wide welfare survey, focusing on further strengthening positive points and tackling specific bottlenecks through concrete actions.

Administrative simplification



ONGOING

An electronic personnel file (EPD) is being developed to collect digitized documents for all Ghent University employees.

SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA



Stimulating sustainable careers

ACHIEVED

A new career policy for (contractual) scientific staff was developed, based on fair and transparent employment conditions. For example, Ghent University generally offers contracts of indefinite duration (instead of a succession of fixed-term contracts), a functional career (with remuneration according to scientific seniority and diploma), a supplementary pension plan and a form of career guidance.

ACHIEVED

The method of evaluation and promotion for independent academic staff has been thoroughly redesigned: from now on, each ZAP member will have an individual HR committee, in which ambitions for the future, feedback and career guidance are central. The new promotion policy gets rid of a priori personalised goals and puts a strong emphasis on growth and developing personal talents and qualities. The new system is based on mutual trust and intrinsic motivation rather than control. This way, Ghent University responds to the signals of increasing pressure caused by the current definition of a ZAP job. The new ZAP career model is already seen as an international example of sustainable career planning, based on talent-driven 'people management'.



SOCIAL INCLUSION & HUMAN RIGHTS

“ Superdiversity is a fact, especially in big cities. However, this is not reflected in our institutions today. That is why Ghent University is more committed than ever to change. After all, diversity can help universities and education in general to bring in different knowledge, ideas and insights so that people can look at things from different perspectives. Diversity can work very innovatively.”

Khalid Benhaddou, Coordinator of the Education Network of Islam Experts, special commissioner diversity at Ghent University

With 'Ghent University in sight: talent is coming', Ghent University offers one year of extra guidance to high school students with a migration background to lower the threshold from high school to university.

Ghent University is aware of the fact that the increasing diversity in our society is still insufficiently reflected in the auditoriums and workplaces and it wants to work on this issue in an active and integral way. Cooperation with high schools and external partners is crucial in this respect ('nothing about us without us').

This ambition was made concrete in a new diversity policy and action plan 2019-2023. Four strategic objectives were drawn up in an inclusive manner on the basis of intersectional thinking:

- Ghent University has an institutional culture that facilitates the superdiversity present in society.
- Ghent University has an efficient organisational structure that promotes knowledge building, increases support for diversity and facilitates the implementation of an integrated and inclusive diversity policy.
- The influx of students and staff from under-represented groups has been increased and strengthened.
- The flow of students and staff from under-represented groups has been increased and reinforced.

On the other hand, five faculties will take specific actions within the framework of the university-wide policy choice 'diversity'.

Furthermore, Ghent University stimulates respect for human rights and minimizes the risks of human rights violations. The human rights policy of Ghent University is inspired by the basic principles of the UN for business and human rights and the recommendations of the Flemish Inter-University Council.

More specifically, Ghent University will not contribute to, nor profit from, human rights violations. In addition, Ghent University supports and develops activities that promote the application of human rights. In order to prevent benefits from human rights violations, cooperation with an external partner is checked with a human rights test beforehand. In order to be able to respond to future human rights violations, each cooperation agreement contains a human rights clause. This makes it possible to terminate the cooperation if the partner is involved in a serious or systematic violation of human rights.

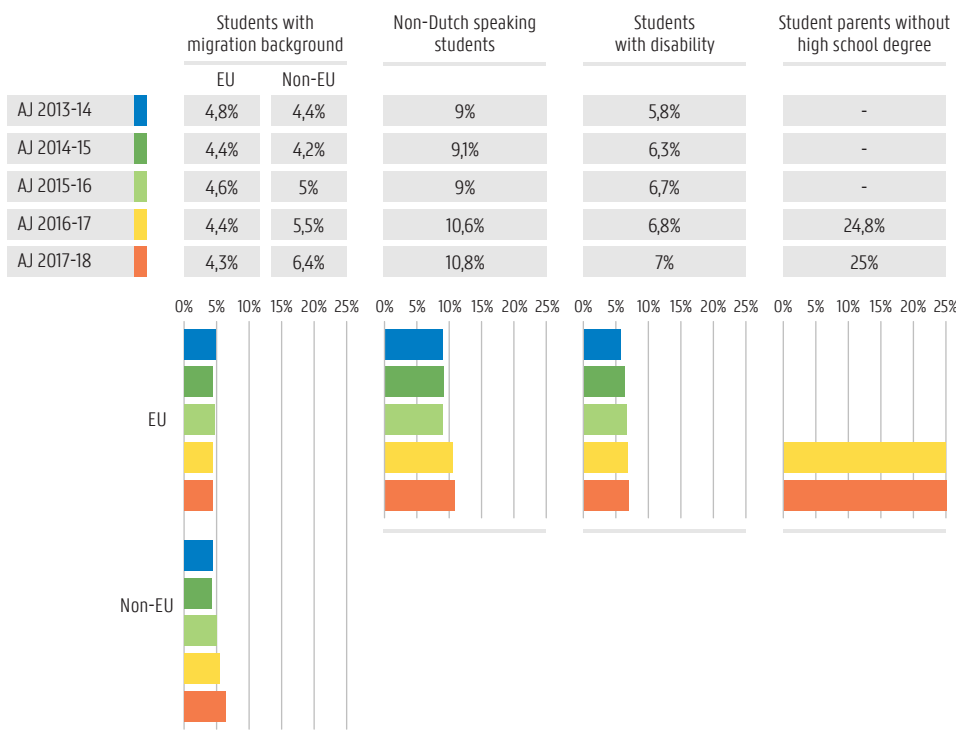
More info: diversity policy and action plan 2019-2023:

<https://www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/diversiteit-en-gender>

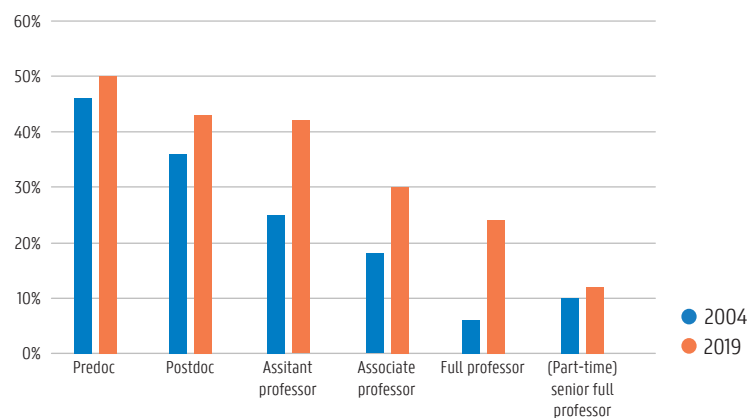
More info human rights policy:

<https://www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/mensenrechten>

Evolution of the influx of under-represented groups to Ghent University



Evolution of the percentage of women per scientific status



SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Increasing the influx of students from under-represented groups



ONGOING

Pupils in high schools are made aware and informed about their possibilities in higher education by bringing them into contact with successful students (role models) from various target groups. To this end, we collaborate with the Ghent University Association.

ONGOING

Ghent University offers talented students with a migration background a unique year-long trajectory on study choice and valuable academic skills with 'UGent in Zicht' (Ghent University in Sight). It is a tailor-made trajectory in which final-year students with a migration background go - under supervision - through an active study choice process.

ONGOING

Non-Dutch speaking newcomers are prepared for Dutch-speaking higher education and are supervised in making an appropriate study choice during the Preparatory Phase for non-Dutch Speaking Newcomers. This project was expanded with the help of Artveldehogeschool and HOGENT, so that the offer now responds more strongly to the needs of prospective students who want to achieve a professional bachelor's degree.

ONGOING

Refugees can contact a point of contact for tailor-made information. The contact point also organises information sessions for refugees and their supervisors with information on admission conditions, study grants, language courses, preparation possibilities and support during studies.



NIEUW

In order to reach specific target groups, an outreach approach is required. In cooperation with Ghent civil society organisations and student associations Umoja, Diaspora 1964 and Risaala, a social media page named 'DurfDiversDenken' (DareToThinkDiversely) has been created on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. It includes videos, proposition weeks with questions and answers, online meetings, etc. to guide final-year students with a migration background easily and interactively in their choice of study.

NIEUW

The Social Service Office of Ghent University will make an effort to make its functioning more widely known by improving their website, manning a stand at info days etc.

Increasing the influx of staff from underrepresented groups



NEW

It is being investigated how selection and recruitment procedures can be adapted in order to achieve greater diversity among staff.

NEW

We are investigating the possibility to employ refugees and/or newcomers as a trainee in certain positions at Ghent University based on competency profiles. After a positive evaluation, a contract of indefinite duration could be offered.

Increasing the mobility of students from underrepresented groups



ONGOING

Students who want to act as mentors take the university-wide elective course unit 'Coaching and diversity'. They receive a theoretical introduction wherein they learn about coaching, intercultural communication and diversity. In addition, they will be a mentor of a first-year student for the length of one academic year. All students with a first enrolment at Ghent University can apply for a mentor, but priority is given to students from the target groups.



NEW

Focus on diversity-conscious teaching is included in the existing and renewed support programmes for lecturers. In addition, training is offered to set up and/or strengthen a diversity policy within the study programme.

Stimulating respect for human rights and minimizing the risks of human rights violations



ONGOING

Each new institutional agreement is checked with a human rights test with two questions: (1) Is it probable that the activities during the partnerships contribute to human rights violations? (2) Is the partner involved in serious or systematic human rights violations? If there is a risk of (involvement in) human rights violations, the cooperation is always submitted to the Commission on Human Rights Policy (CMRB). After an investigation, the Commission gives advice on the planned cooperation and possible risk-reducing measures. If it is considered that the activities have a negative impact on human rights, measures can be taken to limit (the risk of) a negative impact. If the partner is involved in human rights violations, the partner can change its policy. In some cases, cooperation is not possible.

ONGOING

All new institutional cooperation agreements contain a human rights clause. This clause allows cooperations to be terminated when there are clear indications that the partner is involved in serious or systematic human rights violations. This clause will only be applied as a last resort, after establishing a dialogue.

ONGOING

Ghent University supports and develops initiatives for implementing the advance of human rights, such as:

- The interdisciplinary research consortium 'Human Rights Research Network'.
- The Amnesty Chair at Ghent University, yearly attributed to someone who contributed to the domain of human rights in a remarkable way.
- The university-wide elective course unit 'human rights: multidisciplinary perspectives'.
- The celebration of the 70 year anniversary of human rights during a human rights week.
- Membership of Scholars at Risk, offering persecuted academics a temporary position at Ghent University.

GRI Indicator

Reference

STANDARD INFORMATION PROVISION	
	p. 3, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > algemene standaarden
SPECIFIC STANDARD INFORMATION PROVISION	
ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
Economic performance: EC1, 3 > 4	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > jaarverslag 2019
Purchasing policy: EC9	p.49, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > aankopen
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
Purchasing policy: EN1, 2, 32	p.49, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsrapport > aankopen
Energy and water: EN3, 6, 8 > 10	p.27 & 45, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > opvolging energiebeleidsplan 2019
Biodiversity: EN1	p.42
Emissions: EN15, 16, 21	p.38, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > luchtmissiemetingen 2019
Wastewater: EN22, 26	p.45, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > watermissiemetingen 2019
Waste: EN23	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > afvalstofreproductie 2019
Compliance: EN29	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > jaarverslag van de milieucoördinator 2019
Budget: EN31	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > jaarverslag 2019
Environmental complaint procedure: EN34	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > jaarverslag van de milieucoördinator 2019
SOCIAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
Employment opportunities: LA1, 2	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsrapport > jaarverslag 2019
Health, safety and psychosocial well-being: LA5, 6, 8, 16, HR3, 4, PR1	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsrapport > jaarverslag van de interne dienst voor preventie en bescherming op het werk 2019
Education: LA9 > 11	www.ugent.be/intranet/nl/loopbaan
Diversity and equality: LA12, 13, HR3	p.62, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsrapport > jaarverslag diversiteits- en genderbeleid 2017
Purchasing policy: LA14, HR1, 10, 11, S09, 10	p.49, www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsrapport > aankopen
Local community: S01, 2	p.10
Complaint procedure: S011	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > jaarverslag 2019
Evaluation: PR5	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > onderwijskwaliteitszorg
Marketing: PR6	p.10
Privacy: PR8	www.ugent.be/duurzaamheidsverslag > privacyregels

OUR THANKS TO

The Sustainability Policy Committee
 Green Office Gent
 the Center for Sustainable Development
 the think tank Transitie UGent
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