PhD Research at Ghent University

Information for prospective PhD students

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Doctoral Schools Coordination Unit

Content

- UGent Policy re. Doctoral Research
- Facts & Figures
- Concepts & Key Actors
- Admission & Requirements
- Funding Opportunities
- Further Issues

- **UGent Policy re. Doctoral Research**
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UGent Policy re. Doctoral Research (1)

National and international research policy:

- ✓ PhD Degree holders as key actors in knowledge economy
- ✓ Stimulate number of PhD Degrees

Ghent University: increase number of PhD Degree holders *without* loss of quality of PhD research

How?

- UGent Research Council (BOF) funds PhD scholarships
- PhD completion bonus
- Doctoral Schools: focus on top-quality training & research output

UGent Policy re. Doctoral Research (2)

New role + increasing number of PhD Degree holders
= implications:

- ✓ Prepare PhD students not only for an academic career
- ✓ Training through research instead of training for research
- ✓ Multiple support model instead of apprenticeship model

- UGent Policy re. Doctoral Research
- **Facts & Figures**
- Concepts & Key Actors
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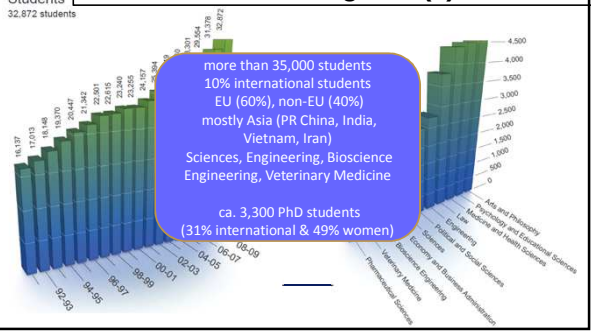
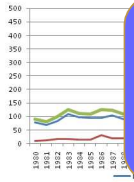
Facts & Figures (1)



Facts & Figures (2)



502 doctoral degrees awarded in 2011

(32% international & 48% women)

Dominant areas:

- Sciences
- Engineering
- Bioscience Engineering
- Medical Sciences

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Concepts & Key Actors (1)

Doctorandus/Doctoranda (doctoraatsstudent)

- ✓ Doctoral student, doctoral candidate, PhD student, PhD candidate
- ✓ Someone currently pursuing a PhD (= doctorate degree), under supervision of a supervisor (= 'promotor')

Doctor

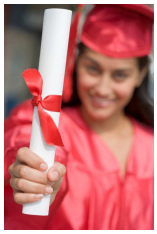
- ✓ Someone who has obtained the doctorate degree, the highest possible academic degree which can be obtained at a Flemish university

Concepts & Key Actors (2)

Doctoral Exam: 2 parts

- ✓ Submission of a doctoral dissertation
- ✓ Public oral defense

Doctorate Degree



Concepts & Key Actors (3)

Doctoral Exam: 2 parts

- ✓ Submission of a doctoral dissertation
- ✓ Public oral defense
- ✓ Written evidence that the researcher in question has contributed independently to the development and extension of scientific knowledge
- ✓ Evidence that he/she has the capacity to create new scientific knowledge on the basis of independent scientific research, which can lead to academic publications

Concepts & Key Actors (4)

'Independent' ≠ 'left alone' or 'lonely'!

- ✓ Promotor = Supervisor
- ✓ Formal and informal coaching, supervision and guidance

Concepts & Key Actors (5)

Doctoraatsopleiding UGent = Doctoral Training Programme

- ✓ Flexible study programme
- ✓ Compulsory in some faculties, for some PhD students, for some doctoral titles
- ✓ Broaden and deepen knowledge and skills + research activities
- ✓ No extra registration fee for the training programme
- ✓ Certificate Doctoral Training Programme ≠ Doctoral Degree

Concepts & Key Actors (6)

New = flexible	Minimum set of activities	Maximum set of activities	Compulsory programme (prior to defence or within x years)
specialist courses			max. 3
			max. 30 ECTS
transferable skills			max. 3
presentations / posters			max. 3
publication			max. 1
progress report	yearly		yearly
defence	1		1
	certificate	optional	to be able to defend

69 certificates awarded in 2011

(25% international & 59% women)

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Admission & Requirements (1)

Degree: 2nd-cycle degree, master's degree or formal equivalent

otherwise: predoctoral training programme

Acceptance of application by Faculty

- Candidate's C.V.
- Suitable supervisor
- PhD research plan

No deadline for application, BUT: foreign Degree holders: 4-6 months application procedure

Fast track (with supervisor and funding)

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Admission & Requirements (2)

Ingredients needed to start research
(and to find motivation to continue)

- ✓ Passion for scientific research

- ✓ Realistic and challenging topic of dissertation
- ✓ Supervisor who supports your application and your research process
- ✓ Funding

Admission & Requirements (3)

Registration

- ✓ At the start of the PhD research = registration as PhD student, regardless of funding: +/- € 283,00
- ✓ Annual re-registration: compulsory, but free of charge
- ✓ Final registration for doctoral exam: +/- € 283,00

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Funding Opportunities

1. Assistantships > department/job application
2. Project funds (government, corporate funding) > supervisor/job application
3. Competitive doctoral scholarships > research proposal

   Regular (BOF, FWO, IWT)

   Development cooperation (VLIR, BOF, BTC)

Duration of a PhD

- ✓ 3 to 6 years (average 5 ½ years)
- ✓ funding: +/- 4 years

Assistantship (Assisterend Academisch Personeel, AAP)

- ✓ Minimum 50% scientific research; other 50%: teaching, lab work, …
- ✓ Duration: 3 x 2 years
- ✓ Employee at Ghent University
- ✓ Job application
- ✓ Requirements & deadlines: see vacancy notice
- ✓ http://www.ugent.be/nl/actueel/vacatures (*Belgian Monitor*) (+/- fixed number per department)

Project funds

- ✓ Supervisor 'hires' staff (funding is not personally allocated)
- ✓ Not always PhD research obligation!
- ✓ Duration: supervisor's decision ~ duration of project
- ✓ Employee at UGent (research staff) or PhD grant holder
- ✓ Job application (not always)
- ✓ Supervisor decides on requirements
- ✓ http://www.ugent.be/nl/actueel/vacatures or departmental noticeboards

Scholarships – general information

- ✓ Focus on research (up to 100%)
- ✓ Duration: 2 x 2 years (can be less)
- ✓ Grant holder funding agency (UGent or other)
- ✓ Competitive selection ~ research proposal, study results & research context (research group/supervisor)
- ✓ PhD candidate applies jointly with a supervisor
- ✓ Calls announced online – respect deadlines
- ✓ Read the calls carefully: requirements ~ degree, research topic, age, nationality, n° of years after graduation etc. – sandwich scholarships; funding or co-funding?
- ✓ http://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding

Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds UGent

✓BOF-Doctoral Scholarships
✓BOF-Doctoral Grants for candidates from developing countries
✓BOF-Cofunding CSC-grant (Chinese students)
✓BOF-Funding for a joint doctorate with Ghent University

FWO-Doctoral Scholarships (FWO aspirant)

IWT-Doctoral Scholarships (IWT specialisatiebeurzen)

ICP-PhD Scholarships (VLIR-UOS)

Other funding opportunities?

- ✓ Yes, e.g. IWT-Baekeland scholarships
- ✓ http://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding
- ✓ Ask your supervisor, postdocs, PhD students

- ✓ **Finalizing grants**
  FWO-Clinical PhD Scholarships
  FWO-Special PhD Scholarships
  BOF finalizing grants

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Further Issues (1)

You've been listening very carefully

Thank you! You are a wonderful audience.

But what are the next stepts YOU have to take?

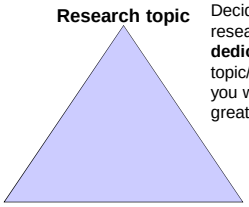
Further Issues (2)

- ✓ Make sure you **really-really-really** want to do a PhD
- ✓ **Talk** to other researchers (PhD researchers, postdoc researchers, professors)
- ✓ Read some scientific articles, spend some time in the lab/library…

Further Issues (3)

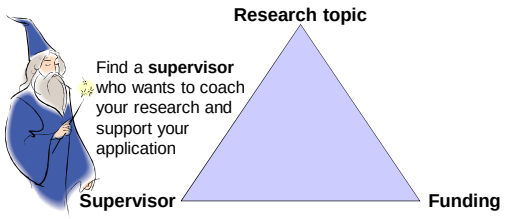
- ✓ Start now

Further Issues (4)



Decide which area of research you feel really **dedicated** to, or which topic/problem/question you want to pursue in greater details

Further Issues (5)



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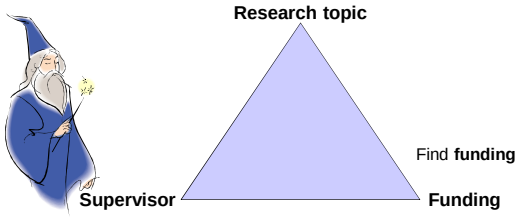
Further Issues (6)



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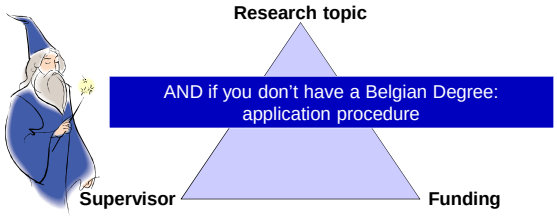
Further Issues (7)



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Further Issues (8)

- ✓ If you decide to write a project proposal
- ❖ **Well-structured**: problem outline, objectives, methodology, work plan, references
- ❖ **Accessible** to non-specialists
- ❖ **Research team & supervisor** must suit the project
- ❖ **Ambitious** but **realistic**
- ❖ Use **tables** and **figures**
- ❖ Respect the **deadline**
- ❖ Make sure your application documents are **complete**

Further Issues (8)

- ✓ Don't give up!
- ✓ Inquire about alternatives: funding, research topics, supervisors/departments/faculties
- ✓ Contact the Research Coordination Office for further information

Research Coordination Office
St-Pietersnieuwstraat 25, Ghent
aoc@ugent.be

http://www.ugent.be/nl/onderzoek
http://www.ugent.be/en/research
http://www.ugent.be/doctoralschools