

GAME CHANGERS

Chairs at Ghent University:
partners in research and education



UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

By establishing a chair you are choosing to deepen and strengthen your connection with the academic world. This gives you a number of advantages such as knowledge transfer, which benefits the university as well the people within your organisation (p. 6-9). It can also be a way to address societal problems in a well-founded manner or to stimulate research within your field (p. 10-22).



Today's challenges, from climate change to digitalisation and healthcare, require knowledge, imagination and collaboration. No single organisation can solve them alone. Universities play a key role in this context: they bring people and ideas together, transcend disciplines and seek sustainable answers to complex questions.

This is precisely where the strength of our chairs lies. They connect education and research with practice and build bridges between science and society. By working with us through a chair, companies, public authorities and organisations not only help shape forward-looking research but also invest in the knowledge and talent of tomorrow.

Ghent University is the ideal partner in this endeavour. From the vibrant heart of Ghent, our university engages confidently with the world. With an extensive network of researchers, staff, students and alumni, and even a fully fledged campus in South Korea, Ghent University has a strong international reach.

A chair enables you to contribute to the development of knowledge that moves our society forward. You are strengthening the connection between science and the world around us. At the same time, you are generating invaluable social return, not just for Ghent University but also for society and yourself.

Let's push the boundaries of knowledge together.

Petra De Sutter
Rector Ghent University

Herwig Reynaert
Vice-Rector Ghent University

A chair: investing in knowledge, innovation and the future. With a chair at Ghent University you are making a genuine difference. You are stimulating innovative research that has an impact on society and on your organisation. In addition, you benefit from clear advantages:

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR A COMPANY/DONOR?



SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP

A chair is the perfect way for you as a company, organisation or private individual to build a sustainable partnership with the university. You help determine the theme and give direction to research or education that matters, without influencing or claiming the results.

Our chair promoters keep you informed through regular updates and an annual report, while our team supports you at every step.

Anne Salenbien,
Head of Fundraising and Relationship Management Ghent University

→ Trailblazer in innovation

You remain at the forefront of scientific insights and receive an annual overview of the research results.

→ Fiscal and communication benefits

Your contribution is often tax-deductible or VAT-recoverable. Moreover, we actively communicate through all Ghent University channels.

→ Inspiring collaboration

You work together with leading academics, creating a valuable exchange between science and practice.

→ Strong reputation and profile

Your name is associated with knowledge, progress and societal impact, with mention in publications, articles and newsletters.

→ Access to a powerful network

You become part of the international Ghent University community and are welcome to attend exclusive events and meetings.

→ New talent and opportunities

You gain direct access to young and ambitious talent and discover opportunities for further collaboration within the university.

A CHAIR HOW DOES IT WORK?

**MINIMUM
€60,000/YEAR**

**MINIMUM
3-YEAR
COMMITMENT**

Each chair has a
**SUPERVISORY
COMMITTEE**

headed by the promoter.
Together, they safeguard the objectives and implementation. Funding partners may appoint a representative and thereby actively contribute to the success.

Every chair has a
PROMOTER

who is a professor at Ghent University and leads a team within a specific faculty or research group.

3 OPTIONS

to fund a chair:

- **Donation**
(= tax-deductible;
you receive a certificate)
- **Sponsorship**
(= with invoice, 21% VAT is
fully tax-deductible)
- **Grant**

As a partner, you have the option

**TO NAME
THE CHAIR**

after your company, yourself, or
the type of research you are supporting.

EXCHANGE ON MULTIPLE LEVELS

Companies can grow their knowledge thanks to the university's research. Conversely, our academics get to know the reality of the workplace. The connection with Ghent University opens doors and creates opportunities to collaborate with the academic world. It is also a way for companies to come into contact with students and potentially recruit them. External partners can also attend or organise guest lectures, symposia, workshops or courses. Companies that collaborate with the university are opting for a vision that is academically rigorous and sustainable.

Liesbeth Plovie,
Academic Chairs

For more details about chairs at Ghent University, please feel free to contact Liesbeth Plovie. She will be happy to assist you with your questions. You can reach her by phone or email.

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All research is conducted in full
**ACADEMIC
FREEDOM**
and the results are public
in order to benefit society.



Public and private
actors join forces.

TOWARDS BETTER CHILDCARE

How can the educational quality of childcare be improved? This question is at the heart of the Chair of Childcare. The research is made possible through a unique collaboration between key private and public actors in the childcare sector. “It’s very simple: without these partners this research could not take place,” says Professor Jochen Devlieghere, who leads the project.



Jochen Devlieghere,
Professor Family Pedagogy

→ Childcare in Flanders is, to say the least, a sensitive topic, with many stakeholders and just as many opinions on how we should move forward. The recommendations of the Future Group provided the latest impetus in the debate. Composed of representatives of families, the childcare sector and experts, this group recommends, among other things, providing significantly more places and lowering the child-to-caregiver ratio.

No in-depth research yet

Professor Jochen Devlieghere frames the importance of the research: “In Flanders, no in-depth research has yet been conducted on the relationship between structural quality – the context in which childcare workers operate – and process quality – the meaningful interactions between childcare workers and children. Our research therefore focuses on two structural quality aspects that we believe impact process quality and, consequently, educational quality: how does lowering the high child-to-caregiver ratio improve care quality, and how do education

coaches improve care quality and the well-being of both children and childcare workers.”

Unique collaboration

What is unique in this narrative is the collaboration with public and private partners in childcare. The Chair of Childcare is primarily funded by Helan Kinderopvang, i-mens, Deliva, the City of Ghent, the City of Leuven and the Agency for Growing Up (Agentschap Opgroeien). Jochen Devlieghere: “With their support we can answer fundamental questions about the necessary conditions to further improve quality. We can also test those conditions in the field because we work directly with childcare providers and the broader childcare landscape.”



The fact that both private and public partners have thrown their weight behind this project underscores the topic’s importance. All partners hope that this research will result in tangible changes that strengthen childcare. City of Ghent: “Childcare in Flanders is not yet structurally high quality and accessible to every parent and every child.” Helan: “Our sector has been under strain for years but for the longest time our calls for help went unanswered. The quality of our work was questioned, hiring new people is a struggle and staff turnover is high.”

For Growing Up it’s a no-brainer: “From Growing Up’s perspective, it’s only logical to support initiatives aiming to further strengthen educational quality.”

i-mens also takes a broader view: “The research is very wide-ranging and will address challenges in order to make the job of childcare worker more attractive, reduce staff outflow and lower the high workload. The research can help tackle these issues in the right order and deliver structural improvements.”

The City of Leuven is already looking towards a possible outcome: “The strength of the Chair lies precisely in the connection between practice, research and policy. We hope the results will influence the Flemish subsidy framework and foster policy choices that strengthen childcare and provide childcare workers with the appreciation and working conditions they deserve.”



**COLLABORATION
BETWEEN GHENT
UNIVERSITY AND
KEYTRADE BANK
MAPS WEALTH OF
BELGIAN HOUSEHOLDS**

What is the financial situation of Belgian households and how does it fluctuate? According to Keytrade Bank, both we and Belgians themselves know too little about this. Together with Ghent University researcher Koen Inghelbrecht (Department of Economics), the bank established a chair to address this knowledge gap together.



“The university’s excellent reputation gives our study additional credibility.”

THIERRY

→ “Keytrade Bank is a platform with products to manage and grow your wealth. That is why we want our customers to better understand the composition of their own wealth,” Keytrade Bank CEO Thierry Ternier explains. “As for us, we obviously also want to get to know our customers better so that we can support them in a more targeted way.”

A major knowledge gap

Thierry approached Ghent University with the request to conduct in-depth research into the wealth accumulation and wealth-related behaviour of the Belgian population. “The bank’s question aligns nicely with my research into investor behaviour,” says Professor Koen Inghelbrecht. “We still know far too little about how people build their wealth and what motivates them. This is particularly true for non-financial assets such as real estate, cars, or art collections.”

“Keytrade Bank helps us with the data. We supply the ideas.”

KOEN



Naturally, he didn’t have to think twice when the bank approached him and shortly afterwards the chair Ghent University-Keytrade Bank was established. The research objectives were defined jointly, Thierry explains: “We set up a steering committee with the key stakeholders from Ghent University and Keytrade Bank. We meet regularly to discuss the progress of the project and to evaluate the objectives.”

Koen: “First, we want to gain a clear picture of Belgian household wealth. We will then proceed with further analysis. In the longer term, we will examine developments over time.”


Independent research

The steering committee does discuss the objectives and results but has no influence whatsoever on the academic study itself. “Needless to say, we don’t steer the results in any way. It’s very important to us that the study is neutral, independent and reliable,” Thierry emphasises. Koen adds: “They help us with the data, we provide the ideas.”

“We have complete confidence in Professor Inghelbrecht’s work,” Thierry continues. “That is one of the reasons why we chose to work with Ghent University. And the university’s excellent reputation obviously gives our study additional credibility.”

Win-win-win

In other words, the chair is a true win-win. “In fact, I’d say the collaboration is a win-win-win,” Thierry concludes. “Through this chair, we are helping all Belgians by giving them greater insight into their wealth. And of course our customers because we want to create better and more targeted tools to manage their wealth. Our active commitment to society fits perfectly with our vision as a bank.”

A photograph of three people in a hydroponic greenhouse. They are wearing white protective suits. The greenhouse is filled with tomato plants growing vertically on metal frames. The plants have green and red tomatoes. The background shows more plants and colorful lights.

The horticulture of the future is happening now, in an impressive rooftop greenhouse in Roeselare. Plants that don't grow in the soil but in water, under the right artificial lighting. Crops arranged in rows stacked vertically in a high-ceilinged greenhouse because vertical farming is booming. This is part of a research project by bioengineers at Ghent University, made possible by the Agrotopia Chair.

AGROTOPIA CHAIR
develops horticulture
of the future



“The chair allows researchers to effectively test promising avenues.”

— JAN PIETERS



The Agrotopia greenhouse offers a whopping 6,000m² of growing surface and for a number of years has adorned the roof of the REO Veiling, a fresh produce market in Roeselare. The greenhouse was commissioned by Inagro, the West Flemish practice centre for research and extension in agriculture and horticulture.

Agrotopia: greenhouse and chair

The chair established by Ghent University together with REO Veiling and Inagro is designed to shape the horticulture of the future. In the greenhouse, research is conducted into greenhouse horticulture and professional, vertical urban horticulture. A variety of aspects is involved: light, climate control, plant sensors and 3D models, greenhouse construction, plant physiology and diseases, microbial ecology and technology.

“With the chair we can explore a new form of greenhouse horticulture and identify new opportunities for the sector”, says Inagro chairman Bart Naeyaert. “The initiative seamlessly aligns with the current thinking on urban agriculture that continues to gain traction, while contributing to potential solutions to provide the growing urban population with safe and fresh food.”





“We work directly with the horticulture sector and all innovation is immediately geared to the target audience.”

— BART NAEYAERT

“Thanks to the chair, researchers can use the Agrotopia greenhouse to put promising lab results to the test”, adds the chair’s promotor, professor Jan Pieters.

“This is an important lever to introduce new technologies in greenhouse horticulture. We work directly with the horticulture sector: from the start of every project, growers and practical researchers are involved in the innovation process. We identify the industry’s needs and together we evaluate the practical applicability of the projects. As a result, all innovations are geared to the target group from day one.”

Sweating lettuce due to stagnant air

For instance, professor Kathy Steppe is researching how lettuce reacts to various environmental factors using plant sensors and other innovative gadgets. She does this within the context of vertical farming, a method to grow crops in vertical rows and without daylight.

“Do you see these edges?” Professor Kathy Steppe holds up a head of lettuce and points to the brown edges that

are visible on several leaves. “We are still not entirely sure what causes them. Supposedly it has something to do with stagnant air in the lettuce itself, making it impossible for the plant to perspire. As a result, the young leaves don’t get enough calcium.” Kathy is investigating how the external quality of the lettuce can be influenced, not through genetic modification but by manipulating environmental factors such as light.

Light is crucial in greenhouse cultivation: sometimes there is too little or even no daylight, creating a need for additional lighting. This is especially true of multi-layer cultivation, where plants grow in close proximity to each other.

The interaction fostered through this chair therefore has a direct impact in the field and is transforming horticulture. “The results facilitate the introduction of new projects to the market,” concludes Jan.



The Crelan Chair at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering creates clear added value through its close collaboration with Ghent University. This partnership brings us and our advisers into regular contact with stakeholders from the sector, keeps us attuned to current topics, and encourages us to continuously align our policies accordingly.

— Philippe Voisin,
CEO Crelan

“The Agrotopia Chair explores a new form of greenhouse horticulture. We build on the current thinking on urban farming, which continues to gain traction. In this way, we contribute to solutions to provide the growing urban population with safe and fresh food.”

— Bart Nayaert,
Chairman Inagro



The Actemium–Sustainable Energy Chair fits in with the future vision of Actemium and the VINCI Energies group, which centres around energy transition and digital transformation. By combining the expertise of Ghent University, Actemium and our clients, we contribute to addressing complex energy challenges and to making our sector more sustainable.

— Luc Clabout,
Managing Director Actemium Belgium



WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN COMPANIES PROVIDE SUPPORT?



CUSTOM-TAILORED

Besides a structural partnership through a chair, there are many flexible ways to support Ghent University. For example, you could make a donation, organise an event or set up a fundraising campaign to support Ghent University research or education. Together, we always look for a bespoke solution."

Wim Van der Planken
Donations & Collections

1. Donate to a theme that fits your company

By making a donation to Ghent University, you can contribute directly to research or projects within a field that matches your values and societal ambitions – from sustainability and health to technology, education or culture. Together, we determine where your support can have the greatest impact.

2. Organise a corporate campaign for a Ghent University Fund

Involve your employees and customers in your commitment. Through the **Ghent University Action Platform**, you can easily set up your own campaign in support of our research or education.



A sporting challenge, a creative campaign or a team-building activity with impact, every action counts and strengthens the bond between your company and the university.

Together, we make knowledge a driving force for change.

→ **Want to know more? Contact:**
universiteitsfonds@ugent.be



“A partnership with the International Research Institute on Social Fraud (IRIS) of Ghent University was a natural choice. We believe the fight against illegal labour and social fraud is most effective when practice and theory are combined. The Ghent Faculty of Law and Criminology has built extensive expertise in the field of social fraud.”

— Bart Stalpaert,
SIOD director



“Ghent University determines the research approach and content, but we do look for common interests so we can learn from each other. The people at Angelini sometimes bring a very different, commercial perspective, which is enriching for us. And we give them insight into the academic world. This approach builds mutual understanding.”



— Kristl Vonck,
Promotor Angelini
Brain Health Chair



OUR PROUD PARTNERS



DONATIONS to Ghent University



Contact us to learn more about Ghent University's charitable causes and the various ways to support them. Every donation matters, no matter how small. We ensure that your donation or bequest goes to a cause that is important to you.

Is your company or organisation not ready for a chair yet? Fortunately, there are many other ways to contribute. Contact the University Fund to discuss the possibilities.



You are welcome to make a donation to the following account:
BE26 3900 9658 0329
(BIC: BBRUBEBB)

Would you like to support one of our funds?

Then scan the QR code below for an online donation or make a donation via bank transfer.

The message for the transfer depends on the Ghent University goal that you wish to support. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more details. Donations of €40 or above come with a tax certificate, allowing you to recover 45% of your gift on your tax return.