



Doctoral Schools at Ghent University:

Challenges and Opportunities



Doctoral Schools – Karen Vandeveldel – March 2007
Ghent University - Department of Research Affairs



Doctoral Schools at Ghent University

1. Context: International policy
2. Implications of decision to change
3. Strategic objectives of UGent
4. UGent challenges
5. Current status
6. Operational tasks
7. Cooperation opportunities

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1. Context: international policy

- ❖ Quality culture in Higher education
 - = Accountability in education & research
- ❖ Changing role of Ph.D. degree
 - = ticket rather than destination

! Important role of EUA in channelling new ideas



1. Context: international policy

- ❖ Higher education responds to changing needs of society
 - knowledge economy
- ❖ **Who** is needed?
 - trained researchers
- ❖ **How** to achieve this?
 - skills + specialised knowledge

1. Context: international policy

Policy objectives:

- ✓ Increase Ph.D.'s **employability**: - academic
- non-academic
- ✓ Increase Ph.D.'s **mobility**: - international
- intersectorial
- ✓ Increase **number** of Ph.D. graduates



Risk of reducing **quality** of Ph.D.?

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2. Implications of decision to change



Old model:

Apprenticeship model
Ph.D. = lifetime achievement

New model:

Supervisor
Supervision team
Broad training model

- Critical mass
- Focus on skills and awareness
- Increase employability



3. Strategic Objectives of UGent



- ☆ Increase (international) **visibility** of Ph.D.-degree
- ☆ Improve **support** for Ph.D. - researchers
- ☆ Encourage a **quality culture** in doctoral research

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3. Strategic Objectives of UGent

- ☆ **Increase (international) visibility of Ph.D.- degree**
 - Communication: attract potential researchers
attract interest from employment sector
newsletter for all Ph.D. candidates (facilities, activities, ...)
 - Cooperation: private sector & service industry
international exchange
 - Tuning: Ph.D. researchers
supervisors
employers (academic + non-academic)

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3. Strategic Objectives of UGent

☆ Improve support for Ph.D.- researchers

Provide alternatives to one-to-one “apprenticeship model”

- Supervisors: reduce workload, focus on research
- Ph.D. guidance committee: supervisor + 2
- Flexible research training programme



3. Strategic Objectives of UGent

Flexible research training programme

- Optional, but can be made compulsory
- Programme consists of:
 - A. Specialised / advanced courses
 - B. Workshops in transferable skills (i.e. communication skills, technology transfer, personal development, networking and team work, management skills)
 - C. Research-related activities (i.e. lectures, conferences, publications, international mobility,...)



3. Strategic Objectives of UGent

☆ **Encourage a quality culture in doctoral research**

- Quality control: more checkpoints in doctoral programme
 - External assessor for Ph.D. examination compulsory
 - Internal and external communication
 - Interdisciplinary cooperation
- University-wide dynamic research culture

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4. UGent challenges

Doctoral Schools:



Bottom-up



Top-down
process

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4. UGent challenges

Doctoral Schools: inspired by current good practice:

- ✓ Research focus – good supervisors
- ✓ Ph.D. support initiatives at departmental / faculty level
- ✓ Technology transfer support
- ✓ Scholarship system and professional recognition for young researchers

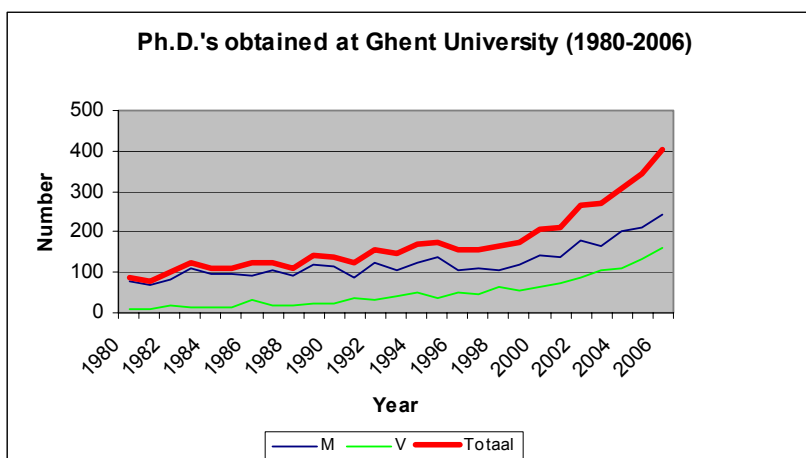
Problems:

- Sometimes lack of communication & transparency
- Support not always available in every field of study

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4. UGent challenges





4. UGent challenges

5 Doctoral Schools to be established:

- Doctoral School of Arts, Humanities and Law
- Doctoral School of Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Doctoral School of Natural Sciences
- Doctoral School of Life Sciences and Medicine
- Doctoral School of (Bioscience) Engineering

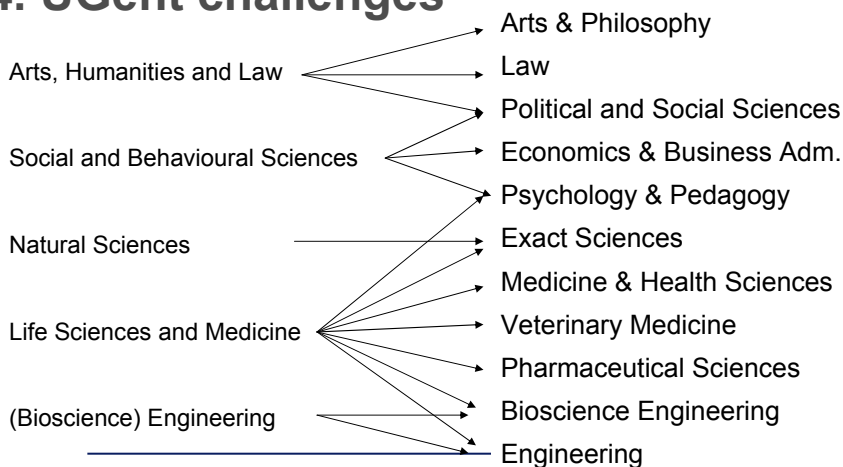


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4. UGent challenges

Ghent University Faculties:



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4. UGent challenges

Management & decision-making structures:

- 5 directors: 1 for each Doctoral School (=50% professorship)
- Shared support unit (2 staff members)
- Strong cooperation between doctoral schools
- Policy tuning with Department of Research Affairs and Department of Educational Affairs
- Policy tuning with faculties

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5. Current status

- Preparation started March 2006 for launch September 2007
- Small group for policy research, designing concept, preparing implementation
- Obtaining feedback from professors, deans, management
- Obtaining 'principal' approval from University Board

- Changing General Teaching and Exam Regulations
- Designing regulations, procedures, ...
- Obtaining final approval from University Board

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6. Operational Tasks Doctoral Schools



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6. Operational Tasks

Budget:

Favourable situation in Flanders: policy focus on
research & training of young researchers

University investment: 900,000 euros

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6. Cooperation opportunities

- **Doctoral Schools:** focus on flexibility (ECTS-credits)
- **Specific admission procedure** for international students and Ph.D.-researchers
- **Joint doctorates:** co-supervision of Ph.D. degree
- **Exchange** programmes: short-term and long-term exchanges of Ph.D. students & professors: Tempus programme with opportunities for Moldova?
- **Scholarships:** Ghent University's Special Research Fund, 7KP

Further information: see "Ghent University in the World"

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III. International Cooperation

between Ghent University and Universities / Institutions in the World

1. Ghent University Initiatives
 - 1.1 Bilateral Cooperation
 - 1.2 Multilateral Cooperation: the Santander Group
 - 1.3 University Special Research Fund (BOF)
 - a. Support for Individual Researchers (Doctoral Scholarships)
 - b. Support for Individual Researchers (Post-Doctoral Level)
 - c. Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowships
 - d. Doctoral Scholarships for Candidates from Developing Countries
 - 1.4 Scholarships for Postgraduate Students from Developing Countries
 - 1.5 University Industrial Research Fund (IOF)
 - 1.6 Technology Transfer and Bilateral Agreements with Industry
2. Participation in International Cooperation Programmes initiated by the Flemish and Belgian Government
 - 2.1 Research Foundation Flanders (FWO)
 - a. Support for Individual Researchers (Doctoral Scholarships)
 - b. Support for Individual Researchers (Post-Doctoral Level)

IV. Overview

Title of Programme	for bachelor/master students	for doctoral students	for postdoctoral researchers	for tenured staff	for institutions & research teams	for industry & non-academics	For Europeans	For Non-Europeans	Focus on Developing Countries
Ghent University Initiatives									
Ghent University Bilateral Cooperation	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Ghent University Multilateral Cooperation: the Santander Group	X	X		X	X		X		
BOF - Support for Individual Researchers (Doctoral Scholarships)		X					X	X	
BOF - Support for Individual Researchers (Post-Doctoral Level)			X				X	X	
BOF - Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowships			X	X			X	X	
BOF - Doctoral Scholarships for Candidates from Developing Countries		X						X	X
Scholarships for Postgraduate Students from Developing Countries	X							X	X
IOF - University Industrial Research Fund			X	X		X	X	X	
Ghent University Technology Transfer			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ghent University membership in international organisations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flemish and Belgian Government Initiatives									
FWO - Support for Individual Researchers (Doctoral Scholarships)		X					X		



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