

OECD THEMATIC REVIEW OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

Country Background Report – Flemish Community of Belgium

**Ministry of Education and Training (Flemish Community - Belgium)
Unit of Higher Education**

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Foreword

Writing a thematic review of tertiary education is a complex enterprise. A wide range of knowledge and experience is needed and this is beyond the scope of a single researcher. Therefore the Flemish approach has been to involve several experts both from inside and outside the Ministry of Education and Training. The following chapters were written by external specialists:

Chapter 3 The tertiary education system and the labour market: Mr Jan Denys, Manager Public Relations and Public Affairs, Randstad,

Chapter 4 The regional role of tertiary education: Mr Harry Martens, Prorector University Hasselt-Director Institute for materials research (IMO),

Chapter 6 Achieving equity in and through tertiary education: Mr Steven Groenez, Researcher, Higher institute for labour studies (HIVA) and Mr Idesbald Nicaise, Professor Higher institute for labour studies (HIVA) and Department of Education, KU Leuven,

Chapter 7 Resourcing the tertiary education system, 7.1 Staff: Ms Veerle Bogaert, Head of Personnel Department, University Antwerp,

Chapter 8 Planning, governing and regulating the system: Mr Jan De Groof, Government Commissioner for the University Antwerp and the University Hasselt,

The other chapters have been produced 'in house'. Although the guidelines for this thematic review of tertiary education have been clearly communicated to the various participants the exercise did in the end reveal differences in output. Comments and suggestions from the stakeholders have been implemented as much as possible. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Flemish minister of Education, Training and Work.

Some experts have focussed on the specific situation of their institution or their region. For some chapters like chapter 4 on the regional role of tertiary education and chapter 7.1 on staff the account is focussed on the region or the university of the authors. To a lesser extent valuable local information has not been mentioned in other chapters because of a lack of similar information in other institutions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BEV	Paid Educational Leave System
BIOMED	Biomedical Research Institute
BOF	Subsidies to Special Research Funds
CenStat	Centre for Statistics
CIKO	Cell for Innovation and Quality Assurance in Education
CMK	Centre for Environmental Sciences
ECA	European Consortium of Accreditation
ECHO	Expertise Centre for Higher Education
EDM	Expertise Centre for Digital Media
ESF	European Social Funds
FWO	Fund for Scientific Research - Flanders
IBBT	Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology
IMEC	Interuniversity Micro Electronics Center
IMO	Institute for Materials Research
IMOB	Institute for Mobility
IWT	Institute for the Promotion of Innovation by Science and Technology in Flanders
KIZOK	Knowledge Institute for Self – Employed Enterprises
KUB	Catholic University Brussels
KULAK	Catholic University Leuven

	Branch Kortrijk
KU Leuven	Catholic University Leuven
LUC	Limburg University Centre
NAR	National Labour Council
NIS	National Institute for Statistics
NVAO	Dutch – Flemish Accreditation Organisation
PSBH	Panel Survey of Belgian Households
SERV	Flemish Socio – Economic Council
SONAR	Interuniversity project
STC	Subregional Employment Committee
TUE	Technical University of Eindhoven
tUL	Transnational University Limburg
UA	University Antwerp
UG	University Ghent
UM	University Maastricht
VDAB	Flemish Employment Agency
VIB	Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology
VLIR	Flemish Interuniversity Council
VLHORA	Flemish Council for ‘hogescholen’
VLOR	Flemish Education Council
VRWB	Flemish Science Policy Council
VUB	Free University Brussels

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Executive summary

As a result of the constitutional reform in Belgium the Dutch speaking and the French-speaking higher education systems were separated. The Flemish government wanted to do things ‘differently and better’. This led to a new higher education legislation in the early 1990s and to a policy based on the principles of deregulation, autonomy and accountability (see chapter 8). The Flemish government wanted to treat all institutions on an equal basis. New legislation made the former state universities autonomous and gave them almost the same responsibility as the ‘free’ universities.

In terms of deregulation, autonomy and accountability the same principles were introduced for the hogescholen. This led in conjunction with the merger operation in 1995 to a fundamental change in the relationship between the government and the hogescholen. Former centralised and detailed regulations were replaced by a management regime aimed at achieving a balanced combination of broad autonomy and responsibility for the hogescholen. The higher education regulations as a whole – universities and hogescholen – became more integrated. The previous government wanted to bring the decree on universities (1991) and the decree on the hogescholen (1994) into line with each other without affecting the nature of the university and college education. This integration process has been stimulated even more by the 2003 legislation on the restructuring of higher education in order to implement the Bologna process.

Students were at the heart of recent changes in legislation on tertiary education. Firstly, a Decree of 19 March 2004 on students’ participation in higher education contained regulations for student involvement in the governance of the education institutions. It has strengthened and specified the participation of students. And a new administrative court has been established to give students the opportunity to a fast track appeal against exam decisions.

A Decree of 21 April 2004 on the flexibility in higher education introduced basic principles on credits and the recognition of acquired competencies and qualifications. On the same day the Flemish Parliament also approved a decree on study financing in higher education. This means that every student who qualifies for study financing can be supported financially for two bachelors, a master, a preparation programme, a bridging programme and a teacher training programme. As study paths have become more flexible, so too has study financing been made more flexible. A system of study credits has replaced the study year system. The study financing amount is linked to the number of study credits for which the student is enrolled. The new decree extends the possibilities of taking study financing beyond Flanders into the wider Higher Education Space. In the past funding could only be taken across the border if students opted for foreign studies that were not provided in Flanders.

The Bologna process has stimulated Flanders in a move towards greater internationalisation. The concept of internationalisation has changed from a focus on the individual to a focus on the ‘system level’, namely the formal structures of higher education. A Flemish credit system based on the ECTS and a Diploma Supplement were already implemented in the early 1990s. More recent changes are:

- implementation of a bachelor and master structure,
- accreditation system in co-operation with the Netherlands,
- more flexible study paths.

CHAPTER 1: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

1.1 Economic, social and cultural background

1. In the seventies and eighties of the previous century the Belgian state has been transformed into a federal state. This process of federalism was a slow process of political debate because its aim was to establish balanced packages of powers. This meant, amongst many other powers, the complete transfer of the educational authority to the new born communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the small German speaking Community. Concerning education what remains under the authority of the federal state is limited to three domains: the beginning and the end of compulsory schooling, the minimal conditions for the presentation of qualifications and the pensions of staff of educational establishments. For education this meant the beginning of a new era.

2. The previous principles in education such as the open entrance policy to higher education and the free choice of students in educational programmes were not abandoned, but were no longer given prominent emphasis. Very soon after education became a regional matter all educational levels from primary to higher education were gripped by a legislative enthusiasm in the Flemish Community to implement change. In the vocabulary of change autonomy, accountability and scaling up became the new key principles.

3. From 1989 onwards the Flemish Community now fully in charge of education is more concrete about the role of higher education in a modern society. The 1991 Decree on university education was the first act to assign a large degree of autonomy to the Flemish universities. According to the discourse the Flemish government wants to diminish the detailed central steering in higher education and wants to create more space for the institutions to enable them to develop their own policies. At the heart of all this is the government's aim to improve the quality of Flemish higher education. What quality in higher education exactly means is not stated clearly in policy and legislative documents. Frequently policy documents refer to a stronger international competition and warn the institutions to be prepared to compete in a wider 'market'. Van Heffen *et al.* (1999) conclude that the Flemish steering system develops towards a liberal states model (market model).

4. It is stated that education in general and higher education in particular must follow carefully the developments in society at large, but also at the same time make youngsters critically aware of what the whole picture is all about. Education has many roles to play and a very important one is about preparing for the 'knowledge-based society'. Arrangements have already been taken in decrees to stimulate co-operation between institutions in higher education and the economy. But in accordance with its choice of giving the institutions more autonomy the Flemish authorities do not impose how institutions have to adapt to the changing circumstances in society and the world of work. As a result of this it is left to the individual institutions to adapt to change as they think fit.

In terms of funding the Flemish government believes that the vast bulk of the financial resources for the higher education sector must come from tax payers' money. Although in practice there is a relatively growing share of funding coming from private resources. In the new policy framework 'accountability' is another new key principle. Institutions have to show stakeholders and in particular the tax payer how the money has been spent

5. It could be summarised that politicians across all parties in Flanders have now accepted this new policy shift which, in rhetoric, is clearly geared towards a market model. Over the past decade a whole new legal framework has been created in which these new key principles have been embedded. However focused actions supported by special funding remain at the margin, e.g. the STIHO projects for innovation in higher education (Stimuleringsprogramma Innovatie van het Hoger Onderwijs). It is obvious that the

current situation is only a half way stage and that important issues for the near future will involve measures to enhance the governance and management at the individual institutions and the adjustment of the central funding mechanisms. In the policy plan of the current Flemish government 2004 - 2009 (Vlaamse Regering, 2004) these issues have been taken on board saying that universities, hogescholen and research institutions will be enabled to implement a 'real' human resource management. In the same text the government has pledged to implement a new funding mechanism for higher education.

1.2 Broad population trends in terms of numbers, age structure and cultural diversity

6. Out of each 100 Belgians 57.9 live in Flanders. Flanders has almost 6 million inhabitants (5.996 million on 1.1.2003). This number will according to the NIS (Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek) rise slightly in the near future (6.175 million in 2030) and will decrease slightly afterwards (6.070 million in 2050). Of the different components to population growth the growth from external migration is dominating. Growth from inter regional migration (between Flemish Community, French Community and Brussels Capital Region) takes second place followed by natural growth in third place.

7. Flanders, like the rest of Europe, has an ageing population. This phenomenon is characterised by two movements simultaneously: a process of decreasing numbers in the 0 to 19 year old age group and an ageing of the total population. The percentage of the population (OECD 2000) that is aged 65 and over has grown from under 12 % in 1960 to about 17 % today. By 2030 about 25 % of the population will be aged 65 and over. The rate of increase for people aged 80 and over is much sharper, from about 2 % in 1960 to nearly 7 % in 2030. Trends are similar to that for the OECD average, but the Belgian population is older than the OECD average throughout the whole projection period. It is important to notice that in the coming years the numbers of young workers entering the labour market will be smaller than the group of those who leave for retirement. The shortage of labour will probably become a main issue in society (VRIND 2003).

8. Due to a decreasing birth rate young age groups keep shrinking. In 1993 the Flemish population contained of 24 % of 0 - 19 year olds. For 2020 this group is expected to fall to a share of 21 % of the population. Also in absolute figures this age group decreases and as a consequence the numbers of pupils in primary and second education decrease. To the same extent the size of the 20 - 29 year old age group will become smaller. So the number of students in higher education is expected to decrease in the future. Of course this number will not only depend on the size of the age group itself but will be influenced positively by the participation rates of that group and other older age groups.

9. Another positive factor for a growing participation rate in higher education is the increasing number of students from an ethnic minority background. Recent research at the University of Antwerp has shown that the number of students from an ethnic minority has risen from 3.4 % in 1993 to 9.6 % in 2003. Figures for the whole of Flanders are not available as most of these students have already been given Belgian nationality and therefore it is hard to identify them from their enrolment documents. As the number of students of Belgian origin decreases over time so the potential of that growing group of non ethnic Belgians should be fully realised (Herbots, 2004).

10. In recent decades the activity rate of the 55 to 64 year group has been decreasing steadily. In 2001 only 38.2 % of the 55 to 59 year group was in work and of the 60 to 64 year group only 10.6 %. It is striking that the activity rate in these age groups is even lower among less qualified staff. There is a growing conviction that initiatives should be taken to keep this age group in the world of work. The Pact

of Vilvoorde¹ suggests an activity rate of about 70 % by the year 2010. This means that investments have to be made for those over 55 in terms of lifelong learning.

11. The current minister of Work, Education and Training, (2004) has promised to encourage youngsters and more mature people to take up further training in the context of lifelong learning. He favours shorter learning tracks comparable to Higher National Certificates and Higher National Degrees in the United Kingdom. These shorter routes would also be more achievable for those youngsters who might find it hard to enter higher education at degree level. In particular these shorter courses could also attract people into study fields which are currently in high demand on the labour market (bottleneck jobs). Also students from ethnic minority groups would benefit from a more diverse tertiary education system as a stepping stone to enter higher education.

1.3 Main economic and labour market trends

12. As mentioned earlier on our population pyramid is characterised by a more and more narrow base with relatively more elderly people and fewer youngsters. So first and foremost this demographic trend will have to be taken into account. This means that employers will look for talented young people further afield than in the past and start thinking at least at European level. Knowledge will soon become available at great quantity world wide as the level of higher education is growing rapidly in places like India and China. Thus the labour market will turn into a global market.

13. Just as in the rest of Europe, industry is losing its important share in the total Belgian economy. In 2003 industry represented 24.7 % in the total Belgian economy (compared to 42.2 % in 1970) and employed about 21 % of the active population. This situation is only going to worsen in the future as more employers are shifting their activities to low wage countries. Part of the lost employment can be compensated by a growing service sector which demands new skills training amongst more people. Unfortunately also employment in this service sector is shifting to low wage countries. The net result is a growing unemployment rate.

14. The fastest growing unemployment rate is amongst the elderly workers (+50 years of age) while the only category with a decreasing unemployment rate is young people (below 25 years of age). The prospect for finding a job remains better for higher trained people (university and polytechnic level) than for those with lower qualifications, although amongst the former category there is an increase in unemployment of 9.4 percent annually.

15. A feature of the current labour market is the high number of so called 'bottleneck jobs'. For these jobs there are either not enough interested job seekers or the job seekers do not fulfil the requirements of the job profile. In the latter case the qualifications are not the issue but often work experience and knowledge of foreign languages are required. It becomes clear that in this situation with a vast number of job seekers the employers demand more. According to the VDAB (2004) (Flemish Employment Agency) 48 % of the vacancies in 2003 were situated as 'bottleneck jobs', compared to 34 % in 1999. Eventually the right candidate was found for four out of five jobs.

Most of the bottleneck jobs belong to the category of technical professions. The main reason is a shortage of those professionals on the labour market. It stems from a public perception that blue collar jobs are second class. This wide spread social disrespect for vocational and technical professions has unavoidably entered our educational system that cares disproportionately well for white collar jobs. The most

¹ The Pact of Vilvoorde was signed by the Flemish government and social partners on 22 November 2001. It consists of 21 objectives. With the Pact of Vilvoorde the Flemish government wants to incorporate long term vision into Flemish policy. The government wanted to respond to the Lisbon challenge to become a competitive and dynamic knowledge economy.

important bottleneck jobs in 2003 were amongst engineers, nurses, technicians, chauffeurs, mechanics, etc.

16. Translated into education many skills of the future will look different and in many cases require higher levels of literacy. Too easily a picture has been created in the media of an overall workforce plagued by illiteracy and of a school system that churns out more illiterate than literate students. The overall picture of levels of educational attainment of the workforce as a whole is positive and some even start warning of a rising tide of overeducated and underemployed graduates. It is beyond any doubt that on the one hand the current workforce is more highly educated than at any other time in our history. On the other hand in the current labour market with a great supply of job seekers employers have become very demanding.

17. Although the overall pattern of job growth is towards higher-skill occupations, very large numbers of jobs will still be created in some medium to low-skilled fields, as part of the bottleneck jobs described above. In absolute numbers the biggest job creation categories will be expected in service occupations, administrative support, marketing and sales. Situated at the centre of Europe with Brussels as the capital of the EU the ability to function in a multicultural labour market will become a prerequisite. In practice it means a dominance of the English language and within Flemish higher education this is already reflected with an increasing number of courses being offered in English.

CHAPTER 2: OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF THE TERTIARY SYSTEM

2.1 Objectives of tertiary education

18. Higher education in Flanders consists of two sectors: the 'hogescholen' and the universities. The purposes, goals and objectives between the two sectors differ and this is due to their different historical development.

Hogescholen

19. Before the Second World War these schools of higher education initially started as an extension to secondary education and were attended by the middle classes. After the Second World War these colleges were upgraded to become independent tertiary bodies. Since the 1960s the Higher Education Outside University (Hoger Onderwijs Buiten Universiteit – HOBU) has grown much more than university education. An increasing number of youngsters from the lower socio economic backgrounds are obtaining higher education.

20. In 1968 the National Council for Science Policy (Nationale Raad voor Wetenschapsbeleid) published a report proposing an overall restructuring of post-secondary education and the construction of a full-fledged education at the hogescholen that would no longer be tightly linked to technical secondary education. This led to the Law of 7 July 1970 on higher education. This law fixed the provision of education on four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher. Higher education consisted of eight forms: university, technical, economic, agricultural, paramedical, social, art and pedagogical higher education. The Law of 15 July 1985 added a ninth form: naval higher education.

21. Education of hogescholen was organised in two different forms as well as in two different sorts of schools. The Law distinguished two forms: a short form and a long form. The short form took at least two years (since 1990 three years). All these training courses were explicitly vocationally oriented. The long form higher education had two cycles of at least two years of study. In later legislation the short form and long form was redefined as one-cycle and two-cycle education of hogescholen. On 23 October 1991 a Decree was adopted on the long-form higher education. Although the long form was not integrated into university education its object was to provide education of an 'academic level'.

22. The Decree of 13 July 1994 on the hogescholen in the Flemish Community, led to a revolution in tertiary education outside universities. The then 164 existing independent hogescholen merged on 1 September 1995, forming 25 hogescholen. (divided between four types of organising authority: the Flemish autonomous hogescholen, the subsidised public-authority hogescholen, the subsidised private-authority hogescholen and one hogeschool for which the Flemish Community itself is the organising authority - the Antwerp Maritime College). This institute works under the direct authority of the Minister of Education and offers bilingual courses (Dutch / French).

23. On 4 April 2003 the Flemish government approved the Decree on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders. A new qualification structure was introduced. One-cycle programmes have been converted to the level of bachelor's degree. Two-cycle programmes in hogescholen will become academic education: academic bachelor courses and master courses in association with a university. One of the consequences is that co-operation between universities and hogescholen will increase considerably with the development of associations.

24. The emphasis at the hogescholen is on its distinctive character, referred to in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Decree of 12 June 1991 as 'more professionally orientated education'. Although the

missions of the hogescholen and the universities differ, this is not the case for every component of the education they offer.

Table 2.1: List of hogescholen with total number of students in BA and MA programmes + initial teacher training programmes - academic year 2004-2005 (Since 1995 they have been reduced to 22)

Name of the hogeschool	Total number of students 2004-2005
1 Europese Hogeschool Brussel (EHSAL)	4.360
2 Hogeschool Sint-Lucas Brussel	835
3 Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst (Brussel)	6.068
4 Erasmushogeschool Brussel	3.730
5 Hogeschool Antwerpen	6.790
6 Plantijn-Hogeschool van de provincie Antwerpen	3.115
7 Karel de Grote-Hogeschool (Antwerpen)	6.955
8 Lessius Hogeschool (Antwerpen)	2.690
9 Hogere Zeevaartschool (Antwerpen)	237
10 Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen (Geel)	5.765
11 Katholieke Hogeschool Mechelen	3.911
12 Groep T - Leuven Hogeschool	1.795
13 Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven	5.021
14 Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg (Hasselt)	3.544
15 Hogeschool Limburg (Diepenbeek)	2.880
16 Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg (Diepenbeek)	5.171
17 Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge-Oostende (Brugge)	2.958
18 Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen (Kortrijk)	4.131
19 Katholieke Hogeschool Zuid-West Vlaanderen (Kortrijk)	6.010
20 Hogeschool Gent	12.762
21 Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Lieven (Gent)	4.681
22 Arteveldehogeschool (Gent)	7.776
Total	101.185

Source: Hoger Onderwijs in beeld 2004-2005 - Department of Education, Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Universities

25. University education is organised in establishments that have the status of university. Within Flanders there are six universities. The four largest are the 'Universiteit Gent' (UG), the 'Katholieke Universiteit Leuven' (K.U Leuven (including a campus near Kortrijk called 'Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Afdeling Kortrijk' – KULAK), the 'Vrije Universiteit Brussel' – VUB and the 'Universiteit Antwerpen' (UA). There are also two universities in which education is limited to a certain number of disciplines: 'Katholieke Universiteit Brussel' – KUB and the 'Universiteit Hasselt' – UH. (Before June 2005 the Universiteit Hasselt was called 'Limburgs Universitair Centrum' – LUC).

26. The 'Universiteit Hasselt' forms together with the Dutch 'Universiteit Maastricht' in the Netherlands (UM) the 'transnationale Universiteit Limburg' (tUL) (transnational University of Limburg). This university started with courses in knowledge technology, information science and biomedical sciences on 1 October 2001. The number of courses offered has been expanded since the academic year

2001-2002. The establishment of the ‘transnationale Universiteit Limburg’ is not yet a merger of the two universities. The new university is a third legal entity alongside the ‘Universiteit Maastricht’ and the ‘Universiteit Hasselt’, but functions within both universities.

The Flemish government has assigned three key tasks to the university as a whole. A university is an institute that is active at the same time in the field of academic education, research and scientific services, in the interests of society. The universities inform the government about their achievements and policy options, amongst other things, in the annual accounts and annual reports (public accountability).

27. The Decree of 4 April 2003 on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders has introduced the bachelor – master structure together with an accreditation system that will be jointly operated with the higher education sector in the Netherlands. In this Decree it is also stipulated that hogescholen and universities form associations.

Table 2.2: List of Flemish universities and total number of students in BA and MA programmes (+ candidate and licentiate) - academic year 2004-2005

Name of university	Total number of students in 2004-2005
1. Universiteit Gent (UG)	20.101
2. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL)	21.321
3. Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)	6.500
4. Katholieke Universiteit Brussel (KUB)	351
5. Universiteit Hasselt (UH)	1.800 (1)
6. Universiteit Antwerpen (UA)	6.932
Total	57.005

Source: Hoger Onderwijs in beeld 2004-2005, Department of Education, Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research

(1) 467 students of the ‘Transnationale Universiteit Limburg’ are included

Associations

28. One of the results of the recent reform of the Flemish higher education system is the officially registered co-operation between a university and one or more hogescholen known as 'association'. Its purpose is to evolve into co-operating entities on education and research, and the development of fine arts. Other actions are to harmonise the fields of study as well as to create bridges between Bachelor’s and Master’s studies.

29. Associations were formed around the KULeuven, UGent, UAantwerp, UHasselt and VUBrussel. Associations are authorised for:

- the tuning of the course profiles, the structuring of the course paths and an improvement of the transition possibilities between bachelor and master courses,
- the organisation of student counselling,
- the tuning of the internal rules concerning the personnel policy,
- the formulation and execution of a long-term plan for educational innovation and improvement, in connection with a jointly established system for internal quality assurance for education,

- the formulation of long-term plan for research and social and scientific service provision, in connection with a jointly established system for quality assurance for research,
- the alignment with research of the academic bachelor courses and of the master courses offered by the colleges of higher education of the association within the framework of the long-term plan for research,
- the formulation of a long-term plan for the mutual tuning of investments, infrastructure, provisions for library and documentation,
- the definition of a procedure for the appointment of an adequate number of representatives of the hogescholen which offer academic bachelor courses and master courses to the research council of the university,
- advising on the offering of a new bachelor or master course in an institution,
- advising on the reorganisation of a two-cycle basic course into a bachelor and master course in academic education,
- advising on the plan for educational development.

Table 2.3: Associations in Flemish Tertiary Education

Associations	University	Number of hogescholen	Total number of students university + hogescholen
1. Association Leuven	KUL	12	21.321+49.265 = 70.586
2. Association Limburg	UH	2	1.800+6.424 = 8.224
3. Association Gent	UG	3	20.101+24.669 = 44.770
4. Association Antwerp	UA	4	6.932+17.097 = 24.029
5. Association Brussels	VUB	1	6.631+3.730 = 10.361
No association	KUB		351

Source: Department of Education, Administration of Scientific Research

The Catholic University of Brussels (KUB) is not part of an association.

30. These different objectives between hogescholen and universities in the Flemish Community are a result of the different historical developments in a previous Belgian context and are currently reshaped by legislation at a Community level. Although there are fundamental differences between both sectors there is a tendency to become closer to each other. This trend is especially driven by the hogescholen. It does create tensions between the two sectors, for instance both sectors compete to attract students and research money. The typical attendance mode for every type of institution is full-time.

31. Alternative institutions and structures

Four organisational variations have to be mentioned within the provision of higher education in Flanders.

- Some university and two cycle hogescholen offer an alternative course schedule (evening lectures) for students who already have a job.
- Anybody can take the examinations for all higher education courses at all levels without attending the courses. These exams have to be taken in institutes that organise the normal full-time programme.
- Many programmes at hogescholen are also offered on a part-time basis by the Social Advancement Education (Onderwijs voor Sociale Promotie).
- There is also a co-operative project with the Heerlen Open University ('Open Universiteit Heerlen' in the Netherlands for offering distance education to Flemish people).

32. A few tertiary education institutes are not regulated by the corresponding laws on tertiary education. The Faculty of Protestant Theology (1)(Faculteit voor Protestantse Godegeleerdheid) in

Brussels and the Evangelical Theological Faculty (2)(Evangelische Theologische Faculteit) in Heverlee award degrees in Protestant Theology. They are recognised as private institutes.

Whatever their origin, all institutions mentioned above are officially recognised by the Flemish authorities. The following postgraduate institutions have the same status:

- Institute of Development Policy and Management (3),
- Institute of Tropical Medicine (4),
- Vlerick Leuven-Gent Management School (5),

33. It is also worth noting the central role played by university departments and laboratories in three public research institutions in Flanders, namely the Interuniversity Microelectronics Center (6)(IMEC), the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology (7)(VIB) and the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broad Band Technology (8) (IBBT).

- The IMEC was founded by the Flemish government in 1984. It collaborates with both industrial companies and research organisations worldwide, and is associated with the laboratories of the Department of Information Technology at the University of Ghent, and the Electronics and Digital Signalling Processing Department of the Free University of Brussels. IMEC's research activities are also carried out in collaboration with its associated labs at the Catholic University of Leuven and the University Hasselt. IMEC also finances and supervises the doctoral work of students registered at several Flemish universities, affording them the opportunity to participate in a range of industrial research activities in the field of microelectronics.
- The VIB, which was founded by the Flemish government in 1995, is a virtual institute located on the campuses of its four partner universities (involving nine departments and five associated laboratories). In collaboration with industry, it conducts research in various areas of biotechnology, undertakes technology assessment, provides policy advice to governmental authorities and takes responsibility for stimulating public dialogue about biotechnology.
- The IBBT is a new research institute founded in 2004 by the Flemish government and aimed at Information and Communication Technology in general and more specifically at the development of broadband application. The research programme of IBBT is demand driven and based on the needs of companies and other societal actors. The IBBT is a virtual research institute that is based on a number of research groups in the existing knowledge centres. These groups are selected by the Flemish government based on the defined research domains.

2.2 Types of qualifications in higher education

34. After signing the Bologna Declaration the Flemish minister of Education started a process to reform the Flemish higher education system. The Flemish Parliament adopted a new Decree of 4 April 2003 on the restructuring of higher education in the Flemish Community. The bachelor and master structure will be gradually implemented from the academic year 2004-2005 onwards.

35. After successfully completing 180 ECTS-credits (a study period of three years) students obtain a bachelor's degree. Profession-oriented bachelor's degrees prepare students for specific professions in industry, education, commerce, agriculture, health and rehabilitation, social work, informatics, applied arts or the media. Courses are therefore practice-oriented and include periods of work placement. These degrees are only awarded by the hogescholen.

36. Academic bachelor's degrees prepare students for advanced studies at master's level. These degrees are awarded by universities and some hogescholen in the framework of an association. Master programmes are characterised by the integration of education and research and a master's dissertation. They cover at least 60 ECTS credits (at least one year of study) or 120 ECTS credits for some science programmes. Depending on the field of study some programmes last longer. Master programmes are organised at universities and at hogescholen in the framework of an association. Subsequent master programmes are organised at universities, at hogescholen in the framework of an association and at postgraduate training institutions.

'Doctor' (PhD) is the highest level of specialisation in research. It is based on an original research project that takes at least two years, resulting in the public presentation of a doctoral thesis. This degree is only awarded by the universities.

37. In combination with the credential itself, the Flemish Diploma Supplement provides information on the nature, level, content and status of the studies that are pursued, together with a description of the Flemish higher education system. The Flemish Diploma Supplement was introduced by law in 1991 for the universities and in 1994 for the hogescholen. Students receive it automatically. The Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Commission recognised the Flemish Diploma Supplement as a 'good practice' and jointly created in 1998 an international model similar to the Flemish Diploma Supplement. It is now an important tool to improve the international transparency and fair recognition of qualifications towards the European Higher Education Area in 2010.

38. For bachelor's programmes (both professional and academic) the general admission requirement is the Flemish '*Diploma van secundair onderwijs*', the secondary school-leaving certificate. The higher education institution boards will be allowed to admit persons who cannot meet the general admission requirement. These individual admission decisions will take into account:

- humanitarian reasons (e.g. refugees lacking the required documents),
- medical, psychological and social reasons,
- the individual education level, skills, competencies and/or academic achievements of the student.

Entry examinations must be passed by any student (Flemish or other) who wants to take up studies in Dentistry, Medicine and Fine Arts.

39. Some professional bachelor degrees give access to subsequent bachelor programmes (at least 60 ECTS credits). A preliminary examination may be required. The hogeschool board will stipulate which bachelor degrees give access to these profession-oriented specialisation programmes. Academic bachelor degrees give direct access to master programmes. Some master degrees will give access to subsequent master programmes (at least another 60 ECTS credits), in some cases after a preliminary examination. The hogeschool / university board will stipulate which master degrees give access to these specialised and advanced master programmes.

40. Professional bachelor degrees give access to some master programmes after a 'bridging course'. The programme of the bridging course will be determined by the college of higher education / university board and will be between 45 and 90 ECTS credits. The ECTS rate of the bridging course may drop to 30 in the circumstance in which the student has either:

- working experience of at least 3 years and passed an evaluation interview
- or individual skills and competencies at academic level.

41. Only when the student has other (e.g. foreign) formal qualifications may the bridging course drop below 30 ECTS credits. Foreign higher education degrees give access to master programmes (including the subsequent master programmes) in the circumstance where the higher education institution boards consider the foreign higher education degree equivalent to the Flemish higher education degree giving access to the programmes concerned. Doctoral programmes are open to graduates with a relevant master's degree, in some cases after a preliminary examination (depending on the study field). Foreign higher education degrees give access to doctoral programmes in the circumstance where the university board considers the foreign higher education degree equivalent to a Flemish master degree. The admission may still depend on a preliminary examination.

42. Before enrolling at a university or hogeschool, it is important to know that Dutch is the language of instruction. However, foreign language courses, courses with foreign guest speakers and teachers, internationally oriented courses, courses in the framework of international developing co-operation, courses in the framework of international exchange programmes and courses for groups of foreign students are taught in another language. Course material may be in any language. A considerable number of master programmes are offered in English and a few in another language. Most institutions require a proof of Dutch language proficiency for the programmes taught in Dutch and a preliminary language test for the programmes taught in another language.

43. Together with the 2003 Decree additional legislation on the flexible organisation of education was implemented on 21 of April 2004. From the academic year 2005-2006 onwards the institutions will be able to build their programmes along flexible learning paths, thus altering the fixed structure of the academic year. Subjects will be independent building blocks for which students may enrol according to their own choice and time. Admission to the programmes and subjects will also be more flexible thanks to future assessment procedures. All this will be reflected in a study contract between student and institution.

44. The student will get a degree after having accumulated all the credits allocated to the subjects necessary to acquire all the competencies linked to the qualification. Credits are based on the ECTS-principles. Each subject stands for minimum 3 credits, with a maximum of 12 subjects per 60 credits. One credit represents 25 to 30 hours of a student's workload. Eventually students will be able to choose their personal learning paths, opting for the traditional route of circa 60 credits a year, or for an individual combination of subjects. Higher education institutions will be allowed to structure the academic year in semesters, evaluations included.

45. The current government intends to restructure all study programmes in post secondary education. Higher education has already been reorganised, as explained earlier on, into the bachelor - master structure. The minister of Work, Education and Training wants to locate all study programmes in a comprehensive qualification framework (2004). He states that the success rate of young people gaining a higher education degree has decreased since the hogescholen have been upgraded in 1994 and adopted the bachelor - master structure in 2004. This situation potentially creates a gap in obtaining a qualification between secondary education and the bachelor level. Examples abroad of short qualifications below bachelor level prove to be useful to adapt to a flexible labour market. In the near future hogescholen and centres for adult education will be stimulated to develop such sub-degrees. These sub-degrees will become recognised qualifications for the labour market and would lead to credits for further study at bachelor level. In a first phase only the existing study programmes will be targeted for this new overall structure. In a second phase an expansion will start towards new study programmes. Within the Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (Bergen, 19-20 May 2005, p.2) these sub-degrees are referred to as 'intermediate qualifications'.

46. As Huisman and Kaiser (2001) stated the Flemish higher education system lacks intermediate qualifications. In the former structure the degree of ‘candidate’ was awarded after the first cycle in universities and two-cycle hogescholen. This degree was no more than an indication of the successful completion of a fixed number of courses to enter the second cycle. It was not recognised as a qualification on the labour market.

2.3 Number of students and participation rates

47. Over the last decade there has been a steady growth in the number of students in higher education. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 illustrate this over the period 1993-1994 to 2004-2005. Table 2.6 shows that the number of students obtaining a degree in higher education has increased by more than 13% over the period from 1996-1997 to 2001-2002. Since the 1960s the student population in the hogescholen has grown more than in the universities. This expansion in the hogescholen mirrors partly the ‘democratisation’ of higher education. An increasing number of young people from lower socio economic backgrounds obtain higher education. For detailed information on participation rates see chapter 6 ‘Achieving equity in and through education’.

48. Flanders has a very liberal access policy towards higher education. All students who have the school leaving ‘Diploma of Secondary Education’ have free access to higher education. So national goals and targets for growth in tertiary education do not exist. The federal government has set a limit to the number of new professionals in medicine and dentistry for each Community in Belgium. This has led the Flemish Community to organise an entrance exam in medicine and dentistry since the academic year 1997-1998. The entrance exam is organised by the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department for Education.

2.4 National agencies and the social partners

National agencies

49. In Flanders there are no national agencies responsible for financing or international affairs. These tasks are carried out within the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Education. The hogescholen sector insists on the establishment of a public – private agency for international affairs.

- The Dutch – Flemish Accreditation Organisation (Nederlands – Vlaams Accreditatieorganisatie). More about this agency is to be found in chapter 9 ‘Assuring and improving the quality of tertiary education’.

In terms of policy preparation the following organisations play an important role in Flanders:

- *The Flemish Education Council* (Vlaamse Onderwijsraad - VLOR) was founded in 1991. It is the advisory and consultative body for all educational matters. All draft decrees in the field of education must be submitted to the VLOR. Furthermore, the VLOR can give advice to the Flemish government on its own initiative. The VLOR consists of a general council and separate councils for primary, secondary, higher and adult education. The general council is composed of representatives of the organising bodies, school staff, parents and socio-economic organisations, university experts and Education Department representatives.
- *The Flemish Socio-Economic Council* (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen - SERV), composed of representatives of employers and employees, gives advice on all draft decrees, including

those in the field of education. The SERV plays an important role in the relationship between education and the world of work.

- *The Flemish Interuniversity Council* (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - VLIR) is an autonomous body of public utility with its own corporate status. It acts as a defender of the universities and as an advisor to the Flemish government on university issues (consultation, advice and recommendations).

- A similar body has been established for the institutions of non-university higher education - the *Flemish Council for hogescholen* (VLHORA). It was founded during the academic year 1996-1997 and represents the hogescholen. The Council gives advice and makes proposals to the Flemish government with regard to the education in the hogescholen. At the same time it can provide consultation among the hogescholen

- The National Union of Students in Flanders (VVS) is the umbrella organisation of student unions at Flemish universities and hogescholen. The National Union of Students in Flanders gives advice at the request of the Flemish government.

- *Role of the Social Partners*

50. Apart from their activities at the national level (via the National Labour Council [NAR], via their participation in the recognition process of training courses within the framework of the Paid Educational Leave system [BEV] and via their managing function regarding the National Employment Fund), the social partners are also active at the Community/regional level.

51. In the Flemish Economical Social Consultation Committee (Vlaams Economisch Sociaal Overlegcomité, VESOC), the Flemish Government, the Flemish employers and the Flemish trade unions discuss all policy matters with a socio-economical dimension. VESOC develops action programmes e.g. on proportional employment and diversity. Decisions concerning training and lifelong learning issues are often included in these action programmes.

52. At the federal level, the social partners agreed on spending 1,9% of the wage mass on training by the end of 2004. (Interprofessional Agreements 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004). The federal social partners also put forward the following objectives: 10.000 long time jobseekers have to enrol in training programmes for so-called bottleneck occupations and 50% of the workers have to participate in education and training on a yearly basis.

53. On the subregional level, the social partners have an advisory function in the so-called Subregional Employment Committees (STCs), which are equally-represented (employer/worker organisations). These 'STCs' provide recommendations on vocational training, which are presented to VDAB's Managing Committee. Via the STCs, the social partners can also give recommendations on adult education and training matters, which are presented to the Flemish minister of Education. Most recommendations concern planning of courses and curricula.

54. On the sectoral level, the social partners control Sectoral Funds, used for the financing of training initiatives which are fully focused on a specific economic sector.

Sectoral training funds play the following roles according to the specific needs of the industrial branch:

- For job seekers: an intermediary role between the qualification needs of the industrial branch and the training suppliers, a supporting role via information, a supplier's role (practical organisation of courses, recruitment of teachers, recruitment of trainees), a subsidising role (via a financial incentive framework) and, finally, a certification role (including quality control).
- For workers (similar): a subsidising role (stimulating enterprise participation in VET), a training

supply role (complementary to the existing VET supply), an intermediary role (matching training supply and demand), a supporting role (detection of training needs, training supply databases) and, finally, certification (attributing a quality label after screening of the training supply).

On a more general level, social partners willingly participate in the drawing up and in the application of job profiles (and consequent training policy decisions).

2.5 The Council for examination disputes

55. Supplementing the Decree of 4 April 2003 on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders, the 'supplementary decree' was passed on 19 March 2004. This decree outlines a clear and unambiguous legal position for the student, as well as transparent double legal protection in the case of disputes related to decisions on study progress. For this purpose an administrative legal board 'the Council for examination disputes' was created specially for higher education. From the 2005-2006 academic year, this will be known as the Council for disputes about decisions on study progress.

56. In the first instance, disputes are dealt with in an internal appeal organised in the institution. It is compulsory for this internal appeal procedure to be exhausted before an appeal can be presented to the Council. The Council can make a final decision in the short term, so that the student knows at a suitable time whether, and under what conditions he or she can start the next year. The student can object to a decision of the Council through the Council of State by means of an administrative appeal.

Table 2.4: Number of students in hogescholen from 1993-1994 until 2004-2005

gender	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998	1996-1997	1995-1996	1994-1995	1993-1994
male	46.233	45.998	46.125	45.775	45.773	45.747	46.796	45.685	43.707	42.451	42.211	42.917
female	54.952	54.180	53.536	53.564	53.485	52.789	53.137	51.889	50.269	48.595	47.944	47.734
total	101.185	100.178	99.661	99.339	99.258	98.536	99.933	97.574	93.976	91.046	90.155	90.651

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2003-2004 Department of Education, afdeling Begroting and Gevensbeheer, 2004-2005 Hoger Onderwijs in beeld, Department of Education, Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research
<http://aps.vlaanderen.be/sgml/reeksen/1807.htm>

Table 2.5: Number of students at university from 1993-1994 until 2004-2005

gender	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998	1996-1997	1995-1996	1994-1995	1993-1994
male	25.379	25.365	25.382	25.644	25.656	26.508	27.408	27.929	28.174	27.934	27.032	26.173
female	31.626	31.474	31.457	31.049	30.462	30.232	29.762	28.973	28.242	27.364	25.745	24.714
total	57.005	56.839	56.839	56.693	56.118	56.740	57.170	56.902	56.416	55.298	52.777	50.887

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department and Flemish Interuniversity Council, 2003-2004 Department of Education, afdeling Begroting and Gevensbeheer, 2004-2005 Hoger Onderwijs in beeld, Department of Education, Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research
<http://aps.vlaanderen.be/sgml/reeksen/1807.htm>

Table 2.6: Number of students obtaining a degree in higher education

hogescholen	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998	1996-1997
One cycle	17.861	16.937	16.986	16.220	16.211	15.474
Two cycles	4.684	4.536	4.214	4.318	4.210	4.373
universities						
2nd cycle	9.690	9.368	9.269	9.067	8.632	8.646

Source: Vlaamse Regionale Indicatoren (VRIND), Administration Planning and Statistics

CHAPTER 3: THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE LABOUR MARKET

3.1 The relationship between labour market demand and the supply of tertiary education graduates

57. Generally speaking, there exists no clear one-dimensional relationship between labour market demand and the choice of certain areas of study in tertiary education. There is little empirical proof that shortages on the labour market systematically lead to an increased number of entrants to tertiary education. Although it is true for some professions, it is not for many others. Conversely, over-supplies on the labour market (in the form of higher unemployment) of graduates of certain study programmes do not automatically lead to a decreased entrance of students. Below are two examples which prove the above statement. Although relatively many graduates holding the diploma of political and social sciences are unemployed at present (compared to graduates from other study programmes), the number of students registering for this study programme increased between 1999 and 2003 (Dessein, 2004). In contrast, entrances to the sciences study programme diminished in the same period although graduates from this study programme are most likely to find a job on the labour market. Up to now, our knowledge on the nature of the factors determining choices of study and on the extent to which they change throughout time is rather limited. We only know that labour market prospects are one of these factors but usually are not of decisive importance. Very often, a strong intrinsic motivation plays a part. People choose the history programme because they like the subject or have even developed a passion for it. They readily accept the reduced labour market opportunities. Although a lot more labour market information is available today, we do not know for sure whether labour market prospects play a more important role than they did 10 or 20 years ago. Experience learns that parents are more sensitive to labour market perspectives than students themselves are. Campaigns aiming at attracting students to a specific study programme are rarely very successful. Sometimes an increase in the number of entrants can be attributed to a campaign (e.g. campaigns for nursing programmes), sometimes it cannot (e.g. the many campaigns to promote engineering programmes). However, students of hogescholen (both one cycle and two cycle programmes) generally show greater sensitivity to labour market conditions. An underlying international trend in choices of study is towards humanities, while exact sciences seem to be less popular among students.

3.2 Gathering evidence at national level

58. The past ten years, a lot of progress was made in gathering information on labour market outcomes of graduates from tertiary education. For 20 years, the VDAB (Flemish Employment Agency) has been studying unemployment among school-leavers at all levels. In recent years, the methodology was strongly improved thus providing an overall view of the situation. Nevertheless, data remain very limited. We only know how many graduates are still without a job in the year after graduation and whether they have been working or not in the meantime. In addition, massive research efforts were undertaken in the past five years by an interuniversity project (SONAR). This research project is meant to provide a detailed insight into labour market entrance. However, the transfer of results to public opinion does not run smoothly

3.3 Planning and managing the system

59. We can certainly speak of shortages and surpluses.² The situation is the most diverse in one-cycle tertiary education. Unemployment is high in the visual and audio-visual arts areas of study³ (37%) as well as in architecture (22%) Here the surplus is evident. In contrast, there are a large number of courses in

² For detailed figures see annex 1

³ An area of study is a cluster of several related courses of study

the health care area of study where virtually no one is unemployed after one year of graduation. This indicates a shortage.

60. In two-cycle tertiary education, extremes are less pronounced but unemployment rates in music and dramatic art (22%) and again in visual and audio-visual arts (37%) are not enviable at all. Architecture and health care stay below 10% which cannot really be considered a shortage. Separate courses of study such as industrial design and construction rank below 4%.

61. In university education, there are high unemployment rates among graduates from political and social sciences (20%), history (23%), archaeology and art sciences (26%) and philosophy and moral sciences (26%). For dentistry, medicine, pharmaceutical sciences, social health sciences and applied sciences, very low unemployment rates (5% or less) are recorded.

62. It is evident that unemployment rates require interpretation. High unemployment rates among graduates from a certain course or area of study does not necessarily lead (immediately) to the discontinuance of the course. Only if it affects the intake of students, this measure can be considered. Almost each and every course of study (and certainly each area of study) has a different story to tell in this context. It is fundamentally wrong to make generalisations about the different courses. For example, if there is a surplus of doctors, authorities will be inclined to take measures even if these measures also have an impact on social security. This will not lead to the abolition of the programme but to a greater admission selectivity as regards the course (entry examinations). The relationship of the study programme with the labour market is also a reason for different approaches. Economists, jurists, engineers but also sociologists and psychologists have access to a wide range of jobs on the labour market. Multiple alternative routes are available. They are some kind of generalists who will specialise themselves during their career. The relatively weak performances of the political and social sciences programme on the labour market have never led to the discontinuance of this course of study at a university. In the worst scenario, these performances have led to an adjustment of the curriculum. Other graduates have significantly less escape routes. From the start, they are more specialised. If a medical doctor is not successful as a practitioner, his/her escape routes are limited, unless he/she is prepared to make heavy sacrifices as regards the level of qualification. The same goes for pilots. For these programmes, the relationship with the labour market should be more closely watched. Account must be taken in this context of the economic situation. The labour market entrance of graduates is by definition very sensitive to economic market trends. When industry experiences a downward trend, their entry opportunities shrink rapidly. When the economy flourishes, they reap the benefits instantly. That is why a long-term analysis of unemployment figures is needed. We must also take the nature of the area of study into account. Students entering visual and audio-visual art programmes as well as philosophy programmes often have a strong intrinsic motivation. By definition, they take little or no account of the labour market opportunities.

3.4 Employment outcomes and earnings by type of institution, field of study and completion versus non-completion

63. There are three criteria to gauge the outcomes of education: the graduates' presence or not on the labour market, employment or unemployment, the wages earned. As for the first criterion, we can be short. The higher the level of education, the higher the probability that the individual will enter the labour market and the more likely that he/she will continue to be active on the labour market. The relatively low labour participation rate in Belgium is partly due to the relatively high number of low-skilled workers. As for the second criterion (employment or unemployment), the first general outcome is that graduates from tertiary education on average compete better on the labour market than graduates from secondary education do.⁴ According to the most recent figures (of the year 2004), a graduate from tertiary education

⁴ For more detailed information, see annex no. 1

was unemployed in 11.6% of the cases. In secondary education, the unemployment rate amounted to 14.6%.

64. What is striking is that the best outcomes are obtained by entrepreneurship training showing an unemployment rate of 8.6%. This figure contradicts the assumption that the higher qualified (as regards the level) are ensured a smoother entry into the labour market. Within tertiary education, there are not only big differences between the courses of study and areas of study (see above), but also between the three types of tertiary education. One-cycle tertiary education registers the best performance showing an unemployment rate of 10.3%. It is doing better than university education with 12.3% of its graduates being unemployed and two-cycle higher education showing an unemployment rate of 16.3%. Thus the latter type of education performs worse than the average secondary education track. In fact, we can conclude that as far as labour market entries are concerned, the differences within the educational levels are bigger than those between the educational levels.

65. But labour market entries do not account for everything. A slow(er) entry into the labour market does not necessarily mean that the rest of the career also develops less positively. However, as regards secondary education, research revealed that a direct entry into the job market had a determining impact on the rest of the career. Those who found a job within a short time span, also showed a better performance after five years. This does not necessarily mean that the same goes for graduates from tertiary education. It is possible that a graduate from tertiary education is more fastidious and waits longer before accepting a job than a graduate from secondary education. Graduates from tertiary education come on average from a higher social environment. Objectively speaking, they can afford more easily to take a sabbatical between school and work with their parents paying their expenses.

66. As stated above, there is another important criterion apart from the labour market presence and being employed or not: namely, the salary earned. According to the human capital theory, graduates from tertiary education should earn more than graduates from secondary education even if foregone earnings as a result of higher studies are taken into account. In practice, this also appears to be the case. Unfortunately, empirical figures for Flanders taking foregone earnings into account date back as far as '84. However, income research showed a few trends (Sels, 2005).

67. First and foremost, the market value of diplomas issued at the close of secondary, one-cycle tertiary, two-cycle tertiary and finally university education differs largely. Between secondary and one-cycle tertiary education there is a gap of 13.4%. Between one-cycle and two-cycle tertiary education there is another gap of 10%. The same difference is noted between two-cycle tertiary education and university education. Between secondary education and university education there is indeed a gulf of 33.5%. For the diagram see annex no. 2⁵

68. The income gap between education levels tends to widen as careers progress. At the start a secondary education graduate earns 75% of the initial salary of a university graduate. After three years of experience, this percentage falls to 70%, after ten years to 59% and after 20 years to 55%. The comparison between graduates from university and graduates from two-cycle tertiary education is also interesting. At the start, there is almost no difference in salary. A graduate from two-cycle tertiary education on average earns 97% of the salary of a university graduate. After 25 years this percentage has

⁵ The figures result from a regressive comparison. All other factors such as gender and number of years of experience were kept neutral with a view to only measuring the influence of the diploma

fallen to 83%. International research has revealed that if the individual takes a market-related in-service training course during his career, this has a positive effect on his salary (de la Fuente et al. 2002).

69. There are indications that the income gap between the education levels has broadened in recent years. Three years ago, a university graduate earned on average 29% more than a secondary education graduate. Now, this figure has risen to 34%. International literature shows that the differences in earnings between the education levels have increased in the nineties. In the eighties, the differences had been weakened (de la Fuente et al. 2002). It is obvious that the structure of the labour market plays an important part here. As salaries are being fixed collectively (in Belgium via collective employment agreements), differences will be rather limited in principle. Nevertheless, in Belgium too there are some indications that the gap is widening (see below).

70. It is evident that there are big differences between the study programmes within the education levels. For instance, the median of the initial monthly income of a graduated civil engineer or engineer architect amounts to 2519 euro (gross per month). A starting social sciences graduate earns a little less than 2000 euro. An information technology graduate (one-cycle tertiary education) earns more than a graduate from study programmes such as physical education, speech therapy, history, industrial sciences and languages. Thus, both the length of the course programmes and the course content play a role. Not all the competencies have the same weight at the labour market.⁶

71. Students who have interrupted their studies are likely to be less successful than those who reached the finish. However, it is not clear whether students having attended one or two years of tertiary education (but have no final diploma) perform better on the labour market than secondary education graduates do. Until now, this analysis has not been carried out in the framework of studies on school-leavers.

72. There is no general information either on the net outcomes of supplementary studies: the so-called third cycle. An exception to this, are the MBA programmes as the business schools concerned keep a close eye on the salaries of their graduates. Indeed, a trend towards an added value is reported but it is not linked to the length of the training. Short courses (one year) seem to score better than longer ones (two years) (Quarcuarelli, 2005).

73. Surveys cannot measure for hundred per cent the effects of education alone as students from different courses and levels of study differ mutually as regards capacities. Of course, education also generates a macro-economical output. More and better schooling also enhances an economy's productivity. Finally, the outcomes of education are not merely economic in nature. More education has also a positive influence on social cohesion within a country and on general public health.

3.5 National policy and the labour market

74 Unlike secondary education, there is not a single system in tertiary education that gears the content of its education towards the labour market. Colleges of higher education have a high degree of autonomy as regards the drawing up of their curriculum. There is no overview of the situation. In university education, the situation is still less clear. In secondary education geared towards the labour market, professional profiles are designed (involving social partners such as the Flemish Socio-Economic

⁶ For a detailed overview see annex no. 3

Council - SERV) on which training profiles and basic competencies will be built later. This system also exists in tertiary education, especially in courses and areas of study directly linked to the job market or linked to regulated professions (nursing, education, medicine) but it is not generally used. As stated above, some courses of study do not lead to a specific job but are more generalist in nature. A national strategy in this matter would be meaningless. In tertiary education, there are several systems to design professional profiles. In some cases, professional groups play an important part (e.g. in the field of nursing or engineering).

75. Indeed, the input of the accreditation commissions screening the quality of the training programmes can be vital in the resolution of this issue. In the visitation committees' manual (VLIR, VLHORA), explicit reference is made to professional knowledge but up to now it is impossible to trace the part played by this aspect in the actual appreciation and accreditation.

76. It is obvious that the adjustment of the curriculum is only one means of adjusting education to the labour market. The provision of work placements during training is also a frequently used means in tertiary education to establish the link with practice and the job market. In one-cycle tertiary education, students almost always take up a work placement. In two-cycle tertiary as well as in university education work placements are organised less frequently (in fact only in those study programmes that are strongly linked to the profession, e.g. medicine).

3.6 The impact of an international labour market

77. The European Bologna Declaration is the initiative taken by European Higher Education to respond to the growing needs of international job mobility and the creation of a European labour market. In the past, students also had opportunities to acquire experience abroad but they were limited to bilateral agreements and good international contacts of universities, faculties and professors. It should be said that these experiences abroad were sometimes enhanced vacation experiences. It is evident that this mobility will become less informal on the one hand and strongly stimulated on the other by the introduction of the bachelor and master training programmes, the ECTS credit transfer system and the elaboration of international recognition criteria.

78. Apart from this structural reform, there exists a wide range of other initiatives that are all geared towards the promotion of international mobility among students: the European exchange programmes (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, the agreements with Canada, the United States and Australia, Erasmus Belgica). In addition, there are a large number of bilateral and multilateral agreements. Also practical training programmes of international student organisations should be mentioned here. A good example is AIESEC. Each year, this international organisation of business and management students provides a paid work experience in foreign companies to some 6,000 students. For other areas of study, similar initiatives are organised: law studies - The European Law Student's Organisation, engineering - IAESTE. In most cases there are no credits awarded for these work experiences. Thus sufficient initiatives are put in place but the problem is that they remain unevaluated. Which effects do these international experiences have on a professional career? For the time being, there are no answers to this question.

79. As another consequence of internationalisation, educational institutions are becoming more competitive in their quest for students. They focus in the first instance on the national student market but are also attracting international students. An important issue in this is the language. International education demands English as a working language. For historical reasons, this remains a sensitive point in Flanders.

80. Especially in university education, there is a strong tendency among professorial staff members to prevent economic conditions from having an impact or limited impact on the finality of this type of education. In addition there are a lot of separate initiatives taken by schools and universities to collect data on their graduates. In this context, we can state that most institutions in tertiary education have a fairly good overview of the labour market position of their graduates, at least in the short run.

CHAPTER 4: THE REGIONAL ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

81. In addition to the time-honoured locations of Ghent, Leuven and Brussels new university establishments were set up during the period 1965 to 1971 in Hasselt (Limburgs Universitair Centrum -LUC, 1971 – now Universiteit Hasselt), Antwerp (Universitaire Faculteiten Sint-Ignatius (UFSIA, 1965), Rijksuniversitair Centrum Antwerpen (RUCA, 1965) and Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen (UIA, 1971) and Kortrijk (branch of the KULeuven).

82. The national higher education policy in the late 1960s to create new university establishments was designed to encourage more people in the provinces to take up university education in provinces that do not have their own university, and to accommodate the increased numbers of students elsewhere. Against the background of the political debates about this "university expansion", the champions of decentralisation refer to the way the threshold is lowered when a province has its own university. They also point to the welcome impact a university has on regional economic development. The university funding system did not feature any special provisions for universities taking on this specific regional role. The driving force came primarily from the region itself.

During this decentralisation process the university's regional role was focused on a greater participation of young people in higher education.

83. The subsequent concentration trends were designed to remedy the serious fragmentation of the hogescholen network (1995) and, more recently, to use associations (2003) between universities and hogescholen as a basis for providing a more comprehensive system for implementing the Bologna agreement. The merger of the three Antwerp university establishments in 2004 into the University Antwerp is also part of this trend. And currently the Catholic University of Brussels (KUB) – the only one kept out of an association – is trying to find a partnership with other institutions. This trend towards concentration is clearly meant to increase an institution's capacity for providing better services to its local stakeholders. This time it is not only students – as in the decentralisation phase - but also industry and society at large. This regional engagement is implicitly part of the mission in higher education.

84. A regional role of higher education is not a dominant feature in the Flemish higher education policy. Tensions do arise when occasionally political parties or politicians lobby to expand the educational offer in a certain province. For instance this happened in Hasselt, Antwerp and Kortrijk in order to compete with the large universities. The implementation of the five associations is still too recent to measure any developments on a regional level. The next section makes a more detailed assessment of developments in the province of Limburg as an example of a regional higher education policy in Flanders.

4.1 The Limburg policy approach to providing education

85. Since the 1950s the authorities and institutions in Limburg have adopted a policy of allowing young people from the area to participate in higher education opportunities on an equal footing with the rest of Flanders. The efforts to achieve this aim are based on creating accessible opportunities via local institutions in Limburg: the Limburg hogescholen and the University Hasselt. Since June 2005 the LUC renamed itself as Universiteit Hasselt (UH).

From its start in 1973, the Limburgs Universitair Centrum (LUC) agreed to accept educational innovation as part of its remit, in addition to increasing the level of participation and lending support to regional economic development. The UH educational concept primarily tries to support the

student's self-activity. This includes a mixture of task-based, problem-based and project-based education. The UH undoubtedly acted as an educational pioneering force amongst Flemish universities. Many reforms now applied on a broader basis were deployed for the first time in the UH.

86. When the UH got underway Limburg conducted a policy of concentrating the colleges of higher education and the UH on the Diepenbeek-Hasselt campus so as to achieve the necessary economy of scale and underpin the co-operative activities. The UH has always advocated a greater level of co-operation between universities and hogescholen in the region. When the Economic Hogeschool Limburg was incorporated into the UH, the UH anticipated the broad process of 'academisation' focused on the two-cycle programme now proposed within the associations.

87. In Limburg it was therefore obvious that an association should be formed between the UH and the three Limburg hogescholen but this plan came to nought. The UH forms an association with two of the three Limburg hogescholen. The third hogeschool (5,000 students) forms an association with KULeuven. In contradiction to all other associations in Flanders - pursuing a regional concentration and co-operation - the KULeuven rather wants to establish an association with hogescholen spread all over Flanders to establish a powerhouse.

4.2 The impact of offering local education opportunities in the province

88. The lower participation rate of Limburg 18-year olds in higher education can undoubtedly be explained by a great number of obstructive factors. For instance the income level of Limburg households is below the Flemish Level and also the average educational level of Limburg households is lower than Flanders. The province of Limburg also has a high percentage of youngsters of ethnic minorities. The local educational offer creates a lower threshold and can partly compensate the negative effects.

89. The education opportunities available at the UH obviously have a positive effect on the Limburg students' choice. More Limburg students being registered for the first time with a Flemish university opted for a course of study covered by the UH than might have been expected given the number of 18-year-olds in the province. The opposite is true for courses not available at the UH. The general shortfall in the level of participation therefore boils down to a shortfall for courses of study for which the UH has no educational powers.

90. A similar situation exists for two-cycle higher education at hogeschool level. The under-representation noted at two-cycle higher education level may therefore be attributed to the under-representation for fields of study not on offer in Limburg. At one-cycle higher education level the situation is better. In terms of the number of students, the main subjects are on offer from hogescholen in the province.

91. It can be concluded that the courses provided by Limburg higher education establishments are seen to have a welcome impact on the level of participation amongst Limburg young people: in the case of courses on offer in Limburg, the level of participation amongst young people in Limburg is comparable with or higher than in the rest of Flanders

4.3 From scientific research to innovation in the region.

92. From the very outset, the UH sought to establish a firm relationship with the region. The Limburg community looked to the university to make a contribution to the economic development of the area. Not only by enhancing the intellectual capacities of young people in Limburg but also by developing direct co-operation with the business sector. This explicitly regional dimension of the university's terms of reference is not the outcome of a specific policy of the central government, but of a debate between the university and the regional government and the regional social partners on setting up the university.

93. When the coal mines were closed down in the late 1980s, a great deal of resources was made available for the economic restructuring of the region. The university managed to persuade the Flemish and provincial authorities to invest a large percentage of these resources in expanding scientific research. Thanks to a high level of European support (EFRO, ESF, INTERREG) almost 45 million euro has been spent on applied scientific research and technology transfer in recent years in Limburg, in the university and the hogescholen and other research institutions. The financial resources were primarily used to consolidate the research infrastructure (buildings and equipment). The investments were focused on promising research groups, active in strategic, forward-looking domains: research into new materials, digital media and telematics applications.

94. This resulted in the establishment of the "Institute for Materials Research" (IMO) in 1990 and the "Expertise Centre for Digital Media" (EDM) in 1994, which are now the UH's largest research institutes. In other areas of research policy, too, efforts were focused on setting up research institutes⁷. The additional resources were deployed as "incentive funding", so that by the end of the incentive scheme the entities should be in position to be self-supporting and be competitive enough to secure the necessary research funding.

95. In recent years, the UH has mainly focused research resources on the aforementioned research institutes, which now have 300 researchers and count for 85% of the research. The research institutes have made hard decisions, opting for a small number of core fields of competence with seriously ambitious aspirations. The core field of competence covers the entire research market: from fundamental research via basic industrial research to applied research and consultancy.

96. The concentration policy has undoubtedly enhanced the standard of research⁸. Recently, initiatives have also been taken – within the framework of the 'academisation' of hogeschool

⁷Apart from IMO and EDM the UH has research institutes in the following domains:
- biotechnological and biomedical research: BIOMED (Biomedical Research Institute)
- environmental research: Centre for Environmental Sciences (CMK)
- statistical research: CenStat (Centre for Statistics)
- social-economic research activities were recently combined in one research institute: (SEIN)
- more recent initiatives are the Institute for Mobility (IMOB) and the Knowledge Institute for Self- Employed Enterprises (KIZOK)

A formal partnership was also established in 2001 between the IMO and the Interuniversity MicroElectronics Center (IMEC): this led to an IMEC division based on the UH campus – called IMOMECE.

⁸A recent report, 'Beoordeling van het onderzoeksmanagement van de Vlaamse Universiteiten', drawn up by a commission headed by Dr. R.J. van Duinen at the request of the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), included a favourable assessment of the UH's research policy. VLIR 2004.

Bibliometric investigations of the UH's scientific publications show that the global visibility of UH publications is better than the international level and the trend is on an upward path. The UH has, for instance, many research groups that considerably surpass the world average. For example, in a recent international comparison of statistic research institutes, the CenStat research institute was named as one of the 10 world's leading institutes (The Canadian Journal of Statistics, Vol 30, No 2, 2002, pp. 329-342)

programmes - to stimulate research in the hogescholen by means of extra resources. This is taking place within the same concentration strategy, i.e. solely for research themes that also fit in with the UH research institutes' activities.

97. In a bid to lend support to technology transfers to the business sector, a science park has also been set up on the campus, in the immediate vicinity of the research institutes. Created for research-intensive companies, the park has an incubator centre for small companies starting up. The university is the main shareholder in the science park.

New impulses

98. The creation of the Transnational University of Limburg (tUL) is set to give new impetus to research activities. The development of master's courses in IT and the life sciences at the tUL calls for further research funding. This is why the tUL in Flanders and the Netherlands has been awarded incentive funding to further develop its research in these fields during the start-up period. Over the next 10 years an additional 55 million euro is to be invested in ICT and the life sciences in Flanders.

Networking

99. The UHs remit specifically features a regional dimension but it also seeks to forge strategic alliances and to engage in networking so as not to be hampered by the disadvantages of operating on too small a scale. In addition to a strategic alliance with Maastricht University in the Netherlands within the framework of the tUL, co-operation agreements have also been sealed with the Technical University of Eindhoven (TUE) in the Netherlands. These co-operation agreements help direct the stream of students emerging from bachelor's courses in mathematics, physics and chemistry towards master's programmes in the engineering sciences at the TUE.

100. Networking is a key component of the research institutes' strategy. Intense co-operation activities have been developed with the Interuniversity MicroElectronics Center (IMEC) in Leuven, focused on material systems for microelectronics. This has resulted in the creation of the IMOMECEC division within the UH's Institute for Materials Research (IMO).

The Institute for Materials Research is associated with the Interuniversity MicroElectronics Center (IMEC) in Leuven and is a partner of Flanders Drive, a government-backed institution involved in R & D for the car industry.

Since March 2004, the Expertise Centre for Digital Media (EDM) became a partner in the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology (IBBT) - a virtual institute in which every Flemish university participates. EDM is also a member of Flanders Multimedia Valley: a co-operation platform of multimedia undertakings in the region.

101. In view of the European-wide trend to (virtual) regional/national clustering of research institutes a particular research area, membership of this type of cluster at European level will also become an increasingly important factor in being able to continue involvement in leading European research (such as the Framework Programmes of R & D). The dozens of projects these UH research institutes have undertaken under the European Framework Programmes offer clear examples of how small regional institutes can play an active part in key European research.

Innovation not only through research but also through education

102. Until recently, the role universities played in innovation was generally considered to be in creating fresh knowledge for scientific research. A university's main input, however, is still the education it provides to students but this concern has to be addressed more fully than ever before, given the tremendous need for knowledge in all sectors of society. When the focus is on broad-based innovation, priority also has to be given to the dissemination of knowledge. With 4,600 graduate economists, 40 % of which are employed in the region itself, the UH's economics faculty has given a big boost to the drive to ensure a sufficient number of good quality policy-makers. Without this impetus, it would undoubtedly have been much more difficult to develop the Limburg economy. So it is clear that the expansion of the services sector in the province has been possible only because of the education on offer. The training of researchers also makes a huge contribution to the innovative capacity required by our society. Since the UH came into being it has awarded over 200 doctor's degrees as a result of the research activities.

4.4 The impact the UH's 'concentration' or 'focus strategy' makes on innovation

Spin-Offs

103. As for direct innovation outputs, the number of spin-offs may be regarded as a parameter. Between 1990 and 2000, the UH was the basis for the creation of seven spin-offs, accounting for 8% of all spin-offs registered in Flemish universities. This is quite remarkable, given that the university has only 3% of the total number of researchers in Flanders⁹

Contract research

104. However, certainly just as important is the university's more indirect involvement in innovation: how far the university lends support to innovation in the business community via contract research. A straightforward unadjusted parameter is the ratio of outside contract funding to the operating resources provided by the authorities. Most of the outside contract research is corporate-driven and primarily focused on technological innovation in enterprises.

105. The UH's outside contract portfolio was worth 18.4 million euro in 2003, compared with government funding¹⁰ of just over 25 million euro. The ratio of outside contract funding to government funding is therefore 73 %, which is an extremely high percentage compared with the other Flemish universities. There has been a strong increase in fundamental research, as well as in applied research and services, particularly in the last 10 years.

The research institutes and companies in the science park provide employment for 239 people. It can be concluded that the UH and the Limburg hogescholen are key players in the region's innovation process. Their research activities in co-operation with companies, their national and international networks, and their graduates represent a key input into the innovation process.

⁹ Vlaams Indicatorenboek 2003, Steunpunt O&O statistieken.

¹⁰ Government funding = operating resources, investment grant, BOF, social grants and enrolment fees

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

106. Since 1991, R&D policy in Belgium has gradually been decentralised towards the regional policy level. In 2002 this decentralisation movement has led to a situation where 67% of the total Belgian public R&D budget now resides under the umbrella of the regional policy level. The remaining 33% still remains under the authority of the federal policy level. The public R&D money is allocated to the various public and private actors in the Flemish regional R&D system. The universities and the hogescholen receive funding via different funding channels.

107. The Flemish agency IWT manages and monitors all public R&D subsidies to support industrial R&D activities in Flanders. IWT bases its selection and monitoring mechanisms on detailed (external) expert reviews (written and oral) of the projects submitted to the agency, supported by a well-developed in-house group of scientific advisors. IWT has also a number of budget items that allow it to support industrially relevant research projects in universities and hogescholen as well as technological PhD projects at universities. The selection and the allocation of those budget items are based on peer- and expert-reviews of the proposals submitted, coupled to project defences by the groups or individuals involved.

108. Four major ‘(applied) research’ institutes conduct R&D in specific technology domains, aimed at industrial exploitation and application. They receive a public R&D subsidy that has to serve as an ‘engine’ to generate extra R&D income via European programs, direct industry funding and the endogenous exploitation of their research results via patenting, licensing and the creation of spin-off companies. Although their activities are geared towards the more application oriented end of the R&D spectrum, this does not mean that they do not engage in more fundamental or basic research activities as well. This is the reason why a significant part of these centers’ research portfolio is often referred to as ‘basic oriented research’ or ‘strategic basic research’.

109. The four institutes are (1) IMEC, the Flemish Inter-University Microelectronics Center, (2) VIB, the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, (3) VITO, the Flemish Institute for Applied Technological Research focusing mainly on applied research for Flanders’ large SME-base and (4) IBBT, Institute for Broadband Technology (see also chapter 2). These semi-public institutes have an organisational structure independent of government, including their own independent Board of Directors that monitors the strategy development and deployment of the institute. Each institute operates under a five-year management contract with the Flemish government. Every five years, independent review panels and experts evaluate the performance of each institute in terms of research output and exploitation results.

110. The major actors in the Flemish scientific research system are without a doubt the Flemish universities. They account for the majority of the scientific research output in Flanders. About 85% of the total Flemish scientific paper output (as obtained from the WoS-SCI) resides within the Flemish academic system. Flemish universities absorb about 50% of the 1,270 million Euro total budget for Flemish science and technology policy, since this budget also contains the operational and the investment subsidies to the Flemish academic world. The allocation of these budget items is based on numbers of students enrolled at the respective institutions. Universities in Flanders have access to more public R&D money. As mentioned, also IWT does support technologically and economically relevant research at universities. Two major additional funding sources and mechanisms are FWO-Vlaanderen en ‘Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds’ or ‘BOF’.

111. FWO-Vlaanderen, the Fund for Scientific Research in Flanders, monitors a large portfolio of basic research grants and projects to individual researchers (including PhD students and post-doctoral grants)

and academic promoters at Flemish universities. The selection and monitoring mechanism is conducted by scientific commissions that base their decisions on a peer-review system, consistently involving foreign experts in evaluating the proposals submitted to the agency

112. Besides the public R&D funding via FWO-Vlaanderen, which is distributed on a project-per-project base or on an individual base, the Flemish government created a mechanism that allows for supporting more large-scale basic research at universities. Moreover, the government decided that apart from ‘calculating’ an inter-university distribution key, the mechanism should allow individual universities to distribute the money they receive internally based on an intra-university competition for grants and projects monitored by the Research Council of the university. Except for setting certain quality guidelines and performance expectations, the government does not intervene at all in the internal selection and monitoring process for the grants. The mechanism thus created has been called ‘Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds’ or ‘BOF’ and had a total budget of 90 million Euro to distribute across the 6 Flemish universities for fiscal year 2002. The intra-university selection and monitoring mechanism can differ between the universities involved.

Selection within a particular university will often be based on a combination of the proven (publication and citation) track record of the group submitting the proposal and a peer-review of the proposal itself. This peer-review will always involve international experts.

113. A major issue with the BOF is the computation of the inter-university distribution key, the so-called BOF-key. Up to 2002 the BOF-key was based on three inputs. They counted for respectively 50%, 35% and 15% of the distributional key. First, the number of PhD’s produced by the universities over the four academic years preceding the year during which the computation is executed accounted for 50% of the distribution key. The PhD’s are weighted using a (1,2,3)-weighting criterion depending on the discipline in which the PhD occurs. For instance a PhD in physics will receive a weight of 3 whereas a PhD in economics will receive a weight of 1. These weights are based on the differential cost estimates of doing doctoral work in the various disciplines as covered and listed by the Flemish Inter-University Council. These weights are the same for all universities. Second, 35% of the BOF-key was accounted for by the number of graduates at each university during the four academic years preceding the year during which the computation is done. Finally, 15% of the BOF-key was based on the amount of public operational and investment money received by the universities over the four years that precede the year during which the computation is done. Each university then receives a fraction of the BOF-money in accordance with its relative share of the three indicators.

114. Over the last decade, the Flemish government has consistently been paying more attention to include bibliometric output indicators as an allocation parameter for public R&D funding decisions. The Flemish government decided in 2003 that the BOF-key should also include output-related performance data. From 2003 onwards the BOF-key consisted of two parts. Part A counted in 2003 for 90% (= previous input as described above) and part B (share of publications and citations) increased gradually from 10% in 2003 to 30% for 2005 and 2006. Currently there is a new proposal for the period 2007-2012 in which the third element of part A (15% based on the amount of public operational and investment money) is reduced to 13% for 2007, 11% for 2008 and 9% for 2009 and transferred into a new indicator to stimulate the HR policies at universities, including their gender issue.

115. The government strongly wants to reach the 3% objective and to strengthen the research capacity and infrastructure of the universities. The government has set out three funding programmes:

- a) The Odysseus programme: this programme involves funding for the universities to help them to attract excellent researchers from abroad. The programme will help the appointed researchers from abroad to establish and develop a research team. The university will provide them with substantial means for a period of 5 years.

- b) The Methuselah programme: this programme is aiming at rewarding outstanding researchers at the universities. The programme covers substantial personal grants for a renewable period of 7 years until the retirement. There will be a strong selection carried out by international experts.
- c) The Hercules programme covers the funding of big research infrastructure and equipment worth at least one million euros. This purchase of that big equipment exceeds the financial capacity of the recurrent funding.

For an overview of the so-called first (operational subsidies), second (FWO and BOF) and third funding (IWT) to universities see table 7.2 Income of universities 1997-2004.

CHAPTER 6: ACHIEVING EQUITY IN AND THROUGH TERTIARY EDUCATION

116. In this chapter we will focus on the question of equity in tertiary education. 'Equal opportunities', 'equal treatment', 'equality of outcomes', 'affirmative action' etc... A wide range of goals and policies are captured with the concept of equity in tertiary education. In this chapter we will make the distinction between equity in access to tertiary education and equity within tertiary education. Both government policies and the role of educational institutions are discussed.

6.1 Expansion of tertiary education

117. After WO II many European societies have experienced a massive educational expansion. The extensive growth in participation in tertiary education is well documented (OECD, 1998; for Belgium: Nonneman, 1998; Vanderstraeten, 1996). In Belgium, participation rates in tertiary education grew from 7% in 1953 to 47% in 1991 (Nonneman 1998).

118. Tables 6.1-6.3 provide the evolution in the total number of students registered in basic tertiary education programmes, total number of 'generation students'¹¹, and total number of graduates over the last seven to ten years.

119. Table 6.1 shows that the overall number of registered students in basic programmes continued to grow until 1998-1999. From 1999-2000, the number of registered students remains stable. While the overall numbers of students registered in basic programmes at universities decreased from 1999-2000 onwards, the number of female students kept rising. From 1996 onwards female students are more numerous than male students at universities. The student population at hogescholen rose until 1998-1999. Afterwards, the number of students in 2 cycle-programmes declined and the number of students in 1 cycle programmes remained more or less stable. Hogeschool education of 1 cycle traditionally attracts more female students, while the opposite is true in 2 cycle hogeschool education.

120. Table 6.2 shows that the total number of generation students started to decline in the second half of the nineties. A more detailed picture shows that the number of generation students remained stable in 1 cycle hogescholen. The number of students starting hogeschool education of 2 cycles increased until the end of the nineties; however the last couple of years show a marked decline. At universities, the number of freshmen declined until 2000, a decline that can be completely attributed to decreasing male enrolments. Finally, the most recent figures show that the total number of graduates from basic programmes is still increasing both for one-cycle hogeschool programmes and for university programmes (see table 6.3).

6.2 Persistent inequality in tertiary education

121. The overall numbers of students from lower socio-economic groups have improved as a result of the overall increase in numbers of students enrolled. However, the explosive increase in participation in tertiary education is barely, if at all, associated with greater equality of participation across the social classes (Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993; Erikson and Jonson, 1996; for Flanders Tan, 1998; Van den Bosch et al., 2001).

122. Tan (1998) examines the evolution in the participation in tertiary education during the period 1976-1992 and concludes that gender differences have disappeared. However, social inequalities persist and

¹¹ A generation student is a student who registered for the first time in the first year of a basic programme.

have changed little in the period studied. Results also suggest that, relative to income position or occupational status, father's educational attainment has become more important in explaining inequalities.

123. Van Den Bosch et al. (2001) address the question of intergenerational mobility amongst Flemish men in the 20th century. The authors examine both the influence of social origin (a) at every transition in the educational career and (b) on final educational attainment. As suggested by Mare (1981), results differ depending on whether (a) or (b) is taken as the ultimate criterion. The authors conclude that, in terms of educational attainment, there has indeed been a tendency towards greater intergenerational equality in the last century. However, the results do *not* indicate that the impact of family background on educational attainment has become smaller in later cohorts. This means that the decreased inequality in educational attainment is due only to the general increase in levels of education across cohorts and not to a reduction in inequality at particular transitions in the schooling career.

124. The most extensive documentation of persisting social inequalities in tertiary education in Flanders can be found in Groenez et. al. 2004. Using household survey data (PSBH: Panel Survey of Belgian households) for the 90's, this study describes social inequalities in access to, participation in and graduation from tertiary education.

6.3 Access to, participation in and graduation from tertiary education

125. Free access to tertiary education is a long-standing tradition in Flanders. Tertiary education is demand driven; institutions are (partly) financed on the number of students enrolled. In general, the access to tertiary education is only restricted by the requirement to have a degree of upper secondary education acquired upon completing the 2nd year of the 3rd stage of secondary education (Isced level 3). The only exception applies to secondary vocational education where only the completion of a 3rd year of the 3rd stage, under certain conditions, gives access to tertiary education. In case a foreign qualification is recognised on the basis of a Flemish degree, a Belgium law, a European Directive or an international convention, the holder will have direct access to tertiary education.

126. No limit is placed on the number of students enrolled. However, for admission to medical and dental sciences (university) students need to pass a special entrance examination. To access hogescholen for the study fields audio-visual and fine arts, music and drama, students need to pass an artistic entrance examination organised by the hogescholen themselves. Access conditions also changed with the introduction of the new Bachelor Master structure in the framework of the Sorbonne/Bologna Declaration. From the academic year 2004-2005 access examinations have been abolished for the following fields: civil engineering (university) and nautical sciences (hogescholen).

127. Groenez et.al. (2004) show that a substantial part of young people are in fact excluded from entry into tertiary education as they do not meet the access conditions in terms of educational qualifications (see table 6.4). Both early school-leaving and tracking in secondary education play a crucial role. On average, 15% of all Flemish youngsters leave secondary education without a degree of upper secondary education (isced 3). Moreover, 12% of all youngsters do attain a degree of vocational secondary education (isced level 3c) without completing the 3rd year that is required to gain access to tertiary education. As a consequence, 27% of all youngsters do not have access to tertiary education.

128. Table 6.4 also shows that mainly youngsters from lower socio-economic groups are excluded from access to tertiary education. Both mother's educational attainment and father's occupational status as indicators of socio-economic background are highly significant in explaining differential access to tertiary education. 30% of children with lower-educated mothers (isced 0 or 1) or fathers working as unskilled

manual workers leave the educational system unqualified. Approximately 1 in 5 of these children obtain a secondary education degree without gaining access to tertiary education. In total, 1 in 2 children from low socio-economic groups have no access to tertiary education. In contrast, 95% of children with mothers who graduated in tertiary education (isced levels 5) and 93% of children whose father is a higher-level employee or professional do have access.

129. As in many other countries gender ratios in access to tertiary education have changed remarkably. At present, boys are more likely than girls to leave the educational system unqualified, and less likely to gain access to tertiary education. Migrant children¹² have a disadvantaged position as 38% of them leave school unqualified and 55% do not have access to tertiary education.

Table 6.4 shows that 52% of all young people participate in tertiary education. Although tertiary education has become the standard, only 1 out of 4 children with lower educated mothers participates. Children of highly educated women have participation rates of over 80%. Girls are more likely to participate than boys. Again, migrant children have very low participation rates.

Inequalities in access rates obviously have a great impact on inequalities in participation. However, participation rates expressed conditionally on access (see last column in table 6.4) again show that youngsters from lower socio-economic background, boys and migrants – even when they have legal access - are less likely to participate in tertiary education.

130. Finally, inequalities in access and inequalities in participation translate into inequalities in graduation. Nowadays, almost 1 in 2 Flemish youngsters obtain a tertiary education degree. However, only 1 in 5 children from manual workers enter the labour market with a degree of tertiary education; whilst 75% or more of the children of the higher educated or higher-level service employees do so.

6.4 Diversification in tertiary education

131. A large part of the expansion can be attributed to an increased diversification in the provision of tertiary education. As in other countries, existing vocational institutions in Flanders were transformed into tertiary education colleges. Next to a quantitative expansion, the range of tertiary education programmes widened.

132. While in most OECD countries approximately 50% of new participants opt for university level courses (OECD 2003), only 1 in 3 students in the Flemish Community do so (see table 6.2). Currently more than 1 in 2 freshmen starts in 1-cycle hogeschool courses and 14% start in 2 cycle college courses.

133. Groenez et al. (2004) show that, in the nineties, students from lower socio-economic groups disproportionately opted for 1-cycle hogeschool courses. Students from higher socio-economic groups were over-represented in university courses. Gender differences in university enrolment were negligible (in the nineties). Male freshmen were over-represented in 2-cycle hogeschool education; females opted disproportionately for 1-cycle hogeschool courses.

134. Table 6.4 already showed that children from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to obtain a tertiary education degree. Table 6.5 shows that if they graduate, they are more likely to obtain one-cycle hogeschool degrees. Again, as children from higher socio-economic groups are far more likely to participate in university education, they are also far more likely to obtain university degrees.

¹² In order to better reflect the position of migrants in Flanders the authors did not use the dichotomy Belgian nationals versus non-nationals, but differentiated between West-European and US-nationals on the one hand and nationals from Southern European, Maghreb and other countries on the other hand.

6.5 Obstacles to participation in tertiary education

135. Research has identified different barriers to tertiary education. Financial, socio-economic and cultural considerations, and the interactions between them, may shape participation decisions. Costs are frequently mentioned as a factor inhibiting participation in tertiary education. Individual academic expectations, next to socio-economic considerations and culturally loaded assumptions shape incentives to continue education and may stimulate or restrain people from participating in tertiary education.

6.5.1 Private costs of participating in tertiary education

136. Private costs of participating in tertiary education consist of direct costs and indirect costs (foregone earnings while participating). The annual private direct costs¹³, have been estimated by Bollens et. al. (2000). Estimates of indirect costs are not available, but can be considered as a multiple of direct costs. Bollens et. al. calculate total direct costs for 1998-1999 by type of education and type of student (campus residents¹⁴ versus local or commuting students). Table 6.6 shows that average costs in 1998-1999 varied between 1680 Euro and 3500 Euro, depending on student type and type of education. For both types of students, average annual costs in hogescholen exceed costs in universities. Comparable calculations for 1986-1987 reveal a net increase between 35 and 63% in average annual study costs, depending on student type and type of education.

6.5.2 Disentangling the participation decision

137. Verhaeghe et al. (2000), surveyed 660 youngsters and their parents at different points in time. In their final year of secondary education, potential students and their parents were asked about intentions to participate in tertiary education and about their perception of financial, social, cultural and academic barriers. A few months after the start of the academic year they were asked again about their actual participation decision. The data show that the decision to participate in tertiary education is significantly and simultaneously influenced by, in decreasing order of importance:

- cultural factor 1: the attitude of potential students towards continuing education;
- economic factor 1: the expected employment odds and expected wages when entering the labour market immediately (these are indicators of the indirect cost of tertiary education);
- economic factor 2: parental income;
- economic factor 3: the subjective perception of the direct study costs;
- academic factor 1: the subjective perception of succeeding in tertiary education;

The choice between courses at hogescholen and university is significantly and simultaneously influenced by:

- cultural factor 2: parental educational attainment;
- cultural factor 3: parental attitudes towards the importance of education;
- economic factor 4: knowledge of potential student about study grants and the provision of in-kind services.

138. Nicaise (1989, 1997) has also studied the impact of financial constraints on educational participation in Flanders. In this research, individual participation decisions are linked to a number of socio-economic and socio-cultural determinants of participation such as income, household size, direct

¹³ The authors use a pragmatic definition of total private costs as those costs one would not make if one did not participate in tertiary education (tuition, student housing, transport, books, etc...). Living costs not related to participation in tertiary education (food, clothing and others) were not estimated.

¹⁴ Campus residents are students who rent a student accommodation while participating in tertiary education.

and indirect study costs, parental educational attainment and parental economic activity. Both studies conclude that, next to cultural barriers, financial barriers to tertiary education still affect participation decisions. Higher family income and study grants positively influence the odds of participation in tertiary education and participation is negatively correlated with the direct and indirect costs of participating.

6.6 Government policy

139. The main instruments of the government to promote equity goals in tertiary education are student grants and the provision of in-kind services. The former are delivered directly to students by the Flemish administration, while the latter are subsidised by the Government and delivered by educational institutions. In funding the private costs of tertiary education and the student cost of living, principles of personal contribution and parental responsibility are combined. Students pay tuition fees to the tertiary education institution. By law, parents are liable for maintenance of their studying children. As a compensation, assistance is given to virtually all parents of students in the form of tax relief and child allowances. Tax relief, depending on the number of children, takes the form of lump sum deductions. Parents receive child allowances for studying children under the age of 25. For students from underprivileged backgrounds, support for the payment of tuition fees supplements the award of grants. No support is given by means of loans, despite the existing legal possibility to develop such a system.

6.6.1 Grants

140. For students from underprivileged backgrounds, means-tested grants may play an important role in promoting access to tertiary education. The principal criterion for eligibility is the income of the people on whom the student is dependent, which cannot exceed a particular sum. The level of the grant is determined by the upper and lower earning limits and the type of student. If the family income is equal to or higher than the upper limit, there is no grant entitlement. The upper earnings limit takes into account the number of dependants within a family. The grant is calculated on the basis of family income two calendar years before the application is made (reference year). If the income is below the lower limit in 2004/2005, the student is entitled to a full grant amounting to 3069 Euro for campus residents, 1842 Euro for a commuting or local student. If the income lies between the lower limit and the upper limit, proportional grants are given.

141. The introduction of a 'joker' grant from the academic year 2001-2002 onwards, provides an opportunity for students to claim grants when repeating a year or changing study fields. Such a joker grant can only be claimed once. The introduction of a joker grant is expected to contribute to equity goals as the previous system *de facto* discriminated against deprived students having to repeat a year. Since the introduction of this measure, approximately 20% of all grants are joker grants. As a student can only once claim such a grant, the number of joker grants is expected to drop.

142. In order to adapt the system of student grants to the structural reform of tertiary education in the framework of the Sorbonne/Bologna Declaration, a new decree on financing tertiary education was adopted in July 2004. Opportunities have been created for students travelling within the European tertiary education area to remain eligible for financial support. Finally, grant amounts have been raised to keep track with direct study costs and special measures have been taken to combat non take-up of grants (information leaflets were distributed amongst all secondary school graduates in 2003).

143. The system of study grants has occasionally come under fire because of the '*Matthew effect*' in the distribution of grants: children from the middle classes do indeed take up more student grants than children from the lower classes, simply because they participate more in education. The need for more selectivity is however questioned by many parties involved. Figure 6.1 shows, paradoxically, that the

proportion of students receiving grants has dropped for all types of tertiary education, while no indication exists that the need for study grants has decreased.

The substantial drop in the proportion of students receiving grants can be interpreted in two very different ways:

- either, the number of potential claimants has dropped due to the overall rise in living standards and the income criteria to be eligible should be adjusted upwards;
- or, the group of potential claimants is large enough but grants are insufficient to convince these claimants to participate.

144. Nicaise et al. (2000) have tested the first hypothesis by calculating the proportion of potential students that would be eligible for grants merely on the basis of the income criteria as applied in the grant system. They come to the conclusion that, on the basis of income criteria only, the grant system would have a coverage ratio of 53%, meaning that more than 1 in 2 potential students (1) would be eligible for grants when effectively participating. As only 45% of all eligible students effectively participate, the proportion of students receiving grants was only 25% (grant receipt ratio or the proportion of students receiving grants expressed as a proportion of all students). The take up ratio (the proportion of students receiving grants expressed as proportion of eligible students participating) is 64%. This suggests that it is not the income criteria that exclude too many students from claiming grants, but that the grants are not substantial enough to encourage potential students to participate. Nicaise (1989) already suggested that, in order for study grants to act as a financial lever for participation of low-income groups, grants should cover a substantial part of the indirect cost of participation.

(1) Potential students are defined as those 18-25 year old who have access to higher education as defined in paragraph 125.

145. Comparing the average annual study costs to full grant amounts shows that 'cost' coverage of a full grant amount decreased between 1986-1987 and 1998-1999 (see table 6.7). In 1986-1987 full grants covered the direct costs of campus residents and even part of the indirect costs of non-campus residents. In 1998-1999, full grants were substantially below average annual costs for all students except university non campus residents. In 2004, the new decree on study financing increased grant amounts. Comparing these revised grants with study costs (corrected for inflation), we see that this increase has not substantially closed the coverage gap. Moreover, 'cost' coverage is still below the 1986-1987 level.

6.6.2 Non-financial aid for students

146. In-kind services are financed by the government and provided by educational institutions. Some of these services are provided selectively (such as housing, supplementary financial aid, legal advice, ...), other services are open to all students (student restaurants, sports facilities, cultural services, etc..). In general, all students receive concessionary fares on Belgian public transport.

In-kind services were originally subsidised only for university students. The law on hogescholen extended subsidies to all tertiary education institutions, albeit on a much lower level, due to budget restrictions. This difference in '*social subsidies*' between universities and hogescholen has been a topic of debate for years.

147. On the basis of the composition of their student body (more students from lower socio-economic groups, more grant recipients), hogescholen claim equal subsidies. However, the same facts can be used to argue that within tertiary education, it is the universities that need to be democratised most. Moreover, needs are different as hogescholen (have to) spend more resources on guidance, while university students are more in need of low-rent rooms (because of the stronger geographical concentration of universities). In recent years, the Flemish government partially met the demands for equal subsidisation and brought down the gap. Still, at present, universities receive a subsidy of 250 Euro per student for 'social services', compared to 163 euro for students in hogescholen.

148. Free access to tertiary education seems to have its reverse in terms of relatively high failure and dropout rates. Success rates among generation students (1) are traditionally lower in universities compared to hogescholen (e.g. in 1998: 44% versus 55%). The Flemish government has stressed the need for both better course selection counselling to potential students and better guidance of first-year students in tertiary education. The 1991 decree on universities, states that 5% of academic staff has to deliver specific educational guidance to first year students. The 1994 decree restructuring hogescholen, obliges hogescholen to establish guidance plans for first-year students. In 2002, a pilot project started in 30 secondary schools. The pilot aims at stimulating and coordinating schools' efforts to guide students in making a more optimal course selection.

(1) Generation student: student enrolled for the first time in the first year of a basic programme.

149. As outcomes in secondary education are the driving force behind inequalities in tertiary education, equal opportunity policies in primary and secondary education may act as important levers for equity in tertiary education. In September 2002, different projects on educational priority, special needs provision etc... have been replaced by an integrated range of support provisions.

6.7 Role of tertiary education institutions

150. Educational institutions have a crucial role in equity enhancing policies as they may or may not design or adapt equity policies to their own institutional realities.

In 2002 the Flemish inter-university council (VLIR) published a report providing an inventory of initiatives as well as recommendations to improve equal opportunities. The report focuses uniquely on gender and ethnic equity issues.

151. An analysis of the gender balance in university staff shows that women are predominantly present at junior positions and that the under representation of women among academic staff is mainly a problem for top-level positions. As universities appear to differ in the extent to which they have tackled this problem, the VLIR makes various recommendations to remedy it more structurally. The recommendations include, among other things, the establishment of centres for equal opportunities at all universities and the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies.

152. The report (p.24) acknowledges the lack of commitment of universities in promoting equality of opportunity for ethnic groups: *"The Flemish universities admit that no special efforts have been taken to tackle the under-representation of ethnic groups in the technical as well as the academic staff"* and *"Ethnic students are clearly underrepresented at universities causing society to lose 'human capital'. Universities in general and the VLIR in particular could contribute to put the democratisation of education again on the political agenda."*

153. In order to coordinate the implementation of the various recommendations, the VLIR recommends all universities to present bi-annual reports on their equity policies. The Flemish council of hogescholen (VLHORA) has also recognised the under-representation of ethnic groups amongst students and staff. Geens (2000) reports that the under-representation of immigrant students cannot be tackled on the basis of voluntary policies. Comprehensive policies are needed to train all parties concerned to function in a multicultural context. The report puts forward the 'joint declaration on non-discrimination policy' signed in 1998 urging all colleges to adopt a policy towards prevention and discouragement of all forms of discrimination.

154. At present, an ad-hoc workgroup within the Council for Higher Education of the Flemish Education Council is drafting a statement of commitment called "Diversity as value added". This statement recognises the multi-dimensionality of the equity problem and tries to establish partnerships in wider society. Next to tertiary education providers and the government, student organisations, social

partners, and representative organisations of minority groups and people living in poverty are involved in the drafting of this statement.

Table 6.1 Evolution in the number of students enrolled in basic tertiary education programmes in Flanders, by gender

	hogescholen 1 cycle (ISCED5B)			hogescholen 2 cycles (ISCED5A)			hogescholen total			University (ISCED5A)		
	men	women	total	men	women	Total	men	women	total	men	women	total
1993 – 1994	24.788	36.319	61.107	16.508	9.720	26.228	43.056	47.896	90.952	26.173	24.714	50.887
1994 – 1995	25.207	37.117	62.324	16.525	10.435	26.960	42.386	48.145	90.531	27.032	25.745	52.777
1995 – 1996	25.959	38.101	64.060	16.585	10.586	27.171	42.544	48.687	91.231	27.934	27.364	55.298
1996 – 1997	27.268	39.867	67.135	16.536	10.469	27.005	43.804	50.336	94.140	28.174	28.242	56.416
1997 – 1998	29.023	41.362	70.385	16.756	10.639	27.395	45.685	51.889	97.574	27.929	28.973	56.902
1998 – 1999	29.959	42.113	72.072	16.837	11.024	27.861	46.796	53.137	99.933	27.408	29.762	57.170
1999 – 2000 (1)	29.902	41.947	71.849	15.845	10.842	26.687	45.747	52.789	98.536	26.508	30.232	56.740
2000 – 2001	30.172	42.634	72.806	15.601	10.851	26.452	45.773	53.485	99.258	25.656	30.462	56.118
2001 – 2002	30.570	42.814	73.384	15.205	10.750	25.955	45.775	53.564	99.339	25.644	31.049	56.693
2002 – 2003	31.012	42.946	73.958	15.113	10.590	25.703	46.125	53.536	99.661	25.382	31.457	56.839

(1) A shift in counting procedure implemented to avoid double counts caused a trend breach in the data from 1999-2000 onwards. In fact the student population increased in 1999-2000.

Source: Flemish inter-university council (VLIR) and Flemish Department of Education

Table 6.2 Evolution in the number of 'generation' students (1) enrolled in tertiary education in Flanders, by gender

	hogescholen 1 cycle (ISCED5B)			hogescholen 2 cycles (ISCED5A)			Colleges total			University (ISCED5A)		
	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women	Total
1996-1997	7.547	11.767	19.314	3.609	2.486	6.095	11.156	14.253	25.409	6.834	7.294	14.128
1997-1998	8.309	12.274	20.583	3.590	2.387	5.977	11.899	14.661	26.560	6.649	7.207	13.856
1998-1999	7.940	11.686	19.626	3.582	2.613	6.195	11.522	14.299	25.821	6.194	7.301	13.495
1999-2000	8.257	12.003	20.260	3.769	2.717	6.486	12.026	14.720	26.746	5.771	7.000	12.771
2000-2001	8.524	12.068	20.592	3.596	2.578	6.174	12.120	14.646	26.766	5.598	7.004	12.602
2001-2002	8.725	12.126	20.851	3.217	2.484	5.701	11.942	14.610	26.552	5.841	7.112	12.953
2002-2003	8.548	11.705	20.253	3.069	2.305	5.374	11.617	14.010	25.627	5.623	7.178	12.801

(1) Generation student: student enrolled for the first time in the first year of a basic programme.

Source: Flemish inter-university council (VLIR) and Flemish Department of Education

Table 6.3 Evolution in the number of tertiary education graduates in Flanders, by gender

	colleges 1 cycle (ISCED5B)			colleges 2 cycles (ISCED5A) (1)			colleges total (1)			University (ISCED5A)		
	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women	Total
1996-1997	5.556	9.510	15.066	2.768	1.861	4.629	8.324	11.371	19.695	4.042	4.188	8.230
1997-1998	5.766	9.708	15.474	2.700	1.673	4.373	8.466	11.381	19.847	4.266	4.379	8.645
1998-1999	6.017	9.993	16.010	2.541	1.711	4.252	8.558	11.704	20.262	4.187	4.444	8.631
1999-2000	5.999	10.221	16.220	2.676	1.642	4.318	8.675	11.863	20.538	4.344	4.723	9.067
2000-2001	6.380	10.606	16.986	2.506	1.780	4.286	8.886	12.386	21.272	4.316	4.953	9.269
2001-2002	6.293	10.644	16.937	2.660	1.876	4.536	8.953	12.520	21.473	4.232	5.136	9.368
2002-2003	6.641	11.220	17.861	2.743	1.941	4.684	9.384	13.161	22.545	4.318	5.372	9.690

(1) In the figures for 2-cycle hogescholen and universities only graduates from the 2nd cycle are included

Source: Flemish inter-university council (VLIR) and Flemish Department of Education

Table 6.4 Access to, participation in and graduation from tertiary education, by mother's highest educational attainment, father's occupational status, gender and nationality at birth (Flanders, young people aged 18-25 year, average figures over 1992-1999)

	Early school-leavers	No access to tertiary education A	Participation rates in tertiary education B	Participation rates conditional on having access (B/100-A)	Tertiary education degree
Average	15.4	26.9	52.0	71.1	48.9
Mother's highest educational attainment					
Elementary education or less (iscsed 0,1)	29.2	49.9	25.3	50.5	25.5
Lower secondary (iscsed2)	13.2	23.4	53.6	70.0	50.1
Higher secondary (iscsed3,4)	8.4	16.4	64.9	77.6	59.5
Tertiary education (iscsed 5)	2.7	4.9	83.2	87.5	78.9
Father's occupational status					
Never worked	-	-	-	-	-
Unskilled manual worker	31.1	53.3	22.8	48.8	21.6
Skilled manual worker	23.8	41.6	35.7	61.1	30.7
Self-employed/Farmer	11.1	20.6	50.4	63.5	49.6
Lower-level service employee	7.7	15.3	65.2	77.0	63.6
Higher-level service employee or professional	3.5	6.9	80.4	86.4	75.4
Entrepreneur / large proprietor	6.5	14.2	66.6	77.6	63.7
Gender					
Male	17.0	28.5	49.7	69.5	47.4
Female	13.7	25.4	54.2	72.7	50.3
Nationality at birth					
Belgian, West-European, US	14.3	25.7	53.4	71.9	50.3
South-European, Maghreb, other	38.3	53.6	21.8	47.0	(16.9)

Source: Groenez et al. (2004) based on the Panel Study of Belgian Households (PSBH)

Table 6.5 Orientation in and graduation from tertiary education, by mother's highest educational attainment, father's occupational status and gender (Flanders, young people aged 18-25 year, average figures over 1992-1999)

	Orientation within tertiary education (expressed as proportions of total participants)				Distribution of tertiary education degrees (expressed as proportions of total degrees)			
	hogescholen		University		hogescholen		University	
	1 cycle isced5b	2 cycles isced 5a	isced 5a	isced 5a	1 cycle isced5b	2 cycles isced 5a	isced 5a	isced 5a
Average	49.7	19.3	31.0	31.0	53.9	18.4	27.7	27.7
Mother's highest educational attainment								
Elementary education or less (isced 0,1)	59.0	22.6	18.4	18.4	60.7	23.8	15.5	15.5
Lower secondary (isced2)	59.9	16.0	24.1	24.1	65.6	14.8	19.6	19.6
Higher secondary (isced3,4)	45.8	22.4	31.8	31.8	50.6	22.0	27.4	27.4
Tertiary education (isced 5)	38.4	18.7	42.9	42.9	40.5	16.2	43.3	43.3
Father's occupational status								
Never worked	-	-	-	-	90.9	5.1	4.0	4.0
Unskilled manual worker	64.2	20.7	15.1	15.1	66.7	16.8	16.5	16.5
Skilled manual worker	64.4	18.2	17.4	17.4	71.4	10.8	17.8	17.8
Self-employed/Farmer	64.4	16.3	19.3	19.3	47.4	25.4	27.2	27.2
Lower-level service employee	46.4	22.5	31.1	31.1	46.3	12.2	41.5	41.5
Higher-level service employee or professional	38.8	13.6	47.6	47.6	35.0	26.4	38.6	38.6
Entrepreneur / large proprietor	34.1	26.4	39.5	39.5	49.0	25.2	25.8	25.8
Gender								
Male	44.0	25.6	30.4	30.4	58.5	12.0	29.5	29.5
Female	54.7	13.7	31.6	31.6				

Source: Groenez et. al. 2004, based on Panel Study of Belgian Households (PSBH)

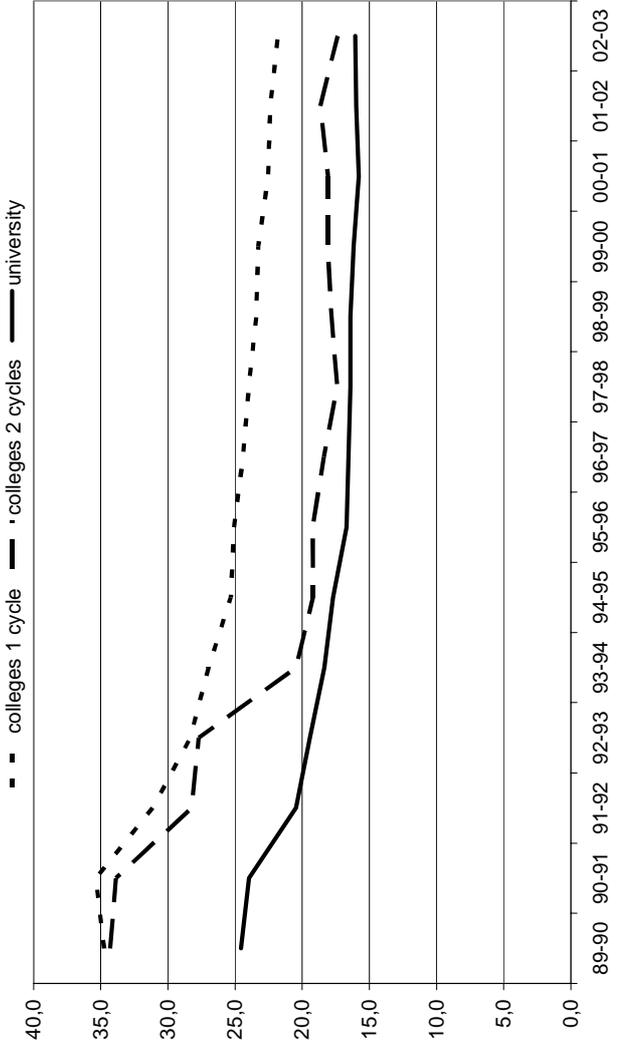
Table 6.6 Annual average private study cost in tertiary education in Flanders and evolution of these costs between 1986-1987 and 1998-1999.

Type of tertiary education	Student type	Annual direct costs		Evolution	
		1986-1987 (€)	1998-1999 (€)	Gross increase	Net increase
Hogeschole	Non campus residents	1 039	1 977	90.3%	62.8%
	Campus residents	2 129	3 503	64.5%	37.0%
University	Non campus residents	1 034	1 680	62.5%	35.0%
	Campus residents	1 982	3 355	69.3%	41.8%

1: the ratio for 2004-2005 was calculated by comparing the maximum study grant with the indexed study cost (study cost adjusted for increases in overall living standards only, or else supposing 0 net increases between 1998-1999 and 2004-2005)

Source: Bollens et al., 2000

Figure 6. 1 Evolution in the proportion of students receiving study grants, by type of education (joker grants not included)



Source: Flemish Department of Education

Table 6.7 Comparison between full grant amounts and annual average private direct study cost in tertiary education in Flanders

Type of tertiary education	Student type	Ratio full grant over average annual costs		
		1986-1987	1998-1999	2004-2005 ¹
Colleges of tertiary education	Non campus residents	144%	82%	84%
	Campus residents	96%	71%	79%
University	Non campus residents	145%	98%	99%
	Campus residents	103%	73%	83%

1: the ratio for 2004-2005 was calculated by comparing the full study grants with the indexed study costs (study costs adjusted for increases in overall living standards only)

Source: Bollens et al., 2000

CHAPTER 7: RESOURCING THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

7.1 Staff

155. The Flemish government has implemented a considerable number of legislative decisions with a view to reforming the 'educational field'. Many of these changes concern human resource matters. This is not surprising since in institutions of higher education the transfer of knowledge through education and research is, more than in any other organization, the work of "people".

156. The staffing issues with which hogescholen and universities are faced differ to a certain extent. Both types have their own (quite similar) legal framework, which they can to some extent adapt to suit their specific needs. It has to be stressed here that the new legislative structures¹⁵ - the basic decrees, including the so-called "restructuring" and "supplementary" decrees - grant higher education institutions greater autonomy with regard to developing an HR policy for their academic staff. Nevertheless, the discretionary powers of higher education institutions are still subject to the controlling power of government, and even to possible sanctions. As HR policy in tertiary education institutions is increasingly being focused on the conditions of employment of academic staff, a certain governmental guarantee with regard to their legal status and position - by means of legal rules - is considered to be a necessity by the Government.

157. The academic staff in tertiary education institutions consists of two groups, namely "assistant academic staff" and "tenured academic staff". "Assistant academic staff" (assistants and doctor-assistants¹⁶), as the terms suggest, assist the members of the "tenured academic staff" in their research and teaching activities. Assistants have the right (laid down by decree) to devote at least half of their time to their doctoral research, leading to a doctoral degree (PhD) within a period of, at the most, six years¹⁷. The position of doctor-assistant offers them the opportunity to build on their doctoral research. As the period of appointment is also limited (two periods of at the most three years), the position of doctor-assistant can be either a "stepping stone" to an academic career or a preparation for a new professional start in the non-academic world.

158. This chapter will focus on the group of "tenured academic staff". Both in universities and hogescholen (offering two-cycle programs), the career path of a member of the tenured academic staff is structured as follows: lecturer, senior lecturer, professor and full professor. Whereas in universities academic duties consist of teaching and research and, in certain cases, scientific services in the interest of society, the responsibilities at the other tertiary education institutions primarily concern (vocationally-oriented) teaching and/or practice-oriented research.

159. The scope of this contribution is limited to the group of "tenured academic staff", remunerated by means of governmental funds and subject to the rules stipulated by decree. However, where relevant, the group of "tenured academic staff" in hogescholen (two-cycle programs) will also be referred to. Recent statistics on university staff (VLIR, 2004) indicate that, because of limited "basic" government funding, the group of "tenured academic staff" has remained fairly stable over the past five years, whereas owing to the increase in 'other' funding (namely government and private funding for research) the group of externally funded academic staff has continued to rise spectacularly. From an human resource point of view, universities are trying to develop a policy that is as similar as legally possible for both groups,

¹⁵ Universities = decree of June 12, 1991 / for hogescholen = decree of July, 13 1994

¹⁶ Within the assistant academic staff, the category of so-called "practice assistants" are a separate group. They can be re-appointed again and again for renewable periods of at the most five years. Their tasks exclusively concern teaching-related activities. This category is less relevant within the framework of this contribution.

¹⁷ In exceptional circumstances or in the case of pregnancy leave or leave for medical reasons, an additional year may be granted.

although the temporary nature of some of the external funding prevents any attractive career planning for the latter group of staff.

7.1.1. Recruitment and selection

160. The various institutions have considerable autonomy in devising and implementing a recruitment and selection policy for their academic staff. The legislator has limited regulations to, on the one hand, the strict condition that applicants need to possess a doctoral degree (PhD) in order to be appointed a member of the academic staff and, on the other, some further administrative conditions, such as the provision that every decision taken by an institutional board should be extensively and comparatively motivated (being the basic principle of “good management”). The legal framework for hogescholen still remains somewhat stricter than that for universities.

161. The recruitment and selection process is strictly organised by the universities and falls within the competence of the faculties and, more specifically, the departments, where the recruitment process starts. They have to argue the need for the (additional) academic position, describe the requirements for the vacant position and organise the actual recruitment and selection process. The final decision is taken by the university’s board of governors. The role of the HR department for academic affairs, in close co-operation with the various academic bodies, is to provide HR instruments to facilitate the process of selection and recruitment and above all to monitor the process from a legal point of view.

162. Taking the University of Antwerp as a case study, some of the major changes that have been made to the recruitment and selection process over the past few years can be described. Vacancies for tenured academic staff are - where appropriate - announced nationally and internationally. Unlike the situation some years ago (especially after the Bologna Declaration), the fact that a potential candidate does not yet have a thorough knowledge of Dutch is no longer a major problem. (Since Dutch is a minority language in an expanding Europe, a major discussion on the desirability of teaching some parts of the course program in English is ongoing in the Netherlands and has started in Flanders). As a rule, any new appointment to the group of tenured academic staff used to be at the level of lecturer. Only a few exceptions, extensively documented, were allowed. This general rule still holds, although it is now more widely accepted that faculties may request a vacancy for a senior profile if the specific needs of the discipline so require. More than in the past the university is convinced that an exception to this general rule is sometimes inevitable in order to attract outstanding academic staff members.

163. When selecting university academic staff, equal attention is paid to teaching and research aspects in function of the specific profile of the vacancy and the rank within the academic staff structure which the applicant requests. In hogeschool education, in line with the duties of their academic staff, attention is primarily focused on teaching, although it should be noted that more recently, growing attention has been paid to research activities. Teaching experience is typically assessed by means of former teaching experience but also on the basis of knowledge of or experience with innovative teaching methods and materials. At the University of Antwerp (UA) a trial lesson (or public lecture) is a compulsory part of the selection process.

164. Research experience and capability are traditionally measured on the basis of the (number of) articles in international journals with peer review, books etc., science citation scores, lectures as invited speaker at scholarly conferences, ability to acquire external research funding, and so on. Of particular interest is the candidate’s research plan for the future and, where relevant, his/her envisaged co-operation with colleagues. A selection committee at the faculty level, including at least two external peers and one member of a different UA faculty, interviews the candidates and draws up a ranking of potential candidates. Their advice has to be extensively and comparatively documented. The advice is then submitted to the faculty council, which, as a rule, confirms the proposal and submits it to the university’s

board of governors, which takes the final decision. The faculty council may also refer the proposal back for further consideration.

165. It is worth mentioning that the possibility is given to universities by the legislator to hire an academic staff member for a trial period of, at the most, three years. The definitive appointment of the member of the academic staff will only be confirmed if his/her teaching and research activities during this trial period have been evaluated positively.

166. There are considerable difficulties in ensuring an adequate supply of academic staff in certain disciplines within the tertiary education system. A VRWB report (2002) (Flemish Science Policy Council) shows that there are major problems in hiring scientific / academic personnel in engineering, and to a lesser extent in bioscience engineering and the social and economic sciences. Another VRWB study (S'Jegers *et al*, 2002) has revealed that the reasons for choosing a non-academic career are manifold, but are to do with one or more of the following: the lack of long-term prospects for a research career at a university, including stability and job security¹⁸ vis-à-vis other sectors, a more dynamic work environment outside universities and, to a lesser extent, less attractive remuneration prospects.

167. Lack of long-term prospects for an academic career at university level

As has been mentioned before, the number of positions for tenured academic staff guaranteeing a long-term, stable academic position are limited and have remained stable over the past few years. Dankaert *et al* (1997) showed that only 1 in 10 post-doctoral researchers succeeded in securing an appointment as a member of the tenured academic staff, and even then it was mainly as a result of “natural” turnover (for example, retirement). Recent statistics (VLIR, 2004) on tenured academic staff at Flemish universities confirm the continuing increase in their age. Almost 48% have reached the age of 50 or over (more than 33% are aged 55 or over). This means that, even within the stabilised environment, the prospects for the next 10 to 15 years (for hogescholen 5 to 10 years) are quite good, although it should be pointed out that cross-border competition is growing.

168. The findings of the above-mentioned VRWB study (S'Jegers *et al*, 2002) are quite interesting in this context. From the answers to a questionnaire, it would appear that approximately two thirds of non-tenured researchers actively seek a position outside the academic environment, even though they have prospects within the university. However, this trend should of course be viewed in the light of the temporary and uncertain nature (dependent on the availability of external funding) of most positions available to post-doctoral researchers for quite some time to come, due to the limited number of tenured positions becoming vacant – a typical vicious circle.

169. Remuneration Prospects

The government's intervention in matters concerning remuneration has gradually decreased over the past few years (a trend which is more pronounced with regard to universities than other higher education institutions). Salary conditions for tenured academic staff are now subject to negotiation, far more so than in the past. Although salary scales are legally fixed, the starting salary of an academic staff member depends on his/her former “useful” experience and professional career and can take into account specific qualifications, and even his/her “potential”. Now that age and professional seniority are no longer the standard criteria, setting objective norms for differentiation with regard to remuneration has become of the utmost importance.

¹⁸ Due to the limited number of positions for tenured academic staff, young post-doctoral researchers often have to work as contractual researchers at the university for some time, thus in a context with less stability and limited career prospects (due to the uncertain nature of external funding).

170. Under strict (legal) conditions, a personal premium may be paid to academic staff members at universities either out of the profits generated by services to science and to the community or to reward them for their contributions to postgraduate teaching programs. Furthermore, the university's board of governors may reward members of the academic staff for exceptional performance (these funds are sometimes referred to as internal 'Nobel prizes', since universities award them extremely rarely). In the hogeschool sector, salary conditions are much stricter: a maximum of ten years of "useful" professional experience can be taken into account. Furthermore, except in the case of academic staff taking up positions of "head of ...", premiums are not applicable.

171. Once more referring to the 2002 VRWB study (S'Jegers *et al.*) on labour market prospects for post-doctoral researchers it should be stressed that higher salary expectations outside the university were not the most important reason for career and sector switches. In this respect, the trend in Flanders does not differ much from that in many other OECD countries. The attractiveness of an academic career also lies to a large extent in the relative freedom of academics to decide on the course of their own professional careers. Sabbatical leave (a maximum of 24 months over an entire career), temporary reductions in duties (stimulating academic staff to acquire experience in another university / scientific organisation or even in the private sector) and the right to return to a full-time tenured position within an 8-year period, are only some of the possibilities.

7.1.2. Career planning and promotion

172. In accordance with Flemish legislation the career path of tenured academic staff is structured as follows: "lecturer", "senior lecturer", "professor" and "full professor". Although the academic duties remain basically the same, promotion to the next level depends on experience gained, on the creativity and innovation demonstrated in the performance of both teaching and research activities and, with regard to research in particular, on international recognition. Initially, the decree with regard to Flemish universities contained strict rules concerning the promotion of academic staff, such as the required minimum seniority and the maximum number of professors and full professors which a university was allowed to employ. In the late nineties, the legislator shifted the full autonomy for the implementation of an HR policy with regard to promotion to the individual institutions. For hogeschool education, stricter government regulations still apply.

173. The first step in the promotion process for tenured academic staff consists in setting an overall budget. Depending on the internal policy in this respect, the funds are allocated at the institutional level or at the faculty/ departmental level. In the case of the University of Antwerp an institutional budget for promotion is set, which is then translated into a number of positions of senior lecturer, professor and full professor. All academic staff are invited to apply. Those who decide to do so submit information on their current teaching and research activities as well as on their services to science and to the community. The information is supplied on a standard application form, which also contains a section for self-assessment.

174. Research activities are frequently assessed by means of output indicators such as publications, active participation in conferences, international contacts which benefit the university, the ability to acquire research funding, the coaching of doctoral students, etc. In assessing teaching activities, information is gathered about teaching (credits, courses, number of students, materials used, results of assessment by students, involvement in educational reform, use of new educational technologies, etc.) Furthermore, in order to obtain an overview of the candidate's services to science and to the community, information is gathered on his/her activities as a consultant, as a member of a commission, council or board within or outside the university, etc.

175. The assessment is based on varying criteria, depending on the academic rank for which the candidate is applying. In the University of Antwerp, in order to be promoted to the rank of:

senior lecturer, the candidate must:

- have provided proof of academic research and teaching at a level commensurate with the post;
- be able to show by means of his/her prior scholarly work that he/she has the ability to excel in his/her chosen field of specialisation. He/she must also possess the ability to attract and manage research projects, and to supervise Ph.D.students;

professor, the candidate must:

- be a first-rate and productive researcher and an excellent teacher with sound didactic qualities
- be able to show that he/she possesses the ability to rank amongst the leading scholars in his/her discipline;

full professor, the candidate must, in addition to the requirements for the post of professor,

- possess an outstanding national / international reputation for his/her academic research and teaching; where relevant, he/she should have a sound track record with regard to attracting external research funding at the international level.

176. At the University of Antwerp, the actual procedure starts with the assessment and ranking of the candidates by their respective faculties. In the next phase, a commission at the institutional level (composed of representatives of the various faculties) prepares the final decision for the university's board of governors, taking into account the information submitted by the candidates (on the application form) and the advice of the faculty council. In addition, the procedure for promotion to the rank of professor or full professor also requires the assessment of the candidates' research activities by external referees.

177. The relative emphasis given to teaching, research and services to science and to the community. is theoretically defined in a 40 – 40 – 20 ratio. However, all candidates are requested to submit their own ratios and to argue why relatively more or less time and effort has been devoted to one or more of the components. There is no doubt that, for example, election to the position of “dean” for a certain period will result in less time being devoted to teaching and/or research and, consequently, in reduced output. The same system also applies in the case of part-time staff members.

178. A similar remark must also be made with regard to the period of reference relevant to the assessment. The University of Antwerp gathers information over the past five years. A prolonged absence (maternity leave, for example) or a reduction in the candidate's duties, for any reason, during this five-year period, will lead to a reduced teaching load and/or research output. It is important - in the context of equal opportunities - that, when assessing and comparing candidates, a correction factor should be applied to those with a shorter reference period in order to remove any obvious discrepancies.

7.1.3. Improving quality in teaching, research and management

179. In the changing domain of tertiary education, assessing the quality of the services that universities provide has become an overriding priority. Quality assessment in Flemish higher education is organised at different levels, i.e. at the meta-level and within individual institutions. Quality assessment is organised for each of the services offered by tertiary education institutions: teaching and (in the case of universities) research.

180. Furthermore, as has already been mentioned, although higher education institutions have been granted discretionary powers, the government retains its controlling power. Even in the recent period of greater autonomy, the Court of Audit has performed thorough and comparative “thematic” checks on the quality of institutional management on a regular basis.

181. Quality assessment with regard to teaching

In exchange for greater autonomy Flemish universities and hogescholen have implemented a system of

internal and external quality assessment. The aim is to improve the quality of study programs. The government has made the institutions themselves responsible for creating the appropriate means for doing this. The so-called “visitations” consist, firstly, of a very important self-assessment (on the basis of a detailed guide) and secondly, the visit and assessment (on the basis of interviews) by an external commission which draws up the final report. As laid down by decree, a visitation for each study program must take place at least once every 8 years. For universities, the first round was completed in 2001; a new round started in 2002 (for non-university tertiary education, a new round started in 2004). Recommendations are, generally speaking, acted upon quite well by the individual institution in question.

182. At the institutional level, the quality assessment with regard to teaching primarily concerns the evaluation of the individual courses. Improving the quality of teaching at the University of Antwerp is, as at other institutions, an ongoing process and consists of different parts.

An overall evaluation will be performed every four years. Its aims are

- the improvement of the quality of teaching activities by providing feedback to the teaching staff, so that they can implement changes to their teaching, where appropriate;
- the evaluation of the teaching performance of individual staff members, which is required for the periodic evaluation (from an HR perspective) as prescribed by decree, the results of which will be added to their files (cf. career planning and promotion)

183. The students’ assessment of teaching performance takes the form of a standardised questionnaire, to be filled in anonymously, which provides information regarding, for example, the teaching materials and methods used, the match between the content and the final objectives of the course, the teaching style, etc. Finally, the students may add general comments (such as suggestions, strengths and weaknesses of the course) by means of open questions.

184. Assessing quality by evaluating the teaching staff is one element, but actions and programs enhancing quality in teaching by investing in educational innovation and new technologies are at least as important. The ECHO¹⁹ centre (= Expertise Centre for Higher Education) of Antwerp’s Tertiary Education Association²⁰ develops and stimulates activities aimed at improving and innovating teaching in higher education. The activities that ECHO is involved in concern two major areas: educational research and the organisation of training programs for both assistant academic staff and young tenured (and tenure-track) academic staff. The central aim of these training programs is to support participants in acquiring and developing the competencies they need in order to be able to design and organise qualitatively sound courses. Enhancing quality, both at the level of their day-to-day teaching and with regard to their own professional development as teachers, is another major objective. These successful training programs have been organised every year since 2000.

185. Other important initiatives to improve the quality of teaching at the University of Antwerp are for example the establishment of “units for innovation and quality assurance in teaching” (= CIKO²¹), a group of staff members responsible for educational reform and quality assessment with regard to teaching at the faculty level (for example, in the context of obtaining accreditation), and the support for educational technology tools (e.g. Blackboard).

¹⁹ = ExpertiseCentrum Hoger Onderwijs

²⁰ = association composed of the following institutions: Universiteit Antwerpen, Karel De Grote Hogeschool, Hogeschool Antwerpen, Plantijnhogeschool, Hogere Zeevaartschool

²¹ Cel voor Innovatie en Kwaliteitszorg in het Onderwijs

186. Quality assessment with regard to research

Although the educational authorities in Flanders are greatly in favor of collective research assessments, quality assurance with regard to research is at present mainly the responsibility of the individual universities. The Department of Education has, however, recently commissioned an evaluation of the universities' research management and quality assurance processes, while the universities themselves were asked to report on their experiences with regard to the research policy management of the authorities. As laid down by decree, a systematic research assessment by each individual university, resulting in a public report, must be carried out at least once every 8 years.

From 1999 onwards, most universities have been carrying out bibliometric studies on research output on the basis of publications and its visibility in the natural and (bio)medical sciences. Recently, pilot studies have also been commissioned in some domains of the humanities and social sciences (linguistics, economics, law). Furthermore, self-assessment reports at the level of individual research teams, supplemented by data on commissioned research and output of the teams, are regularly used in internal and external peer reviews. Only one university (Free University of Brussels – VUB) is at present running a systematic research assessment program consisting of complementary bibliometric studies and on site peer review.

187. Most research (both fundamental and applied) in Flanders is carried out at universities. On the whole, funding is only awarded to research teams following a public tender process, which means that nearly all research teams are regularly evaluated when they compete for these external research funds. In this sense, all commonly used indicators measuring the quality of research performance, mainly made visible by the recognition (or non-recognition) of a researcher's merits by peers in his/her academic field (invited lectures, periods of research abroad, visits from peers, ...) are frequently used as criteria.

All of the aspects under consideration in the process of research evaluation act as a strong incentive to enhance the quality of the research activities of staff members. All universities run research administration offices which are keen to help staff members improve the quality of their research and research proposals in order to stimulate the research environment in each of the universities.

188. Quality assessment with regard to management

Assessment activities, which are becoming increasingly important, are on the whole limited to teaching and research and are far less common with regard to management competencies. Research findings in the above-mentioned VRWB report (June 2002) have demonstrated that the majority of young post-doctoral researchers lack more general management competencies - management skills, social skills and insight into budgeting and financial reporting. At the University of Antwerp, management skills are gradually becoming an evaluation criterion in the recruitment and assessment of academic staff. Although at present no training programs aimed at improving management competencies are being offered, this is certainly something to be considered in the near future.

7.2 Financing

7.2.1 Funding higher education until 2007

189. The Flemish higher education system is predominantly a public funded system. All higher education institutions (public as well as private ones) are funded on an equal footing since 1971. Since the implementation of the Bologna process the system should be regarded as a binary system: professional higher education at the 'hogescholen' and academic higher education at the universities and at the 'hogescholen' (associations). The 'hogescholen' can award academic degrees in cooperation with a university. Still the universities have the monopoly of awarding doctor's degrees.

190. The Ministry of Education and Training directly funds the HEIs. There is no intermediate independent statutory body. Although from January 1st 2006 an executive agency for the allocation of funds to the HEIs was established within the ministry alongside the department. The agency remains under the authority of the minister. It cannot be compared in scope and degree of autonomy to the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The department itself will focus on policy development and policy evaluation.

191. The public funding system distinguishes three main funding streams:

- the first flow: a core recurrent funding for teaching and research which covers costs of staff, material, equipment, buildings and social facilities of students;
- the second flow: an additional funding for basic research and a funding for basic research allocated by the research council and a funding allocated by the federal state (research networks of universities of both linguistic communities);
- the third flow: public funding for specific research programmes developed by the government, other public organisation, EU, cities and the provinces: such as for justice, social security, energy, sustainability, There are also funds for policy oriented research linked to the main policy domains.

192. The core recurrent funding to the HEIs is allocated through a system of block grants (lump sum).

Universities:

50% of the core recurrent funding to the universities was until 2001 informed by a formula based unit cost system. The main input to the formula are the universities' students enrolments, the number of doctors' degrees awarded and the number of teachers' training certificates awarded.

50% of the core recurrent funding was based on historical calculations and was regarded as a fixed amount, independent of the number of students.

193. Different subjects require different levels of resource. We have defined three broad groups of subjects (price groups) for funding. The relative cost weights are the following: 1 to 2 to 3.

A: humanities and social sciences (cost weight 1);

B: natural sciences and social medicine and the first cycle of engineering, medicine and dentistry and veterinary sciences (cost weight 2);

C: the second cycle of the engineering, medicine and dentistry and veterinary sciences (cost weight 3).

194. The core recurrent funding for infrastructure (buildings) is also based on a formula. Inputs to the formula are the numbers of students and a unit price per M². There are two price groups with relative cost weights: 1 to 4.

A: Humanities and social sciences;

B: natural sciences, social medicine, engineering, medicine, dentistry and veterinary sciences.

195. The core recurrent funding for social facilities for students is informed by a formula to which the number of students and a unit price per student is the input. No weighting is applied.

196. There is also an additional funding to the private universities to cover the extra costs of the pension scheme for their supportive staff compared to the public pension scheme (the so-called article 136 funding).

Hogescholen:

197. The public appropriations for the 'hogescholen' are allocated to the 'hogescholen'. There is a system of distribution in place informed by a formula to which the following elements are the inputs:

1. the historical fixed sum (the costs of the hogeschool in the past);
2. the number of students (five-year average in the past 1991-1995);
3. the numbers of students as a three-year average.

198. Four groups are distinguished to which the following weightings are allocated: 1.1: commercial science and business administration, 1.2: applied linguistics and one-cycle industrial science courses, 1.4: architecture, biotechnology, social work, two-cycle industrial science courses, and 1.6: product design, health care and education.

199. The share of the historical fixed sum (based on the cost in 1995) was reduced from 100% to 20% between 1996 and 2000. In 2000, 64% was distributed on the basis of three year average of the number of students and 16% on the basis of historical average number of students (1991-1995).

The ministry also allocates funding for covering the costs of building (capital subsidies for investments).

Second flow:

200. The additional funding for research is informed by a formula funding system to which the following elements are the input:

- the share of each university in the total core recurrent funding (15%);
- the number of masters' degrees awarded (20%);
- the number of doctors' degrees awarded (35%);
- the number of scientific publications and citations in the Science Citation Index Expanded (30%).

The same weightings are applied as for the core recurrent funding.

An overall budget is distributed between the universities relative to the share of each university in the four parameters.

All the other funds for research are allocated for separate research proposals submitted by individual researchers to the research councils or to the federal government.

201. The third flow of funding is allocated for research proposals submitted by the universities to the funding authorities which are responsible for the developing and the executing of the research programme.

202. The 1991 funding system of the universities was based on the assumption that the number of students has reached a maximum. The expectations at that time were rather a decreasing number than an increasing number of students at the universities. The expectations were informed by the decreasing birth rate. But in reality we have seen an increase in the number of students due to a growing participation rate. But the growth of the number of students differs from one university to another. The effect was a growing gap between the average funding per student between the universities. By the end of the nineties the gap became unacceptable. In 1998 the government made extra money available for the university funding system in order to bridge a little bit the funding gap between the universities.

In 2001 the new government launched a four year plan for strengthening the funding of the universities. Each year there was an additional budget for the universities of about 6.25 Meuro (cumulative over 4 years: 30 Meuro). The objectives were:

- to compensate the universities with a more than average growth in the number of students;
- to compensate the private universities for the increasing costs of the private pension scheme for their supportive staff;
- to compensate for an adjustment of the weighting factor of the humanities (1,2 instead of 1);
- to develop an innovation fund as an instrument to give an incentive for the innovation of teaching; the allocation of the funds was based on a covenant between a university and the minister; later on the funds were allocated after the submission and a positive evaluation of a teaching development plan.

At the same time the appropriations for each university were fixed for the years 2001-2006 irrespective of the evolution of the number of students. The advantages are:

- universities can better plan the financial perspectives for the coming years;
- the universities can implement the Bologna process without worrying about the direct financial effects.

203. Tuition fees:

Generally speaking the tuition fees are low compared to many other countries:

- maximum 100 euro for students from the lower socio-economic background (students who are eligible for a grant – about 25% of the student population);
- maximum 515 euro for the other students; there is a deduction for students whose parental income is a little bit above the eligible income limit).

The HEIs can raise tuition fees for non-EU students and for advanced master study programme in order to cover the costs of attracting specialists (these programmes are also internationally oriented).

204. Summing up:

1. There is/was no link between performance, quality and the funding; this is one of the characteristics of an input related funding system;
2. The big increase in research funding has caused an imbalance between the core recurrent funding and the second and third flow; as a consequence we see that the same imbalance emerges between tenure staff (of whom the costs are covered by the first flow) and the number of PhD students and research staff on a temporary basis. The ratio temporary staff/ tenured staff is becoming unsound and gives rise to supervision problems.
3. In a way it seems easier to make funds available for research than for teaching. One reason could be that the research funds count for 100% in order to get the 3%-norm. First flow funds count only for 25%. Another reason is that the political responsibility is split up between two ministers: one responsible for research and innovation and another one responsible for education, including higher education.
4. There are almost no incentives for the system to improve its efficiency.
5. The share of tuition fees in the financial resources of the HEIs is very small: about 4% at the universities, about 8% at the 'hogescholen'.

7.2.2 Reform of the funding model of higher education

205. The minister is working at a new funding mechanism for higher education. The new model should be in place January 1st 2008. The new model should encompass the whole higher education sector: hogescholen and the universities, the professional degree programmes and the academic degree programmes. The components of the new model will be:

- a fixed amount of about 8 to 15%, depending on the size and the profile of the institutions taking into account economies of scale;
- a variable amount for teaching depending on the number of students enrolled (converted in a number of study points – the input side) and on the number of credits and degrees awarded (the output side);
- a variable amount for research (only for the universities) depending on the number of master's degrees awarded, the number of PhD degrees awarded and the number of publications and citations (gathered from ISI database).

206. Apart from the lump sum the funding model will cover multi-annual agreements between the minister and each higher education institution setting out agreed objectives and targets and the commitment of the institution to deliver on them and the amount of funding involved.

Aims and characteristics:

- to enable the HEIs to enhance their innovative capacity,
- to enable the HEIs to increase the participation of students from ethnic minorities and under-represented social-economic groups,
- to enable the HEIs to develop more flexible learning paths and to develop opportunities which are more suitable to mature and employed students while maintaining the academic standards,
- to enable the HEIs to improve the efficiency and the overall quality of the higher education system by pooling capacity and expertise (critical mass) and by developing joint study programmes,

207. Characteristics of the model:

- transparency: the data used in the funding formula should be valid, reliable, verifiable, robust (fraud-proof),
- predictability: the model may allow the institutions to assess the financial consequences of their policy decisions,
- acceptance: differences in funding between institutions have to be justified by objective differences (mission, profile, size of the institution),
- stability: small changes in volume may not involve major shifts in funding,
- lump sum,
- containment of the administrative burden,

The funding method will apply premiums for higher weightings for:

- students from under-represented social-economic groups (low cultural capital),
- students in strategically important subjects (mathematics, science and technology),
- students in joint study programmes,

The new funding method should stimulate the institutions to support student achievement and progression and to improve academic success (in terms of completing credits and gaining a qualification), especially the achievement and success of students from more vulnerable backgrounds (low cultural capital).

Table 7.2. Income of universities 1997-2004

Income universities in euro	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
First Flow operating subsidies from the government								
Operating subsidy	465.868.780,00	479.609.518,10	489.859.915,40	501.986.866,60	518.498.700,00	529.737.006,00	550.498.810,00	562.904.008,00
Art. 136	10.473.501,42	10.570.179,90	12.444.254,94	12.585.554,25	14.015.947,90	15.485.800,00	16.858.000,00	17.856.000,00
ABOS/DGIS	3.690.663,58	4.179.068,36	3.838.660,98	2.514.884,77	3.288.101,00	3.715.741,00	3.468.407,00	3.580.001,00
Investments	15.627.207,80	16.046.643,65	16.447.735,37	21.911.308,65	21.844.400,00	22.029.240,00	22.244.883,00	19.505.468,00
Social facilities	13.366.406,46	13.748.271,56	14.035.847,88	14.187.176,96	13.844.900,00	14.001.000,00	13.797.200,00	14.584.000,00
Additional income						6.596.000,00	5.966.500,00	7.531.000,00
Special investments					1.250.000,00	1.250.000,00	5.847.871,00	1.250.000,00
Total first flow	509.026.559,30	524.153.681,60	536.626.414,60	553.185.791,23	572.742.048,00	592.814.787,00	618.681.670,00	627.210.476,00
Second flow government's participation basic research								
Flemish Com. BOF	36.261.817,70	41.332.427,70	48.527.678,55	65.282.910,96	83.768.180,00	90.291.000,00	92.983.100,00	93.430.400,00
Flemish Com. FWO	37.501.582,80	40.138.173,37	47.963.088,65	47.584.627,13	44.521.979,00	40.878.885,00	85.517.084,00	58.690.328,00
Federal State IUAP	18.314.187,69	15.700.143,03	18.194.412,98	17.049.011,03	16.283.069,00	11.707.990,00	14.245.702,00	12.719.937,00
Total second flow	92.077.588,19	97.170.744,10	114.685.180,20	129.916.549,10	144.573.228,00	142.877.875,00	192.745.886,00	164.840.665,00
Third flow – contract research government								
Flemish Com. -IWT	46.519.304,71	46.302.078,09	48.717.222,90	56.423.017,91	57.909.082,00	71.118.551,00	66.141.462,00	79.001.536,00
Fed. gov. No IUAP	36.628.372,90	31.400.263,76	36.388.820,99	34.098.019,58	32.579.207,00	33.879.804,00	31.072.515,00	38.873.949,00
International Com.	38.962.040,06	31.017.481,45	29.809.285,60	32.145.525,89	28.892.485,00	33.486.774,00	26.471.084,00	48.951.619,00
Cities and Provin.	2.070.451,34	2.224.100,70	2.458.010,56	3.177.600,84	2.348.051,00	1.823.352,00	2.351.136,00	1.772.098,00
Others	1.477.861,86	1.939.372,68	1.053.946,59	1.766.823,91	7.044.398,00	11.452.749,00	8.171.898,00	12.279.332,00
Total third flow	125.658.030,90	112.883.296,68	118.427.286,60	127.610.988,10	128.773.224,00	151.761.230,00	134.208.095,00	180.878.533,00
Fourth flow + own financial resources								
Private income	18.479.654,14	23.166.272,10	24.241.126,03	25.156.581,94	20.980.459,00	17.805.441,00	20.524.535,00	18.321.258,00
Rev. service sector	56.226.810,18	60.747.480,78	67.356.991,47	65.958.019,23	71.460.375,00	70.203.928,00	60.660.166,00	79.062.390,00
Val. research results	4.520.261,58	2.354.661,26	1.839.203,87	3.081.988,30	2.378.300,00	814.819,00	6.759.720,00	12.582.014,00
Income overhead	9.100.813,34	9.825.874,63	15.360.228,95	13.933.078,66	17.349.671,00	21.852.188,00	25.876.781,00	27.453.958,00
Donations	3.794.771,43	4.955.676,63	4.197.566,18	3.508.384,99	4.597.847,00	3.574.195,00	2.382.322,00	2.122.986,00
Post academic train.					7.942.921,00	14.280.959,00	13.301.281,00	12.925.581,00
Fees and exam fees	23.569.151,14	24.332.678,07	24.396.359,44	25.101.544,62	26.321.513,00	26.962.620,00	27.421.611,00	28.761.469,00
Real estate	13.481.860,39	13.740.311,70	15.483.627,87	12.678.477,14	7.311.170,00	19.661.766,00	6.875.151,00	19.945.349,00
Financial revenue	31.580.338,57	40.877.198,51	30.175.744,11	52.419.088,79	27.853.075,00	21.567.379,00	20.997.902,00	29.785.626,00
Various income	74.125.706,81	63.152.486,74	68.208.319,80	89.344.448,05	60.140.406,00	63.989.339,00	77.117.996,00	64.888.659,00
Total fourth flow	234.879.367,58	243.152.640,42	251.259.167,72	291.181.611,72	264.335.738,00	260.712.636,00	261.917.465,00	296.119.290,00
Total Income	961.641.545,97	977.360.362,80	1.020.998.049,12	1.101.894.940,15	1.092.424.239,00	1.148.166.527,00	1.207.553.116,00	1.269.048.964,00

Source: Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research

CHAPTER 8: PLANNING, GOVERNING AND REGULATING THE SYSTEM

8.1 The Flemish model

208. ‘The Flemish model’ tries to achieve a balance, a *modus vivendi* between tertiary education institutions on the one hand and the government on the other. The legislator establishes the general legal framework, the principles of programming (and no doubt in the future also of rationalisation), access to education and ratification of the studies, financing of the institution (operation, investments, research, social student services) and its personnel, financing in consideration of the student, the basic pattern of the (academic, financial, social) statute of the various branches.

209. The government must also see to it that the goals of academic education are accomplished. The university may not turn aside, for example, to become merely a research institute or a narrowly specialised higher technical school. One of the specific characteristics of the Flemish (European oriented) concept is precisely the refusal to make a selection between the “*researcher discipline based loyalty*” and the “*teaching, institutional loyalty*,” in accordance with the American school of thought. Or – in the same vein – a mortgage could also be placed on the academic mission by the deletion of historical, philosophical or cultural curriculum content.

210. At the same time, the institution must be able to develop its own strategic management, with a view to planning, searching for strong and weak points, leadership, vision, communication, evaluation, and personnel management. Each institution ought to profile itself, as it were, in *forum internum* and in *forum externum*.

211. This balance does not allow for rigid centralism - no detailed central steering of conduct by the government with respect to education and research. But neither may there be ‘obstinacy’ on the part of institutions. Or to employ another judicial principle: the application of the “loyalty principle” to community regulations. And above all: the tertiary education institution must – precisely because they are “*enclaves of self-management*” – give account for the investment entrusted to them by society. The Flemish legislation, with its stipulations of application, is permeated by this.

212. The Flemish universities obtain only a limited part of their global budget from private sources (very few *grants* from *alumni*, there are contracts with companies, but the most important part of research contracts is still public money. Gifts and legacies are only minimal). This counts *a fortiori* for the hogescholen.

8.2 Statutory features of higher education institutions – Public and non governmental institutions – Public function and public service

213. Universities are either State²² or *autonomous and of public law*²³ on the one hand or *independent and subsidised*²⁴ on the other hand.

Within the hogescholen sector, there are three legal types of ‘hogescholen’. One type is composed of former state hogescholen; before the Decree of 13 July 1994, all the state institutions were directly under the authority of the Minister of Education. They are now called *autonomous hogescholen*²⁵. The second

²² Universiteit Gent.

²³ Universiteit Antwerpen and Universiteit Hasselt.

²⁴ Katholieke Universiteit Brussel, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

²⁵ Hogere Zeevaartschool, Hogeschool Antwerpen, Hogeschool Gent, Hogeschool Limburg and Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen.

are the *provincial institutes*²⁶, and the third type is composed of *independent subsidised institutes*, practically all of which are run by boards belonging to a Catholic network.²⁷ The structure of the state institutions is still fixed by decree, in contrast with that of the subsidised institutions, for which only the democratic representation of the students and the staff is regulated by decree.

214. The non governmental tertiary education institutions in turn, have their own bye-laws, their own requirements of commitment to a particular ethic when recruiting staff and, in a certain measure, oversee the application of such rules themselves.

215. The Flemish Ministry subsidises and recognises establishments set up by private interests or by local authorities (provinces), and assigns grants to the organising networks which have met the necessary prior conditions as set down in law. Such grants are for equipment, to offset running costs or in support of staff salaries.

216. This guaranteed underwriting is accorded once the right to 'salary support' attains the status of a 'subjective right' that is, a right that may be requested from the courts once the statutory conditions have been met. The right to support is then acquired automatically on fulfilment of the statutory and legal requirements.

217. Complex arrangements such as these are themselves pointers to the fact that the boundaries between private and public law are becoming less distinct including the line between statutory and contractual conditions of employment. Recent jurisprudence however confirmed the civil contract basis of the personnel of non-state institutions versus the formal public servant status in state institutions. (Verstegen, 1999-2000; De Groof, 1999-2000)

218. By including non-public education within the domain of public law the argument can be made that this contributes to the common goal. They award degrees recognised in civil law, they undertake the function of what has been termed the organic public service. Non-governmental education, it is argued, acts as a functional public service. Their qualifications confer the right to exercise particular professions and the education they provide constitutes an undoubted public benefit.

219. Because of the monopoly which the tertiary education institutions hold with regard to the ratification of academic diplomas and because of the fact that the basic financing of the universities is based on government money, the Belgian constitutional court designated state and non state institutions as a "*public service*" (resp. organic or functional).

220. To the extent that the non-governmental institutions want to keep pace with the public universities, the subsidy system will also be used as a "*handy management tool*" (Craenen, 1986). It goes without saying that the explicit *equality principle* in educational affairs, in accordance with art. 24 §4 of the Constitution, further enhances a *more uniform approach* on the part of the Community, regardless of the legal nature of the institution (De Groof, 1989).

8.3 The mission of tertiary education institutions

221. Art. 4 of the 1991 Flemish Decree on Universities specifies:

²⁶ Plantijnhogeschool and Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg.

²⁷ Arteveldehogeschool, Europese Hogeschool Brussel, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Hogeschool Groep-T Leuven, Hogeschool Sint-Lukas Brussel, Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst, Karel De Grote Hogeschool, Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge-Oostende, Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen, Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven, Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg, Katholieke Hogeschool Mechelen, Katholiek Hogeschool Sint-Lieven, Katholieke Hogeschool Zuid-West-Vlaanderen and Lessius Hogeschool.

“The activities of the universities are spread, in the interest of the collectivity, simultaneously over academic education, scientific research and scientific services. They can exert all legal actions and in particular close contracts with this aim with all legal persons of private or public nature”.

222. Art. 3 of the 1994 Decree pertaining to the hogescholen in the Flemish Community:
“The activities of the hogescholen are spread, in the interest of the collectivity, simultaneously over higher education, services rendered to society and, in particular cases, over thematic applied research in the framework of co-operation with Belgian or foreign universities or third parties. In addition, development and practice of art is a part of the mission of these hogescholen that organise education in one of the following areas: audio-visual arts, painting and sculpture, music and drama”.

223. In defining the task of the university, the Flemish law-maker was seeking to ensure a certain degree of continuity, by limiting himself to compiling lists of institutions that qualify as university (Decree of 12 June 1991) or hogescholen (Decree of 13 July 1994). The attribution of the title 'university' is subject to legal protection (Decree of 12 June 1991).

224. Yet an adequate definition of 'service' is far from obvious given the multiple aspects involved. What one can say is that by including it, one emphasises the very different type of relationship between university and society that flows from its figuring as a third and integral element to both teaching and research (De Groof & Peeters, 1993-94). The final area of responsibility that falls to the university is the rendering of expert and specialist services to the community.

225. We now face a situation in which one must indeed question how far 'academic education' can in reality be distinguished from 'education at an academic level' (two cycle courses in hogescholen) and most especially so with the advent of 'professionally oriented' courses within the university.

226. The concept of *associations* between universities and hogescholen will stress more upon the specific level and profile of *programs* than of the distinctions between *institutes*.

8.4 Structures of tertiary education system

227. Two cycle hogescholen and the universities both strive to attain an 'academic level'. They can be considered as *equivalent* in many respects, in that they both have to meet similar minimum standards. Neither at universities nor at the other higher education institutions do the various courses achieve their targets in a uniform way, but this diversity is justified on the basis of equivalent academic standards.

228. The university stands, *in principle*, for the unity of education and research; at present, hogescholen *tend* towards that 'in practice'. The *division of tasks* will, in any case, remain enforceable: the doctorate degree and doctorate courses can only be organised by universities. Fundamental scientific research will remain - organically - the monopoly of the university (in the first phase) and of research units (in the second phase). For the time being, hogescholen will carry out applied scientific research (project-based and other) in collaboration with a faculty or a department. Whether academic staff members join a scientific project will then no longer depend on their status, but on their competence.

229. From both sides, the access routes and the possibilities of mutual co-operation and cross-fertilisation can be opened up more: a network, as it were, of various institutes, which are all aware of the fact that they are anchored in a joint goal of science and education (De Groof, 2000-2001). The recent legislation stimulates in a private innovative way networks of the university and hogescholen.

230. The Decree of 4 April 2003 (art. 96-113) established “*associations*”, new legal bodies as not-for-profit institutions in which at least one hogeschool and no more than one university share some responsibilities (Art. 101), for example,

- the offering of a rational supply of courses;
- the co-ordination of educational profiles, guidance, transfer opportunities, more particularly between the bachelor and master courses;
- the organisation of guidance for students;
- the co-ordination of personnel policy;
- the construction of a long-range plan for educational innovation and improvement in close connection with a common quality assurance system;
- the development of a long-range plan for scientific research and scientific and social service provision in close connection with a common quality assurance system for research;
- supervision of the link between research and teaching in the colleges of the association that offer academic education.

231. Hogescholen may not organise academic bachelor and master courses outside an association. Associations between universities and the other institutions could become vital instruments for diminishing the ‘distance’ between the institutions and students. Moreover: the distinction between universities and hogescholen will become blurred.

8.5 Autonomy in the tertiary education system

232. *Substantive* autonomy is the right of a university to determine its own study programmes and their goals. *Procedural* autonomy involves the right of a university to determine the means it shall devote to fulfil priorities agreed upon beforehand and assigned to it as part of national (governmental) policy. *Organic* autonomy recognises the right of institutions of higher education to determine their own academic organisation, whether it is to be based on faculties and departments, schools, institutes, professional areas etc...

233. The drive towards decentralisation of decision-making away from central administration down to the individual university and the gathering momentum of deregulation that accompanied it was accompanied by some significant change in institutional status. In the non-state sector, the Catholic University of Leuven and Brussels and the Free University of Brussels were guaranteed corporative status. In the state sector, the Universities of Gent, Hasselt and Antwerp were endowed with full administrative autonomy with respect to internal budget distribution, the presentation of accounts and in staffing policy.

234. The concept of ‘remote steering’ is applicable to the Flemish system which assigned the formulation of national strategy to central government whilst conferring a wide degree of latitude in determining how this strategy would be fulfilled by the individual university. Cross sector planning, between university and hogescholen was introduced by aggregating different disciplines into nine sectors. Not only was this thought to increase flexibility in subject provision, but also flexibility in meeting student demand. Both were designed to improve the employability and appropriate qualifications amongst graduates.

235. A close examination of the areas from which governments appear to be reducing their commitments suggests that these areas correspond to what may be termed ‘*process control*’. Briefly stated, process control as its name implies, concentrates on controlling the processes of higher education as opposed to the ‘product’. This is however partly true. Process control determined by the legislation, focuses on the curriculum and credit balance, the disciplinary profile, the enumeration of disciplines, in short the conditions, means and resources which are indispensable to the produce of higher education. The latter involves student output and graduation, their qualifications and certified abilities, research

projects tendered for and completed, publications, patents taken out etc. Once we distinguish between these two domains, we obtain a more nuanced interpretation of the reality of institutional autonomy.

236. Institutional self-regulation in the process domain is itself dependent on success and good performance in the area of 'product control'. The rise of *a posteriori* financing, performance monitoring and, last but not least, the flourishing quality assessment "industry" points to the fact that, greater institutional autonomy in the process domain is not always reflected by a similar latitude in the product domain. Indeed, the price to be paid for enhanced self-regulation in the process domain appears to be closer surveillance over institutional performance judged within the sphere of the product domain (Neave & van Vught, 1991; De Groof, 1995). The rise of the use of performance contracting in the university sector confirms this tendency (Houtman, 2005).

237. Functions previously under central surveillance are relocated. The rise of specialised 'agencies of public purpose' (Trow, 1996) in the fields of quality assessment, validation and recognition, accreditation, is especially noteworthy. It is a moot point whether such agencies form part of central administration for often their status emphasises formal independence from Ministry of the Flemish Community. By the same token, however, their significance as a part of bureaucratic authority functioning nation-wide cannot be denied either. It remains to be seen whether such functional agencies, despite their formal independence or their indirect ties with the Ministry, do not constitute a powerful countervailing weight to the centrifugal forces that deregulation appears to support (De Groof, Svec and Neave, 1998; De Groof, 2004).

238. The higher education legislation of the early 1990s shaped a policy based on the principles of *deregulation*, *autonomy*, and *accountability* and that this would be similar for both the universities and the hogescholen, state and non state. They determine their mission statement, have a complete personality, own their buildings, borrow funds, spend budgets to achieve their objectives, design the curricula of the fields of study, which themselves are set by the legislation, employ and dismiss staff, determine the professional career of their staff, decide about student policy. The organising body of the higher education institution is responsible for the diplomas and certificates that are automatically "recognised" by the Flemish Department of Education. There are no official diploma 'homologation' procedures any more.

239. All high education institutions received quasi identical autonomy. As was the case in the previous university legislation, several prescriptions about the proportion of the different ranks in the totality of the teaching staff still limit nevertheless the hogescholen to some extent in their personnel policy.

240. The main difference between universities and the other institutions lies in the *research*-competence linked to the monopoly of the university. The Decree of 4 April 2003 provides special resources for *project*-oriented research and for the 'academisation' of the hogescholen. But hogescholen have to co-operate with universities (of the association) for the organisation of their *project*-based scientific research. A commission, composed of three university professors, has to assess the research work of a candidate for a full professorship at the hogescholen.

- Staff

241. The largest single heading in the university budget are personnel costs. Within the sphere of staff policy - over and above the issue of salaries, pension rights and social security - a division of responsibility between national administration and institutional management, is to be found. The career structure, conditions of appointment, assessment procedures, the salary structure within each rank, are laid down at the national level, as too are sickness benefits, vacation allowances etc.. Yet freedom for an institution to appoint its staff is crucial, but the principles of good administration should be respected (De Groof, 1995).

- Teaching and Research

242. Though there are notable exceptions, the subjects offered by universities are often confined to the areas of study for which they have obtained validation, recognition or accreditation from government (or the competent agencies, as mentioned before) and that the corresponding diplomas to which such courses lead, are likewise recognised. Furthermore, such validation also ties in with legislation on the financing both of institutions and of particular courses. The State did not set down norms for estimating the numbers of students to be accepted and even the numbers themselves as a condition for granting public funding (except the rationalisation norms). Institutions are not free to offer courses that are not mentioned in the *Register*, except in the 'post-academic' program sector. (Het hogeronderwijsregister – www.hogeronderwijsregister.be)

243. Amongst the normative regulations laid down by central authority and which surround teaching are length of study time, the number of credits, course points required, conditions governing transfer between courses and registration procedures, course programmes etc.. In addition, each university lays down its own regulations for courses and examinations, determines the teaching programme, timetable, the method of assessment and criteria for evaluating individual student performance.

- Management of administration and finance

244. Despite the noise and clamour that have accompanied the introduction of the idea of 'market-driven' higher education and despite outstanding examples of research units attracting funding and support from the private sector, for the greater part reliance on public funding remains the rule. Income from student registration fees, investments, gifts and legacies as a percentage of total yearly expenditure, tends to be meagre indeed. Moreover, the Flemish Community does not permit registration fees to exceed what is set down by law, primarily to avoid the accusation of sacrificing the talented but less well-off and infringing thereby the basic principles of equity and merit.

245. One of the prime concerns of national framework legislation as it applies to higher education, is to seek to strike a balance between budgetary continuity for the institution as a whole as against its intellectual freedom *vis à vis* the State as prime paymaster.

246. No public funding authority will base higher education finance on the issuing of blank cheques. Universities are answerable for their funding and the governing council must show without peradventure that the institution falls fully in with the public standards and requirements of financial rectitude. Furthermore, the government insists on an internal audit, just as the institution has itself to show how quality control bears out its own policy and priorities. In the case of the institution's own assets and its own income the principle of freedom to follow its own priorities should hold valid. However, legislation regulates the use of an institution's self-generated funds, often on the grounds first, that such funds are used to top out basic running costs and second, because the prime source of an institution's internal funds is the state budget.

247. Since the budgetary cycle is annual, so is the presenting of accounts. However regulation applies a multi-annual planning cycle (this applies also to investment and research policy) and requires therefore that institutions present budgetary headings and line items according to a similar format.

8.6 The changing place of government

248. Each higher education institution has to publish an annual report and annual accounts according to the prescriptions of the legislation. This annual report is public and is sent to the Flemish Parliament. It reviews the overall education and research activities, investments in infrastructure, social services for students, internationalisation, the results of the visitations within the external quality assurance system, and the actions taken to correct the defects, and even on the resources. Moreover, each institution has to submit one-year and five-year budgets and a report on the staffing to the Flemish government for approval.

249. Institutions are also supervised by a government commissioner whose mission is to control if the institutions comply with the principles of good administration and the overall legislation, including as regards financial management and whether the budget is balanced. They also check whether the accounts and the financial reports are in conformity with the legal regulations. Institutions can be sanctioned if they break the law or if they do not maintain a healthy financial balance. The commissioners are also considered as the privileged advisors of both institutions and the Minister of education (De Groof, 2003a).

250. The institutions are individually responsible for their own internal and external quality assurance system (De Groof, 2003b). External quality assurance is organised within the framework of the VLHORA and VLIR.

251. Starting in the academic year 2004-2005, the institutes will not have the right to offer courses that are not included in the *National Register of Higher Education* (Decree of 4 April, 2003). Apart from some exceptions, new bachelor courses may only be offered in 2006-2007. Decisions about the content of this register are taken by the government on the advice of the *Recognition Commission*, which has to assess whether a course fits principles of efficiency in the total higher education supply: the relation of the course with the existing supply, the number of students in the same or related courses, the expected demand for graduates in this or related courses, the social relevance of the course (Decree of April 4, 2003).

252. The register will be maintained by the *Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation* (The Hague, the Netherlands) (De Groof, 2004). Only accredited courses will be supported by state subsidies.

253. As to the management of personnel, the institution administration must state every year the global formation of the personnel paid by the Flemish Community, which provides the money for the wages. Personnel administration is carried out by the institutions (especially by universities) themselves. They are in charge of compulsory and periodical assessment of the full staff. The management of some hogescholen personnel is now, due to the recent legislation, subject to the great change, of which the consequences are as yet extremely hard to calculate. As the scaling-up operation proceeds, these institutions will become increasingly able to conduct a real policy towards their personnel (in the hogescholen sector). Owing to the new legislation, these administrations now have the possibility of creating new career opportunities, better or extra remuneration and so on for their staff. Quality of personnel has replaced to a large extent the former standard for wage raises, which was seniority. Institutions however, seem to be reluctant in the implementation of this 'autonomy'.

8.7 Institutional structures

254. Across the Flemish landscape a whole host of different arrangements for organising higher education are to be found. To a large extent, structuring the institution lies in the autonomous competence of the institution itself, within the limits of the education and research domain the institution is competent for according to the detailed positive legislation. The traditional pattern organised around the professorial Chair has moved on and the institution is organised into *departments*, more closely reflecting the

definition and alignment around academic disciplines. A variation builds less around broadly defined disciplines but rather around specialist sub-sets within disciplines - the *Vakgroepen*.

255. The fragmentation of academic disciplines into *smaller teaching and research units* - or even their recombination grouped around '*Schools of Study*', found in the innovating Transnational University Limburg, is perhaps the most deeply-laid and unavoidable development in today's academic institutions. It is a dynamic not easily controlled by administration, be it institutional or national.

256. The *faculty* however, in many respects, is the crossing point where one type of authority deriving from repute, excellence and the personal influence of the academic in his speciality meets the authority that derives from the law, from government and the formal responsibilities that both have defined as falling to institutional administration and leadership. The faculty is responsible for the co-ordination and organisation of degree programmes, the upkeep of quality, academic staffing and, to a certain extent, the allocation of resources. In contrast to the shifting intellectual boundaries that characterise academic organisation below the faculty level, the latter tend to cleave to the classical divisions in the structure of knowledge. The faculties of law, psychology, politics, history, languages, medicine, engineering to mention but a few, retain both an administrative and an historical continuity, despite the intellectual dynamism that continues to alter their content.

257. Yet even the faculty model shows variation. Thus it is that certain higher education systems split their universities into three conglomerates - human sciences, exact sciences and the medical and biological sciences. Others will opt for a rather different profile, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering and the medical sciences. For many, the essential generic feature of the tertiary education institution is the presence within a single establishment of several but not necessary all faculties.

258. In fact there is a lot of similarity between the governance structure of the autonomous hogescholen and the universities under the special decree (Decree of 19 March 2004). The governing bodies of an Autonomous Hogeschool are the director, the Governing Board, the Executive Board and the Departmental Boards. There is a clear analogy between the competence of the Autonomous Hogeschool Governing Board and Executive Board with that of the Universities of the Special Decree on the University of Ghent and the University Centre Antwerp. The general administration is the task of the general director.

259. All hogescholen are divided in departments, similar to the universities' faculties. Each department has a Departmental Board of which the Department chairman (departementshoofd) is the chairman. In contrast with the Faculty Boards the Departmental Board have also representatives from the social-economic field.

8.8 Participation and institutional governance

260. Promoting the public interest also requires that the government organise systematically the means of consulting the universities, building, where possible, consensus around the mission of the university in general and that of individual establishments. Such a consultative mechanism may reside in the rectors' conference, an inter institution council (VLIR and VLHORA) or be seated in other consultative committees (VLOR). The legal basis of this mechanism is contained in positive law, and such is also the case for participation at institution level, though the right to participation is enforced *vis à vis* the competent authorities on grounds of its being a moral right vested in the consumer of education.

261. There is, in the tertiary education sector, a certain tradition of users and 'clients' being involved in the conduct of administration and management issues. The participatory impulse of the 1970s was also in Belgium considered to be a powerful means of 'democratising' higher education and, as time passed and

managerialism became in vogue, it was also subsequently held to be conducive to the efficient functioning and transparency in administration.

262. Within the limits permitted by legal enactment, that institutions enjoy self-regulation is offset by the governing council seeking the advice and views of professionals, by its' drawing on the expertise within its ranks and by giving ear to members of the academic community. Yet there is a view that has gained ground which argues that the 'social goal' of the institution corporation calls for the involvement of the main constituencies. Education being one of the university's basic tasks, those affected by administrative decisions ought to be able to have their views made known to the appropriate decision-making body and to extend, where appropriate, discussion to others in the academic community.

263. The representation of interests may, of course, take many forms right up to and including joint management and co-responsibility. But the moment that students take part in the deliberations of faculty, department or governing council as is the case in the Flemish system, they have gone beyond the role of interest group and assume a part of the overall responsibility for the institution since they have, at that point, become part of the common weal.

264. As one looks at participation systems generally, several tendencies stand out. The first revolves around the Flemish Decree of 2004 opted undoubtedly in favour for authentic and genuine participation on a given organ of university government: senate, general council, university council. A sub variation on this model involves participation in advisory groups the conclusions of which are passed upwards and on to the point where the decision is reached.

265. Apart from the academic staff, the non-academic staff, the students and some representatives of social-economic groups outside the institution, participate in the governance. All groups are appointed by election, apart from the last mentioned category. There are no professional managers fully participating in the decision making of the governing bodies. The administrators, who do not necessarily belong to the academic staff, will merely attend the meetings of the Executive Board, having an advisory function only.

266. At university level the rector has the general direction of the university. He can be the chairman of both the Governing Board and of the Executive Board, although this is only the case in the Ghent University. The vice-rector assists the rector in the fulfilment of his task and can replace the rector in case of absence. He acts as the vice-chairman of the Governing Board, who can assign him additional tasks.

CHAPTER 9: ASSURING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

267. De Wit and Verhoeven (2004) state that with the constitutional reform of 1988 a shift took place in the normative conception of the government regarding higher education. They argue that the Flemish government's normative background developed into a more homogenous neo-liberal value system (a 'market-state' model). Within this market-state rhetoric, the quality of higher education is a central issue for the Flemish government.

268. The Decree on Universities of 1991 introduced the legal basis and obligation for the Flemish universities to organise an internal and external quality assurance system, a decree of 1994 did the same for the hogescholen. In the future bachelor's and master's degrees will only be lawful if the programmes of study concerned have been accredited. An accreditation body will give a mark of quality to a programme of study; this is a formal recognition of the basic quality of the programme concerned by an independent and expert authority.

269. This mark of quality guarantees that the students can rely on an accredited programme providing them with the knowledge, insights, skills and qualifications which are related to an internationally recognised bachelor's or master's degree. For employers, this mark of quality is also a guarantee that the programme concerned meets the international standards and that the graduates of this programme have acquired the knowledge, insights and skills which were laid down by the university and hogeschool as the objectives and attainment targets of the programme.

270. This newly developed accreditation system will be put in place in the next few years in the framework of the new legislation (decree of 4 April 2003, introducing the bachelor-master structure in the Flemish Community). This system builds on the quality assurance schemes already in place.

9.1 The Quality Assurance System

271. With the introduction of this quality assurance system in university education, the Flemish government took in 1991 an important step towards greater autonomy for the institutions. In exchange for a greater degree of independence, the universities – and subsequently also the hogescholen – introduced a system of internal and external quality assurance. On the one hand, this quality assurance system focuses strongly on the perspective of improvement (giving priority to improving the quality of the courses); while on the other hand, it also fulfils an important function of accountability. The Flemish government places the responsibility for and the ownership of the quality assurance system entirely with the institutions, whilst the external reviews are co-ordinated by two umbrella organisations: the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) and/or the Flemish Council for Higher Non-University Education (VLHORA).

272. Programmes leading to first and second cycle diplomas²⁸ – and not institutions - are assessed on an inter-university or inter-hogescholen basis. This means that in most cases the individual disciplines are the object of one external quality assessment. But in some cases disciplines that have many similarities are grouped in one assessment (in these cases the assessment is co-ordinated both by VLIR and by VLHORA).

273. VLIR and VLHORA visitations are assessments of the programmes by an independent panel of 'peers'. The institutions, through VLIR or VLHORA, decide on the composition of the panels, but certain

²⁸ Initially, 'third cycle' programmes were not included in the visitation scheme, but this will change in the near future (with the introduction of the accreditation system).

general rules apply²⁹. The basis of the evaluation is the self-assessment report, which each individual programme has to compile from a detailed questionnaire provided by the VLIR of VLHORA. During a site visit of several days, the panel critically reviews the programme by questioning the self-assessment report, analysing relevant documentation, and interviewing all relevant actors and stakeholders. The findings of the panel are then published in a visitation report. The universities and hogescholen have then to follow up the visitation and they have to report on the decisions and action taken to improve the programmes.

274. This assessment is carried out every eight years, but for the universities the first round was carried out over a total period of ten years. Between 1991 and 2001, all university programmes – except the post-initial ones – were reviewed in this system of visitations.

275. Several evaluations have been made of the quality assurance system of the Flemish universities. For instance in 1997 an Audit Commission was set up by the then Flemish minister of Education and the Civil Service. The Report of the Audit Commission on Quality Assurance in Academic Education in Flanders was published in 1998. On the basis of these evaluations and on subsequent discussions, VLIR changes the visitations systems and its protocol for the start of the “second round” which began in 2002. The main changes in the system were:

- the use of quantified quality judgements: each of the 17 quality aspects and indicators are now judged on a scale from ‘A’ to ‘E’; comparative tables are included in the report with the scores of the programmes under review on each of the indicators;
- the ‘research base’ on which the programmes under review rest is included as one of the quality aspects and indicators;
- the explicit formulation of a frame of reference by the expert panels and its presentation to the programmes that will be assessed.

276. After a transition period, the hogescholen started with the first assessments in 2001. The first round of visitations has to be completed by 2008. VLHORA has elaborated a protocol with a list of quality aspects and indicators, checklists, guidelines for the design of the self-assessment report and procedure, rules for the work of the expert panels, timetables, etc.

9.2 The accreditation system

277. With the introduction of an accreditation system, the Flemish government aims to extend the existing system of quality assurance and strengthen it. Therefore, the accreditation system in Flanders is designed as a system 'on top of' the existing quality assurance schemes which were seen as functioning well and of high quality. On the other hand, accreditation is also seen as an answer to tackle some of the shortcomings of the existing quality assurance schemes, namely their lack of clear conclusions and their limited capacity to make the higher education system more transparent.

278. Accreditation is also introduced to implement the Bologna Declaration. Although it was not mentioned explicitly in the Bologna Declaration, Flemish higher education leaders, from the outset, saw it as a necessary instrument to achieve the ambitions of 'Bologna'.

279. The main characteristics of the new accreditation system in Flanders will be that:

²⁹ In the near future, an independent commission (de Erkenningcommissie) will have to approve the composition of the panel of ‘peers’, this in order to guarantee the independence of this panel.

- All programmes³⁰ in the new bachelor-master degree system will have to be accredited in order to ensure their basic quality for the students, stakeholders and society.
- Accreditation will follow the bachelor-master degree system. This implies that the binary divide in programmes, which is maintained in the Flemish degree system at bachelor level³¹, will lead to different accreditation standards and criteria.
- Accreditation will be given to programmes if there are sufficient guarantees that they meet the basic standards and criteria.
- Accreditation will be given on the basis of the results of existing quality assurance schemes, co-ordinated by VLIR and VLHORA. Visitation panels will have to comply with the accreditation frameworks.
- Accreditation will have 'external effects on the public recognition of the programme and its degree. Public institutions cannot offer a non-accredited programme.
- New programmes will have to submit themselves to a specific kind of *ex ante* accreditation procedure, organised by the accreditation organisation.

280. The quality assurance system remains in the hands of the institutions, which implies – as mentioned before - that the VLIR and the VLHORA co-ordinate the external reviews. This co-ordination certainly concerns the development and establishment of a protocol of quality assurance, which will have to be used by the panels of 'peers'.

281. The final decision on the quality of a programme is made by the accreditation body, independently of both the institutions and the government. This accreditation body will not resume the reviews, but will not leave the final judgement of quality to the peers who carried out the reviews either. The review committee must demonstrate in its report, with reference to the self-assessment report of the institution providing the programme, that the programme complies with the requirements imposed for standards for a professionally- or academically-oriented bachelor's or master's programme³². It also gives an assessment for every aspect of quality.

282. In a sense, accreditation can be regarded as a form of meta-evaluation of the existing quality assuring system. The accreditation body verifies the review results, and the decision of the accreditation is based on the assessment for each aspect of quality given in the review report.

283. The process leading to accreditation has the following components:

- An institution asks a quality assessment agency (VLIR, VLHORA or another) to carry out a review and a visitation according to its protocols, which meet the requirements of the accreditation agency.
- Programmes carry out a self-assessment and produce the self-assessment report that will be transmitted to the review panel.
- The actual external review and site visit take place.
- At least six months before the previous accreditation for a programme comes to an end, the institution submits a request for a new accreditation that includes its self-assessment report and a recent (not more than one year) external quality assessment report.

³⁰ Accreditation will also cover post-initial programmes, but not the professionally oriented programmes and continuing education courses offered by universities and hogescholen

³¹ In contrast with the Netherlands, in the Flemish bachelor-master degree system, there are no professional master programmes and degrees. All masters will be academic. The binary divide is therefore limited to the bachelor degree level. Hogescholen will be able to award master degrees on condition that they integrate themselves with universities via the 'associations'.

³² These minimum requirements for bachelor (professional and academic) and master programmes are described in the decree of 4 April 2003.

- The accreditation organisation examines the report and takes a decision within three months following the request. Before the decision is formally confirmed it is presented to the institution, which has two weeks to react.
- The accreditation organisation publishes its decision.
- Accredited programmes will be listed in the higher education register.

284. In total, the process will take about a year and a half. In the Flemish higher education law, accreditation is granted to a programme for a period of eight years. Institutions have the legal right to object to accreditation decisions in court.

285. A strongly independent and expert accreditation body is a prerequisite for a properly functioning accreditation system. Therefore, for many obvious reasons, Flanders is co-operating with the Netherlands for the setting up of an accreditation body. The Dutch-Flemish partnership is regulated in the convention of 3 September 2003.

286. This convention contains regulations on matters for which the Dutch and Flemish governments have joint responsibility: the appointment of the members of the accreditation body³³, the approval of the protocols and of the evaluation framework, the joint supervision of the accreditation body's operation and its funding. The convention contains also provisions on the involvement of Flemish universities and hogescholen and of Flemish students and employers, in the same way that Dutch universities and hogescholen, students and employers are involved by law in the Dutch accreditation body. Both governments can give the accreditation body extra tasks on the basis of a national perspective. The accreditation body is not only responsible for the accreditation of existing bachelor's and master's programmes. It is also responsible for the evaluation of new programmes.

9.3 Assessment of research quality³⁴

287. The accreditation system will only address programmes and will thus cover only the educational functions of universities and hogescholen. However, since both VLIR and VLHORA visitation schemes address the other functions of institutions in their impact on teaching and learning processes, there is indirect reference to other functions in the definition of quality. It is clear that the scientific and research base will be an important criterion for accreditation in academic bachelor degree programmes and master programmes.

9.4 The Flemish Government

288. Despite (1) the fact that the quality assurance system is in the hands of the institutions and (2) the installation of an independent accreditation agency (NVAO), the Flemish government continues to have a great deal of responsibility for the quality of higher education as a whole. According to De Wit and Verhoeven (2004) the model of the 'market state' or the 'evaluative state' is only realised partially in Flanders. They conclude that 'the government is still interventionist when it comes to key policy issues'.

³³ the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation or 'De Nederlands-Vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie' (NVAO)

³⁴ Strictly speaking, visitation schemes only address the educational programmes of the Flemish universities. However, reality is more complex. The 'research base' of programmes became a separate quality aspect. Data concerning the research output of staff involved in programmes, the quantity of staff members involved with research or with a doctorate, for example, are now integrated in the quality indicators assessed in a visitation.

289. The Flemish government also acts as a court of appeal in case of negative decisions of accreditation. Every institution in higher education and any other party concerned can start an appeal to the Flemish government against a negative decision on accreditation taken by the NVAO. The Flemish government assesses the contested decision against the regulations in the Decree on the structure of higher education and the accreditation rules. The government can nullify decisions that are clearly in disagreement with these regulations and rules. When the Flemish government nullifies a negative decision on accreditation, the accreditation body will debate again on the accreditation request, taking into account the motives which formed the foundation of the nullification. When the decision on accreditation about a study programme is negative, the study programme can in certain circumstances, according to the law, benefit from a temporary recognition.

9.5 VLIR and VLHORA

290. The Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) is legally responsible for organising and monitoring the quality assurance scheme for the universities. VLIR was established by law in 1976, but is a private body run by the universities. It has the legal capacity to advise public policies and to promote co-operation between universities. Quality assurance is one of its main tasks. It designs the system, develops and updates the protocols and guidelines, appoints the expert panels, receives the reports of the panels, publishes them, etc.

291. The equivalent council for the hogescholen, VLHORA, was established by law in 1998 and has the same legal capacity for the hogescholen. The funding of VLIR and VLHORA consists of a fixed percentage of what universities and hogescholen receive as basic funding from the state.

9.6 Institutions

292. The institutions – hogescholen and universities- are each responsible for the quality of their programmes and have the legal obligation to engage in internal quality assurance mechanisms and to participate in external quality assessments. They are also collectively responsible, since they own the system jointly and have to collaborate in VLIR or VLHORA. The institutions are also responsible for the follow-up to a visitation report.

9.7 NVAO

293. In the Netherlands, the tasks of NVAO are based on the Higher Education and Research Act (Wet Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek, WHW) which, in short, comes down to: accrediting existing study programmes, validating new study programmes in higher education and advising on the possible lengthening of master's degree courses in university education.

294. In Flanders, the operation of NVAO is established by the Decree on Higher Education of 4th April 2003. This decree provides for an international treaty (3 September 2003) that appoints the body that grants accreditation and carries out the validations of all new study programmes in higher education in Flanders.

295. The agency will have four major tasks: (i) accreditation of existing bachelor-master programmes; (ii) *ex ante* evaluation of new programmes to check whether they meet the basic quality standards; (iii) assessment, on demand of the institution, of specific quality aspects of the programme; and (iv) the promotion of the European and international dimension in Dutch-Flemish accreditation and the development of international contacts in order to achieve co-ordination and collaboration.

296. The accreditation organisation is financed by the Netherlands and by Flanders (60% by the Netherlands and 40% by Flanders). Institutions will have to pay for an accreditation, in addition to the cost of a visitation. In Flanders, institutions have to pay 500 euro per accreditation and 5000 euro for ‘de toets nieuwe opleidingen’ (a check on new study programmes).

9.8 Student involvement

297. Students play an active role in the management and quality monitoring of study programmes, although their participation in internal quality assurance processes is sometimes problematic. In most universities and hogescholen, students are represented in the committees that are responsible for programmes and their quality assurance. They are included in the panels that have been set up by faculties and departments for self-assessment. During the visitation process, the panel talks with students and graduates. Although this is not systematic, most self-assessments include a survey of graduates, which focuses on their employment and their critical feedback. Student representatives generally invite programme directors and programme committees to take the findings of visitation reports into account. Students asked for the inclusion of a student in each programme review team. This demand has been met in the new Flemish higher education decree of 2003.

9.9 Involvement of social partners

298. Some self-assessment reports, especially in disciplines that are closely linked to the labour market and professional associations, pay attention to the opinions of socio-economic stakeholders. When this is the case, employers can express their criticisms, demands and expectations regarding the study programmes and their graduates. Trade unions are rarely involved.

9.10 International comparability

299. From the start of the quality assurance system international co-operation has been taken seriously. For instance a foreign expert was included in the teams for the site visits - in most cases due to the language a Dutchman. In a few cases there were joint Dutch-Flemish site visits. Co-operation with the Netherlands started from the design of the accreditation system onwards. This led to two comparable accreditation systems and one mutual accreditation body (NVAO). Further steps towards internationalisation is one of the tasks of the accreditation body.

300. The Dutch-Flemish co-operation will be the core which could lead to a larger European consortium. Flanders and the Netherlands launched the ‘Joint Quality Initiative’ within the Bologna process to promote international co-operation in quality assurance and accreditation, which was soon followed by several other countries. One of the main realisations of the JQI were the ‘Dublin descriptors’ for bachelors and masters. The minimum requirements for bachelor’s and master’s programmes – as specified in the decree of 4 April 2003 – are based on these Dublin descriptors.

301. Flanders and the Netherlands – by the NVAO - played also an important role in the creation of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA). At this moment, 12 accreditation organisations from 8 different countries (Norway, Spain, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Flanders and the Netherlands) are members of this consortium. The aim is to recognise each others accreditation decisions before the end of 2007. This is important for the transparency and recognisability of European higher education. The eight countries have started to list the differences and similarities between the different accreditation systems. The Consortium was officially established in November 2003 in Cordoba.

302. The accreditation body can give an accreditation based on a foreign accreditation which is acknowledged as equivalent. The accreditation body investigates whether the accreditations have been given according to a methodological approach similar to their own accreditation system.

CHAPTER 10: INTERNATIONALISATION AND GLOBALISATION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

303. A comprehensive policy on internationalisation and globalisation does not exist in Flemish tertiary education. Documents draw attention to a growing trend of internationalisation in higher education, but clear objectives for internationalisation are not mentioned. A hearing in the Flemish parliament in February 2003 on internationalisation and globalisation in the context of the parliamentary discussions on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders provided more information on how internationalisation and globalisation is perceived in Flanders.

304. It is clear from that parliamentary hearing that internationalisation and globalisation are seen as two different concepts. Internationalisation in higher education is for the institutions in higher education not a new phenomenon. Mobility of students and staff has always been a feature of academic life and research activities are characterised by a strong international dimension. Historically Flemish universities have also played an important role in supporting developing countries.

305. According to professor D. Van Damme, during this hearing, real internationalisation goes beyond student exchange and bilateral agreements. For him internationalisation is about the way institutions systematically integrate the international dimension in their mission, core business and activities. From this vision mobility is an instrument to achieve a specific goal, rather than a goal on its own. Van Damme also emphasised that Flemish universities and hogescholen do not want to exploit internationalisation for making profit, for instance to compensate a drop in government subsidies. Nor are Flemish institutions, unlike some larger European countries, using internationalisation and globalisation for strategic political purposes.

306. Without focussing on a specific target in terms of mobility the Flemish government tries to facilitate internationalisation for students, staff and institutions via its legislation in higher education. Coinciding with this practice is a major change in the concept of internationalisation, namely from a focus on the individual, via a focus on the institutions as a whole to the 'system level', i.e. the formal structures of higher education. This area has been the main focus of the Flemish government.

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10.1 Internationalisation at individual level

10.1.1 International mobility of foreign students into Flanders

307. The number of foreign students in Flemish higher education is increasing slightly. During the academic year 2003-2004 8161 students with a foreign nationality enrolled in higher education institutions. See tables 10.1 and 10.2. Tables 10.3 and 10.4 give an overview of the number of foreign students per study field for the universities. For information on the hogescholen see tables 7.5 and 7.6

Table 10.1: Total number of foreign students in Flemish universities (undergraduate, postgraduate, initial teacher training and PhD students)

Academic year	Total number of students	Total number of Belgian students	Total number of students with foreign nationality	% of students with foreign nationality
1993-1994	60136	55949	4187	6.96%
1994-1995	61545	57345	4200	6.82%
1995-1996	63563	58889	4674	7.35%
1996-1997	64587	59899	4688	7.25%
1997-1998	65057	60586	4471	6.87%
1998-1999	65393	61054	4339	6.63%
1999-2000	65820	61392	4428	6.72%
2000-2001	65615	61277	4338	6.61%
2001-2002	67096	62545	4551	6.78%
2002-2003	68643	63651	4992	7.27%
2003-2004	69406	63868	5538	7.97%

Source: Data from 1993-1994 to 1998-1999: Flemish Inter university Council (VLIR)
Data from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004: Department of Education, DTO

Table 10.2: Total number of foreign students in Flemish ‘hogescholen’ (undergraduate and initial teacher training)

Academic year	Total numbers of students	Total number of Belgian students	Total number of students with foreign nationality	% of students with foreign nationality
1993-1994	90651	88636	2015	2.22%
1994-1995	90155	88173	1982	2.20%
1995-1996	91046	89174	1872	2.06%
1996-1997	93976	92115	1861	1.98%
1997-1998	97574	95767	1807	1.85%
1998-1999	99933	98122	1811	1.81%
1999-2000	98536	96703	1833	1.86%
2000-2001	99258	97423	1835	1.85%
2001-2002	99339	97397	1942	1.95%
2002-2003	99661	97413	2248	2.26%
2003-2004	100178	97555	2623	2.62%

Source: Department of Education, from 1999-2000 DTO

Table 10.3: Proportion Belgian students – foreign students per study field in academic basic programmes at Flemish universities – 2003/2004 and 2004/2005

Universities / academic basic programmes						
Study fields	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians
Philosophy and Ethical Sciences	971	115	10,59%	912	119	11,54%
Theology, Religious Studies and Canon Law	234	133	36,24%	245	117	32,32%
Language and Literature	2975	64	2,11%	3130	78	2,43%
History	2099	28	1,32%	2119	31	1,44%
Archaeology and Art Sciences	1159	39	3,26%	1146	41	3,45%
Law, Notary and Criminology	8110	140	1,70%	8130	156	1,88%
Psychology and Educational Sciences	6390	113	1,74%	6486	124	1,88%
Economic Sciences and Applied Economic Sciences	6259	187	2,90%	6198	176	2,76%
Political and Social Sciences	4796	107	2,18%	4665	126	2,63%
Social Health Sciences	875	7	0,79%	758	9	1,17%
Physical Education, Motoric Revalidation and Physiotherapy	2260	35	1,53%	2272	47	2,03%
Science	4117	237	5,44%	3943	121	2,98%
Applied Sciences	3873	59	1,50%	4090	79	1,89%
Applied Biological Sciences	2005	10	0,50%	1894	19	0,99%
Medicine	3400	339	9,07%	3523	299	7,82%
Dentistry	262	53	16,83%	295	49	14,24%
Veterinary Sciences	1145	388	25,31%	1146	398	25,78%
Pharmaceutical Sciences	1225	29	2,31%	1355	38	2,73%
Biomedical Sciences				1474	89	5,69%
Transport Science				54	1	1,82%
Combined study fields	2412	189	7,27%	990	63	5,98%
Total	54567	2272	4,00%	54824	2180	3,82%

Source: DTO Department of Education
(Students of teacher training programmes are not included)

Table 10.4: Proportion Belgian students – foreign students per study field in postgraduate programmes at Flemish universities – 2003/2004 and 2004/2005

Universities / postgraduate programmes (complementary and advanced education)						
Study fields	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians
Philosophy and Ethical Sciences	23	66	74,16%	13	83	86,46%
Theology, Religious Studies and Canon Law	3	1	25,00%	36	28	43,75%
Language and Literature	200	15	6,98%	153	21	12,07%
History	50		0,00%	39	3	7,14%
Archaeology and Art Sciences	38	6	13,64%	43	1	2,27%
Law, Notary and Criminology	631	188	22,95%	672	180	21,13%
Psychology and Educational Sciences	206	119	36,62%	187	162	46,42%
Economic Sciences and Applied Economic Sciences	1165	464	28,48%	1006	376	27,21%
Political and Social Sciences	749	131	14,89%	635	134	17,43%
Social Health Sciences	93	13	12,26%	138	26	15,85%
Physical Education, Motoric Revalidation and Physiotherapy	63	28	30,77%	52	19	26,76%
Science	254	375	59,62%	199	366	64,78%
Applied Sciences	453	380	45,62%	447	347	43,70%
Applied Biological Sciences	73	275	79,02%	56	296	84,09%
Medicine	248	74	22,98%	257	61	19,18%
Dentistry	51	4	7,27%	45	6	11,76%
Veterinary Sciences	30	5	14,29%	23	9	28,13%
Pharmaceutical Sciences	66	17	20,48%	69	24	25,81%
Biomedical Sciences				7		0,00%
Combined study fields	609	405	39,94%	633	449	41,50%
Total	5005	2566	33,89%	4710	2591	35,49%

Source: DTO Department of Education
(Students of teacher training and PhD programmes are not included)

Table 10.5: Proportion Belgian students – foreign students per study field in basic programmes at hogescholen

Hogescholen / basic programmes						
Study fields	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians
Architecture	3617	191	5,01%	3746	209	5,28%
Audio-visual arts	3514	304	7,96%	3504	343	8,91%
Biotechnology	1486	16	1,06%	1789	18	0,99%
Combined study fields	0	0	0%	187	2	1,06%
Health care	9946	401	3,87%	10516	488	0,04%
Commercial Sciences and Business Management	29520	642	2,12%	28420	658	0,02%
Industrial Sciences and Technology	16752	399	2,32%	16626	413	2,42%
Music and Drama	1441	317	18,03%	1436	316	18,03%
Education	19025	116	0,61%	19220	140	0,72%
Product Design	387	5	1,28%	353	4	1,12%
Social Work	9113	113	1,22%	9684	137	1,39%
Applied Language Studies	2754	119	4,14%	2850	126	4,23%
Total	97,555	2,623	2,62%	98,331	2,854	2,82%

Source: DTO Department of Education

Table 10.6: Proportion Belgian students – foreign students per study field in postgraduate programmes at hogescholen

Hogescholen / postgraduate programmes						
Study fields	2003-2004			2004-2005		
	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians	Belgians	Not-Belgians	% Not-Belgians
Architecture	64	5	7,25%	51	3	5,56%
Audio-visual arts	20	7	25,93%	9	3	25,00%
Health Care	579	17	596%	721	10	1,37%
Commercial Sciences and Business Management	833	12	1,42%	684	16	2,29%
Industrial Sciences and Technology	163	20	10,93%	89	6	6,32%
Music and Drama	8	14	63,64%	11	19	30%
Education	26	0	0,00%	24	0	0,00%
Social Work	58	0	0,00%	107	2	1,83%
Applied Language Studies	147	3	2,00%	98	0	0,00%
Total	1,898	78	3,95%	1,794	59	3,18%

Source: DTO Department of Education

10.2.2 Remarks on foreign participation in higher education: students with P.R. China nationality and Dutch nationality

308. On average 14.48 % of the foreign students (all continents, including Europe) at Flemish universities and 10.03 % at 'hogescholen' have P.R. China nationality³⁵. Top 3 of foreign nationalities at Flemish universities in absolute and relative student numbers: 1. Netherlands, 2. P.R. China, 3. Nigeria. Top 3 of foreign nationalities at Flemish 'hogescholen' (all continents including Europe) in absolute and relative numbers: 1. Netherlands; 2. P.R. China, 3. Morocco.

Figures for higher education only include regular students and therefore are incomplete.

309. Categories of students that are not included in these statistics : students in exchange programmes that remain enrolled in their home institution (e.g. in the framework of EU mobility programmes) , free researchers, free students (following only a few elective courses), some categories of doctoral researchers preparing to graduate at their home institutions, students of non-financed postgraduate studies at 'hogescholen'; visiting scholars, some categories of part-time students, preparatory year students etc.

310. As quite a number of Chinese students study in a non-regular status, their actual number is much higher than the figures above. Estimations by our Rector's Conferences of the total number of Chinese students at Flemish Community higher education institutions indicate that their actual number exceeds 2000 students.

311. Currently the Flemish Department of Education is investigating options to organise a general test for Chinese students in China before they leave for Belgium. The intention is to select genuine students. Flanders want to follow the example of Germany and Austria. Both countries work together and organise a general test in China. The great number of Chinese students in Flemish higher education has consequences for the quality of the teaching and learning process.

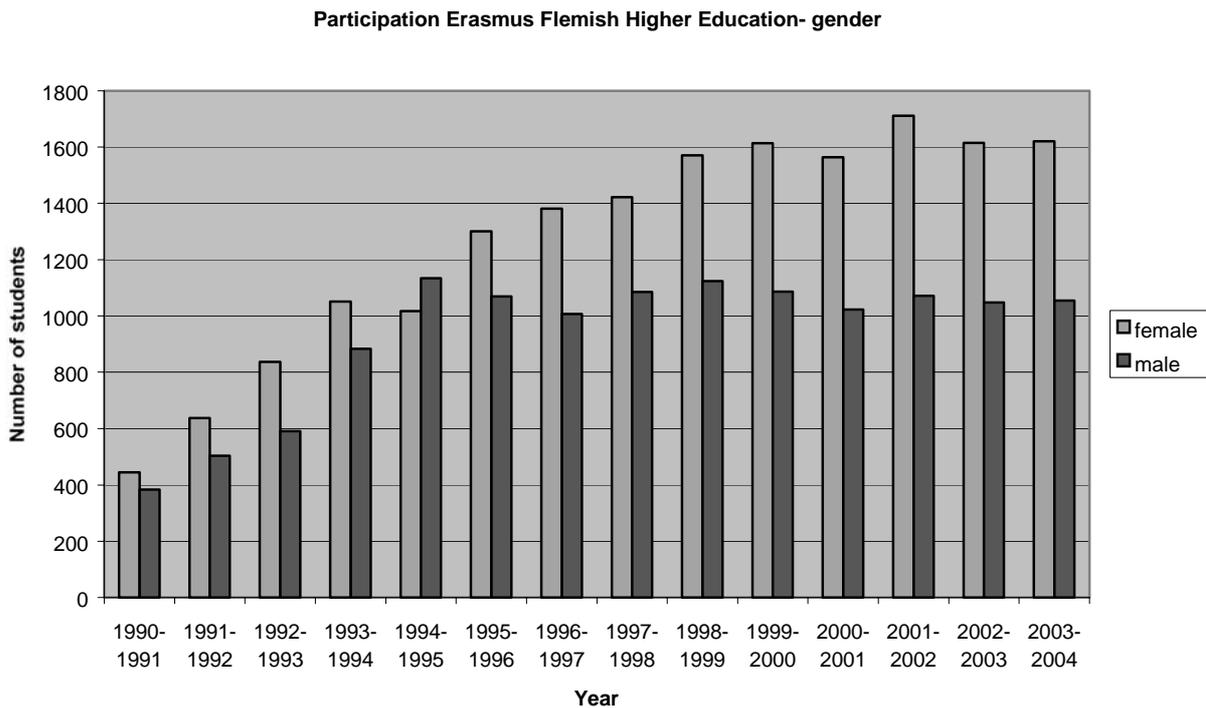
312. The high number of students from the Netherlands has to be explained mainly by a linguistic factor (Dutch as common language) and by the existence in the Netherlands of a selective entrance to higher education in certain study fields, e.g. medicine, dentistry and veterinary sciences. Fewer Flemish students study in the Netherlands and for some Flemish politicians this situation causes tensions.

³⁵ Please note the high participation rate of Chinese students in the university postgraduate range: Advanced master (ManaMa): 19% of foreign students, 5% of all students (including Belgian students). GAS (advanced programmes / supplementary): 32% of foreign students, 10% of all students, GGS (advanced programmes / specialised): 26% of foreign students, 12% of all students

10.1.3 Flemish students studying abroad

313. Although the Erasmus programme (and related programmes) is not part of a national policy it does give an indication about the mobility of Flemish students and their studies abroad (There are no statistics available of Flemish students who study abroad without a grant).

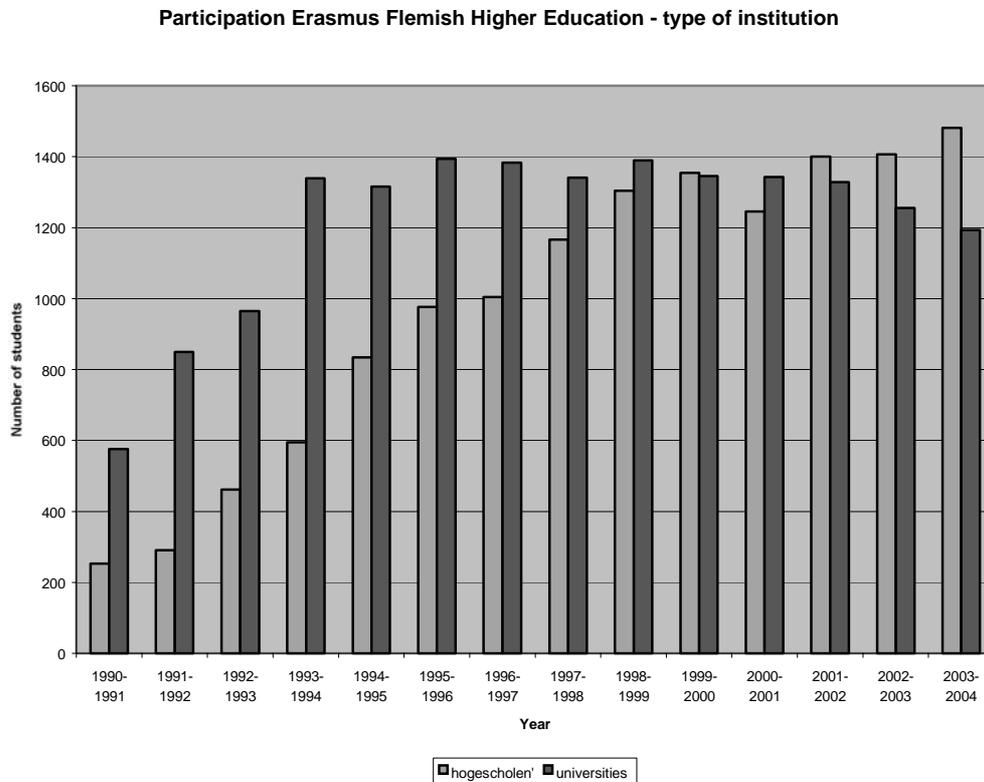
Figure 10.1: Participation Erasmus Flemish Higher Education - gender



Source: Flemish education indicators in an international perspective (2004, p. 84)

314. The publication ‘Flemish education indicators in an international perspective’ (2004, p. 84) shows that the number of students receiving Erasmus grants has increased steadily through the 1990s to between 2600 and 2700 in 1998-1999, since when it has stayed unchanged (graph 7.7). There have been two major changes. Firstly whereas in the early 1990s two thirds of students studying abroad came from the university sector and a third from the ‘hogescholen’, by 2003-2004 this gap had closed and in fact more students from the ‘hogescholen’ studied abroad than from the universities (graph 7.8). Secondly, there has been a steady increase in the number of female students receiving an Erasmus grant to study abroad (though the number of male students has stayed at approximately 1000 for a decade (graph 7.7). Most of the Erasmus students attend courses in Management, Languages and Education and teacher training (p. 83). Under the new decree of 30 April 2004 on study grants and student provision in higher education in the Flemish Community Flemish students can take their study grant abroad.

Figure 10.2: Participation Erasmus Flemish Higher Education – type of institution



Source: Flemish education indicators in an international perspective

10.2 Internationalisation at institutional level

315. One of the aims of the reform in the ‘hogescholen’ sector in 1994 was to increase the participation of the ‘hogescholen’ in international programmes. Since then each ‘hogeschool’ has established a department for international relations to support the extension of international contacts and relations (The universities already had such departments).

316. The 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education allows universities and ‘hogescholen’ to stipulate the conditions in their education and examination regulation under which their students can attend courses and sit exams in another higher education institution in Belgium and abroad. For instance as a consequence the new Erasmus Belgica programme emerged to give university students or students at the ‘hogescholen’ the opportunity to follow part of their course at a university or a college of higher education in another Community in Belgium. This project was initiated in February 2004.

317. The 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education legalised joint programmes, double degrees and joint degrees. Higher education institutions may organise joint programmes and allow their students to follow education at another higher education institution as part of their Bachelor or Master programme.

Higher education institutions may award a Flemish degree (Bachelor or Master) together with a state recognised degree from a (or several) partner higher education institution(s) taking into account certain administrative conditions. Higher education institutions may award a joint degree with one or more foreign higher education institutions. And in case this joint degree is not a 'Bachelor' or 'Master', the Flemish degree Bachelor or Master on top of it.

10.3 First hogeschool branch from the European continent in Dubai Knowledge Village (UAE)

318. EHSAL, 'Europese Hogeschool Brussel' has opened a campus in Dubai (Emirates). The campus is part of Knowledge Village, the prestigious and fast-growing learning community promoted by the Emirates authorities. EHSAL is the first 'hogeschool' of mainland Europe to organise a campus in KV with master and bachelor courses in economics and management.

319. The Dubai authorities opened Knowledge Village in September 2003 to answer the urgent needs of the fast growing industry and business world for higher education and entrepreneurship training. EHSAL was invited to join the learning community because of its' longstanding tradition of business-oriented academic education. EHSAL's focus on entrepreneurial learning in an intercultural environment will now also be transferred to Dubai. The target group is twofold: EHSAL Dubai serves the local community upgrading the entrepreneurial skills of the Emirates, and it serves the large expatriate community offering European (ECTS-based) degrees that can easily be transferred in case of relocation to Europe.

10.4 Internationalisation at system level

10.4.1 The introduction of a new two-cycle degree structure

320. The Flemish Parliament adopted a new Decree of 4 April 2003 on the restructuring of higher education in the Flemish Community. The bachelor and master structure will be gradually implemented from 2004-2005 onwards. For more information see chapter 2 'Overall Description of the Tertiary System'.

10.4.2 The introduction of a credit point system and Diploma Supplement

321. A Flemish credit system based entirely on the ECTS has been applied to university programmes since 1991 and to hogeschool programmes since 1994. The new 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education endorses the compatibility of the existing credit system with ECTS.

322. In Flanders a compulsory Diploma Supplement has been awarded automatically at university level since 1991 and at hogeschool level since 1994. In combination with the credential itself, the Flemish Diploma Supplement provided information on the nature, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued, together with a description of the Flemish higher education system. The Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Commission recognised the Flemish Diploma Supplement as a 'good practice' and jointly created in 1998 an international model similar to the Flemish Diploma Supplement. The 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education endorsed the concept of a Diploma Supplement and the Flemish Diploma Supplement is now adapted to the international one. It is now an important tool to improve the international transparency and fair recognition of qualification towards the European Higher Education Area in 2010.

10.4.3 The introduction of mechanisms and institutions for quality assurance and accreditation

323. Flanders has introduced an international dimension in its system of quality control. In co-operation with the Netherlands review committees, consisting of experts from both countries, evaluate the branches of study of university education as well as education at the hogescholen which are offered in Flanders as well as in the Netherlands. The same co-operation has developed between the Netherlands and Flanders for the accreditation of study programmes. For more information see chapter 9 'Assuring and improving the quality of tertiary education'.

10.4.4 The introduction of English as a language of teaching and learning

324. Dutch is the language of instruction in Flemish higher education. However, foreign language courses, courses with foreign guest speakers and teachers, internationally oriented courses, courses in the framework of international developing co-operation, courses in the framework of international exchange programmes and courses for groups of foreign students are taught in another language. Course material may be in any language. As a general rule at bachelor level the use of a foreign language is limited to maximum 10% of the study programme. At master level a considerable number of Master programmes are offered in English and a few in another language. Language (i.e. English) is in Flemish higher education an issue of tension. The institutions report annually about their use of another language to the Flemish parliament.

10.4.5 Ranking

325. The Flemish minister for Education and Work has committed to participate in a pilot project about ranking. The project concerns a co-operation between the CHE (Germany) and the Netherlands. The aim is to provide students with relevant information about potential courses at home and abroad and more generally to promote higher education to foreign students. The Ministry wants the institutions to play an important role in this pilot project.

10.5 Reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and Training

326. The Ministry of Education and Training has been reorganised. Since 1 January 2006 the Ministry works on policy preparation and evaluations, while all executive tasks have been grouped into agencies outside the Ministry. Within the Ministry a specialised unit has been created for international relations. This new unit is going to play a role in policy work on internationalisation in higher education in Flanders.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

327. Over the last decade and a half the tertiary education system in Flanders has had to absorb complex changes. The first phase of change started in the early 1990s. The new constitutional reform in Belgium made it possible for the Flemish Community to modernise its higher education sector. These changes were characterised by a strong emphasis on quality and the implementation of a new relationship between the government and the higher education institutions – more autonomy and accountability. The Decree on the Universities of 1991 and the Decree of 1994 for the hogescholen introduced the legal basis and obligation for the higher education institutions to organise an internal and external quality assurance system. This legislation of the early 1990s also shaped a policy based on the principles of deregulation, autonomy and accountability. The number of hogescholen was reduced via a major scaling up operation and this legal framework was mirrored on the university sector. As a result the gap between both the university sector and the hogescholen sector became narrower.

328. Whereas the first phase of change in the early 1990s was mainly started by the challenges emerging from the new constitutional reform at the end of the 1980s, the second major reform in the Flemish higher education system has been driven by the Bologna process. The Decree of 2003 on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders opened up the Flemish higher education system to become part of the European Higher Education Area. This legislation introduced gradually the Bachelor / Master structure from 2004-2005 onwards. This degree structure facilitates mobility of students and graduates Europe wide and to the same aim legislation on credits, flexible learning paths, accreditation of prior learning and joint degrees have been implemented. This focus has been summarised previously as a focus on the ‘system level’: the formal structures of higher education in the context of a further drive towards internationalisation. The quality assurance system already in place has been extended along the same lines of internationalisation with the implementation of the Dutch – Flemish Accreditation Organisation.

329. Also a legal framework for the new providers of educational programmes has been introduced via the 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education. So all these recent changes add a new dimension to the earlier developments of the 1990s; this time towards the creation of an ‘educational market’. Although the major changes of the 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders were about the implementation of the Bologna process, the Decree also dealt with some internal dynamics of the Flemish system. Namely through the introduction of the Bachelor / Master structure the two-cycle programmes of the hogescholen became academic programmes via co-operation of the hogescholen with a university in research activities. This co-operation is at the heart of the new established ‘associations’. This new concept of ‘associations’ in Flanders has not only been an answer to the ‘academic drift’ of the hogescholen, but it will also provide in the future an appropriate context to optimise the higher education offer and to make it more responsive to the current needs of society.

330. Future policy-making in Flemish tertiary education concerns first of all the consolidation and refinement of the Bologna process:

- Bachelor programmes started in the academic year 2004-2005 and the Master programmes will be introduced in the academic year 2007-2008,
- the two-cycle programmes of the hogescholen will be upgraded to academic Bachelor and Master programmes via the co-operation within an association between hogescholen and a university,
- the introduction of more flexible learning paths started in the academic year 2005-2006,
- the study time of certain Master programmes in the Sciences and the Bio-medical sciences will become two years instead of one year,

- institutions in tertiary education have committed themselves to stimulate more diversity (male/female and students from ethnic minorities). The new funding mechanism will reward these institutions that are making good progress on equal opportunities and diversity.

331. The current funding system for higher education has been in place since the early 1990s and is no longer an adequate instrument to influence institutional behaviour in the context of these recent changes mentioned earlier on. All these new policies need an appropriate funding mechanism. The previous government has timetabled the new funding system for higher education to be implemented by 2007. The decree on the new funding that is being anticipated, is facing many challenges such as:

- to provide extra funding for the hogescholen where it is thought the financial need is higher than in the universities,
- to implement a set of identical funding principles for both hogescholen and universities and to find a balance between large institutions and small institutions. Since 1991 institutions that have grown in student numbers have not been financially rewarded by the system accordingly,
- to embrace more flexibility in the learning paths leading to a differentiated reward,
- to stimulate more co-operation between institutions and to encourage greater rationalisation within associations of hogescholen and universities,

332 The new funding is vital in connection with the 2003 Decree on the restructuring of higher education which has opened up the Flemish system to the European Higher Education Area. The new decree will give the institutions an important indication to what extent they can rely on public money to deliver their core tasks in a more international context. Although the general assumption in Flanders is still strong that most of the resources of higher education will be provided by the tax payer, it has already been stated that public money will no longer be available for the so called advanced Masters (the previous postgraduate programmes).

333 Principles such as open entrance policy to higher education and the free choice of students in educational programmes were not given a major emphasis over the past decade. Within a context of lifelong learning and discourses of social inclusion it becomes apparent that issues on equality are back on the political agenda. Since higher education has been reorganised the government now intends to restructure all remaining study programmes in post secondary education. The government wants to locate all study programmes in a comprehensive qualification framework. It states that the success rate of young people gaining a higher education degree has decreased since the hogescholen have been upgraded in 1994 and adopted the bachelor – master structure in 2004. This situation potentially creates a gap in obtaining a qualification between secondary education and the bachelor level. Examples abroad of short qualifications below bachelor level prove to be useful to adapt to a flexible labour market. In the near future hogescholen and centres for adult education will be stimulated to develop such sub-degrees. These sub-degrees will become recognised qualifications for the labour market and would lead to credits for further study at bachelor level. In a first phase only the existing study programmes will be targeted for this new overall structure. In a second phase an expansion will start towards new study programmes.

331. Flanders has no intention to attract foreign students and researchers in great numbers, which does not imply that there is no need for researchers at all for certain disciplines. Internationalisation is not an instrument for ‘brain-gain’. Flemish policy on internationalisation is not aiming at specific (traditional) targets such as a percentage of foreign students.

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ANNEXES

Chapter 3:

Annex 1

Follow-up figures per study level

General secondary education 3rd stage	17,5
Vocational secondary education 3rd stage	14,0
Technical secondary education 3rd stage	14,3
Tertiary education - one cycle	10,3
Tertiary education - two cycles	16,3
University education	12,3

Follow-up figures for one-cycle tertiary education

Areas of study

Health care	3,7
Education	6,8
Industrial sciences and technology	11,8
Social pedagogy	12,1
Commercial sciences and business studies	12,9
Biotechnology	14,5
Architecture	21,7
Visual and audio-visual arts	36,9

Courses of study

Laboratory and food technology	0
Nursing	0
Orthopaedics	0
Clinical nursing	0,2
Child nursing	1,7
Social nursing	2,2
Speech therapy and audiology	2,6
Psychiatric nursing	3,1
Mechanics	3,5
Secretarial management	3,7
Social work	18,5
Aviation	19,4
Applied information technology	19,4
Communication management	23,7
Graphic companies	25
Interior design	27,3
Audio-visual techniques -photography	32,6
Audio-visual techniques-assistance	34,5
Audio-visual techniques-cinematography	34,8
Plastic arts	36,9

Follow-up figures for two-cycle tertiary education

Areas of study

Architecture	9,2
Health care	9,6
Biotechnology	11
Industrial sciences and technology	11,8
Commercial sciences and business studies	13,8
Applied linguistics	16,5
Product development	17,8
Music and dramatic art	21,6
Visual and audio-visual arts	35,2

Courses of study

Industrial design	3,8
Construction	3,9
Architect	5,8
Land surveying	6,3
Biochemical engineering	7,8
Chemical engineering	9,9
Physiotherapy	10,1
Electrical engineering	10,3
Automatisation	11,5
Agriculture and Biotechnological agriculture	11,6
Interior architect	25,6
Graphic and advertising design	29,8
Photography	32,7
Fashion, textiles	33,3
Three-dimensional design	33,3
Music, theory, musical notation	34,8
Audio-visual arts - medium	40
Fine arts	41,3
Drama	41,4
Animation	64,5

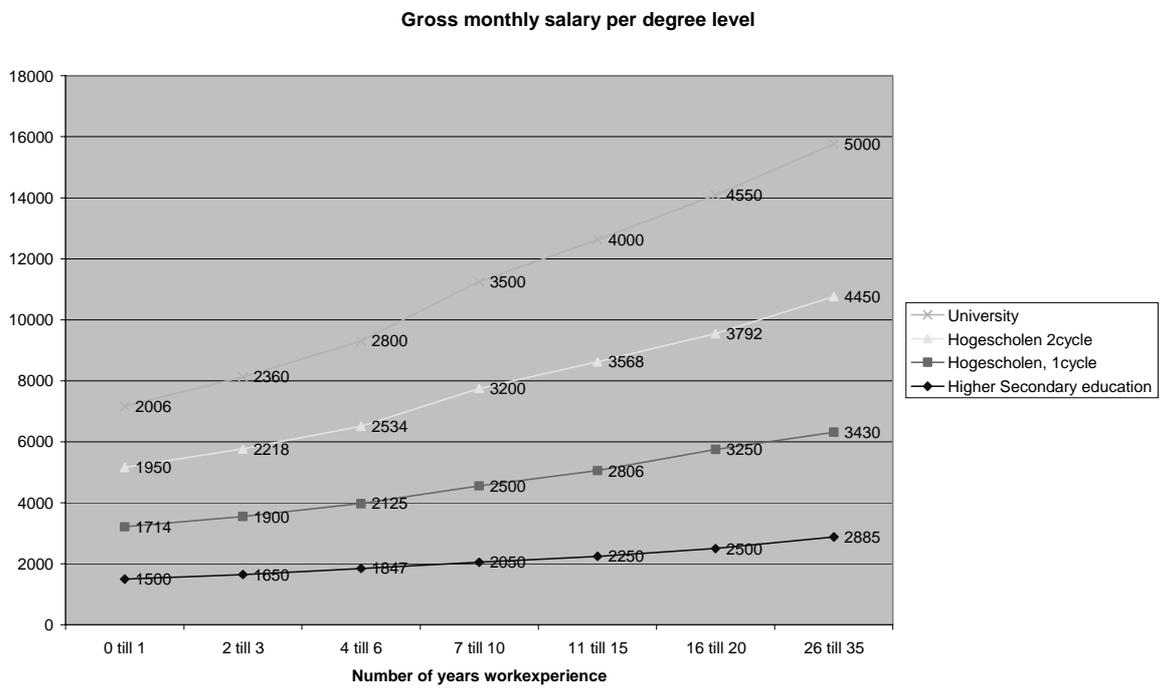
University education

Areas of study

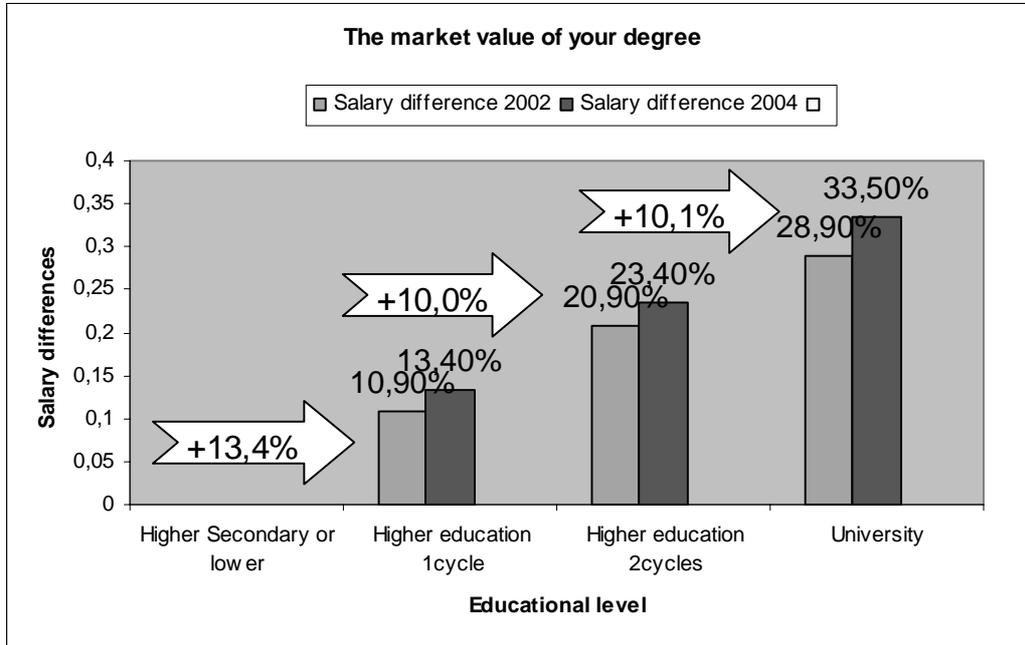
Dentistry	0
Medicine	0,2
Pharmaceutical sciences	1,8
Social health sciences	2,7
Applied sciences	5,7
Theology	8
Applied biological sciences	9,3
Economic and applied economic sciences	10,8
Sciences	11,5
Language and literature	11,9
Law, notary sciences and criminology	12,5
Physical education	12,8

Psychology and educational sciences	14,5
Veterinary sciences	18,1
Political and social sciences	20,1
History	23,3
Archaeology	25,9
Philosophy	26,2

Annex 2a



Annex 2b



Annex 3

Hogescholen (one-cycle programmes)	Median starting salary
Architecture	1553.39
Health Care (laboratory worker, speech-training, physiotherapy, ergotherapie, nutrition, dietetics)	1794.42
Nursing, midwifery	1892.91
Business Management, business languages (book keeping, taxation, accountancy, library)	1670.21
Industrial sciences (audiovisual technology, photography, graphic industry, (bio)chemistry, electricity, electro-mechanics, telecommunications, textiles)	1832.28
Informatics	1923.84
Social work (social worker, assistant psychologist, orthopedics, rehabilitation sciences)	1708.73
Pre school teacher, Primary school teacher	1670.21
Lower secondary Education Teacher	1752.01
Communication, media, public relations and advertising	1670.21
Agricultural	1589.09
Tourism and recreation	1447.52
Legal practice	1740.04
Building construction	1742.87
Logistics	1794.13
Hogescholen (two-cycle programmes)	
Engineering, land surveillance,	2071.19
Architect	
Licentiate Public Administration, Commercial Engineering	1946.68
Licentiate journalism, Interpreter, Translator	1796.76
Master in Arts (Dramatic Art, Music, Design, Plastic Arts), Communication and Media	1537.83
University	
Civil Engineering, Engineering in Architecture	2519.99
Sciences (Biology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Geography)	2298.54
Agricultural Engineer, Bio-Engineer	2283.81
Informatics	2274.71
Medicine	1999.18
Veterinary Sciences	
Physical Education, Physiotherapy, Logopaedics	1874.10
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2301.64
Dentistry	
Royal Military School	
Law	2115.60
Criminology	2000.00
Psychology, Pedagogy	2066.30
Languages, philology, Germanic, Romance	1832.28
History, art-history, music-history, archaeology	1836.11
Applied Economic Sciences (TEW)	2071.07
Commercial Engineering	2115.48
Social Sciences, Political Sciences, Communication Sciences, Administrative Sciences, Philosophy, Theology	1947.92

1 UNIV	Civil Engineering, Engineering in Architecture	2519.99
2 UNIV	Pharmaceutical Sciences	2301.64
3 UNIV	Sciences: Biology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Geography	2298.54
4 UNIV	Agricultural Engineer, Bio-Engineer	2283.81
5 UNIV	Informatics	2274.71
6 UNIV	Law	2115.60
7 UNIV	Commercial Engineer (HIR)	2115.48
8 HS 2 cycle	Industrial Engineer, MSOG (surveyor)	2071.19
9 UNIV	Applied Economic Sciences	2071.07
10 UNIV	Psychology, Pedagogy	2066.30
11 UNIV	Criminology	2000.00
12 UNIV	Medicine	1999.18
13 UNIV	Social Sciences, Political Sciences, Communication Sciences, Administrative Sciences	1947.92
14 HS 2cycle	Licentiate Public Administration, Commercial Engineering	1946.68
15 HS 1cycle	AI Informatics	1923.84
16 HS 1cycle	Nursing, Midwifery	1892.91
17 UNIV	Physical Education, Physiotherapy, Logopaedics	1874.10
18 UNIV	History, art-history, music-history, archaeology	1836.11
19 HS 1cycle	Industrial sciences (audiovisual technology, photography, graphic industry, (bio)chemistry, electricity, electro-mechanics, telecommunications, textiles)	1832.28
20 UNIV	Languages, philology, Germanic, Romance	1832.28
21 HS 2cycle	Licentiate journalism, Interpreter, Translator	1796.76
22 HS 1cycle	Health Care (laboratory worker, speech-training, physiotherapy, ergotherapie, nutrition, dietetics)	1794.42
23 HS 1cycle	Logistics	1794.13
24 HS 1cycle	Teacher secondary education	1752.01
25 HS 1cycle	Building construction	1742.87
26 HS 1cycle	Legal practice	1740.04
27 HS 1cycle	Social work (social worker, assistant psychologist, orthopedics, rehabilitation sciences)	1708.73
28 HS 1cycle	Business Management, business languages (book keeping, taxation, accountancy, library)	1670.21
29 HS 1cycle	Pre school teacher, Primary school teacher	1670.21
30 HS 1cycle	Communication, media, public relations and advertising	1670.21
31 HS 1cycle	Agricultural	1589.09
32 HS 1cycle	Architecture	1553.39
33 HS 2cycle	Master in Arts (Dramatic Art, Music, Design, Plastic Arts),	1537.83
34 HS 1cycle	Tourism and recreation	1447.52