



DOCTORAL TRAINING IN THE CAPITAL OF EUROPE: HOW TO DEAL WITH DIVERSITY



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OUTLINE

- The concept of diversity
- Diversity
 - in the Flemish context
 - in Brussels
 - at VUB

The concept of Diversity

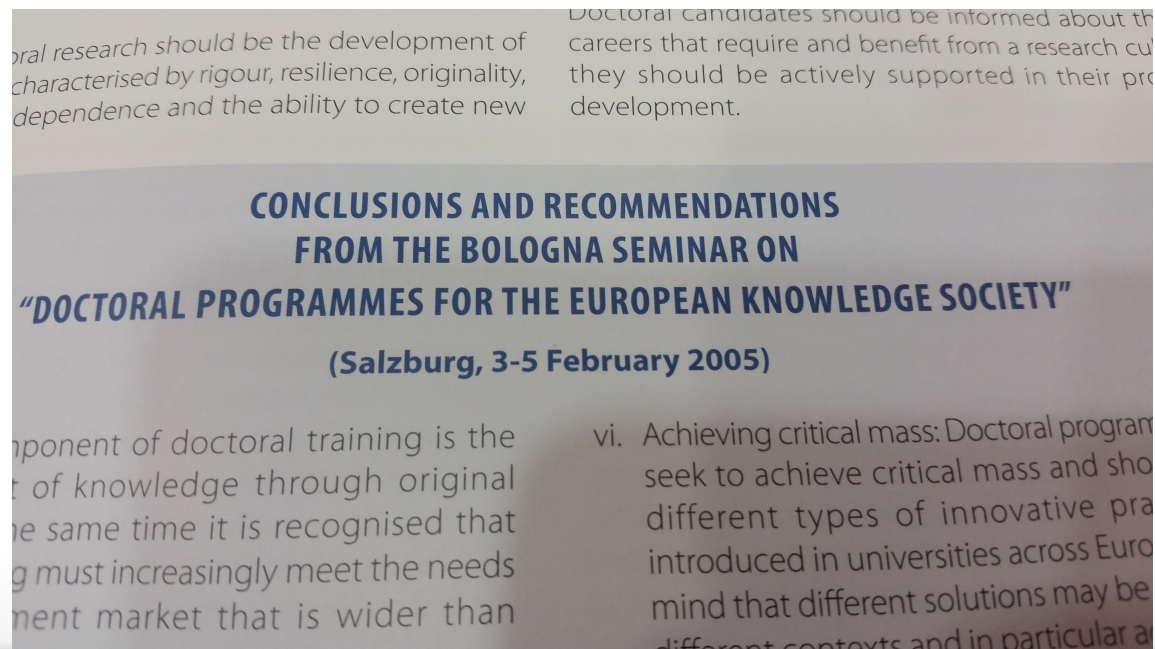


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DIVERSITY

EU landscape:

Attention to diversity: not that new
Salzburg recommendations (2005)



DIVERSITY

Salzburg recommendations (2005)

programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.

- iii. The importance of diversity: the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe – including joint doctorates – is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and sound practice.
- iv. Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers: should be recognized as professionals – with commensurate rights – who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.

Doctoral research should be the development of careers that require and benefit from a research culture. They should be actively supported in their professional development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOLOGNA SEMINAR ON "DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY" (Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005)

- vi. Achieving critical mass: Doctoral programmes should seek to achieve critical mass and should introduce different types of innovative practices in universities across Europe. It is important to mind that different solutions may be required in different contexts and in particular at the national level.
- vii. Duration: Doctoral programmes should be designed to meet the needs of the knowledge society. The duration should be within 3 to 4 years for full-time research.
- viii. The professionalization of doctoral candidates: Doctoral candidates should be recognized as professionals – with commensurate rights – who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.
- ix. Increasing the visibility of doctoral research: Doctoral candidates should be recognized as professionals – with commensurate rights – who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.

DIVERSITY

QUALITY OF EU DOCTORAL EDUCATION

EU DE **reflects** diversity

EU DE **takes care** for diversity

It is an interesting **challenge** to drive excellence from diversity

Unity in diversity: respecting **autonomy** of the university adapted to the needs of the local settings

EU has a culture of dealing with diversity (broad meaning of the concept)

DIVERSITY

QUALITY OF EU DOCTORAL EDUCATION

USA: diversity: traditionally un- or underrepresented students (black people, American natives, less favorable people)

EU: diversity:

Narrow meaning (gender, socio cultural background, cultural, ethnical background, ~~race~~)

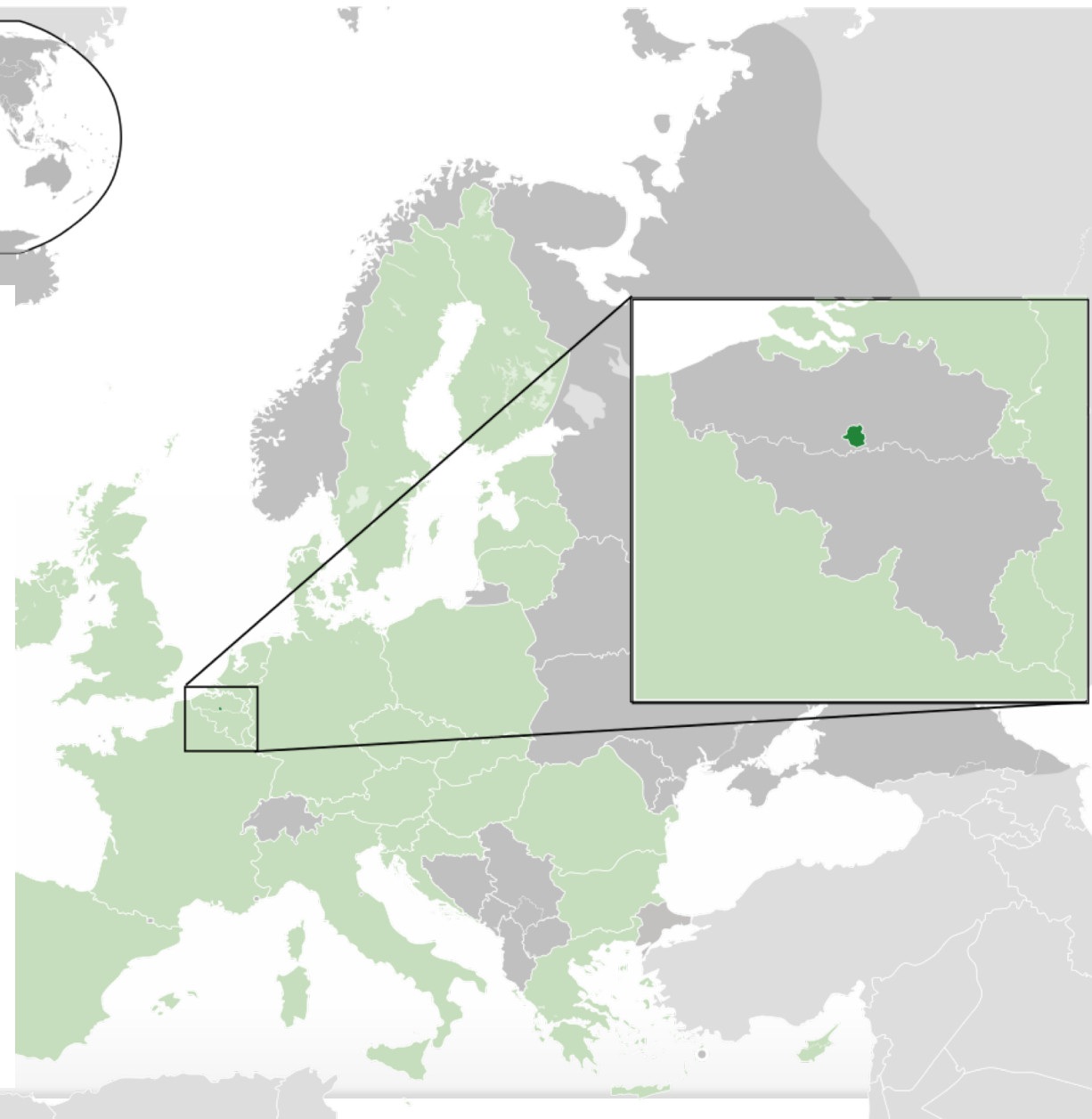
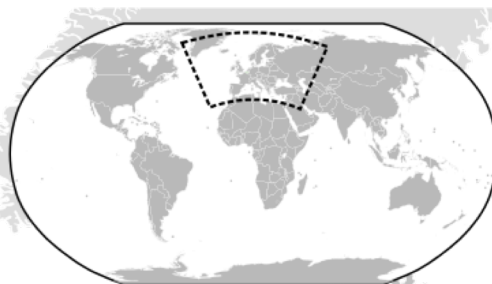
Broader meaning: in the context of DE: referring to institutional diversity

Diversity in Flemish Context



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WHERE ARE WE?



FLEMISH COLLABORATION

Flemish Interuniversity Council (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - VLIR)

- Platform to facilitate cooperation between all five Flemish universities
- Regular meeting with stakeholders in doctoral education
- Interacts with the Flemish government in all matters concerning higher education policy
- Combining **collaboration** and **autonomy**
- Evaluation report – finding common ground



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Flemish government financially supports all Flemish universities with OJO funding

- ▶ OJO= Support for Young Researchers
- ▶ Activities including
 - ▶ Training for young researchers
 - Interdisciplinary, cross-subject and transferable skills
 - Postdocs
 - Communication
 - Valorisation
 - Didactics
 - **Gender**
 - Scientific integrity
 - Supervisor training
 - ▶ Career Development
 - ▶ International orientation
 - ▶ Interuniversity collaboration (at least 25% of all means)

FLEMISH COLLABORATION ON DIVERSITY: EXAMPLE 1

Gender Research Seminar

- Annually
- Cooperation between VUB, UAntwerpen & UGent
- Specific topic changes: intersectionality, morality and the intimate atmosphere, opposition to gender equality
- 2018: Citizenship, Diversity & Equality



FLEMISH COLLABORATION ON DIVERSITY: EXAMPLE 2

What does it mean to be a researcher in the 21st century academia?

- Cooperation between UAntwerpen, KULeuven, UGent & VUB
- Topics: gender discrimination, sexism & patriarchy
- 2016-2017: larger topic of diversity including nationality – how functioning of academia influences diversity in different disciplines, and diversity in research

INTER-UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL COURSE
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A
RESEARCHER IN 21ST CENTURY
ACADEMIA

PROGRAMME

- PUBLISH AND/OR PERISH
FREEK VAN DEYNZE & NICK
SCHUERMANS
- FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN
BELGIUM: THE ALLOCATION MODEL
IGNACE LEMAHIEU & KOENRAAD
DEBACKERE
- MENTAL HEALTH, HYPERMOBILITY AND
PRECARITY
INCEBORG MEIJER & YANNIS TZANINIS
- GENDER AND DIVERSITY AT UNIVERSITY
EVELIEN GEERTS & JELLE MAMPAEY
- ACTIVISM AND SCHOLARSHIP
IMAN LECHKAR & DAVID VAN DER HA
- REFLECTIVE AFTERNOON
WITH UNION REPRESENTATIVES
- DEBATE: UNIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY
IN COLLABORATION WITH DE BUREN
- ACTION DAY: ANOTHER UNIVERSITY IS
POSSIBLE
TRAINING BY VREDESACTIE

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**UNIVERSITEIT
GENT**

KU LEUVEN

**Vlaanderen
in actie
Pact 2020**

**Vlaamse
overheid**

**Universiteit
Antwerpen**



FLAMES: Flanders Training Network for Methodology and Statistics

Diversity in methodology: quantitative track – qualitative track

Diversity in software: -general introduction

-different hands on workshops in SPSS, SAS, STATA, R, ...

Diversity in Brussels



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Zoeken in Google Maps





"FREE UNIVERSITY BRUSSEL"

VUB/ULB

Free University Brussels:

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

Rector: Prof Dr **Caroline Pauwels**

Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

Rector: Prof Dr **Yvon Englert**



Zoeken in Google Maps

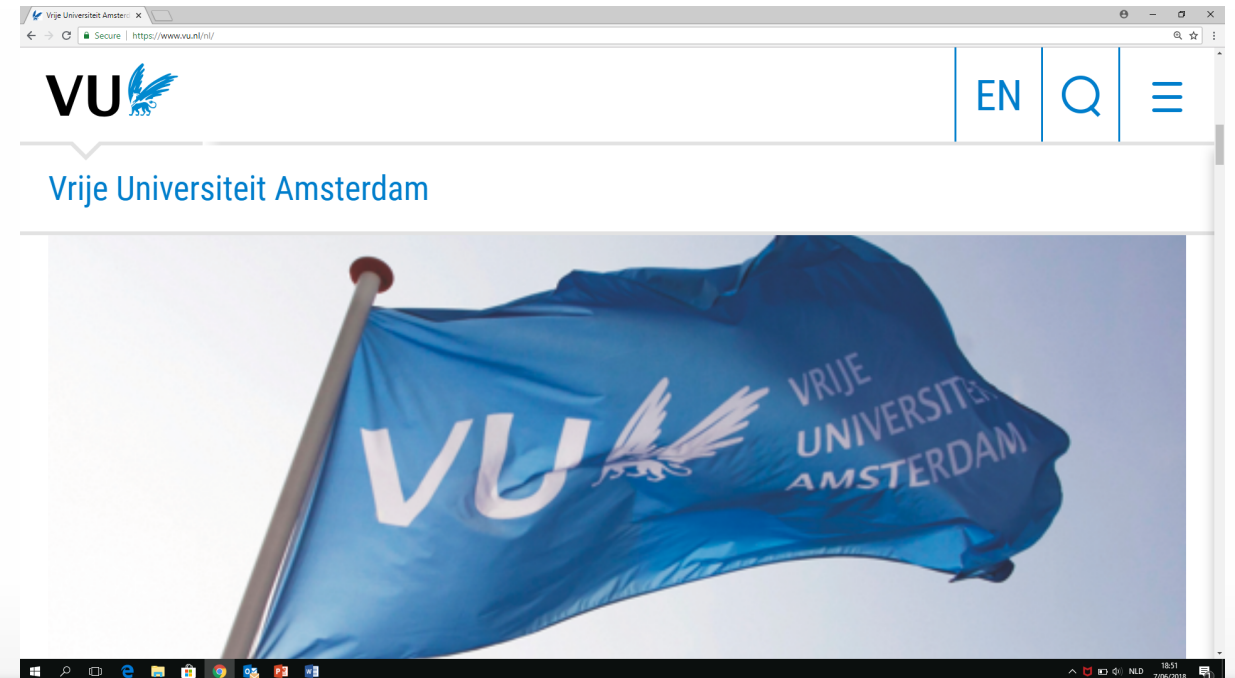


"FREE UNIVERSITY" EUROPE?

Free from Catholics

Free from Marxism

Free from Protestants



DIVERSITY AS STRATEGIC GOAL OF RECTOR

QUALITY LABEL OF VUB DOCTORAL EDUCATION



Two key components:

1. Reaching out through participative and community-based education and research
>>> bringing the students to the city
2. Building an open and diverse research community



brussels
centre
for
urban
studies

News & Events

Writing (on) the Urban Question

7 May 2018

Brussels



Skills training

Writing (on) the Urban Question

May 7-9th, 2018

Writing (on) the Urban Question is the first workshop of its kind in Brussels organized by the VUB Graduate School for Urban Research. It is an exciting and unique multidisciplinary writing workshop, [specifically tailored for doctoral students and early-career academics working on urban issues](#). The

workshop is led by the renowned creative writer, literature consultant, and urban activist, [Sarah Butler](#), based in Manchester, the UK.

Writing (on) the Urban Question is an interdisciplinary and interuniversity event that will bring promising junior researchers from across Belgium and Europe together at VUB. For our first year, we have fourteen doctoral students (in the final stages of their study) and early-career academics

Diversity @ VUB



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DIVERSITY AMONG DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

Some figures

- 1700 PhD candidates
- **45%** international students coming from 96 different countries
- Several EU/international financing schemes (CSC, Erasmus+,...)
- Almost fully gender balanced (F/M: 52/48)
- 'Special' Doctorates: Doctorate in the arts, Interdisciplinary Doctorates



SUPPORT NETWORK

Supervisor

Centre for Wellbeing

Advisory commission

Buddy & PhD Networks

Doctoral School &
Central PhD Office

Ombudsperson
/ PhD survey

PHD BUDDY PROJECT

- Starting PhD candidates are matched to more experienced PhDs
- Especially for international candidates
- Mix between disciplines
- A buddy :
 - Gives practical support
 - Is experienced in opportunities & pitfalls of doing a PhD
 - Is someone you can talk to about doubts and concerns
 - Is actively involved in the faculty/department
- <https://www.vub.ac.be/en/phd/buddy>



PHD NETWORKS

- One for each Doctoral School
 - Engineering & Natural Sciences (NSE) PhD Network
 - Human Sciences (DSh) PhD Network
 - Life Sciences & Medicine (LSM) PhD United
- Informal social activities (bbq, academic speeddating, quiz,...)
- Formal initiatives such as
 - Local PhD day for Life Sciences & Medicine
 - Career Fair for Engineers and Natural Scientists



SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

Cross cultural intelligence in academic environments

- Expectations towards PhD candidates differ across cultures
- How to achieve your goals, while taking into account expectations of others

VUB PhD Cup

- 3-minute talk on PhD project to a non-academic audience
- More visibility for research relevant for society

Gender week

- Leadership workshop for women
- Doing feminist research: dilemmas of power and inequality in the research relation



PhD survey

- Annual survey on PhD progress, supervision, satisfaction with support etc
- 2017: pilot study among 3 faculties
- 2018: all faculties included
- Detecting problems in anonymized way - possibility for follow-up, step towards ombudsperson
- Also good practices can be detected

Self-evaluation
by PhD researcher

Early problem
detection
by representative

Feedback to faculty
and other relevant
services

Questions?



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Contact: Hannelore.de.grande@vub.be

Global view on PhD survey

