



European Flagship Universities: balancing academic excellence and socio-economic relevance

KU LEUVEN

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1. Introduction

1.1. Mission

KU Leuven was founded in 1425. It is a private university according to law, but a fully publicly funded. It was born of and has grown within the Catholic tradition. KU Leuven offers its students an academic education based on high-level research, with the aim of preparing them to assume their social responsibilities. KU Leuven is a research-intensive, internationally oriented university that carries out both fundamental and applied research. It is strongly inter- and multidisciplinary in focus and strives for international excellence. To this end, KU Leuven works together actively with its research partners at home and abroad.

KU Leuven encourages personal initiative and critical reflection in a culture of idea exchange, cooperation, solidarity and academic freedom. It pursues a proactive diversity policy for its students and staff. KU Leuven aims to actively participate in public and cultural debate and in the advancement of a knowledge-based society. It puts its expertise to the service of society, with particular consideration for its most vulnerable members.

From a basis of social responsibility and scientific expertise, KU Leuven provides high-quality, comprehensive health care, including specialised tertiary care, in its University Hospitals. In doing so it strives toward optimum accessibility and respect for all patients.

KU Leuven carries out its academic activities at various campuses, research parks and hospital facilities in close cooperation with the members of the KU Leuven Association and with its hospital partners.

1.2. History

KU Leuven has been a centre of learning for almost six centuries. Founded in 1425 by Pope Martin V, it bears the double honour of being the oldest existent Catholic university in the world and the oldest university in the Low Countries. In its early days, the university was modelled on the universities of Paris, Cologne, and Vienna. In a short time, it grew into one of the largest and most renowned universities in Europe. Its academic fame attracted numerous scholars who made valuable contributions to European culture.

Not all has been trouble-free, though, in the university's illustrious history. It has had its share of difficulties during the various social and political upheavals in this region from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. More recently, the two World Wars of the twentieth century deeply scarred

the university. In 1914 as well as in 1940 a substantial part of the precious library was lost. Since then, the university library, and in fact the entire university, has undergone a thorough reconstruction.

The university is located in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium. With the Dutch language's steady rise to renewed prominence, 1968 saw the university split into two new universities. The French-speaking Université Catholique de Louvain moved to the newly built campus in Louvain-la-Neuve. The Dutch-speaking Katholieke Universiteit Leuven remained in the historic town of Leuven.

Such a rich history of nearly six hundred years has provided KU Leuven with its own dynamic international dimension. Today, international co-operation is regarded as essential for a modern university. Top-level research is judged according to international standards and implies interaction, co-operation, and exchange, both of researchers and results. As such, KU Leuven is a charter member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), and European surveys rank KU Leuven among the top ten European universities in terms of its scholarly output. Likewise with regard to teaching, several quality surveys demonstrate that KU Leuven stands on par with internationally respected institutions in a large number of fields.

This academic reputation attracts students from all over the world. KU Leuven has been involved in the Erasmus student exchange programmes since its launch in Europe in the late 1980s; the growing success of the Erasmus programme later on led to the launch of the Socrates programme, and today the University of Leuven has over 300 contracts under this programme. Each year around 600 international Erasmus students spend part of their study programme in Leuven, while more than 500 of our students share the same European experience at another university. The TEMPUS-PHARE programme was set up for students and researchers from Eastern Europe, while contacts with universities in the former Soviet Union are being built up through the TEMPUS-TACIS programme. The co-operation with universities in Latin America falls within the scope of the ALFA programme.

Besides these exchange programmes, the university has set up a number of international academic programmes aimed both at Belgian and international students. Unlike the regular Dutch-language programmes, the international academic programmes are taught in English. Most of these programmes confer master's degrees: full bachelor's degree programmes in English are offered only in the fields of theology and philosophy.

Besides the main campus in Leuven, the KU Leuven has a campus in Kortrijk (KULAK, founded in 1965). It is a fully-fledged bachelor-level campus with a selective research agenda. The campus Kortrijk enrolls some 10% of new first year Bachelors' students of the whole university.

2. KU Leuven Association

Associations are a particular phenomenon in Flemish higher education. Broadly speaking, it is a collaboration between one university and a number of university colleges. Over the last decade there has been a lot of discussion as well as changes with respect to these associations. One of the main aims was the upgrade the educational programmes of the university colleges.

The K.U.Leuven association is a network consisting of the university and university colleges throughout Flanders. Together, the Association's partners account for 85,000 students representing 42% of the Flemish student population spread across 23 cities in Flanders. The K.U.Leuven Association's university colleges are currently reorganising into one discipline-aligned and four regionally-aligned clusters with streamlined decision-making bodies.

The Association gives shape to the Bologna Process of 1999, which provides more effective synchronisation of higher education across Europe. In Flanders, this was paired with the introduction of a twofold higher education structure consisting of professionally-aligned bachelor's programmes on the one hand and academically-aligned bachelor's and master's programmes on the other. Professional bachelor's programmes are offered by the university colleges while academic bachelor's and master's programmes are organised by the university colleges in the context of the Association, and by the universities. The K.U.Leuven Association provides reciprocal links between the professional and academic programmes, especially in the context of offering sufficient transfer possibilities for students. The transition to academic bachelor's and master's programmes requires a so-called 'academisation' process. This means that these degree programmes must be strongly anchored in research.

This academisation process is nearly complete. As a final step, all academically-aligned degree programmes housed at the K.U.Leuven Association's university colleges will be integrated into the university by the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. They will maintain their own unique profiles and local imbeddedness. K.U.Leuven will be responsible for the awarding of diplomas, education and research policy, quality assurance for education and research, and staff policy for all staff members working in the newly integrated degree programmes. The integration of these degree programmes takes on concrete form in the integrated and associated faculties.

3. KU Leuven in the rankings

The KU Leuven is a highly reputational university in the world, underlined by several ranking systems:

- The KU Leuven is ranked 67th in the 2011 THE World University ranking, Ghent University is 102. In terms of subjects the KU Leuven is, according to the THE ranking, doing well in life sciences (38), engineering and technology (38), health (40), and arts and humanities (42).
- In the 2011 QS ranking the KU Leuven ranked 68. In terms of subjects it ranked between 62 (life sciences) and 88 (natural sciences).
- Its ranked position on the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai) is in the range 102-150.
- In the Leiden ranking the KU Leuven has position 149.
- In the HEEACT ranking the position of KU Leuven is 64.

4. Key figures

At present, KU Leuven caters to more than 31,000 students, around 12% of whom are international students from more than 120 nations. In terms of its personnel, there are 5,287 academic staff, 2,730 administrative and technical staff, and 8,172 university hospital staff members. With regard to its physical facilities, the university occupies a total area of 1,058,445 square metres and it has a total of 26,606 rooms. On the academic side, the university is composed of fourteen faculties, fifty departments and about 240 sub-departments. Further, its network of thirty auxiliary libraries now houses a total of 4.3 million volumes, 14,500 magazines and journals, and 7,492 full text electronic magazines. And concerning its medical facilities, KU Leuven supports five hospitals and three affiliated hospitals, with a total of 2,057 hospital beds for the acutely ill.

4.1. Size (2010/11, February 1st)

Number of students: 38,640 (20,877 female and 17,763 male)

Distribution:

- Bachelor students: 49,8%
- Master students: 30,2%
- Advanced masters: 4,2%

- Doctoral students 11,3%
- Academic teacher training: 1,7%
- Other: 2,8%

Number of new first year Bachelors enrolments: 5,662

Number of international students: 5,530 from 140 countries world wide

Number of PhD students: 4,381 (of which are 38% international students)

Annual number of PhD dissertations: 626 (2010-2011); 570 (2008-2009); 540 (2007-2008)

Number of internationally reviewed articles : 5,199 (in 2010)

Number of spin off companies: 98 (per December 2011)

Number of staff: head count 9,971 (excluding hospitals) – 8,684 FTE

Distribution:

- Senior academic staff 1,473 (1,004 TFE)
- Junior academic staff and scientific staff: 5,344 (4,770)
- Administrative and technical staff: 3,154 (2,910)

4.2. Education

The KU Leuven offers:

- 55 Dutch bachelor degree programmes
- 132 masters degree programmes
- 53 advanced masters degrees programmes

Moreover, there are:

- 47 international masters programmes, 31 advanced masters and 2 bachelor degrees programmes offered
- 7 Erasmus Mundus programmes

4.3. Range of disciplines

There are fourteen faculties: Theology, Canon Law, Philosophy, Law, Business and Economics, Social Sciences, Arts, Psychology and Educational Sciences, Science, Engineering, Bioscience Engineering, Medicine, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences. There is only one field of study offered by Belgian universities that K.U. Leuven does not cover, i.e. Veterinary Science

The faculties are clustered into 'three groups'; each group has a doctoral school:

- The humanities and social sciences group (eight faculties)
- The Biomedical Sciences group (three faculties)
- The Science, Engineering and Technology group (three faculties)

5. Contextual information on Flemish higher education

The higher education system in Belgium is different in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part) and the French-speaking part (Wallonia). In Flanders, a binary higher education system exists, comprising six universities and twenty-two university colleges. The university colleges enrol about 125,600 students, the universities about 82,300. Two of the six universities are public (Antwerp and Ghent); the others, including Leuven, are private.

The universities offer 3-year academic Bachelor's programmes, 1- or 2-year Master's programmes, advanced Master's programmes and PhD programmes. Some university colleges also offer academic Bachelor's and Master's programmes, other offer professional bachelor's programmes and advanced bachelor's (to be followed only after completion of a professional bachelor) programmes.

Universities and university colleges are grouped in associations (one university with one or more university colleges). The partners may transfer their powers regarding education, scientific research and societal services to this association. The University of Leuven forms an association with twelve university colleges, which together is the largest Association in Flanders. The Association-structure is relatively new (started in the early 2000s) and is still evolving. At the moment there are five Associations.

In the development of the higher education system in Flanders, two periods are of major importance. The first period is the beginning of the 1990s, when the authority regarding education was transferred from the Belgian state to the Flemish Community. This led to a restructuring of the higher

education sector in Flanders. The second period covers the introduction of the bachelor-master structure in Flanders, starting with new legislation in 2003.

The state reform of 1988-1989, not only made Belgium a federal state, where the authority over education was granted to the Communities, it also gave rise to a different model of governmental control of the university. Before 1989, the public universities were very centralistically managed. They were directly under the responsibility of the Minister of Education, who was the organising authority of state education. Therefore, these universities were influenced directly by the features of the political system of the time, which was unstable due to linguistic troubles and financially restricted because of the increasing public debt. Moreover the strong centralism ('Brussels' took all decisions) was supported by a high degree of bureaucratisation. The decisions were executed by the administration, which was politicised. The bureaucratisation was an expression of the hierarchical structure of state education, with the Minister of Education at the top.

The private universities were relatively autonomous, though they were just like public (state) universities controlled by a state commissioner. After the big changes of the university organisation and the funding principles of the universities in the years 1970 and 1971, the government did not interfere in these universities very much. Although the system was 'state-controlled', in practice the universities had significant autonomy. The government was reluctant to regulate, in order not to upset the delicate ideological and linguistic equilibrium in the university sector.

Already in the 1980s the Minister of Education expressed his discontent with this structure, especially the way in which the state regulated higher education, an idea shared by many in the universities and in political parties. This caused a fundamental shift when Flanders (instead of the Belgium government) got the authority over education. With the law on universities of 12 June 1991, the government took an important step towards far-reaching autonomy for the universities. Two major new laws on higher education were published in 1991 (see section 5.1); in the 1990s and 2000s these laws have been replaced by others.

Consequently, governmental steering of higher education after 1989 greatly differs from the previous period. With new legislation in place (after the "division" of Belgium into the Walloon and Flemish community, the former state universities became their own organising body (more self-regulation) and their autonomy became largely the same as that of private universities. At the same time, private universities (such as KU Leuven) lost parts of their former freedom because the government wanted a guarantee that these universities would act in accordance with the law. Despite the changes, a number of principles regarding the governance of higher education have remained in place and are not subject to fundamental discussion. Collegiate governance,

participative governance, openness towards external stakeholders, and elected leadership are among the most important of these principles.

In other words, an evolution towards a market state model has been present in Flemish higher education policy since 1989. The government sets out a general framework and defines a number of control mechanisms on the meta-level. The higher education institutions are granted more autonomy. Autonomy for and responsibility of the higher education institutions were the key words in both the reforms of 1991 (for universities) and 1994 (for university colleges). From then on, the laws only imposed formal requirements (length of the study programmes, division in degree structures, and so on); the content of education (the study programmes and courses) could be decided by the institutions themselves. All institutions then operated under a block grant (lump sum) funding system, although the precise conditions differ between universities and university colleges. Especially for the (then merged) university colleges and the former state institutions, this meant in practice a considerable increase in their responsibility for institutional policies.

About a decade later, a new period of major reform started. The Minister of Education of Flanders was one of the 29 European Ministers who signed the Bologna Declaration in July 1999. Consequently, the Flemish government and Flemish universities began to prepare for higher education reform in accordance with the Bologna objectives. This resulted in the acceptance of a new law on the structure of higher education in 2003. The new law regulated the gradual year by year introduction of programmes in the bachelor-master structure from 2004-2005 onwards. This law was followed by several other laws and regulations that all together have been changing the framework for higher education in Flanders quite drastically. First there is a law on the social position of students and their participation (2004). Second, a law on flexibility (2004) introduced a more flexible organisation of higher education, regulating as it did the basic rules to obtain credits, to receive an attestation for competences and qualifications obtained outside formal education structures, and to guarantee study progression whilst abolishing the study year system. Third, a new law on teacher education (2007) implemented the bachelor-master structure in this sector too. And finally, a new law on the funding of higher education (2008) introduced a funding system taking account of all reforms, consolidating all the changes and modernising the financial mechanisms governing higher education in Flanders. Public funding of higher education institutions was confirmed and increased with 9%. At current, the distribution of these funds is based on student enrolments (input financing), on student achievement and progression, that is, on the number of credits and degrees awarded (output financing), and on research output. Institutions are financially rewarded for academic success of students from under-represented socio-economic and ethnic groups. More generally, a study voucher system (*'leerkrediet'*) has been introduced in 2007 to

support the students' study progress. A law in which the different laws are unified and integrated is announced.

There are three major 'legal innovations' in the contemporary structure of higher education. First, the law changes the length of the programmes. In the former system, a degree of "candidate" could be obtained after 120 credits, followed by a degree of "licentiate" that was obtained after 120 or 180 credits. In the new structure, there are two main types of programmes. A bachelor degree can be obtained after 180 credits and a master's after 60 or 120 additional credits. There are two kinds of master programmes: initial (master-after-bachelor) and post initial (master-after-master) programmes.

From the academic year 2004-2005 onwards, higher education in the Flemish Community provides five kinds of study programmes. University colleges offer *professional bachelor* programmes, geared towards professional practice, and *advanced bachelor* programmes for students who have completed a professional bachelor programme and want to specialise. Both university colleges (within the framework of an association) and universities offer *academic bachelor* programmes, intended to make students pass on to the master course, and *academic master* programmes. *Advanced master* programmes, offered by universities and university colleges, are intended for students who have obtained a master degree and want to specialise. By means of bridging programmes, holders of a professionally-oriented bachelor degree can gain access to master programmes.

A second major change introduced by the law is the transition from a threefold structure to a twofold structure. The threefold structure consisted of higher education courses lasting one cycle in university colleges, higher education courses of two cycles in university colleges, and university programmes. In the twofold structure professional courses and academic courses are distinguished. The professional courses are the former one cycle programmes. The former two cycle programmes and the university programmes are now grouped together as "academic" programmes and are transformed into academic bachelor and master's programmes. As a consequence, the division between professional and academic programmes is no longer linked to different institutions. Since the former two cycle programmes in the university colleges become academic programmes, it is no longer a privilege of universities to offer academic programmes. Linked to this change, the creation of higher education associations was legislated. An association is a co-operation between a university and one or more university colleges. As a result there are five associations in Flanders with the universities of Leuven, Ghent, Antwerp, Hasselt and Brussels as centres. Together with twelve university colleges, the K.U.Leuven forms the "K.U.Leuven Association". The associations are charged, among other things, with improving the research capacity of university colleges, consulting about a rational supply of study programmes, structuring programmes and transition possibilities,

the development of a shared approach for quality assurance, organising student counselling, and educational innovation and improvement.

The reform of the quality assurance system in co-operation with the Netherlands is a third important innovation. Bachelor and master's degrees can only be granted by accredited institutions; accreditation 'guarantees' the minimum quality of a programme. In addition, accreditation is a prerequisite for funding by the government for these programmes, and study financing for students. In September 2003 a new governmental accreditation body, the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (*Nederlands Vlaams accreditatie orgaan*), was installed. Each programme is visited and accredited every eight years. All accredited study programmes are included in the Higher Education Register (*Hoger Onderwijs Register*), which is a publicly available register containing information on the study programmes and the institutions offering these study programmes, that can be consulted on-line.

Higher education institutions are responsible for their policies and quality control. The government pursues a politics of non-intervention, combined with a strong emphasis on quality, both in teaching and research, as the ultimate goal. Granting autonomy to higher education institutions and making them responsible for their decisions increases the extent of the institutions' own reflection on the programmes they offer and, for instance, allows them to keep track of international tendencies. A downside for the higher education institutions is the high level of reporting duties to the government ('red tape').

A restriction on the institution's autonomy is that from now on, as a general principle, an institution can only create a new programme if it is allowed to organise programmes in the specific discipline (as determined by law) and if an existing one is cancelled.

The introduction of the two-cycle bachelor-master structure was only one of the Bologna objectives. Other elements of the agreement were already operative in Flanders, others were new.

The Flemish legislation already incorporated the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement with a view on improving the international transparency and recognition of study abroad, both for incoming and outgoing students. Both the pre-Bologna and Bologna study programmes are described in 'study points' (or ECTS credits) with each study point representing 25 to 30 hours of study time, including contact hours, assimilation time, assignments, training, final dissertations, and exams. The Diploma Supplement was introduced in 1991 and is currently based on the model developed in 1998 by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The Diploma Supplement is delivered to students free of charge. It is automatically delivered in Dutch and upon the student's request in English.

The law on flexibility introduced a more flexible way of organising study programmes than was common practice at that time. Study programmes were rather strictly organised on the basis of study years, with study progression measured by passing or failing the exams of each study year. This system was replaced by a credit accumulation system, although model trajectories of 60 credits for each academic year (that is, roughly one study year) still are defined by the higher education institutions. At the same time, provisions were made to allow for the recognition of competences and qualifications gained outside the formal education system. This should make possible flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning.

The law on teacher education of 2007 transformed the rather diverse landscape of teacher education and forced different actors to collaborate. In universities, the old 'academic teacher education' of 45 ECTS credits was transformed into a 'specific teacher education' of 60 ECTS-credits (30 credits for theoretical courses, followed by 30 credits for teaching practice). Students in master programmes of 60 credits can choose to do the first 30 credits of their teacher education simultaneously or can start the teacher education after graduation. The first 30 credits of teacher education are offered as one of the possible tracks in most of the 120 credit master programmes.

6. University governance structure

6.1. The structure

The national legislation concerning the governance structures of private universities, like K.U.Leuven, grants them the right to define their internal structure. As a consequence, this governance and management structure of the universities in Flanders differs from university to university. There are, however, a number of common features. Among other things, the governance and management structure is, to some extent, based on representation of all staff categories within the university and of the socio-economic and cultural sectors of society. In other words, both internal and external stakeholders are engaged in university policy making. Students for instance also are represented in the governance and management of the university, either in a governing body or in a student council consisting of elected students and advising governing bodies of the university on student matters.

The basic governance structure of the KU Leuven can be found in the Organic Regulation (*Organiek reglement*), laid down by the Board of Trustees on advice of the Board of Governors. Further internal regulations (regulations for groups, faculties, departments) provide further details on structures, responsibilities, accountability relationships, etc.

Figure 1 represents a stylised picture of K.U. Leuven's internal governance structure. Basically, five levels can be distinguished. The first level is the Board of Trustees. The second level concerns the Board of Governors and the Academic Council. The third level is the university's daily management level ('executive') with the Executive Board. The fourth level is the Group-level – a cluster of faculties to facilitate collaboration between various faculties and departments. The fifth level is the faculty and department level. The different levels are organisationally interrelated, i.e. the executive board consists, among others, of the rector, the general manager and the vice rectors who are heading the Groups. The different governing bodies are described below.

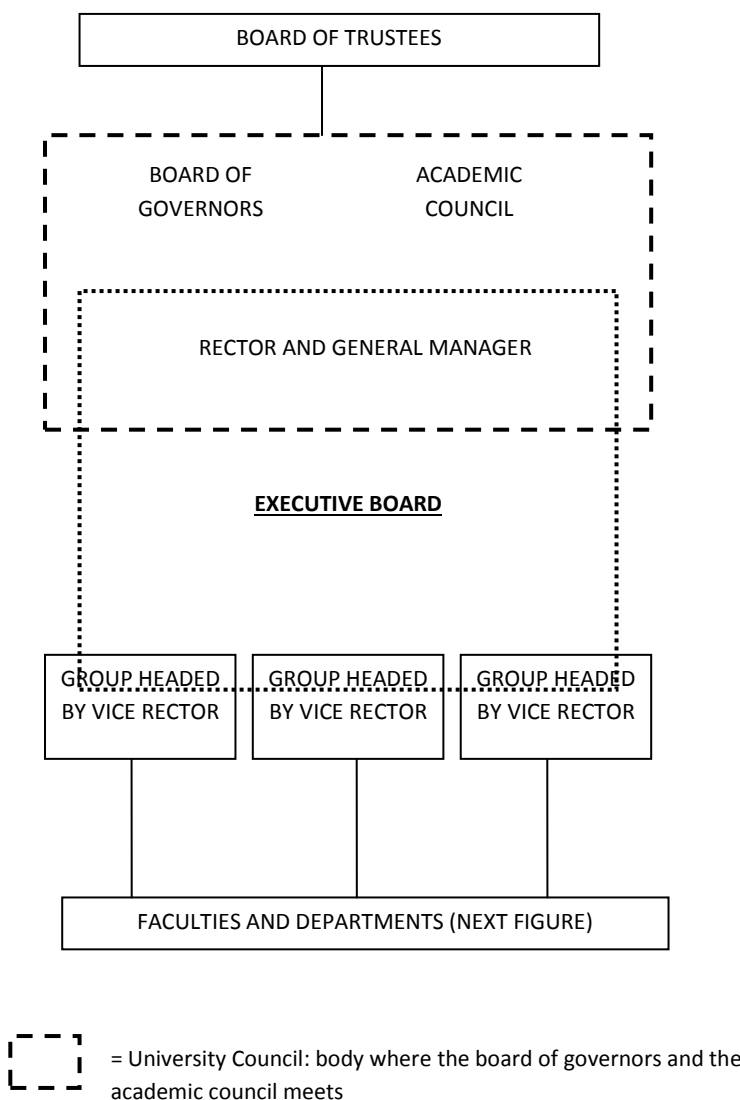


FIGURE 1: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE KU LEUVEN CENTRAL LEVEL

The Board of Trustees (*Inrichtende Overheid*) is the constituent authority of the university. It comprises a number of representatives of the university, the university colleges of the Association, the social stakeholders, and the diocesan bishops of Flanders. Currently this board has 38 members

who meet twice per year. It approves the mission statement and the organic regulation of K.U.Leuven. It appoints the members of the Board of Governors and grants them discharge.

The governance structure at the central university level consists of the Board of Governors, the Academic Council, the Executive Board, the Special Academic Council, the University Council, the rector, and the general manager.

The Board of Governors (*Raad van Bestuur*) is the body responsible towards third parties for the governance and the financial means of the university. It bears final internal and external responsibility but shares and delegates daily management of the university to the Academic Council and the Executive Board. Next to the members of the Executive Board (see below), it has members both from within the university and from outside the university, with the external members having a majority in the Board of Governors and one external governor that chairs this Board. The external members of the board are appointed by the Board of Trustees. Students too are represented in the Board of Governors. This Board of Governors has a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 25 members (currently 23).

The Academic Council (*Academische Raad*) is responsible for academic affairs (teaching, research and community services) and takes the final policy decisions. It has the full right of initiative, decision, and control in matters concerning education, scientific research, scientific service, and all related activities. It consists of the Rector and the members of the Executive Board (see below), the deans, representatives of professors, assistants, non-academic staff, and students. The current number of members is 35.

The executive committee of both the Board of Governors and the Academic Council is the Executive Board (*Gemeenschappelijk Bureau*). It is responsible for the day-to-day management of the university. The members are the rector, the general manager, the rector of the campus Kortrijk, vice-rectors for the groups (Humanities and Social Sciences; Science, Engineering and Technology; Biomedical Sciences), and vice-rectors for research policy, education policy, student policy, and internationalisation policy. The members of the Executive Board (except the general manager) have a four-year term, once renewable. This is the general principle for all governance bodies: a once-renewable four-year term.

The Executive Board assembles together with the deans as Special Academic Council to decide on the general policy concerning professors and it appoints and promotes them.

The University Council (*Universiteitsraad*) is composed of the members of the Board of Governors and the Academic Council and functions as a forum for dialogue between them. It is an advisory body

with regard to amendments to the mission statement, the organic regulation, and the appointment of members of the Board of Trustees and external members of the Board of Governors.

The rector is elected by all professors and representatives of other categories of staff and students for a four-year term. He represents the university community and chairs the Academic Council, the Executive Board, and the University Council, and he is a member of the Board of Governors.

The General Manager is appointed by the Board of Trustees on proposal of the external members of the Board of Governors, for a renewable four-year term. He is responsible for the financial, administrative and logistic organisation of the university. He can be regarded as the 'administrative head' of the university.

There are separate governance structures for the campus in Kortrijk, for the university hospitals and for Leuven Research & Development (LRD) (i.e. the knowledge and technology transfer office). In this document the focus is on the organisation of the K.U. Leuven.

At the non-central level, the governance structure of the university consists of groups, faculties, departments, and a number of other institutes.

The three Groups (Humanities and Social Sciences; Science, Engineering and Technology; Biomedical Sciences) are co-ordinating bodies between the faculties and the departments. It is an organisational level that clusters several faculties – an 'interfaculty governing body'. The composition of the Executive Committee of the Group (*Groepsbestuur*) is decided by each group separately, but in any case comprises the vice-rector for the group (who bears the final responsibility), the deans of the faculties of the group, the group administrator (responsible for administration and logistics), and a representative of the students. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the faculties and departments, sets out goals and evaluates their implementation, allocates the funding it receives from the central allocation model, and decides on investments. It can propose to the Academic Council the establishment of pools of excellence, and decides on proposal of the faculties regarding education. The Group Council (*Groepsraad*) is also differently composed in each group, but in any case comprises representatives of professors, assistants, non-academic staff, and students. It evaluates the policy of the Executive Committee of the Group.

The faculties (see figure 2) bear responsibility for the academic education they conduct. The Faculty Bureau (*Faculteitsbestuur*) is responsible for organising education and assuring its quality. It draws up an educational policy plan that has to be approved by the Executive Committee of the Group. The Faculty Bureau also allocates the financial means it receives from the Group. It is comprised differently in each faculty, but will always have as members the dean and representatives of the student body, the assistants, and non-academic staff. The Faculty Council (*Faculteitsraad*) comprises

the full-time professors and representatives of the part-time professors, assistants, non-academic staff, and students. The Faculty Council elects the dean from the body of full faculty professors. The Faculty Council also must approve the policy of the Faculty Bureau.

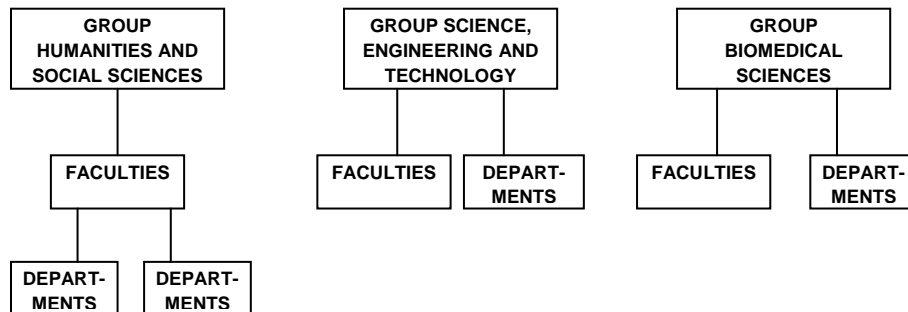


FIGURE 2: THE GROUPS AND THEIR FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

The three Groups ('interfaculty units') have different structures. In the first Group there are faculties and the faculties have departments. In the other two Groups there are faculties and departments at the same level.

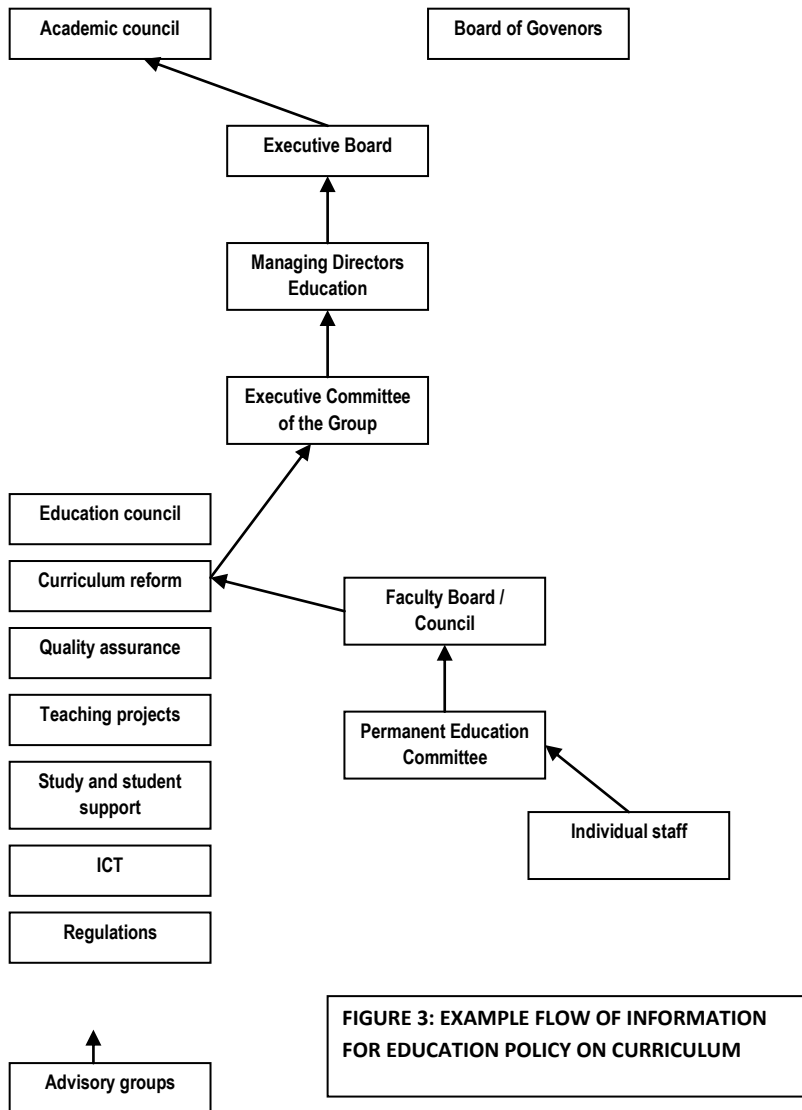
The departments are the main division for research tasks and therefore are structured according to homogeneous research areas. They are led by a Department Council (*Departementsraad*), which can establish a Department Bureau, and can elect the Chairperson of the department. Each department can decide itself how a Department Bureau is established and what powers it has within the framework of the faculty or group. In the Group Humanities and Social Sciences the faculties bear the responsibility for research and co-ordinate their departments. In the two other Groups, the departments are a separate structure, receiving funding not through but apart from the faculties. The Department Bureau (*Departementsbestuur*) bears responsibility for research policy and scientific service provision, it draws up a policy plan that has to be approved by the Executive Committee of the Group, and it has to guarantee sufficient teaching competences and teaching capacity for education.

Outside this structure of faculties and departments, there are several interfaculty institutes and similar initiatives (Overlegcentrum voor Ethiek, HIVA - Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving, Interfacultair Centrum voor Agrarische Geschiedenis, Leuven Statistics Research Centre, K.U.Leuven Energie-Instituut, LUCAS – Centrum voor Zorgonderzoek en Consultancy).

6.2. Decision-making

The flow of decision making is, in general, from faculty or department to the group, and then to the Executive Board and the Academic Council. This general picture will, however, be quite different depending on the subject at hand (subjects such as education, research, international affairs, student affairs, etc). It has to be noted that, apart from the governance bodies described above, a number of advisory bodies at the central level of the university also come into play (Education Council, Research Council, etc.).

For example, the figure below shows all advisory and governance bodies concerned with education policy, and the decision flow with regard to the establishment of an inter-university course programme. The stylised flow is as follows. Individual academics, the permanent education committee put forward ideas to the Faculty Bureau and in consultation with the Committee Curriculum Reform a proposal is drafted that is send to the Executive Committee of the Group. After discussion this proposal is send to the Managing Directors on Education and the university's Executive Board (including the rector). After this the proposal is discussed in the Academic Council.



6.3. Relationship central and faculty level

K.U. Leuven has, in principle, a decentralised structure, with the faculties as responsible organising entities for education and the departments as responsible organising entities for research and scientific service provision (see 4.1). There is limited direct steering by the central level. The central level sets out general policy lines, but because the faculties and departments are represented in a number of central bodies (including bodies at the Group level), these central guidelines are not made at the top and then disseminated towards the faculties and departments, but most of the time are the result of a discussion among the central actors and the faculties and departments.

The faculties and departments are autonomous entities. This does not mean that they are independent legal entities but that they have ample discretionary powers. They draw up their own

policy plans and, hence, can formulate their own goals and priorities, and can decide on the way in which to spend the funding they receive through the group allocation model. So they function as independent budgetary units within a group. The allocation model at the central level of the university divides government funding in four parts: a sum for the functioning of the university at central level, and a sum for each Group, according to an intergroup allocation model. This intergroup allocation model is decided on by the Executive Board of the K.U. Leuven and needs approval from the academic council of the university. Each group has an intragroup allocation model to distribute the group's financial means between the faculties and departments. This is decided upon by the most important internal stakeholders, including the vice-rectors (heads of the groups). In two of the 3 groups faculties and departments have a similar status. In the third group (Humanities & Social Sciences) departments are subdivisions of the faculties (see Figure 2).

7. Central administration

The following general figure shows the basic structure (figure 4).

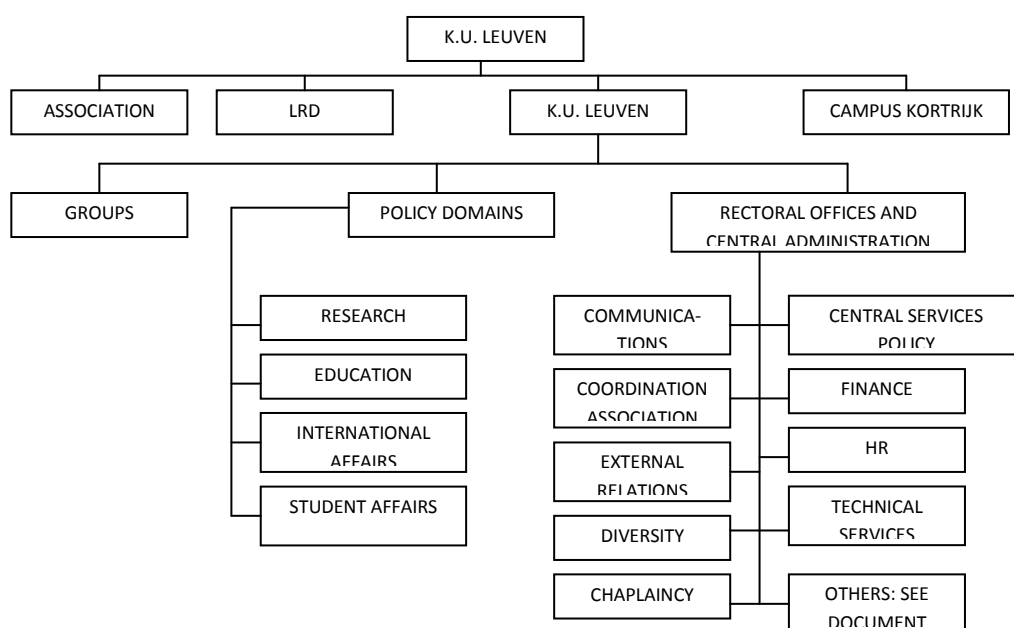


FIGURE 4: CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURE

In the following list we mention the administrative bodies. Most bodies have relatively clear tasks and responsibilities. Next to the central administrative units, all four policy domains (Research, Education, International and Student Affairs) have their own policy departments as well as administrative support offices. See also: <https://admin.kuleuven.be/raden/en/index>

Listing of offices:

- Rectorial Offices
 - Communications Office
 - Coordination Association K.U.Leuven
 - External Relations Office
 - Diversity Policy Office
 - University Chaplaincy
- Group Humanities and Social Sciences
- Group Science, Engineering and Technology
- Group Biomedical Sciences
- Intergroup / Interuniversity Institutes
- Research Policy
 - Policy Unit
 - Research Coordination Office
- Educational Policy
 - Office for Educational Policy
 - Centre for Educational Development
 - Centre for Media and Learning
 - Academic Centre for Teacher Training
 - School of Education (Association)
- International Policy
 - International Office
- Student Affairs
 - Student Administration
 - Student Services
 - Head Office and Policy Departments
 - Medical and Psychotherapeutic Centre
 - Student Counselling Services
 - Student Housing
- University Administration and Central Services
 - University Administration and Central Services Policy Department
 - Finance Department

- HR Department
- Technical Services Department
- Directorate ICTS (Information & Communication Technology & Systems)
- Other Units University Administration
 - University Library
 - Leuven University Press
 - University Day Care Centres
 - Exploitation Residences (hotels, dormitories, conference locations, guest housing, etc.)
 - Loyola International Nachbahr House (student housing for international students)
- Campus Kortrijk (provides a number of bachelor programmes)
- Leuven Research & Development (technology transfer office)

8. Research Management

The research policy of K.U.Leuven is the responsibility of the vice-rector for research. There is a Council for Research Policy (*Raad voor Onderzoeksbeleid*) to decide on the general lines of policy; a Research Council that evaluates project proposals for the Special Research Fund (funded by the Flemish government); and an Industrial Research Council that evaluates projects for the Industrial Research Fund (also funded by the Flemish government).

The policy paper on research 2006-2011 describes the policy priorities for research at K.U.Leuven. A number of specific goals has been included:

- to strengthen the research output, not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality (high impact scores);
- to strengthen research staff: to increase the number of doctorates, projects, and international staff;
- to broaden research funding: to increase the funding received from the Flemish government, from European funding sources, and from cooperation with companies.

One of the most important objectives of the internal research policy of K.U.Leuven is improving research quality as well as the internal organisation and efficiency of the research process. Therefore, a specific funding scheme for 'centres of excellence' was launched in 2005. It provides a 5 year funding for research initiatives within specific areas, often by means of internal networking between research groups with complementary competencies.

With regard to doctoral training and obtaining PhDs, K.U.Leuven has established three doctoral schools:

- Arenberg doctoral school (Science, Engineering and Technology);
- Doctoral school for Biomedical Sciences;
- Doctoral school for Humanities and Arts.

These doctoral schools offer specialized courses in scientific disciplines and training in different skills (academic, but also non-academic). They also have as a goal to attract international talent to K.U.Leuven.

The doctoral schools fall under the organizational structure of the groups. They primarily are an administrative construct with an own director and using academic staff of other units within the group, like from faculties and departments. Administratively they fall under the responsibility of the Bureau of the Group.

Support offices for research are the Research Coordination Office (for research) and Leuven Research & Development (for the valorisation of research).

Leuven Research and Development (LRD) was founded in 1972 and incorporated in the university in 1985. It was meant to structurally and systematically foster the 'third mission' of the university, that is, scientific services to society. With LRD, researchers no longer negotiate directly about contracts, but LRD does the negotiations. This rather strict mode of operation is at least partially the result of the law on service provision by universities (1995), that obliged the universities to draw up regulations concerning service provision, and that safeguards the position of universities vis-à-vis third parties (for instance, in service provision contracts no commitment can be taken with regard to results, only with regard to effort). But it was also an explicit decision by the university to structure valorisation practices.

LRD manages the juridical, administrative, and commercial aspects of contract research, it protects intellectual property rights, and supports the establishment of spin-off companies. It also established risk capital funds, science parks, an incubation and innovation centre, and networks of entrepreneurs (e.g. Leuven.Inc).

The income researchers or research groups gain through contract research are used to attract contract research staff and to build surpluses to be able to invest in research and infrastructure.

The K.U. Leuven has a monitoring system to follow research performance and output. This coordinated by the policy unit 'research' (see figure 4). The availability of research data (research

output) is an important element in the university's research quality system. These publication output data are linked the individuals and their groups.

At national level there is a central organization for bibliometric research and measurement of research performance. This organization is called ECOOM (Expertise Centre for Research and Development Monitoring).

The main lines for research performance and quality measurement are continuing high quality on the basis of past performance as well as stimulating "new quality" which is innovative and interdisciplinary research. The past performance quality measurement takes place on predefined bibliometric and other indicators.

Innovation quality is based on the extent to which groups are able to attract external research funding (Research council funding). This is particularly important for the Centres of Excellence.

9. Management of education

The management of the studies' processes focus on the quality of education in a cyclic process, the so-called plan-do-check-act cycle (PDCA). Various actors are engaged in this cycle. This means that various actors bear responsibilities for the organisation of studies. These actors and their roles will be discussed below. In this process the Programme Committee has the primary responsibility for the content and organisation of the study programmes. Of course the deans of the faculties also play an influential role.

The strategic vision on education ('plan') is part of the global mission and strategic planning of K.U.Leuven. The policies of the faculties are framed within this university-wide vision on education. Each faculty draws up an educational reference framework which guides curriculum development, which should lead to a curriculum that is coherent with regard to content and organisation.

The implementation of the vision and framework ('do') is, of course, the work of the teaching staff. For each programme or group of programmes a Programme Committee (*Permanente Onderwijscommissie*) is established, that lays down the educational reference framework indicating the goals and final objectives and the means to achieve them, and evaluates the programmes, the didactic methods and the exam system.

The three Groups are responsible for the programme supply in its domain, including all bachelor, master and PhD programmes.

Both the programmes as a whole, and courses on themselves, are subject of regular evaluations ('check'). Students are questioned about the quality of their education every two years through an online survey. The results are used both to detect good practices and to find points for improvement. The results are part of the staff file of each member of the teaching staff.

Every programme at K.U.Leuven is evaluated every eight years. The legislation imposes the development of a quality assurance system that, following international standards, consists of three steps: an internal review, an external review, and a public report.

The review system takes a study programme or group of related study programmes as its point of departure. First, each of the relevant study fields at each university has to write a self-evaluation report, containing the results of a critical self-analysis by all groups associated with the study programme (professors, assistants, and students). Second, the external review has to determine if a study programme achieves the objectives set at the outset. A review committee, consisting of experts who are not employed in any of the study programmes concerned, drafts a report based on the self-evaluation, student surveys, courses, text books, on-site visits, and so on. Last, once all the study programmes in a particular field of study have been examined, a general report is produced. The final report comprises a comparative section and a section on each university in particular. The review committee quantifies its judgement about the study programmes on six quality aspects: aims and objectives of the study programme, content and structure of the study programme, staff commitment, facilities (e.g. study guidance), internal quality assurance, and educational outcomes. The final report is made public at the NVAO website. (<http://www.nvao.net/>)

On top of the quality assurance system, an accreditation system was installed (see above). In cooperation with the Netherlands an independent Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation was set up. Together with the stakeholders, the NVAO worked out a frame of reference to evaluate and accredit study programmes. Students are involved at every stage. Higher education programmes that have successfully gone through the external quality review can send the review report to the NVAO. The NVAO then evaluates the thoroughness of the external assessment and accepts or rejects its findings.

All accredited study programmes are included in the Higher Education Register. Accreditation is a prerequisite for awarding bachelor and master degrees, funding by the government for these programmes, and study financing for students.

The visitation and accreditation process points to good practices and issues that need improvement, i.e. that need to be acted upon ('act'). Therefore, at K.U.Leuven one year after the publication of the

visitation report a follow-up takes place, and in between two visitations a 'balance moment', whereby the university management discusses the report and the progress made in between visitations with those responsible for the programme.

10. Management of staff

The Flemish Government develops the legal framework in which the higher education institutions can pursue their proper strategic policy on academic staff. As a general policy goal, the Flemish Government wants to guarantee the effective use of resources it provides to the higher education institutions. In order to achieve this, it has restricted the share of the operating grant that can be spent on wages to a maximum of 80%. In that way at least 20% can be spend on operating costs.

The general responsibility for staff management in the K.U. Leuven is the Board of Governors, who sets the criteria for staff members and has to officially approve every new appointment of staff as well as prolongations of contracts. In order to administer all HR policies there is central HR department. The HR department takes care of all administrative tasks related to staffing policies in house, without outsourcing any of these tasks. Of course professionalization training can be followed outside the university. The department heads propose to appoint new staff members after consultation of deans, groups chairs and relevant others.

In some ways, institutional autonomy with regard to staff policies is limited. First, because senior academic staff has tenure, job opportunities for younger academics are scarce. With an ageing academic staff, there will be many retirements in the next few years. But this is a slow process, and therefore the higher education institutions sometimes use the possibility granted by law to offer their senior academic staff an early retirement (from the age of 60 instead of 65). Second, the increasing amount of external research funding in universities leads to the appointment of growing numbers of junior staff. The number of senior staff, however, has to be paid from the operating grant and therefore cannot increase to the same extent. To give some leeway to the universities, the government has made provisions so that junior staff members who have obtained a PhD are allowed to teach.

The academic staff of universities consists of junior and senior academic staff. Staff may have permanent or temporary appointments and may be full-time or part-time employees. The career line of the academics in universities is stipulated by law. The occupational grades are:

- junior staff: assistant (*assistent*); doctor-assistant (*doctor-assistent*);

- senior staff: lecturer (*docent*); senior lecturer (*hoofddocent*); professor (*hoogleraar*); full professor (*gewoon hoogleraar*). All members of senior staff are allowed to be promoter of PhD's.

In public universities, staff members are civil servants. Private universities are obliged by law to give the same legal rights to their staff. The Flemish Government lays down regulations regarding leave, order, employment grades, and end of employment. The university management decides on the staff complement plan, that is, on the number of staff in each teaching grade. The university management (in Leuven the Board of Governors) can appoint by contract guest professors in addition to the staff complement plan. It also develops the rules according to which the tasks of academic staff are assigned. An appointment or change of tasks regarding their content, their extent or their nature can only be done after consultation of the body or the bodies to which these tasks are attached (e.g. faculties, departments). When tasks are changed, the member of staff has to be heard.

The workload of staff members is not officially defined. The basic notion is that all academics do considerable tasks in research and teaching. It also includes a part for services and maybe administration. The exact tasks for teaching and research are negotiated with the dean or the head of department.

In universities, a doctorate (PhD) is required for all teaching and research posts in the staff complement plan, except the post of research assistant which requires a master degree only. The management of the university can and often does set additional requirements for appointments and promotions in the senior academic staff categories. Moreover, it often formulates additional requirements for the appointment of research assistants, for example, candidates must have achieved excellent marks during their undergraduate training.

The university management (in case of the K.U. Leuven this is the Board of Governors) not only defines the criteria, it also appoints and promotes the members of academic staff. It can also regulate the way in which positions are declared vacant. A first appointment as academic staff member, however, has to involve a public announcement. An appointment as senior academic staff must be motivated by the university management, that is, it has to make an objective comparison between the scientific and educational capacities of the candidates.

Members of junior academic staff are appointed for a period of two years, which can be renewed twice after a positive evaluation. If they only perform teaching duties (*praktijkassistenten*), they can be appointed in renewable periods of one to five years. The period for doctor-assistants is three years, with a maximum of two periods and only after a positive evaluation of their scientific

capacities. In exceptional circumstances, in cases of long-lasting and grave health problems, and in case of pregnancy, the temporary appointment as junior staff member can be extended. Members of the senior academic staff can be appointed full-time or part-time, depending on a decision of the university management.

In order to be promoted from one academic function to another a person has to apply for that new function. In order to be promoted within a function one has to hand in a personal dossier indicating all performances in terms of research and teaching. There are faculty, group and institutional evaluation committees that evaluate such internal promotions at the level where it is applicable. The protocol for this process has been defined by the Board of Governors.

11. Finances

In Flanders, higher education is considered to be a public good. Hence, funding the institutions of higher education adequately is considered a public responsibility. Not surprisingly then, at this moment the major part of the financial resources of the higher education institutions is provided by the government. Nevertheless third party funding of some institutions (among which K.U.Leuven) is growing. The government has encouraged this by developing a legal framework granting intellectual property rights to the university when its staff is involved in contract activities with third parties (private partners or research councils).

In general, the internal allocation models of universities are similar to the funding mechanisms as defined by the government. Each institution can lay its own accents, based on the mission and goals it sets out for itself. Hence, funding and accountability of units differs in each institution (with a stronger or less strong focus on research and teaching). At K.U.Leuven, the allocation model distributes funding as lump sums to the groups and within the groups, to the faculties and the departments.

In general, public funding covers about 80% of the costs of universities. Public funding includes two streams of funds. The first stream is the public operating grant of the universities. The first stream covers the costs of academic education, scientific research, scientific services, and the administration of the institution. The Flemish Government funds separately the investment costs of universities (although the universities are owners of their estate) and the cost of social facilities for students (housing, restaurants, cultural activities, counselling, etc.).

The second stream of funds consists of the public funds distributed by the national research councils on a largely competitive basis. For example, every university has a Special Research Fund. The

research councils of the universities can use their Special Research Fund to pay for fundamental research and pursue their own research policy. Both projects and staff can be paid from the fund. This research funding is mainly output based: the number of master's degrees, the number of PhD's degrees, the number of publications and citations (ISI database).

Next to the first stream of funds (the operational grant) and the second stream of funds (research funds distributed through research councils), institutions of higher education can draw on a third stream of funds. The third stream of funds consists of income from contract activities.

The different units within the university have discretionary freedom to spend their budget that was decided upon at a level above and provided as a lump sum. But most financial transactions are controlled at the central level of the university. In principle this system of decentralised lump sum funding is a tickling down mechanism.

To enrol in Leuven students have to pay a tuition fee (maximum amount determined by national decree; institutions decide on actual figure). Tuition is €578 per year for full-time students. However, students who qualify for a means tested grant this is €80.

The operating revenue of the KU Leuven has increased significantly over the last ten years, from 442 million in 2001 to 701 million euros (apart from the revenues of the university hospitals – additional 773 million euros).

	kM €	% total operating revenue
Government funding and subsidies – basic funding	279	43.1
Government funding – fundamental research	106	16,3
Government funding – applied scientific research	100	15,4
Contract research with private sector and scientific services rendered	101	15,6
Other revenue from education, research and public services	63	9,6

Total revenue linked to education, research and public service	648	92,4
Other operating revenue	53	7,6
Total operating revenue KU Leuven	701	100

Appendix

Enrolments	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Total number of students	38,240	36,440	34,688	33,598	32,264
New first year Bachelors' enrolments	5,662	5,531	5,277	5,148	5,136
Undergraduate	17,277	16,672	16,235	15,909	15,553
Graduate	9,894	9,622	8,904	7,999	7,099
International students	5,565	5,007	4,352	4,039	3,947

New first year Bachelors' enrolments per faculty	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Theology	20	19	54	38	65
Philosophy	57	61	35	43	49
Law	747	726	733	788	787
Business and Economics	699	636	654	608	541
Social Sciences	256	306	329	375	360
Arts	743	722	666	651	726
Psychology and Educational Sciences	583	593	531	506	560
Science	386	357	353	369	332
Engineering	533	565	535	533	473
Bioscience Engineering	223	205	185	164	151

Medicine	817	828	667	639	664
Pharmaceutical Sciences	177	183	187	171	171
Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences	421	330	348	263	257
Total	5662	5531	5277	5148	5136

Staff per function – in FTE					
	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Other academic staff</i>	<i>Non- academic staff</i>	<i>Total</i>
2009	1,007	475	3,761	2,809	8,052
2005	959	576	2,891	2,530	6,956
Tenured and temporary staff per function – in FTE					
tenured					
2009	889	0	105	2,104	3,098
2005	881	0	66	1,919	2,866
temporary					
2009	118	475	3,666	704	4,963
2005	78	576	2,826	611	4,091

Publications in international reviewed journals	2008
Humanities and Social Sciences	1,189
Science, Engineering and Technology	2,120
Biomedical Sciences	2,717
Total	6,026