

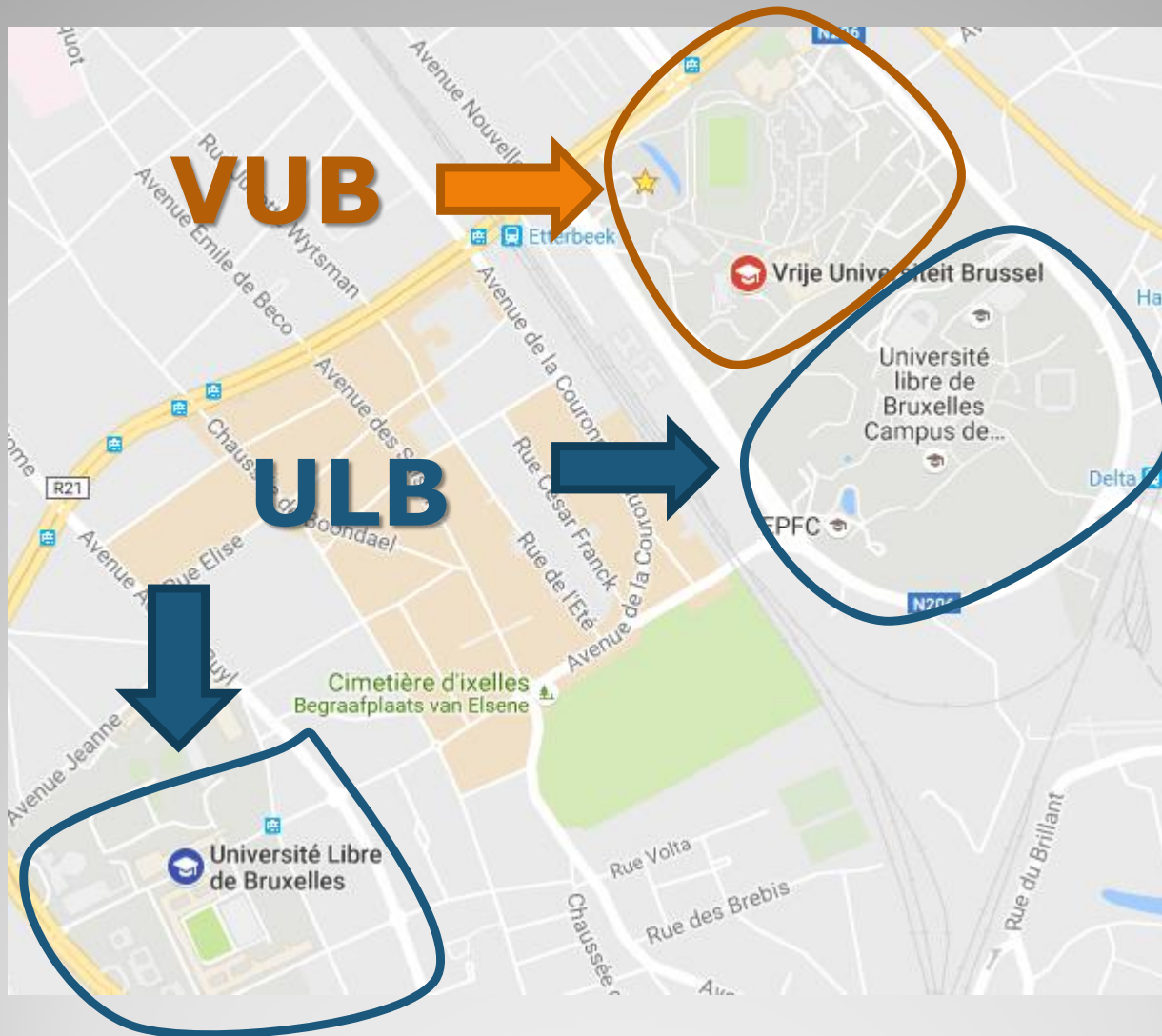
Transferable skills training at the VUB

dr. Hannelore De Grande
Coördinator Central PhD Office

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VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL



VUB – ULB what's the difference?

- Flemish government financially supports all Flemish universities with OJO funding
 - OJO= Support for Young Researchers
 - 4 million eur for all, +- 500.000 for VUB
 - Activities including
 - Training for young researchers
 - Career Development
 - International orientation
 - Interuniversity collaboration (at least 25% of all means)
- Enormous boost for all Doctoral Schools in terms of personnel, training possibilities

Flemish context

- Cooperation between Central PhD Office and the Doctoral Schools
 - Three administrative employees
 - Three DS directors: human, natural sciences & engineering, medical and life sciences
- Together, we decide upon the training needs of the PhD candidates
 - Continuous development of your academic & generic skills
 - Specialist and transferable skills training
 - Composed individually as you go
 - In principle not compulsory

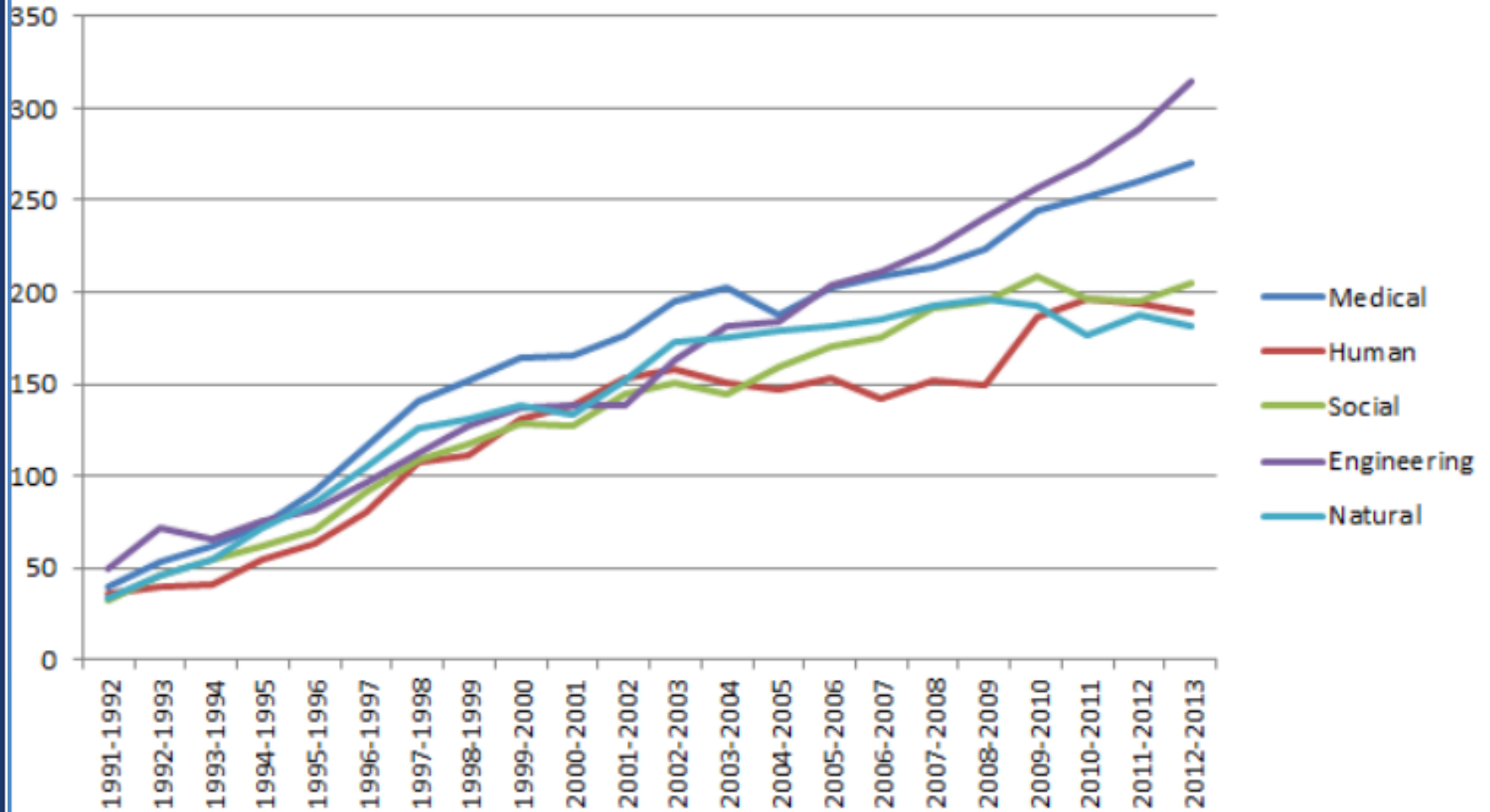
Organisation at VUB

Some numbers...

- 1692 PhD candidates
- 45% international students coming from 95 different countries
- 170-190 defences per year
- Mean time to degree: 5.3 years
- 600 supervisors

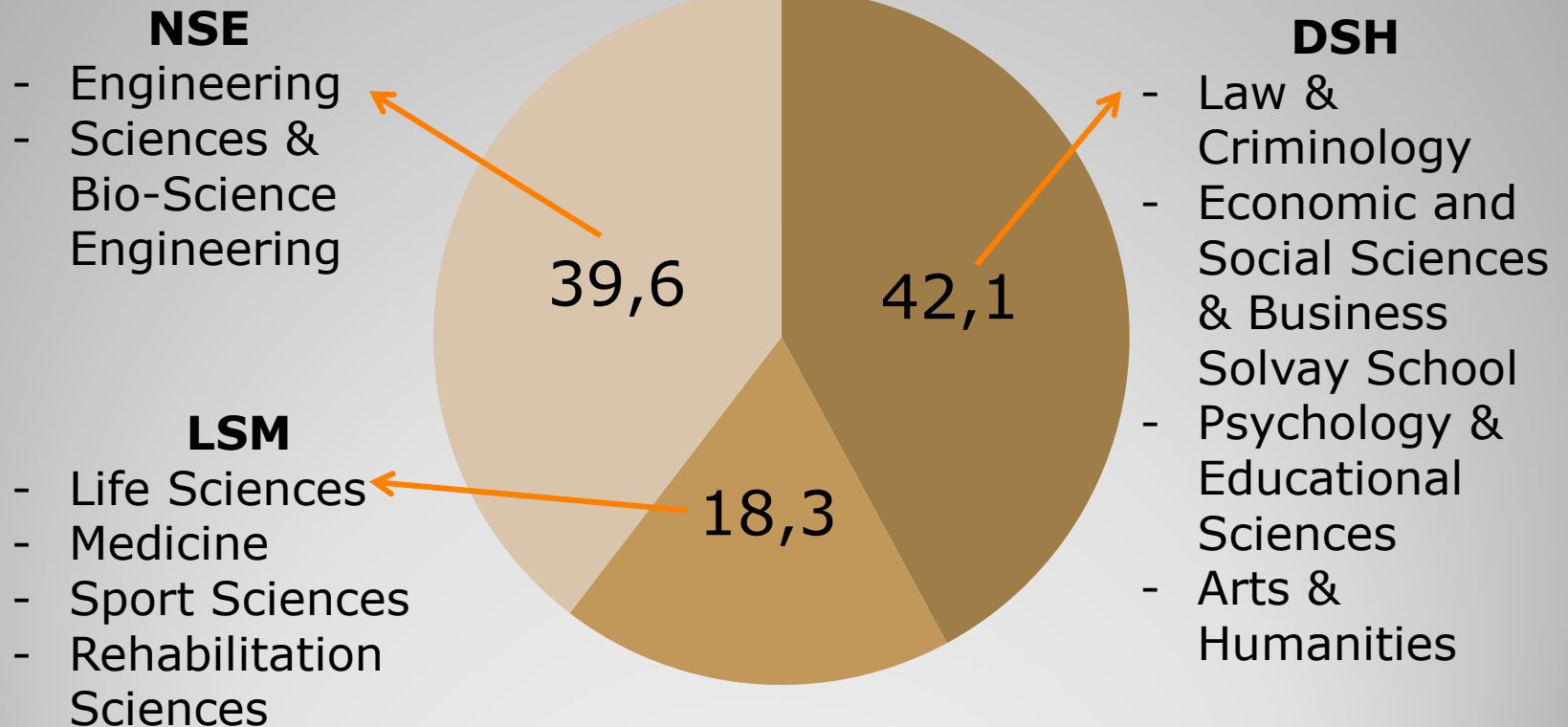
About our PhD candidates

Population of PhD candidates between 1991 and 2013



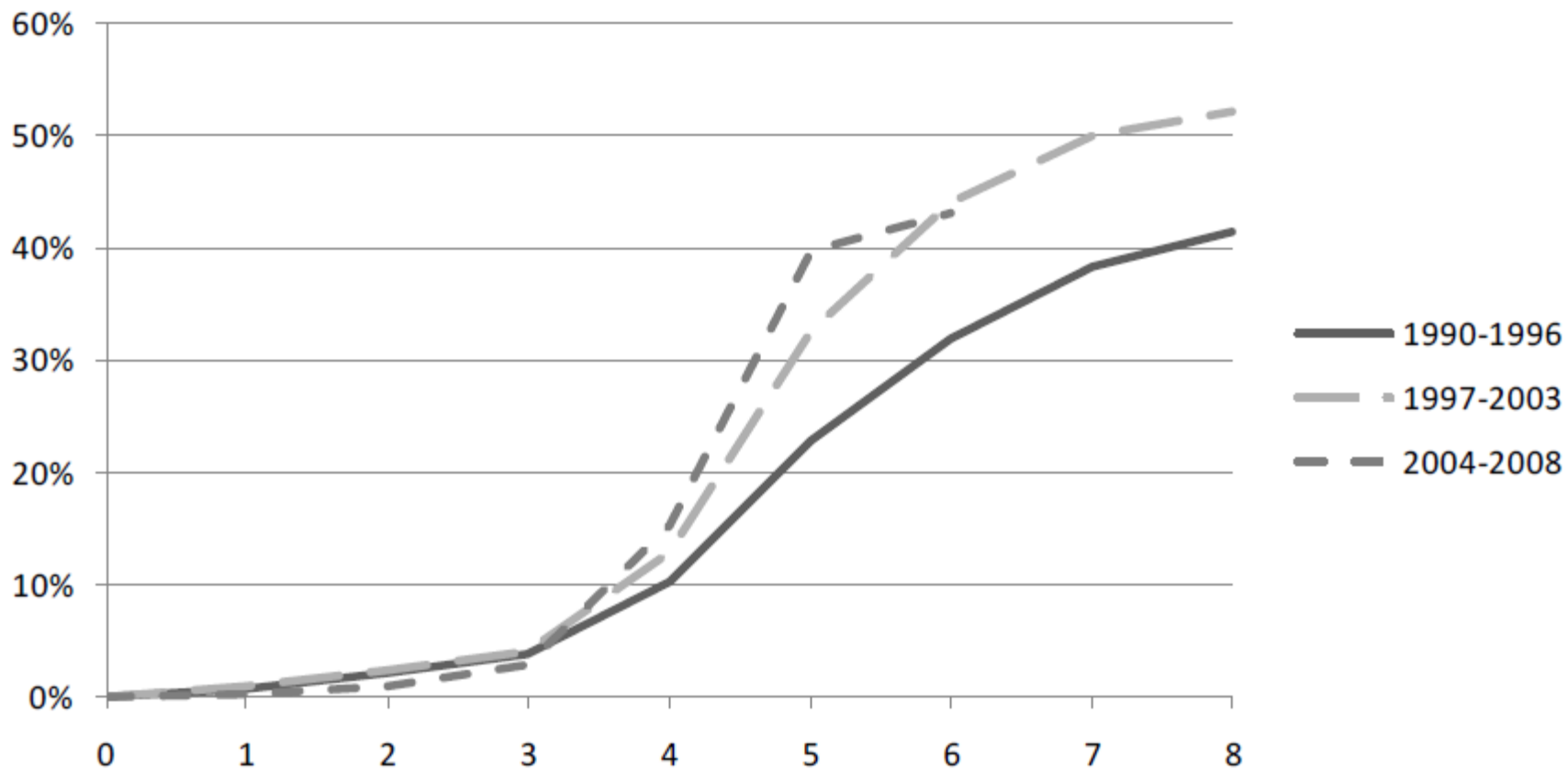
Source: HRRF database - ECOOM

Division Doctoral Schools



Source: Student Database VUB

Cumulative success rates within 8 yrs, per cohort



Source: Groenvynck et al. (2013)

4 main types of activities:

1. Regular courses (bachelor, master, advanced master, post-graduate,...)
2. Doctoral Seminars and Workshops
3. Research activities, e.g. publications and conference participation
4. Successful defence of doctoral thesis

Doctoral Training

Composition of training offer

- Surveys on training needs of PhD candidates
- Work together with internal services
- Contact from external trainings
- Bottom-up initiatives by PhD candidates/postdocs
- Looking for best practices, from other Flemish universities or abroad

Doctoral Training

1. Information, welcome & research culture
 - Introduction to scientific integrity, intellectual property, bib tour,...
2. Organising information and library research
 - Information Retrieval for PhD students, From Research Question to Literature Study, Web of Science, Latex for Junior researchers,...
3. Academic writing and publishing
 - Academic English I & II, Writing an article and abstract in the humanities/natural sciences, Publishing Your Article in a Scientific Journal,...
4. Presentation and science communication
 - Presentation Skills, Popular Scientific Writing, How to create an engaging Research Presentation/Poster, How to handle the media,...

Seminars & Workshops

- 5. Methodology
 - Both quantitative and qualitative: Statistics for PhD students, Focus groups interviews for advanced users, Introduction to logical methods,...
- 6. Funding
 - Writing proposals, introduction for FWO/IWT scholarships,...
- 7. Transferable skills and career development
 - Managing my PhD, personal effectiveness, leadership, networking, conflict handling, life after a phd series
 - Career courses in cooperation with career center

Seminars & Workshops

Introduction Week

- Introduction to
 - Rules and Regulations of doing a PhD at the VUB – Doctoral Schools
 - Scientific Integrity
 - Intellectual Property Rights and Technology Transfer
 - Publication Database PURE
 - Publishing Articles & Registering Output

Information & research culture

Academic English Courses

- Cooperation with internal service
- Started of with one course on upgrading level of English – in cooperation with Academic Language Center VUB
- At present: 3 courses per semester
 - Introductory course to Academic English
 - Academic English I
 - Academic English II
- Coming up: quick course on Academic English

Academic Writing & Publishing

Summer School Science Communication

- Initiated at VUB
- Already 4 interuniversity editions (2 VUB, 1 KULeuven, 1 Ugent)
- 3 days with
 - Plenary sessions (debate on how to work with media, Science Communication policy on university level, etc)
 - Workshops
 - Stand-up Science

Presentation Skills

Communicating with impact

- Demand for empowerment courses – inter- and intrapersonal communication skills
- Evidence-based Leadership Courses by PERCO
- Tutor=has a PhD and works as a parttime professor
- Several tailor-made courses for
 - PhD candidates
 - Postdocs
 - Supervisors

Transferable skills

Life after a PhD series

- Organised by PhD candidates of Psychology & Educational Sciences
- Supported by Doctoral School of Human Sciences
- Several sessions:
 - Academic vs Non-Academic Career
 - Testimonials from PhD holders outside academia
 - Tailor your CV

Career Development

Tips and Tricks

- Work together within university
- Work together between universities
- Get involved in an international network of professionals in doctoral education
- Listen to your PhD candidates

Wrap Up

- Central PhD Office
 - <https://my.vub.ac.be/en/phd/docbe>
- Regulations
 - <https://my.vub.ac.be/en/phd/regulations-forms#central>
- Activities and workshops
 - <https://my.vub.ac.be/en/phd/events>

More information

- Hannelore De Grande, Lowie Geers, Nele Van Schelvergem
 - Hannelore.De.Grande@vub.ac.be
 - phd@vub.ac.be
 - doctoral.schools@vub.ac.be
 - 0032/ 2 629 16 53

Contact us!