Application of NQF and SQF's in designing study programmes and learning outcomes: department's perspective

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GHENT UNIVERSITY

Department's perspective

- **My 'natural' position:**
  - Not too much formal knowledge of qualifications/competences/learning outcomes systems
  - Not too much interested in it

- **Director of sociology program:**
  - Implicit ideas on learning outcomes
  - Increasingly aware of the value of a formal approach
  - Pressure from external review commission
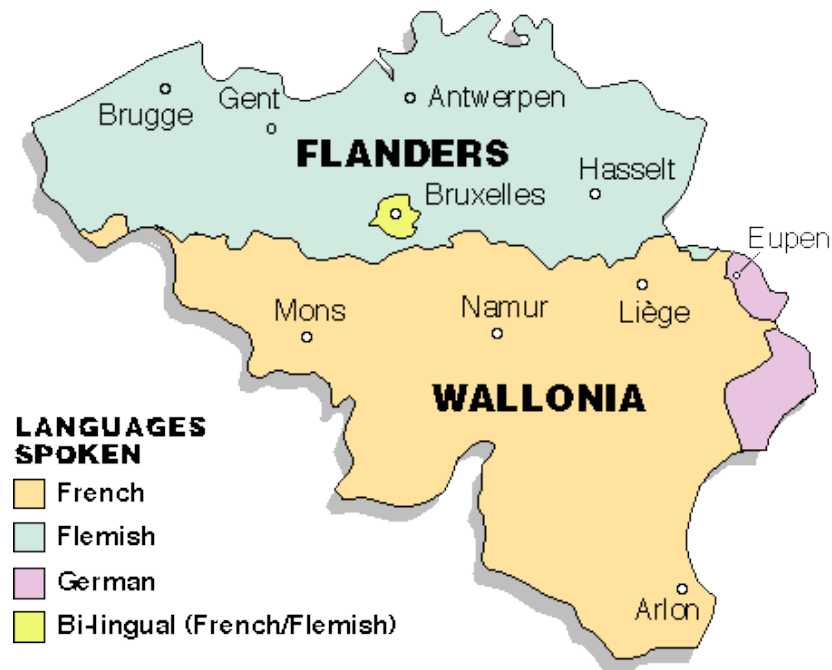
Starting point: external review

= external committee of retired Dutch sociology professors evaluating Flemish sociology programs

- **Three questions:**
  - 1. What are your aims?
    - *= what are the competences that graduated students should have?*
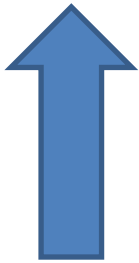 - 2. How do you organise your program to do that?
  - 3. Do you succeed?

- → **allowed (or not) to continue the program…**

Step 1:
I need a formulation of competences

- **UGent Sociology** **program competences structure**

Translated by…

The Pedagogical Bureaucrat

- **Flemish Sociology** programmes competences structure

- **Flemish** Qualification structure

- **European** Qualification structure

Qualifications Frameworks at the <u>European</u> level

- **"Bologna"**
  - Framework of Qualifications for European Higher Education
- **"Copenhagen"**
  - European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL)

I never read these…

➜ need for national & sectoral frameworks

Qualifications Frameworks in <u>Flanders</u>

- **The Bologna route**
  - **2003 → "Structural Decree"**
    - Qualifications for higher education in Flanders (based on Dublin descriptors)
  - **Long negotiations with stakeholders, official boards,..**
    - Employers, Trade unions, Education (including higher)
    - VLOR (Flemish Education Council), SERV (Socio-economic Council Flanders)

I did not know about this…

Qualifications Frameworks in **Flanders**

- **How do they look like?**
  - 8 levels (cf. EQF)
  - in terms of "competences" (= learning outcomes)

FQS level	Level descriptor elements	
	Knowledge **Skills**	**Context** **Autonomy** **Responsibility**
Level 7	– **integrating and reformulating knowledge and insights from a specific area** or at the interface between different areas – applying complex new skills, linked to autonomous, standardised research – critically evaluating and applying complex, advanced and/or innovative problem-solving techniques and methods	– **acting in unpredictable, complex and specialised contexts** – functioning with complete autonomy and a right of decision – taking final responsibility for the definition of collective outcomes

Domain Specific Qualifications Frameworks in Flanders

- **The Copenhagen route**
  - In 2009 → "Flemish Act on the Qualification Structure"
    - → "**Domain Specific Reference Framework**"
  - Universities write these together
  - NVAO (Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation) validates the descriptions

<u>Domain Specific</u> Qualifications Frameworks in Flanders

- **Procedure coordinated by VLIR (Rectors Conference)**

- **Program Directors of each Sociology Department come together and write them…**
  - **1 year before the external review**
    - → everybody needs to be happy…
  - **'Check by the stakeholders'**
    - → we selected the stakeholders ourselves…
  - **Easy: quite the same approach to sociology**
    - → only four universities, we know each other…

Domain Specific Qualifications Frameworks in Flanders

Flemish Bachelor in Sociology

1. *Concepts and theories in sociology*
2. *Methods of the social sciences*
3. *Analyzing social problems/issues from a scientific point of view*
4. *Societal institutions*
5. *Other relevant sciences*
6. *Design research questions and answer them*
7. *Academic writing and presentation skills*
8. *Find sources/literature*
9. *Critical reflection*
10. *Teamwork*

LEVEL:
- FQS BA, level 6
- Structure Decree BA
- DUBLIN 1st cyclus
- EQF LLL f6

Some bureaucrats controlled this…

Domain Specific Qualifications Frameworks in Flanders

- **Generic but space for profiling by each institution**
  - additional but compatible learning outcomes
  - own approach to learning and teaching
  - organisation/design of course modules

- → **A framework, not a straitjacket**
- → **Does not lead to common programmes or course units!**

Step 1 = 'compulsory'
I need a formulation of UGent Sociology competences

Step 2 = 'challenging'
I need a simple and coherent vision that helps in organizing/finetuning the Sociology program & practice

- Background
- The UGent Sociology Competences Structure
- The program
- The practice
- Evaluation of program/practice by students

Background

- **3 bachelor years + 1 master year**

- **Number of students**
  - About 70 new students in 1st bachelor + 15 extra students join after third bachelor (from other programmes)
  - About 45 students graduate as master in sociology

- **Doing sociology**
  - **→ research**

- **Organisation: not very top down…**
  - Implicit consensus among staff on program/practice
  - Need for more coordination
  - **→ balance between coordination and individual autonomy**

The UGent Sociology Compentences Structure

Four competence domains

- **1. Insight in 21st century society** (sociology/related fields)

- **2. Research skills** (quantitative/qualitative)

- **3. Project management**

- **4. Academic communication**

- **→ independent (academic) researcher**

Bachelor   **Master**

1. Insight 21st century

Bachelor	Master
B.1.2 Kritisch omgaan met de relevantie en beperkingen van specifieke sociologische theorieën en benaderingswijzen.	cultuursociologie, politieke sociologie of de sociologie van conflict en ontwikkeling.
B.1.3 Hedendaagse maatschappelijke fenomenen en problemen genuanceerd en kritisch duiden vanuit sociologische theorieën en benaderingswijzen.	M.1.2 Onderzoeksimplicaties afleiden op basis van inzicht in de relevantie en beperkingen van algemene en specialistische sociologische theorieën en benaderingswijzen.
B.1.4 Een beredeneerd en wetenschappelijk onderbouwd standpunt innemen over hedendaagse maatschappelijke fenomenen en problemen.	M.1.3 Een wetenschappelijk onderbouwde en doordachte argumentatie ontwikkelen over heden maatschappelijke fenomenen en problemen.
B.1.5. Inzicht hebben in het ontstaan en de historische ontwikkeling van de sociologische theorie in relatie tot maatschappelijke veranderingen.	
B.1.6 Basiskennis hebben in de hulpwetenschappen van de sociologie: biologie, (sociale) psychologie, economie, recht, politicologie, communicatiewetenschappen.	
B.1.7 Inzicht hebben in een specifieke hulpwetensch de sociologie.	
B.1.8 Inzicht hebben in maats institutionele raamwerken en beleidsvorming binnen structuren	

2. Research skills

Bachelor	Master
B.2.2 Relevante wetenschappelijke bronnen selecteren.	geïntegreerd uitvoeren.
B.2.3 Wetenschappelijke inzichten kritisch gebruiken/integreren in een literatuurstudie.	M.2.2 Gevorderde technieken van kwalitatief en/of kwantitatief onderzoek verantwoord uitvoeren en de resultaten hiervan correct interpreteren.
B.2.4 Op basis van een sociologische probleemstelling en literatuurstudie richtinggevende onderzoeksvragen en of hypothesen formuleren.	M.2.3. Inzicht hebben in specifieke methoden en technieken die relevant zijn voor specialisme van de sociologie.
B.2.5 Methoden en technieken van kwalitatief en kwantitatief onderzoek doordacht selecteren.	
B.2.6 Een geïntegreerd onderzoeksvoorstel doordacht uitwerken (onderzoeksvraag, theoretisch kader, onderzoeksdesign).	
B.2.7 Courante dataverzamelingsmethoden kennen, toepassen en evalueren.	
B.2.8 Courante technieken van kwalitatief en kwantitatief onderzoek verantwoord uitvoeren en de resultaten hiervan	

3. Project Management

Bachelor	Master
B.3.1 In een gestructureerd traject een (onderzoeks)project opzetten.	M.3.1 Een complex (onderzoeks)project op en uitvoeren.
B.3.2 Op basis van zelfreflectie en feedback van peers en sociologische professionals sociologisch werk bijsturen.	M.3.2 Een complex (onderzoeks)project op basis zelfreflectie en feedback van peers en sociolog professionals pragmatisch bijsturen.
B.3.3 Als actief lid van een groep bijdragen tot het verrichten van specifieke stappen in sociologisch onderzoek of het ontwikkelen van sociologische inzichten.	M.3.3 Als actief lid van een groep wetenschappelijke opdrachten verrichten.
B.3.4 Deontologisch correct wetenschappelijke opdrachten uitvoeren en rapporteren.	M.3.4 Deontologisch correct wetenschappelijke opdrachten uitvoeren en rapporteren.
B.3.5 Up to date kennis integreren in eigen werk	M.3.5 Up to date specialistische kennis in eigen werk

4. Academic communication

Bachelor	Master
B.4.1 Sociologische inzichten en/of onderzoeksresultaten weergeven in een heldere en gestructureerde tekst aan de hand van een academisch format.	M.4.1 Alle stappen van sociologisch onderzoek geïntegreerd en coherent beschrijven aan de hand van een academisch format.
B.4.2. Correct refereren naar wetenschappelijke literatuur en andere bronnen.	M.4.2 Gevorderde sociologische inzichten en onderzoek mondeling presenteren aan de hand van een academisch format.
B.4.3 Sociologische inzichten en specifieke stappen in sociologisch onderzoek mondeling presenteren aan de hand van een academisch format.	M.4.3 Gevorderde sociologische inzichten en onderzoek mondeling presenteren aan de hand van creatieve formats.
B.4.4 Over eigen sociologische inzichten constructief discussiëren.	M.4.4 Gevorderde sociologische inzichten en onderzoek presenteren en verantwoorden in een formeel gesprek.
B.4.5 Empathisch, kritisch en constructief feedback geven op sociologisch werk van peers.	M.4.5 Empathisch, kritisch en constructief het sociologisch werk van peers bespreken.

Competences per domain

Research skills - Bachelor

1. Clear sociological research question

2. Select relevant literature

3. Integrate literature critically in theoretical analysis

4. Formulate hypotheses

5. Select appropriate techniques

6. Formulate coherent research design

7. Apply data sampling methods

8. Apply standard quantitative and qualitative techniques and interpret results

Research skills - Master

1. Apply all steps in one project

2. Advanced techniques

3. Specialized techniques (related to subdomain)

The program

The 3 step learning curve

Competence domain	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Insight 21st century	Introductory	Advanced	Specialized, out of the box
Research skills	Simple	Average	Advanced
Project management	Small exercises, few integration of competences	Medium level exercises, some integration	Large, integrated exercises
Academic communication	Formal aspects	Balance between formal and substantial issues	Substantial issues
YEAR	1st bachelor	2nd and 3rd bachelor	master

How to organize the learning curves?

Competence domain	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Type and complexity of exercises	Small, straightforward, strictly organized exercises	Larger exercises, students have greater say	Free applications on cases selected by students
Learning material	Dutch handbooks	Selection of original literature in English	Own selection of literature
Type of supervision	Generic feedback, top down organization	Strict organization of feedback, but more space for one to one guidance	One to one guidance, more peer assesment, students organize their work
Examination	Small exercises, simple applications	Larger exercises, balance between classic and creative formats, oral examinations	Large and complex projects, creative formats, advanced oral examinations

Courses *within* learning curves

- **Each course situated in:**
  - specific competence domain
  - learning curve level

Insight 21 century	Level 1	Course: introduction sociology	Level 2	Sociology of modernity	Level 3	Migration & Integration
Level of insight	Introductory		Advanced		Specialized, out of the box	
Type and complexity of exercises	Small, straightforward, strictly organized exercises	In class interpretation of news-topics led by prof.	Larger exercises, students have greater say	Essays: comparing two authors	Free applications on cases selected by students	Students teach one hour on topic of choice
Learning material	Dutch handbooks		Selection of original literature in English		Own selection of literature	
Type of supervision	Generic feedback, top down organization		Strict organization of feedback, more one to one guidance		One to one guidance, more peer assesment, …	
Examination	Small exercises, simple applications	Multiple choice exam	Larger exercises, balance between classic and creative formats, oral examinations	Essay + classic oral exam	Large and complex projects, creative formats, advanced oral examinations	Choose topic (in migration) and make an insightful presentation

Courses *within* learning curves

- **Stepwise**
  - **Bachelor 1**: intro in statistics
  - **Bachelor 2/3**: in depth courses
  - **Master**: advanced, specialized courses

- **Integrated courses: full research cycle (ba2/3)**
  - **Sociological research 1**: research question
  - **Sociological research 2**: doing survey research
  - **Multivariate data-analysis**: analysing the data

Competences per course

Labels: **Courses**, **Insight 21st century**, **Research**, **Project**, **Commu-nication**

Course	B1.1	B1.2	B1.3	B1.4	B1.5	B1.6	B1.7	B1.8	B2.1	B2.2	B2.3	B2.4	B2.5	B2.6	B2.7	B2.8	B3.1	B3.2	B3.3	B3.4	B3.5	B4.1	B4.2	B4.3	B4.4	B4.5	Tot. "Nagestreefd"	Tot. "Nagestreefd & getoetst"
Sociologie																											5	5
Sociale en politieke leerstelsels																											6	5
Algemene beginselen van het recht																											12	12
Politicologie																											3	3
Communicatiewetenschap																											2	2
Inleiding tot de wereldpolitiek																											4	3
Algemene psychologie																											3	3
Biologie, hersenen en gedrag																											7	3
Methodologie van de sociale wetenschappen																											11	6
Statistiek																											2	2
Actuele maatschappelijke problemen																											15	14
Sociologie van de moderniteit																											7	7
Sociale ongelijkheid																											22	22
Organisatietheorie																											10	9
Historische sociologie																											16	16
Hedendaagse sociologische theorieën																											16	16
Sociologische benaderingswijzen																											10	10
Demografie																											5	5
Economie																											2	2
Sociale Psychologie																											3	3
Culturele antropologie																											3	3
Vergelijkende religiestudies																											2	2
Multiculturalisme en multiculturele samenlevingen																											2	2
Gender en diversiteit																											12	12
Kwantitatieve analyse																											8	4
Multivariate analyse																											5	4
Inleiding tot kwalitatieve onderzoekstechnieken																											15	13
Sociologisch onderzoek I																											18	18
Sociologisch onderzoek II																											17	17
Onderzoekspaper																											18	18
Totaal "Nagestreefd"	8	15	15	13	10	11	11	9	13	11	11	9	11	8	7	10	6	10	7	10	12	9	9	6	12	8	261	
Totaal "Nagestreefd & getoetst"	8	15	15	11	8	11	11	9	12	9	10	8	11	7	7	10	6	8	7	11	9	10	8	6	8	6		241

Integration of competence domains *within* courses

- **Social inequality/Bachelor 2**
  - **Theoretical course** + exercise in **qualitative research**
- **Historical Sociology/bachelor 3**
  - **Theoretical course** + thematic group presentation (**team work/project managament**)
- **Societal Problems/bachelor 1**
  - **Theoretical course**: thematic workshops + **writing exercise/communication skills**
- **Bachelor paper, Master paper**
  - **Integration of everything**

The practice

Passive versus *active* learning modes

- % of ex-cathedra lessons

	Insight 21st century	Research skills	Project management	Academic communication
Bachelor	54	32	11	19
Master	49	35	24	25

Active process → feedback

- Courses based on the *continuous feedback for all* principle
  - Pre-exam feedback for alle students on regular times

	ECTS-points
Bachelor 1	12
Bachelor 2	33
Bachelor 3	37
Master	30

Written exams versus *oral exams, papers…*

	Courses not only using classic written examination
Bachelor 1	10%
Bachelor 2	47%
Bachelor 3	71%
Master	80%

Voluntourism in Mexico

Masterthesis Sociology – Loes Verhaeghe

- **How does local community perceive Western volunteers?**

Four types of volunteers:

- Source of income
- Sent by God
- Arrogant, knowing everything better
- Truely interested world citizen

- Travel Grant
- 3 months of field work in Mexican village
- Participation in daily life, interviews

DOSSIER: **VOLUNTOURISM**

OPINIE

50

3

Lees later

Godsgeschenk? Voluntourists en Zoque indianen in Mexico

"Gracias a Dios!" antwoordden vele inwoners van Ocotepec me wanneer ik hen vroeg naar hun mening over de komst van internationale vrijwilligers. Toch wees mijn onderzoek uit dat de percepties rond 'voluntourism' niet zo eenduidig zijn en onder te brengen zijn in vier types. Het debat, onderzoek en het opzetten van internationaal vrijwilligerswerk kan gebaat zijn met betere kennis over de visie van de gastgemeenschap.

LOES VERHAEGHE · 11 JULI 2014

Gender-attitudes of Iranian and Afghan female refugees

Masterthesis Sociology – Katrijn Delaruelle

Bent u gehuwd met uw partner? آیا عروسی کرده اید همرای شوهرتان؟

1: Ja بلی

2: Neen نخیر

Integration?

- **Language, social contacts...**?
- **Gender norms**?

Quantitative Survey

- in French and Farsi
- via refugee-NGO's, etc.
- 122 respondents

Findings

For a long time in Flanders

→ **integration** in terms of language, social contacts

→ **NO integration** in terms of gender norms

Vluchtelingenwerk
VLAANDEREN

The grading system

Tabel 19. Het puntensysteem

Student's level	Academische diplomagraden	Beoordeling in lekentaal	Punten eindtotaal master	Vak
Promising academic researcher	De Grootste Onderscheiding	Uitzonderlijk sterk	+ 825 (16,5/20)	18-20
Able to set up own research, can start PHD	Grote Onderscheiding	Uitstekend	+ 750 (15/20)	16-17
Can start PHD if promotor sets up the research	Onderscheiding	Volwaardig	+ 675 (13,5/20)	14-15
Able to perform research in team, some experience necessary to become independent	Op voldoende wijze	Aanvaardbaar		12-13
Idem, long time before independent	Op voldoende wijze	Minimaal aanvaardbaar	+500	10-11
Needs more training	Niet geslaagd	Onaanvaardbaar		8-9
Needs much more training	Niet geslaagd	Compleet onaanvaardbaar		7 of lager

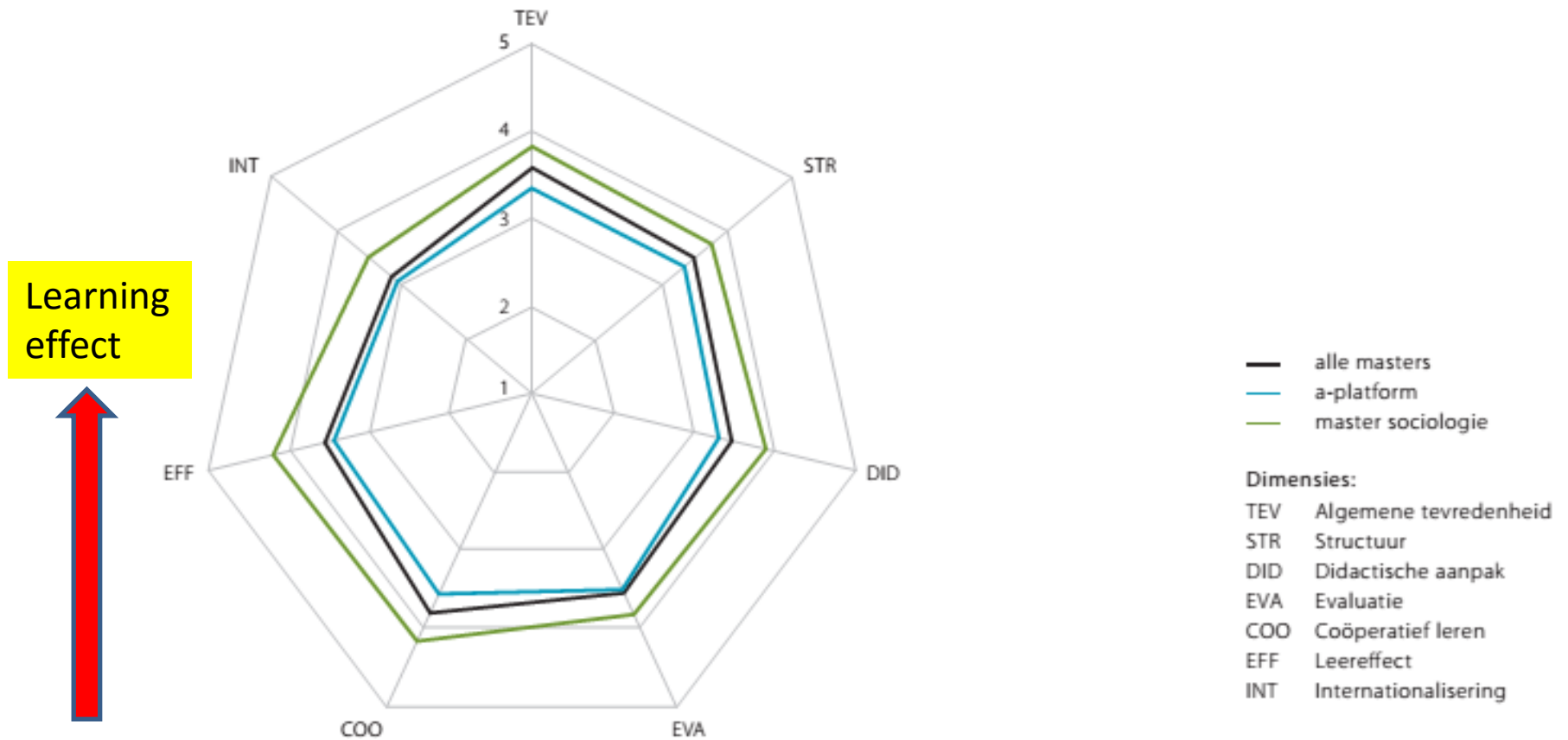# Do students acquire competences?

- **First + second grade level: 16% of the students**
  - 20% of students **start PHD**
    - in our department, medicine, economy, psychology, other universities, …

  - Master theses sometimes reworked into **journal article**

  - 5 most recent 'Flemish sociology **master thesis award**' winners are from UGent

Evaluation of program and practice by students

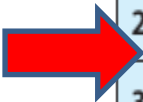# How do students evaluate the Sociology program?

Program evaluation, comparison with other UGent programmes

Learning effect

	alle masters
	a-platform
	master sociologie

Dimensies:

TEV	Algemene tevredenheid
STR	Structuur
DID	Didactische aanpak
EVA	Evaluatie
COO	Coöperatief leren
EFF	Leereffect
INT	Internationalisering

Ex-students: *"We do have relevant (research) skills"*

How do students evaluate the each year of the program?

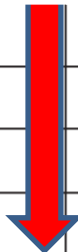**Course evaluation, average scores (on 5) for several dimensions**

	Lereffect	Doceerstijl	Structuur	Aanspreek-baarheid	Evaluatie	Cursus-materiaal	Oefeningen
1ste bachelor	4,0	4,0	3,9	4,4	3,9	4,1	4,2
2de bachelor	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,9	3,8	3,8	3,5
3de bachelor	4,0	3,9	3,6	4,0	3,9	3,6	4,0
Master	4,0	4,2	4,0	4,3	4,0	4,1	4,3
Gemiddelde	3,9	4,0	3,8	4,1	3,9	3,9	4,0

How do students evaluate the work load?

"How heavy is each course?"

Average scores per year, in %

	Very light	Light	Moderate	Heavy	Very Heavy	No Answer
1ste bachelor	0%	9%	52%	24%	8%	7%
2de bachelor	2%	15%	47%	24%	12%	1%
3de bachelor	0%	10%	49%	31%	10%	0%
Master	0%	8%	42%	40%	9%	0%

Employment sector

Figuur 2. Tewerkstelling van oud-studenten 2008 en 2010[70]
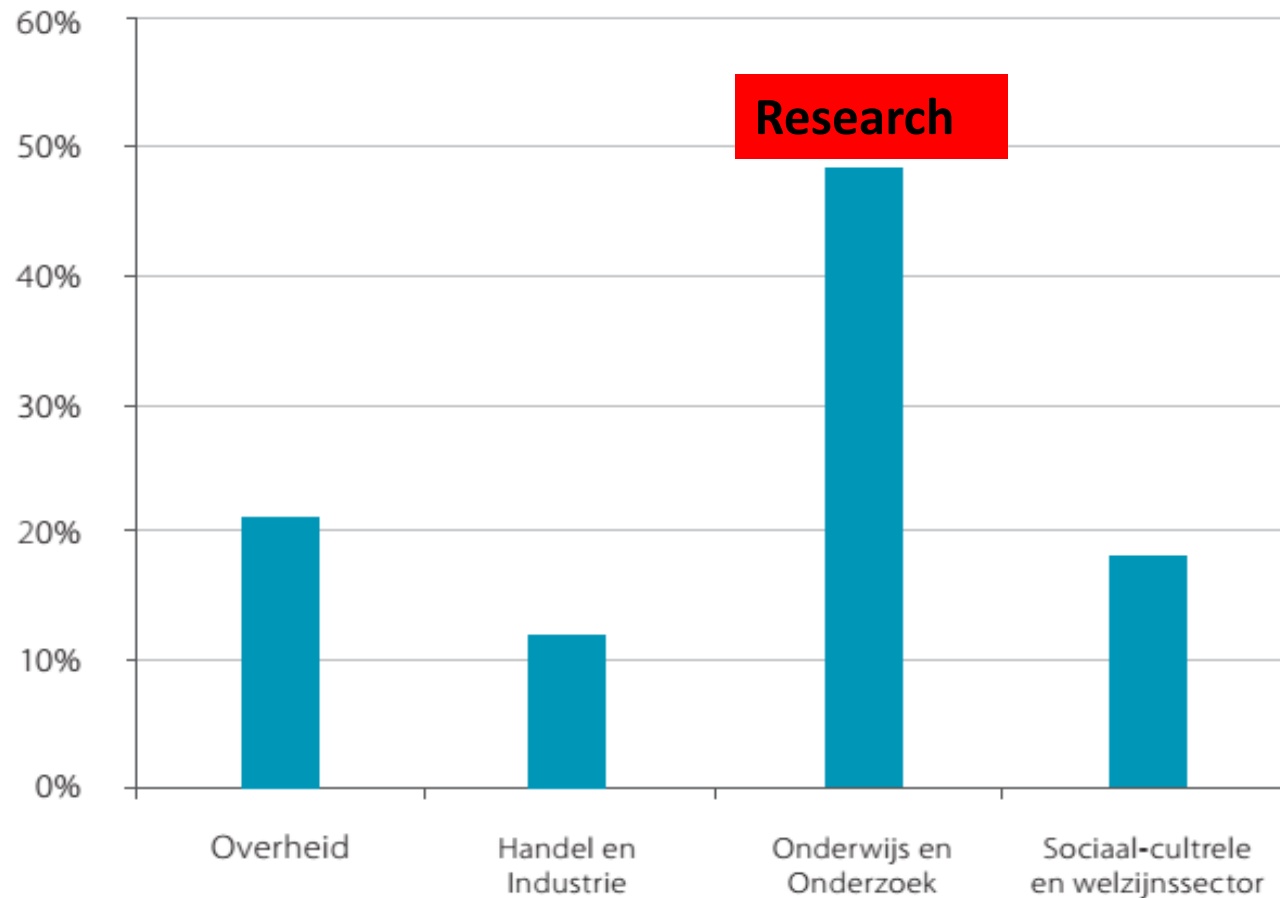
Conclusion: are competences/learning curves useful?

- **Competences approach = making the implicit explicit**
  - → **1. Reforming the program & practices**
    - **Project management**: new bach/ma thesis supervision method
    - **Academic communication**: guideline book
  - → **2. Monitoring** program/practices/examination
  - → **3. Informing teaching staff** (new staff, assistants…)
    - intake interview
    - advise on examination, teaching practices, …
  - → **4. Informing students** (!) – new and old ones
    - "*we do not want to be academic researchers*"
    - "*we do not know what sociologists do outside academia*"