


PURPOSE

Ghent University's **public accountability** about the quality of its study programmes is laid down by law. By means of this so-called “publicly available information” study programmes position themselves in terms of unique selling points, explicit strengths, and weaknesses from a quality assurance perspective. The publicly available information, in other words, is a concise and broadly accessible summary of the information available in the Education Monitor. This summary is published on the [Study Guide website](#) under the tab “Quality Assurance”.

TARGET READERSHIP

The Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) dictates that study programmes provide (1) “information on all phases of the study trajectory that is at once complete and easy to read”, and (2) “publicly available” information on study programme quality. Ghent University chooses to bundle and publish this information on its [Study Guide website](#). It goes without saying that all information published there must be easy to read and understand by the target readership, i.e. **eighteen-year-old prospective students** without any prior knowledge of Ghent University structures or specific Ghent University jargon.



The screenshot shows the website interface for 'STUDIEKIEZER.UGENT.BE'. At the top, there is a globe icon and the website name. Below that, the word 'STRUCTURE' is displayed. A blue bar contains two menu items: '- ABOUT THE PROGRAMME' and '- STUDY PROGRAMME QUALITY'. Underneath, there is a gold medal icon with the text 'General introduction about quality assurance at Ghent University'. Below this, three icons are shown: a person with a megaphone (labeled '5 unique selling points'), a target with an arrow (labeled '5 strengths'), and a checklist (labeled '3 weaknesses'). At the bottom, there is a hand icon labeled 'tailored coaching programme (if applicable)'.

Take into account the following writing tips

Know your target readership

Do not overestimate your reader's prior knowledge!

Use simple language.

Avoid difficult words, jargon and unknown abbreviations.

Show some reader-friendliness

Write as a person, not as a company or an organization.

Write in a gender neutral way.

Do not use 'one'.



It is now commonly accepted to use the possessive pronoun 'their' to refer to a singular subject.

The study programme gives its students intensive coaching throughout their study career.

As a student in the study programme one receives intensive coaching throughout one's study career.

Students in our study programme receive intensive coaching throughout their study career.

Avoid zombies, write in the active voice

A variety of teaching methods is used by our teaching staff.

Our teaching staff uses a variety of teaching methods.

If you can add 'by zombies' at the end of a sentence (after the verb), you are using the passive voice.



Or: you can filter excessive use of the passive voice with the readability statistics in Word. Go to File→Options→Proofing→Show Readability Statistics.

Avoid nominalizations

i.e. converting a verb/phrase into a noun

The implementation of rubrics was an improvement to our assessment practice.

We implemented rubrics to improve our assessment practice.

'Brevity is the soul of wit'

Be concise.

Be specific. Delete information (words/sentences) that is (are) obsolete.



Let someone else do the deleting for you.

Take into account the following style and lay-out tips

Text blocks

Text blocks contain one main idea and are about 80-100 words in length. Use a text block for each new unique selling point, strength, and weakness.

Key Words

Start with a key word. Concisely explain why that key word holds true for your study programme. Be specific. If necessary, choose one example that clearly illustrates your point.

Harness the 'Power of Three'

Organize your message into three equal parts. It is a simple trick to make your contents more powerful, clearer, and easier to remember. See also: 'brevity is the soul of wit'.

We aim for publically available information that is clear, specific, easily readable and accessible.

We aim for publically available information that is a clear, correct and easily accessible.

Emphasis

Use **bold** for emphasis: do so for the **first key word**, and any other important words you might wish to emphasize. Steer clear of italics, underlining, or upper case.

Enumerations, or *fearful asymmetry*

The publicly available information is an enumeration by structure (see below).

Try to avoid (lengthy) enumerations when describing individual unique selling points, strengths, and weaknesses.

Is an enumeration unavoidable? Remember the 'power of three' and avoid (grammatical) asymmetry!

Our study programme has the following unique selling points:

- an academic and professional focus;
- a strong link with the professional field;
- you can undertake a work placement abroad.

Our study programme has the following unique selling points:

- an academic and professional focus;
- a strong link with the professional field;
- a work placement abroad.

Hyperlinks

Always place hyperlinks behind a key word or key sentence. Avoid using "click here" and never include 'naked' hyperlinks.

Useful Links

- 👉 the [English Style Guide](#) issued by the European Commission
- 👉 the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) (OED)
- 👉 the [British Council's English grammar reference](#)
- 👉 the [BBC News Style Guide](#)



- Study Programme Quality

Quality Assurance



This **default** introductory heading is used for all study programmes.

At Ghent University, we strive to educate people who dare to think about the challenges of tomorrow. For that purpose, we provide education that is embedded in six strategic objectives: *Think Broadly, Keep Researching, Cultivate Talent, Contribute, Extend Horizons, Opt for Quality*. Ghent University continuously focuses on quality assurance and quality culture. The Ghent University's quality assurance system offers information on each study programme's unique selling points, and on its strengths and weaknesses with regard to quality assurance.

More information:

[Education Policy and Quality Assurance](#)

[Opt for Quality](#)

Unique Selling Points



This refers to any features by means of which a study programme distinguishes itself from other study programmes **in a clear and traceable manner**.

This section allows study programmes to **market themselves to a certain extent, provided that the information is in line with the Education Monitor**.

1. Our programme focuses on **languages and cultures**: you learn two [region] languages and you are introduced to [the region's] high linguistic diversity. Through course units on anthropology, history and literature you will also immerse yourself in the continent's rich cultural diversity. Gradually, you will come to understand the interaction between language, culture and society.
2. In the context of **Community Service Learning**, we take our students beyond the walls of traditional lecturing halls. Several course units, research assignments and the work placement offer opportunities for gaining practical experience as a professional [add discipline].
3. **Academic and professional focus**: we train our students to become professionals with a solid academic background. You come into contact with topical and state-of-the-art developments in the field. You learn how to keep up with these developments and how to put them into practice. Our graduates are able to explain [discipline-specific] processes in society. What is more, they can detect opportunities to turn these processes into more sustainable, resilient developments.
4. **Strong embedding of the professional field**: the work placement in the Master's is one of our study programme's most important assets. For three months, students immerse themselves in the practice of various sectors, where they learn how to function independently and in a team.
5. **A diversity of perspectives**: in our study programme, we establish interaction between various theoretical and practical perspectives. In so doing, we go beyond the boundaries of our own discipline and look at [other related disciplines].

Strengths



This refers to **strengths** specifically **related to quality assurance**.

This section allows study programmes to promote **5 strengths of their own choice**. These strengths are **best described in terms of Ghent University's Six Strategic Objectives and/or the chapters in the Education Monitor**.

Here, too, the information must be **in line with the Education Monitor**.

1. **Research-based education:** choosing our study programme means opting for high-quality education based on state-of-the art academic research. The course units we offer are closely aligned with our lecturers' research expertise.
2. **Putting theory into practice:** our curriculum contains a large number of practical course units. You learn how to put recently acquired theory into practice in small groups. Je kan daarvoor rekenen op onze goed uitgebouwde laboruimtes en praktijklokalen.
3. **Knowledge creation:** our graduates are versatile Masters who combine their prior education with newly acquired [discipline-specific] knowledge. We train our students to become critical professionals who can work in a team, and teach them to think and work in a creative and problem-solving manner.
4. **In consultation with our students:** we consider our students to be full partners in shaping our programme. Students have a vote in all the important consultation bodies. We also pay attention to the participation of students working their way through university.
5. **Approachability:** as a small study programme, we invest in immediate and intensive contact between our students and our lecturers. Our students can count on thorough counselling on all aspects of their study career.

Weaknesses



This refers to **weaknesses** specifically **related to quality assurance**.

These weaknesses are **best described in terms of Ghent University's Six Strategic Objectives and/or the chapters in the Education Monitor**.

Here, too, the information must be **in line with the Education Monitor**.

1. Our students indicate that some course units and/or entire terms come with a heavy **workload**. While we continue to monitor this workload together with our students, we also work to improve clear communication on mutual expectations. In addition, we keep investing in an **optimal study success** so that all our students get the opportunity to graduate within the usual 5 years. .
2. When it comes to **internationalization**, we are not yet using the opportunities for staff and student exchange to the fullest. A mobility window for spending a term abroad is only available in the third year. We are currently exploring the possibilities for incorporating international exchange into a one-year Master's programme.
3. We strongly focus on an **exchange of perspectives**, e.g. by means of the work placement and electives at other faculties. Our current initiatives are still too incidental in nature. We are working to bring these stand-alone initiatives together into a strong and coherent whole.

Tailored Programme applicable) **Coaching (if**



These default sentences are only applicable to study programmes following a **tailored coaching programme.**

As stipulated in the quality improvement plan, the study programme in liaison with the faculty and the Education Department, is set to eliminate the weaknesses within a reasonable time frame. The study programme delivers regular progress reports to the Education Quality Board.