



**BELGIUM - FRENCH COMMUNITY
(WALLONIA-BRUSSELS
FEDERATION)**

Country Report on HEI types

Thomas Scherngell

Juni 2022



Belgium - French Community

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Wallonia-Brussels Federation, (Belgium - French Community)¹, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice Report on the national higher education system but complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2017-2019.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

Wallonia-Brussels Federation has listed by degree the higher education institutions authorized to organize recognized training, to grant academic titles and degrees sanctioning higher education and to issue the corresponding diplomas and certificates²:

- 6 Universities (“Universités”);
- 19 University colleges (“Hautes-Ecoles”);
- 16 Schools of arts (“Ecoles Supérieurs des Arts”);
- 86 Adult higher education institutions (“Etablissements d’enseignement de promotion sociale”).

The Universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation provide high-level training, with a close link between fundamental or applied scientific research and the subjects taught. The University colleges, each mobilized around its own pedagogical, social and cultural project, provide higher education with a specific professional aim. This is characterized by the strong link between the curriculum and the skills to be acquired in order to practice a profession. The University colleges fulfill their mission of applied research linked to their teaching in close relationship with the professional world and academic institutions. The Schools of arts open the doors to the world of arts and entertainment. They accompany students throughout their research, offering them an environment conducive to the development of their unique projects. They train not only artists, but also educators and social actors adapted to the realities of the field and of today's society.

With a strong local base, the adult higher education institutions are aimed at people with diverse professional and personal training paths who wish to acquire, develop or update their skills or simply give a new direction to their career.

Higher education is organized on a binary model and includes: The short type of higher education: these studies, comprising between 120 and 240 ECTS, take place in a single cycle and combine, from a pedagogical point of view, theory and practice, including internships in a professional environment or in a laboratory; they

¹https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/types-higher-education-institutions-5_en

² The list of recognized higher education institutions is available

- at www.enseignement.be;

- on the www.mesetudes.be website;

- on the website of the Academy of Research and Higher Education (ARES) www.ares-ac.be;

- on the website of the Adult Higher Education <https://promsoc.cfwb.be/>

- on the website <https://www.studyinbelgium.be/fr>

thus meet precise professional objectives. They are organized in the University colleges, in the Arts schools and Adult higher education institutions. These studies lead to diplomas corresponding to levels 5 (associate degree) to 6 (professionalising bachelor) of the French-speaking framework of qualifications. Specialization studies might complete the bachelor's degree (advanced bachelor degree).

Long term higher education: these studies, comprising between 60 and 180 ECTS, are based on fundamental concepts, experiments and illustrations and provide, in two cycles, both general and in-depth training. They are organized in Universities, University colleges, Arts colleges and in Adult higher education institutions. These studies lead to a final certification of level 7 (master). Specialization studies leading to advanced master degrees are also organized. In addition, doctoral studies and preparatory work for the doctorate are carried out in research teams, at the University (or in close collaboration with and under the direction of the University), and can lead to a level 8 certification (doctoral degree) awarded exclusively by a University.

Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Table 1 below provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics across the four types of HEIs. Doctoral studies and preparatory work for the doctorate are carried out in research teams, at the University (or in close collaboration with and under the direction of the University), and can lead to doctoral degree awarded exclusively by one of the six Universities. The adult higher education institutions are by far the largest group in terms of the total number of institutions (around two third of the total institutions). There are 16 Arts colleges, six of them are organised as private government dependent higher education institutions (funded but not run by public authorities). Four of the six Universities are private legal entities, though government dependent.

Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2019

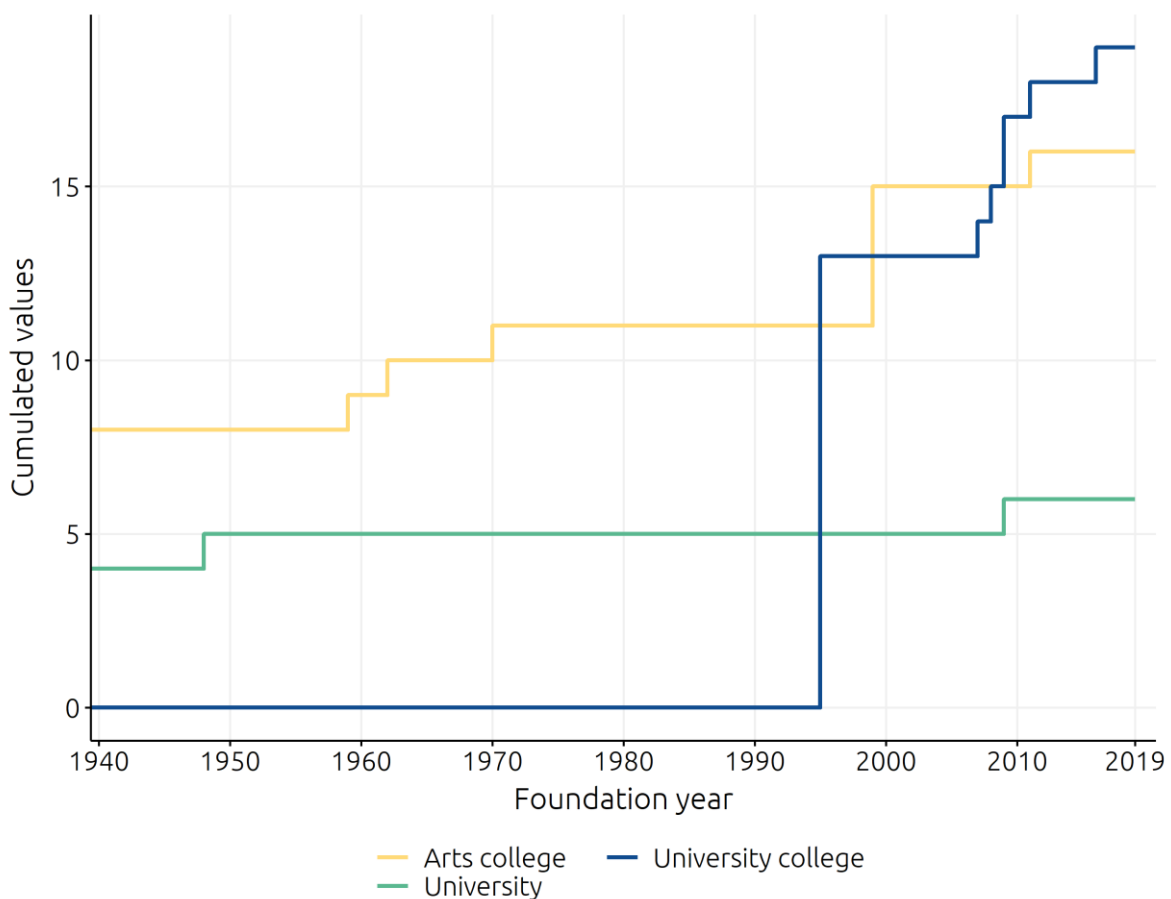
Category		N	Public	Private government-dependent	PhD awarding
Adult higher education	Enseignement de promotion sociale	86	56	30	0
Arts college	Ecole supérieure des arts	16	10	6	0
University	Université	6	2	4	6
University college	Hautes Ecoles	19	11	8	0
Total		128	79	48	6

Note: Only limited data on Adult higher education institutions included in ETER

Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of the Belgian higher education and its evolution over time. The HE system shows some deep historical roots, with the KU Leuven being the oldest Belgian University already established in the 15th century. Figure 1 overleaf shows that actually one third of the six Universities has been founded before 1940, just two additional ones have been established after the second World War. University colleges, in contrast, are a very recent phenomenon, with the first just appearing in the 1990s (indicating a drastic change in the HE system), and a gradual increase until 2019. Arts colleges show a somewhat similar pattern to Universities; a substantial amount of institutions has historical roots, established before 1940. The number of Arts colleges just increased after 1960, roughly doubling the number of institutions until 2010. Foundation years for adult higher education institutions are missing in the ETER data collection.

Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type

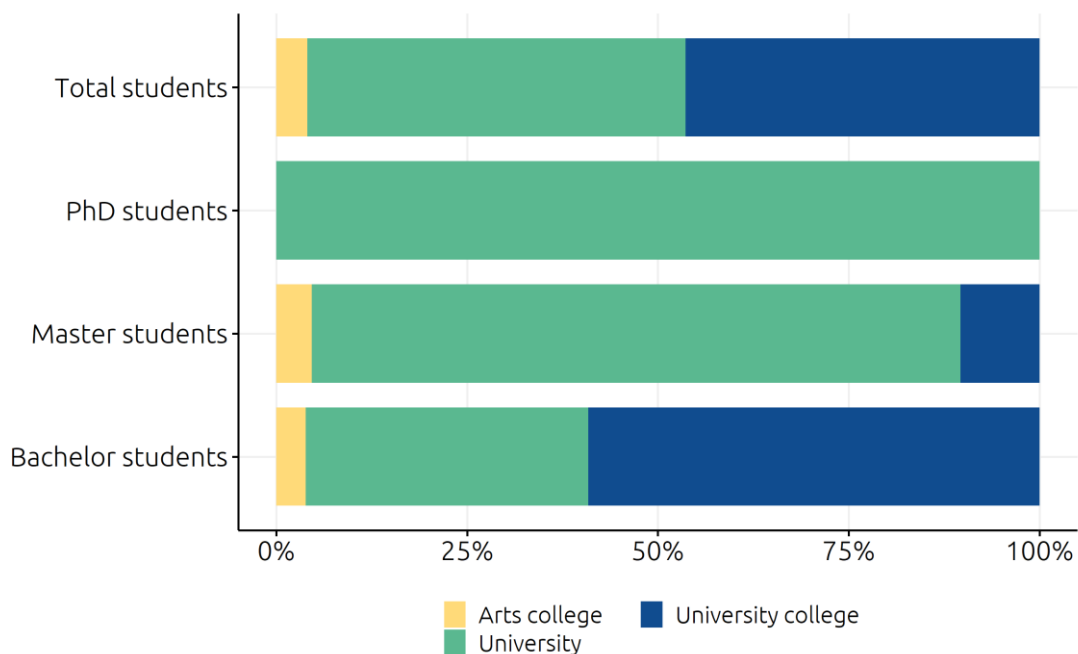


Note: Adult higher education Institutions missing

How are students distributed?

Figure 2 provides an overview on the numbers of students enrolled, disaggregated by ISCED level across the four institution types. Some interesting patterns are observable, though some numbers have to be interpreted with caution as data for adult higher education institutions are missing. As already observed in Table 1, it can be seen PhD students are limited to Universities, being the only PhD awarding institution type in the Wallonia-Brussels higher education system. In general, while there are just six Universities in the system, which is a share of just 5% of all institutions, the share of total students enrolled in Universities is the highest (more than 50% when not taking into account the Adult higher education institutions that are missing in this analysis). Accordingly, the six universities are extremely large institutions in terms of the number of students they enroll. This observation also holds when looking at Master level students. At Bachelor level, University colleges show the highest amount. Arts colleges that account for more than 10% of all institutions, just account for less than 5% in terms of the share of total students enrolled.

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2019

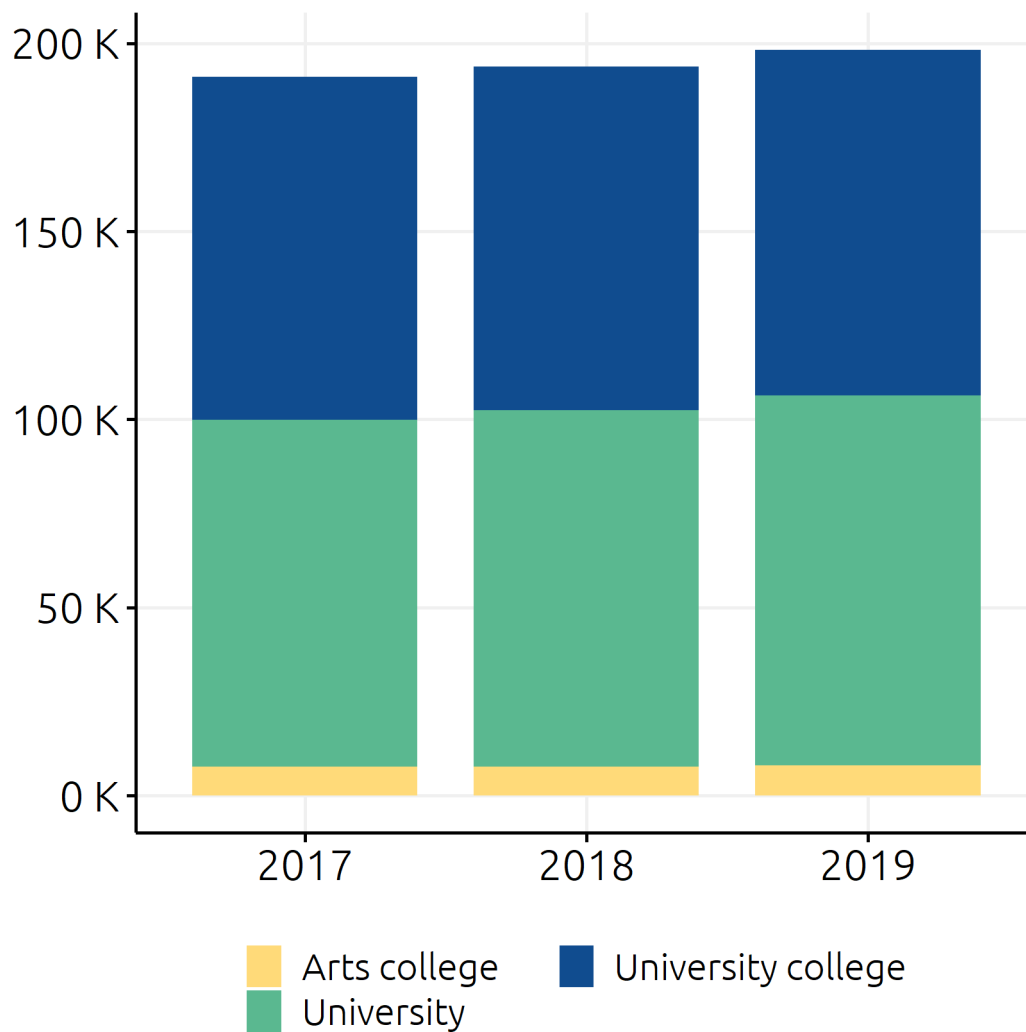


Note: Total students includes ISCED 6-7; Adult higher education Institutions missing

Changing roles over time

Figure 3 illustrates changes over time in terms of the share of students enrolled by institutional type. Data are only available from 2017 to 2019 and show an increase in terms of the total number of students enrolled. The composition across the different institutional types stays largely equal in this period, with more than 50% of all students being enrolled in Universities.

Figure 3. Share of students enrolled by institutional type



Note: Adult higher education Institutions missing



twitter.com/eter_eu



www.eter-project.eu



eter@eter-project.eu



Università
della
Svizzera
italiana

JOANNEUM
RESEARCH
POLICIES



AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

NIFU

Nordisk institutt for studier av
innovasjon, forskning og utdanning



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA