



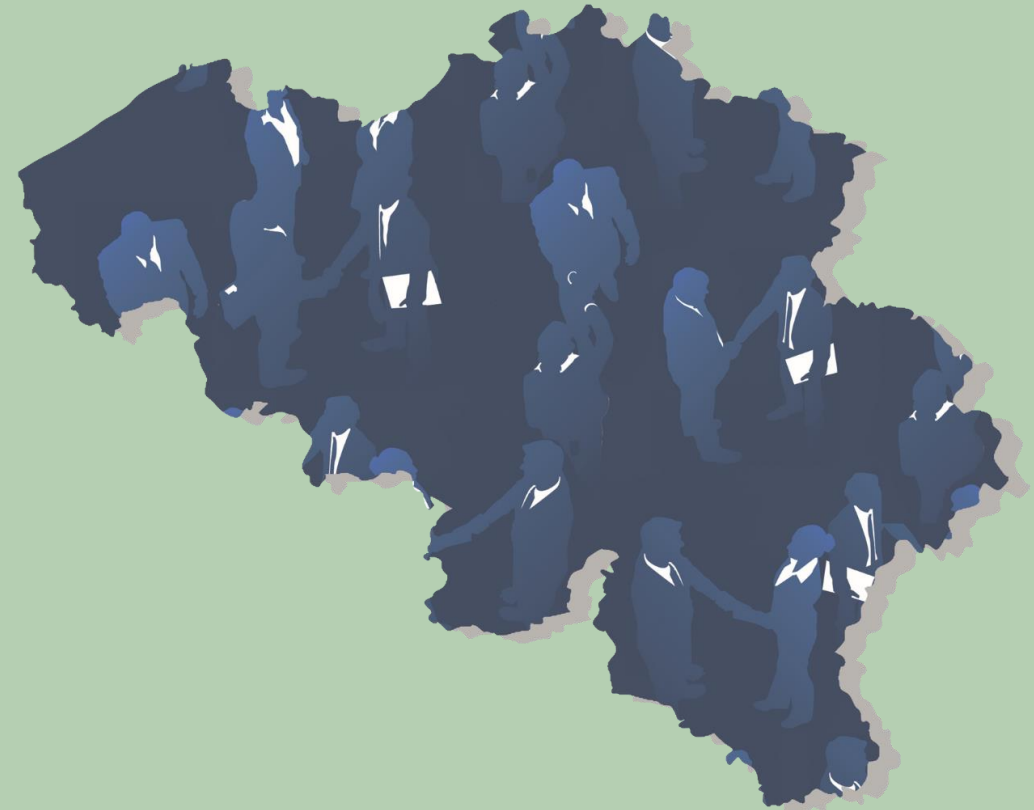
UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

State of University- Business Cooperation

BELGIUM

University Perspective

Study on the cooperation between
higher education institutions and
public and private organisations



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The State of Belgium University-Business Cooperation: the university perspective

Partners



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Executive summary

This report seeks to contribute to our understanding of the higher education institution's (HEI) perspective of university-business cooperation (UBC). Examining the perceptions of academics, HEI managers and knowledge transfer professionals (KTP) provides positive signs for the future, with 98.5% of all respondents currently cooperating with businesses planning to maintain or increase their cooperation in the future and higher than European average rate of satisfaction of the stakeholders with their current activities. Yet, more can be done, for example, by further supporting academics in acquiring knowledge about the business' needs and further developing UBC supporting mechanisms on the institutional level.

About the study

The results presented in this report reflect the perceptions of academics, HEI managers and KTP in Belgium with respect to cooperation between HEIs and business. Data was collected by means of an online survey distributed via email to all registered European HEIs in 33 countries during October-November 2016, leading to a total of 173 responses from Belgian HEIs. The study measured the perceptions of respondents with respect to their cooperation efforts, barriers, drivers, support mechanisms and perceived capabilities.

University-Business Cooperation activities

Belgian academics most commonly practice mobility of students (37.6%), consulting (38.2%) and collaboration in R&D (32.4%) with businesses. However, more than 50% of them do not engage in these activities at all. The academia is still oriented

more towards generating publications and teaching, while UBC activities might not be translated into career advancement and a number of publications for the individual academics. Even fewer academics undertake UBC in valorisation and management, with more than 60% of them not engaging in those activities at all.

Belgian academics clearly see themselves as the main UBC initiators. More than 70% of the academics report that they or their colleagues always or usually initiate UBC. External intermediaries and university management are seen as rather passive in UBC initiation in Belgium.

Not enough financial resources and understanding

Those stakeholders surveyed in this study (HEI representatives, collaborating and non-collaborating academics) indicate rather similar major factors that hinder UBC. For collaborating and non-collaborating Belgian academics as well as HEI management the barriers related to culture, such as the focus on producing practical results by business and insufficient work time allocated by the university for academics' UBC activities appear to be the most pressing. Certainly, lack of funding is seen as a barrier for Belgian collaborating academics as well, especially from the business side, but is perceived as slightly less inhibiting for non-collaborating academics.

This report provides a university perspective on university-business cooperation (UBC), drawing on a survey of European higher education institutions, academics and businesses. While acknowledging limitations relating to the generalisability of the results due to the non-random nature of the sample, the results provide positive signs both of the present and for the future, while also providing an indication as to areas that require future development.

Executive summary

Relationship is the key; funding is the keychain

A well-established relationship between the partners is a key to successful collaborative practices, which is agreed upon by both Belgian academics and HEI managers. Mutual trust and a shared goal considerably facilitate UBC. However, the relationship should be supported by the structures and, more importantly, funding. The existence of funding to undertake the cooperation is one of the more frequently mentioned facilitator of UBC by all Belgian respondents, along with prior relations with the business partner.

Social responsibility motivates UBC engagement

HEI stakeholders in Belgium are driven by rather similar motivations to engage in UBC. Both academics and HEI managers are motivated by research-oriented and society-driven benefits. However, Belgian academics that cooperate with businesses are more motivated to undertake UBC to advance their research (such as to gain new insights and apply their research in practice), while non-collaborating academics are more inclined towards improving graduate employability and addressing societal challenges, HEI managers hold a view that represents the mixture of both previously mentioned groups.

Likewise, Belgian academics and HEI managers have a similar view on which stakeholder groups benefit the most from UBC: they are business, students and universities.

Policies and strategy drive collaboration

Overall, the policy, strategic, structural and operational mechanisms to support UBC are developed at a medium level in Belgian HEI, which, nonetheless, exceeds the European average. The most developed policy mechanisms are connected with regional innovation, entrepreneurship activities, and support for UBC. On the institutional level, Belgian HEI representatives recognise top-level management commitment to UBC and higher level of the development of paper strategies, such as mission and vision embracing cooperation. Agencies dedicated to UBC and incubators are the most developed structural mechanisms in Belgian HEIs, while student-oriented activities are the most common operational mechanisms supporting UBC.

Positive attitude to UBC

Belgian academics agree that they personally, as well as their university management have a positive attitude towards UBC. Contextually, academics see their universities as having a strong educational profile, yet lacking skills in basic research. Additionally, Belgian academics identify their capabilities for UBC as moderate. They believe in their ability to exchange knowledge and conduct research for/with companies. Belgian academics, however, report that they have insufficient knowledge on UBC and general support to undertake UBC.

Despite the challenges, Belgian academics seem to be satisfied with the joint activities with businesses in both research and educational activities, which exceeds European average, especially in education. This shows a positive tendency for the UBC growth in the future.

Introduction

About the study

The study focusses on the cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and public and private organisations in the 28 European Union Member States and 5 associated countries.

The State of European university-business cooperation (UBC) study is executed for the DG Education and Culture at the European Commission (EAC/10/2015) by a consortium led by the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre (S2BMRC), in Germany from January 2016 until November 2017.

The aim of the study is to get a more profound, comprehensive and up to date understanding of the state of UBC in Europe: what is the state of play of a wide range of UBC activities in the different countries, what are the main drivers and barriers for the different stakeholders and at what levels; what is the regulatory framework and socio-economic conditions and what kind of measures/initiatives exist on a national level to support the development of UBC. The project investigates UBC from the perspective of both university and business.

Main activities

The main components of the project were a series of expert interviews with 23 recognised UBC experts, 51 good practice case studies, a UBC policy and indicators review as well as a major quantitative survey of stakeholders within both HEIs and business. The survey was translated into 25 languages and sent to all registered European HEIs (numbering over 3,000) in the 33 countries during

October-November 2016. Through this, a final sample of 17,410 representatives from within HEIs and business was achieved. This makes the study the largest international study into cooperation between HEIs and business yet completed.

Why care about university-business cooperation?

- UBC is considered to be the engine towards knowledge-based societies and economies
- UBC is specially needed in the European context, threatened by increased global competition, with ongoing economic and social problems and high levels of youth unemployment
- UBC helps to create a more connected and functioning relationship between government, business and HEIs, which is at the core of EU funding schemes, such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.
- UBC direct outcomes include:
 - improving the competitiveness of business,
 - increasing the relevance and innovativeness of research and teaching in HEIs,
 - improving the future job prospects of students and graduates,which can in the longer term:
 - create jobs,
 - stimulate economic growth,
 - increase living standards,
 - reduce hindrances to good living.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives for the study are:

- Chart the current state of play and provide an in-depth analysis of UBC in the countries covered by this study, from the HE and business perspectives
- Deliver 50 case studies of UBC (representative sample, balanced distribution among countries and organisations, balanced distribution of HEI and business led cases);
- Review indicators measuring UBC and propose possible scenarios for the implementations of UBC monitoring in Europe;
- Provide policy conclusions and recommendations for the furthering of UBC and the best approaches to take.



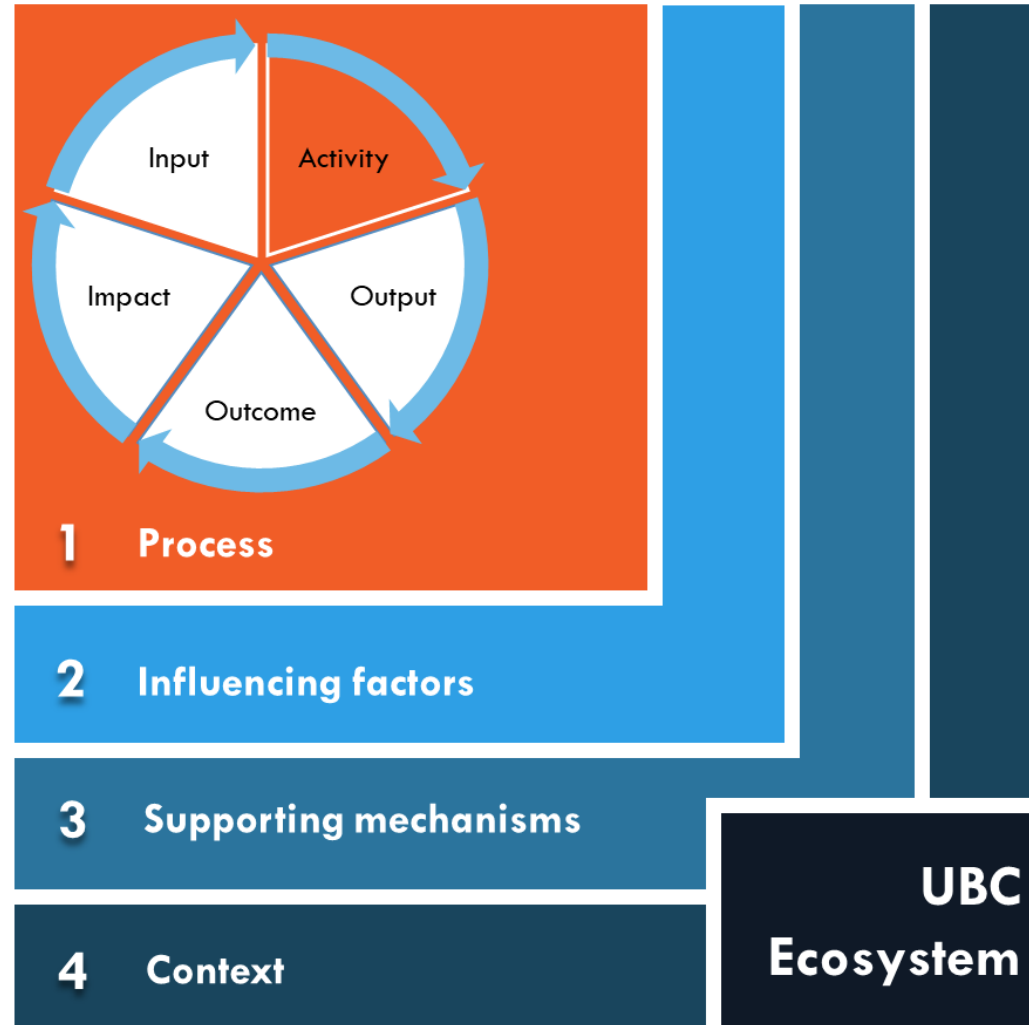
UBC activities

UBC Ecosystem Framework™

In order to best organise the project results, a project conceptual framework was chosen.

The UBC Ecosystem Framework possess a number of interrelated elements including the process of undertaking UBC, factors that are influencing UBC, mechanisms supporting UBC and finally the context in which UBC occurs.

The framework ties together the respective project activities, providing a common thread for reporting results and making recommendations.



Source: Galán-Muros, V.; Davey, T. (2017) *The UBC Ecosystem: Putting together a comprehensive framework for university-business cooperation*. *Journal of Technology Transfer*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-017-9562-3>

UBC Activities

Fourteen UBC activities are recognised and categorised into the areas of education, research, valorisation and management.

Area	Activity
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. curriculum co-<u>design</u>2. curriculum co-<u>delivery</u> (e.g. guest lectures)3. mobility of students (i.e. student internships/placements)4. dual education programmes (i.e. part theory, part practical)5. lifelong learning for people from business (e.g. executive education, industry training and professional courses)
Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. joint R&D (incl. joint funded research)7. consulting to business (incl. contract research)8. mobility of professionals (i.e. temporary mobility of academics to business and vice versa)
Valorisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. commercialisation of R&D results (e.g. licencing/patenting)10. academic entrepreneurship (e.g. spin offs)11. student entrepreneurship (e.g. start-ups)
Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none">12. governance (e.g. participation of academics on business boards and businesspeople participation in university board)13. shared resources (e.g. infrastructure, personnel, equipment)14. industry support (e.g. endowments, sponsorship and scholarships)

Development of UBC activities

Belgian academics see the development of UBC in their country lower than the European average. Less than a fifth of the respondents indicated medium to high level of development for majority of UBC activities. Academics in Belgium focus primarily on their research. They seek to stand out in rankings and cooperate only with partners in case there is a link with research or funding. Cooperation with business in general is seen by academics as something undertaken for central bodies within the university.

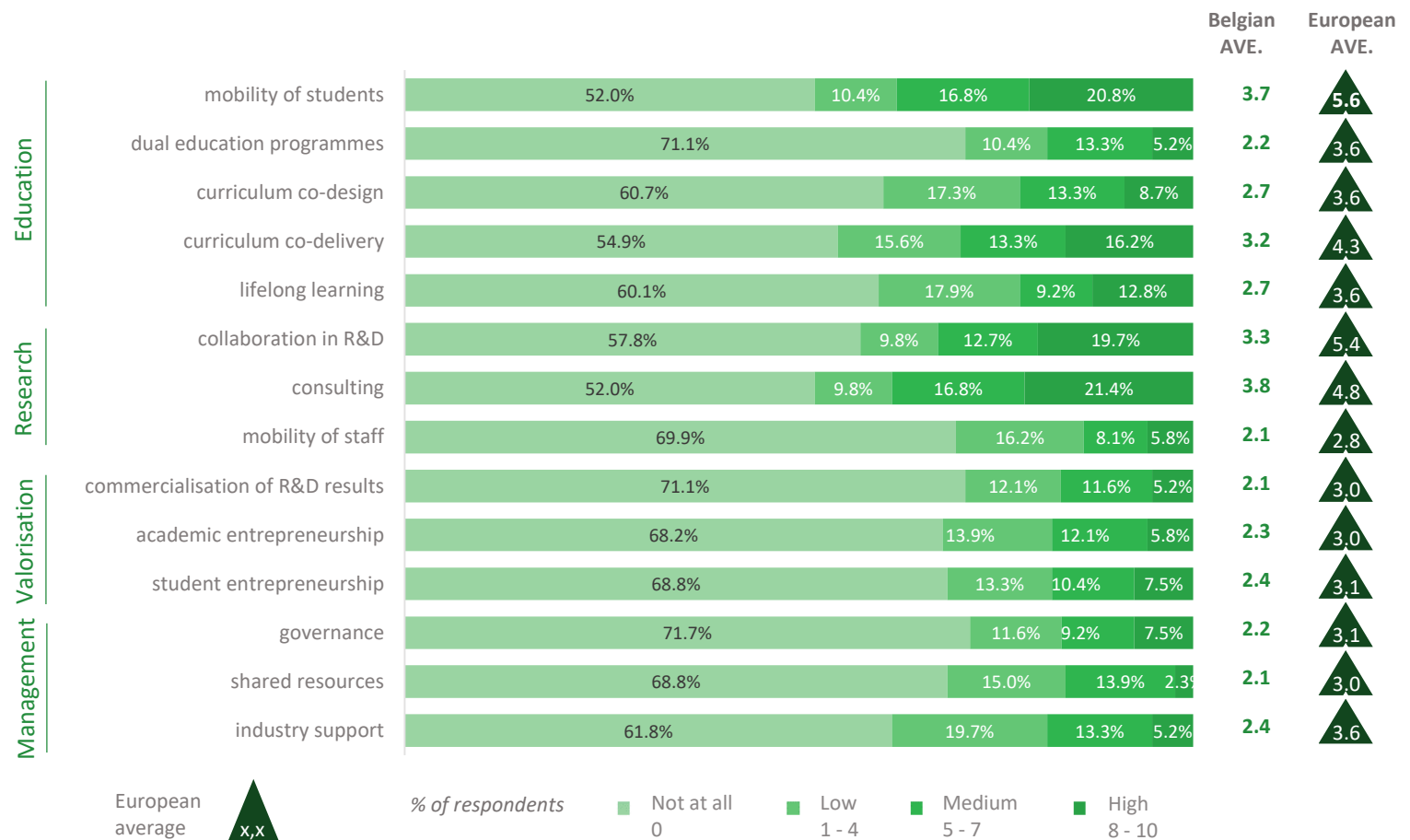
The most developed activity is consulting (3.8) and mobility of students (3.7). Nevertheless, over 50% of Belgian academics do not engage in it at all.

Collaboration in R&D (3.3) and curriculum co-delivery (3.2) are also well developed compared to other UBC activities in Belgium.

Most UBC management and valorization activities are reported to be undeveloped or not present at all by around 70% of Belgian academics.

The extent of development of UBC activities

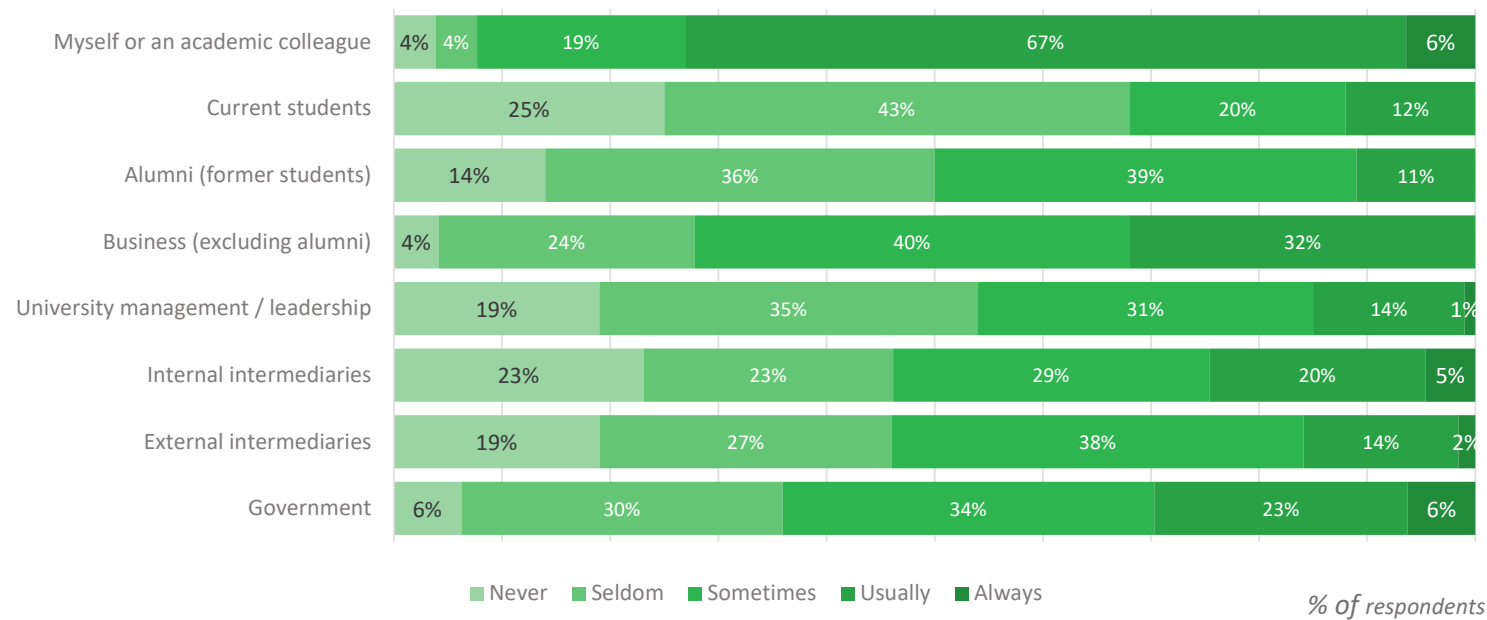
'Which UBC activities do you collaborate with businesses in?' – as answered by academics



Initiation of UBC

How UBC is initiated

'How often various stakeholders initiate UBC activities' – as answered by academics

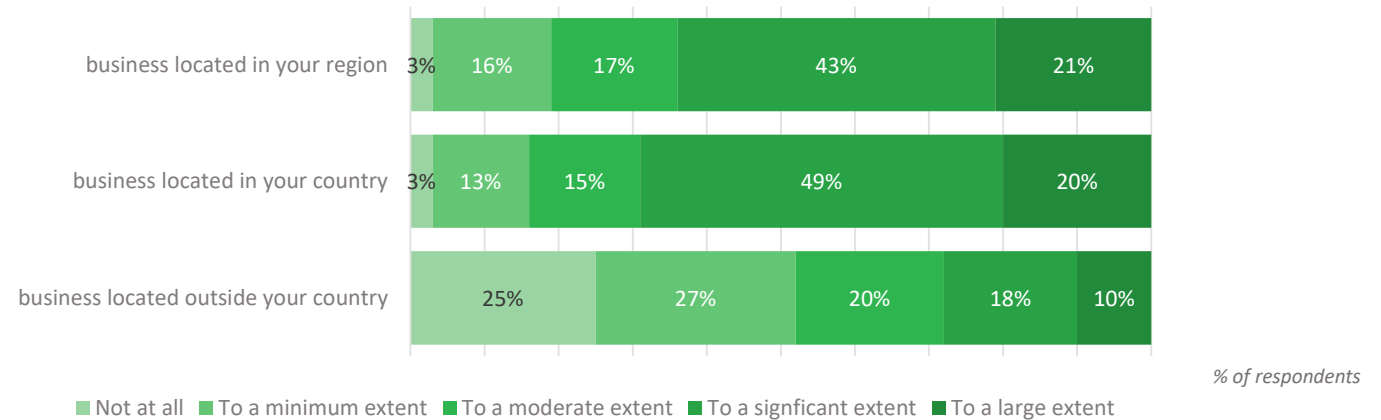


Over two thirds of Belgian academics (73%) state that they themselves or their colleagues always or usually initiate UBC. Business (excluding alumni) are the next stakeholder that usually initiates UBC (32%), who are followed by the government (29%).

On the other hand, current students and university management are thought to initiate the UBC the least – 68% and 54% of current students and university management respectively initiate UBC never or seldom. Students in Belgium usually will only contact companies for an internship and in some cases even universities would do that on their behalf. When it comes to management, it focuses more on close relations with intermediate organisations (e.g. Chamber of commerce).

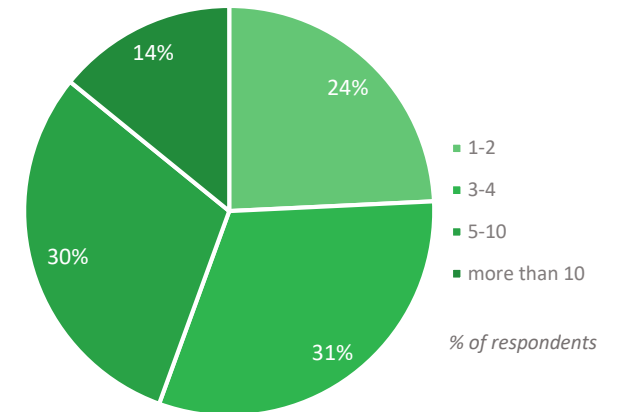
Location of cooperating partners

Location of business partners



Academics in Belgium mostly focus on collaboration with national and regional businesses. 69% of respondents indicate the collaboration at a national level and 64% at regional one to be developed at a significant or large extent. However, only 28% of academics closely cooperate with international businesses. Belgium is a quite small country and academics tend to collaborate on a local scene so as to make an impact on their own environment. Only high-tech research makes collaborations with international companies.

Number of business partners

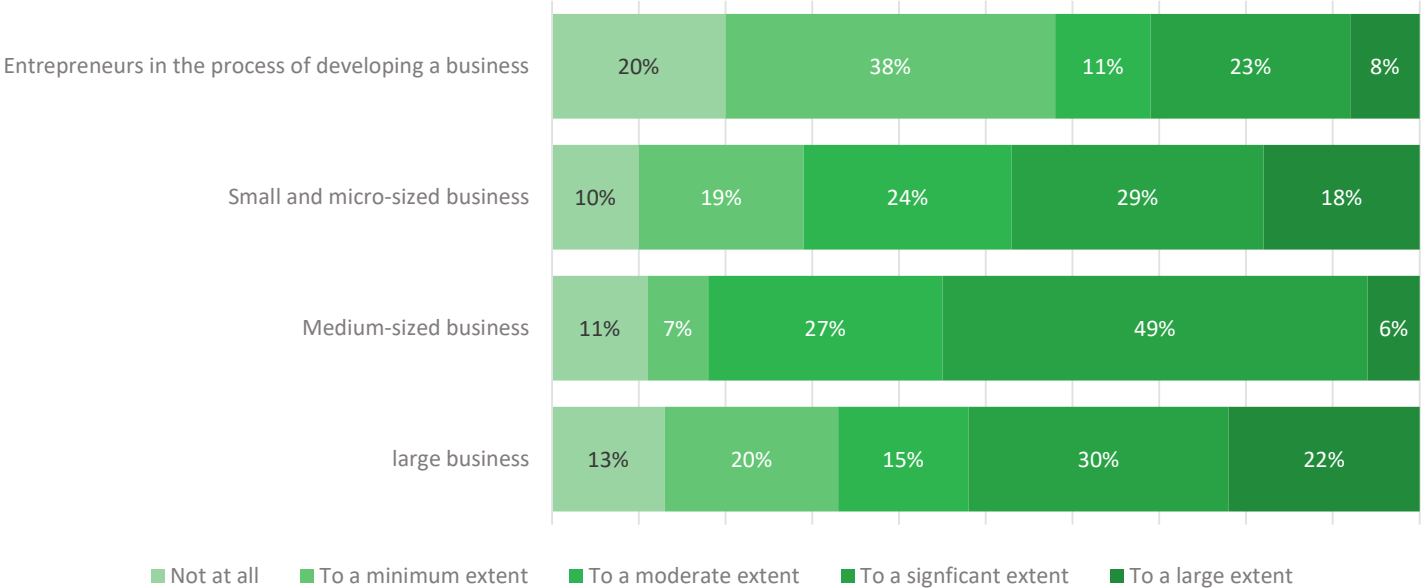


Over a half of Belgian academics cooperate with 3 to 10 businesses (61%). The remaining 24% have relations with 1 to 2 partners, while 14% established connections with more than 10 businesses.

Size of cooperating partners

Size of cooperating partner

'With whom do you collaborate?' – as answered by academics



Belgian academics cooperate the most with medium-sized businesses. 55% stated they cooperate with them to a significant/large extent. For academics, it seems easier to cooperate with companies of a certain size, since they believe there is more structure and stability.

52% of cooperating academics in Belgium engage to a significant or large extent with large businesses.

This is followed by cooperation with small and micro-sized business (47%) while they cooperate the least with entrepreneurs in the process of developing a business (58% of them either do not cooperate with them or do so to a minimum extent).

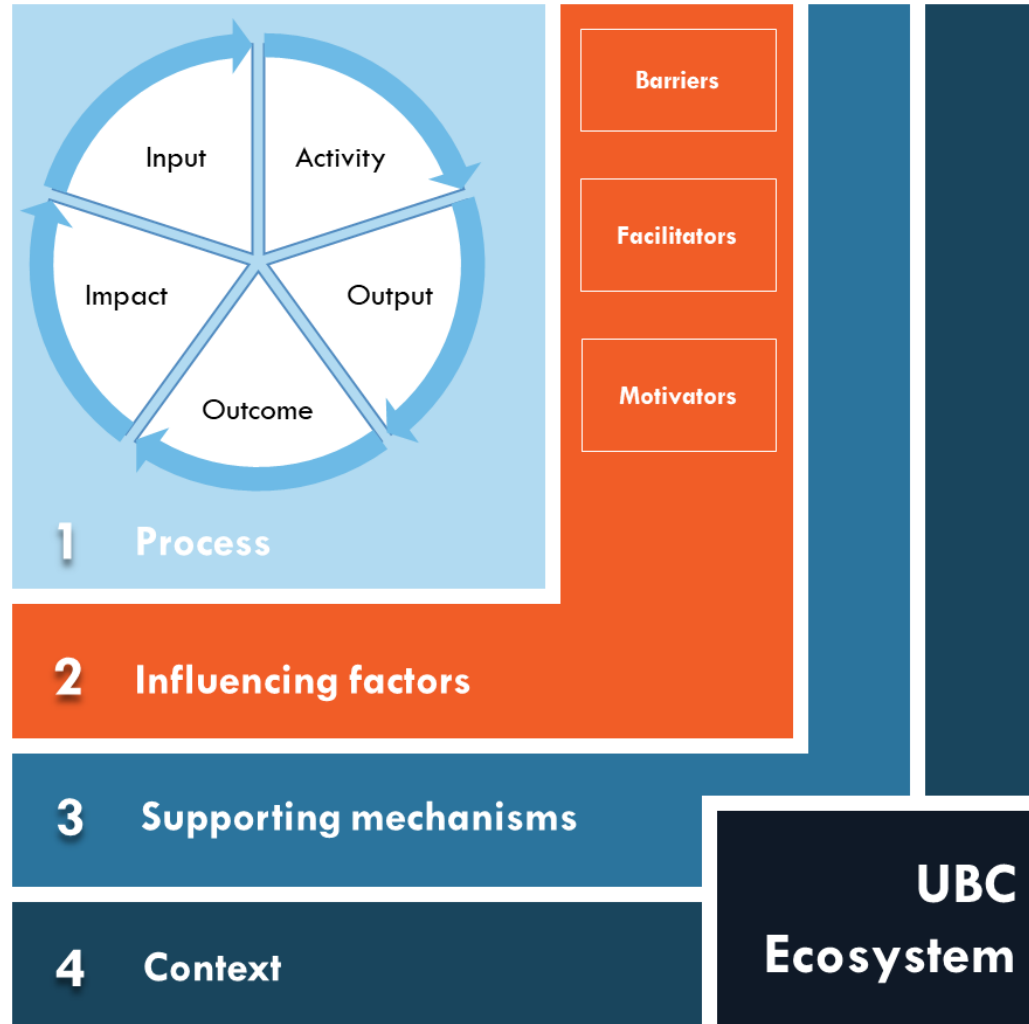
Factors influencing UBC

This section outlines the extent to which various factors affect UBC.

Generally, a barrier provides a hindrance or obstacle to do something. Drivers comprise facilitators, which enable or ease the process, and the motivators, which triggers the starting of an activity and are often related to the expected outcome(s).

At the European level, this study has found that removing a barrier does not necessarily create UBC but rather it makes UBC possible. Instead, it is the facilitators and motivators (drivers) that initiate UBC.


For example, even when a lack of funds is often named as a major barrier to cooperation, the presence of funds may not be enough for cooperation to happen if the perceived facilitators or motivators are not sufficiently present.



Barriers hindering UBC

Barriers

What is inhibiting your cooperation with business?' – as answered by academics



	Academics collaborating with business	Academics not collaborating with business
1.	Insufficient work time allocated by the university for academics' UBC activities	The focus on producing practical results by business
2.	Lack of business funding for UBC	Difficulty in finding the appropriate collaboration partner
3.	Differing time horizons between university and business	Lack of business funding for UBC
4.	Differing motivation / values between university and business	UBC conflicts with my teaching and research responsibilities
5.	Lack of government funding for UBC	Lack of government funding for UBC
<i>Lowest</i>	Frequent staff turnovers within my university or the business	Frequent staff turnovers within my university or the business

The top five barriers for both collaborating and non-collaborating academics are rather different.

While Belgian academics who collaborate with businesses see insufficient work time allocated by the university for academic UBC activities as the most pressing barrier, non-cooperating academics indicate the focus on producing practical results by business as the most hindering one. The predominant activities that take majority of time in Belgian academic life is research (focus on publications) and education. SMEs on the other hand are focused on (fast) results.

Nonetheless, both groups are similarly hindered by the lack of business funding for UBC. Many initiatives depend on individual efforts and there are no central supporting mechanisms that could provide necessary funding for UBC.

The least important factor that might inhibit UBC for both groups is frequent staff turnover within the university or the business.

Barriers hindering UBC

Belgian academics perceive most of the barriers to UBC similarly to their European counterparts, but with some exceptions.

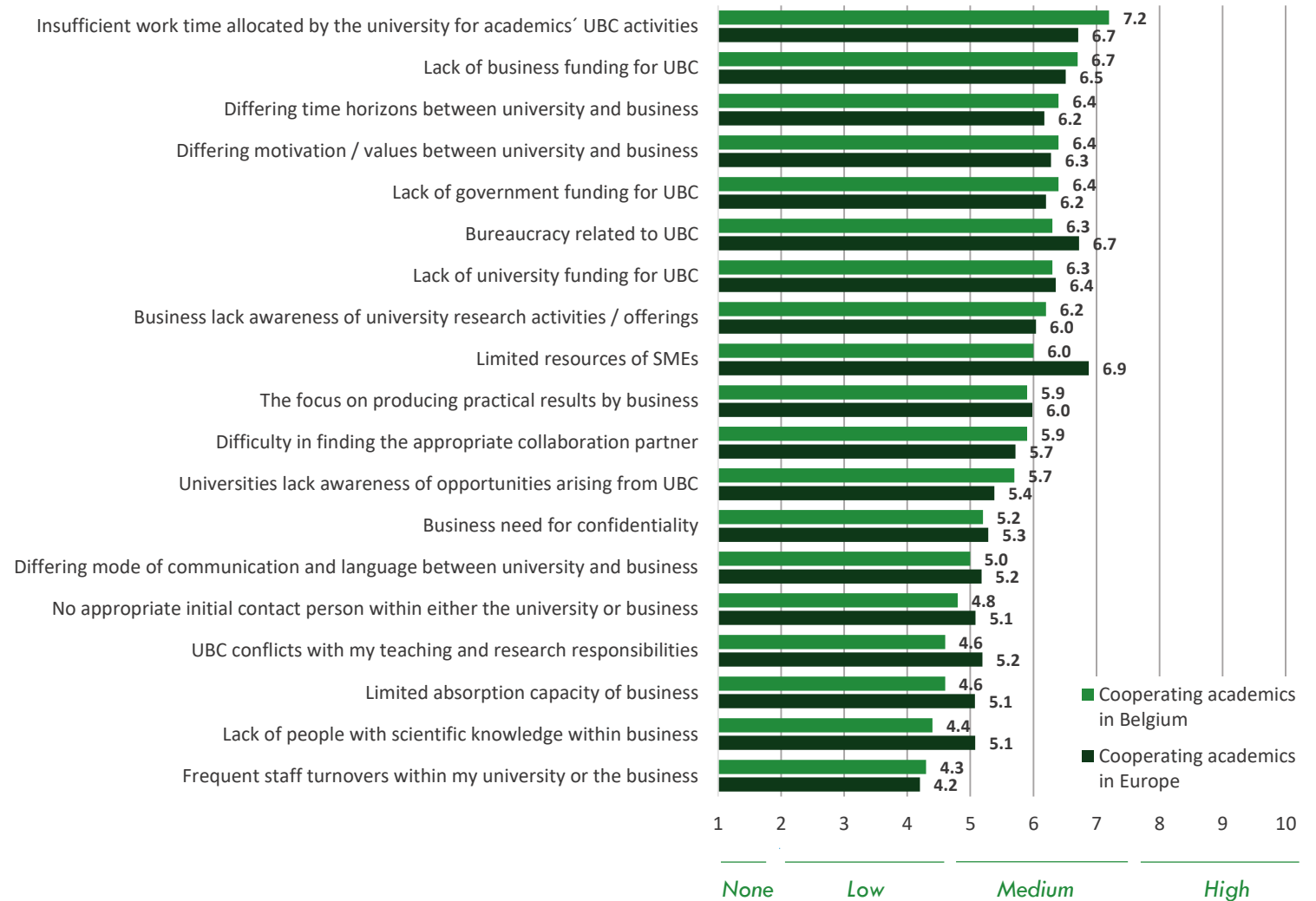
Belgian academics are hindered by insufficient work time allocated by the university for academic UBC activities more than their European counterparts.

On the other hand, Belgian academics see bureaucracy related to UBC and limited resources of SMEs as less pressing than European ones on average.

Both groups see frequent staff turnovers within either partner as the least significant barrier for UBC.

Barriers

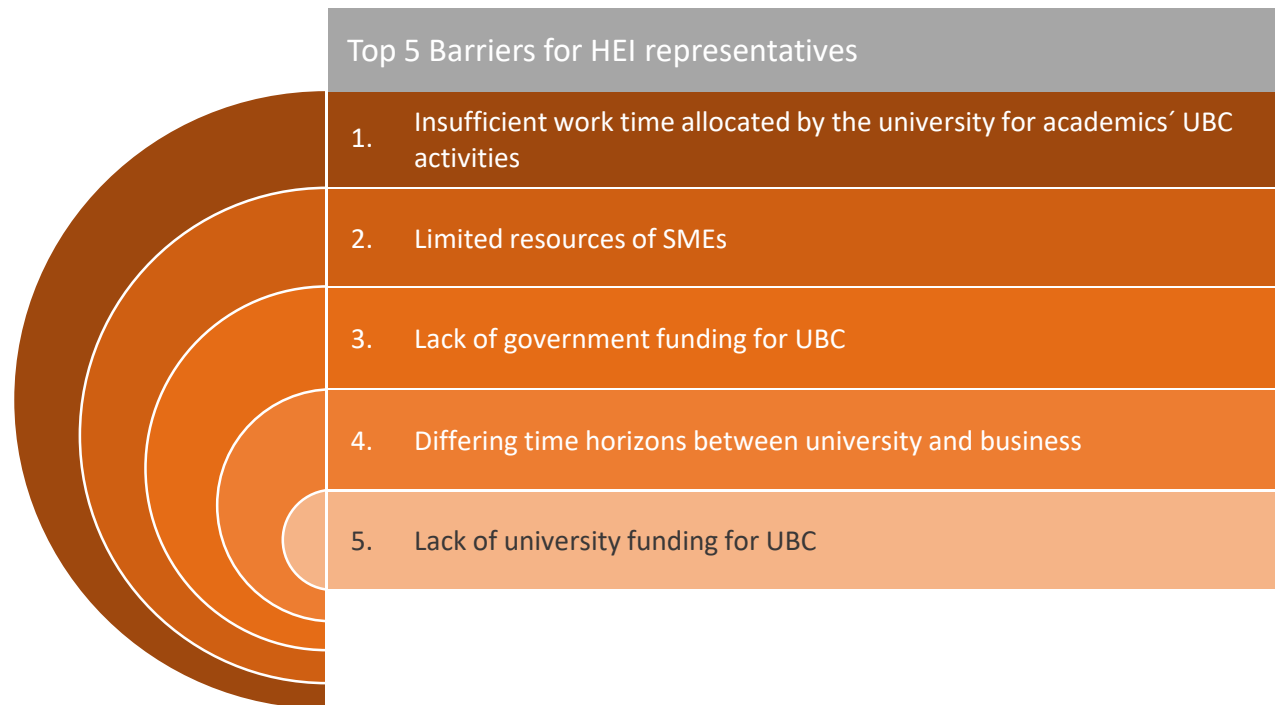
'What is inhibiting your cooperation with business?' – as answered by academics



Barriers hindering UBC

Barriers

'What is inhibiting your HEI cooperation with business?' – as answered by HEI representatives



Belgian HEI representatives indicate that insufficient work time allocated by the university for academics' UBC activities hinder UBC the most, same as with cooperating academics.

Limited resources of SMEs, differing time horizons between universities and businesses are further relevant barriers for HEI managers.

Barriers hindering UBC

Overall, Belgian HEI representatives perceive most of the barriers to UBC to be rather similar or lower when compared to European average.

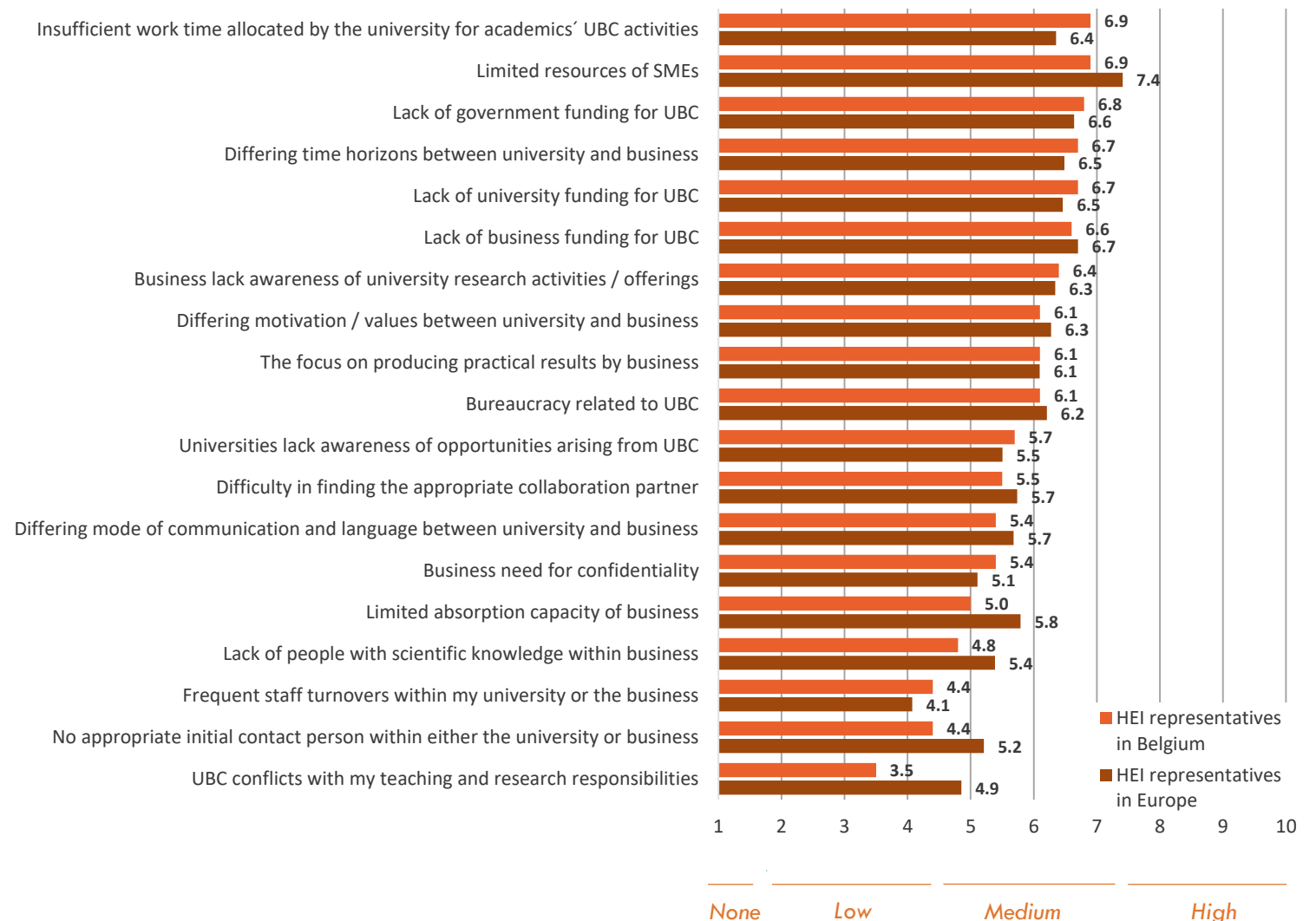
Thus, Belgian HEI representatives are hindered by insufficient work time allocated by the university for academics' UBC activities, lack of government funding and differing time horizons more than their European counterparts. They are also hindered by limited SMEs' resources but not as much as their European counterparts. Academic year can be seen as a constrain in collaboration as businesses sometimes may come with propositions at the end of the academic year, and at that point the work needs to be done in the following academic year.

On contrary, Belgian HEI managers see limited absorption capacity and lack of people with scientific knowledge within business as less pressing than their EU colleagues.

The least significant barriers are no appropriate initial contact person within university or business and conflict between UBC and teaching and research.

Barriers

'What is inhibiting your cooperation with business?' – as answered by academics and HEI representatives



Drivers stimulating UBC

Drivers are those factors that encourage businesses, academics or HEIs to engage in UBC.

Drivers of UBC are divided into two factors:

1. **Facilitators** – factors that enable or ease cooperation
2. **Motivators** – incentives or benefits that the respective stakeholders would like from the cooperation

Together, these two factors provide a comprehensive picture of what compels businesses to cooperate.

The 2010-11 State of European UBC study showed that for European universities the existence of strong UBC drivers can overcome the presence of barriers to UBC.


The main UBC facilitators for both Belgian academics and Belgian HEI representatives are very similar.

Both groups agree that facilitators related to the existence of funding and personal relationships (e.g. existence of mutual commitment, mutual trust, a shared goal) are of extreme importance for UBC.

On the other hand, cooperating academics highly value the prior relation with the business partner while HEI representatives value his less.

Facilitators

'What is facilitating your cooperation with business?' – as answered by academics and HEI representatives



	Academics cooperating	HEI representatives
1.	Existence of mutual trust	Existence of mutual trust
2.	Existence of funding to undertake the cooperation	Existence of funding to undertake the cooperation
3.	Existence of a shared goal	Existence of a shared goal
4.	Prior relation with the business partner	Interest of business in accessing scientific knowledge
5.	Existence of mutual commitment	Prior relation with the business partner

Drivers stimulating UBC

European and Belgian academics have slightly different perceptions of UBC facilitators.

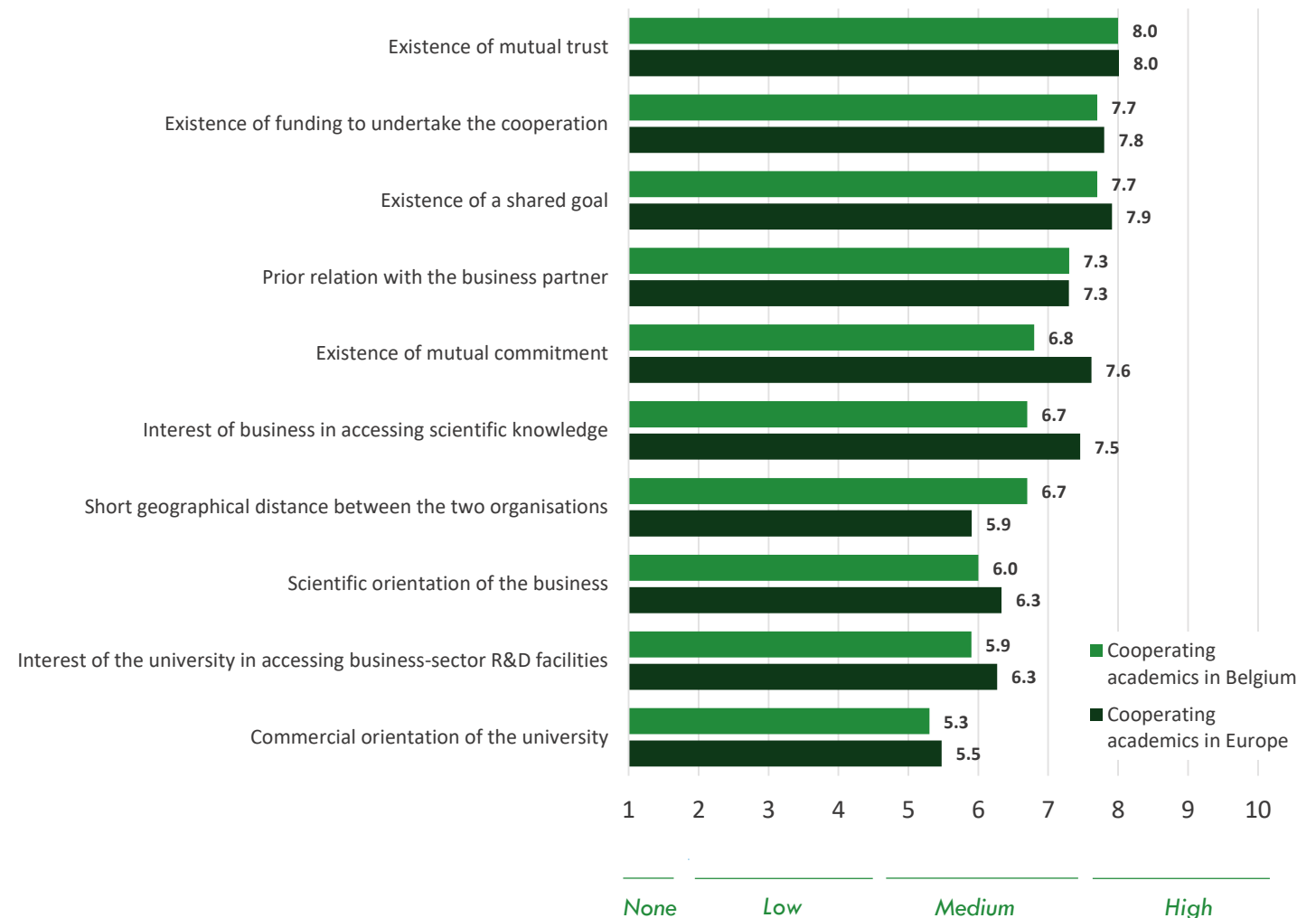
For both groups, the most common UBC facilitators are those related to the existence of funding to undertake the cooperation and positive relationship between the actors (e.g. existence of mutual commitment, trust and a shared goal).

On the other hand, Belgian academics find university interest in accessing business-sector R&D facilities less stimulating than their European counterparts.

Commercial orientation of the university emerges as the least important UBC driver for both groups.

Facilitators

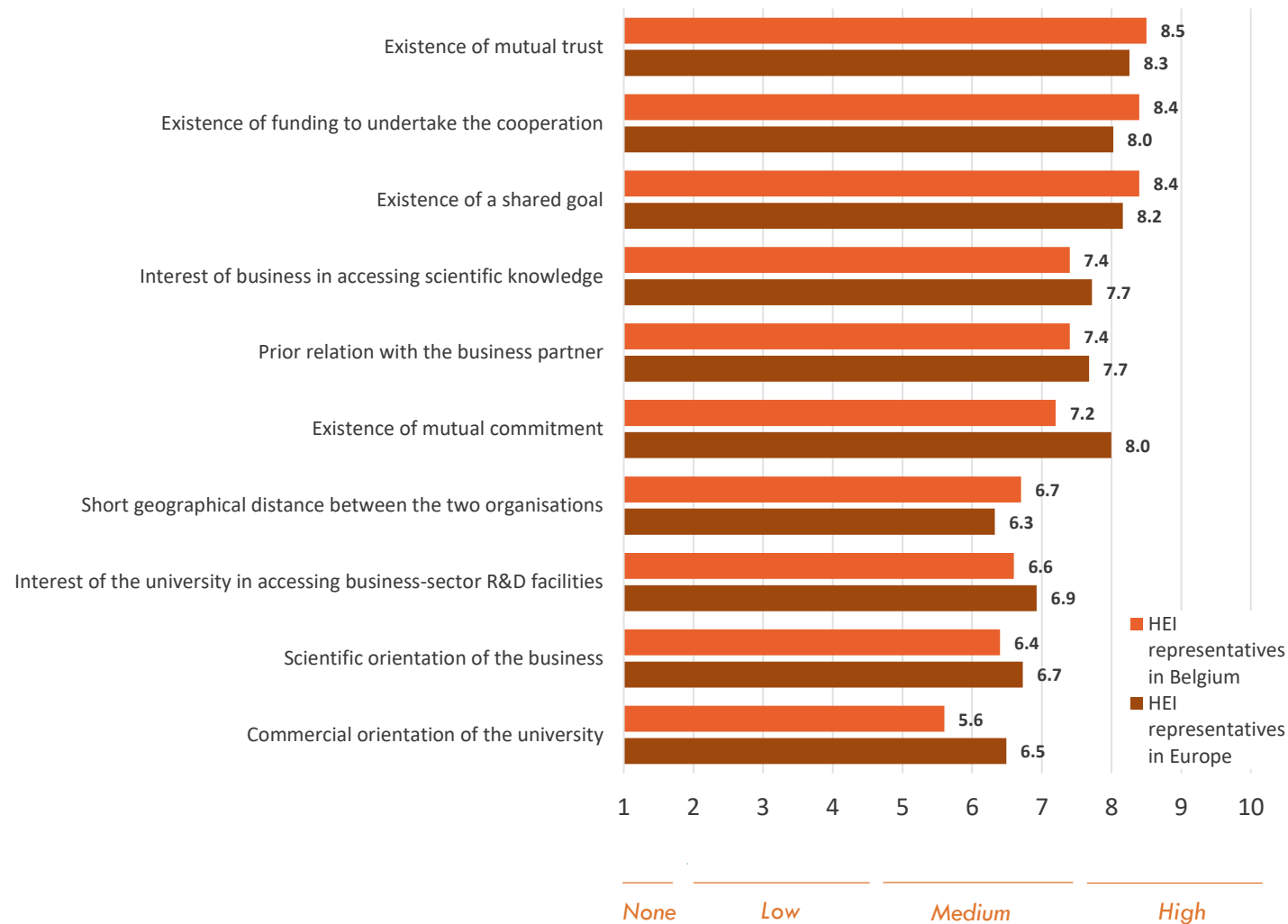
'What is facilitating your cooperation with business?' – as answered by academics



Drivers stimulating UBC

Facilitators

'What is facilitating your cooperation with business?' – as answered by HEI representatives



European and Belgian HEI representatives have relatively similar perceptions of what stimulates UBC.

For both groups, the most important facilitators relate to personal relationships and existence of funding to undertake UBC. This is consistent with the academic perspective. Belgium is a very small and densely populated country and majority of universities and businesses prefer to collaborate with partners from within their own region. This is also intensified with language and law differences between North and South.

Belgian HEI representatives see short geographical distance between partners as more important driver stimulating UBC than their European counterparts.

Compared to the European average, Belgian HEI representatives see scientific orientation of the business and commercial orientation of the universities as significantly less stimulating drivers of UBC.

Drivers stimulating UBC


Cooperating and non-cooperating Belgian academics have certain similarities in their motivations to engage in UBC.

Both cooperating and non-cooperating academics are highly motivated to partake in UBC in order to address societal challenges and issues.

On the other hand, cooperating academics are more motivated to gain new insights for research while non-cooperating academics are more motivated to improve graduate employability.

Motivators

'What motivates you to cooperate with business?'- as answered by academics

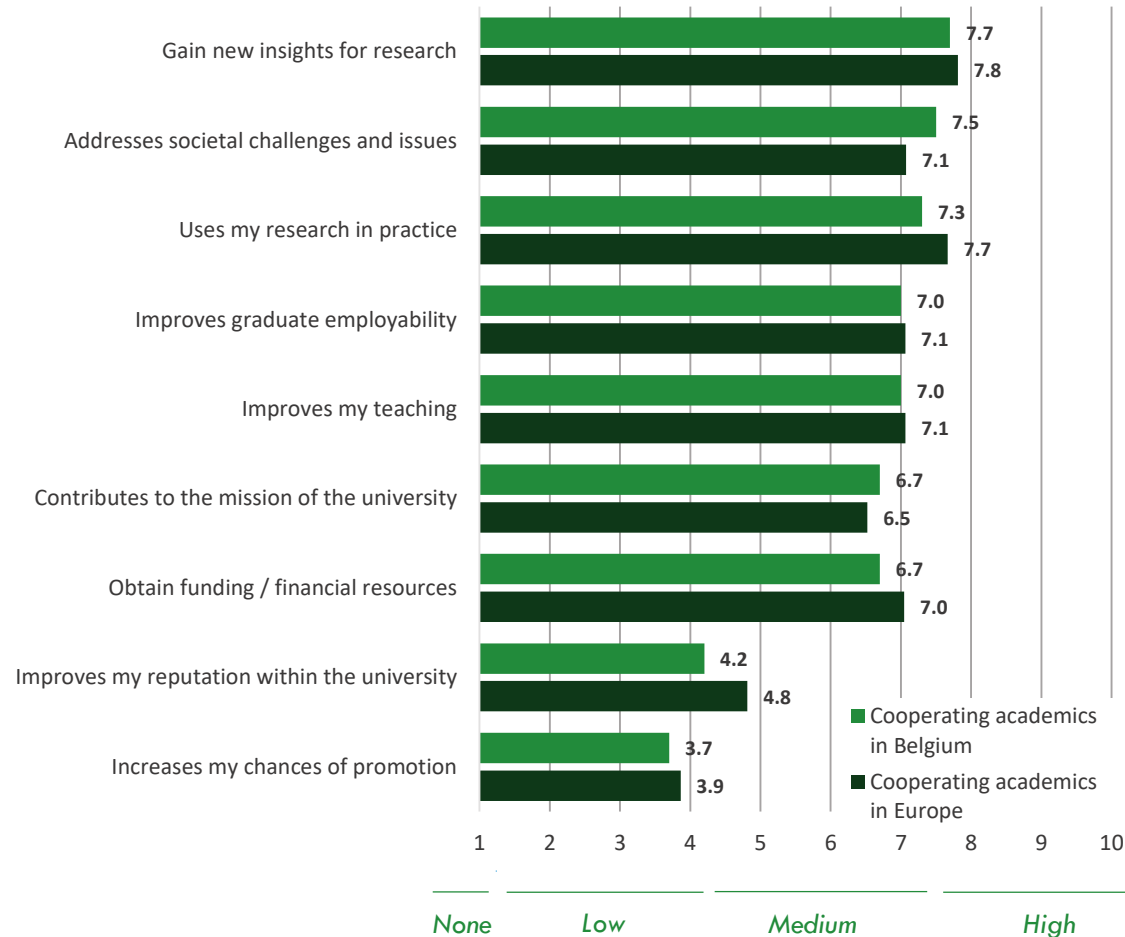


	Academics who cooperate	Academics who <u>do not</u> cooperate
1.	Gain new insights for research	Addresses societal challenges and issues
2.	Addresses societal challenges and issues	Improves graduate employability
3.	Uses my research in practice	Contribute to the mission of the university
4.	Improves graduate employability	Uses my research in practice
5.	Improves my teaching	Provides funding / financial resources

Drivers stimulating UBC

Motivators

'What motivates you to cooperate with business?'- as answered by academics



Belgian and European academics' perceptions of UBC motivators are different. Belgian academics rate most motivators lower, albeit not to a large extent.

One exception is that Belgian academics are motivated to address societal challenges and issues, and contribute to the mission of the university more than their European counterparts.

Compared to European average, Belgian academics are less motivated to obtain funding and use their research in practice.

Promotion and reputation related motivators are the weakest motivators for both groups, although rated higher by European academics.

Drivers stimulating UBC

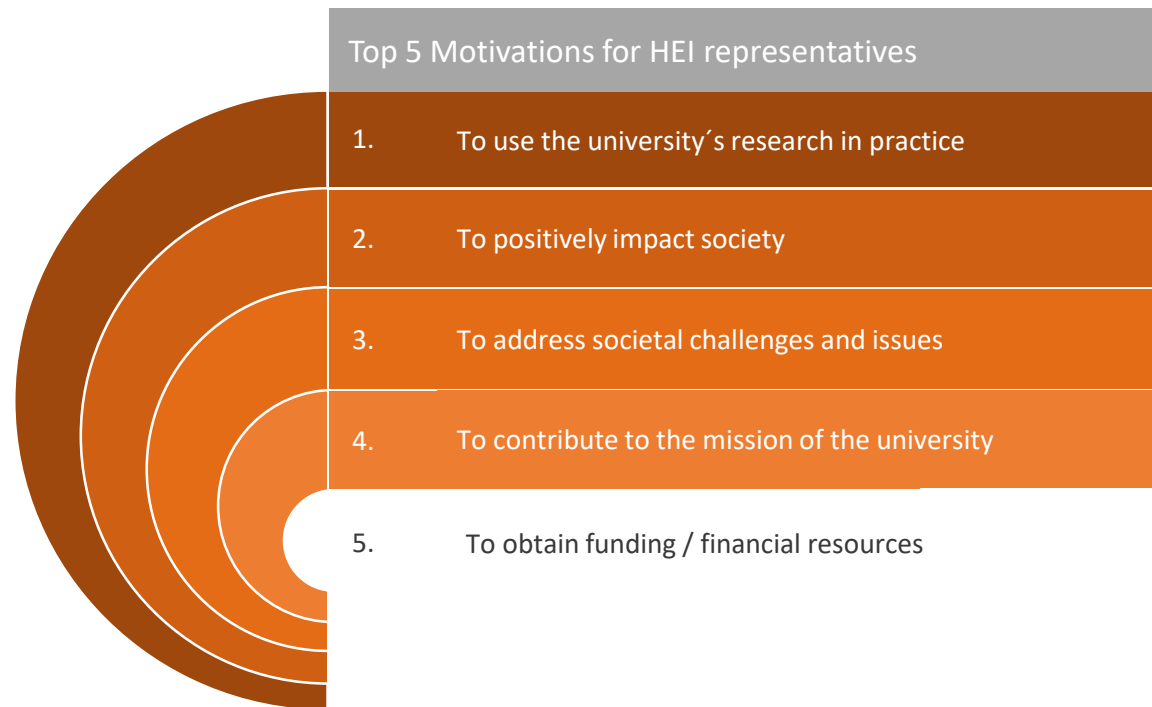
Belgian HEI representatives are motivated by the possibility to use the university's research in practice.

They are also interested in positively impacting society and addressing societal challenges and issues.

Motivations to contribute to the mission of the university and to obtain funding also drives UBC for Belgian HEI representatives.

Motivators

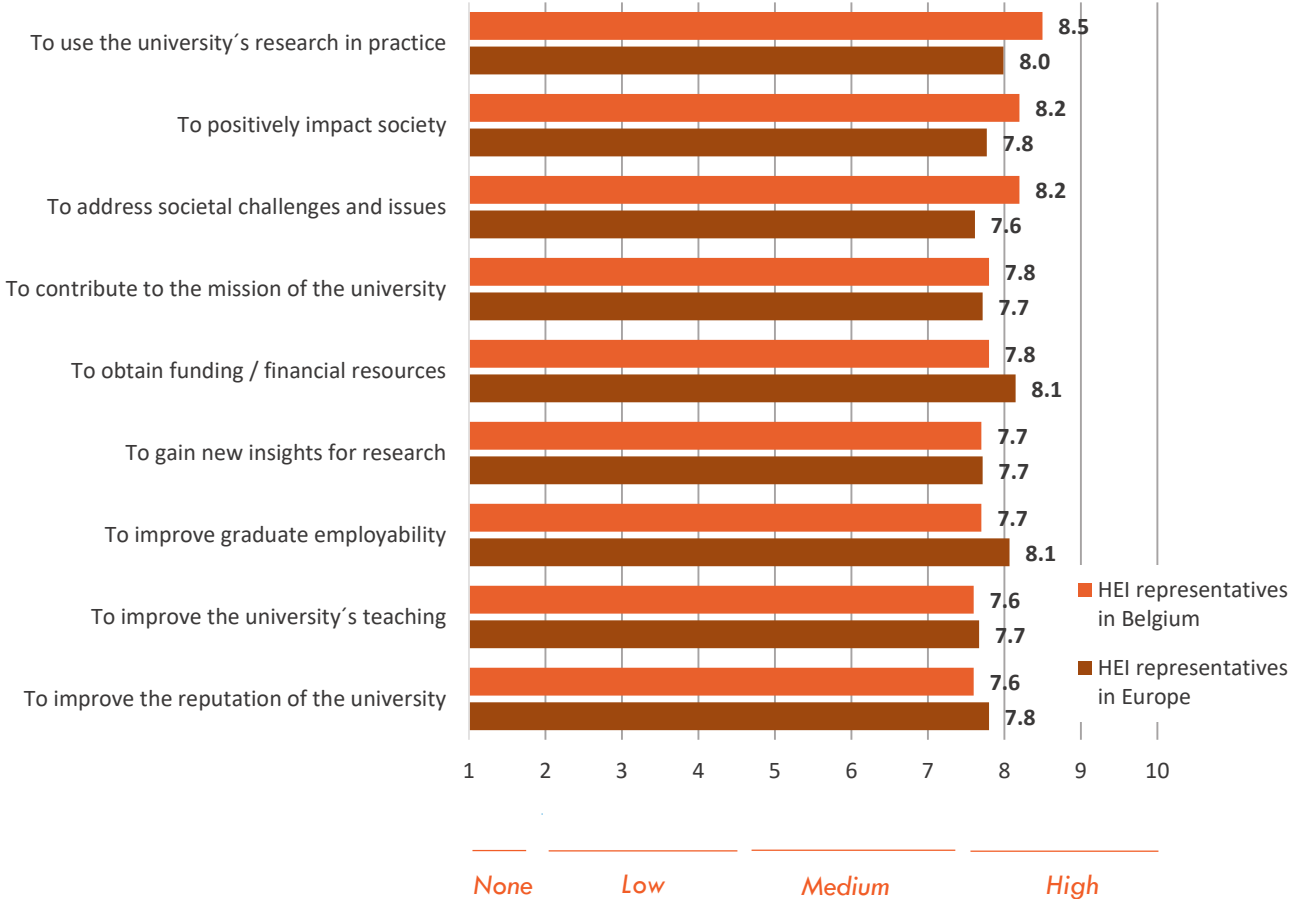
'What motivates your HEI to cooperate with business?' - As answered by HEI representatives



Drivers stimulating UBC

Motivators

'What motivates your HEI to cooperate with business?'- as answered by HEI representatives



Belgian and European HEI representatives have slightly different perceptions of UBC motivators.

To positively impact society and address societal challenges are among the top motivators for both groups.

However, for Belgian HEI managers, the use of university's research in practice is the bigger motivator than it is the case with European ones.

The least important motivators for Belgian HEI representatives are related to the university reputation and improvement of university's teaching, which rate slightly higher for European HEI representatives on average.

Benefits of UBC

Belgian academics and HEI managers have very similar perceptions about the stakeholders that benefit from UBC.

Both see business, society and universities as the top three benefactors of UBC.

While academics see society benefitting from UBC the most, HEI representatives see considerably less benefits for it.

They also consider the government to have the least benefits from UBC.


Benefits are the perceived positive outcomes (financial and non-financial) from undertaking UBC as relevant for the different stakeholder groups that can potentially participate in UBC.

The perception regarding who benefits from such cooperation can influence the decision to increase or decrease their participation or the involvement

of other groups. For example, if academics perceive their own *benefits* to be low, they may refrain from engaging in UBC. Yet, if they perceive *benefits* for students to be high, they might undertake actions that contribute to students' involvement in UBC.

Benefits

'Who receives the benefits of UBC?' - as answered by academics and HEI representatives

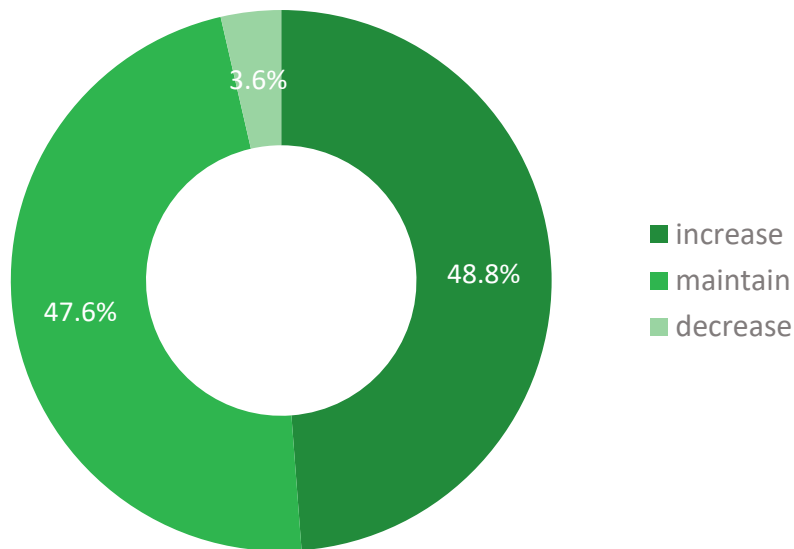


	Academics	HEI representatives
1.	Business	Business
2.	Society	Students
3.	Universities	Universities
4.	Academics	Society
5.	Students	Academics
6.	Government / public authorities	Government / public authorities

Future intentions

Future UBC intentions – Belgium

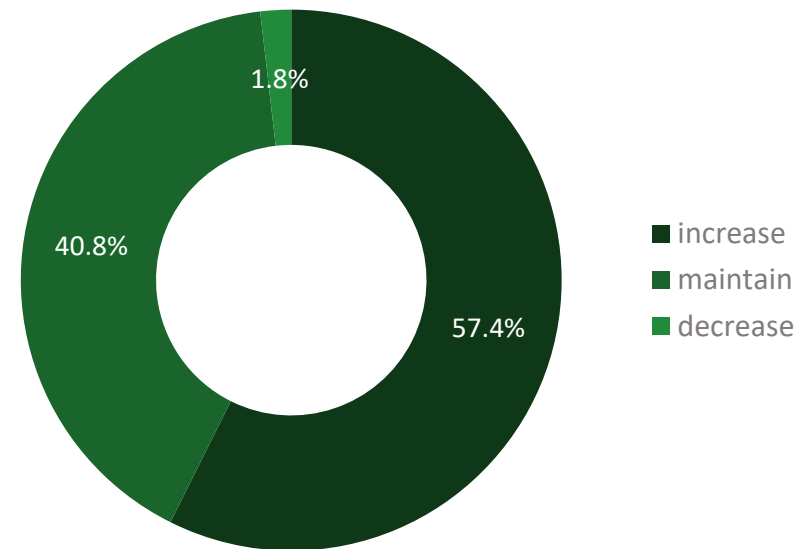
As answered by Belgian academics



Belgian academics show a very strong commitment to UBC. 48.8% of academics expect to increase their UBC activities while 47.6% plan to maintain the current UBC levels. Only 3.6% of academics plan to decrease their UBC activities.

Future UBC intentions – EUROPE

As answered by European academics



Academics in Europe show equal commitment to increasing UBC activities. 57,4% of cooperating academics expect to increase their cooperation and only 1,8% plan to decrease their collaborative activities with businesses. This shows a positive projection for UBC in Europe.

Willingness to recommend UBC

The willingness of Belgian cooperating academics to recommend to an academic colleague to engage in UBC varies depending on whether this cooperation is in research or in education.

Belgian academics are equally satisfied with UBC in research as their European counterparts (NPS=17). While 42% of them will promote UBC in research positively, 25% will do it negatively.

Moreover, Belgian academics are more satisfied in education-related UBC than academics in Europe (NPS=-7 for Latvian and NPS=-14 for European academics).

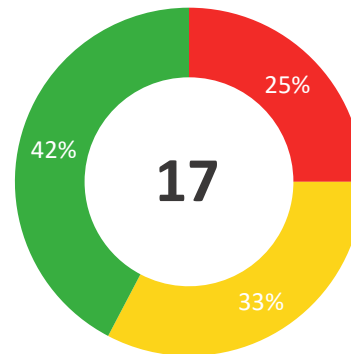
Willingness to recommend to an academic colleague cooperation with business in R&D and education

As answered by academics

	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	Net promotor score
Academics cooperating in E&T	37%	33%	30%	-7
Academics cooperating in R&D	25%	33%	42%	17

Satisfaction in cooperation with businesses (net promotor score)

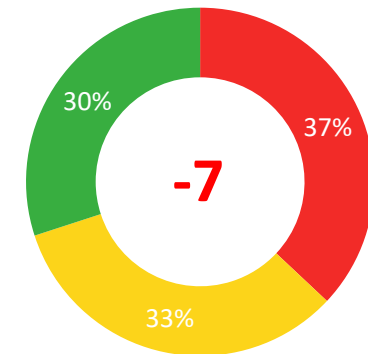
Academics cooperating in research



■ Detractors ■ Passives ■ Promoters

European academics' NPS result: 17

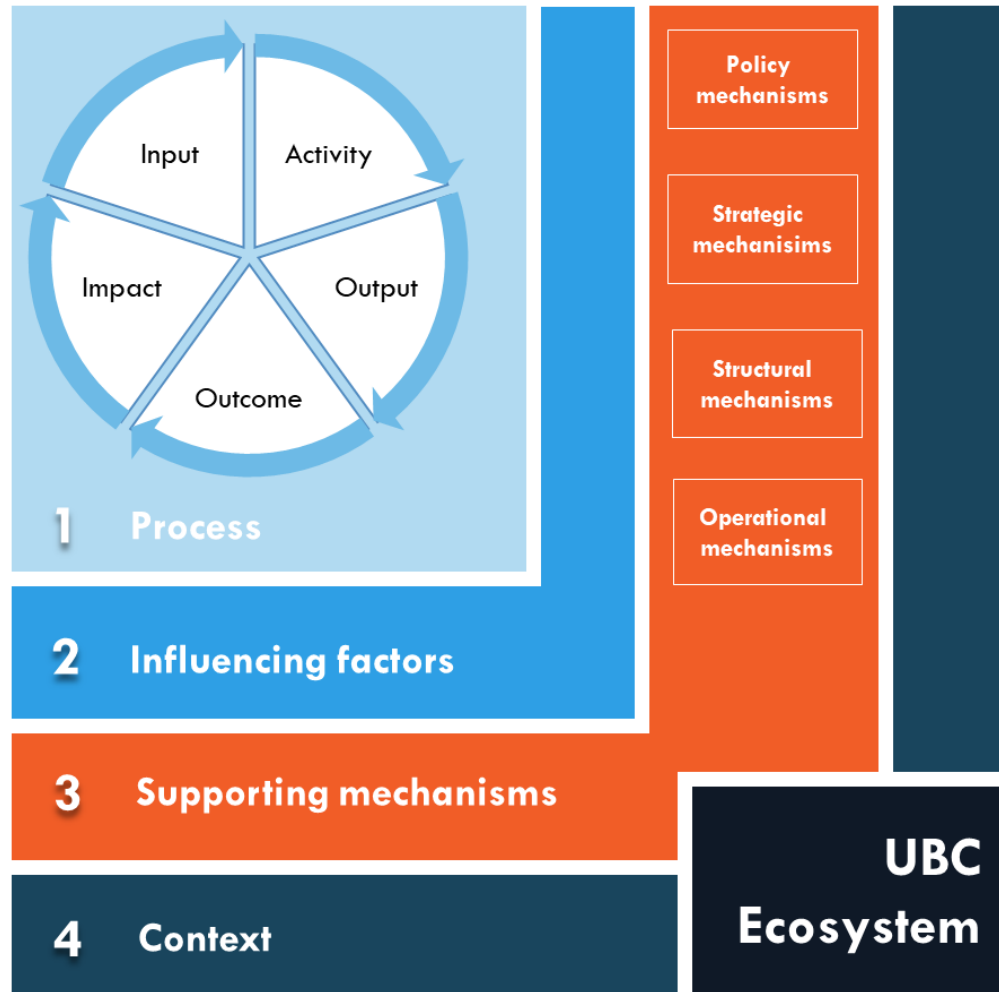
Academics cooperating in education



■ Detractors ■ Passives ■ Promoters

European academics' NPS result: -14

Supporting mechanisms for UBC



Supporting mechanisms are interventions designed to support the development of cooperation between HEIs and business.

There are four types of supporting mechanisms:

- Policy
- Strategic
- Structural
- Operational

This section outlines the extent to which UBC supporting mechanisms are developed in this sample from the HEI perspective.

At the European level, the extent of development of all these mechanisms significantly influences the extent of cooperation.

Supporting mechanisms for UBC

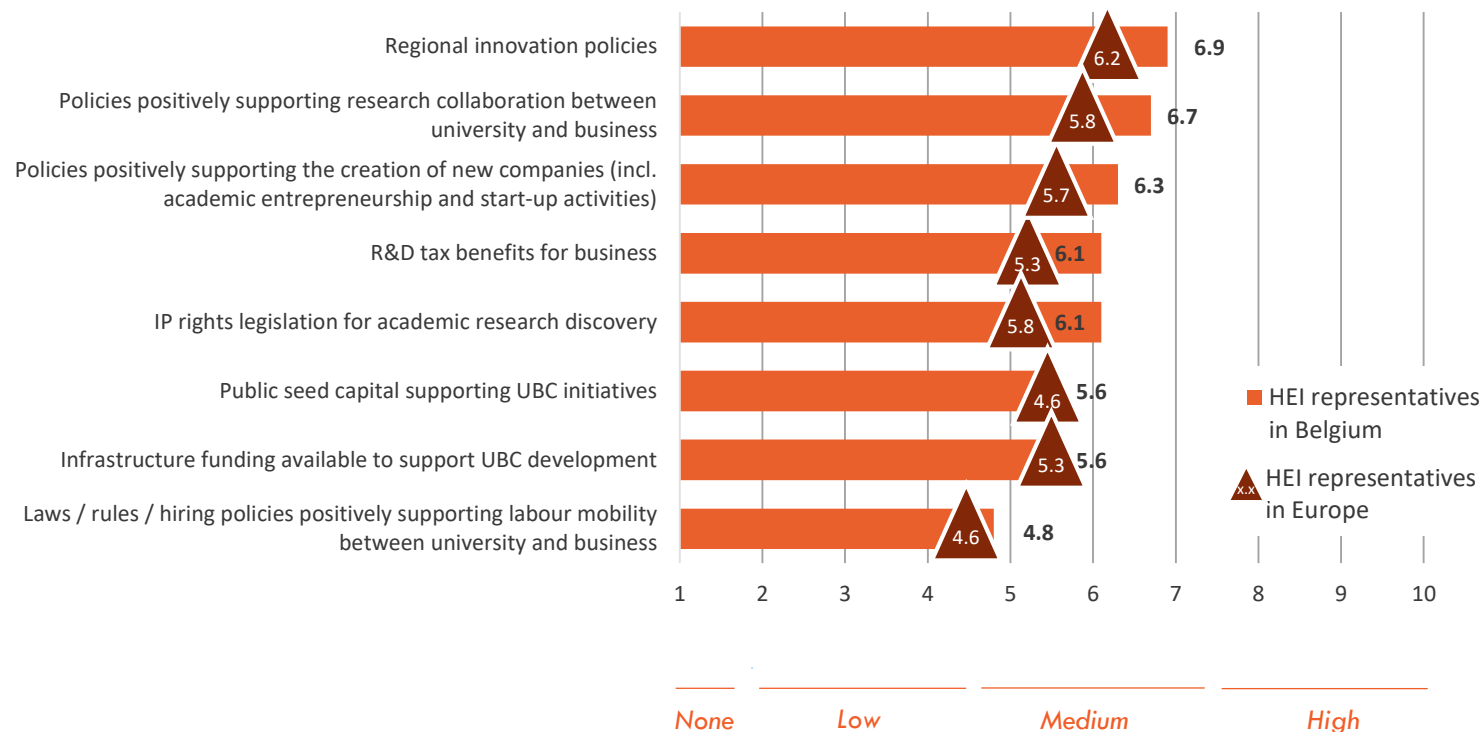
Belgian HEI representatives perceive UBC supporting policy mechanisms to be developed at a medium level. This perception is slightly higher than that of European HEI managers on most indicators.

Regional innovation policies and policies positively supporting research collaboration between UBC are the most developed supporting mechanisms in Belgian HEIs (6.9 and 6.7 respectively), exceeding considerably the EU average. Due to split governments, there are competing policies between the regions devised to stimulate business creation, entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

The least developed policy mechanisms are laws and rules policies that support university-business labor mobility and it is rather lower than the EU average.

Policy mechanisms

'To what extent do these mechanisms support UBC in your HEI?' - as answered by HEI representatives



Supporting mechanisms for UBC

Strategic mechanisms

'To what extent do these mechanisms support UBC in your HEI?' - as answered by HEI representatives



The development of the strategic mechanisms in Belgium and European HEIs is quite different. Paper strategy and around half of implementation mechanisms are less developed than the EU average.

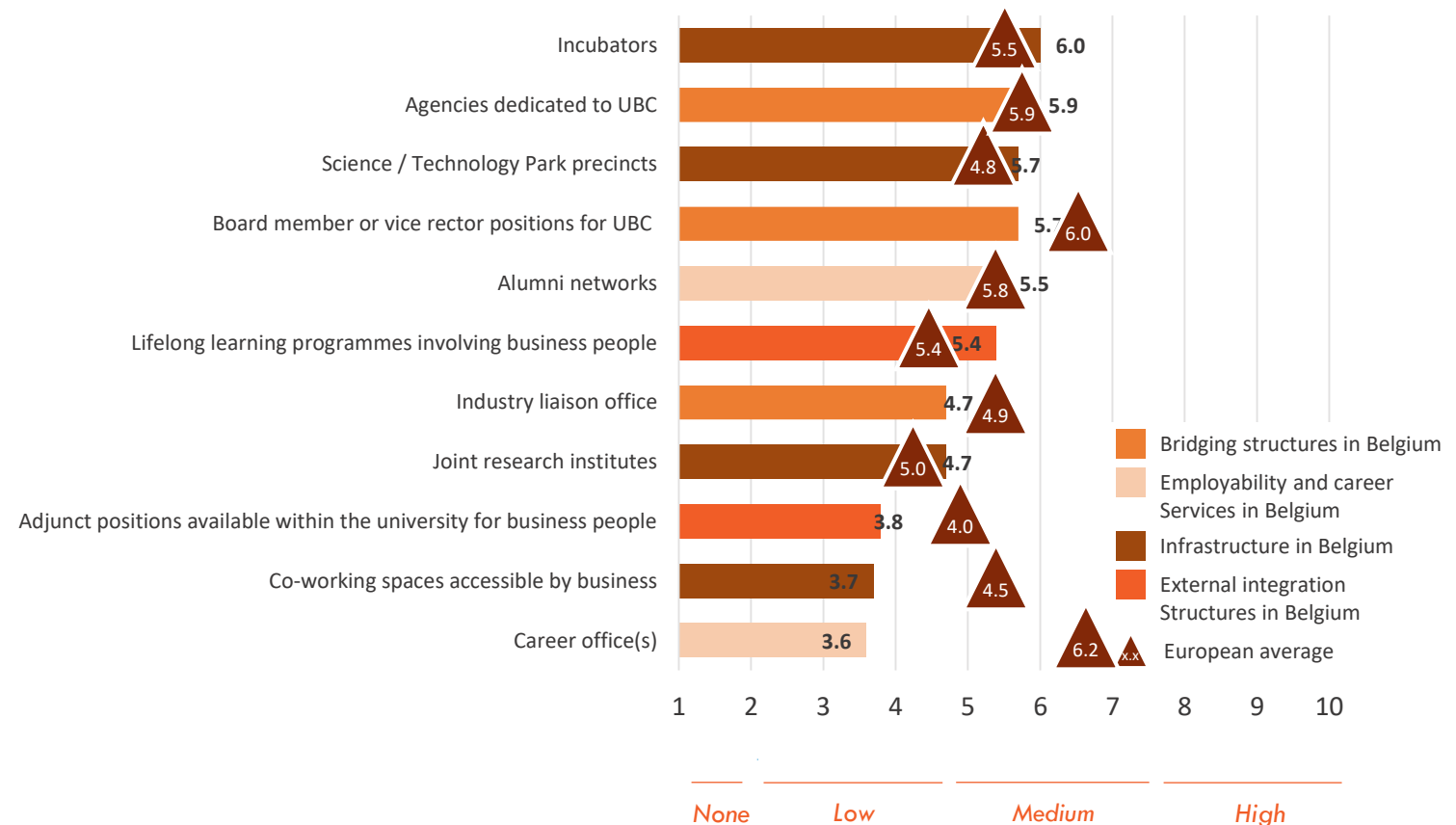
The top-level management and documented mission/vision embracing UBC in Belgian HEIs are highly committed to UBC (7.1 and 6.8 respectively).

The least developed mechanisms are the strategies related to the practice of recruiting business professionals into the careers/alumni office (4.4) and the reduction of teaching time for cooperating academics (3.9).

Supporting mechanisms for UBC

Structural mechanisms

'To what extent do these mechanisms support UBC in your HEI?' - as answered by HEI representatives



The level of development of Belgian HEI structural mechanisms to support UBC differs from the European average.

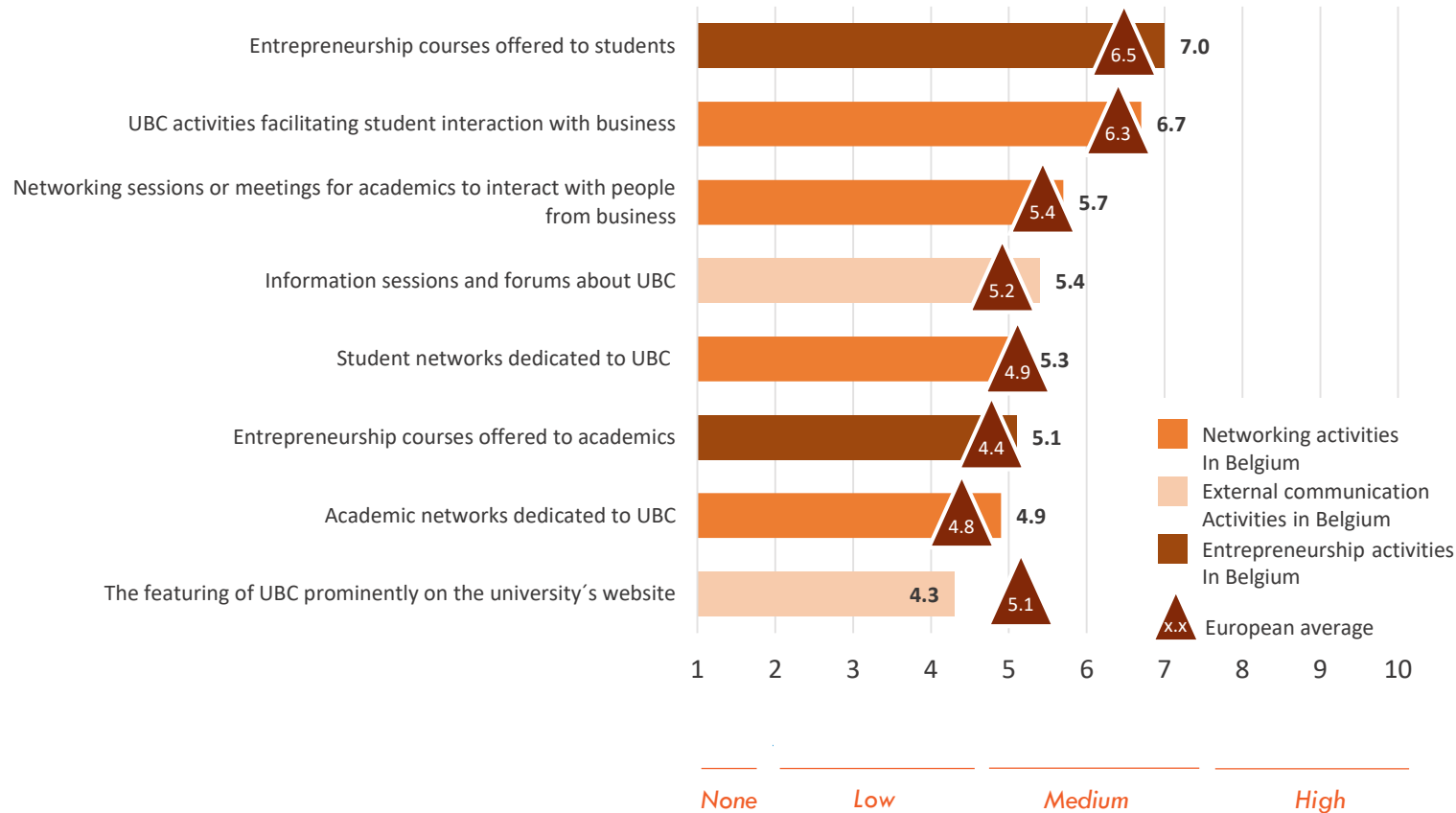
Top four structural mechanisms are related to the bridging structures (agencies and board member positions for UBC) and infrastructure (incubators, agencies dedicated to UBC and technology parks). The development of above-mentioned mechanisms in Belgium exceeds European average.

Career offices and co-working spaces accessible by businesses (3.6 and 3.7 respectively) are the least developed structural mechanisms in Belgian HEIs.

Supporting mechanisms for UBC

Operational mechanisms

'To what extent do these mechanisms support UBC in your HEI?' - as answered by HEI representatives



Overall, operational mechanisms supporting UBC are similarly developed in Belgian HEIs as in EU HEIs.

Student-oriented mechanisms are the most developed for both Belgian and European HEI representatives, where entrepreneurship courses offered to students and UBC activities facilitating student interaction with businesses are ranked the highest.

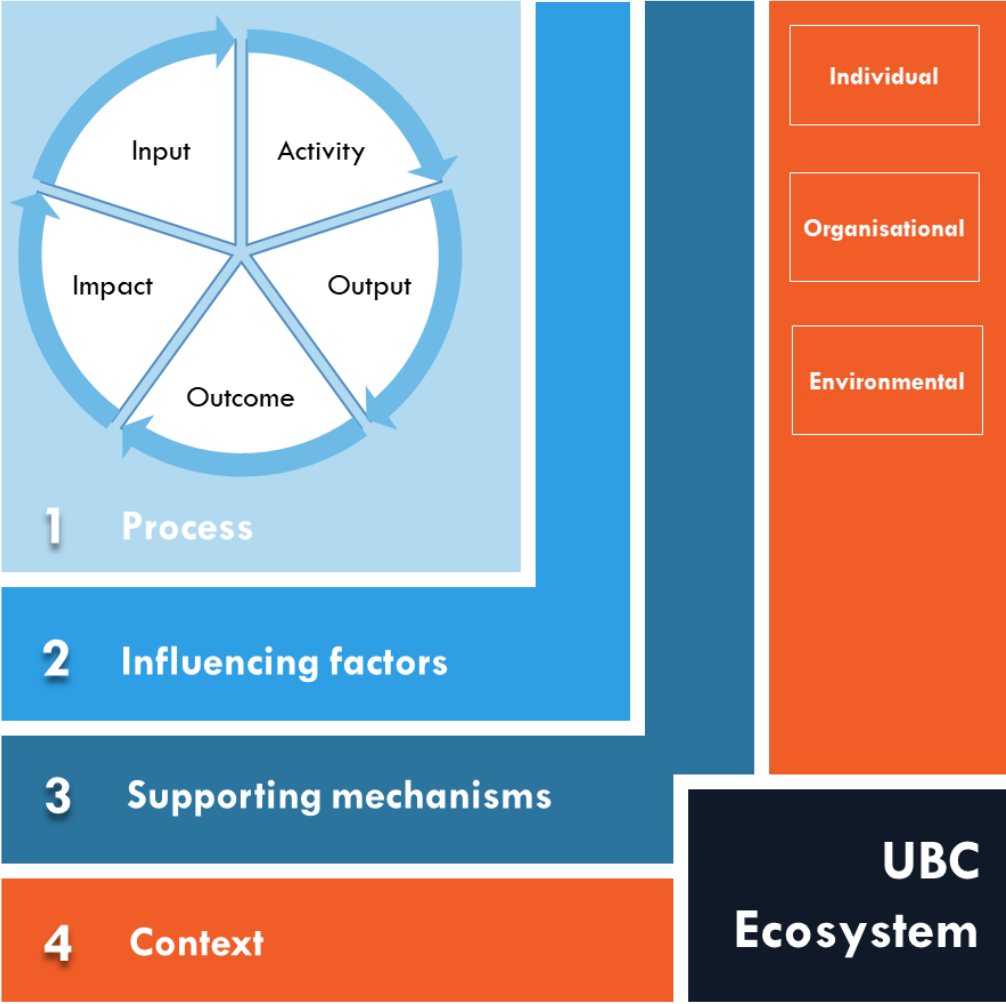
Academic networks dedicated to UBC and the featuring of UBC prominently on the university's website are least developed.

Context

The degree to which UBC takes place is influenced by a set of element present in the context of the organisation that cannot be changed in short or medium term.

These include the characteristics of individual actors involved, the institutional factors relating to the university and business, as well as by a set of broader environmental factors (political, economic, social, technological, etc.).

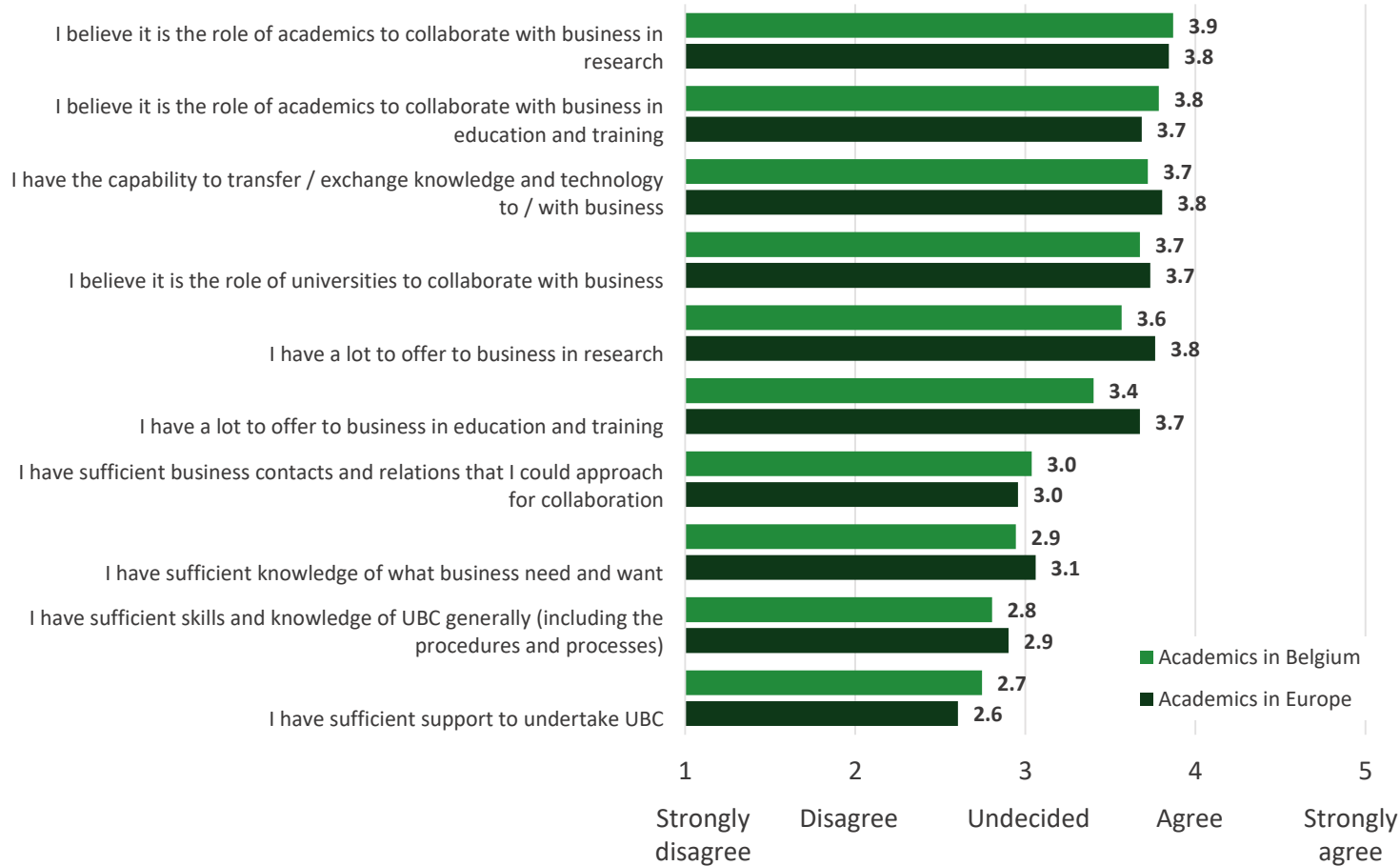
This section outlines how some contextual factors influence UBC in the country.



UBC capabilities

Capabilities for UBC

'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' - as answered by academics



Belgian academics identify moderate UBC capabilities and beliefs about the role of UBC.

Belgian academics identified their strengths in the capability of transferring knowledge and technology (3.9) and doing research for companies (3.6).

They also believe that it is their and universities role to collaborate with businesses in research and education.

However, Belgian academics consider their knowledge about UBC and business needs insufficient (2.8 and 2.9 respectively).

Generally, they lack support to undertake UBC (2.7), similarly to EU academics.

Context

Belgian academics rate most contextual factors affecting UBC to be equal or slightly higher than European academics do.

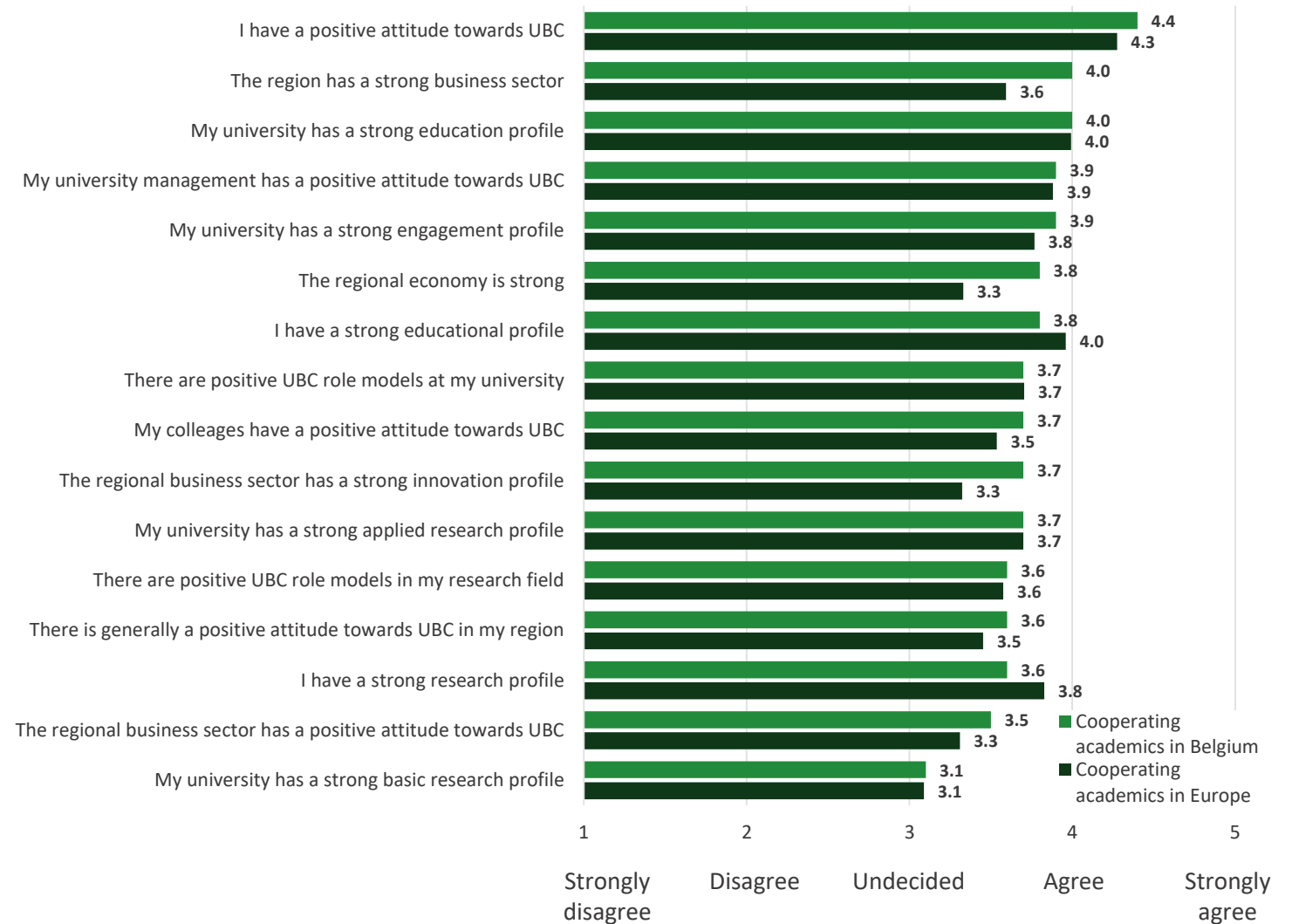
Overall, both groups believe themselves and their university management to have a positive attitude towards UBC and consider their universities to have a strong education profile. This is due to the fact that, given that universities of applied sciences are mainly focused on teaching, there are more educators than researchers in Belgian higher education system.

However, Belgian academics perceive the strength of the regional business sector, its innovation profile and regional economy noticeably higher than their European counterparts.

On the other hand, Belgian academics are less certain that they have a strong research and education profile.

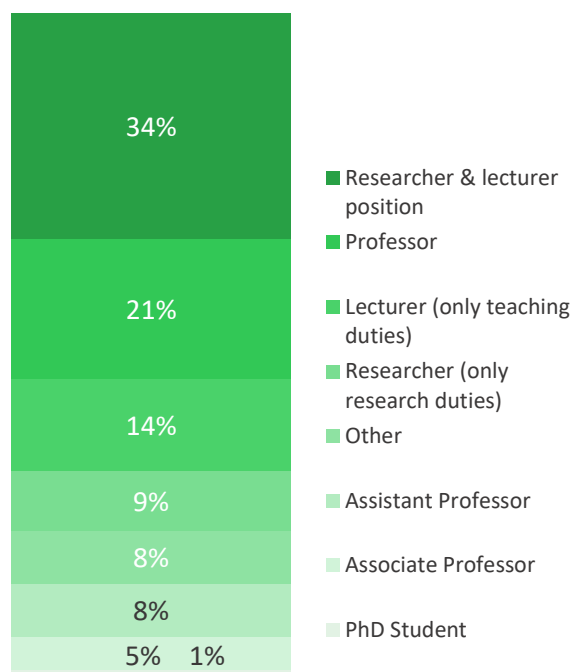
Contextual factors affecting UBC

'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' - as answered by academics



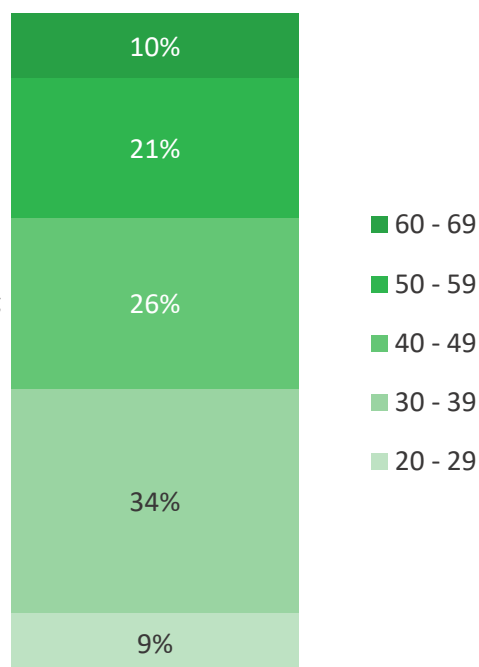
Respondent profile – academics

Position of respondent



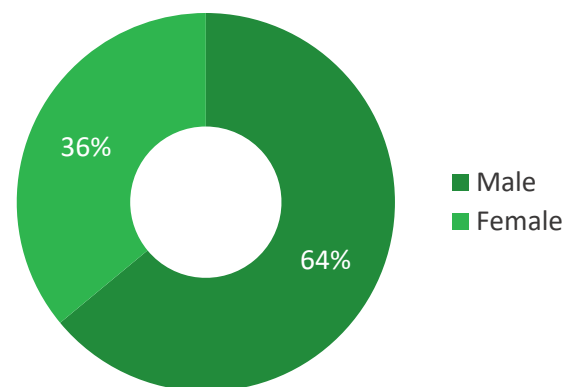
Researchers/Lecturers represent the largest group within Belgian academic sample (34%). This is followed by professors (21%) and assistant professors lecturers (14%). The remaining respondents identified themselves as researchers (9%), assistant professors (8%), associate professors (5%), PhD students (1%) and others (8%).

Age of respondents



The majority of Belgian academics in the sample are in their 30s (34%). 26% of the respondents are aged 40-49, and the 21% of academics are in their 50s. 10% of academics are aged 60-69. Academics younger than 30 are 9%.

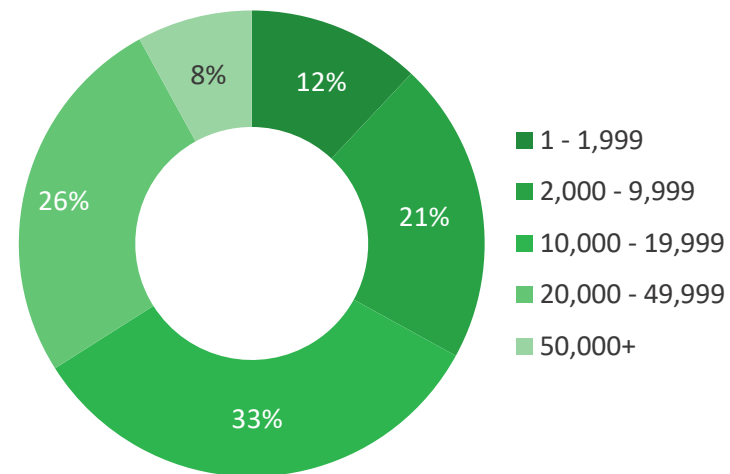
Gender of respondents



The gender distribution in the academic sample in Belgium is skewed towards male respondents, who represent 64% of the total sample.

Respondent profile – academics

Number of students of the HEI

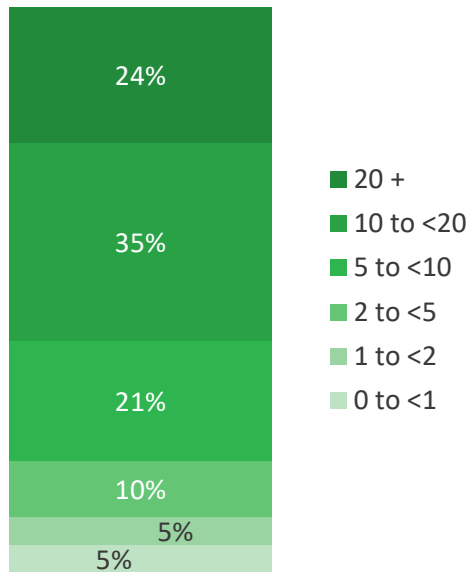


Sample Size	
Belgian Academics	n=173
European Academics	n=10.836
Belgian HEI representatives	n=100
European HEI representatives	n=3.482

33% of Belgian academics in the sample work for medium-sized HEIs (10,000 to 19,999 students), followed by 36% based in medium-large HEIs (20,000 to 49,999 students). 21% of all respondents work for small-sized HEIs (2,000 to 19,999 students). Micro-sized HEIs (up to 1,999 students) are represented by 12% of the respondents. Only 8% of the academics work at very large HEIs with over 50,000 students.

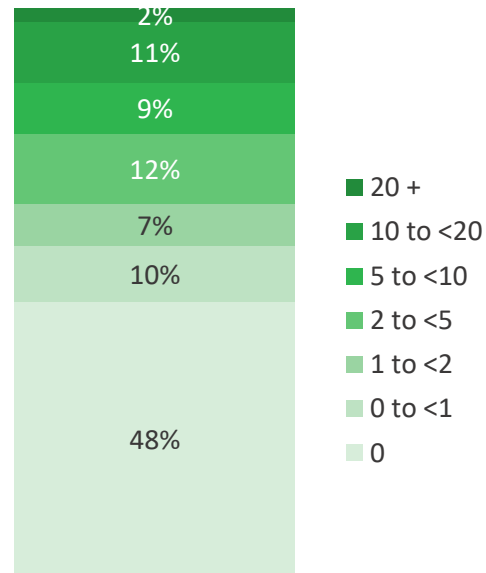
Respondent profile – academics

Years working in university



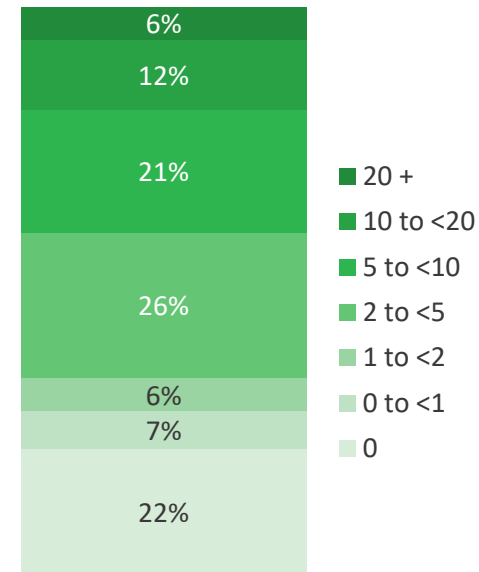
Over a third of academics have worked in universities from 10 to 20 years (35%). They are followed by 24% of academics who have over 20 years of academic experience. 21% have worked for academia for 5-10 years and further 20% have done so up to 5 years.

Years working in business



Almost half (48%) of academics have no industry experience. 17% of respondents worked up to 2 years in industry before, while 12% have done so for 2-5 years. 9% have business experience of 5-10 years. 11% has worked in business 10-20 years. Only 2% of respondents have worked in business for over 20 years.

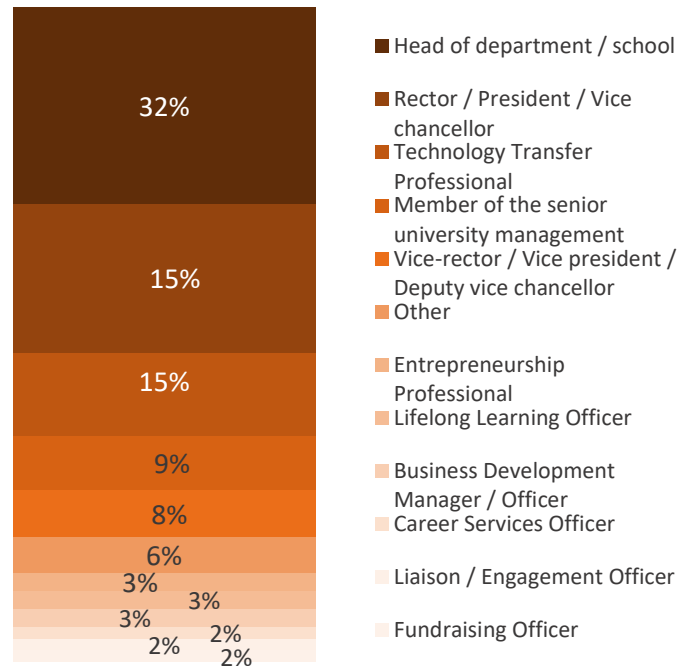
Years involved in UBC whilst working at a university or business



Most academic respondents in Belgium have some UBC experience. Although only 6% have been involved in UBC for over 20 years, 33% have 5-20 years of experience. 32% have been cooperating with businesses for 1-5 years. 29% of academics in the sample have engaged little or not at all in UBC.

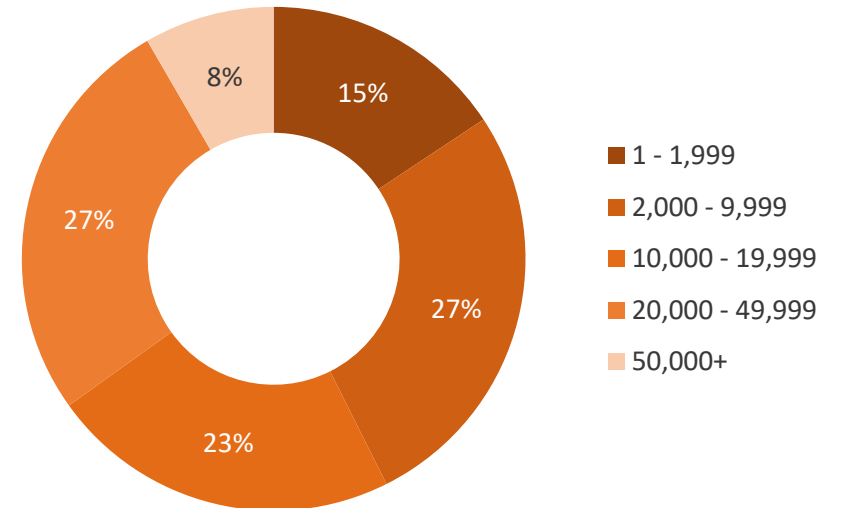
Respondent profile – HEI representatives

Position of respondent



Heads of departments/schools represent the largest group of Belgian HEI representatives (32%). Rectors or presidents constitute 15% of the sample while technology transfer professionals make up 15% of the sample. 9% is taken up by the members of senior management, followed by 8% of vice-rectors. The remaining respondents identified themselves as rectors or presidents, members of senior university management or vice-rectors and fundraising officers.

Number of students of the HEI



Overall, more than 50% of the sample in Belgium works either at large HEIs (20,000 to 49,999 students), or at small HEIs (2,000 to 9,999 students) – 27% each. 23% is employed at medium-sized HEIs (10,000 to 19,999 students). 15% works at micro-sized HEIs (up to 1,999 students) while only 8% is employed at very large HEIs (over 50,000 students).

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This report is part of the DG Education and Culture study on the University-Business Cooperation in Europe: drivers, challenges and opportunities in Europe EAC/10/2015. Further information can be found at www.ub-cooperation.eu

This report is also part of the Global University-Business Monitor initiative, a global study into university engagement and cooperation between university and business. Further information can be found at: www.ubc-monitor.com