

# Supervisor training : why, how and for what benefits ?

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# Outline of the talk

*Supervisor training : why, how and for what benefits ?*

- Performance measures of the doctoral education system
- Supervisor training at the University of Liège

# Performance measures of the doctoral education system

- Measuring the performance of universities is current practice nowadays... on all aspects related to teaching and research.
- The doctoral education system is also analysed in many universities with two main focuses
  - ▶ Success rate
  - ▶ Duration of the PhD



PhD completion rates, 2013

According to a report published on July 26 by England's funding council, 72.9 per cent of the 11,625 students from the UK or the EU who began full-time doctorates in 2010-11 will obtain a degree within seven years. This compares with 70.1 per cent who started in 2009-10 and 70.5 per cent in 2008-09.

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## Improving PhD completion rates: where should we start?

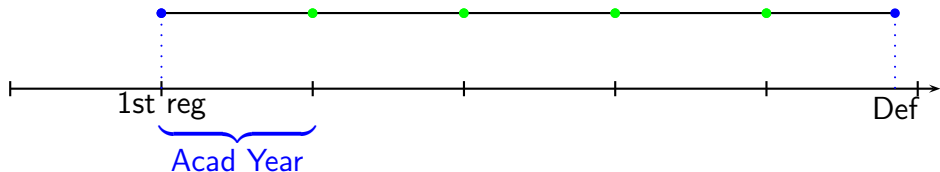
Doctoral attrition rates are high in North America: an estimated 40% to 50% of candidates never finish. Though these rates have been relatively stable over time, the issue is of growing concern given recent increases in PhD enrollment. According to the OECD, enrollment in advanced research programs in the US and Canada rose by approximately 70% from 1998 to 2012.

In the (near?) future: specialists predict that these performance measures will not only be computed on an **institutional level** but also on an **individual basis** (when applying for a PhD grant, for a promotion,...)

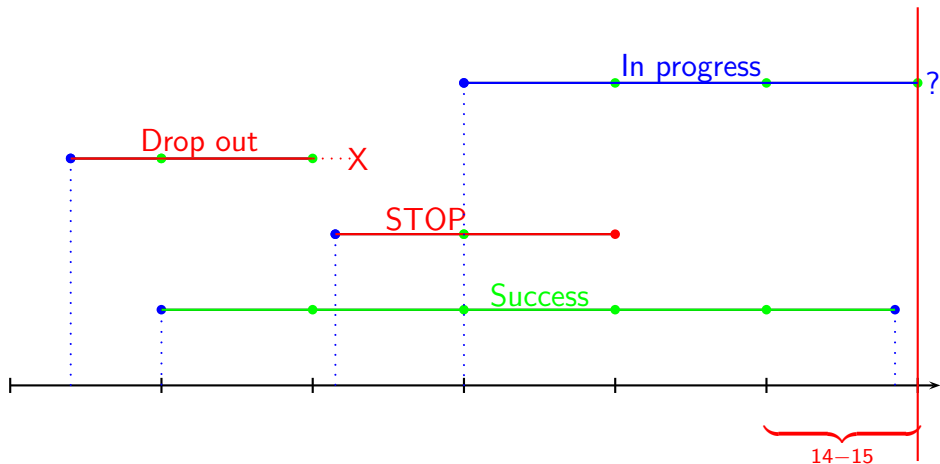
# Success rates and duration of the PhD

Measuring the success rate is not so easy as a PhD trajectory is a varying process from one student to the next.

Here is the “ideal path”:

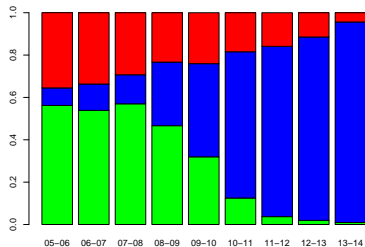
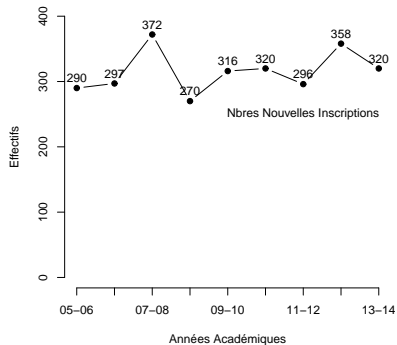


# Other typical paths



The question is: which path is the most frequent?

# Number of successes - drop out - “in progress” for newly registered students

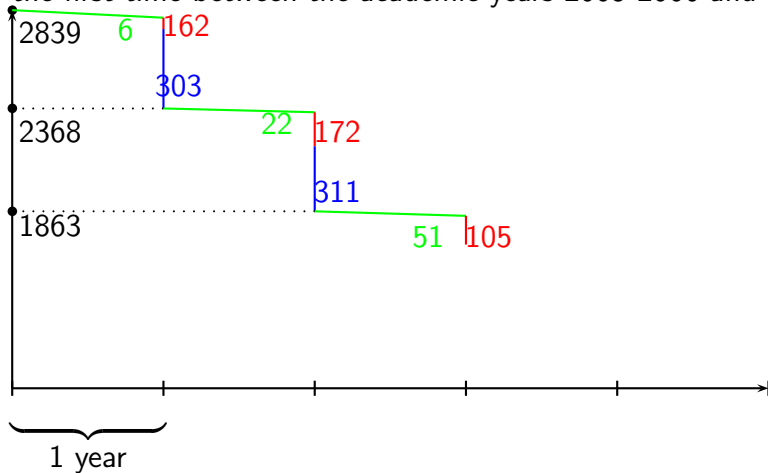


One needs to take the duration into account in order to measure a success rate!

Appropriate statistical tool: survival data analysis

# Success and failure rate during the $i$ th registration year

Data Base (administrative data): all PhD students who registered for the first time between the academic years 2005-2006 and 2013-2014.

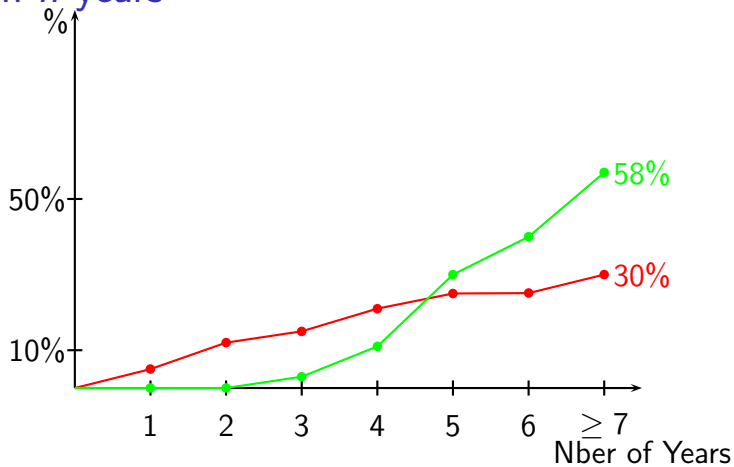


# Success and failure rates during the $i$ th registration year

Year	Numbers "at risk"	Numbers			Proba	Proba
		Drop out	Success	In progress	Drop out	Success
1	2839	162	6	303	5,71%	0,21%
2	2368	172	22	311	7,26%	0,93%
3	1863	105	51	238	5,64%	2,74%
4	1469	74	155	223	5,04%	10,55%
5	1017	43	305	139	4,23%	29,99%
6	530	20	164	79	3,77%	30,94%
$\geq 7$	267	36	120	111	13,48%	44,94%



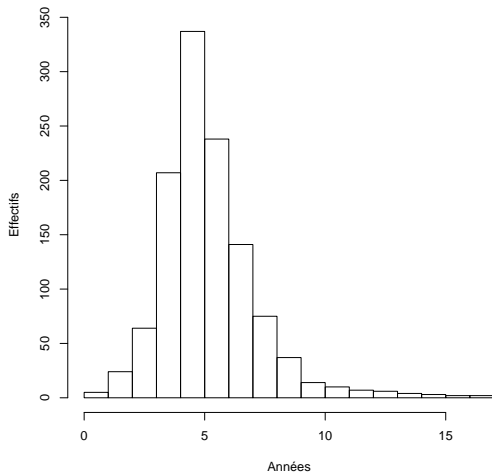
# Cumulative probabilities: success and failure rates in $n$ years



The success rate of ULg is “in the average” ...

Statistical analysis of the potential impact of explanatory variables  
(Gender, nationality, status,...)

# More about duration

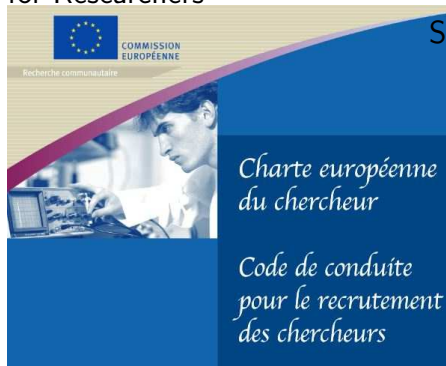


The mean duration of success is 5.5 years!

# Supervisor training

Why?

- ULg tries to comply to the guidelines of the “European Charter for Researchers”



Some elements:

- ▶ Relation with supervisors
- ▶ Supervision and managerial duties
- ▶ Continuing professional development
- ▶ ...

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCha>

# Supervisor training

## Why?

- The Masters, and even the PhD training, do not provide training explaining how to proceed as a supervisor...
- Better practices might improve the performance of ULg in terms of PhD completion and PhD duration.
- Some newly appointed professor are willing to get some kind of help.

# Supervisor training

How?

Since 2010, ULg has been offering supervisors training based on the concept of “sharing experience”. Typically:

- Half a day
- 20 participants and 3 “witnesses” (better word than “expert”)
- First Round of the table (who are you? already some experience or not? Problems?)
- 3 testimonies
- Questions and discussion

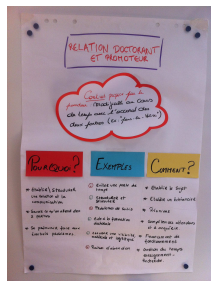
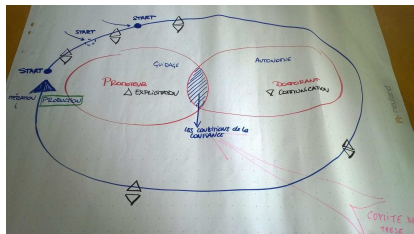
# “Professionalization” of PhD Supervision in ULg

In January 2015, ULg and ULB jointly invited Professor H. Sonneveld (Netherlands Centre for Graduate and Research Schools) for an intensive supervisor training.

- 2 full days and, three months before, a half-day of preparation
- Program divided into specific topics:
  - ▶ Doctoral Studies on the way to 2020 (bibliography on international trends and the growing importance of performance measures)
  - ▶ Transparency of expectations
  - ▶ Acceptance, selection and admission of PhD candidates
  - ▶ Intervision - a Peer Coaching Technique
  - ▶ Literature and Supervisory Tools (Toolkit)
  - ▶ Warning signs and remedies
- Much space for intensive discussion and exchange of experience (beyond faculty boundaries)

# New offer for supervisors

- June 2015: half-day training with experience sharing and a group exercise on “expectations at the start of the PhD” (25 participants)



- 14 January 2016: round table on the theme “selection and recruitment of PhD candidates” (15 participants)
- June 2016: round table on the theme “interculturality”

# Some questions...

- The trainings are not compulsory. Should they?
- What are the benefits of the training?  
At the last CDE-workshop of the EUA, surveys showed different types of benefits
  - ▶ for the supervisors (better time management, better at detecting warning signs, clarity of the expectations,...)
  - ▶ Benefits for the PhD candidates
  - ▶ Institutional benefits???
- “Professional”  $\longleftrightarrow$  “local” trainers???
- ...