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Does open access to higher education mean that the sky is the limit? A reflective analysis of an open access system in Flanders and the importance of study and career guidance.

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Abstract

Higher education in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, has always maintained a policy of open access. Besides for e.g. (veterinary) medicine or arts programs, there is no application process, enrollment cap or ranking system. A secondary school diploma suffices to enroll directly in an associate's degree (EQF level 5) or a bachelor's degree (EQF level 6). Starting September 2025, a recent educational reform broadens the direct access to associate degree programs to students of vocational tracks. Overall, this open access removes barriers to entry, allowing a broad and diverse range of students to pursue higher education.

At the same time, Flemish higher education experiences significant dropout rates. Many young people use the open access to 'try out' higher education. A common pattern is that students begin with ambitious choices but later switch to different programs. This trial-and-error approach results in study delays, discouragement, and a loss of motivation. Additionally, lecturers often express concern about limited language proficiency and mathematics knowledge, a lack of maturity, and underdeveloped study skills. As a result, much of the institutional support is focused on bridging these gaps. Consequently, the call to more restricted access through entrance exams grows louder every year.

In this reflective analysis, we illustrate the approach of our university of applied sciences in this challenging reality in Flanders. We explore the various ways we try to ensure the right (prospective) student profile ends up in the best-matching program. In relation to this, we examine how three contextual factors affect our work with students: (1) the benefits and challenges of open access, (2) the usefulness and thresholds of entrance exams, and (3) the undervaluation of vocational and associate degree programs leading to an 'aim high' attitude. Eventually we ask ourselves: might Study and Career Guidance play a unique role in an open access system?

Keywords: Access, transition to higher education, study and career guidance, vocational tracks, pre-entry

Context

Higher education in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, has always maintained a policy of open access. Besides for e.g. (veterinary) medicine or arts programs, there is no application process, enrollment cap or ranking system. A secondary school diploma suffices to enroll directly in an associate's degree (EQF level 5) or a bachelor's degree (EQF level 6). Of all students graduating from secondary education in Flanders, about two-thirds continue to higher education: 53.14% in a professional bachelor's program,

35.72% in an academic bachelor's program and 11.14% in an associate degree program (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2025).

Starting September 2025, an educational reform broadens the direct access to associate degree programs to students of vocational tracks. Overall, this open access removes barriers to entry, allowing a broad and diverse range of students to pursue higher education.

Some countries, by contrast, set specific conditions for entry into higher education — ranging from achieving certain grades in secondary education or on national entrance exams, to passing specific admission tests, completing application procedures, meeting numerous fixed limits, or successfully finishing specific high school programs (International Association of Universities, n.d.).

The open system used in Flanders is certainly not unique. Many countries allow free access to higher education upon obtaining a secondary school diploma. Such an open system offers several advantages.

Benefits of an open access system

Equity

The greatest advantage of open access to higher education is that it invests in equal opportunities, which is particularly important for students whose earlier school careers have not gone smoothly.

In Flanders, secondary education is organized into three main tracks. The *academic track* prepares students for higher education. The *labor market track* prepares students directly for entry into the labor market. In between, there is a *dual track*, where students are ready to enter the labor market upon graduation but are also sufficiently prepared to start a program in higher education.

However, the distribution of young people across these three tracks is not purely linked to their future ambitions. Students enter the labor market track for a wide variety of reasons (Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2024; Pinxten, 2012). Many start in the academic track and later transfer to another track (the so-called *waterfall system*).

Changing study tracks during secondary education can be related to problems at home, a lack of motivation, illness, difficulties with the language of instruction, limited support or educational background in the family … Some choose particular study tracks for practical or even negative reasons, such as choosing a language program because their friends do, or wanting to avoid more demanding mathematics courses.

A group of students is guided toward the labor market track at an early age. Performance in mathematics or Dutch largely determines the study track advice received (Waber et al., 2012). That may seem logical, yet we too often treat students' competencies as something static, while research shows there are differences in the ages at which children learn most effectively (Giedd, 2015). Neuroscientist Dr. Jay N. Giedd warns that we sometimes give up too early, assuming that children are destined for a certain path, while from a biological perspective they still possess tremendous potential thanks to the brain's neuroplasticity.

Not only the underestimation of students' growth potential leads to misguided study orientation. The *2018 Diversity Barometer* of Unia - an independent public institution that combats discrimination - reports on inequality of opportunity in education in Belgium, based on several university studies. Students with a migration background are more likely to be required to repeat a school year. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also at greater risk of receiving less favorable study orientation advice. As

a result, these students are underrepresented in the academic tracks, more likely to leave school without a diploma, and are less likely to pursue higher education. According to Unia's report, teachers and school leaders tend to operate with assumptions about students - such as the presumed level of parental support - which in turn affects orientation decisions. These mechanisms are often unconscious, yet have been shown to be systematic.

And this outcome is clearly reflected in the data (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2025). While two-thirds of high school students in Flanders continue into higher education, the share drops to only 45% among students whose mothers have a low level of education, and rises to 83% among those whose mothers are highly educated. Thus, even within a system of open access to higher education, a significant disparity remains.

Thanks to the relatively unrestricted access to higher education in Flanders, students from the labor market track can enter higher education through an associate degree, and may later progress to a bachelor's program. In more restrictive systems, much of this potential talent would be lost to society.

The cost of selection

Selection processes require both time and money and are a major logistic challenge. Applications, deadlines, and exception procedures all demand considerable organization. Moreover, designing a fair and effective selection process is far from simple — something we will return to later.

A selective system also creates opportunities for fraud. In the summer of 2025, several prospective students were disqualified after using AI tools to cheat during the entrance exam for medicine - one of the few admission tests in Flanders. This led to a series of legal proceedings. Ensuring fraud-free admissions in a closed system therefore requires constant vigilance and up-to-date expertise regarding new technologies and methods.

Moving away from the Ivory Tower

Finally, an open-access system helps create a more inclusive higher education environment in which diversity is valued. Colleges and universities should not be places reserved for an elite - not ivory towers where young people are educated in isolation from reality. As a result, higher education itself contributes to a broader dissemination of knowledge across society as a whole.

That said, open access to higher education is not all plain sailing. There are also certain drawbacks to maintaining minimal admission requirements.

Challenges of an open access system

Dropout and lower study efficiency

From our experience in supporting prospective students in their study choice, a group begins higher education without a realistic understanding of the required prior knowledge, entry-level competencies, or the level of difficulty of their chosen program and therefore drop out. According to the OECD, the average dropout rate in Europe is around 13% (OECD, 2025). Comprehensive figures for Flanders are scarce. At Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, the average dropout rate is 23% - considerably higher than the European average.

Is this higher dropout rate linked to the open access to higher education in Flanders? A study on higher education retention in Ireland and Scotland found that retention was higher in Scotland, where stricter selection criteria are applied, than in Ireland (Iannelli, 2025). Finland also uses a *numerus clausus* system in several fields. According to Statistics Finland, approximately 6% of students in the 2022–2023 academic year discontinued their studies without obtaining a qualification - strikingly low compared to the OECD average of 13%, and far below the rate at our institution (DF Report, 2025, 13 March).

33% of new entrants to bachelor's programs in Flanders obtain their degree within the theoretical duration, compared to an OECD average of 43% (OECD, 2025). The United Kingdom performs considerably better, with 67% completion within the theoretical time frame. There is no direct research linking the UK's more selective admission system - with centralized A-level examinations and centralized application - to study duration, yet the difference between Flanders and the UK is nonetheless remarkable.

Trial and error

There is no research showing that students more frequently switch programs in countries with an open entry system compared to more selective systems. Definitions of 'changing programs' also vary between studies: it can refer to changing a bachelor's program, a major, a specialization, or even the higher education institution itself.

Based on our own experience, we observe that a significant portion of our students have previously attempted a different program. What stands out is that we see this 'trial and error' approach less frequently among international students. Flemish students seem to choose a program quickly, give it a try, and sometimes switch again. Could it be that the stakes feel too low for Flemish students?

Students who repeatedly try one program after another are costly for society. Each year of higher education requires public funding. When this does not result in a degree, it is clearly a regrettable outcome. The Flemish government has therefore implemented several measures to limit endless switching and trial-and-error approaches in bachelor's programs.

This switching behavior is also problematic for higher education institutions themselves. In Flanders, higher education is funded through a mixed system of institutional resources and government subsidies. Funding from the Flemish government is based not only on market share of student intake but also on the number of credits earned, diplomas awarded, and graduates in specific fields of study. Therefore, attracting students who ultimately do not progress or graduate is costly and yields little return.

Bridging the gaps

Because a highly diverse group of students with varying educational backgrounds can freely enter higher education programs, there is a wide range of prior knowledge in student groups. Lecturers often express concerns about limited language proficiency and mathematics skills, a lack of maturity, and underdeveloped study skills. As a result, much of the institutional support is focused on bridging these gaps. Language support, study skills workshops, and practice sessions require significant investment from the institution. Lecturers need further professional development to effectively teach heterogeneous groups and differentiate their lessons, which demands both time and expertise.

Consequently, calls for more restricted access through entrance exams grow louder each year. Could a shift toward a more selective system with admission exams provide a solution? Or are there ways within an open access system to reduce dropout and reorientation while attracting the right students? How can we ensure that the right student ends up in the right program?

The call for entrance exams in higher education

In Flanders, only a few higher education programs use binding entrance exams. These include the bachelor's programs in Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine, as well as some artistic programs.

Additionally, many programs administer a mandatory non-binding entrance test. The purpose of these tests is to position a student relative to their potential success in a given program or to assess certain starting competencies. In its 2024–2029 coalition agreement, the Flemish government announced plans to implement a mandatory entrance test for every bachelor program (Vlaamse Regering, 2024). However, the reliability and validity of such tests are not straightforward. Developing a validated test with meaningful informational value for prospective students takes several years.

The predictive value of admission tests

Hasselt University conducted a meta-analysis on predicting academic success (Doumen & Nauwelaerts, 2016), including the reliability of previously developed entrance tests (De Schepper, 2020). Some notable findings emerged.

The best tests worldwide show some predictive value, with correlations ranging from 0.50 to 0.55. The engineering test ranks among the best in Flanders, with an average correlation of 0.50 (Fonteyne et al., 2018). Most entrance tests however exhibit correlations between 0.20 and 0.35.

The group of false positives (students who receive a positive recommendation but do not succeed in the program) and false negatives (students who receive a negative recommendation but still succeed) is therefore much larger than is often assumed. For the very best test (correlation 0.50), depending on whether the selection threshold is set high or low, 18.5% to 43% of participants receive a false positive recommendation, while 22% to 49% receive a false negative recommendation. So, even if an entrance test is used with the best predictive value achievable, one can expect that at least one-fifth - and possibly up to half - of participants will receive an inaccurate prediction.

Additionally, there is concern that entrance tests may exhibit bias. Between 2020 and 2023, an average of 46% of women in 15 OECD countries held a tertiary degree, compared to 39% of men (OECD, 2025). In Flanders, 57.8% of female students pass their first year of higher education, compared to 47.3% of male students and 37% of women complete a bachelor's degree within the standard duration, versus 26% of men. Even though girls outperform boys in higher education, they tend to perform worse on entrance tests (Graetz & Karimi, 2022). Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds also tend to be better prepared for entrance tests through tutoring and additional support (Sackett et al., 2009).

Finally, any selection test is inherently a snapshot: circumstances and stress can influence performance on the day.

Striving for a perfect correlation between test results and ultimate academic success in higher education seems, in this light, somewhat utopian.

The obsession with predicting academic success

Do we not, in general, overestimate the extent to which cognitive abilities - abilities we hope to measure - are the best predictors of success in higher education? Are we not oversimplifying a highly complex phenomenon such as academic success?

There are actually better predictors of academic success than most standardized tests. For example, the advice from secondary school on the student's future academic track, shows a correlation of 0.47, as does the grade point average in secondary school. Even ambition has a higher correlation than the vast majority of entrance tests, at 0.44 (Doumen & Nauwelaerts, 2016).

And what about IQ? IQ is far from a simple concept. Western University, concluded based on a study with 100,000 participants completing 12 cognitive tests that there is little evidence for a concept of general intelligence (Hampshire et al., 2012). *"We could conclusively demonstrate that individual differences cannot be reduced to a single IQ number."* The meta-analysis from Hasselt University found that IQ correlates at 0.23, resulting in even more false positives and false negatives (Doumen & Nauwelaerts, 2016).

Other predictors of academic success are unfortunately not easy to measure. Self-discipline, perseverance (grit), self-regulation, motivation, self-efficacy, academic engagement, social integration, and connection to the program - all these factors are known to be predictive (Coertjens et al., 2018; Richardson et al., 2012).

Impact on study choice process

What is often overlooked is that the study choice process works differently in a closed-access system. Young people often become intensely focused on passing the exam, which carries the risk that they do not engage in a genuine process of exploring a suitable program. They may forget to look more broadly at the range of options in higher education

Here lies a potential pitfall. Passing an entrance exam is a recognition of talent and effort, and it confers status and prestige. When students have worked so hard for an exam and succeed, they feel enormous pressure to start that program - they are, after all, among the 'happy few' (Pierlet, 2024).

So, is the widespread use of entrance exams to place the right student in the right program really the best way? The focus on predicting academic success can risk throwing away the good along with the bad. After all, open access offers many advantages. Perhaps these exams should be used for their intended purpose: mapping starting competencies and prior knowledge rather than as a rigid selection tool.

A broader societal problem

The undervaluation of vocational studies and associate degrees

With open access to higher education, it seems like the sky's the limit. Success stories tend to focus primarily on academic achievements. Secondary schools and higher education institutions often showcase these examples. Rarely do we hear about successful electricians or chefs.

This 'aim high' phenomenon is seen in the language that schools, parents and students use, with terms like "dropping down" and "lower level" when a student switches from the academic track to the dual-track or labor market track, or from a bachelor to an associate's degree. This vocabulary implies a hierarchy, where the number of hours of advanced mathematics, science, or classical languages is used as the benchmark.

In our workshops, we often hear students in the labor market track that feel undervalued. Could this lead them to seek more recognition after secondary school by attempting to obtain a higher education diploma? Preferably not just an associate degree—students from vocational tracks also inquire about earning a bachelor's degree.

The share of individuals without a secondary school diploma in Flanders decreased from 42.3% in 1999 to a stunning 15.1% in 2024 (Statbel – Algemene Directie Statistiek & Steunpunt Werk, 2025). The share of bachelor's and master's graduates in the labor market has increased significantly.

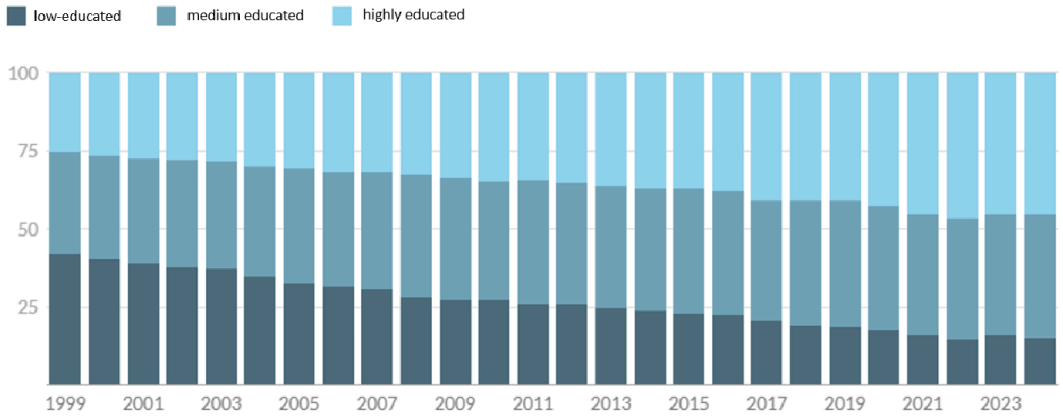

Figure 1 Population aged 25-64 by educational level – Flemish region, 1999-2024, in %. Source: EAK StatBel – Steunpunt Werk

There is some concern that master's graduates may crowd out bachelor's graduates in the job market. However, whether there are too many highly educated workers is a complex matter, depending largely on labor market demand, economic conditions, and specific sectors where certain degrees are required. In any case, the European Union has set an ambition to increase the number of highly educated people by 2030 (Eurostat, 2020). In each member state, at least 45% of 25- to 35-year-olds should have a higher education qualification. In the EU, in 2024, just over one in three inhabitants was highly educated (36.1%).

The 'sky is the limit' attitude however is exemplary of the undervaluation of vocational tracks. Students who are cognitively strong or come from tracks with mathematics and sciences, and who express the ambition to pursue a professional bachelor's degree, are often questioned. "You're not really going to do a bachelor's if you could achieve a master's, are you? Why study an associate's degree program if you can do a bachelor's?" We overlook whether this path truly makes them happy. A young person may be very good with numbers, but does working with numbers actually bring them satisfaction? Talent involves things that come effortlessly and provide energy (Dewulf, 2012). Should someone who could easily earn a medical degree not be allowed to choose a career as a painter?

A future of leaky roofs

The recent reform of secondary education in Flanders also affects the provision of labor-market-oriented programs in secondary schools. Whereas in the past many '7th specialization years' were offered - programs that students could follow after the 6th year of vocational education - we now see that many schools are hesitant to continue investing in them. They anticipate that a significant portion of their students will enroll in an associate degree program, rather than pursuing a 7th specialization year. This could potentially impact the availability of specialized workers in the future. For example, the 7th specialization year for roofers still exists, but we see that only four schools across all of Flanders still offer this option, and none of them are in a major city.

This development could lead to shortages in the labor market for specific occupational profiles. Are we heading toward a future of leaky roofs, clogged sinks, and long waiting times for childcare?

In any case, the undervaluation of vocational education - and the associated vocabulary and advice - has a significant impact on young people. At the same time, we ask them to make a well-informed choice in a society steeped in the 'aim high' attitude and a 'trial and error' approach to higher education. Are they able to do that?

The paradox of self-reflection

Open access to higher education requires a great deal of self-reflection from young people. They need to reflect on their interests, talents, values, and goals in order to make a well-informed study choice. They also need to assess what is required for that program and whether their abilities match those requirements.

The brains of young people are still actively developing. Research shows that the brain continues to mature until around the age of 25 (Giedd, 2008). A recent study by Mousley et al. (2025), showed the brain even keeps reorganizing until around the age of 32. One of the last parts of the brain to mature is the prefrontal cortex, responsible for executive functions such as organization, time management and planning. During adolescence, other regions, such as the emotional center and reward system often take over. A well-functioning prefrontal cortex is crucial for metacognition and self-reflection. It is therefore no surprise that many young people struggle with making a fitting study choice, and can use some guidance in that area.

In our practice in Flanders, we often observe that people with lower levels of self-reflection are more likely to take the step into higher education. They tend to underestimate the challenges of an academic program, which makes them more inclined to enroll. However, their lack of critical self-awareness increases their risk of dropping out or failing. Conversely, young people with higher levels of self-reflection are better able to assess their own competencies, motivation, and limitations. While this improves their chances of success once they participate, their greater self-awareness can also lead to caution, doubt, or risk avoidance, which decreases the likelihood that they will even start.

This phenomenon could be called the *self-reflection paradox*, and shows similarities with the Dunning–Kruger effect (Dunning & Kruger, 1999), a psychological phenomenon in which people with low competence in a particular domain overestimate their own abilities, while those with high competence tend to underestimate their own proficiency.

As a result, we sometimes unintentionally attract the wrong profile of students. So, how do we address the challenges mentioned above: dropout, program switching and the diverse needs of students? This

highlights a particularly important role for study and career guidance. Entering higher education without entry requirements calls for a thorough study orientation.

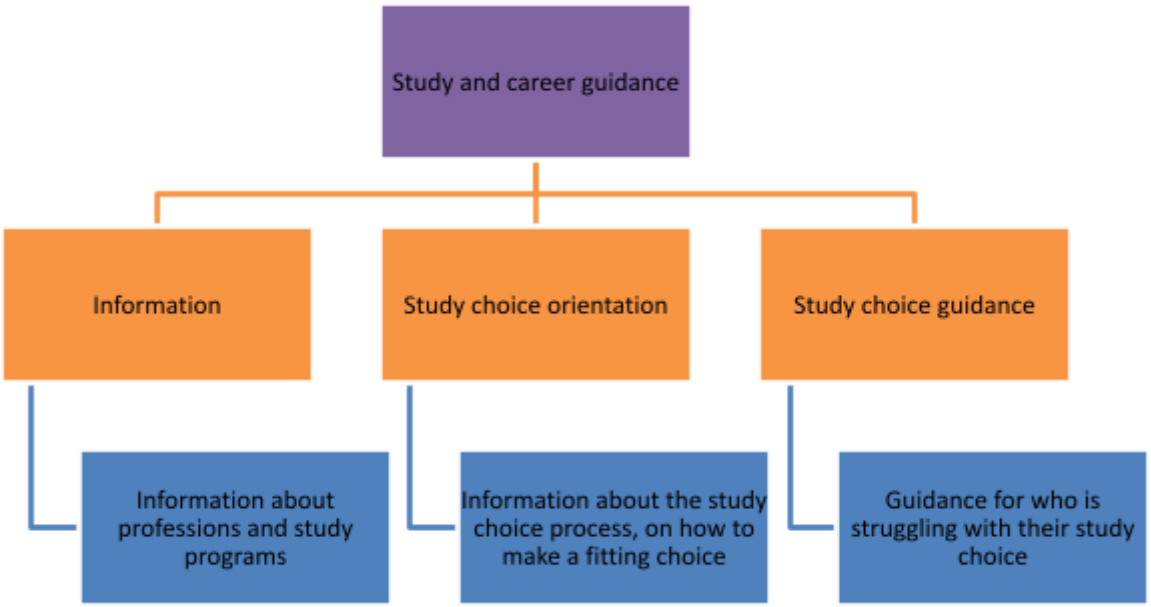

Figure 2 The three levels of study and career guidance. Source: Arbetsförmedlingen – Swedish Public Employment Service

The unique role of study and career guidance in an open access system

Waiting until the transition to higher education to guide young people in making a choice comes far too late. Effective study choice guidance is something that should be continuously provided throughout a student's entire educational career. This guidance takes place on three levels: providing accurate information, offering thorough study choice orientation, and delivering the guidance itself (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2021).

Information about study programs and careers is important for everyone. But there is more to guiding students in their study choice than providing information.

Additionally, it is useful for every young person to receive guidance on how to make choices. Often, we let young people make decisions only at the moment a choice has to be made, moving from one decision to another. However, focusing on *learning to choose* can help develop lifelong skills to make (educational) career decisions (Kuijpers, 2005). Study choice orientation involves developing career competencies such as reflecting on motives, reflecting on personal strengths, exploring work options, managing one's career, and networking. These life skills around decision-making support all future choices.

Finally, for some students, professional guidance is also necessary. This requires trained professionals, skilled in guiding the decision-making process and uncovering the underlying motives that influence

choices. Pressure from parents, societal expectations, and underlying dilemmas can thus be identified and discussed, allowing young people to take informed next steps.

The approach of Artevelde University of Applied Sciences

At our institution, we have chosen to invest in supporting (prospective) students in making a suitable study choice, through an overarching Office of Study and Career Guidance.

Giving information

We try to give as realistic a picture of our programs as possible. By giving correct information and creating different opportunities for prospective students to explore higher education, we try to encourage self-reflection.

We host several information sessions about higher education, that offer a broad and neutral overview of the options available and aim to avoid promotional or recruitment-focused messaging. The sessions take place online, on our own campus, and can also be requested by secondary schools.

Our website provides a lot of information to prospective students. The program pages start with a clear profile that students can use as a reference to assess whether there is a match. There are videos, the study program is clearly presented with brief descriptions of the courses, and an overview of potential careers is provided.

In the second half of the year, we participate in the central study choice fairs across Flanders. Staff at our exhibition booth are trained by the Office of Study and Career Guidance to provide clear and neutral information. For example, instead of saying, “You should have studied at least four hours of mathematics per week for this”, say: “We actually start at the level of four hours of prior mathematics; here are the ways to bridge that gap and prepare before you begin.”

After these fairs, prospective students can register to attend a class to get a firsthand experience of how higher education works.

On our ‘choose wisely’-days, several workshops from different fields of study are offered.

Each year, there are four open campus information days where faculty and current students are present. Short information sessions are offered to explain the programs, and prospective students can review the course materials for each program. This material is also available year-round at the Office of Study and Career Guidance’s information center.

Schools can also visit our campus, request workshops, or we can send faculty to their schools to give students a taste of higher education.

Finally, we bring student role models - through the role model project, a collaboration with all the higher education institutions in Ghent - to various schools to provide neutral information and raise awareness to students that are less likely to consider higher education.

Study choice orientation

We organize short information sessions as well as longer workshops on how to make a well-informed study choice. We professionalize teachers through study and networking days. For prospective students and their parents, there is a dedicated website, which offers numerous tips and a practical study choice checklist.

For students who have already enrolled, a focus on choice orientation is also useful, e.g. when choosing a specialization, selecting an internship or deciding whether to pursue further studies. We explicitly focus on this through intra-curricular guidance. Each student has an individual trajectory coach, serving as a personal and single point of contact. In every year of study, a 3-credit course called 'Personal and Professional Development' focuses on four key components:

1. Promoting social and academic integration, including extended onboarding, monitoring integration through a FIT test, feedback, and study progress meetings
2. Developing self-direction
3. Fostering student well-being
4. Strengthening career competencies

This course offers significant advantages in an open-access system, particularly in closing gaps. Additionally, developing career competencies and enhancing self-direction equips students with a strong foundation for the rest of their lives.

Study choice guidance

Finally, we also focus on (prospective) students who get stuck in the decision-making process. They can easily schedule a study choice interview (on campus or online) with a professional counselor. These appointments are free of charge. Each year, we assist over 500 (prospective) students who are struggling with their choice. Due to new government measures and changes in secondary education, we have observed a significant increase in the number of consultations. Over a period of two years - comparing academic years 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 - the number of appointments increased by 53.3%.

Lessons for the future

An open access or closed access system is ultimately primarily an ethical and political discussion about educational equity, efficiency, and social mobility. As a society, do you invest in talent and opportunities for everyone, or do you focus your resources on students who are already likely to succeed? Do you spend your funds on strict admissions tests and selection processes, or rather on providing guidance and support for students in an open access system?

Open access certainly does not mean giving endless chances or wasting resources. A closed system also incurs costs.

Consequently, it makes sense to address the disadvantages of an open system—such as dropout, program changes, and increased need for guidance—rather than to strictly limit access.

How can the drawbacks of an open access system be addressed?

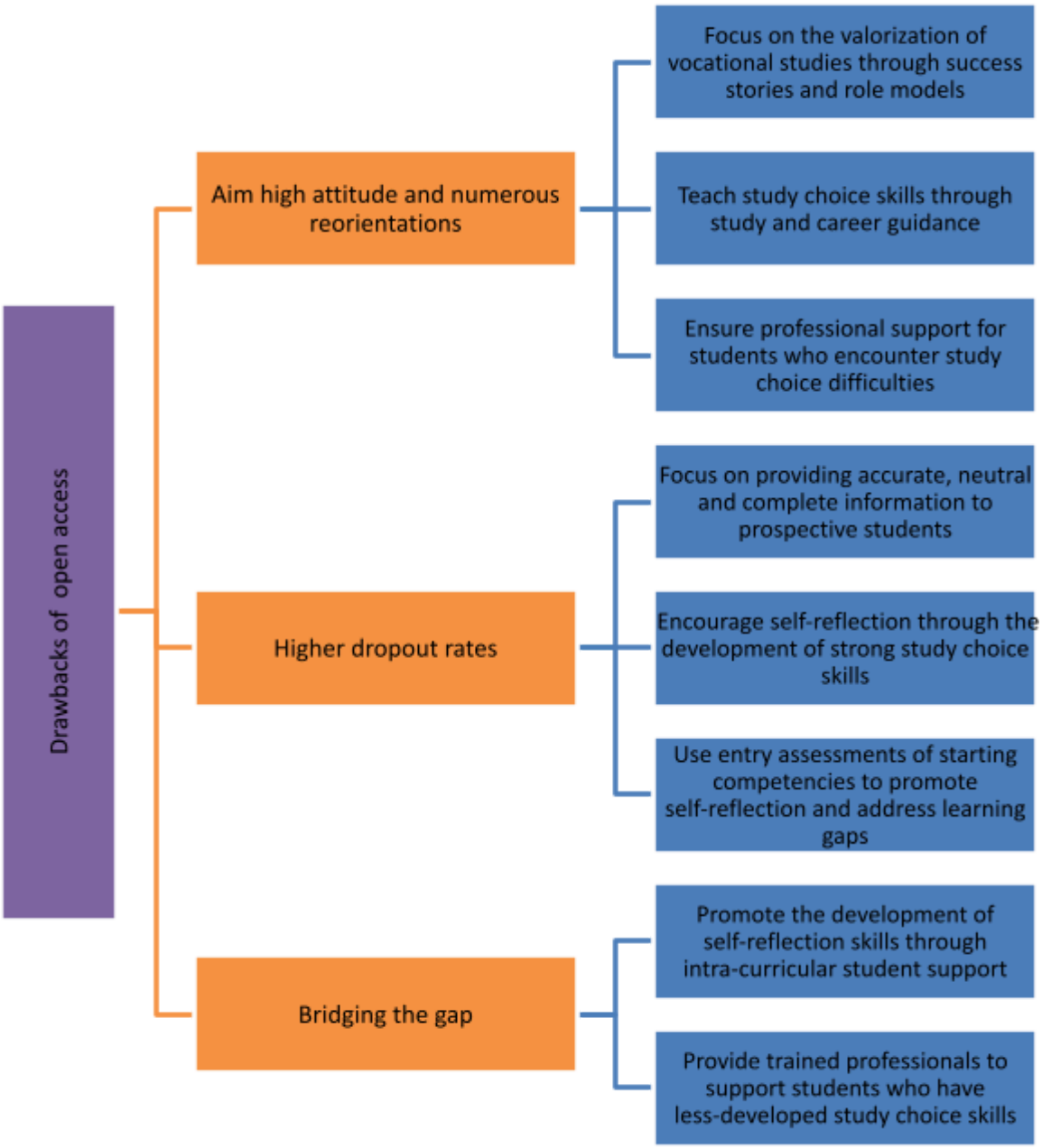

Figure 3 Addressing the drawbacks of an open access system – Office of Study and Career Guidance – Artevelde University of Applied Sciences

There is a role to be played here by secondary schools, institutions, higher education, and society as a whole.

As a society, we bear a responsibility to place greater value on a wide range of professions. Before students transition to higher education, showcase enough success stories of former students who did not go on to higher education. A successful entrepreneur, a young person who built a brand from scratch, the local hairdresser whose appointments are booked months in advance. Display their photos in the hallways

alongside those of well-known academic success stories. In doing so, redefine what success means—and show that it extends beyond academic achievement.

Finally, invest in study and career guidance to mitigate the disadvantages of open access. In this way can we achieve the best of both worlds: reduced dropout and trial-and-error experiences, while maintaining access to higher education that promotes diversity and equity.

Biographies

The *Office of Study and Career Guidance* of Artevelde University of Applied Sciences is an expertise center in career guidance for students. Annually, we see over 500 high school students in our workshops, have more than 400 individual guidance sessions with students, inform more than a thousand parents and students on higher education, give workshops and information sessions in over 30 secondary schools and professionalize up to 150 high school teachers on study and career guidance.

Nele Pierlet has years of experience in secondary education and as a lecturer in our teacher's program. Since 2016 she has worked as a guidance counselor with a focus on higher education for underrepresented groups. She is the coordinator of the Flemish Support Centre of Inclusive Higher Education, which supports higher education institutions in Flanders with their inclusion policy. She is the author of the book 'Making powerful choices' (Dutch) on how to guide young people in making a study choice.

Eva Booms is an expert in the transition to the labor market. She has 20 years of experience in career guidance and ran the Artevelde Career Center for many years. She has a postgraduate degree in grief and loss counselling and is trained in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

Lieselot Buyle is an occupational psychologist and trained career counselor. She has 6 years of experience at the Office of Study and Career Guidance and manages the partnerships with secondary schools in Flanders.

Delphine Goethals has 16 years of experience as a study and career counselor. She is also an admissions officer and international recruiter. Delphine is an expert in organizing events and activities related to study choice.

Sien Pieters has been working at CLB (Flemish Centre for Student Guidance in secondary education) prior to her start at the Office of Study and Career Guidance in 2023. She also manages the partnerships with secondary schools in Flanders.

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