

## Call

### **SPECIAL RESEARCH FUND ANNOUNCEMENT 2026 PREFERENCE PROGRAMME FOR CHINESE PhD CSC CANDIDATES**

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#### **Announcement and application information**

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Each year the Flemish Government allocates research funds to Ghent University so as to implement the Flemish Government's Resolution of 21 December 2012. In accordance with this resolution, Ghent University has drawn up rules and regulations regarding the funds of the Special Research Fund (BOF, Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds) <sup>1</sup>. Each year the Research Council invites research proposals for the different initiatives.

At least 3.5% of the financial means of the Special Research Fund has to be used to support bilateral scientific collaboration initiatives. One of these initiatives is the cofunding of Chinese doctoral students who obtained a PhD-scholarship of the Chinese Scholarship Council.

This invitation concerns:

**Preference programme for Chinese PhD CSC candidates  
Applying for a CSC scholarship in 2026**

**The deadline for applications at Ghent University is  
16 December 2025, 23.59 (Belgian time).**

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<sup>1</sup> Board of Directors, 18.01.2013

### **Ghent University preference programme for Chinese PhD CSC candidates**

Ghent University has entered into a cooperation agreement with the China Scholarship Council (CSC) to promote Ghent University as a host institution for Chinese PhD students. This cooperation agreement will span five years from 30 November 2023 to 30 November 2028.

Within the framework of this agreement, Ghent University and CSC will jointly finance 50 new CSC PhD students annually. Students selected under this preference programme will be exempted from paying tuition, bench fees, or any other study-related costs at Ghent University. Additionally, the selected students will receive a small top-up scholarship from Ghent University, supplementing their CSC scholarship to ensure a total monthly income of minimum 1610 euros (following the Ghent University policy on recommended financial support for PhD students).

Each year, Ghent University and CSC will select 50 PhD students who opt for Ghent University as their host institution and aim to earn a PhD degree either at Ghent University or through a Joint (or double) PhD programme between Ghent University and their home university.

A Joint PhD degree (also known as a joint doctorate or co-tutelle doctorate) is a doctoral degree awarded by two or more institutions, sharing supervisory responsibilities and coordinating the PhD candidate's research trajectory, culminating in a jointly administered examination process.

It's important to note that exchange or visiting PhD students, who are enrolled as PhD students at a Chinese university and intend to obtain their PhD degree solely from their home university in China, are ineligible to apply under the preference programme. Instead these visiting/exchange students can apply for a personal CSC scholarship with the support of a Ghent University supervisor.

This preference program is open exclusively to freshman students, meaning first-year PhD students who have not yet received a CSC scholarship. At the time of the application eligible students may have completed a maximum of one full academic year at Ghent University and must not have received a CSC scholarship. Joint doctoral students who started at a Chinese institution and are only enrolled at this institution may have been enrolled for more than 1 academic year at the time of the deadline.

### **Evaluation of applications and granting of the cofunding**

The Research Council will preselect up to 55-60 candidates at Ghent university prior to the CSC scholarship selection based on the qualifications of the candidates. These **nominated students will be invited to apply for a CSC preference scholarship in China**. CSC will select out of these group of nominated students (approximately) 50 students for a CSC preference scholarship.

- **Students will be ranked based on their bachelor's degree results. Therefore, students must include a transcript of records (or another official document) that shows their weighted bachelor's degree results, translated into a score out of 100.**

Students who only have a GPA must always indicate the maximum score that can be obtained (e.g. .../3, .../4,.../5) and must add an official attestation of the used grading/credit system + conversion scale into a 100 percentage scale. If needed, students are advised to contact the student administration of their respective universities to attest their study result into a score out of 100. **Without this information the application will not be considered eligible.**

- Candidates for the preference programme must also prove to have a **master degree or be in the final year of their master studies**. Students that have been enrolled as a PhD student on the basis of a bachelor degree are also eligible to apply.

**Applicants without master study/PhD enrollment will not be taken into consideration for this programme.**

### **Ghent University preselection:**

The candidates that qualify for the *preference programme* will be ranked according to their **bachelor study** and **universities where they have or will be graduated** (bachelor and/or master/PhD).

Ghent University will give preference towards

- the **highest ranked student** (on the basis of their bachelor result) +

- **candidates that graduated/studied (bachelor and/or master/PhD) at Chinese universities/institutions listed on the Double First Class University Project.** (The list is available on <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding/bof/chn/overview.htm>).
- Candidates that study/have graduated at other universities than those mentioned in the Double First Class University project list take the remaining places in the nomination.

**Ghent University supervisors can support maximum 1 candidate per call.**

No restrictions will be imposed relating to the fields of research.

**Language**

The applications for the preference programme for Chinese CSC candidates must be submitted in English.

**Result**

A list of nominated candidates will be published on the Ghent University website at the end of February 2026: <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding/bof/results/overview.htm>

The nominated candidates will be invited to submit their application through the CSC preference channel.

**Submission**

Applications for the preference programme for Chinese CSC candidates must be submitted on the required forms: <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding/bof/chn/overview.htm>

The **deadline** for applications is: **16 December 2025, 23.59 (Belgian time).**

The deadline will be strictly respected; late or incomplete applications will be rejected without review.

The **application** has to be submitted electronically to [BOFapplication@UGent.be](mailto:BOFapplication@UGent.be) (please use a pdf converted from the Word document and not a scanned pdf<sup>2</sup>).

The document has to be named as follows: "surname Candidate\_name Candidate\_BOF\_CSC\_application". Send the application form and annexes as separate PDF-files

The proposals must be drawn up in English. Add a copy of the following documents:

- copies of diplomas, transcripts of records and document(s)<sup>3</sup> to attest the studies (Ba + Ma/PhD) and the study results for the bachelor translated into a score out of 100.
- official attestation of the grading/credit system (if applicable)
- If it concerns a Joint PhD degree:
  - a statement from the Chinese home university confirming the university's willingness to negotiate a future joint PhD partnership agreement with Ghent University
  - a CV of the foreign supervisor.

The **Ghent University supervisor** has to fill in an **ethic questionnaire**. This document is available on the same webpage as the application form. The supervisor has to send this ethic questionnaire to [BOFapplication@ugent.be](mailto:BOFapplication@ugent.be).

**Scientific/scholarly report**

Within 3 months following upon the end of the cofunding a final scientific/scholarly report must be submitted, signed by the supervisor. This report will relate to the full period of the cofunding that was granted and will present the results of the research project. The scientific/scholarly report must be made on the required forms, which are available on

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<sup>2</sup> Via File < Export < Create PDF/XPS document

<sup>3</sup> Explanation of grading/credit system



the University website <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding/bof/chn/overview.htm>. The report has to be sent electronically to [BOFapplication@UGent.be](mailto:BOFapplication@UGent.be)

**More information**

For further general information, please contact Mrs. An Moors – tel. +32 9 264 95 61 (e-mail: [BOF@UGent.be](mailto:BOF@UGent.be)), or Sean Bex, head of Research Projects .

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

### 1 Administrative data (must be filled out completely and accurately, using arial font size 10 pt.)

#### 1.1 The candidate

To be eligible for this preference programme, students must have started the admission procedure as prospective PhD students at Ghent University by the application deadline.

While the admission process does not need to be completed by the pre-selection deadline, it must be finalized by the time of the CSC application in China.

The admission procedure at Ghent University is initiated by the Ghent University supervisor. This is primarily an administrative process during which the academic aspects (such as the equivalence of your degree, research proposal, and language skills) will be evaluated. More details:

<https://www.ugent.be/en/research/doctoralresearch/enrolment-doctorate>.

**Both the supervisor and the student must ensure that they complete the online registration module in OASIS as soon as possible and submit their application for approval to the (faculty) administration.**

Supervisors can find more instructions on the intranet: [Basic points of attention for PhD supervisors](#)

#### 1.2 Supervisor (only one allowed)

Ghent University supervisor can support maximum 1 candidates per call.

The proposals must be submitted by:

(1) a supervisor who is, at the moment of the deadline of this call, associated with Ghent University either as:

- (a) a member of the tenured academic staff (Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel)
- (b) a visiting professor with at least a research assignment

or by:

(2) a senior assistant, senior lector, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor or senior full professor within the integration framework at UGent who holds a PhD degree. In this case, it is compulsory to add a co-supervisor (see 1.3) who belongs to category (1) of the supervisor.

The supervisor carries the responsibility for the proper implementation of and reporting on the project.

Please mention the ORCID-ID of the supervisor.

The supervisor is obliged to have an ORCID-ID (publically available). Those who do not yet have an ORCID-ID can find more information on: <https://www.ugent.be/orcid>.

#### 1.3 Co-supervisor (only one allowed)

As is evident in the project description and the plan of work, the co-supervisor must make a real contribution to the coordination of the PhD research. Depending on the category to which the supervisor belongs, the following distinction is being made:

(a) If the supervisor belongs to **category (1) of the supervisor**, a co-supervisor is **optional**. At the moment of the deadline of this call, the co-supervisor must:

- belong to one of the categories of the supervisors
- have an appointment at Ghent University, the University Hospital, VIB, IMEC, IBBT and/or Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School or at one of the University Colleges (“hogescholen”) from the Ghent University Association **and** hold a PhD degree.

(b) If the supervisor belongs to the **integration framework**, or will retire during the course of the scholarship, it is **compulsory to add one co-supervisor who belongs to category (1) of the supervisor**. In that case the application has to be supported by a co-supervisor who is:

- a member of the tenured academic staff (Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel)

- a visiting professor with at least a research assignment

The status of the co-supervisor (including the type and duration of the appointment) and the home institution have to be specified in the application forms.

Please mention the ORCID-ID of the co-supervisor. The co-supervisor is **obliged** to have an ORCID-ID (*publically available*). Those who do not yet have an ORCID-ID can find more information on: [ORCID — Ghent University](#)

**In the case of a joint PhD, give the name and details of the supervisor at the partner university who will, jointly with a Ghent University supervisor, supervise the PhD.**

**The supervisor must have the authority to supervise PhD students and must hold a PhD degree.**

**Please also attach a CV of the foreign supervisor to the application form.**

#### 1.4 Title of the PhD proposal

Concise title of the PhD research

#### 1.5 University where the student wants to obtain the PhD degree

There are two possibilities: either the PhD student takes the **PhD degree at Ghent University** or the student takes a **joint PhD degree at both Ghent University and the Chinese home university**. Indicate what is applicable.

**A joint PhD (=joint doctorate; co-tutelle doctorate) is a doctoral degree awarded by two (or more) institutions, which share the responsibilities of supervising and coordinating a researcher's PhD trajectory and which organize a joint examination procedure.** For more information about Joint PhD agreements see: <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/doctoralresearch/joint-phd/overview.htm>

***Students who want to obtain a PhD degree at their Chinese home university only ('visiting or exchange students'), are not eligible for this preference programme.***

#### 1.6 CSC-application for a PhD-grant

Give the requested information.

#### 1.7 Does the proposed research include possible ethical and/or biosafety issues and/or processing of personal data?

**The Ghent University supervisor must submit a separate advice on the ethical and biosafety context of the proposed research project.**

The advice document is available on the same webpage as the application form.

If available a favourable ethical recommendation or evidence of a bio-safety file can be added as an annex to this advice.

If the research concerns dual-use goods, software or technology, be aware that certain restrictions apply. Consult the Ghent University intranet for more information about '[Dual-use items](#)' and '[Knowledge security](#)'

#### 1.8 Abstract of the research proposal in Dutch and English

Please give a short Dutch and English description of the research proposal in maximum 60 words. Include the title of the project, the abstract and also at least 3 keywords, divided by a semicolon “;” .

## 1.9 Research field codes (at least one):

Please include at least 1 research field code. For the different codes, see <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-ugent/research-discipline.htm> under “Disciplinary Subfield L4”.

## 1.10 Data Management Plan

When research funding is granted by BOF, the researchers (promoters or holders of a pre-doctoral or post-doctoral fellowship) will be asked to write a data management plan (DMP) submit it to [dmp.admin@ugent.be](mailto:dmp.admin@ugent.be) within 6 months after the start of the project.

The DMP has to be based on one of the templates that are available on [DMPonline.be](http://DMPonline.be). It is preferable to use this tool also for the drafting of a DMP.

Researchers are also expected to keep the DMP up-to-date during the course of the project and are accountable for the data management of their projects at any time. No later than three months after the end of the project, the researchers will need to upload the final version of their DMP in GISMO. See for more information on: <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/datamanagement/policies/ghent-university.htm#BOF-andIOF-fundedresearch>. Questions about writing a DMP or the templates can be addressed to [rdm.support@ugent.be](mailto:rdm.support@ugent.be).

## 2 The candidate

### 2.1 Studies

Mention the global title of your studies (bachelor and master/PhD level) (not the titles of the individual courses) and if applicable the results per degree (weighted marks/100 or GPA). Add copies of all diplomas and certificates and the transcripts of records (in English). If you are currently in the final year of your master degree studies, add the transcript of records of the master courses you have completed so far.

**Students will be ranked on the basis of their bachelor study result**, so an exact score is required. Therefore students must include a transcript of records (or other official document) that **attests their weighted bachelor study result translated into a score out of 100. Without this information the application will not be considered eligible.**

Students who only have a GPA must always indicate the maximum score that can be obtained (e.g. .../3, .../4,.../5) and must add an official attestation of the used grading/credit system + conversion scale into a 100 percentage scale. If needed, students are advised to contact the student administration of their respective universities to attest their study result into a score/100.

Candidates for the *preference programme* must also prove to have **a master degree or be in the final year of their master studies/have started their PhD studies.**

## 3 The PhD research

**Describe the doctoral research on 1 page: explain the topic, the research question(s) and the methodology that will be used. Please use Arial, size 10 pt.**