howest
university of applied sciences

ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

Annual Report 2025

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university of applied sciences

CONTENT





2025 WAS... 6

1 CORPORATE HOWEST 8

THE BLUE CIRCLE 10
ORGANISATION CULTURE 11
RUN-EU, OUR STUDENTS WILL INHERIT THE FUTURE 12
RUN-EU IN NUMBERS 13
TIMELINE RUN-EU 16
SUSTAINABLE HOWEST 18
Sustainable project in the spotlight:
Business Management 2030 20

2 EDUCATION 22

INTRODUCTION 24
EDUCATION IN NUMBERS 25
INNOVATIVE TRAINING PORTFOLIO 26
PROFESSIONAL MASTERS 28
AI IN HOWEST 29
AI language policy 27
AI in research: projects in the spotlight 28
INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS 31
SO HOWEST, WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE A STRONG START IN HIGHER EDUCATION 32
SOCIAL CREATIVITY CONGRESS 33
COLLABORATIONS 34
HOWEST ACADEMY 34
Courses and study formats à la carte 35
Energy studies at Howest 36
STUDY PROGRAMMES ON OFFER 37
A WIDE SELECTION OF STUDENT SERVICES 38
STUVO IN NUMBERS 39
StudentApp 38
United Spurs Athlete Status 39
Pixelkot 39





3 INTERNATIONALISATION: VIEW OF OUR WORLD AN OPEN-MINDED 42

INTRODUCTION 44
INTERNATIONALISATION IN NUMBERS 45
ENGLISH-TAUGHT PROGRAMMES 46
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS 48
INTERNATIONAL PROJECT IN THE SPOTLIGHT: BIP GLOBALIZATION & MIGRATION 50
STRONGER COLLABORATION WITH VOKA INTERNATIONAL HOUSE FOR INTERNATIONAL RETENTION 51

4 RESEARCH 52

INTRODUCTION 54
RESEARCH WITH IMPACT 55
MISSION-DRIVEN RESEARCH IN FIVE TRANSITION DOMAINS 56
Digital 57
Ecological 58
Health 59
Learning 60
Social 61
AN OPEN SCHOOL AS LINKING ELEMENT IN THE ECOSYSTEEM 62
RESEARCH DAY 63



5 VIBRANT CAMPUSES AND ECOSYSTEMS 64

INTRODUCTION 66
BRUGES 68
KORTRIJK 72
SUSTAINABLE CAMPUSES 75
CAMPUS KORTRIJK WEIDE 77
CAMPUS BRUGES STATION 79
ECOSYSTEM BRUGES 80
Inauguration Cyber Defence Factory 80
Collaboration between Howest and ZoWe Bruges 81
ECOSYSTEM OUDENAARDE 82
ECOSYSTEM KORTRIJK 83



6 HOWEST IN THE MEDIA 84

2025 WAS...

2025. It was a special year as Howest celebrated its 30th anniversary. We marked the occasion in style, including by honouring staff who have been with us since the very beginning during the opening of the academic year. It was also a year in which collaboration, innovation and sustainability became more deeply embedded in Howest's DNA. Together with students, staff and partners, we continued to build an academic institution that is rooted locally yet connected internationally.

With RUN-EU, we once again took significant steps towards building a sustainable European network. With the expansion of the partnership to include 'Dunărea de Jos' University of Galați (UGAL) in Romania and the Technical University of Liberec (TUL) in the Czech Republic, the alliance further evolved as a strong international ecosystem. At the same time, we made the European learning experience more accessible through the development of the RUN-EU Hub. This platform was developed in-house and is now in use across all partner institutions. It not only simplifies the application process for Short Learning Opportunities for students but also supports collaboration and connectivity between all RUN-EU partners. Our goal is to embed RUN-EU projects even more firmly within our curricula.

Closer to home, too, we continued to invest in strong partnerships and sustainable networks. For example, we set up the Cyber Defence Factory in Bruges with the Ministry of Defence, and we launched SO Howest: a renewed partnership with secondary schools that brings initiatives for students and teachers together under a single banner. We value our collaborations with partners in education and the professional sector, based on the conviction that innovation flourishes where knowledge is shared and strengths are combined.

In 2025, sustainability took on an even more prominent role within our organisation. Together with CIFAL Flanders, we took steps towards being recognised as an SDG Pioneer, with SDG 4 – quality education – naturally serving as our guiding principle. This commitment to sustainability is evident not only in our degree programmes and research projects, but also on our campuses. We continue to invest in sustainable infrastructure. Initiatives such as the WeidEnergie co-operative demonstrate how we are literally building a 'warm' Howest. However, we remain committed to this in a figurative sense as well.

2025 was, above all, a year in which we looked beyond our own borders with confidence. We will continue to do so with 'togetherness' as the key ingredient.

Frederik D'hulster / president of Howest
Lode De Geyter / chair of the board of directors at Howest







01 CORPORATE HOWEST







The Blue Circle

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Strategic plan 2022-2028

The Blue Circle is the visual translation of what we as Howest represent and stand for. Everything stems from a passion for our students. Guided by our core values, we prepare them for a bright future. Every Howest employee contributes to our vision of building an innovative and creative institution, all of us together.

We follow three strategic objectives to achieve our goals:

1 Howest is a versatile organisation

We are a financially robust organisation that readily anticipates new challenges. Our programmes and staff are, as a result, well equipped to respond accordingly to arising educational, research and service opportunities.

2 Howest provides an effective and engaging environment for learning and research

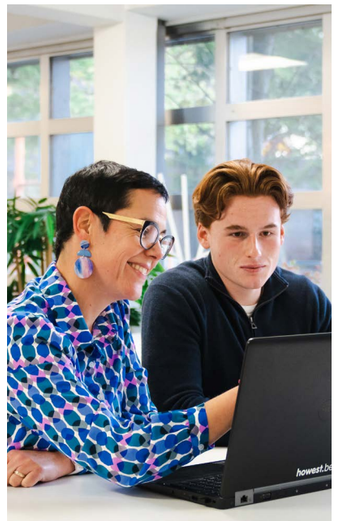
As a university of applied sciences, we optimise study choice and progression for a diverse student population. Evidence-based research founds the choices we make for creating effective and engaging learning environments. Research and service, in collaboration with the professional work field, further strengthen our programmes. Our physical and virtual learning environments are open and accessible to all stakeholders.

3 Howest offers innovative and future-oriented training, research and services

With an extensive range of programmes on offer, we appeal to various target groups. We develop future-oriented training that anticipates and adapts to current and future societal needs. To do so, we work closely with the professional work field and actively participate in applied research with demonstrated impact.







» ORGANISATION CULTURE

Howest strives to be an inclusive and connected community where everyone can be themselves. Students and staff feel welcome, valued and heard. They actively contribute to open dialogue, sustainable relationships and an innovative organisation. By utilising everyone's talents, a sense of meaning and trust is created. We therefore refer to a Howest Community that is:



Talent- and value-based

Talents are recognised and nurtured. Mistakes are seen as learning opportunities. Howest is a testing ground for innovation and personal growth.



Open and inclusive

Diversity is seen as an asset. Consideration is given to everyone's background and beliefs, and different voices and opinions are actively explored.



Connecting and empowering

Solidarity and shared responsibility stand central. Space is created for gathering and collaboration, so that everyone feels involved.



Safe and respectful

Integrity and respect are the norm. Howest offers support in the area of well-being, so that everyone has a safe environment.



Trendsetting and entrepreneurial

We give staff and students the confidence and space to develop future-oriented ideas and projects – with a twist – we do it together with the professional field and alumni. Together, we are building a culture of curiosity, experimentation and growth.



» RUN-EU
OUR STUDENTS WILL INHERIT THE FUTURE



RUN-EU, **Regional University Network**, a European University, is a transnational alliance of higher education institutions from across the EU.

The **goal** of the European Universities is to enable higher education institutions in various European countries to cooperate more closely, so that students, researchers, and staff can learn, work, and research across borders more easily.

To this end, universities and universities of applied sciences are forming **strategic alliances** through which they can bring added value to one another. RUN-EU aims to pool the strengths of regional higher education institutions and, in doing so, become a prominent partner within the **regional socio-economic** fabric.





RUN-EU is focused on three major objectives:

- **European Programmes Academy** (EPA), which develops joint study programmes and learning activities for students, with a focus on practical experience and societal challenges.
- **European Research Area** (ERA), which connects educational institutions, researchers and regional partners to collaborate on research, innovation and regional development.
- **European Stakeholder Engagement** (ESEC), which brings together entrepreneurship, volunteering and innovation labs to ensure that external stakeholders are fully engaged.

more info:
run-eu.eu

RUN REGIONAL UNIVERSITY NETWORK EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

RUN-EU in numbers

114.985 students

11.847 staff

138 research centres

85 faculties/schools

64 Short Advanced Programmes
13 Blended Intensive Programmes
74 Other Short Learning Opportunities

31 associated partners and businesses

130 student- and
100 staff mobilities

By 2025, RUN-EU really began to take root within Howest's operations. The mobility schemes confirm this. Not only students, but also staff members found their way to the nine partner institutions for educational and research exchanges.

By hosting **9 Short Learning Opportunities**, including Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs) and Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), we achieved our set target. Many RUN-EU students and staff members also found their way to our campuses in Kortrijk and Bruges. In addition, we were the first partner to launch a **COIL** (Collaborative Online International Learning) programme within the Tourism and Recreation Management course.

'RUN-EU is here to stay' was made priority for 2025, with institutional transition high on the agenda. The aim has been to embed RUN-EU projects even more firmly within the curricula to ensure RUN-EU's long-term sustainability.

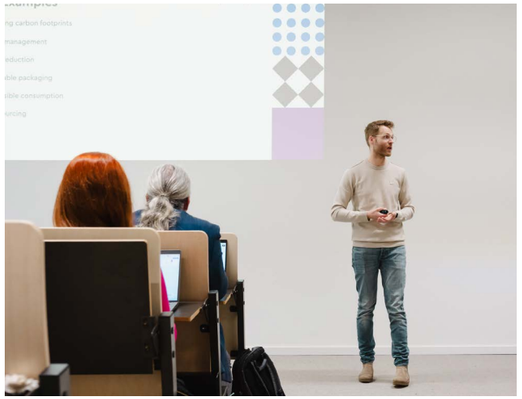
2 bootcamp days were organised on our campuses to enable RUN-EU partners to collaborate in person on the creation of short-term projects, such as a Short Advanced Programme (SAP) or a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP).

In terms of **research**, we secured several excellent projects by submitting joint proposals in response to international calls. **RUN-Innoboost** is a project within the RUN-EU alliance that strengthens innovation and entrepreneurship through interregional 'Living Labs'. Howest continues to play an active role in this by leading workshops and training students in Design Thinking, in collaboration with NHL Stenden, with a focus on cross-border solutions for the bioeconomy and industry.

In November, the Erasmus+ Tinkerverse was approved. This project helps children aged 3 to 15 improve their reading, maths and thinking skills, and to become more confident with technology through hands-on learning in creative 'maker spaces' where they build, test and discover things for themselves. Schools and teachers in various European countries are receiving support in this regard, so that children in vulnerable or multilingual environments also have equal opportunities to develop key basic skills for the future.

In August, we reached an important milestone with the launch of the **RUN-EU E-Hub platform**. Howest developed this new platform that, first and foremost, significantly simplifies the application process for students wishing to undertake a Short Learning Opportunity. In addition, the platform enables lecturers from across the entire alliance to publish their course offerings in an efficient and standardised manner. This improves both the discoverability and accessibility of the range of courses on offer. The platform also provides access to the RUN-EU organisational chart and facilitates collaboration in MS Teams. The platform supports the vision of creating a fully connected European university.

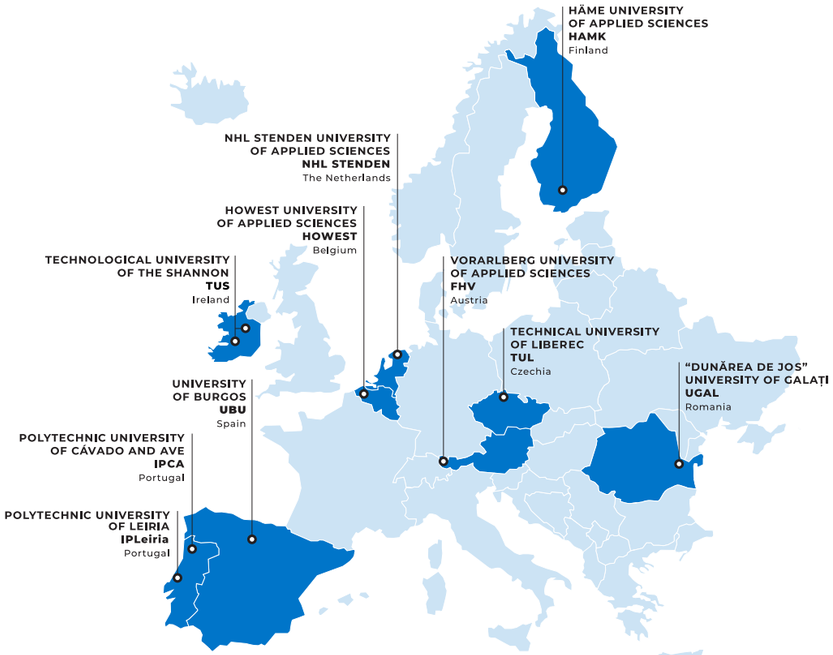






Howest also led the **Impact Showcase Challenge**, in which RUN-EU was encouraged to submit the best case studies that had achieved regional impact. At the General Assembly hosted by the Portuguese partner IPCA, the SAP Next Gen Content project, coordinated by Howest, was named the well-deserved winner.

In 2025, the **RUN-EU family expanded** further with two new members: the Technical University of Liberec (TUL, Czech Republic) and "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați (UGAL, Romania). This milestone marked the beginning of a new chapter, one centred on community, collaboration, and our shared ambition for a stronger Europe. With the addition of TUL and UGAL, we are expanding our presence into Central and Eastern Europe, enriching our diversity, and strengthening our impact. Together, we look forward to new collaborations and a promising future.



TIMELINE RUN-EU

January

EU-values key-note at the internal study day for academic personnel

February

Leadership role taken in the development of **COILs and MOOCs**

March



SAPs hosted:

- **SAP:** Bee Analytics and Business
- **SAP:** Next Gen Content
- **SAP:** Business Intelligence with Power BI
- **SAP:** Kick start your business app
- **SAP:** Navigating EU Values in EU Institutions

April



RUN-EU Research Student Academy (mentor/mentee) where 2 junior researchers received an 8-month training around all the challenges within research

May

- **HR expert network** visited Howest
- Start of **RUN-Innoboost**, a RUN-EU satellite programme under the European Institute of Innovation & Technology Higher Education Initiative Call.

June



Start FILS together with the Mind- and Maker space where all the **makers labs** from the alliance bundle their strengths and establish a programme together around themes like STEAM

August

Launch of the self-developed **platform E-Hub** as part of the first Short Learning Opportunities

September

- Start **service-learning project** around the strengthening of financial literacy for underprivileged communities with Business Management students
- **COIL:** Ethics & values in events, tourism & hospitality

October

- **RUN-EU day** where we shared all our achievements to date, with Howesters and other Flemish alliances and associated partners
- **General Assembly** at Portuguese partner IPCA
- **BIP:** Dreaming of a Green Christmas: sustainable food tourism at winter markets
- **SAP:** Community & Sense of Belonging

November

- **Tinkerverse** is an Erasmus+ project
- **RUN-services** start up, the non-profit organisation that establishes a legal entity for the alliance through which we are able to host the platform

December



- **SAP:** Design and implementing STEAM activities in het FILS
- **SAP:** Innovation and Creative Problem Solving with Design Thinking

» SUSTAINABLE HOWEST

Howest looks to the future with a strong commitment to society. As an entrepreneurial institution, we aim to train professionals and nurture **pioneers and changemakers** who are ready to tackle the complex challenges of tomorrow. Sustainability and care for society are therefore key pillars of our strategic plan. The United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** serve as a benchmark and guiding framework for our policy in this regard.

To raise awareness amongst staff and students of global challenges, such as global warming, digitalisation and inequality, we are committed to strengthening sustainability skills and critical thinking. To this end, we work closely with **CIFAL Flanders**, which guides us in developing, implementing and evaluating our sustainability policy and supports us on our journey towards recognition as an **SDG Pioneer**. The **'Sustainable Howest' task force**, comprising representatives from various sections of Howest, advises on and oversees the steps involved in the SDG Pioneer Programme.

Howest's **lead and core SDGs** were determined through a **participatory process**, with input from both staff and students. We therefore made a conscious choice to adopt an integrated strategy in which **SDG 4 – Quality Education** – serves as the central lever. For us, education is the key driver of change: future-proof curricula, inclusive learning opportunities and lifelong learning form the basis on which we create sustainable impact.



With SDG 4 as the foundation, our three priority SDG focus areas:

1. **SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth:** through sustainable business practices and innovation, we promote dignified, future-proof employment and support student entrepreneurs in developing sustainable business models.
2. **SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production:** with a focus on regenerative campuses, we are committed to eco-design, circular procurement policies and zero waste.
3. **SDG 13 – Climate action:** we are building an energy-efficient infrastructure, promoting sustainable mobility and actively reducing our ecological footprint.

These ambitions are underpinned by enabling conditions such as well-being (SDG 3), innovation (SDG 9), equal opportunities (SDG 10), strong institutions (SDG 16) and partnerships (SDG 17).

Howest is committed to teaching sustainability but also to practising it as a driving force for future-proof change.







Sustainable project in the spotlight

Business Management 2030

In the spring of 2025, more than 400 secondary school students, together with first-year students in the Business Management bachelor's programme, gathered once again at the Howest Bruges Station campus to debate **corporate social responsibility linked to the SDGs**.

Through inspiring demonstrations and interactive exhibition stands, these young people explored our economic future, with a strong focus on sustainable business practices. The Business Management students presented organisations that excel in a well-thought-out CSR approach and demonstrated how sustainability can be successfully implemented.

At one of the exhibition stands, students discovered how companies can opt for bespoke packaging that protects not only their products but also the planet.

02 EDUCATION









INTRODUCTION

In 2025, Howest once again fully embraced its **pioneering role** within the Flemish higher education landscape. Our programme portfolio expanded to include innovative courses developed through close collaboration with the professional sector, demonstrating our commitment to developing programmes for a wide range of target groups through different learning pathways.

We foster **innovation** within our curricula and learning environment by aligning programmes and facilitating interdisciplinary projects, providing students and staff with as many opportunities as possible to gain international and intercultural learning experiences, while fully embracing and integrating developments such as AI. We are strongly committed to the interaction between research and teaching, ensuring that research findings and innovations are incorporated into our curricula.





Education
in numbers

howest?

- **14** associates programmes
- **3** advanced bachelor's programmes
- **34** bachelor's programmes
- **22** postgraduate certificates
- **2** European master's programmes
- **24** English-taught semesters

±11.200 students

30% of students have an international experience

age of students **17-68 years old**

2.231/year graduates

93% satisfied with their study programme

95% satisfied with lecturers' approachability

1.412 international students from **104 countries**

» INNOVATIVE TRAINING PORTFOLIO

Howest maintains its leading role by continuing to develop a contemporary and innovative programme portfolio. Our programme portfolio is regularly reviewed and updated, with a focus on the demands of the professional field.

In addition to the Dutch-taught bachelor's programme in Cybersecurity, a fully-fledged **English-taught bachelor's programme in Cybersecurity** was launched in September 2025. Students can now choose to study the programme in Dutch or English. The English-taught programme meets the high demand from international students to study at Howest. During the programme, students are introduced to both the offensive and defensive aspects of cybersecurity, learn how to respond effectively to cyber incidents, and gain an understanding of governance issues.

Within the **Digital Arts and Entertainment** programme (Dutch & English), the specialisation tracks Game Sound Integration and 3D Animation Production were introduced in the 2025–2026 academic year as **fully-fledged majors**, alongside the existing specialisations in Visual Effects, Game Development, Game Graphics Production and Independent Game Production. Recognition of these majors enables the programme to be better aligned with the needs of the industry. As a result, the programme offers two film-focused and four games-focused majors, each with its own unique focus.











Starting in the 2025–2026 academic year, it will be possible to undertake the **Advanced Bachelor in e-Health** as a one-year course (in addition to the micro-degrees on offer). This is intended to make the programme even more accessible to professionals who wish to combine work and study. The programme is aimed at anyone working in the sport, welfare or health sectors who wishes to provide digital support to clients outside of consultations.

Within the **Bachelor in Business Management**, the elective track **'Management in the Public, Non-Profit and Social-Profit Sectors'** has been added to the curriculum. Within this track, students learn to develop policy plans, optimise internal processes and communicate effectively with various stakeholders. Students acquire in-depth knowledge of public management, sustainability and data analysis.

Three **elective options** have been introduced into the **Bachelor in Communication** to respond to trends and needs in the professional field. In their final year, students can choose between three electives: Content Creation, Digital Marketing & Sales, and Media & Events.

A new model track programme has been added to the **Advanced Bachelor in Bioinformatics**, delivered via distance learning (@home), aimed at IT professionals **(Bioinformatics for IT Professionals)**. Depending on the student's prior education, they can choose a pathway with additional content on molecular biology (for IT professionals) or a pathway with additional content on Linux and web technology (for professionals with a background in life sciences). This gives IT professionals the opportunity to successfully make the transition into the field of bioinformatics.

» PROFESSIONAL MASTERS

Howest is committed to offering a complete professional learning pathway and aims to offer programmes at associate, bachelor's and master's level. In addition to its range of advanced bachelor's programmes (Bioinformatics, Sustainable Energy Management and E-health), Howest has also chosen to offer a number of professional master's programmes in partnership with other institutions, thereby completing the educational pathway within the province of West Flanders. For many years, Howest has been calling for professional master's programmes, an option that does exist in other EU countries. Howest is already participating in the European Masters in Sustainable Energy System Management and the European Master in Renewable Energy in collaboration with Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen (NL). Students are trained to design, evaluate and implement an innovative energy business plan. Through realistic and authentic business case studies and projects, they learn to tackle sustainable energy challenges using a systems-based approach.

Given the high demand for master's graduates in the gaming sector, Howest, in collaboration with Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas), is offering the Professional Master in Game Technology. Like Howest, BUas offers a gaming programme with an excellent reputation. This collaboration responds to the industry's call to transform our wider region into a gaming hub with an international profile. Master's students work within the DAE Research group in Kortrijk or in Breda, depending on the topic of their master's thesis.



» AI IN HOWEST

The use of generative AI tools has become an integral part of how many students, lecturers, researchers and administrative staff carry out their tasks. Howest provides them with the necessary support to use these tools in an effective, purposeful, critical and responsible manner. In the field of education, we aim to ensure that AI enhances the learning process. Furthermore, sector-specific skills for applying AI in the professional field are embedded in our curricula.

AI language policy

In 2025, the project 'Comprehensive Language Policy as a Catalyst for Academic Success' was continued. Through this project, Howest aims to strengthen the institution's language policy. The language policy focuses on three key areas of action: developing language learning pathways, promoting language-developing teaching, and creating guides featuring effective language practices.

Specifically, the **'AI and Writing'** project was developed in 2025. This project investigated how students can learn to use AI tools in a critical and responsible manner when undertaking various writing assignments, whilst continuing to develop and refine their writing skills. As a pilot, the project involved collaboration with both associate and bachelor's degree programmes, as well as programmes with a strong language focus and those with a less language-intensive focus. This result has been a flexible model that can be applied within any degree programme, supplemented by practical support materials for lecturers in the form of six easy-to-use fact sheets on various stages of the writing process (such as citing sources, spell-checking, etc.).

In this way, we are using AI to enhance students' learning process and to provide lecturers with tools that enable them to integrate AI thoughtfully into their teaching practice.



Frederiek Berthier

Programme Coordinator for Internet of Things and Bachelor in Multimedia & Creative Technologies:

"From the first cover letter for a dream work placement to the technical reporting in their final-year project: we ensure that no talent goes to waste. Our Internet of Things students are engineers through and through. Thanks to an inclusive language policy supported by AI, we ensure that language barriers are removed. This gives every student, regardless of their linguistic background, the opportunity to present their innovative technical solutions with the professional polish they deserve."

AI in research: projects in the spotlight

AI-UPD8 supports Flemish SMEs in the implementation of generative artificial intelligence. Through this, we are building an accessible knowledge centre where businesses can turn to for guidance, workshops and practical tools. The emphasis is on direct applicability in marketing, communication and automation, so that businesses can get started with AI quickly and efficiently.

EnergyWise uses AI to carry out thorough analysis of companies' energy consumption. Based on these analyses, organisations receive tailored advice on how to cut their costs and reduce their CO emissions. The project therefore plays an important role in the energy transition and helps companies to operate in a more sustainable and efficient manner.

EdhubAI focuses on education, with the aim of making schools AI-literate. We guide educational institutions in the correct and responsible use of AI, taking into account current regulations such as the European AI Act. Teachers gain an understanding of what AI can and cannot do, and learn how to incorporate it into assignments, tests and exams. By translating AI into practical tools and insights, we are making a broad impact on thousands of pupils and teachers.



» INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

The breadth of the programme portfolio makes it possible to find partners within Howest itself for cross-programme projects tailored to the needs of the professional field.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration (IPS) is a multidisciplinary module in which students from eight people-centred degree programmes at Howest (Kortrijk and Bruges) work closely together to address a client's central concern, with the aim of improving their quality of life. Students from the bachelor's programmes in Occupational Therapy, Social Rehabilitation Sciences, Applied Psychology, Nursing, Applied Health Promotion and Sport and Exercise, and the associate programmes in Social Work and Remedial Education, pool their expertise for three days in mixed teams at various locations.

Prior to this intensive collaboration, the students undertake a blended learning programme, during which they familiarise themselves with each other's degree programmes, explore the context of their case study and acquire a shared theoretical framework, in particular the ICF model (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health). This model was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

On the first day, the focus is on team building and case exploration. Working in small groups, students prepare interviews with the client, a person from their social network (such as a partner, friend or parent) and a professional from the care network. On the second day, these interviews are conducted and the various perspectives are brought together to form an integrated picture of the client's situation.

The third day is devoted to a simulated interdisciplinary consultation. During this session, the students draw on their joint analysis to formulate a well-founded action plan. Both the needs and the strengths of the client and their network are explicitly taken into account.

The IPS programme is delivered in **close collaboration with various industry partners**, including the Inoa School for Special Needs Education (Roeselare), the Jacky Maes Residential Care Centre (Bredene), the Overleie Centre for Outpatient Rehabilitation (Kortrijk), AZ Damiaan (Ostend) and the Sint-Amandus Psychiatric Centre (Beernem). This collaboration reinforces the **practical focus** of the course module and offers students a valuable learning experience in a **realistic context**.



» SO HOWEST

Working Together to Ensure a Strong Start in Higher Education

In September 2025, **a renewed partnership between Howest and its partner secondary schools** was launched. Together, we are pooling our expertise to optimally prepare 7th-year students in preparatory higher education for their transition to higher education. This initiative is part of the broader SO Howest initiative.

SO Howest brings together all initiatives for secondary schools under one strong and recognizable banner. It serves as the bridge between secondary education and higher education, and it embodies Howest's unique DNA: an unconventional, contemporary, innovative, and entrepreneurial approach - our way of doing things, our "So Howest."

Based on the belief that a strong starting point is essential for every student in higher education, we focus on four pillars:

- **Training for basic and academic skills**
  via digital learning paths for subjects such as math skills and Dutch.
- **Learning to learn**
  with training for students and teachers on study skills, self-regulation, information literacy, and foreign languages.
- **Relevant experience in academic fields**
  by giving students the opportunity to earn credits early on (a "head start" programme), through subject-specific workshops, online selection support, and assistance during the annual "Dive into Higher Education" activities.
- **Lower thresholds on campus**
  by introducing students to our facilities, campus activities, and digital learning environment, and by having them spend a day participating in regular educational activities.

Through SO Howest, we are consciously building a robust and cohesive platform that supports secondary schools and prospective students in their transition to a successful future in higher education.







» SOCIAL CREATIVITY CONGRESS

Social Creativity is a Howest initiative designed to highlight and connect organizations and projects that address social issues and challenges in creative ways.

The Social Creativity Congress 2025 brought together students, faculty, researchers, and a broad network of external partners around a single central goal: **addressing societal challenges through creative and sustainable solutions**. The event aligns with Howest's strategic focus on social impact, interdisciplinary collaboration, and practice-oriented learning.

The conference combined inspiring keynote speeches by Davina Simons and Dalilla Hermans with interactive formats such as workshops and Speakers' Corners, where organizations shared their research projects and innovative practices. Specific examples include workshops on design thinking in a social context, AI in the classroom to promote inclusion, and experiential learning in and with nature. The Speakers' Corners featured projects on topics such as gender-sensitive education, inclusive employment (the Kadet lunch bar), and sustainable initiatives like SDGeneration.

The added value lies both internally and externally: students and staff strengthen their skills in **co-creation and social innovation**, while external partners from the fields of education, social services, and culture take inspiration and practical tools back to their own work. Thanks to this interchange of expertise, the conference serves as a dynamic platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and sustainable collaboration.

With a view to creating a lasting impact, Howest is committed to organizing the Social Creativity Congress every two years as a catalyst for lasting connections and social innovation. The Social Creativity slogan is, therefore: **inspire and connect**. We're already looking forward to the 2027 edition!

Collaborations

Howest is a hub for teaching and learning that draws inspiration from the professional field, partners, and schools, but also strives to inspire others.

We welcome projects, suggestions and questions.

Work with Howest



» HOWEST ACADEMY

Discover all that's on offer

Howest Academy develops relevant and customized training programmes for a wide variety of target groups and skill levels.

It serves as the cornerstone for Howest's broad portfolio of programmes and anyone who wishes to pursue continuing education or retraining - for companies or organizations seeking to offer training to their employees, or for individuals of all ages interested in delving deeper into a subject or field of study.

Howest Academy offers all these opportunities for **lifelong learning** through more than 100 high-quality programmes across nine areas of interest. The programmes and courses are tailored to working professionals.

We offer our programmes on campus in Bruges, Kortrijk and Oudenaarde, or through distance learning.







Lifelong learning can mean finally earning that degree. Giving your career a new direction. Delving into a subject that fascinates you. Not through a full-time programme, but flexibly, at your own pace. The Howest Academy makes it possible.

As a higher education institution, Howest is also authorised to award **officially recognized qualifications**. Students who choose individual modules and pass the exams will receive a recognised certificate and can, in this way, work towards a full degree programme if they wish.

Howest is renowned for its close **collaboration with the professional sector**. Practical research carried out in partnership with businesses and organisations offers added value not only to the clients but also to the study programmes. The curricula are systematically updated, and this knowledge is incorporated into continuing professional development and refresher courses. For this reason, Howest Academy is also an attractive partner for businesses and organisations wishing to offer their staff a state-of-the-art seminar or refresher course.

Courses and study formats à la carte

Howest Academy offers a range of course types and study formats, tailored to students' available time, circumstances and ambitions.

Those wishing to obtain a qualification can enrol on a bachelor's or **postgraduate programme**, combining study modes in a way that allows for a good work-life balance. Those who successfully complete a postgraduate programme will receive an official certificate.

Anyone wishing to acquire specific skills or competences, or to gain a deeper understanding of a particular subject, should opt for **micro-credentials**. Here too, it is possible to take one or more course modules and receive an **official ECTS credit certificate** for them.

Anyone wishing to further their professional development will undoubtedly find something to suit them in the wide range of **continuing professional development** courses on offer.

Energy studies at Howest

At Howest, we are well aware that energy is a hot topic. To address the numerous energy challenges, a great many energy specialists will be needed in the future – energy experts who, drawing on their in-depth knowledge of energy technology and smart tools, can guide businesses and individuals towards the optimal use of energy. At Howest, we train the **energy specialists of tomorrow**. In addition to our associate degree programme in the Internet of Things, our Bachelor in Built Environment, our Professional Bachelor in Sustainable Energy Management, and the Master in Sustainable Energy System Management and Renewable Energy, we also offer courses for professionals who wish to develop or deepen their knowledge of the energy transition.

Postgraduate Programme in Energy Monitoring and Energy Transition

The postgraduate programme in Energy Monitoring and Energy Transition at Howest provides professionals with the tools to **strategically strengthen energy management within their organisation**, thereby contributing to both **cost reduction** and **sustainable growth**. During the programme, students learn how to draw up a well-founded energy strategy based on a thorough analysis of an organisation's current energy consumption and energy requirements. This enables organisations to make faster, more accurate and data-driven decisions.

Furthermore, attention is paid to visualising historical energy data via dashboards, enabling energy performance to be clearly and continuously monitored and analysed, so that organisations can better optimise their energy planning, investment decisions and cost management.

Micro-credential Energy Transition

In the Energy Transition micro-credential, students are immersed in the world of renewable energy, batteries and smart control systems. Getting the most out of these is no easy task. An installer or energy manager knows all about technology and installation, but the real challenge lies in **coordinating systems so that they reinforce one another**. In our hands-on labs, students work with real systems and develop their own energy transition plan.

» STUDY PROGRAMMES ON OFFER

BUSINESS & ORGANISATION

BACHELOR PROGRAMMES

Business Management (B)
- *Chinese Business Studies*
- *International Business Management*
- *Multilingual Business Organisation*
- *Management in the Public, Non-Profit and Social-Profit Sector*
- *Sport Business Management*
- *Applied Business Economics*

/ Accountacy and Tax
/ Finance and Insurance
/ Marketing
/ Supply Chain Management (Logistics Management)

Communication (K)
- *Content Creation*
- *Digital Marketing & Sales*
- *Media & Events*

Human Resources Management (B)
Idea & Innovation Management (K)
- *Business Innovation in Esports*
- *Sustainable Transition*

Journalism (K)
- *Journalism*
- *Sport Journalism*

Tourism and Recreation Management (K)

ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Accounting Administration (B)
HR support (B)
Marketing and Communication Support (B+K)
/ Communication Support
/ Marketing Support

Transport and Logistics (B)
/ Dispatcher Road Transport
/ Customs
/ Warehouse Management

Travel Support (K)

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

BACHELOR PROGRAMMES

Advanced Bachelor of Bioinformatics (B)
Banaba Sustainable Energy Management (K)
Building and Construction Drafting (K)
Creative Technologies & AI (K)
Cybersecurity (B)
Digital Arts and Entertainment (K) (DUTCH/ENG)
/ 3D Animation Production
/ Game Development
/ Game Graphics Production
/ Game Sound Integration
/ Independent Game Production
/ Visual Effects

Digital Design and Development (K) (DUTCH/ENG)
- *Expert Creative Technology*
- *Expert Digital Design*
- *Expert UX Research*

Industrial Product Design (K) (DUTCH/ENG)
- *Interior Product Design*

Multimedia and Creative Technologies (K)
- *AI Engineer*
- *Next Web Developer*
- *XR Developer*

Applied Architecture (B)
- *Mixed Experience Design*

Applied Computer Science (B)
- *Software Engineer*

/ Artificial Intelligence

ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Building and Construction Drafting (B+K)
Digital Design
- *Online & Offline Graphic Design (B)*
- *Web Development & Design (K)*

Internet of Things (K)
Computer Programming (B)
Industrial Informatics (B)

PEOPLE & WELLBEING

BACHELOR PROGRAMMES

Banaba e-Health (B)
Biomedical Laboratory Science (B)
- *Forensic Laboratory Analysis*

/ Pharmaceutical and Biological Laboratory Technology
/ Medical Laboratory Technology

Teacher Training: Pre-Primary Education (B)
Teacher Training: Primary Education (B)
Teacher Training: Secondary Education (B)
Short Track Teacher Training: Pre-Primary Education (B+O)
Short Track Teacher Training: Primary Education (B+K)
Short Track Teacher Training: Secondary Education (B+O+K)
Occupational Therapy (K)
- *Experience and Challenge*
- *Wellbeing and Coaching*
- *Sports & Inclusion*

Social Work (B+K)
- *Social Work and Social Care*
- *Social and Cultural Work*
- *Sociaal-juridische Advisering*
- *Applied Criminology*

Social Rehabilitation Sciences (K)
Sport and Movement Sciences (B)
Applied Health and Lifestyle Sciences (B)
Applied Psychology (B)
Nursing (B)

ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Associate Degree in Education:
Secondary Education (B+O+K)
Social Work (B)
Social Educational Care Work (B)
Associate Degree in Nursing (B)

/ = Specialisation
- = *Electives*

(B) = Bruges
(K) = Kortrijk
(O) = Oudenaarde

» A WIDE SELECTION OF STUDENT SERVICES

Howest creates the **best possible learning environment** for all its students and strives to ensure they have an engaging and enjoyable time while studying with us.

In 2025, too, we worked closely with various internal and external partners to support students in developing their **talents** within a warm and stimulating environment.

STUVO Connects further expanded the range of social activities organised for and by students. In addition, the range of student accommodation managed in-house was increased, making it easier for students to find a room close to the campuses. In 2025, there was also a noticeable increase in the number of students seeking psychosocial support and study coaching.









STUDENT SERVICES
in numbers

127 Howest student rooms in Bruges

137 Howest student rooms in Kortrijk (new Pixelkot and The House)

578 hours of specialist support provided for students with visual or hearing impairments

1241 students called on our staff for support in **social services**

1266 students with a disability were supported by our **study coaches**

Students kicked off the academic year during the Student Welcome:
7.000 in Kortrijk
5.000 in Bruges

±290 bicycles were rented to students via vzw Mobiel (Kortrijk) and Fietspunt Bruges

2 gold medals for the Association UGent-student sports teams at Euromilano

StudentApp

The StudentApp brings together a wide range of **recreational options** (sports, cultural, and social), allowing students to quickly and easily find the perfect activity to unwind and meet others. The full selection is presented in a concise and organized manner, so you can see all the activities offered by your own institution, the city, and all partners at a glance.

The StudentApp is the result of a **unique collaboration** between Howest and VIVES. The range of activities offered by both institutions is shared via the app, thereby significantly expanding the total range of options available to students. This enables students to take part in sports programmes and cultural activities in various cities in an accessible and affordable way.

In 2025, the **communities** were given a more prominent place in the app, and activities can now be linked to specific communities. Students can join one of the communities to get to know fellow students who share their interests.

In 2025, Thomas More also joined as a partner, further strengthening the **expansion** of the range of leisure activities available via the StudentApp.

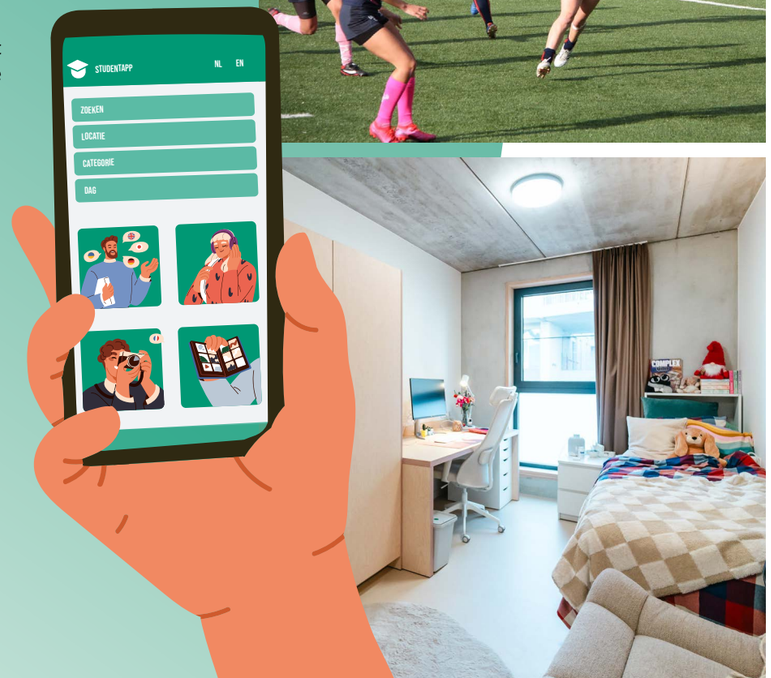
The app has already proved a success at Howest: in the 2025–2026 academic year, there were 2,564 registered profiles and 607 sports memberships were purchased via the app at student-friendly prices.

app.studentapp.be









United Spurs Athlete Status

Since 2025–2026, Howest has been offering a new special status: the **United Spurs Athlete Status**. United Spurs is an umbrella initiative of the City of Kortrijk that supports sports clubs in their professionalisation and growth, whilst respecting their own identity.

From now on, a place on the first-team squad of any of the United Spurs clubs is sufficient to gain access to the facilities and benefits of the athlete status. Through this additional form of recognition for students involved in sport, Howest aims to **strengthen the link** between **its students and the socio-economic fabric of the region**. This status not only encourages sporting engagement but also helps to ensure that students become firmly rooted in the Kortrijk community in the long term.

"We want to ensure that talented young athletes can develop their full potential without their studies suffering as a result. By simplifying the administrative procedure, we are making it easier for them to take advantage of the sports status," said Mieke Demeyere, Vice-President of Education, Students and Internationalisation at Howest.

Pixelkot

In 2025, Howest opened a **new student residence** at de Havenkaai in Kortrijk. The 127 rooms combine affordability with quality and fit perfectly with Howest's sustainable and innovative vision. The entire site, comprising residential accommodation, educational buildings, offices and student accommodation, serves as a testing ground where Howest researchers from Energy Lab test and demonstrate innovative and energy-efficient solutions.

Pixelkot is more than just student accommodation. The residence reinforces Kortrijk's reputation as a vibrant student city and contributes to a liveable, inclusive and sustainable environment where students can flourish.

03

INTERNATIONALISATION: AN OPEN-MINDED VIEW OF OUR WORLD









INTRODUCTION

Howest has positioned itself as an **initiator and partner institution for international mobility and projects**. To this end, Howest participates actively in European and national funding programmes such as Erasmus, the grant programmes of the Flemish Government and the Province of West Flanders, VLIR-UOS, Global Minds, Horizon, etc. We are committed to establishing long-term partnerships with international partners and to raising Howest's profile and representation in a European and global context.

Howest is developing a **learning and research environment** in which students and staff are given every opportunity to acquire or **hone their international and intercultural skills**. After all, the international context is highly relevant within every discipline. For this reason, every Howest programme has embedded 'learning with an open mind' into its curriculum and offers its students and staff a wide range of international and intercultural learning experiences.

The many efforts made to ensure high-quality international mobility for our outgoing and incoming students have also been recognised externally. In 2025, Howest received the **highest quality label, 'Success Story',** from the National Erasmus Agency Epos, in recognition of its excellent Erasmus+ mobility programme during the period 2022–24.





Internationalisation
in numbers

225
students taking part in long-term mobility abroad

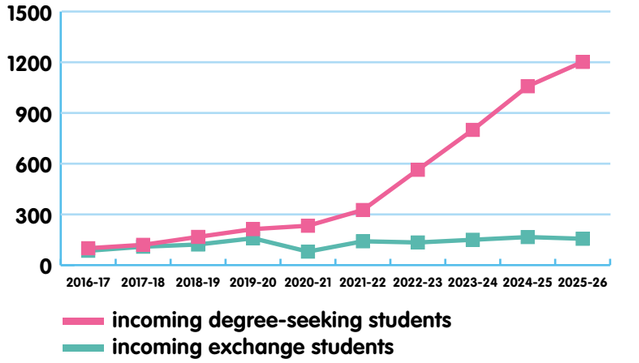
411
students taking part in short-term projects abroad

14 English-taught semesters
2 Advanced bachelor's in English
6 English-taught bachelor's programmes

15,1% (206)
of our graduates obtained a mobile diploma consisting of at least **15 mobile credits**

Erasmus+ Quality Label

International students with **104** different nationalities



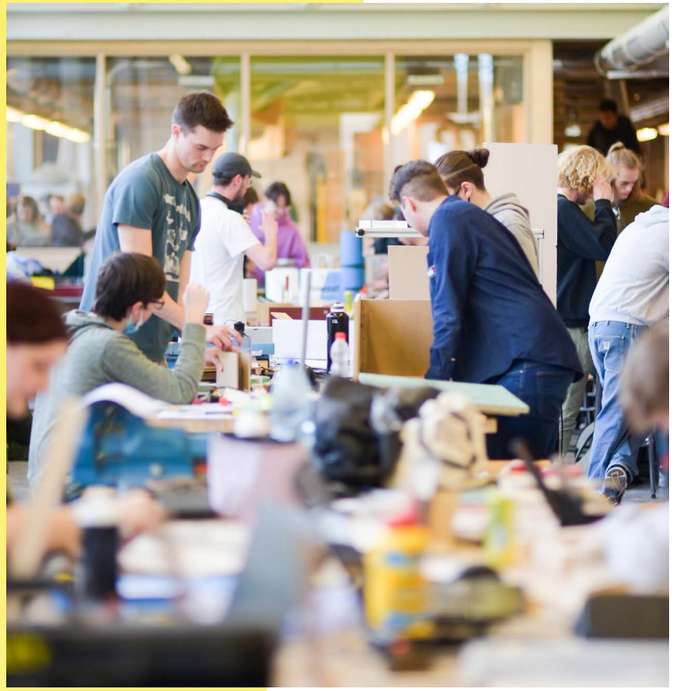
» ENGLISH-TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

In 2025, Howest continued to focus on promoting its English-language study programmes. International students – both degree-seeking and exchange students – are a powerful internationalisation@home factor for our own students and bring an international atmosphere to our campuses. Furthermore, they help address the need for talent in certain shortage occupations in Flanders.

In 2025, we launched six **English-taught bachelor's degree programmes**:

- Digital Arts & Entertainment
- Advanced bachelor of Bioinformatics
- Digital Design & Development
- Cybersecurity
- Industrial Product Design
- Creative Technologies and Artificial Intelligence

In addition, we offered the **European Master** in Sustainable Energy System Management, the European Master in Renewable Energy, the Master in Game Technology, 14 English-taught exchange semesters and two English-taught postgraduate programmes.





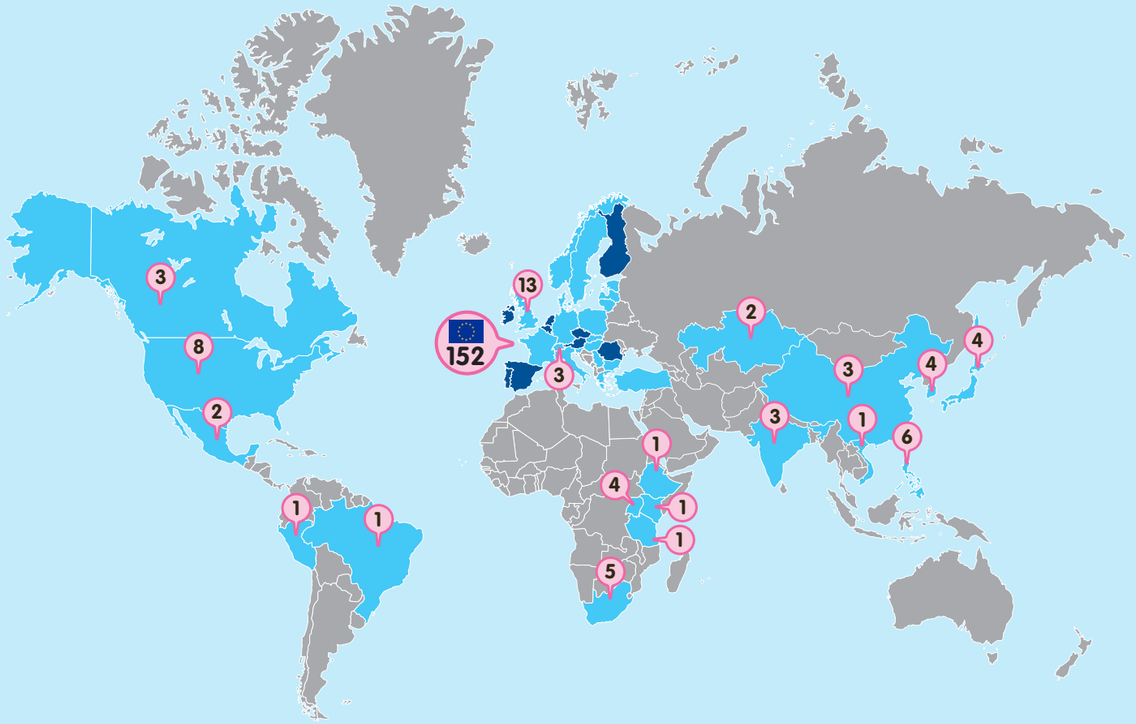




It should come as no surprise that our internationally renowned degree programmes attract many international students. In both Bruges and Kortrijk, they form a **global community** of more than 1,500 students. International students can turn to a **buddy** who helps them with practical matters and ensures that they feel at home at Howest more quickly. International students also have their own 'home away from home' on our campuses, where they are welcome all year round, including at weekends and during the holidays. All Howest international students and their buddies are welcome to relax or work together in the refurbished student lounges in Bruges (Suite 18) and Kortrijk (The Oasis).

At Howest, we are committed to **guiding international graduates into the Flemish labour market** so that these highly sought-after professionals can contribute to an innovative Flemish economy. To this end, we are working closely in with VOKA International House West Flanders.

» INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Partners for exchange and educational cooperation RUN-EU partners

In 2025, we recorded a number of exciting collaborative initiatives with our **intercontinental focus countries**:

Japan

In 2025, the **first Howest mission to Japan** took place, during which visits were made to the three partner universities: Tokyo International University (Tokyo), Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (Beppu) and Tsuru University (Tsuru). The ongoing collaboration was discussed and evaluated. New opportunities for collaboration in the areas of double degrees and short-term mobility programmes were explored. Tokyo University of Technology was also visited following on from existing contacts established as part of the **study trip to Japan organised by the Industrial Product Design (IPO)** programme. A new cooperation agreement with this new partner institution is currently being drawn up for the IPO programme. In this way, we aim to respond to the keen interest shown by Howest students on creative programmes in studying for a semester in Japan. We also visited our internship **placement partner for the School of Education**, Aoba-Japan International School in Tokyo, where the placements were evaluated and the partnership was consolidated.

US

The United States remained our main focus country for intercontinental exchanges. Howest representatives attended the **NAFSA conference in San Diego**, where we meet our US partners every year.

China

The institution-wide **'China from within' study trip** took place once again. The students and lecturers spent a week in Hangzhou, amongst other places, taking part in activities at the partner campuses: Zhejiang Gongshang University for students on business- and technology-oriented programmes, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University for students on health-related programmes. They also followed a bespoke programme in which the students explored Hangzhou and carried out assignments to enhance their knowledge of and self-reliance in China. Howest paid its first visit to its **new partner, Hong Kong Chu Hai College**, with which the Applied Architecture programme will initially collaborate. Howest expressed its intention to organise a return visit and, in the meantime, to further explore opportunities for collaboration and future partnership.





International project in the spotlight:
» BIP GLOBALIZATION & MIGRATION

In March 2025, the **Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) on Globalisation & Migration** was organised in collaboration with Makerere University in Uganda and Chestnut Hill College (USA). This project received support from the Province of West Flanders. Students and lecturers from various disciplines (Social Work, Applied Psychology, etc.) took part in a two-week programme comprising lectures and workshops on globalisation and migration. Participants explored the topic from a range of **international perspectives**, spanning three continents, and learnt to collaborate in an intercultural context. Namukwaya Shadiah, a student at Makerere University in Uganda, says: *"It was truly an honour for me to be one of the participating students on the Blended Intensive Programme on Globalization and Migration. It was life changing and contributed immensely to my professional and personal development. I experienced a lot of learning and built long lasting networks for social capital development. What a blessing!"*

» STRONGER COLLABORATION WITH VOKA INTERNATIONAL HOUSE FOR INTERNATIONAL RETENTION

The partnership with **VOKA International House West Flanders (IHWF)** was further strengthened with the aim of **encouraging international alumni to remain in West Flanders** for employment. Since early 2024, the Global Communities in Kortrijk and Bruges have been working with VOKA International House, a service provided by VOKA which, on the one hand, offers practical and administrative support to employers in recruiting expats and, on the other hand, assists international employees in settling in Belgium to make their stay more pleasant. This service is also available to international alumni who wish to find work in the region or set up their own start-up.

Information about the support that IHWF can offer in finding work in the province and settling in as an expat is actively shared with final-year international students. From the 2024–2025 academic year onwards, they will be informed via various channels about the services offered by VOKA International House and invited to information sessions and events in Kortrijk and Bruges. From 2025–2026 onwards, this collaboration will be further strengthened through the organisation of on-campus information sessions and workshops at both Howest campuses, specifically tailored to this target group.

04 RESEARCH


VLAIO


Blancheren, coaten, frituren,
koelen en vriezen van groenten
en aardappelen


HIT Lab
Human Interface Technology Lab
RESEARCH & DEVEL
AUGMENTED
REALITY
BIO-
EUROMETRICS
hitlab.be

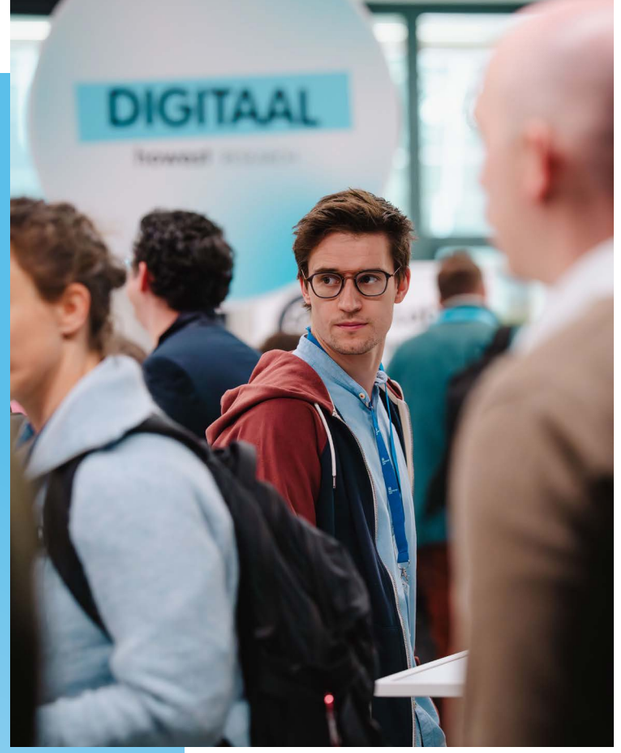


INTRODUCTION

Howest has positioned itself as an inspiring **centre of excellence** and a leading authority in innovative, value-oriented research and entrepreneurship. In 2025, we continued to build on our **mission-driven research** policy, with projects that provide solutions to current societal challenges and contribute to the sustainable development of well-being and prosperity.

We are building a dynamic and stimulating research environment in which we strive for **optimal knowledge-sharing and interaction between research, education and the professional field**. As an open and collaborative partner, we play an active role within various ecosystems.

We invite our partners to join us in making a difference!





Research with IMPACT

5 transition domains:

- Digital
- Ecological
- Health
- Learning
- Social

680 collaborations with partners

390 collaborations with the scientific world

260 researchers (93 VTE)

200 ongoing projects

partner of European alliance RUN-EU

REGIONAL UNIVERSITY NETWORK
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

€870.000 revenue from services

revenue from research

active in 2025
€12.50 million

new in 2025
€7.13 million

» MISSION-DRIVEN RESEARCH IN FIVE TRANSITION DOMAINS

In line with Howest's strategic plan, we are committed to mission-driven and impact-oriented research. In 2025, we further developed this approach and embedded it even more firmly within our operations.

The focus is on societal challenges to which we aim to make an active contribution through our practice-led research and community services. Together with the Research, Services and Entrepreneurship Department, the research groups have defined **five transition domains** in which Howest aims to make a difference: Digital, Ecological, Learning, Health and Society.

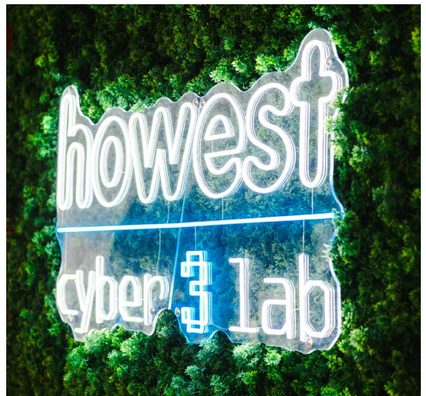
Within each of these transition areas, missions were defined, aligned with external frameworks of objectives at various levels, such as, amongst others, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals at international level, the European Green Deal and the Digital Agenda for Europe at European level, Vizier 2030, Vision 2050, the Flemish Health Objectives and the Flemish Productivity and Competitiveness Agenda at the Flemish level, and the Provincial SDG Framework 2030 at the provincial level in West Flanders.

The **Impact Lab** helps staff to design and carry out mission-driven and impact-oriented research. We help researchers to formulate objectives in collaboration with the regional ecosystem and support them in setting up projects with a clear focus on social added value.

Through coaching, tools and guidance, the Impact Lab encourages mission-driven and impact-focused working at every stage of the research process. In this way, we strengthen the link between research and the creation of social value for our region in a sustainable manner.









DIGITAL

Digital technologies play a crucial role in the economy of tomorrow. At Howest, we are committed to innovation and digital transformation to prepare businesses and organisations for the future. Our research projects help businesses and organisations not only to embrace digital tools, but also to use them strategically to optimise processes, improve performance and achieve sustainable growth.

An example from 2025:

VEooX

Digital twins for business environments

The VEooX project, an initiative of Flanders Make@UGent and Howest, makes it possible to virtually simulate industrial environments and test scenarios cost-effectively, without impacting production or logistics. The focus is on manufacturing companies, machine builders and system integrators.

VEooX combines virtual engineering and user experience through digital twins. Using advanced tools, production and logistics environments are simulated, (re)designed, controlled and optimised. This enables innovations, technologies and products in the manufacturing industry to be developed and validated more quickly and without risk.

ECOLOGICAL

The future is sustainable – and at Howest, we are fully committed to this. We believe in innovative solutions that bring people and the environment into harmony. By embracing smart technologies and sustainable innovations, we are making a difference in the fields of energy and circularity.

An example from 2025:

Manuf Excellence

Smart measurement kits for the manufacturing industry

The Manufacturing Excellence research project involves the development of smart measurement kits for the manufacturing industry. There is a great need for Manufacturing Excellence amongst manufacturing companies to remain competitive. There are already quite a few tools available, but no one-size-fits-all solution. In this project, Howest is addressing this need through a combination of mobile and laboratory infrastructure.

There are solutions designed to measure and optimise energy consumption (Energy), digital security (Cybersecurity), internal logistics (5G) and workplace design (XR). These enable manufacturing companies to make their production processes more efficient, safer and future proof. In this way, they can respond in a targeted manner to current challenges such as rising energy prices, increasing cyber threats and the need for sustainable digitalisation.





HEALTH

At Howest, we use technology and innovation to shape the healthcare of tomorrow. We are working on a future-proof approach to healthcare that focuses on prevention, high-quality care and an optimal quality of life.

Through practice-oriented research and innovative solutions, we help to prevent health problems and strengthen the healthcare system.

An example from 2025:

Healthy Ageing Policies

Research into age-friendly towns and municipalities

Howest is conducting research into how we can age healthily and actively. The research examines both the importance of individual lifestyle factors – such as sufficient exercise and good sleep hygiene – and the impact of the environment. We take a positive view of ageing and emphasise the possibilities of healthy ageing rather than the limitations.

The 'Healthy Ageing Policies' research project was completed in 2025, with the launch of an Age-Friendly Monitor, a conference on age-friendly towns and municipalities, and a white paper encouraging policymakers and staff to help build age-friendly environments.

LEARNING

At Howest, we believe in education that keeps pace with the world of tomorrow. We are committed to an innovative, practice-oriented approach that not only identifies talent but also develops it to its full potential. With a focus on creativity and digital skills, we are preparing education for the future.

An example from 2025:

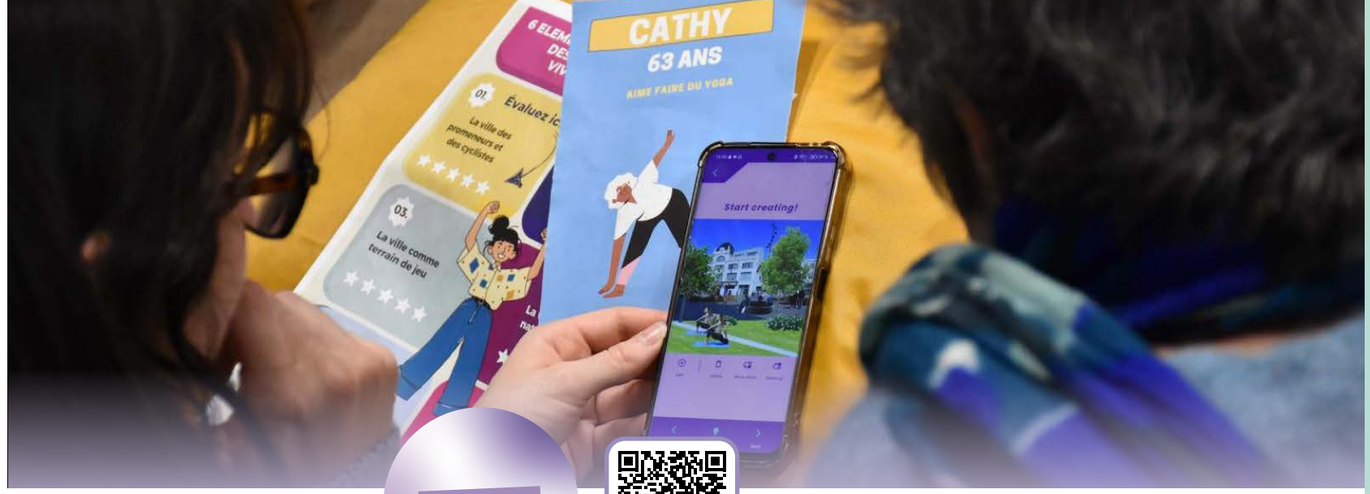
LeesZin

Improving reading skills in primary and secondary education

Research shows that the quality of education in Flanders is declining. In subjects such as language, for example, pupils in primary and secondary education are scoring lower than they did in tests conducted 10 to 20 years ago. With LeesZin, Howest is continuing its efforts to implement a continuous reading programme across primary and secondary education.

The focus is on motivation to read, given its importance for reading proficiency. From pre-school through to the upper years of secondary education, we are investigating ways in which motivation to read can be strengthened. We are examining the impact of informal learning not only within the school setting, but also outside school. By combining a stimulating reading environment, effective reading strategies, collaboration and integration into policy, we aim to create a virtuous circle: greater motivation to read leads to better readers.





SOCIAL

A future in which everyone is given equal opportunities and can participate fully in society – that is what Howest is committed to. Through innovative research projects and collaboration, we are committed to an inclusive society in which diversity is a strength, and no one is left behind. By breaking down barriers and creating equal opportunities, we are working together to build a world in which everyone is given the space to grow and contribute.

An example from 2025:

YET

Urban development for and by young people

In 2025, Howest launched the Youth Engagement & Environment Tool, or the YET app for short. This app gives children and young people the opportunity to come up with their own ideas for what their neighbourhood should look like. Using the app, they can take photos of their surroundings, easily add elements, put together their own creations - with or without the help of AI - and pin all of this on a map.

In this way, they can address spatial issues in their neighbourhood and engage in dialogue with policymakers, planners, practitioners, and so on. There are also opportunities the other way round. Cities, local authorities, schools, organisations and others can also post a challenge on the app themselves, such as the redevelopment of a park or a playground. YET has been developed in collaboration with the City of Bruges, Maricolen Bruges and the Flemish Government's Department of Culture, Youth & Media.

» AN OPEN SCHOOL AS LINKING ELEMENTIN THE ECOSYSTEEM

Howest has positioned itself as an Open School, with a focus on **knowledge-sharing, collaboration and access to infrastructure**. Within this framework, ERDF Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) projects were set up to raise the profile of available research findings and disseminate them widely across the region. This led to the approval of two complementary projects running from 2024 to 2027:

- Innovation Information Point (co-ordinated by Howest) – Focused on making research results and research infrastructure accessible both physically and digitally;
- Unlocking Digital Potential (TUA West as coordinator) – Focused on commercialising digital innovations.

As part of the **Innovation Information Point** initiative, physical information points are being developed on strategic campuses where the most relevant research findings are presented in an accessible manner. These information points, supported by an infrastructure lending scheme and an integrated XRM system, are designed to enable businesses and organisations, researchers and students to actively explore and apply innovation within their working contexts.

In addition, efforts are being made to develop an **innovation network** in collaboration with POM West Flanders and TUA West, with the aim of better integrating researchers and their research findings into the regional innovation ecosystem. This network promotes knowledge-sharing and valorisation and creates a structural link between research and the professional field.

To increase the visibility and impact of the research findings, a **communication and valorisation strategy** is also being developed. This involves setting up a lending scheme, displaying Howest's wider range of services, and fostering new partnerships through sector-specific showcases and workshops.

Through these initiatives, Howest Research is taking further steps to enhance the **impact** of practice-oriented research and to provide structural support for digital and technological innovation in West Flanders.







» RESEARCH DAY

In 2025, Howest organised its first research day, to which representatives from the professional field were also invited. The research day marked the launch of mission-driven research at Howest in the five transition areas mentioned earlier. Following a presentation by Research Director Geoffrey Hamon and a keynote speech by futurist Stefaan Vandist, workshops, demonstrations and laboratory visits were organised. There was plenty of opportunity for networking, which was seen as an added benefit by both the visitors and our staff.

05

VIBRANT CAMPUSES AND ECOSYSTEMS













INTRODUCTION

The integrated campuses, designed and managed with sustainability in mind, are **vibrant hubs** for the learning community of students, staff and partners.

They form physical and virtual open communities; they are **open meeting places** that go beyond formal learning and research.

Making the facilities **as accessible as possible**, both physically and virtually, is a top priority for our organisation.

Na de grote stappen die gezet werden in 2024 in Brugge en Kortrijk:

- The opening of the new Bruges Station campus
- The dismantling and restoration of the Magdalena swimming pool in Kortrijk
- The start of work on the Havenkaai in Kortrijk

2025 has been the year in which a number of larger and smaller projects have been completed.



» BRUGES

In June 2025, the final classes were held at the **Bruges Centrum campus**. For many colleagues and students, leaving this building marked an emotional farewell, accompanied by several parties and moments of reflection, as well as an auction of unique items from the campus's contents. The move to the Station Campus took place in July and August. From the start of the academic year in September, the unified, vibrant campus provided a boost for lecturers and students alike.

At the Bruges Station campus, building BST.J was brought back into use in September 2025 following a thorough year-long refurbishment. Priority was given to dismantling and refitting the **project and team rooms** of the academic departments based there.

In a corner of the building, with direct access from outside, space has been fitted for Howest's growing international student community. They work, study and relax together in Suite 18, their *home away from home*.

Just before winter, a new **high-efficiency boiler** was installed in the BST.J building, both to reduce the carbon footprint and to prepare for a transition to low-temperature heating.

Finally, in the BST.G building (The Lodge, which also houses student accommodation), the first phase of the ground floor refurbishment was completed. The former Community Education offices (secretariat, reception, offices) have made way for an expanded **STUVO zone** with office and meeting spaces and a multi-purpose room (The Pitch), as well as the **ICT Helpdesk**. Other functions will be added to the ground floor so that the building maintains its focus on **student-centred services**. It will become, both literally and figuratively (and both during and outside teaching hours), the beating heart of the campus.









However, the work in Bruges does not stop there. In the BST.J building, work has begun on the next phase of refurbishment: the ground-floor wing facing the street. The **Digital Health Lab** being set up here will be showcased as a flagship research lab focusing on digitalisation and innovation in preventive healthcare: from testing and monitoring, through raising awareness, to coaching and support.

With the replacement of the old gas boilers, space has also been made for an **underground cycle storage facility**, and a **mezzanine** measuring 180m² will be built in the old boiler room to house a student café.

Finally, Building BST.G will undergo a second phase in 2026, during which work will continue on a **multi-purpose space** for research and projects (The Switch) and **additional leisure facilities** for students.







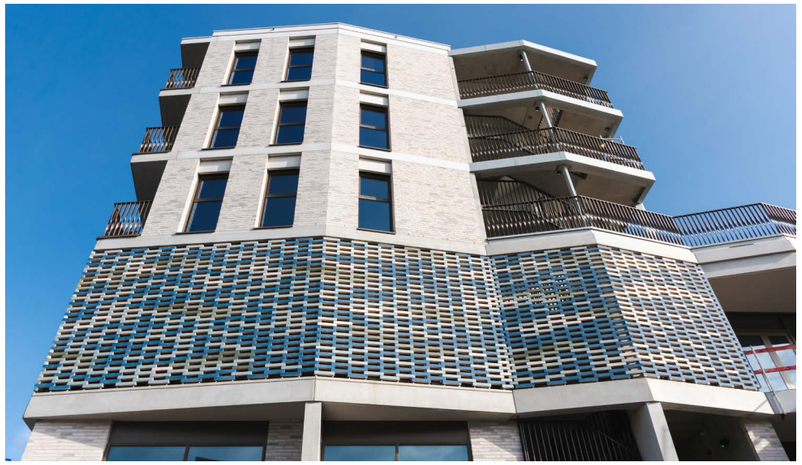


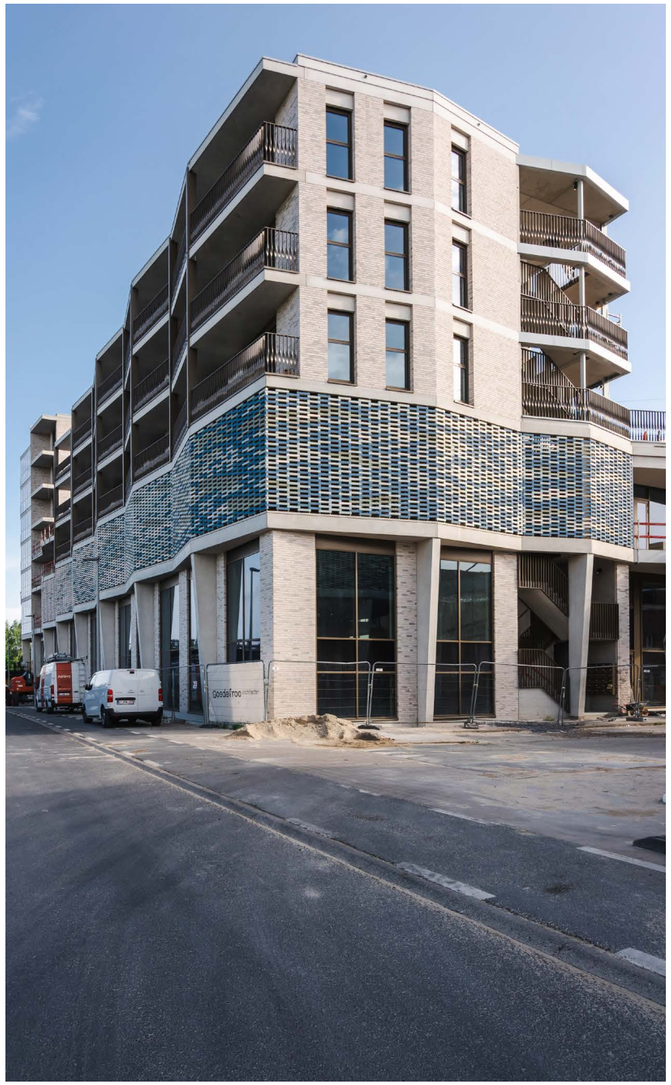
» KORTRIJK

In **Kortrijk**, the **Pixelkot** student accommodation was opened in September 2025, as hoped and in line with a very tight schedule. 127 students can now live on campus itself, continuing the story of the unified, vibrant campus in Kortrijk as well.

A second student residence was added to this. **The House**, a former deanery on Marksesteenweg, has been accommodating 10 students since September 2025. The property was modernised in 2025 and adapted to meet current standards.

At the **Havenkaai site**, in addition to the student accommodation, construction work for Howest is still underway: an educational building, a connecting bridge to The Level and an extension to The Level were further developed in 2025. The plan to accommodate all degree programmes and students on the Kortrijk Weide campus is thus taking further shape. The next step is the fitting out and commissioning of the shell building (The Pixel) and the relocation of all activities from The Square to the Kortrijk campus.





With this latest move, almost half of the Havenkaai site will be taken into use by Howest, which is thus helping to invest in one of the first **pilot projects** on this scale in Flanders to feature a **geothermal heating system**. The thermal energy from the River Leie will be used in winter to heat the buildings, and in summer to raise the temperature of the geothermal boreholes. To utilise this heat source as effectively as possible, the older building, The Level, has been connected to the Havenkaai site. This means that, from 2028, The Level will also be heated without the use of fossil fuels.

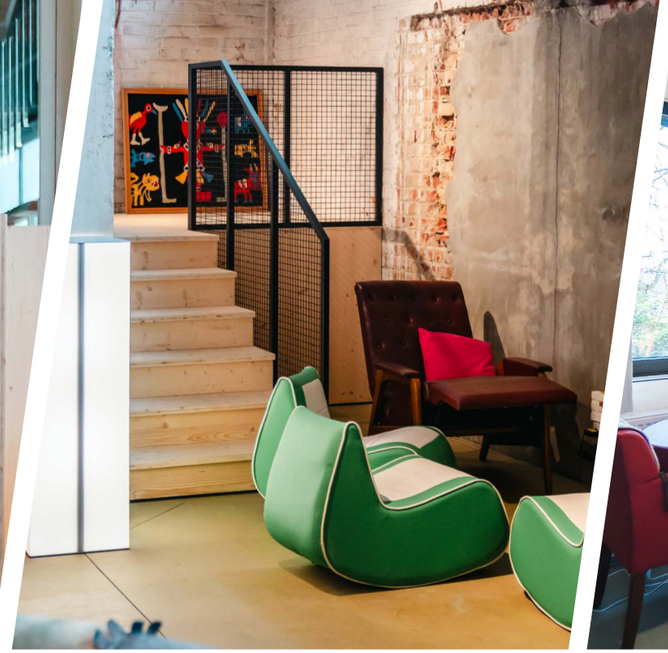
The Havenkaai site is, moreover, a prime example of the **integration of functions**. Living, working, studying and relaxing side by side and intertwined, in a site that is designed to accommodate all stages of life, with different types and sizes of homes. It is a wonderful addition to Howest's heritage and the Kortrijk Weide ecosystem. Another building is also being added to that ecosystem: in 2025, Ghent University (UGent) took the KUBES building into use, a building housing laboratories, offices and small teaching rooms.

At the former ***Magdalena swimming pool,*** the first space in the building has been fitted out and opened: The Oasis is the Kortrijk counterpart to Suite 18 in Bruges, a 'home away from home' for our international student community.

Not all infrastructure projects focus on new-builds or on extensive renovation or restoration; facilitating study, research and entrepreneurship is the priority, even in buildings that are not particularly old or dilapidated. When that research has an **ecological focus**, it addresses two key pillars of the Howest culture: sustainability and innovation. The **Circular Solutions Lab** is being set up in building KWE.C (the Industrial Design Centre), following an 'inward extension' involving the addition of a mezzanine floor.

Another such win-win situation can be found in the **WeidEnergie energy co-operative**, which was launched in 2025. Together with Ghent University, the PTI and the city of Kortrijk, Howest manages a **shared heating network** that already connects eight buildings, thereby enabling heat exchange. In time, this heating network will be extended to other buildings and users, thereby ensuring that residual heat is put to good use.





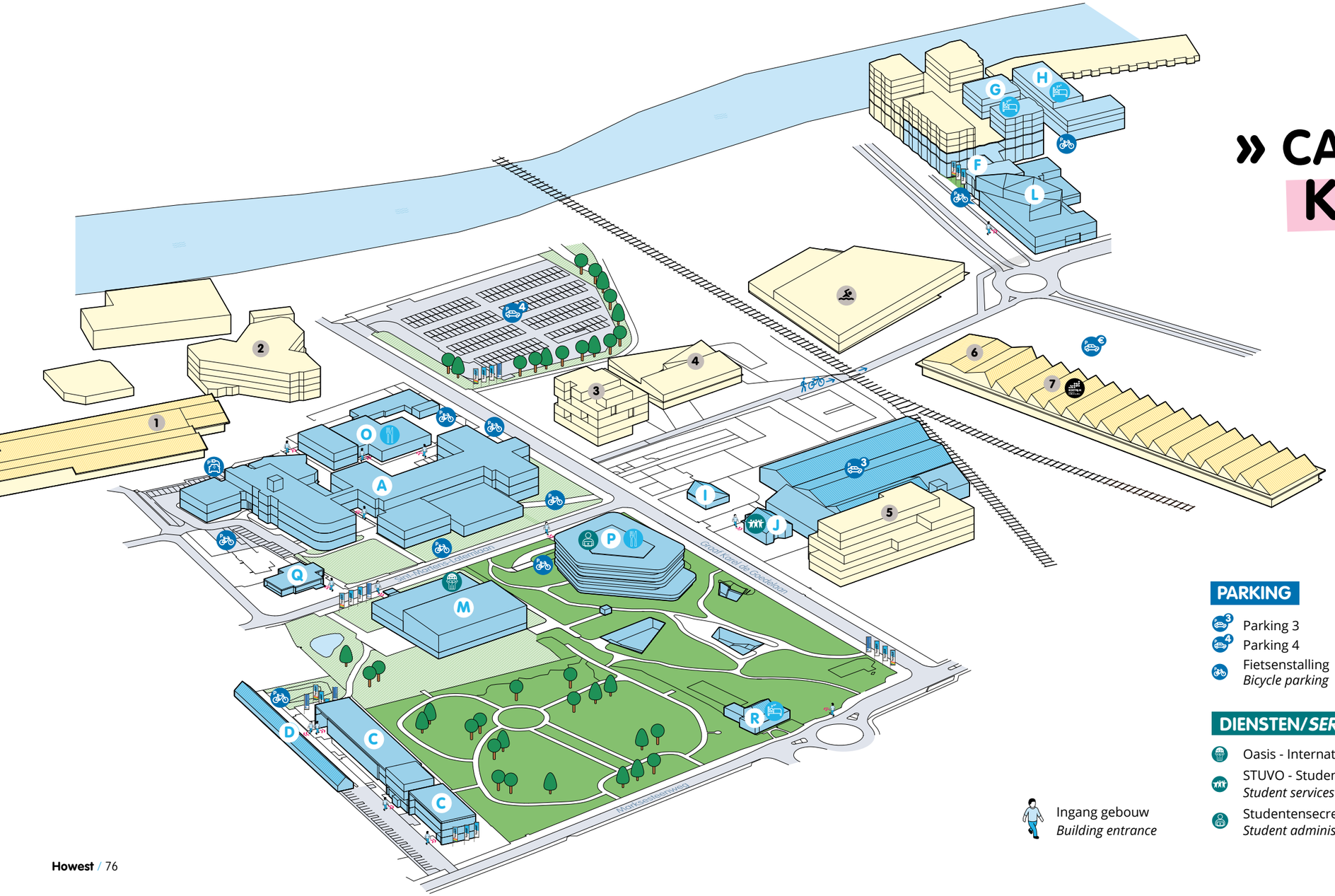


» SUSTAINABLE CAMPUSES

Sustainability remains the guiding principle for all construction and renovation work. Whether it involves reducing the use of fossil fuels through improved insulation, making more efficient use of scarce indoor space, or a complete transition to new energy sources, preparing our buildings for a fossil-free future is paramount in the selection and decision-making process.

Having built and renovated the buildings sustainably, the next logical step is to use them sustainably: circular water management, which reduces the consumption of drinking water by more than 90 per cent; catering solutions featuring ‘good-to-go’ initiatives for disadvantaged student groups; a focus on short supply chains in procurement and local partnerships, and the reduction of residual waste (along with better monitoring of waste streams): many small measures that result in a reduction in the ecological footprint.

» CAMPUS KORTRIJK WEIDE



GEBOUWEN/*BUILDINGS*

- A KWE.A - The Core
- C KWE.C - Industrial Design Center (IDC)
- D KWE.D - Paardenstallen
- E Algemene Diensten
  Central Office
- F KWE.F - The Pixel
- G Kaaikot
- H Pixelkot
- I The Villa
- J The Office
- L KWE.L - The Level
- M KWE.M
- O KWE.O - The Reactor / Obee
- P KWE.P - The Penta
- Q 't Pandje
- R The House
- 1 House of Manufacturing
- 2 PTI
- 3 UGent
- 4 VEG-i-TEC
- 5 Flanders Make
- 6 Depart
- 7 Hangar K
- Zwembad/*pool* LAGO

PARKING

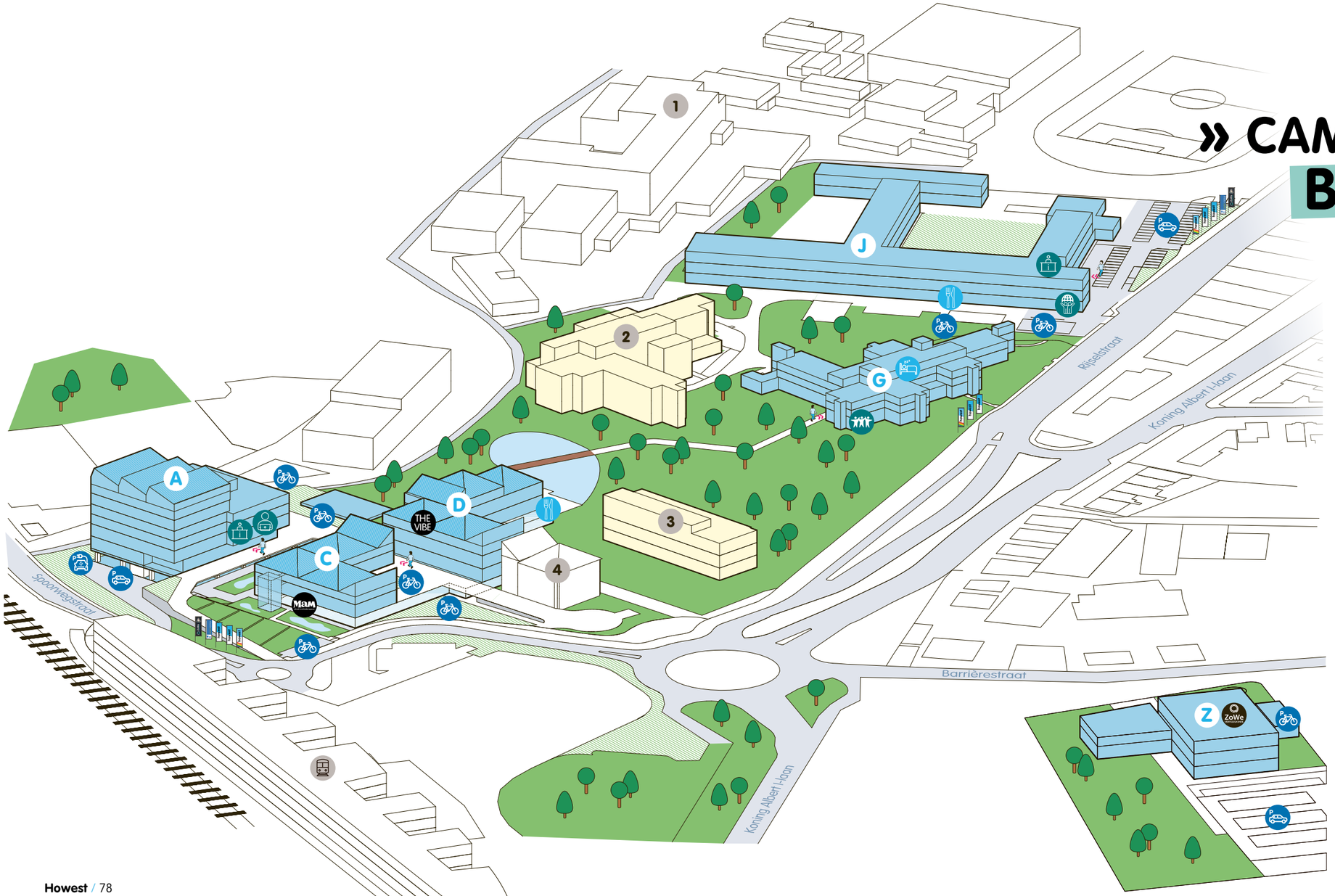
- Parking 3
- Parking 4
- Fietsenstalling
  Bicycle parking

DIENSTEN/*SERVICES*

- Oasis - International Community
- STUVO - Studentenvoorzieningen
  Student services
- Studentensecretariaat Howest
  Student administration office Howest

Ingang gebouw
Building entrance

» CAMPUS
BRUGES STATION



GEBOUWEN/*BUILDINGS*

- A BST.A
- C BST.C
- D BST.D
- c BST.G - The Lodge
- J BST.J
- Z BST.Z
- Station / Kam gebouw
- 1 KTA
- 2 GO! Impact
- 3 UpKot
- 4 Proximus

DIENSTEN/*SERVICES*

- Onthaal
  Reception
- Suite 18 - International Community
- STUVO - Studentenvoorzieningen
  Student services
- Studentensecretariaat
  Student administration office

Ingang gebouw
Building entrance

PARKING

- Parking
- Fietsenstalling
  Bicycle parking

PARTNERS

- MaM (Mind- And Makerspace)
- The Vibe
- ZoWe verpleegkunde







» ECOSYSTEM BRUGES

Inauguration Cyber Defence Factory

In May 2025, the first Flemish **Cyber Defence Factory** was inaugurated on the Bruges Station campus, marking a long-term and unique collaboration between the Ministry of Defence's Cyber Command, Howest and industrial partners.

Howest researchers and students will work with businesses and the Ministry of Defence to develop innovative cybersecurity solutions. The focus is on the Navy, which is crucial given the proximity to the port. The expertise in cyber security that the Cyber3lab research group and the bachelor's programme in Cyber Security and the associate degree programme in Systems and Network Management have built up, together with their many partners, makes Howest the obvious partner.

Here at Howest, we are keen to turn this collaboration into **training programmes, research and service projects** with a view to creating a safer digital world.

Collaboration between Howest and ZoWe Bruges

Howest and ZoWe Bruges have been working closely together for several years to offer the associate degree in Basic Nursing. As part of this, we also open our campuses to one another. This collaboration not only strengthens the relationship between students and lecturers, but also simplifies the transition between the associate degree in Basic Nursing and the bachelor's degree in Nursing. Graduates of the associate degree programme can progress directly to the bachelor's programme within the same familiar environment. Furthermore, this collaboration promotes optimal preparation for the labour market, where associate degree and bachelor's students must work closely together. Together, we are also working on the restructuring of the associate degree programme. Within this structural collaboration, both partners support and inspire one another. In this way, Howest and ZoWe Nursing guarantee **high-quality education and personalised support**.

» ECOSYSTEM OUDENAARDE

The Howest campus in Oudenaarde is a centre for **expertise and training for teacher education** within a unique regional ecosystem. Through close collaboration with the **GO! atheneum in Oudenaarde**, a realistic school environment is created where the interplay between theory and practice takes centre stage. In the innovative SPARK classroom and the specialised STEM practical classrooms, students experiment with the **latest teaching technologies**, from 3D printers to VR applications. With the Short Track Teacher Training Programme in Secondary Education and the Accelerated bachelor's programme in Teacher Training for Secondary Education, Howest offers a contemporary range of courses, including flexible teaching placement programmes for those already working in the classroom. On this campus, students are not just numbers: we guarantee a personalised approach through close, individual guidance from lecturers with extensive practical experience.







» ECOSYSTEM KORTRIJK

In recent years, the **Howest Kortrijk Weide** campus has developed into a dynamic ecosystem where technology, education and entrepreneurship converge. Around the Howest buildings, various centres of expertise and intermediary organisations reinforce one another. A fine example is The **House of Manufacturing**, a collaboration between the PTI, Agoria and POM West Flanders. The crossover between Howest and Ghent University is also bearing fruit, notably at the food research centre **VEG-i-TEC**. For creative entrepreneurship, Hangar K – together with the Flanders Game Hub and Designregio Kortrijk – is the driving force behind our young entrepreneurs. Furthermore, in 2025, **Flanders Make** opened a collective research centre in close collaboration with the West Flemish universities of applied sciences and universities. Here, the focus is on the Flemish manufacturing industry, an area in which Howest and Ghent University already complement each other very well.

At **Indumation 2026**, these partners presented their work jointly at the 'Innovation Hub', supported by the provincial policy on 'Factories of the Future'. Through 21 high-tech demonstrations, the 9 expertise partners showcased how West Flanders is leading the way in a people-centred, digital and sustainable manufacturing industry.

06

HOWEST IN THE MEDIA







Howest opens first Cyber Defence Factory in Flanders

At Flanders' first Cyber Defence Factory in Bruges, Howest researchers and students will work alongside businesses and the Ministry of Defence to develop innovative cybersecurity solutions.

A team of Howest lecturers wins Belgian YOU.Fo Open Championship, and donates the prize money

The championship was organised by students from the Sport and Exercise programme and won by a team of lecturers from Howest. The win earned the team a cheque for 500 euros. As they are unable to travel to the world championship in Japan, they decided to donate the prize money to the team that finished in second place.

Students on game design course create stamps with digital twist

Five different works by Digital Arts & Entertainment students feature on a sheet of stamps. Two of the five stamps feature a QR code that takes you to a world that captures the imagination.

Minister of Education, Zuhal Demir visits Howest Campus Kortrijk: "Impressive"

Flemish Minister of Education, Zuhal Demir, visited the Level, home base of Digital Arts & Entertainment at Howest. There she was treated to a demonstration from the virtual production studio and was impressed by how students there combine technology and creativity.

Welcoming its 11,000th student marks milestone for Howest University of Applied Sciences

On the first day of the second semester, Axel Grzych was given a warm welcome as Howest's 11,000th student. This growth confirms the university of applied sciences' appeal. This comes down to its practical, student-centred approach, including personalised support.

Cast of #LikeMe give concert in the Roblox world, courtesy of Howest

Using the motion capture infrastructure at Howest, the #LikeMe concert was streamed virtually on Roblox, allowing even more fans to enjoy the show.

Howest Refugee Walk supports refugees

Well over two hundred participants walked together through Bruges to show their solidarity with more than 123 million people worldwide who are fleeing war, violence and persecution. Through this initiative, Howest aims to raise awareness amongst the general public of this harrowing reality and to put pressure on policymakers to ensure better reception and protection.

Howest researchers develop app that uses AI to give existing neighbourhoods new look

Researchers at Vital Cities have developed YET – the Youth Engagement and Environment Tool – a new application for designing public spaces. Young people can use it to share their ideas, concerns and visions to help shape their neighbourhoods in cities.

Howest wins two awards at the prestigious 'Energy Manager of the Year' competition

Howest students Jonas (Bachelor in Energy Management) and Thibo (European Master in Sustainable Energy System Management) were named Energy Managers of the Year. The title is awarded by the umbrella organisation Energik, Engie and Fluvious.

International students living in care homes

International students at Howest are moving into accommodation at the Sint-Pietersmolenwijk residential care home in Bruges in response to the shortage of student accommodation. The students see it as a unique experience and are bringing more life to the neighbourhood.

Howest students win prestigious AM Design Challenge with satellite mechanism: "Creativity was the deciding factor"

Industrial Product Design (IPO) students at Howest have won the AM Design Challenge 2025, a national design competition organised by the technology federation Agoria. The challenge was complex and involved designing a passive deployment mechanism that, without an external power source, autonomously activates a satellite's deployable components - such as solar panels or antennas - in space.



Howest thanks Jan Durnez for his years of service as chairperson of Howest.

howest
university of applied sciences



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