



Pushing out the boundaries of business knowledge

Professor Bernadette Govaerts at Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) teaches with SAS

Established by Duke John IV of Brabant and the town of Louvain (Leuven) with the authority of Pope Martin V on 9 December 1425, the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) is one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious academic institutions. The theologian and humanist Erasmus, the geographer Mercator and the anatomist Vesalius were frequent visitors to the University. In 1971, following several years of rapid expansion, the University was split into two institutions. The French-speaking UCL moving to the new town of Louvain-la-Neuve, with the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) remaining in the Flemish-speaking town of Leuven itself.

Today UCL works increasingly closely with a variety of private sector and professional organizations to meet the needs of the business world. In September 2000 the University's Institute of Statistics at UCL offered a new Complementary Studies Option in data management and data mining, in collaboration with SAS Institute.

"The Institute of Statistics is an inter-faculty department, set up on the initiative of the rector (Vice-Chancellor) and directly responsible to the University rector's council," says Professor Govaerts of UCL. The Institute's activities are structured around pure and applied research, undergraduate and postgraduate

teaching, and (internal and external) consultancy. In particular, the Institute offers courses in applied and theoretical statistics through a recently established Doctoral School and four Masters or Advanced Studies Diplomas in biostatistics and epidemiology, statistical methodology, applied statistics and statistics and econometrics.

Govaerts, who has a strong background in the private sector, was mandated to reform the Complementary Studies Diplomas offered by the Institute in order to meet market needs more effectively. Her approach is based on teaching methods with a practical bias adapted to the needs of a diverse adult student population. Govaerts comments, "The objective is to provide sound basic training in statistics and to enable students to familiarize themselves with the main data processing tools. Our intention is to push the practical side."

The Complementary Studies Diplomas in Statistics cover five courses of study: science and technology, marketing and surveys, economics and insurance, statistical mathematics and probability, and data management and data mining. Organized in collaboration with SAS, the data management and data mining courses respond to a real demand in the business world, says Govaerts. "Businesses are



Customer	Catholic University of Louvain (UCL)
Sector	Academic
Business Issue	Needed analytical solutions for teaching business intelligence
Solution	SAS® E
Benefits	Prepares students for successful careers in business

increasingly involved in processing data. They need database managers and statisticians who can answer business questions, in particular through the application of data mining techniques. Very often the same person is simultaneously responsible for managing the database, carrying out analyses and producing the results. Often this person is a computer technician who is new to statistics, or conversely a statistician with limited experience of information technology. The fact is that there are not enough IT-trained statisticians on the international market, Belgium included."

The Diplomas consist of 330 hours of lessons and practical exercises over one or two years, comprising 90 hours basic course, courses in statistical techniques and specific courses in different fields of application. Flexibility to meet the needs of professionals is key. The programme includes 30 hours on databases, 30 hours on data mining and ten days of SAS training in data management (leading to SAS Certification).

UCL's collaboration with SAS falls within the framework of the SAS Academic Initiative, launched internationally in 1999 following successful collaborations in Belgium, France, Denmark and the United Kingdom. "SAS has always maintained close relations with the universities," says Annelies Bulkens, Academic and Business Alliances Manager at SAS, "and Belgium has played a very dynamic role in the Academic Initiative. We work in collaboration with the majority of universities and colleges of higher education in the country." SAS has granted a total of more than 50,000 academic software licenses in Belgium, of which 20,000 have been to KUL and more than 19,000 to UCL. "The universities have the opportunity to experiment and push our solutions very far. SAS benefits from valuable feedback, helping us to improve our products. Our development centres take careful account of the comments and feedback they receive," says Bulkens.

For the relationship to be of maximum benefit to both parties, it is therefore vitally important that students should feel free to criticize and discuss the merits of different vendors' software offerings. "Many SAS customers, who are today business executives and decision makers, had their first exposure to the software at university," says Bulkens.

"We are not in an exclusive relationship with SAS, and our students receive training in a wide variety of software. One of our objectives is to allow students to take a critical look at different solutions. They are free to use the software of their choice to carry out their work," says Govaerts.



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