

## PhD RESEARCH

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### **Jumping from gymnastics to science? Processes of academic and professional profile keeping within the university field of physical education in Belgium**

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In 1908, physical education was incorporated as a new university discipline within the Higher Institute of Physical Education (HIPE) at the State University in Ghent. During the 1930s, university institutes for physical education were also established in Liège, Brussels and Leuven. This university institutionalisation of physical education symbolized the starting point in a difficult quest for professional and academic respect. Several professional profiles were developed through the university education program, namely the formation of university-educated teachers instructed in the Swedish pedagogical gymnastics method, the training of health guardians with medical-scientific knowledge for the school and sports sectors, the instruction of sports trainers, fitness instructors, sports managers, outdoor trainers, adapted physical activity coaches and movement experts. The retention of this profession profile, however, was not realised. The academic profiling equally did not result in a strong, unique academic identity for the field, which is now characterised by fragmentation, both on a national and international level. Therefore, reflecting on, and striving for, both professional and academic profile seems necessary to maintain the field of physical education or kinesiology at university level, as the demarcation of its own social and scientific field must enable the field to finance and thus legitimise itself.