

CESPE Manager

ABOUT GHENT UNIVERSITY

Ghent University is a world of its own. Employing more than 15,000 people, it is actively involved in education and research, management and administration, as well as technical and social service provision on a daily basis. It is one of the largest, most exciting employers in the area and offers great career opportunities. With its 11 faculties and more than 80 departments offering state-of-the-art study programmes grounded in research in a wide range of academic fields, Ghent University is a logical choice for its staff and students.

ABOUT CESPE

The Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Pharmaceutical Engineering and Manufacturing (CESPE) at Ghent University drives innovation in (bio)pharmaceutical production, bridging academic expertise and industrial needs. CESPE unites 20 research groups and numerous industry partners to advance sustainable, resilient, and efficient manufacturing technologies. Through high-impact projects and the CESPE Academy, it fosters talent and collaboration at the academic–industrial interface. The forthcoming CESPE Innovation Accelerator will provide a state-of-the-art environment for research and partnership. CESPE's governance ensures strategic alignment with sector priorities, positioning it as a leading force in pharmaceutical manufacturing innovation.

YOUR TASKS

As CESPE Manager, you will:

1. Strategic Leadership (30%)

- Define and drive CESPE's long-term vision and strategic direction, ensuring alignment with industry needs, sustainability goals, and academic excellence.
- Oversee the development and implementation of a coherent multi-year strategic roadmap, translating CESPE's vision into measurable objectives and initiatives.
- Ensure sustainable growth through effective prioritisation across activities, research domains, and partnerships.
- Establish and maintain a framework for systematic monitoring and evaluation of CESPE's performance against strategic objectives.
- Steer CESPE's strategic direction in response to technological, regulatory, and market developments in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

2. Operational management (+ team leadership) (40%)

- Translate CESPE's strategic objectives into actionable annual plans with clear responsibilities, deliverables, and timelines.
- Oversee the execution of initiatives across all CESPE pillars, ensuring timely delivery, effective implementation, and identification of risks, bottlenecks, or resource gaps.
- Manage CESPE's finances, including long-term financial strategy, budgeting, forecasting, and validation of expenditures to support strategic priorities.
- Establish and maintain efficient operational and administrative frameworks/internal quality system (documentation, SOPs, and internal communication processes).
- Lead, motivate, and develop the multidisciplinary operational team, ensuring effective deployment of human resources and alignment with organisational goals.

3. Stakeholder management (30%)

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including close interaction with academic and industry CESPE members.
- Foster collaboration across UGent academic groups, ensuring alignment with CESPE's strategic priorities, leveraging synergies, and guiding teams toward high-impact projects.
- Liaise closely with the Lifesciences BD network through participation in IOF functional structure to ensure alignment of CESPE platform with extended UGent network needs related to Pharmaceutical Engineering and related fields.
- Cultivate, maintain, and evaluate strategic partnerships with industry, government agencies, and funding bodies, ensuring alignment with CESPE's objectives and return on investment.
- Represent CESPE selectively at high-impact events, conferences, and forums, strengthening visibility and promoting its mission.
- Support targeted communication and outreach initiatives to enhance CESPE's external profile.
- Gather insights from stakeholders, including industry, regulators, and funding agencies, to inform strategy and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Identify funding opportunities and suitable funding bodies, both nationally and internationally, and ensure these are channelled to relevant research groups.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

- PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences, (Bio)Engineering, or a related field (or equal in years of industrial experience.)
- At least 2 years of professional experience in the (bio)pharmaceutical sector, with hands-on experience in process development, manufacturing technologies, or innovation management highly desirable.
- At least 2 years of leadership experience, including managing direct reports and leading project teams, with the ability to coordinate complex, multidisciplinary initiatives.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, operational excellence, including medium- to long-term planning, budget management, and delivering measurable results.
- Established professional network in the pharmaceutical ecosystem, with experience engaging across academic, industrial, and governmental stakeholders.
- A strategic thinker with a clear vision, able to turn ideas into actionable plans and efficient results.
- Comfortable with financial and operational matters, with a proactive, "can-do" approach to driving growth. Enabler that tracks growth based on relevant KPIs.
- Strong communicator and relationship-builder, able to work effectively with partners across academia, industry, and government.
- Inspiring leader who values teamwork, cultivating trust, accountability, and collaboration.
- Entrepreneurial and innovative, always looking for new opportunities and ways to make an impact.
- Familiar with technical and regulatory aspects of sustainable manufacturing, digitalisation, and advanced pharmaceutical technologies.
- Well-versed in international regulatory frameworks (EMA, FDA) and global manufacturing standards.
- Fluent in English, with knowledge of Dutch considered a plus.

- Additional Master of Business Administration is a plus.
- Experience in academic–industry consortia, technology transfer offices, or innovation hubs is desirable.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU

- We offer you a contract of indefinite duration.
- Your contract will start on 1/02/2026 at the earliest.
- Your remuneration will be determined by salary scale WM1 to WM4 (if you hold a Master's degree) or salary scale PD1 to PD4 (if you hold a doctorate). [Click here for more information about our salary scales.](#)
- All Ghent University staff members enjoy a number of benefits, such as a wide range of training and education opportunities, 36 days of holiday leave (on an annual basis for a full-time job) supplemented by annual fixed bridge days, a bicycle allowance and eco vouchers. [Click here for a complete overview of all the staff benefits.](#)

INTERESTED?

Apply **online through the e-recruitment system before the application deadline 18/01/2026**. We do not accept late applications or applications that are not submitted through the online system.

Your application must include the following documents:

- In the field '**CV**': your CV and a transcript of your academic record (merged into one pdf file)
- In the field '**Cover letter**': your application letter in pdf format
- In the field '**Diploma**': a transcript of the required degree (if already in your possession). If you have a foreign diploma in a language other than our national languages (Dutch, French or German) or English, please add a translation in one of the mentioned languages.
- In the field "**other documents**": any reference letter or overview of your study results you wish to share

Note that the maximum file size for each field is 10 MB.

As Ghent University maintains an equal opportunities and diversity policy, everyone is encouraged to apply for this position.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about this vacancy, please contact RPh. Sarah Braet (sarah.braet@UGent.be).

Important: do NOT send your application by email, but apply online.