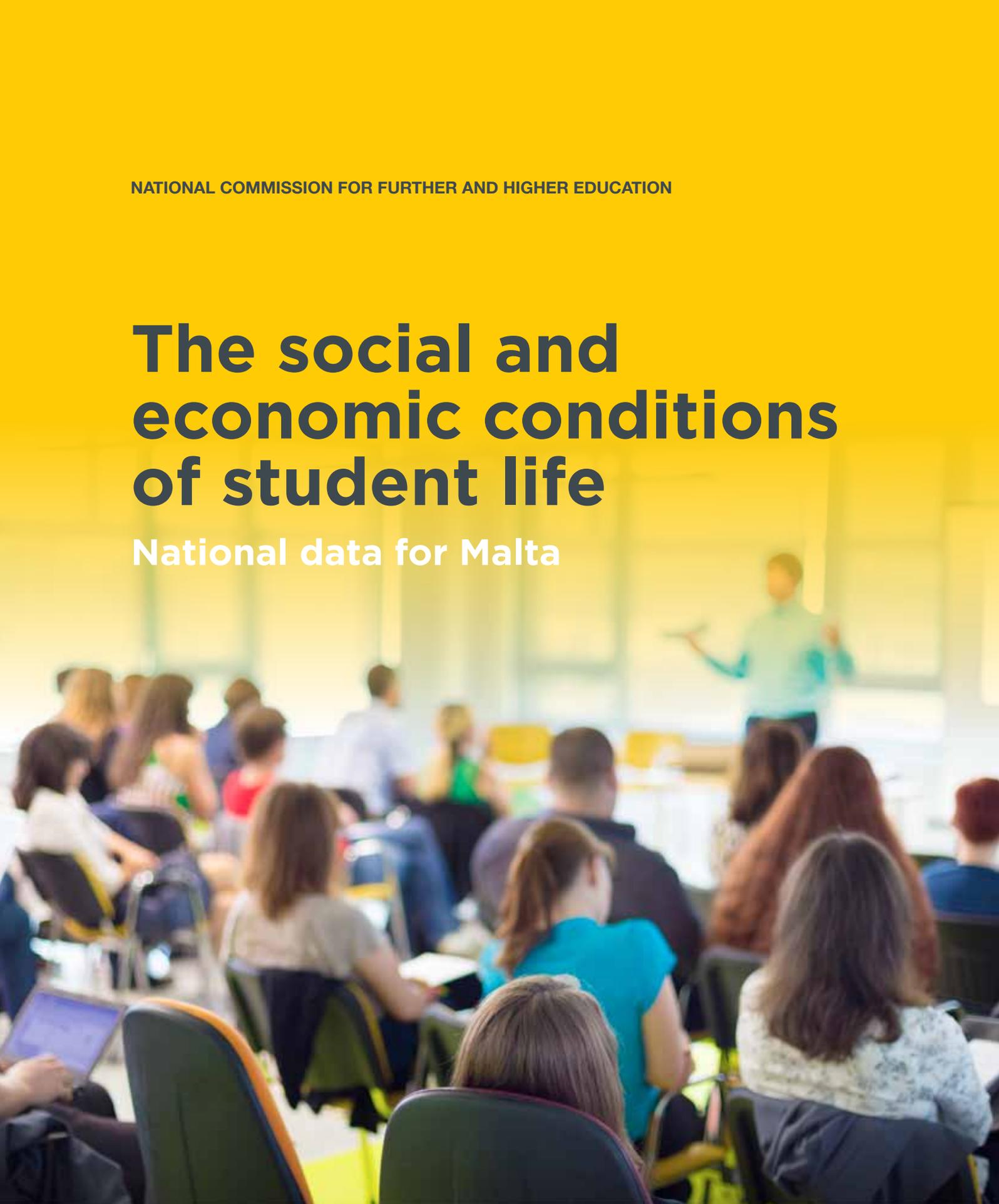


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The social and economic conditions of student life

National data for Malta



This report presents the findings of the national student survey carried out in Malta between May and July 2013. This research forms part of a European project called Eurostudent aimed at comparing national data on the social and economic conditions of student life in different European countries. In the fifth round of the Eurostudent project 30 European countries participated in the data collection exercise. The present report presents key findings of the Maltese contribution to this project.

A copy of the full report is available in the Downloads Section on www.ncfhe.org.mt.

Text in bold refers to key terms explained in the glossary of key terms.

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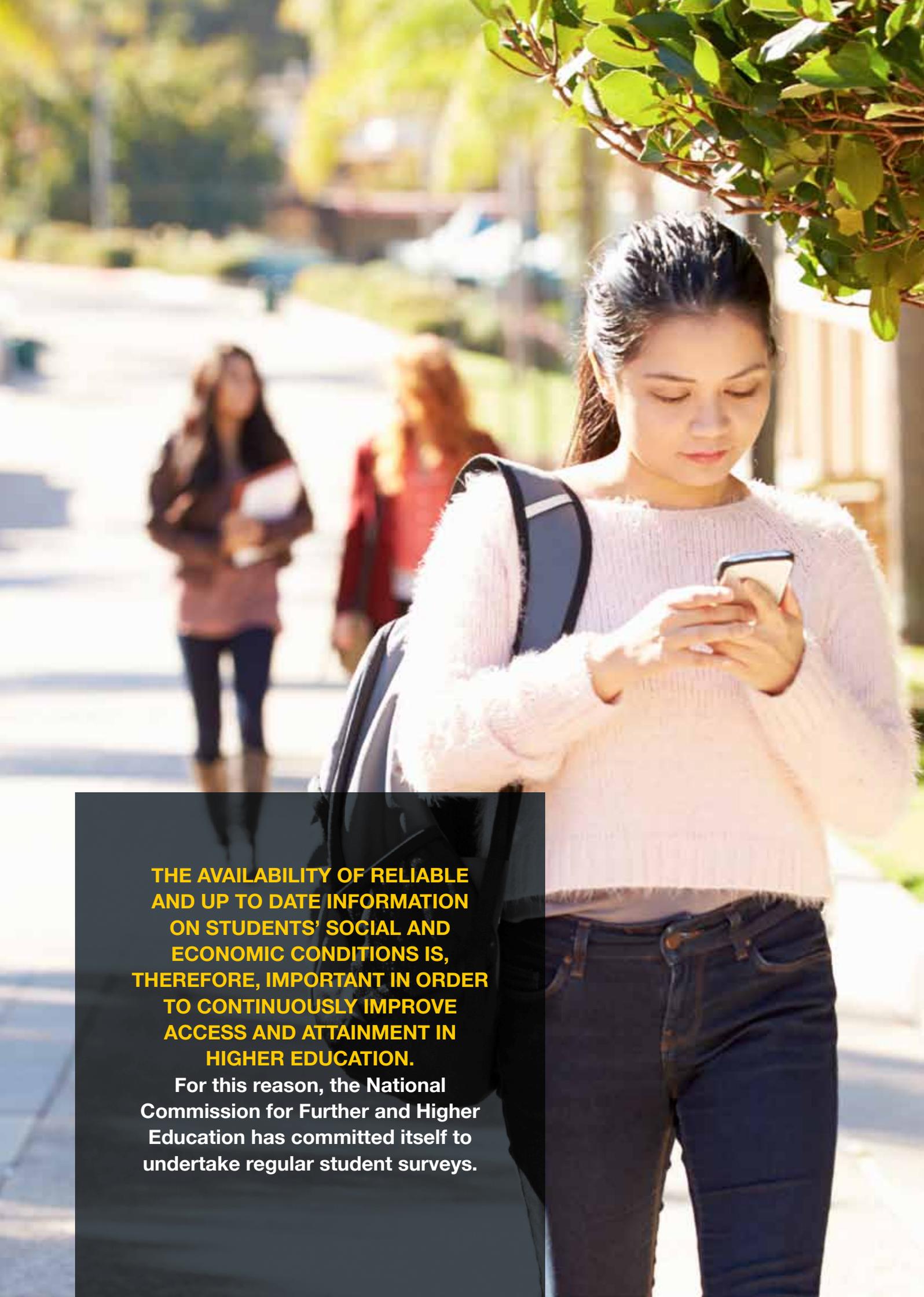
The author has thoroughly checked the accuracy of the information presented in this publication. However, mistakes cannot be ruled out completely. The aforementioned parties, therefore, do not assume liability for the accuracy and completeness of the information presented here.

National Commission for Further and Higher Education (2014):
The social and economic conditions of student life. National data for Malta. Executive Summary. Malta. December 2014.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The social and economic conditions of student life

National data for Malta

A young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light pink sweater and dark jeans, is looking down at her smartphone. She has a black backpack on her back. The background is a blurred college campus with other students walking. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

THE AVAILABILITY OF RELIABLE AND UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE ACCESS AND ATTAINMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

For this reason, the National Commission for Further and Higher Education has committed itself to undertake regular student surveys.

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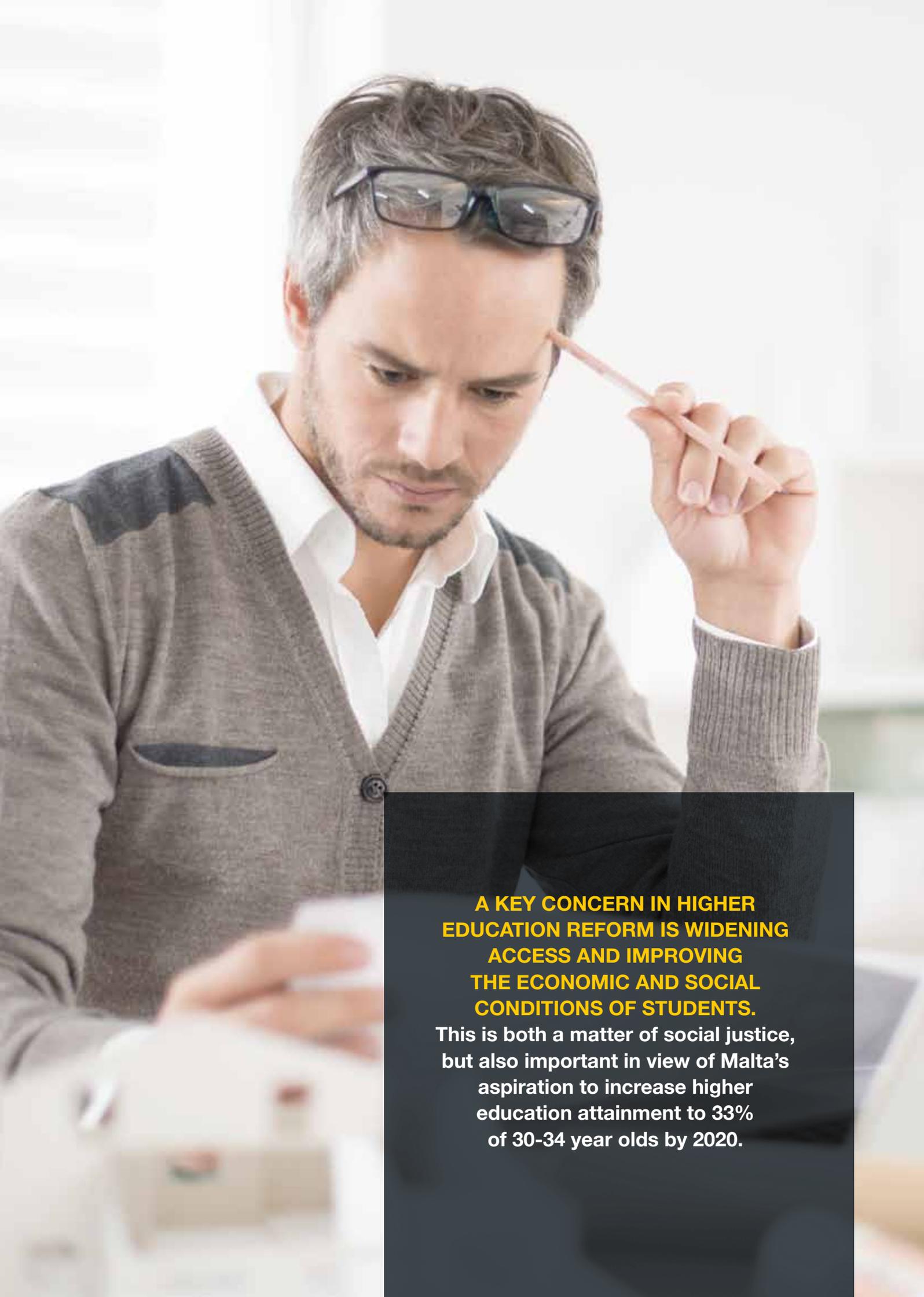
Note from the author

One of the key functions of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) is to advise government on the future development of further and higher education in Malta based on continuous research and to monitor policy implementation. The present research delivers on both functions in an exemplary way by providing data on the social and economic conditions of student life in Malta, which is instrumental in determining the suitability of current policies to widen access to higher education and remove obstacles to attainment. At the same time it also provides a solid basis for policy recommendations to further improve on both of these objectives, which are central, if Malta wishes to achieve the Europe 2020 target of 33% of 30-34 year olds having attained higher education by 2020.

Following a first student survey among students of the University of Malta in 2010, the present report is the second of its kind providing detailed information on the social and economic conditions of student life in Malta based on a survey carried out in the summer semester 2013. This report, which is based directly on information obtained by students, is an important supplement to the administrative headcount statistics collected annually by the NCFHE – providing information on the conditions of student life in addition to data on the number of students enrolled in further and higher education in Malta. These two strands of data collection – from education providers and students – are important in two respects. First and foremost they allow the NCFHE to deliver on its function outlined above in a comprehensive manner. But equally important, they allow the NCFHE to monitor progress over time and in this way provide data, which is otherwise unavailable in Malta. This requires a continuous and long-term commitment to develop and strengthen the research function of the NCFHE, given that such extensive research projects are underlying multi-annual cycles to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

Indeed many actors have been instrumental in supporting this research exercise and I would, therefore, like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude towards them. This includes the three higher education institutions in Malta – the University of Malta, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) – and in particular their registrar's offices, who have kindly supported us in contacting their students to take part in this survey. I would also like to express my thanks to our partners in the Eurostudent project, who have very generously shared their expertise with us on various occasions and, in this way, helped to further strengthen the research capacity of the NCFHE. I would like to thank various individuals and stakeholders for giving us valuable feedback on the transposition of the Eurostudent core questionnaire into the Maltese context and, in particular, in providing feedback on its translation into Maltese. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues at the NCFHE, who have supported this research project in various ways, such as by assisting with the translation of the questionnaire, performing technical checks on the implementation of the online survey, assisting in the reliability check of the Maltese translation or contributing to the interpretation of the data collected, amongst others. Further thanks are due to Mr Clive Sacco, who spent a considerable share of his student summer work placement with the NCFHE to compile the graphs contained in this report. However, particular thanks are due to Dr Philip von Brockdorff and Ms Edel Cassar for having entrusted me with this rewarding research project and for their unwavering support in bringing about the report you find in front of you.

It is hoped that the present report provides an interesting new perspective on the Maltese higher education system as a whole as a basis for further policy development to improve the social and economic conditions of student life in Malta, widen participation and increase attainment in higher education.



A KEY CONCERN IN HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM IS WIDENING ACCESS AND IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF STUDENTS.

This is both a matter of social justice, but also important in view of Malta's aspiration to increase higher education attainment to 33% of 30-34 year olds by 2020.

Introduction

One key concern in the reform of higher education systems in Europe through the Bologna Process is the social dimension. This refers to the objective of continuously widening access to higher education and improving the economic and social conditions of students, in order to ensure that students do not face any obstacles in entering, progressing or completing higher education. This is both a matter of social justice, but also important in view of Malta's aspiration to continuously increase participation in higher education with the aim of 33% of 30-34 year olds having attained higher education by 2020.¹ This calls not only for an increase in the number of students enrolled in higher education overall, but will also result in a student body in higher education with more diverse backgrounds. Thus, in order to adequately support all students entering higher education irrespective of their background, policy makers and higher education institutions need to be aware of and sensitive to their specific needs.

The availability of reliable and up to date information on students' social and economic conditions is, therefore, important in order to continuously improve access and attainment in higher education. For this reason, the National Commission for Further and Higher Education has committed itself to undertake regular student surveys.

The first survey of this kind was carried out in the summer semester 2010 among students from the University of Malta. This survey was followed-up in the summer semester 2013, but this time included students from the University of Malta, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS).

This regular three-yearly data collection forms part of a European-wide project called Eurostudent that aims to provide comparable data on the social and economic conditions of student life. The Eurostudent project contributed to the development of a common core questionnaire implemented at national level by all countries participating in the data collection exercise, a common standard target audience, a common period for data collection and common conventions for the calculation of indicators for European comparison.² These elements have helped to make national data more comparable at European level in order to identify similarities and differences in the social and economic conditions of student life in different countries. The present report is Malta's contribution to this data collection exercise and at the same time provides a broad overview of the Maltese higher education system and the social and economic conditions of students in Malta.

The report covers the following aspects of student life:

- Demographic characteristics
- Social background of the student body
- Access to higher education
- Enrolment in higher education
- Accommodation
- Living expenses
- Assessment and future plans
- Internationalisation and student mobility
- Time budget and employment
- Funding and state assistance

¹ Ministry for Finance (2013): Malta's National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy. April 2013, p. 15.

² See: http://www.eurostudent.eu/about/docs/index_html

In this way, the report covers all aspects of the student lifecycle from conditions influencing the entry into higher education; the social, economic and academic aspects influencing student life throughout the entire duration of the study programme until graduation; student mobility and students' plans after graduation.

Data was collected between May and August 2013 among all students from the University of Malta, MCAST and ITS. However, the Eurostudent project restricts its focus in the European comparison on:

- All students in the respective country, i.e. national and foreign students who are pursuing their studies for a degree in the country of the survey, except students on leave and excluding students on incoming and outgoing credit mobility.
- Full-time and part-time students by status.
- Students in all ISCED 2011 level 5, 6 and 7 programmes, regardless of their character as general or professional, as long as the programmes are considered higher education in your national context.
- All higher education institutions offering programmes considered "normal". In many cases this means only public, non-specialist institutions of higher education.
- All national degrees corresponding to ISCED 5, 6 and 7 (e.g. BA, MA, traditional diploma, Lizentiat, national degrees in medicine. Short courses only if they are based on ISCED 5.)
- Distance students who study at a "normal" higher education institution, i.e. excluding institutions solely for long distance students like open universities, Fernuniversität Hagen and similar.

Consequently the data considered in this report is restricted to students, who were enrolled in and studying at a public higher education institution in Malta in the summer semester 2013 at Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) level 5 to 7, which is equivalent to ISCED 2011 level 5 to 7. This corresponds to a total student population at MQF level 5-7 at the University of Malta, MCAST and ITS of 11,487 students during the academic year 2013/2014. By close of the survey in August 2013 a total of 1,326 students matching these criteria had responded to the survey. Given that the Eurostudent project seeks to compare the social and economic conditions of students with different characteristics,

which are referred to as standard focus groups, respondents to the survey not providing data on a minimum set of variables were also excluded from the analysis. Thus students not providing data on the following variables could not be considered in the analysis:

- age
- gender
- qualification being studied for
- type of higher education institution attended
- study intensity
- field of study
- educational attainment of parents
- international students
- direct or delayed transition into higher education
- dependency on income sources

A total of 1,190 students provided data on the above-mentioned variables and could, therefore, be considered in the analysis as valid responses. This ensures a margin of error of 2.69% of the findings presented in this report assuming a 95% degree of confidence, which is quite satisfactory. In order to further ensure that the data is representative of the diversity of the student population studied in this report, the data collected has been weighted. This data weighting was carried out based on administrative data of the student population at MQF level 5-7 at the University of Malta, MCAST and ITS during the academic year 2013/2014. For this purpose the distribution in the total population by higher education institution, gender, age and MQF level during the academic year 2013/2014 was compared to the same distribution among students, who provided valid responses. In cases, where this resulted in weighting factors lower than 0.2 or higher than 5, the weighting factor was rounded up to 0.2 or rounded down to 5 respectively. Following this adjustment of the weighting factors the arithmetic mean was calculated and all values were adjusted in order for the arithmetic mean to be 1.

The present report represents the Maltese data calculated based on the conventions for data processing and delivery and was delivered to Eurostudent between January and June 2014. It is supplemented by methodological considerations and a national interpretation of the findings to provide contextual information for readers unfamiliar with the Maltese higher education system or interested in key findings resulting from this data collection.

Executive summary

Chapter A: Demographic characteristics

Chapter A reviews the demographic characteristics of students in Malta. The data indicates that the majority of the students (47%) are up to 21 years old. It appears, therefore, that the majority of Bachelor and **high-intensity** students entered higher education directly after attaining the Matriculation Certificate, which is the general entrance qualification for higher education and is generally obtained at age 18. In comparison, the majority of Masters or **low-intensity** students are 25-29 years old. This might suggest that they have entered the labour market after graduating from higher education and have undertaken further studies at a later stage alongside employment.

The average age of students in Malta is 25.34. However, there is a noticeable age difference between university and **non-university** students, with the latter being considerably younger (average age of 21.44) than university students (average age of 26.18). Given that non-university higher education institutions in Malta only offer programmes up to **ISCED** 2011 level 6, while the University of Malta offers programmes up to ISCED 2011 level

8, this age difference may be explained by the share and age of students enrolled in postgraduate programmes at the University of Malta.

The data also reveals a considerable difference in the age profile of students from different social backgrounds. The share of students aged 21 years or younger from higher education backgrounds is considerably higher (60.4%) when compared to students without higher education backgrounds (42.7%).

According to data published by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the share of women and men in the general population in Malta in 2009 was that of 50.23% and 49.77% respectively. Considering that women make up 55% of all students in higher education, they are, therefore, well represented amongst tertiary level students. Females make up the majority of university students. On the other hand, in non-university institutions, which are mainly vocationally oriented, the majority of students are males (56%). Although females form the majority of students in higher education, they are underrepresented in non-university settings. The

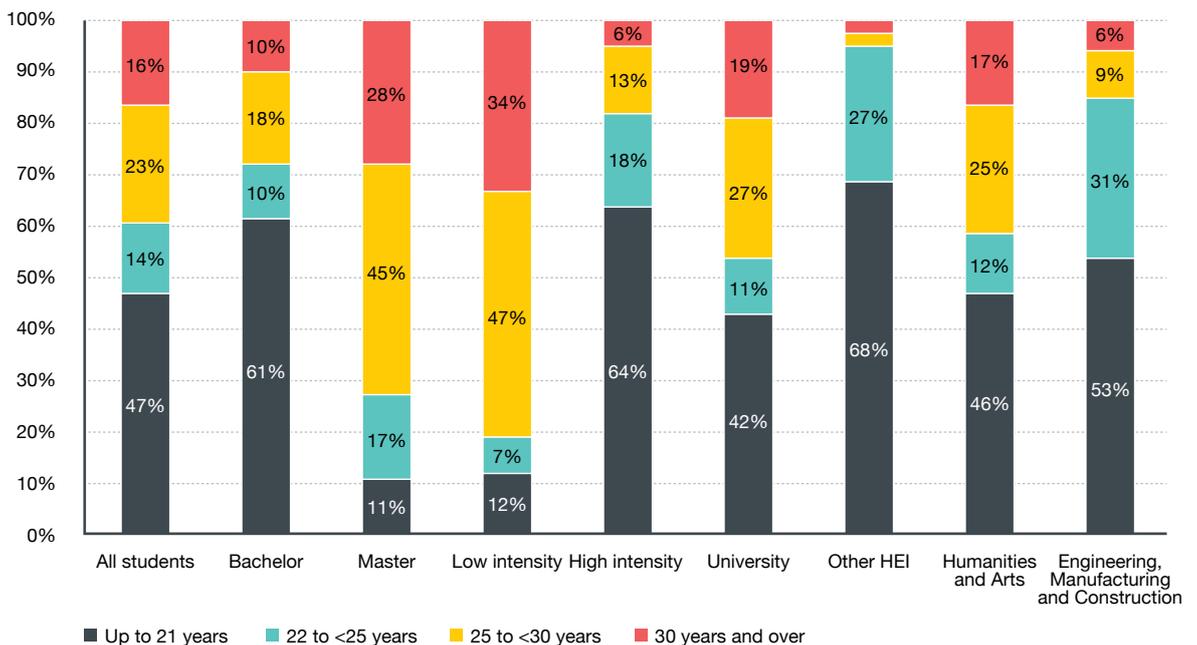


Figure 1: Grouped age profile by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

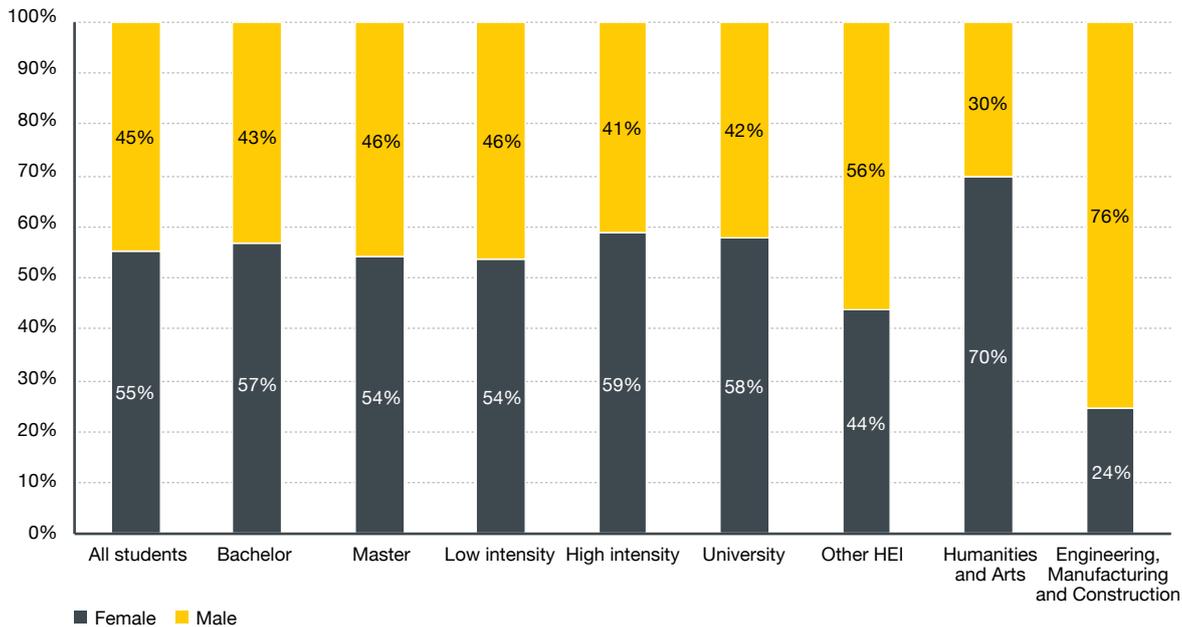


Figure 2: Sex profile by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

data also suggests a gender bias between different subject areas. While study programmes in the field of engineering remain “male strongholds” with only 24% of students being females, the humanities remain dominated by females (70%).

Since the possibility to follow programmes at higher education level might be affected by students’ family responsibilities, the survey also looked into the share of students in higher education with **family responsibilities**. Amongst all students in higher education 12.6% have children. The majority of those are Masters students (21.5%) or **low-intensity** students (26.1%). These students are generally older than the average age of Maltese students, which is 25.34. Masters students are on average 29.19 and low-intensity students 30.37. Thus, older students appear to have more often already established their own families, suggesting that these students are faced more often with family responsibilities in addition their studies. Given the considerable age difference between university (average age of 26.18) and **non-university** students (average age of 21.44), it is, therefore, coherent that university students report a much higher share of students with children (14.5%) than non-university students (4.7%).

Furthermore, the survey also focused on students’ impairment and how these are taken into consideration as part of their study programme. Out of all students, 9% report some form of

impairment. The most commonly registered types of impairments are chronic diseases (2.4%), sensory impairments (2.4%), and other unclassified long standing health problems (2.5%). The share of students with impairments is particularly high among **high-intensity** students (14.1%), while being very low among students enrolled in engineering programmes (5.6%). The majority of students (56%) with impairments stated that their condition creates little or no obstacle at all in their studies.

Another criterion examined in this survey is the mobility and migration of students who enrol in Maltese higher education institutions. The share of **mobile/migrant** students among the total student population in higher education in Malta is about 16%. 9% of migrant students were born in Malta to foreign parents (second-generation migrants), while 5% of these students came to Malta and chose to undertake their studies here (first-generation migrants). The share of students with migration background is particularly high among students with **higher education background** (23%) and students aged 25 to 29 (25%). The high level of education of their parents may contribute to similar aspirations among migrant students, which may explain why 2nd generation migrants are very well represented at Bachelor level or why 1st generation migrants are very strongly represented even at postgraduate level. Likewise, the considerable share of migrant students among the 25-29 age group suggests that a considerable number of 1st generation students

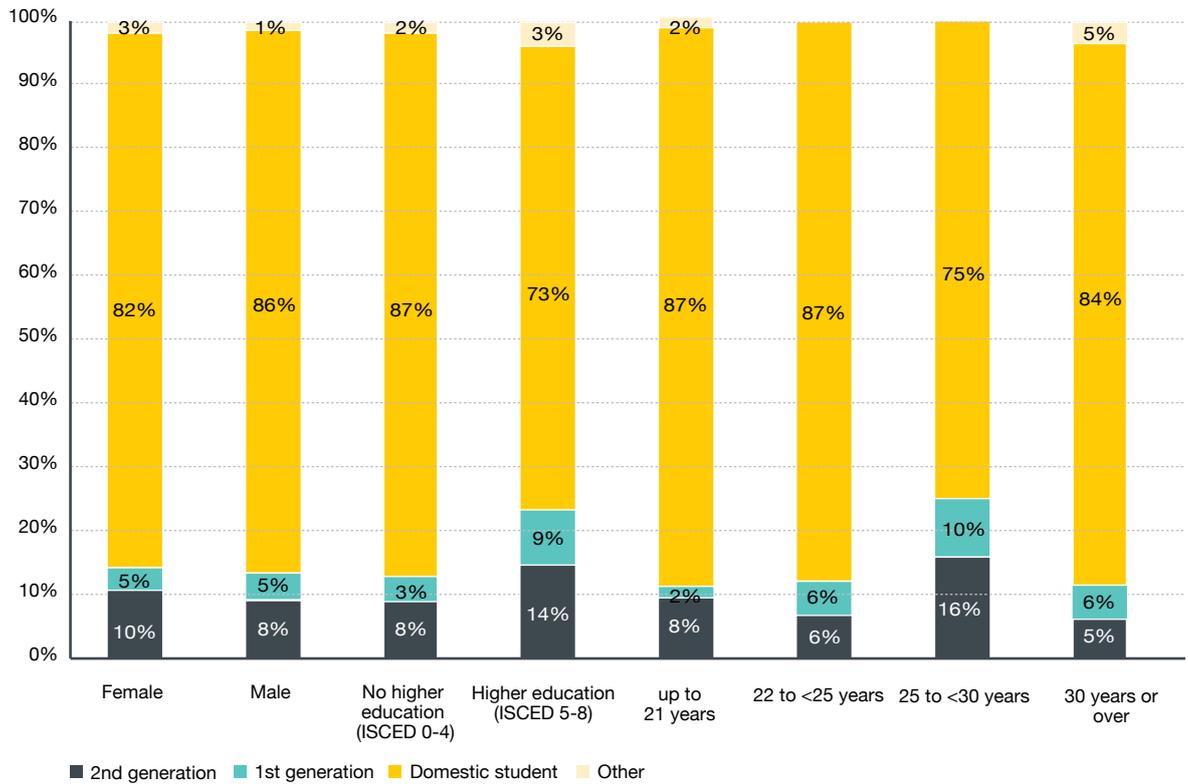


Figure 3: Migrant students according to own and to parents’ place of birth by socio-demographic characteristics of students (in %)

undertake studies after having resettled in Malta from their countries of origin. These appear to enrol in particular in programmes in the social sciences, business and law; health and welfare and services (tourism).

Chapter B: Qualification routes into Higher Education

Chapter B focuses on the different educational pathways which grant access into higher education. Most students report to have attained the Matriculation Certificate (60.4%) as the highest qualification without any interruption of their education career before entering higher education. This is true in particular for students whose parents completed higher education (69.6%) compared to students, whose parents did not attain higher education (54.6%). A considerably share of students also enter higher education through ‘non-traditional’ routes, such as the so-called ‘Maturity clause’ (11.6), or enters with Vocational Education and Training qualifications (10.5%).

When one compares the students’ gender profile with regards to access to higher education one may note that females enter higher education more often with the Matriculation Certificate (84.4%) than males (76.4%). In contrast, double as many males (14.7%) as females (7%) use Vocational Education and Training qualifications for entry into higher education. This may be due to the difference in enrolment of females and males in university and **non-university** institutions.

With regard to **prior experience in the labour market** before entering higher education, the vast majority of students in Malta report to have some experience of the working world (55.2%). The majority of these students held casual minor jobs of less than 20 hours per week or for less than a year (30.2%), while 25% of these students were employed on a regular basis. Labour market experience also varies according to the social background of the students. While 31.5% of students, whose **parents have not attained higher education**, report to have had a regular job prior to entering higher education, only 17.8% of students with a **higher education background** report the same.

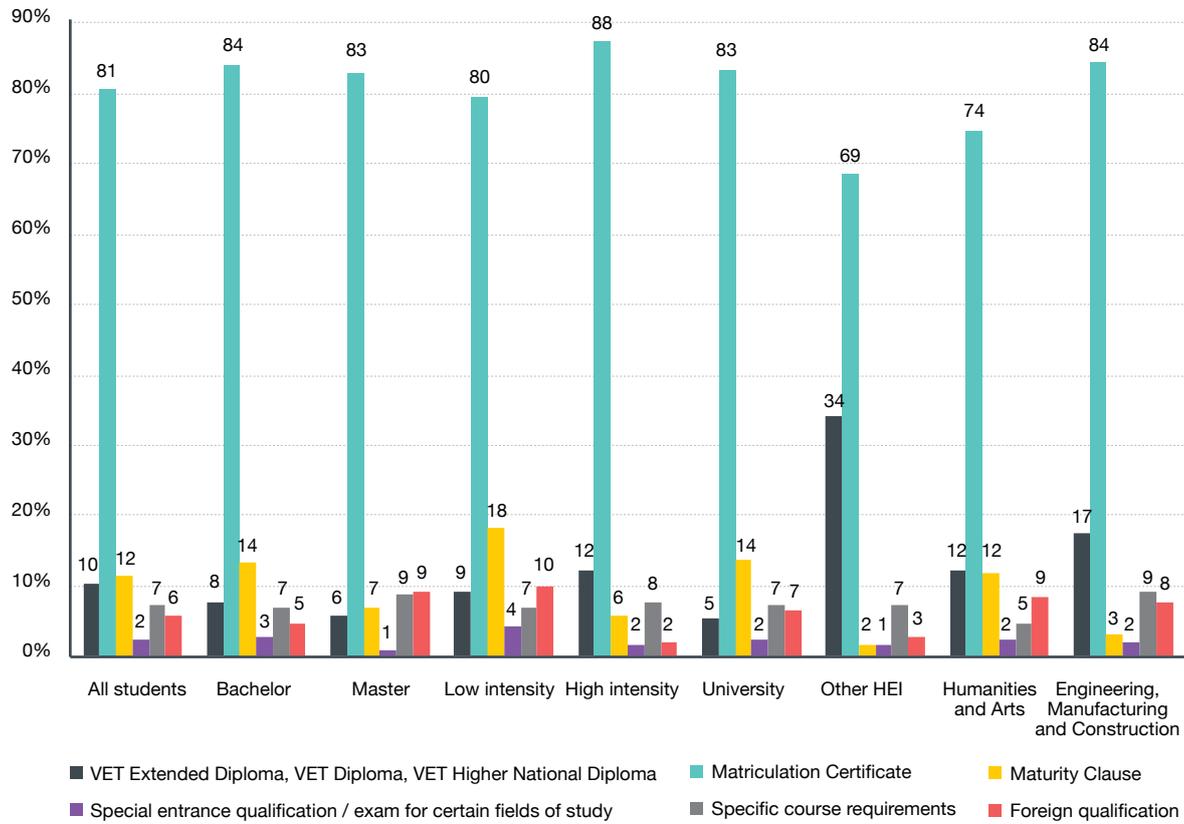


Figure 4: Entry qualifications and measures used for entry into higher education by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

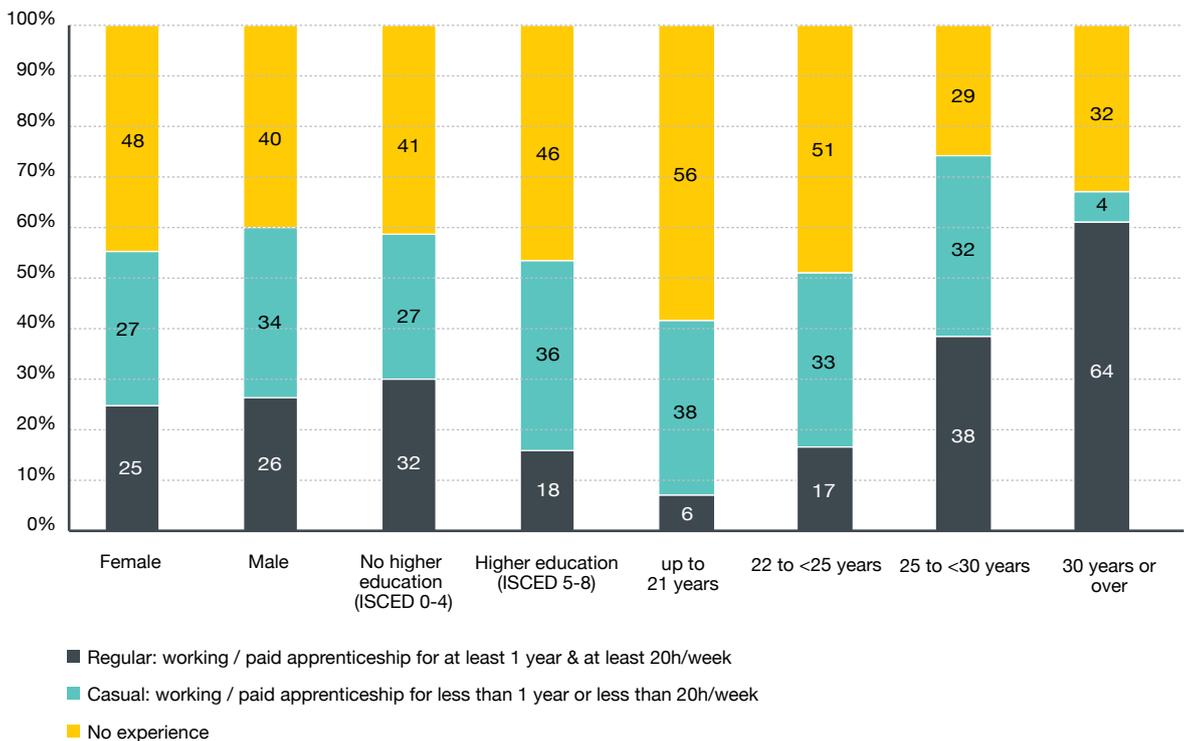


Figure 5: Prior experience of labour market before higher education entry by socio-demographic characteristics of students (in %)



75.2%

**OF STUDENTS ENTERING
HIGHER EDUCATION DO NOT
INTERRUPT THEIR STUDIES.**

However, those who indicate to have interrupted their education at one point, have mostly done so between their undergraduate and postgraduate programme, with a share of 19.2%

There also appears to be a link between the age of the student and their prior work experience. Older students are reporting more often to have had regular work experience before entry into higher education, while the majority of students **reliant on public support** had no such experience (54%), nor interrupted their higher education at any point (94.5%). This suggests that mature students, after gaining experience in the working world, may consider that furthering their education will enhance their career prospects or enable them to seek employment with better wages.

The survey focused on the **interruption in the education career** of students either before entry into higher education, during their degree or before re-entering into higher education for another degree. 75.2% of students entering higher education do not interrupt their studies. However, those who indicate to have interrupted their education at one point, have mostly done so between their undergraduate and postgraduate programme, with a share of 19.2%. It is, therefore, not surprising that older students are more likely to have interrupted their studies. The majority of students (92.5%) enter higher education without any interruption within a year after obtaining the entry qualification into higher

education. Delayed transitions to higher education are closely linked to the educational background of students’ parents, where students whose parents did not attain higher education, appear to enter higher education between 1 and 2 years after attaining the entry qualifications. Students, who rely on own earnings, report more often to have delayed their entry into higher education (10.2%).

Chapter C: Enrolment in Higher Education

Chapter C reviews the enrolment of students in higher education. Data shows that 47% of all students studying at higher education level in Malta follow programmes at Bachelor level. Another share of students (25%), are enrolled in shorter higher education at ISCED 2011 level 5 / MQF level 5 whilst 25% follow a Masters programme. The majority of university students are enrolled in Bachelor programmes, whereas, 81% of all students at **non-university** institutions follow a short-cycle higher education. Since these short-cycle higher education programmes are generally accessible either through post-secondary vocational pathways or with partial higher education entrance qualifications, they

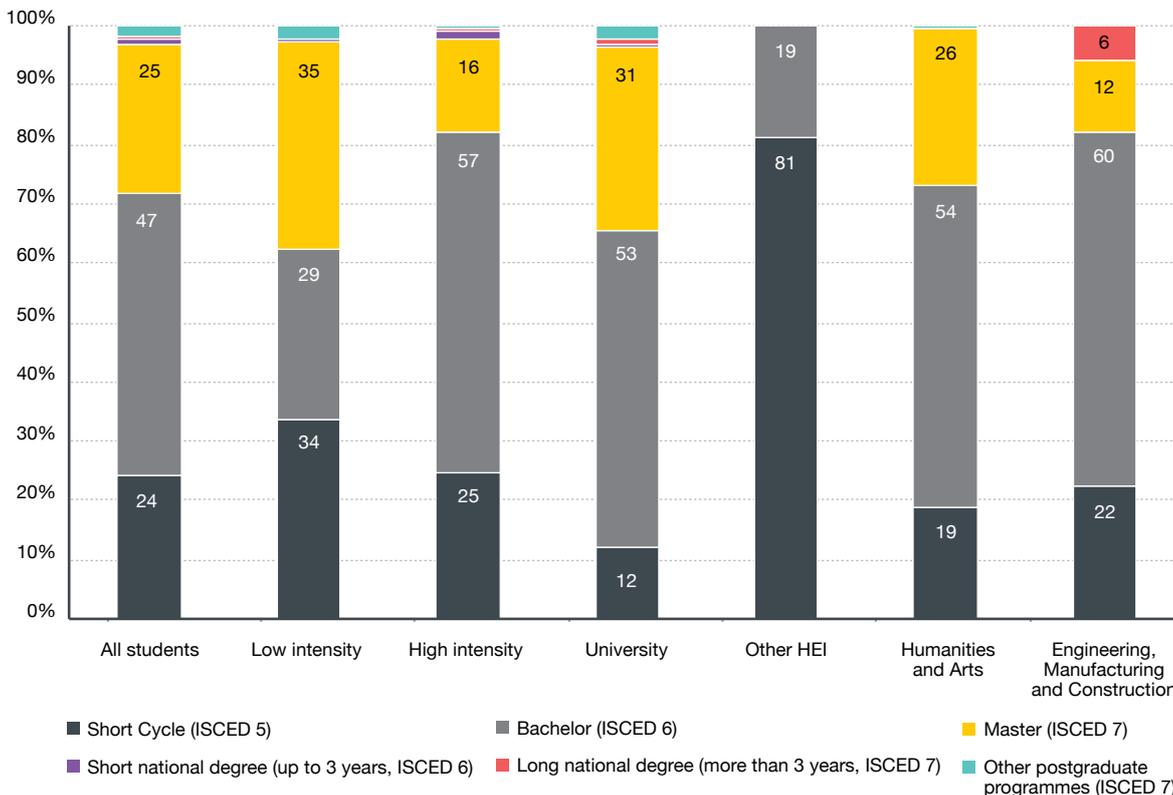


Figure 6: Student enrolment by programme by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

appear to provide important pathways into higher education for students following the vocational routes or not meeting all entry requirements to enter directly into Bachelor level programmes. Bearing in mind, therefore, that the share of students enrolled in short-cycle programmes is considerably larger at non-university institutions (81%) compared to university institutions (12%), non-university institutions appear to serve as important pathway into higher education in particular for the vocationally oriented programmes.

There is a considerable difference in the programmes **high-intensity** and **low-intensity** students are enrolled in. Generally, part-time students follow low-intensity programmes since they are working alongside their studies. Low-intensity students appear to be more often students enrolled in short-cycle (34%) or Masters programmes (35%), while high-intensity students are in the majority enrolled in Bachelor programmes (57%). This suggests that low-intensity students, who are generally working regularly alongside their studies, undertake higher education either to obtain their first higher education qualification or to follow postgraduate studies. In contrast, high-intensity students appear to be young students up to the age of 24, who entered higher education directly after obtaining the entry qualification and study full-time. The majority of full-time students (78.6%) spend more than 30 hours per week on study-related activities which include taught studies and personal study time.

The majority of students that depend mostly on **public support** are studying at Bachelor level (79%). This is not surprising, since students following full-time undergraduate programmes at **ISCED** 2011 Level 5 and 6 at public higher education institutions receive the Student Maintenance Grant, while postgraduate students are generally not eligible for public support. Conversely, it is also not surprising that students predominantly **reliant** on own resources are more often enrolled at Masters level (40%), because they benefit less often from public support and, therefore, appear to complement their income through employment.

The most popular fields of study amongst all Bachelor students are social sciences, business and law (33%), followed by natural sciences (22%). However, there appear to be considerable differences in the subject areas pursued by university and **non-university** students. While university students are most often enrolled in social sciences, business and law (34%) and natural sciences (34%), non-university students are most often enrolled in natural science (51%) or

engineering, manufacturing and construction (23%). This may be linked to the main areas of study offered at the MCAST, which is Malta's main vocational education and training institution and was established in 2001 based on the merger of various technical colleges.

Chapter D: Social background

Chapter D reviews the social backgrounds of students in Malta. When comparing data collected in 2010 with 2013 data an improvement in the inclusiveness of Malta's higher education system can be recorded. The participation of students, whose fathers hold occupations skills at level 1 and 2³ has increased by 19% between 2010 and 2013. Moreover, between 2010 and 2013 a 10% increase can be recorded in the participation of students, whose parents did not attain higher education. This suggests that the higher education system in Malta continues to expand and attract students from lower socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. This might be linked in particular to the expansion of vocationally oriented higher education programmes.

Data suggests that there is a link between the age of students and the level of education of their parents. Parents of younger students seem to have attained higher education more often compared to older students, which may be attributed to the above-mentioned ongoing expansion of Malta's higher education system. It is, therefore, not surprising that parents of Masters students, which are on average 29.19 and enrolled more often on a part-time and **low-intensity** basis, appear to have less often attained higher education than parents of Bachelor students.

Moreover, there appears to be a clear link between the occupational status of students' parents and the level of education they have attained. In this regard a low education attainment appears to be linked to a low skill level of the occupation held. Closely linked to this, there appears to be a link between the perceived social standing of students' parents and their education attainment. Students, whose parents have attained higher education, judge their parents' social standing as higher than students, whose parents have not attained higher education. This suggests that higher education attainment contributes both to better employment prospects as well as to social mobility.

3 Skill level 1-2 refers to the following occupations: clerical support workers; service and sales workers; skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers; crafts and related trades workers; plant and machine operators; and elementary occupations.

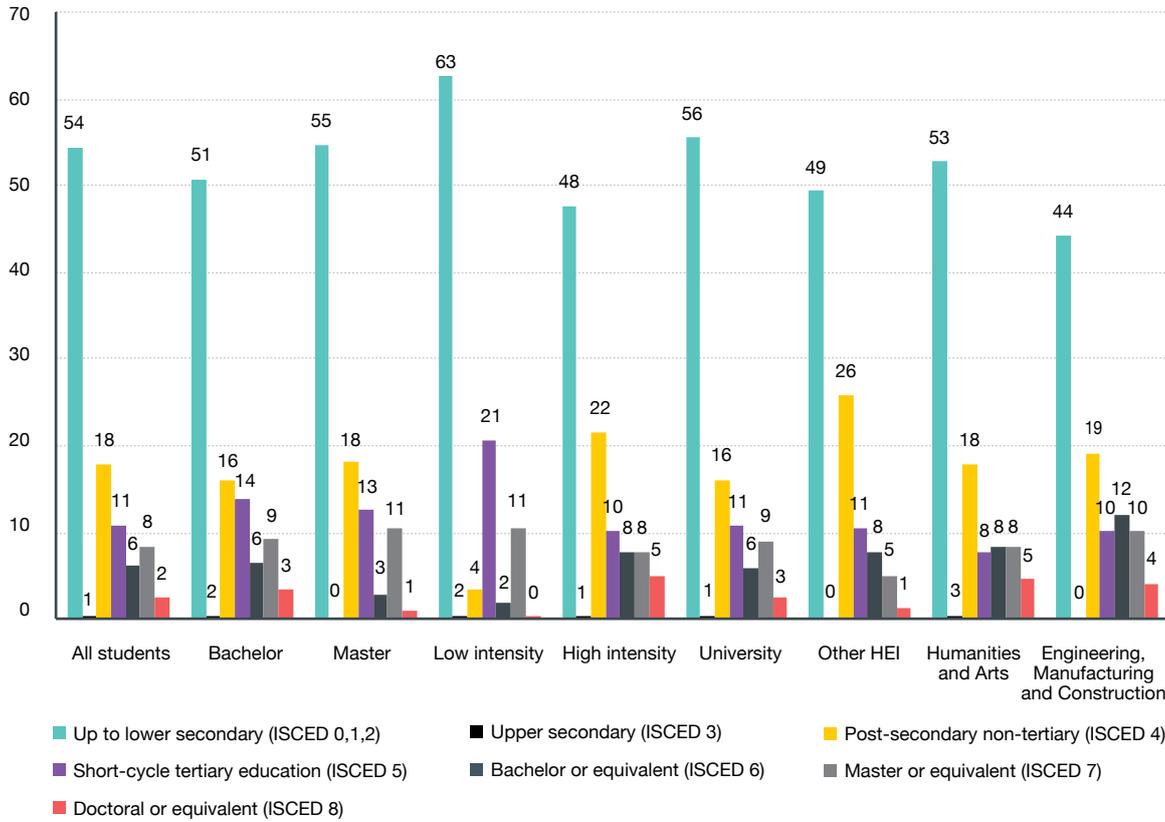


Figure 7: Students' parents highest educational attainment by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

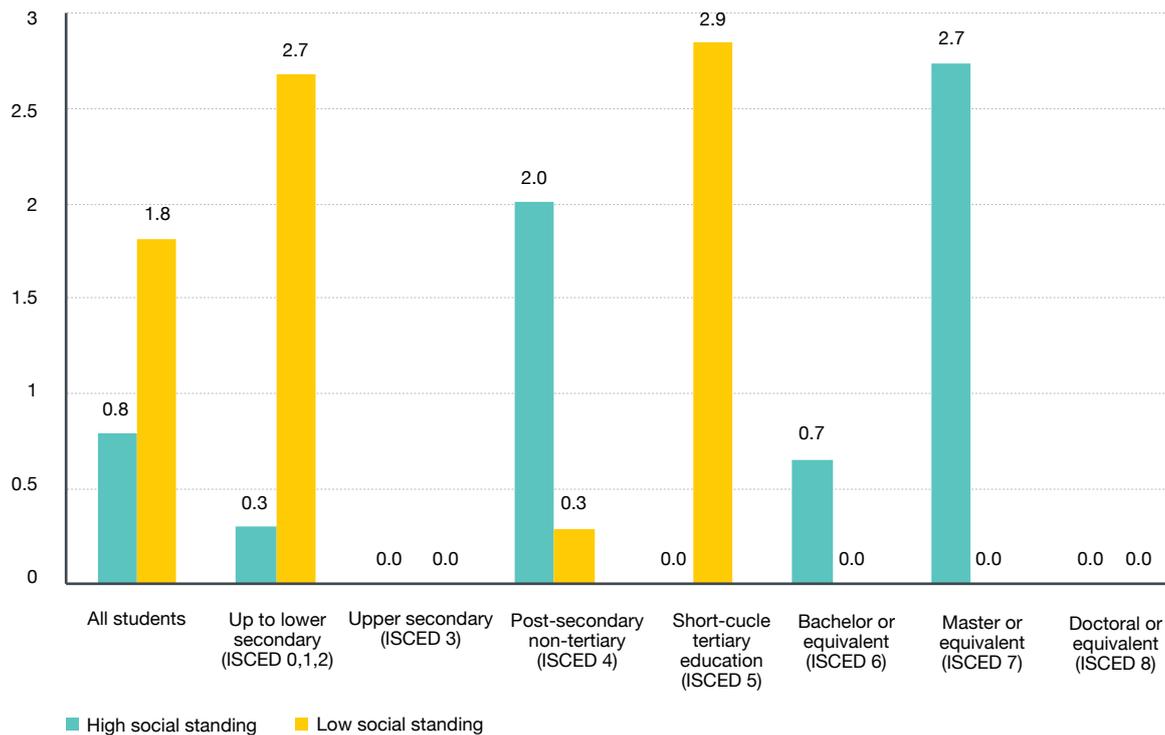


Figure 8: Students' assessment of their parents' social standing by parental education level (in %)

Chapter E: Accommodation

Living with parents remains the most common form of accommodation of students in Malta with 66% of university students living with their parents in 2013 compared to 76% in 2010. There is a relation between students’ age and their form of housing. Given the average ages of university and non-university students (21.44 and 26.18 respectively), more **non-university** students seem to live with their parents when compared to the share of university students (65.8%). Therefore, the older the student, the more probable it is that the individual lives on his or her own or else with their partner and children.

Despite the fact that there is no substantial age difference between female (25.37) and male students (25.31), males live more often with their parents (75.2%) than females (66.4%). This may be linked to the fact that females tend to be younger when they get married and start their family (at an average age of 23.9) compared to males (at an average age of 26.4) (NSO 2014: 106).

There do not appear to be substantial differences in students’ assessment of their housing, irrespective of whether they live with their parents or not. Having said that, females appear to

assess their accommodation more favourably (81.8% very satisfied) than males (48.1% very satisfied). Likewise, older students assess their accommodation considerably more positively (76.8% of 25-29 year olds and 76.8% 30 year and older very satisfied) compared to younger students (31.0% of up to 21 year olds very satisfied).

When comparing the feedback of females and males, who do not live with their parents, students living with their partner or children assess their accommodation particularly positively (83% of females and 66% of males very satisfied). It is also evident, that females living alone consider their accommodation considerably better (93% very satisfied) than males (15% very satisfied).

Chapter F: Living expenses

Chapter F explores the living expenses of students, covering both **expenses directly related to their participation in higher education** as well as their **general living cost**. The key items of expenditure for students in Malta are accommodation, food, transportation expenses and other regular living costs. These items make up 64.4% of expenses for students living with parents and 66.3% for students

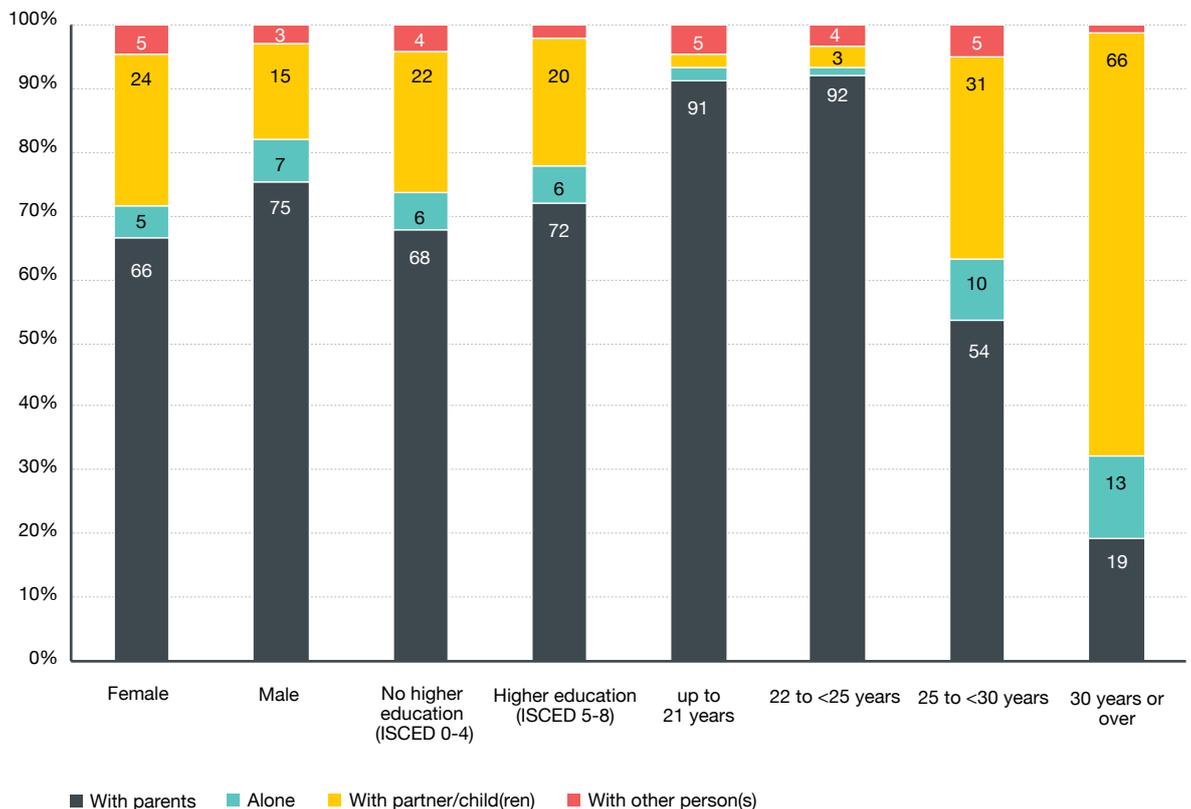


Figure 9: Form of housing by socio-demographic characteristics of students (in %)

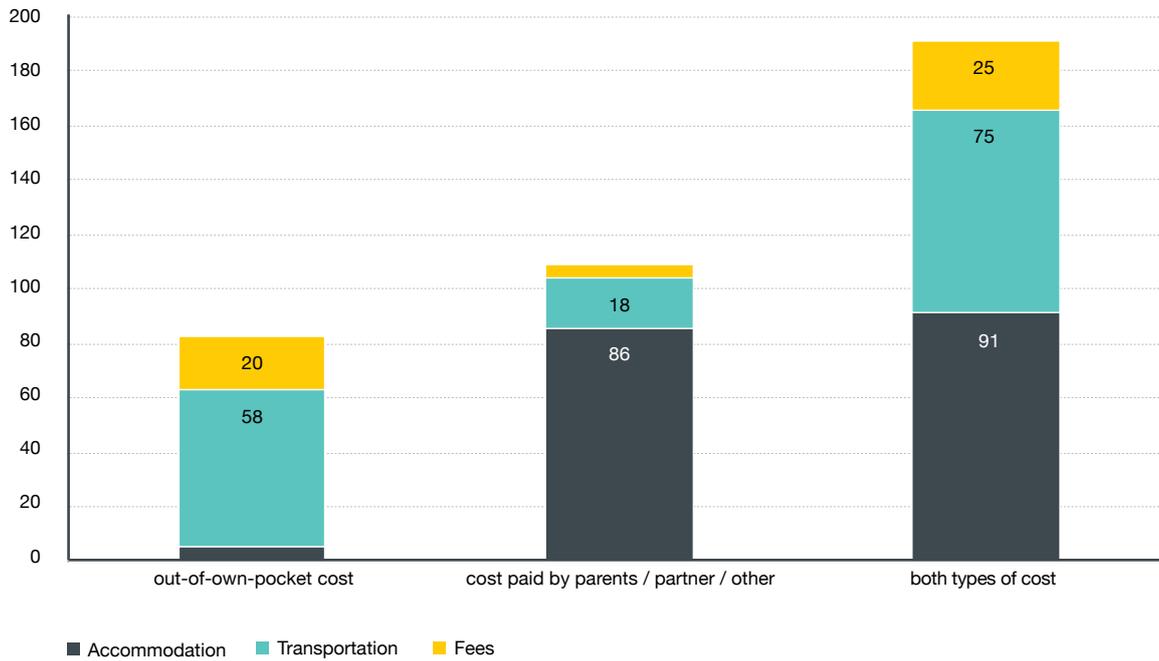


Figure 10: Profile of students' monthly key cost by payer for students living with parents (in Euro)

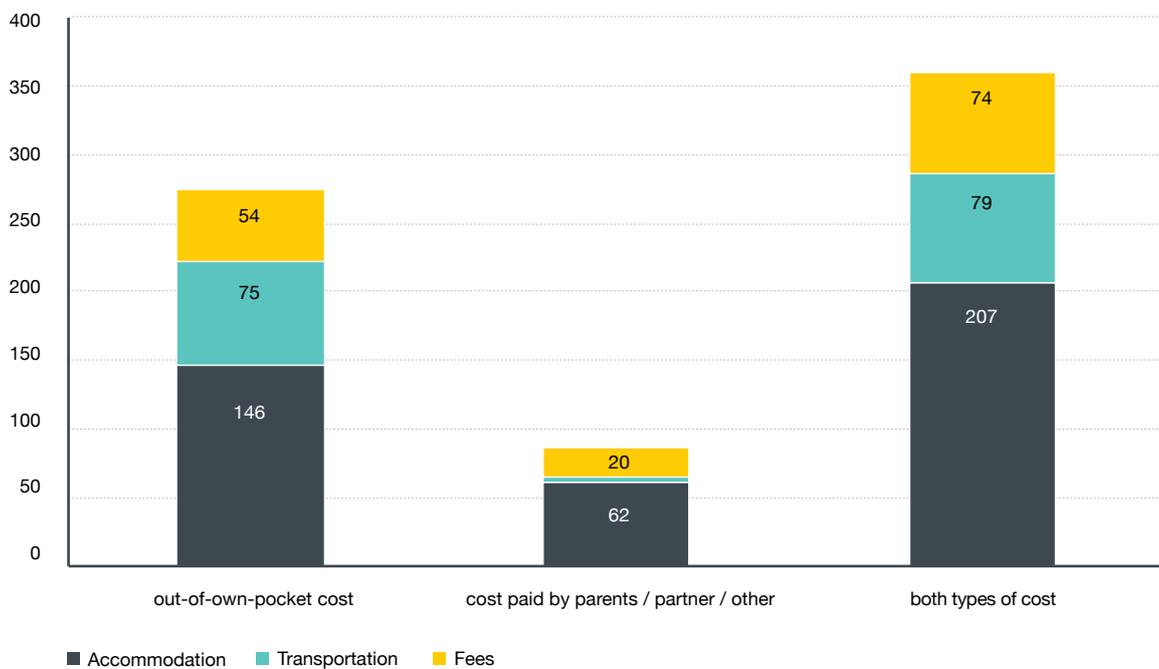


Figure 11: Profile of students' monthly key cost by payer for students not living with parents (in Euro)

not living with parents. Naturally, expenses for accommodation and food make up a larger share of the budget of students not living with parents (48.9%) compared to students living with parents (37.7%).

Two groups with different spending profiles appear to emerge from the data collected, namely Bachelor students on the one hand and Masters and **low-intensity** students on the other hand. Bachelor students report lower shares and absolute expenditures on accommodation and fees. This may be related to the fact that Bachelor students generally live with their parents, thus, incurring lower costs for accommodation. In contrast, Masters and low-intensity students tend to live less often with their parents, thus, incurring higher expenditures for accommodation. Given that postgraduate and part-time programmes are generally subject to tuition fees in public higher education institutions, it is also expected that Masters and **low-intensity** students would report higher expenses for tuition fees.

The majority of students (77%), who do not live with their parents, work alongside their studies in order to cover the higher expenses arising from maintaining an own household. Nevertheless, students not living with parents report more often financial difficulties than students living with their parents. This is true in particular for Bachelor students not living with their

parents, who work less often regularly alongside their studies and, thus, might have less supplementary income compared to Masters students.

Moreover, students aged 25-29 not living with their parents appear to suffer more often financial difficulties when compared to their younger or older peers. This appears to be due to younger students depending more often on family support, which seems to be sufficient, given that young students report less often financial difficulties. In contrast, older students are more often **reliant** on own earnings. Given that salaries tend to increase with increasing years of employment, students above the age of 30 report higher salaries than 25-29 year olds, which may explain the higher financial difficulties of the latter.

Chapter G: Funding and state assistance

Chapter G reviews the funding and state assistance available to students in higher education. Family support and self-earned income make up the majority of a student's monthly income. This is true both for students living with their parents and those who maintain their own household. Bachelor and **high-intensity** students depend more often on family support and **public funding**, while Masters and low-intensity students mainly depend on own earnings.

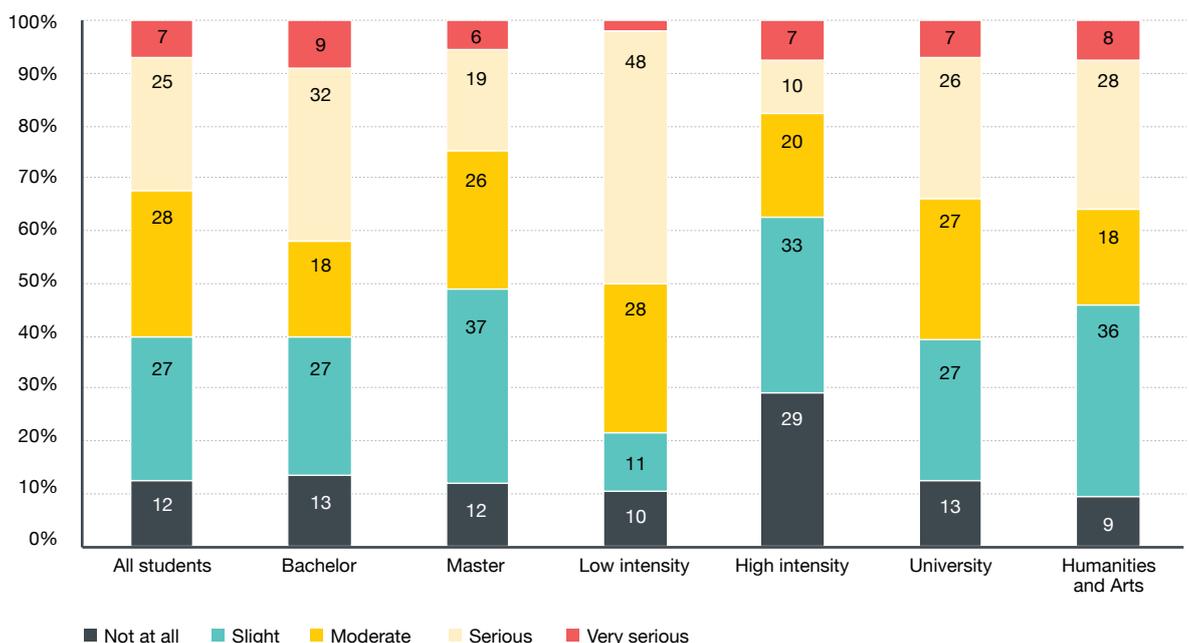


Figure 12: Students' assessment of experiencing current financial difficulties, students by study-related characteristics not living with parents (in %)

A young man with a light beard, wearing a blue and white plaid button-down shirt, is sitting at a dark wooden table. He is focused on writing in a small, yellow, spiral-bound notebook with a black pen. His left hand rests on the table near the notebook. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a library or study area.

STUDENTS AGED

25-29

not living with their parents
appear to suffer more often financial
difficulties when compared to their
younger or older peers.

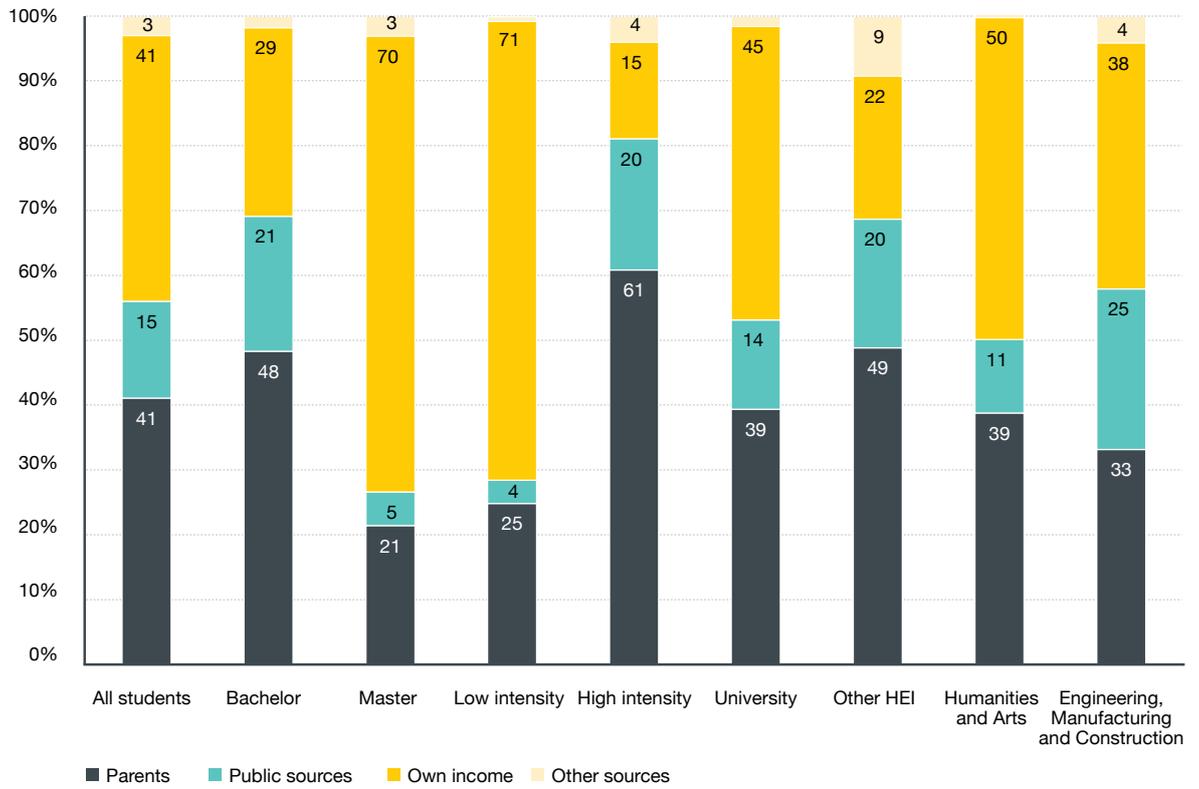


Figure 13: Students' monthly income by study-related characteristics of students living with parents (in %)

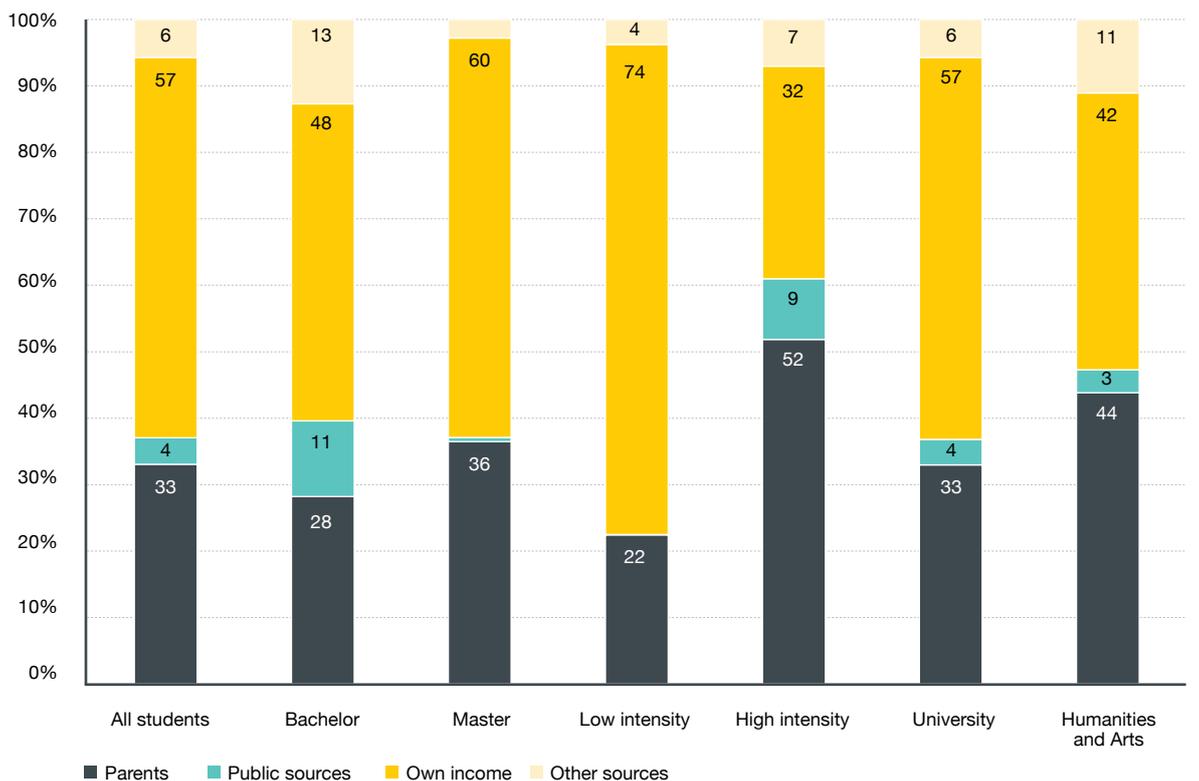


Figure 14: Students' monthly income by study-related characteristics of students not living with parents (in %)

It is also interesting to note that students from **non-university** institutions rely considerably less often on income from **paid jobs** than university students. This may be linked to the fact that students at non-university institutions are mostly young and that young students generally rely more often on family support and **public funding**, while older students rely more often on own earnings. This appears to be linked to the fact that younger students are following undergraduate programmes on a full-time basis and are, thus, receive the Student Maintenance Grant. In contrast, older students tend to be enrolled more often at postgraduate level and on a part-time basis and are, therefore, not eligible for **public support**.

Besides students' age and level of qualification pursued, their main form of income appears to be linked to the education attainment of their parents. Students, whose parents have attained higher education, rely significantly more often on family support and on public funds, while students whose parents have not attained higher education rely significantly more often on own earnings.

Chapter H: Time budget for employment

A large share of students work alongside their studies. This is true both for students living with their parents (48.6%) as well as those not living with parents (67.1%). Maybe not very surprisingly the share of students not living with their parents working alongside their studies far exceeds the corresponding share of students living with their parents, which may be due to higher living expenses associated with maintaining an own household. Indeed, covering the living expenses or improving their own living standard are the main reason students in Malta work alongside their studies.

The data suggests that there is a link in the employment rate during the semester and students' age. The older the students, the more likely they are working alongside their studies and the more likely they are to do so on a regular basis for 5 hours or more per week. This is true both for students, who are living with their parents, and those who are not.

Consequently, Bachelor students tend to work less than Masters students. One plausible reason might be the organisation of the studies and the **study-related** workload associated with Bachelor programmes, which might hinder their possibility to work alongside their studies.

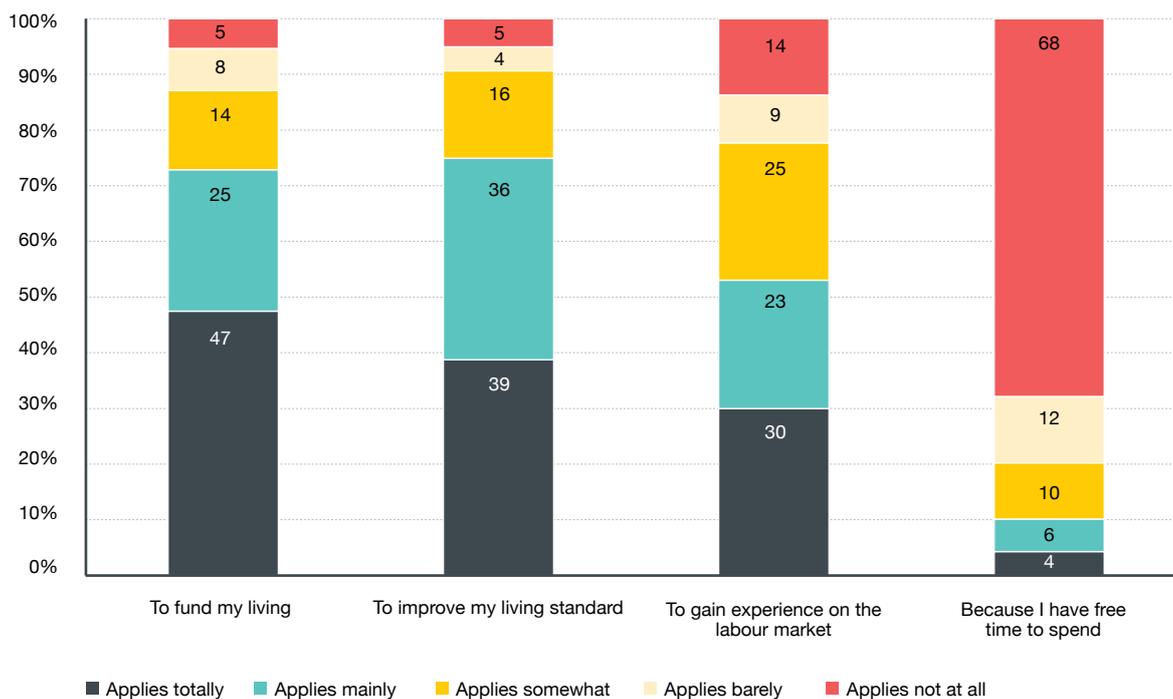


Figure 15: Students' motivation to work alongside their studies – all students (in %)

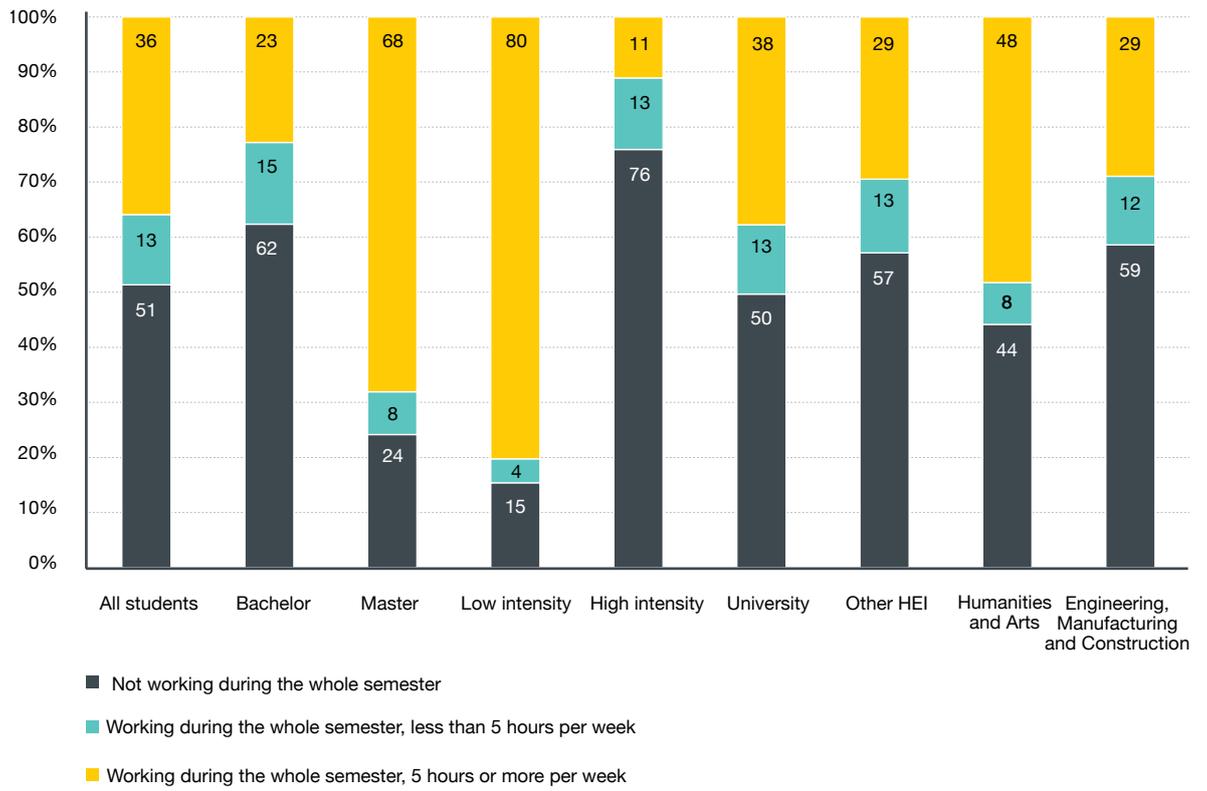


Figure 16: Job activity during whole semester by study-related characteristics of students living with parents (in %)

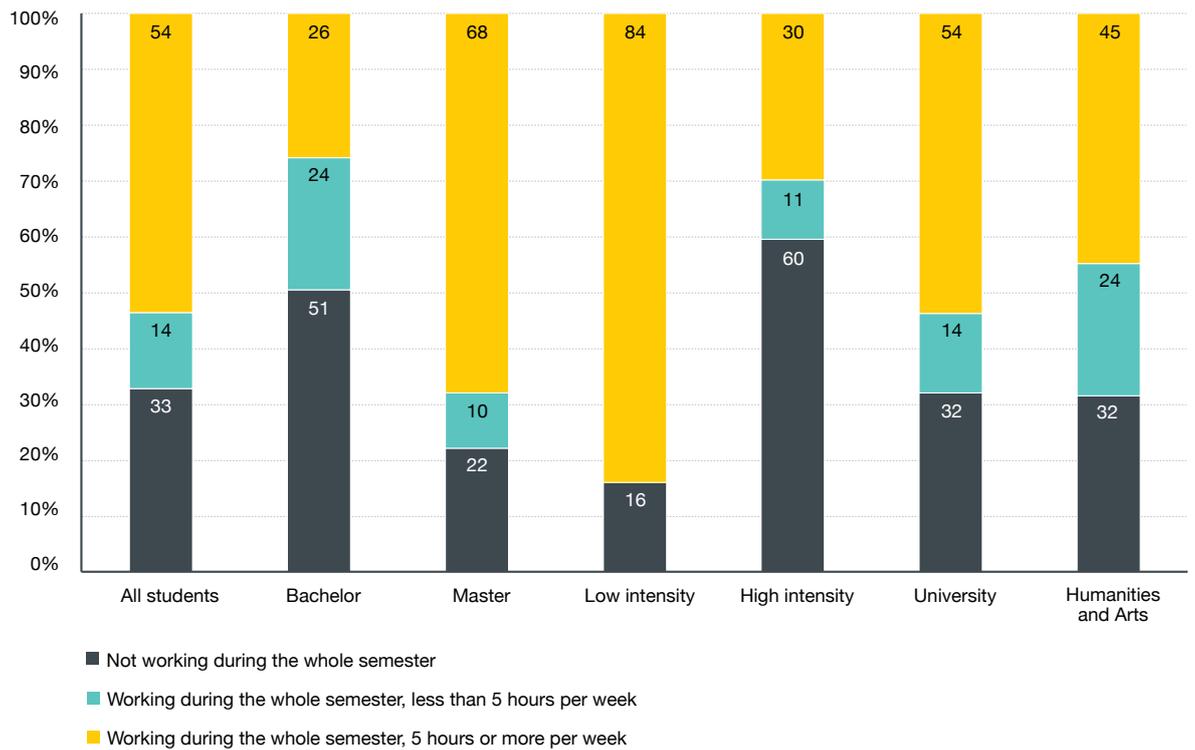


Figure 17: Job activity during whole semester by study-related characteristics of students not living with parents (in %)

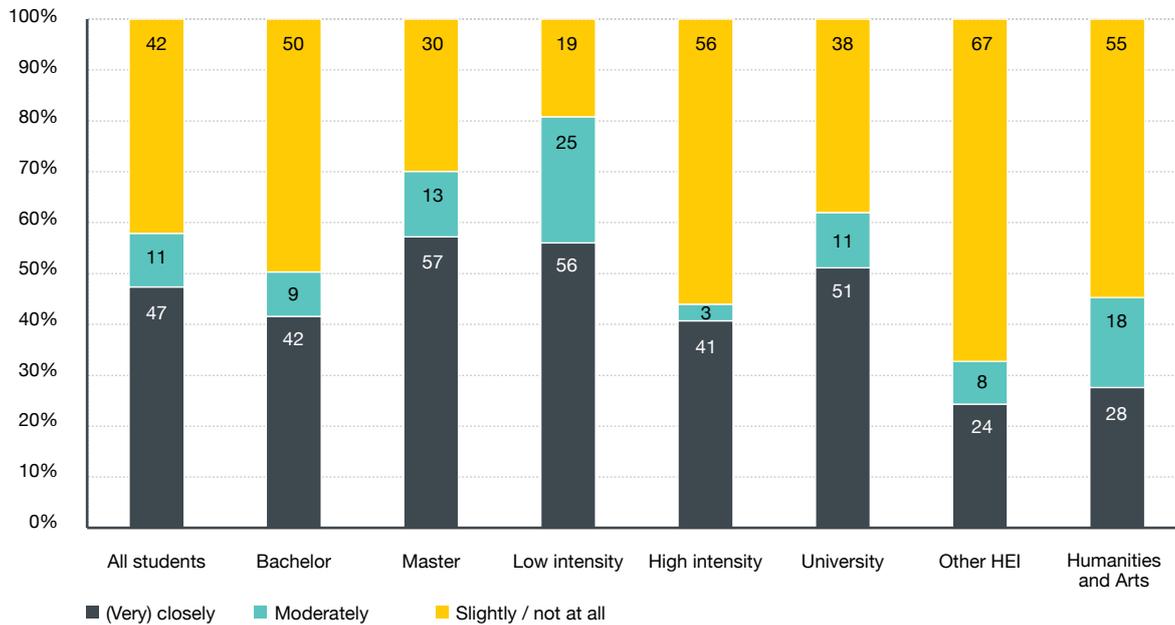


Figure 18: Extent of relation to job by students' study-related characteristics (in %)

In contrast, Masters (67.9%) and **low-intensity** students (83.9%) have the highest share of students working more than five hours per week while pursuing their studies. This might suggest that Masters students are most likely part-time students, while being full-time workers. This is supported by students' self-assessment of their own situation, given that the majority of Masters (73.1%) and **low-intensity** students (88.7%) consider themselves mainly as studying alongside employment rather than the other way around. Besides that, Masters students hold more often jobs that are closely related to their studies, which suggests that they have already established themselves in their working environment and commenced their programme alongside and related to their work, possibly as a means of furthering their career development.

Chapter I: Time-budget for study related activities

Chapter I provides an overview of the time-budget for study-related activities of students in higher education. The data shows that students living with their parents have a **weekly workload** of 54 hours divided into 43 hours of **study-related** activities and 11 hours of **work-related** activities. Bachelor

and **high-intensity** students spend more time on study-related activity rather than work-related activities while Masters and low-intensity students spend considerably more time on paid jobs. Thus, the older the students, the more likely it is that they spend more time each week on paid jobs and less on study-related activities. The same can be said for students maintaining their own household.

The data indicates that with an increasing **weekly workload** spent on **paid jobs**, students spend less time on **study-related** activities. In particular, they appear to compensate this additional workload by reducing the time spent on **self-study**. This, however, raises concerns with regard to the impact on their academic performance.

Moreover, there appear to be considerable differences in the **study-related weekly workload** of university (40 hours) and **non-university** students (51 hours). This may be attributed in part to the fact that non-university institutions do not offer postgraduate programmes, which are generally part-time and **low-intensity** programmes. However, given that non-university students indicate that they would like a lower study-related workload, this might indicate the need to review the programme design.

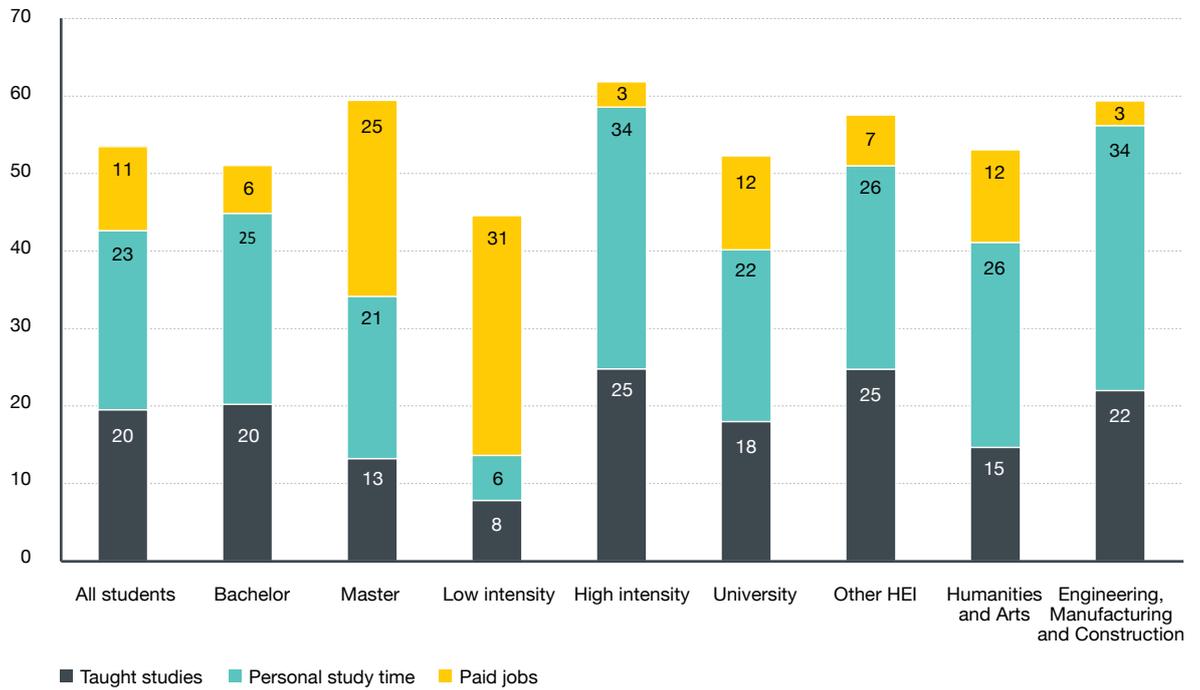


Figure 19: Time budget by study-related characteristics of students who are living with parents (in hours per week)

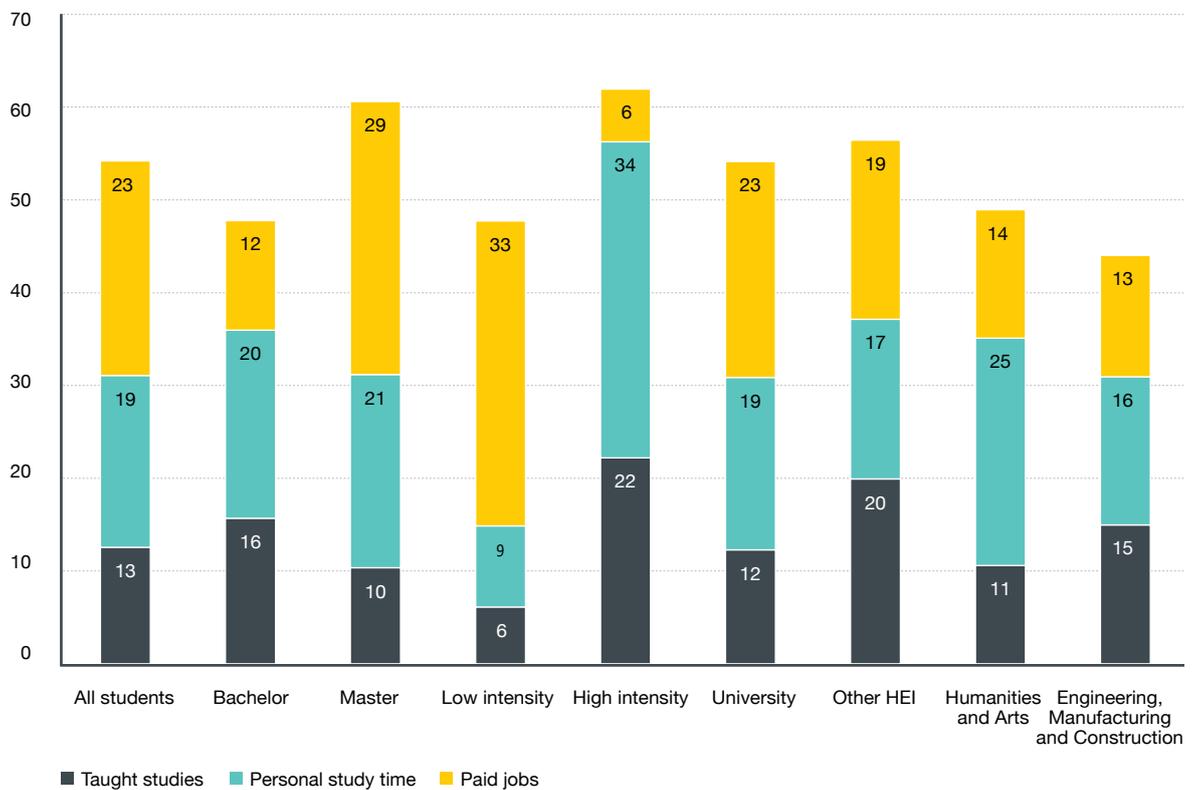


Figure 20: Time budget by study-related characteristics of students who are not living with parents (in hours per week)

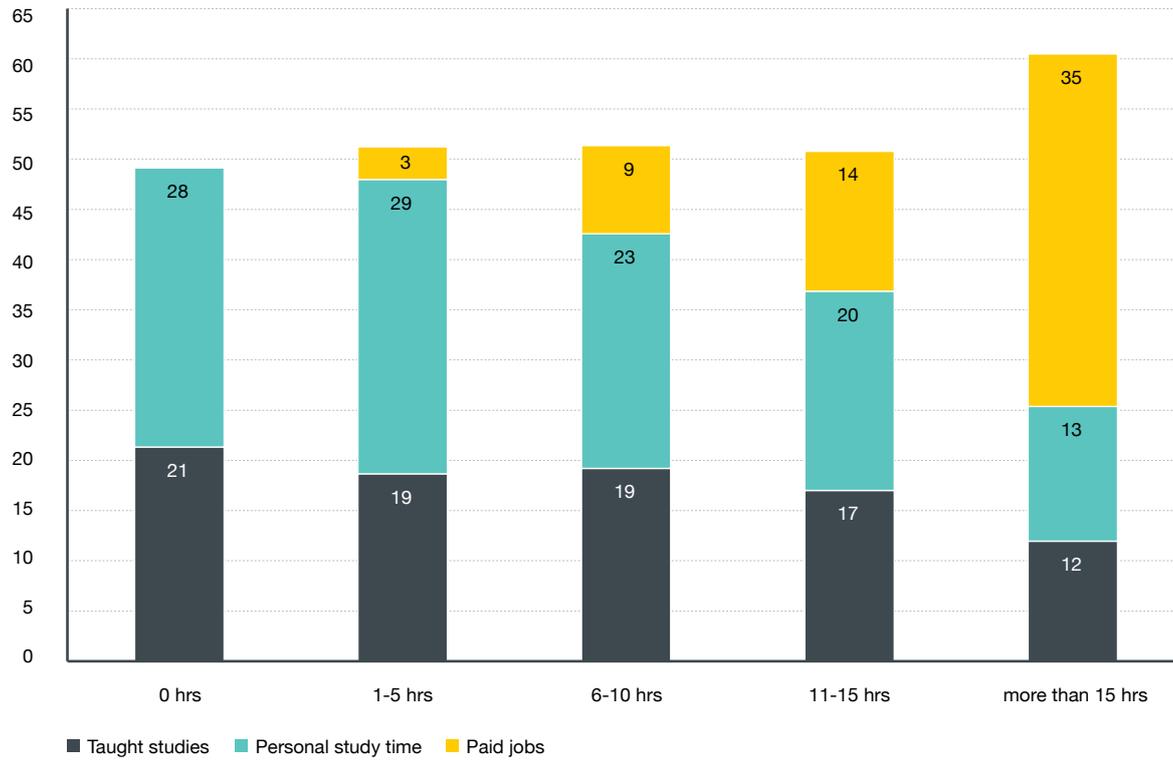


Figure 21: Students' time budget by extent of paid employment (in hours per week)

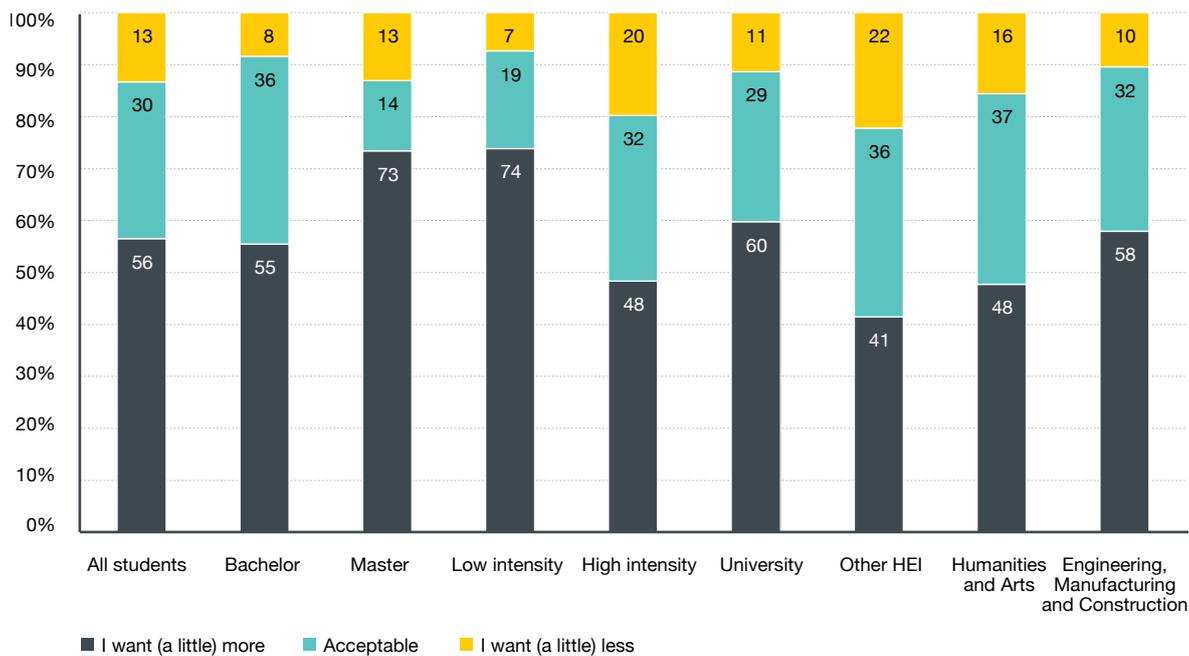


Figure 22: Students' assessment of their workload for study-related activities by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

In contrast Masters and low-intensity students indicate that they would like more time to dedicate on study-related activities. Given that these students generally work regularly alongside their studies, this might suggest an unsatisfactory balance between work and studies.

Chapter J: Assessment of studies

Chapter J analyses the assessment of students of various aspects of their studies. In general, students appear to be satisfied with the quality of teaching and teachers' attitudes towards them but appear to be less satisfied with the organization of studies, variety of courses and the way administration handles students. There also appear to be considerable differences in the assessment of students attending **non-university** institutions, when compared to university students. Non-university students are less satisfied with the different aspects outlined above. This is true in particular for the organisation of their timetable and the study facilities. The latter may be attributed to the ongoing refurbishment of the MCAST campus.

Students in Malta generally view their chances in the labour market as very well, particularly at the national level. Interestingly, university students

consider their chances in the labour market to be better than **non-university** students. This may be linked to Bachelor programmes being established only recently at non-university institutions and their students being uncertain to what extent these are known and accepted in the labour market. Besides that, younger students are more optimistic and interested in finding work abroad than older students which may be due to already established careers and families. This context could lead them to not even considering opportunities abroad.

The majority of students plan to continue their studies either within a year after graduating (46%) or at a later stage (21%). Those most likely to continue their studies within a year are **non-university** students and Bachelor students, which may be influenced by concerns about their labour market prospects. At the same time it may also be influenced by the career pathway students have chosen, which might require a postgraduate qualification for entry into the desired profession. Most Bachelor students, who plan to continue their studies at Masters level, plan to do so in Malta (39%), rather than abroad (21%). This is true in particular for students, whose **parents have not attained higher education** (41%), while students from **higher education backgrounds** plan more often to undertake their Masters abroad (34%).

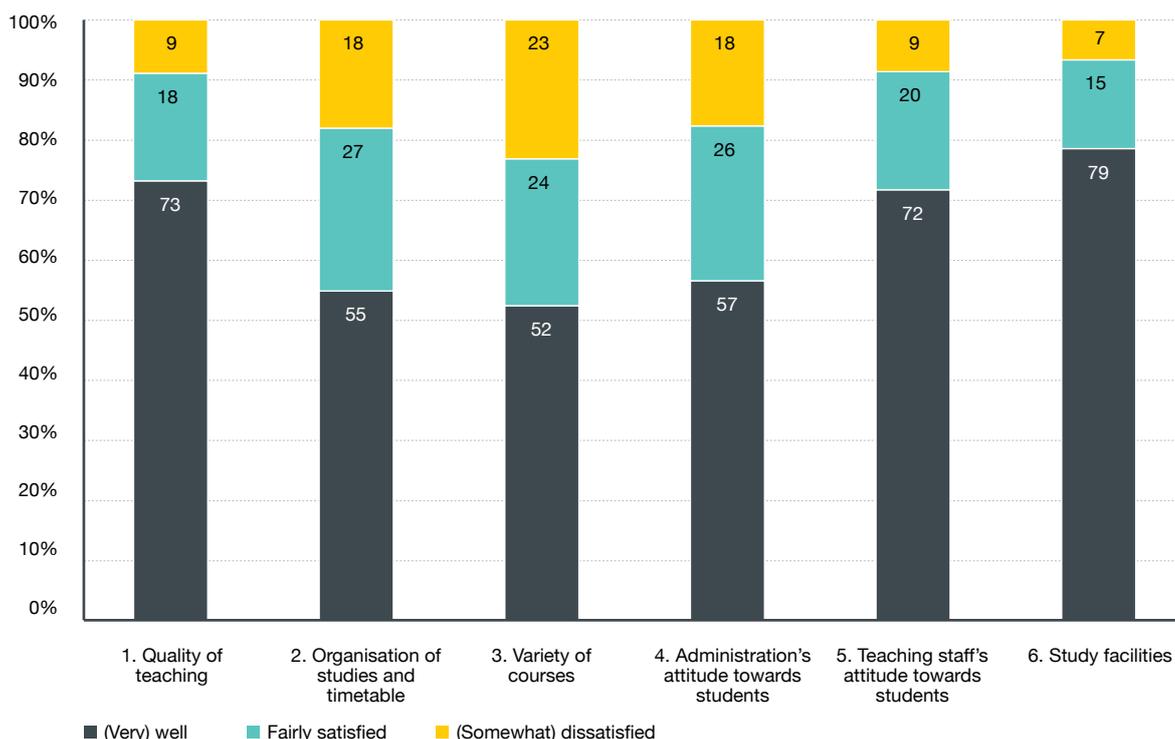


Figure 23: University students' satisfaction with aspects of current study programme (in %)

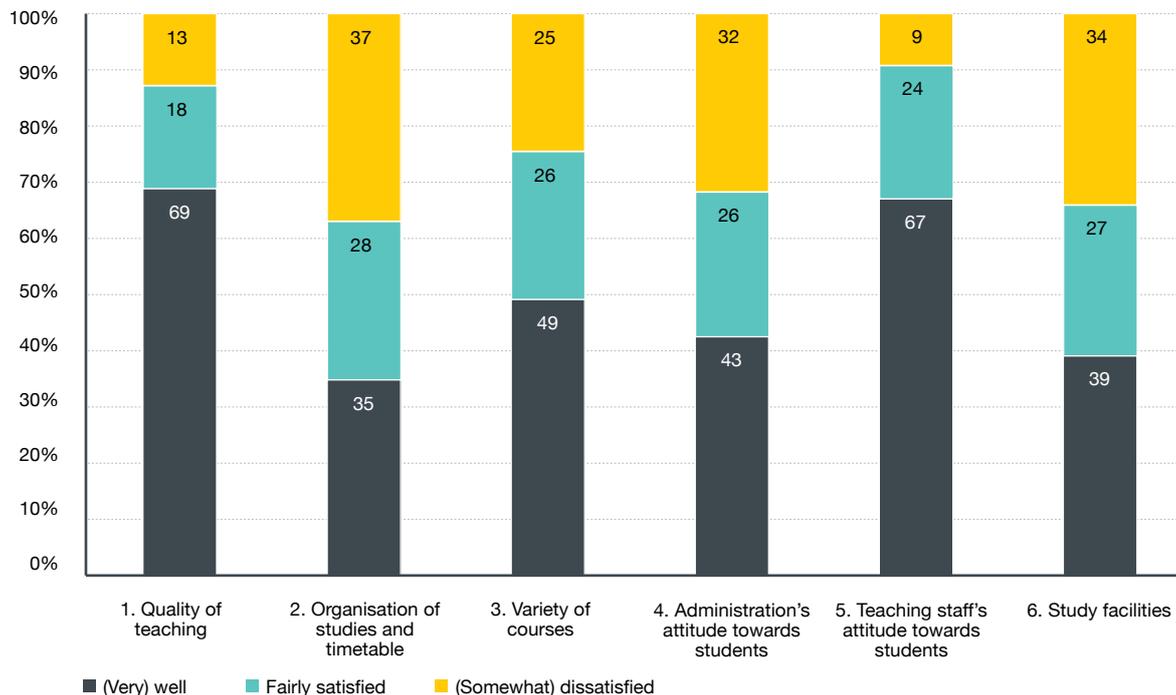


Figure 24: Non-university students' satisfaction with aspects of current study programme (in %)

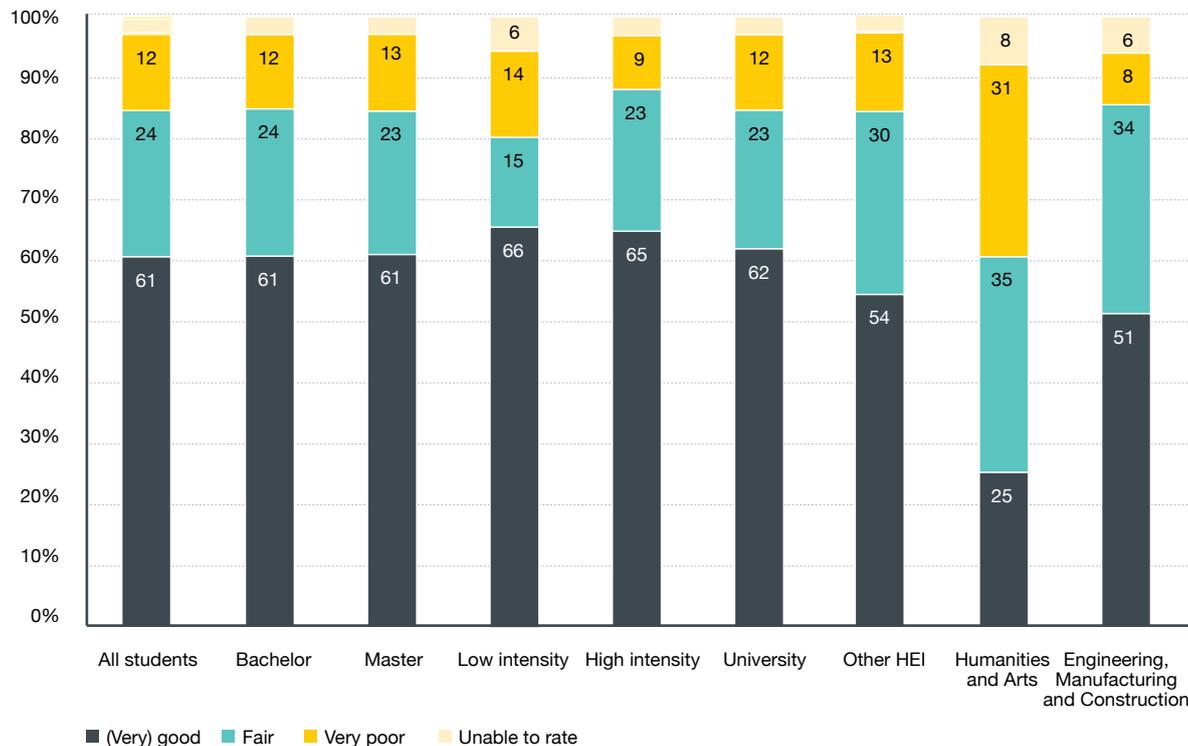


Figure 25: Students' assessment of chances in labour market after graduation from current study programme by students' study-related characteristics – national level (in %)

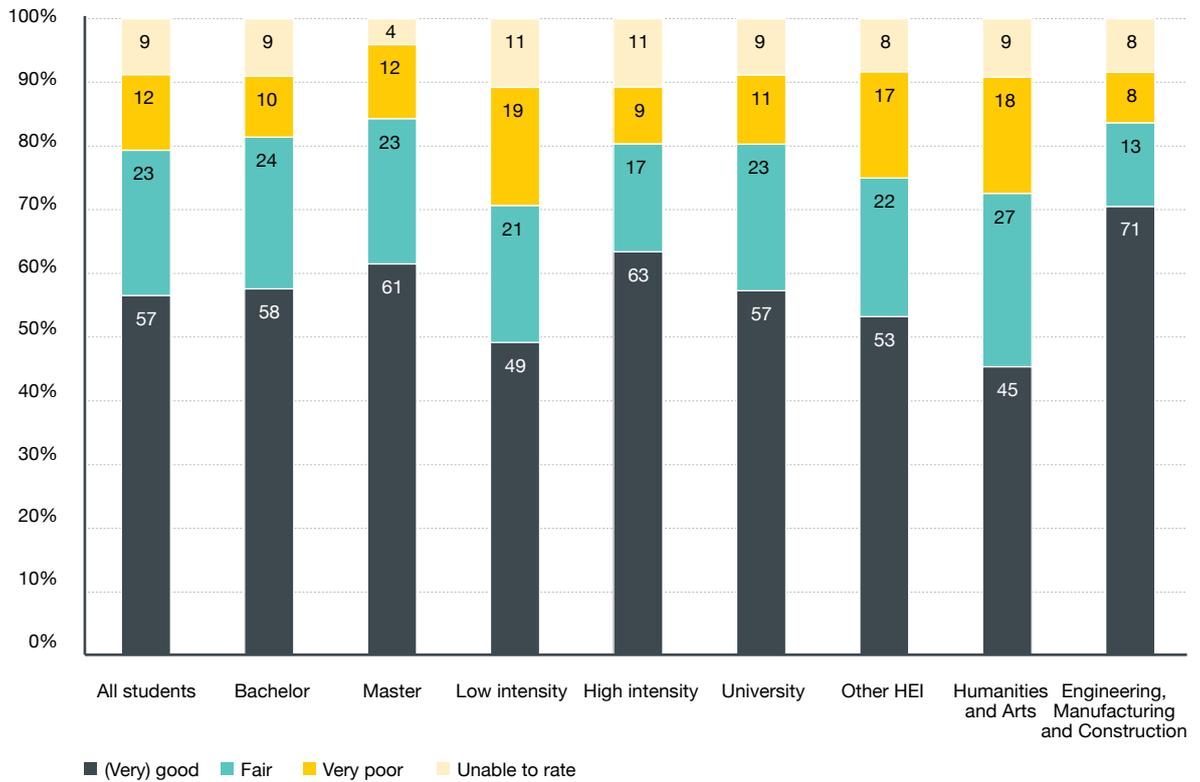


Figure 26: Students’ assessment of chances in labour market after graduation from current study programme by students’ study-related characteristics – international level (in %)

Chapter K: Internationalisation

Chapter K analyses the mobility of students and their willingness to study abroad. Most Bachelor and Masters students have not been enrolled abroad and are not planning to do so. However, Bachelor students report more often to consider an enrolment abroad (46%) compared to Masters students (27%). This may be due to Masters students having already undertaken such student mobility. In fact, the share of Masters students that have study abroad (21%) by far exceeds the corresponding share among Bachelor students (5%).

Besides that, students enrolled in Masters programmes generally are older (average age of 29.19), which may suggest that these students have already settled down both in terms of employment and family life, which might explain the considerably higher share among them excluding an enrolment abroad.

The majority of students, who have been enrolled abroad, have studied in the United Kingdom and Italy. A similar trend is visible for students planning

to enrol abroad in the future. This may be due to students’ language competences given that 98% of students speak English (very) well and 56% speak Italian (very) well. At the same time this may be attributed to the close cultural and historical ties with these countries.

The primary source of funding for students temporarily enrolled abroad appears to have been family support (39%), followed by EU study grants (24%). Students, who have been temporarily studying abroad, spent on average 7.83 months abroad. This relatively long duration is influenced by higher average stays of free-movers, that means students that did not organise their mobility period through an EU programme. These report an average duration of 15.14 months for students enrolled abroad without a funding programme. In comparison students enrolled abroad with an EU programme report an average duration of 4.25 months, which is consistent with the duration of outgoing student mobility on the Erasmus programme for the academic year 2012 / 2013.

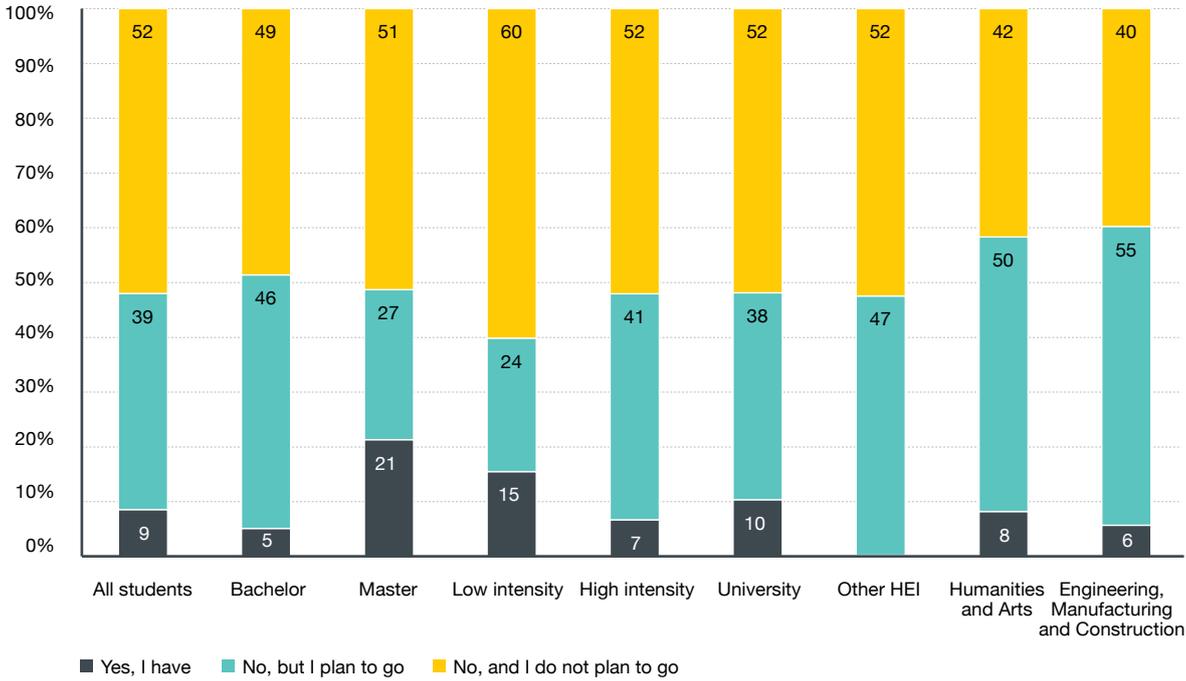


Figure 27: Students’ previous enrolment abroad or respective plans by study-related characteristics of students (in %)

The main obstacles students witnessed when realising their study period abroad were financial constraints and the limited admittance to mobility programmes by their home institution in Malta. Likewise, financial constraints are also perceived as the main obstacle by students who plan to

enrol abroad as well as those, who do not intend to study abroad. However, the second most important obstacle hindering students with, as well as without, plans to study abroad from becoming mobile appear to be family responsibilities and motivational barriers arising from the separation from their family, partner or friends. This is consistent with the finding above, namely that older students are less inclined to undertake mobility periods abroad due to family and work responsibilities.

ABOUT 20% OF STUDENTS HAVE UNDERTAKEN SOME STUDY-RELATED ACTIVITIES ABROAD. The most common study-related activities abroad, besides student enrolment, are research and fieldtrips.

About 20% of students have undertaken some study-related activities abroad. The most common study-related activities abroad, besides student enrolment, are research and fieldtrips. Masters and low-intensity students report more often to have been abroad undertaking research than Bachelor and high-intensity students, which may be linked to postgraduate programmes being more research focussed. Most students undertaking research activities or fieldtrips abroad have stayed between 1 and 2 weeks.

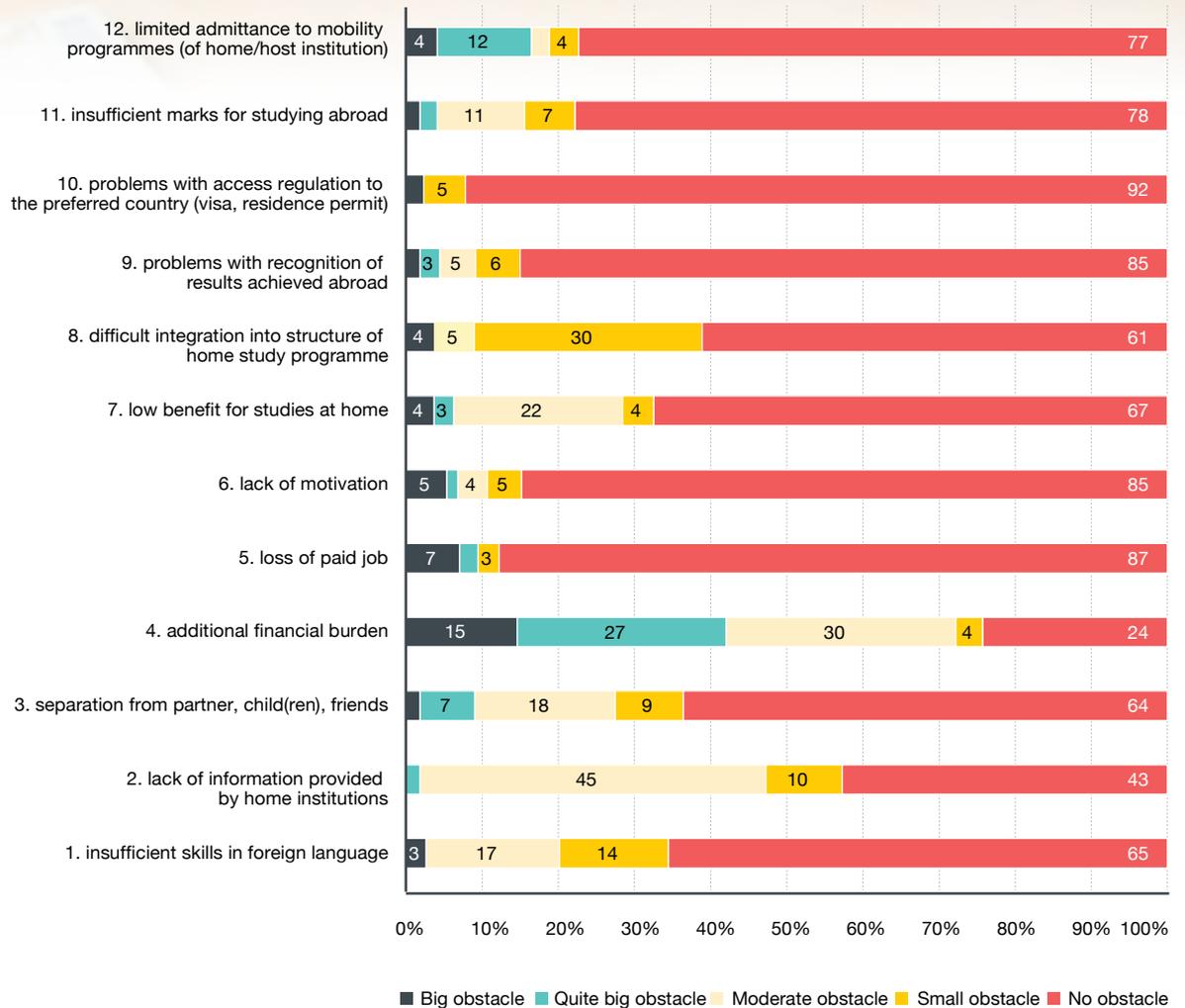


Figure 28: Perception of obstructions to enrolment abroad for students who have been enrolled abroad (in %)

Glossary of key terms

Activities, job-related	This refers to the sum of hours spent on gainful employment.
Activities, study-related	This refers to the sum of hours spent on taught studies (e.g. lectures, tutorials) and on personal study time (i.e. time of self-preparation).
Background, higher education	This comprises all students whose parents' highest educational attainment belongs to the ISCED levels 5-8.
Background, not higher education	This comprises all students whose parents' highest educational attainment belongs to the ISCED levels 0-4.
Cost out of own pocket	This contains living expenses and study-related expenditures that are incurred by the students themselves, irrespective whether they are paid in cash, credit or transfer.
Cost study-related	These are costs that are directly related to higher education studies, such as fees, learning materials etc.
Cost of living	These are costs related to the everyday maintenance costs of the students, such as accommodation, food, transportation, insurance. They exclude extra-ordinary expenses, such as buying a car, furniture.
Cost paid by parents/partner (transfers in-kind)	These are students' living expenses or study-related costs, which are paid directly by another person (family or partner) on behalf of the student, such as the cost of accommodation or food.
Dependency on income source	This refers to the students' income structure and the main source of income classified as either 1. family support (direct payments and transfers in-kind); 2. self-earned income from paid jobs; 3. public support. A student is considered dependent on an income source, if it provides more than 50% of the students' total income (direct income and transfers in-kind).
Dependents	This refers to any children, who depend on the student in social and economic ways, whether they are own children, adopted, fostered, step-children, partner's children etc.
Gini coefficient	The Gini coefficient is an aggregated measure which quantifies the relative concentration of a statistical distribution (e.g. income distribution) by one index. For the value of the Gini coefficient the following holds true: $0 \leq G < 1$. The higher the value of the Gini coefficient, the higher is the degree of concentration. Usually this measure of concentration is used to complement the analysis of the Lorenz curve .
Interruption of the educational career	This category covers different kinds of breaks, starting at a length of at least one year, in the student's educational career after entering higher education. Two types of breaks are considered: 1) between entering HE and graduating from HE for the first time, 2) between graduating from HE and re-entering HE.

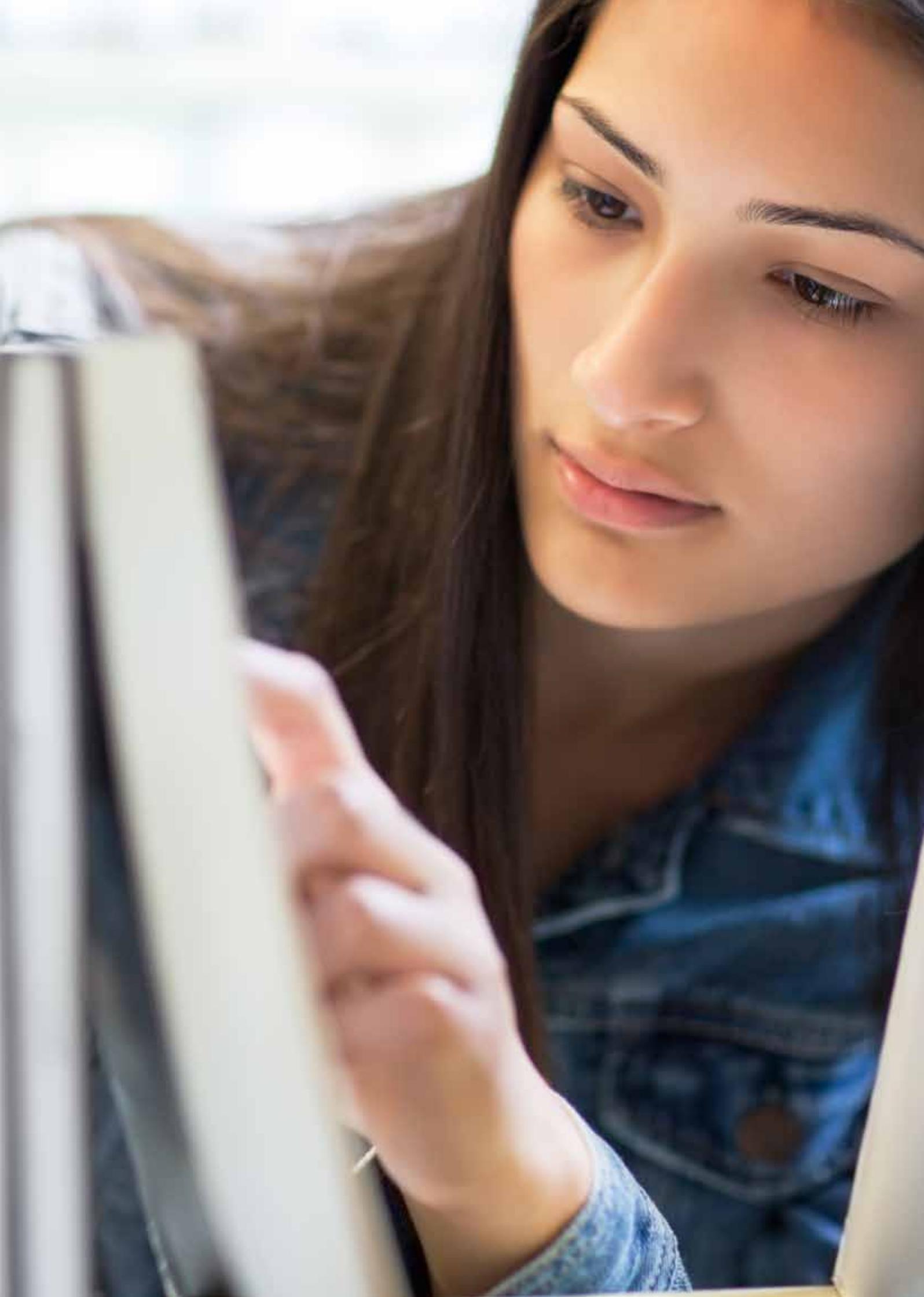
ISCED	For this report the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 was used - http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-ofeducation.aspx
ISCO	For this report the International Standard Classification of Occupations-08 code was used - http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/index.htm
Lorenz curve	The Lorenz curve is a frequency polygon which is used to graph the concentration of a statistical distribution. In general, this curve shows how the sum of characteristic values concentrates on statistical units. In the EUROSTUDENT context the Lorenz curve is used to describe the concentration of students' income (either total income or income from employment). The curve then indicates for every aggregated percentage of the student body (on the horizontal axis) the corresponding aggregated percentage of income they receive (on the vertical axis). One could then state, for example, that "the bottom 20 % of all students has 10 % of the total income".
Non-university / Other HEI	This is a residual category which captures all institutions which are not universities , but offering higher education programmes/degrees.
Prior experience in the labour market	If students gained labour market experience before taking up studies for the first time, their jobs are assigned to two categories: a) casual minor jobs and b) regular paid jobs. According to our definition a casual minor job is a labour condition that lasted for less than one year or on which the student spent less than 20 hours per week and for which he/she received a salary (or a comparable sort of payment). A regular paid job is a labour condition that lasted for at least one year and on which the student spent at least 20 hours per week or more and for which he/she received a salary (or a comparable sort of payment).
Public support	Support which a student receives from the state usually because of his/her student status.
Skill level 1-2 occupations	This reference group of employees (formerly described as "blue-collar workers") comprises two out of four skill levels: Skill level 1 = elementary occupations. Skill level 2 = a) clerical support workers, b) services and sales workers, c) skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, d) craft and related trades workers, e) plant and machine operators and assemblers. Within our framework, Armed forces occupations are not added to skill level 1-2 as this occupational group is highly heterogeneous.
Student, high-intensity	A student who spends more than 40 hours per week on study-related activities (= taught studies + personal study time) irrespective of his/her formal status. That means for instance, a student who is formally holding the status of a part-time student but who spends more than 40 hours per week on study-related activities is considered a high-intensity student.
Student, low-intensity	A student who spends 20 hours per week or less on study-related activities (= taught studies + personal study time) irrespective of his/her formal status. That means for instance, a student who is formally holding the status of a full-time student but who spends 20 hours per week or less on study-related activities is considered a low-intensity student.

Student, migrant	The concept refers to the place of birth of the student and that of his/her parents. The status of (non-)migrant students is defined as follows: a) 2nd generation migrant = at least one parent was born abroad and the student was born in the country of the survey; b) 1st generation migrant = at least one parent and the student were born abroad; c) domestic student = both parents and the student were born in the country of the survey; d) other = both parents were born in the country of the survey and the student was born abroad.
Studies, taught	Taught studies refer to a student's contact hours. This includes for instance lessons, seminars, hours in laboratories, tests, etc. Taught studies must be reported in clock hours (= 60-minutes-hours), even though course hours may differ from this format.
Studies, personal study	This includes time spent on e.g. preparation, learning, reading, writing homework, etc. Personal study time must be reported in clock hours (= 60-minutes-hours).
Time budget in a typical week	The students' time budget consists of study-related and job-related activities. The students are asked to report the time spent on study-related activities (= taught studies and personal study time) and on job-related activities for a typical week. A typical week is defined as a week during the study term/semester which can be regarded as being representative for this period (i.e. that reflects the student's routine as accurately as possible).
University	Refers to institutions of higher education formally classified or licensed to hold this title within the higher education system.

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