

# Facts & Figures

**HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN HUNGARY  
2011**



HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



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EDUCATION  
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Published in co-operation with the Ministry of National Resources

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Mária Simon, Marianna Szemerszki, Gábor Tomasz, Irén Vágó, 2011

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© Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development, publisher, 2011

ISBN 978 963 682 667 3

Published by the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development

Published on the responsibility of József Kaposi, Director-General

**PRINTED BY** Érdi Rózsa Nyomda

Printed on the responsibility of László Juhász

# Facts & Figures

## **HIGHER EDUCATION IN HUNGARY 2011**

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HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
BUDAPEST, 2011

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## LECTORI SALUTEM

*The last two decades, since the political changes in Hungary, might be seen as only a passing moment in the 600-year-long history – with all the discontinuations and changes of direction – of Hungarian universities; yet this period has brought about a radical transformation of the whole system of higher education in terms of its maintenance and maintainers, structure, content, stakeholders and participants.*

*The formerly decentralized system of higher education institutions, under sectoral governance, has become centralized and is overseen by the ministry responsible for the education sector in general. As a result of uniform management and control, professional and public bodies responsible for the self-regulation and self-discipline of the higher education sector have rapidly emerged. Alongside state-funded colleges and universities, church-maintained and private higher education institutions have become established, and great opportunities have arisen for students to enrol on fee-paying courses, too. Prospective students can apply for a practically unlimited number of majors, and students are free to study different subjects at the same time, or successively – as the earlier limitation, allowing applicants only a single choice of major, has been abolished. With the introduction of higher-level secondary school-leaving exams, entrance examinations at higher education institutions have ceased (except in relation to some courses requiring special aptitudes and skills). Along with the Bologna Process, from the former and purely dual system, a multi-cycle system has now taken over and become dominant. This latter development has brought about a fundamental correction in the structure of courses, with a significant decrease, followed by a gradual increase in their numbers. The qualitative differentiation among institutions has led to the introduction of “Research University” and “University of Excellence” titles, making rankings of higher education institutions a focus of public interest.*

*Along with these fundamental changes in the system of higher education, an enormous expansion took place in the student population, starting from 1991, which then turned into a period of relative expansion a decade later. This increased population made mobility programs noteworthy: as of today, tens of thousands of Hungarian students are studying abroad, while a similar number of international students choose to undertake their studies in excellent Hungarian institutions.*

*This booklet gives the interested reader an unusual, 3-dimensional snapshot. It provides up-to-date information on the relevant facts and data pertaining to the Hungarian higher education system, and also describes, as background information, the trends and changes that have occurred in the last twenty years. All of this is presented in a European context, as a frame of reference. We hope that this report, along with the tables and diagrams that complement each section, provides the reader with a convincing demonstration of the fact that the processes and developments of the last two decades have made the Hungarian higher education system a genuine and legitimate member of the European Higher Education Area.*

*As the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union comes to an end, we offer this booklet to anyone wishing to become familiar with the country's higher education system. The past six months have made Hungary more visible and more transparent to the international community. Our intention to increase the quality, success and effectiveness of higher education in Hungary has become more noticeable, and the upcoming new Higher Education Act will provide the necessary framework for – and give support in achieving – these goals. We expect that the quality changes in our agenda will improve the level of our international competitiveness, and Hungary, as part of the European Higher Education Area, will become a more attractive place for students from all over the world.*

Rózsa Hoffmann  
Minister of State for Education

# 1. EDUCATION AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The population of Hungary has gradually decreased in the last 30 years. The rate of births has varied a lot in recent decades and such fluctuation has been a burden to the larger communal institutions and the labour market. In the early '70s the number of newborn children was around 200,000 per year (often rising above this figure), though two generations later, i.e. in the '90s, it had dropped to 100,000; while since 1998 it has constantly remained below 100,000. The children of the most populous generation – of the '50s – formed another huge peak on the curve of demographic statistics in the '70s. However, because of various social transformations the fertility rate of this latter generation dropped, and the rate of newborns remained around the average of 1% per year, resulting in a flattening of the demographic curve. The population breakdown by age group shows that over the last decade the number of young people has also declined gradually: in 2000, 0–14 year-olds represented 17 per cent of the population; in 2005, this had dropped to 16 per cent – and in 2010 to 15 per cent. This decreasing tendency had slowed down by the end of the decade.

Comparative studies on the education of the population being of active age (25–64 yrs.) show that the proportion of people with a completed upper secondary education in Hungary is slightly above the average of OECD countries; yet, at the same time, the proportion of graduates is slightly below the OECD average. With a more detailed perspective, it can be seen that the amount of graduates corresponds to the figures for other Central European countries, though is significantly lower than that of the much more competitive countries.

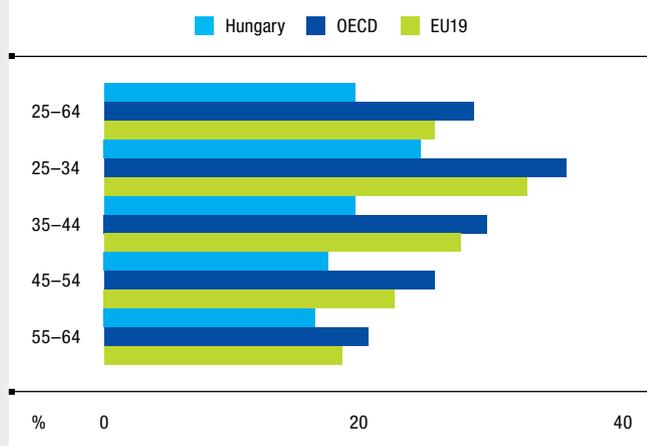
Indicators for Hungarian education show a steady improvement. In 1990, 31% of the relevant population had not completed an elementary level of education; while only 10% had graduated from a higher education institution. In 2005, the proportions were 17% and 15%, respectively. Educational attainment rates also differ according to gender. In 1980, the amount of female graduates was only half of that of male graduates within the same age group; but by 2005, this ratio had evened itself out (15%

of men and 14% of women had a degree from a higher educational institution). One consequence of the rapid expansion of secondary and tertiary education in the 1990s is that the younger generations are far more educated than older ones, and this has had significant effects on the labour market.

From an international perspective, tertiary educational attendance has grown rapidly over the years. In the youngest active age group (25–34 years), the average proportion of graduates in OECD countries is 35%, while the same number in the 19 EU countries that are also members of the OECD is 32%; in Hungary it is 24%. The dynamics (growing tendencies) are the same both in Hungary and in the more developed countries, i.e. the gap between them has remained.

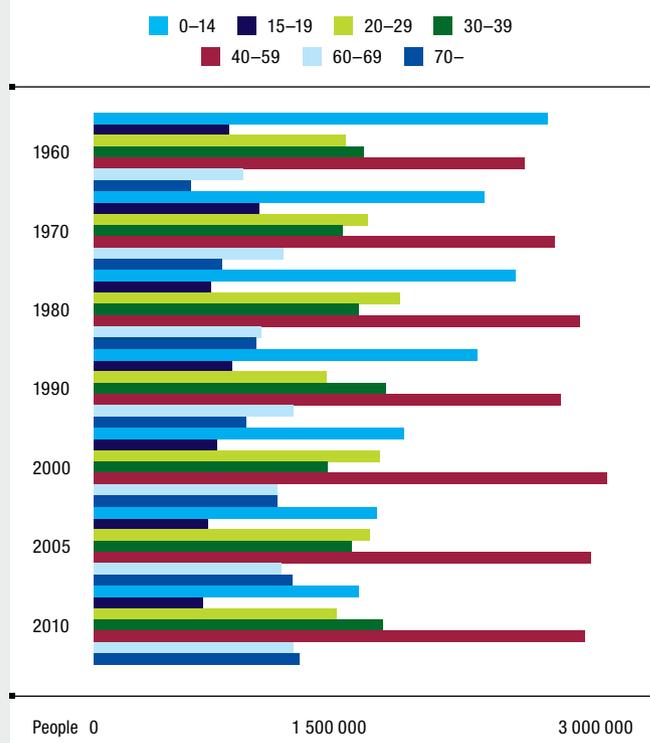
While there is a general tendency in favour of dynamic growth in education, regional differences still persist. There are notable differences between the regions from the perspective of the highest qualification level attained. It is clear that the North-eastern region of the country performs much worse compared to the traditionally more developed central and Western parts concerning rates for finished secondary education. The higher levels of qualification in certain regions can be attributed to the geographical location of large university centres. A clear example here is the large number of tertiary education graduates in the Hajdú-Bihar and Csongrád counties, where large university complexes are located. However, in other instances it is not the existence of universities but, rather, the labour market that creates fluctuations – for example in the case of Székesfehérvár, where the knowledge-intensive sectors attract young graduates. In general, though, Budapest is the absolute leader in education both in terms of educational results and young graduates.

### Ratio of graduates in different age groups, 2008



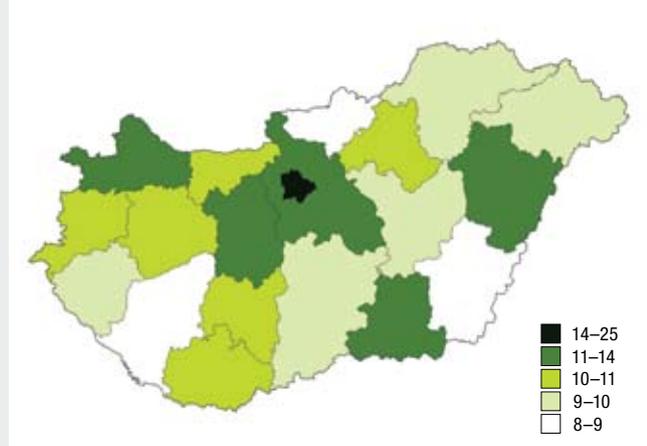
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Different age groups in Hungary, 1960–2010



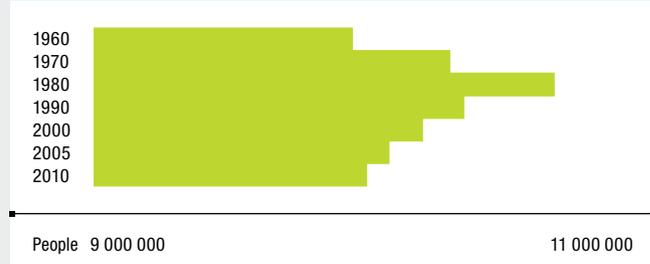
Source: Statistical yearbook of Hungary, KSH. 2010

### Ratio of graduates above 15 years of age, by counties, 2005 (%)



Source: KSH Mikrocensus 2005. edited by Tamás Híves, 2011

### Population in Hungary, 1960–2010



Source: Statistical yearbook of Hungary, KSH 2010

## 2. THE STEERING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In the socialist era, Hungary's higher education was mostly characterized by there being large, state-funded institutions, specializing in certain fields of knowledge, and with a dual structure (colleges vs. universities) – with the exception of the institutions teaching theology. In 1990, legislators created an opportunity to establish religious and non-state higher education institutions. Act LXXX, of 1993, on Higher Education regulated the status of state-funded and non-public institutions, and served to replace the former statute, i.e. in which the specialized universities were overseen by different ministries. This 1993 Act defined such professional organizations and specified mechanisms and institutions of quality assurance. Higher education is organized and governed by this law along with government and ministry regulations and, also, the constitution and other specifications laid down at each institution, with the legal supervision of the state.

In the last two decades, laws have been modified several times, partly due to changes in the political environment and partly as a reaction to feedback coming from actual institutions. Consecutive governments have tried to implement their own policies via legislation. The 1993 Act was essentially modified in 1996 (Amendment of the Public Education Act). In 2000, it was amended in the so-called 'Law of Merger', which restructured smaller institutions so that they became larger and more complex ones. In 2005, a new Higher Education Act came into effect, focusing on the Bologna Process and implementation of the EU's higher educational policy. At present, legislators are working on a new statute.

Measures introduced into other sectors do also affect processes in the field of education. As regards state-financed institutions, the most important of these are the Public Finance Act, the Budget Act and the State Asset Management Act. These acts are barriers to such institutions' independence, however. There is also a lot of work to do in terms of the harmonization of different acts and statutes, and this is a challenge the policy coordination is currently facing.

The general head of the educational sector is the Minister responsible for education (currently the Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium – Ministry of National Resources), who is also responsible for the maintenance of state-funded institutions. The two functions of steering and maintenance were outlined and separated in 2005 – yet the supervisor of these functions remains the same. The Minister responsible for the educational sector mainly governs it via regulations; besides this, the resources coming from institution development plans in co-operation with the Ministry, and programs financed by the EU's Structural Funds have gained more and more significance. Among these factors, we need to highlight issues concerning the development of data collection and management systems in preparation for an evidence-based policy, capacity development and quality renewal of institutions' educational and research capabilities, a strengthening of connections with the labour market to increase economic competitiveness, and the development of such institutions' innovation potential.

The Ministry shares its steering responsibilities with intermediary bodies. Shortly after the political transition of 1989, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee was founded, and an accreditation system was developed, which is responsible for the operation of such institutions, for the set-up and launching of new educational programs, and for quality control. In general, the Minister must follow decisions made by the Accreditation Committee, but (s)he can also decide to do otherwise, with a sufficient explanation.

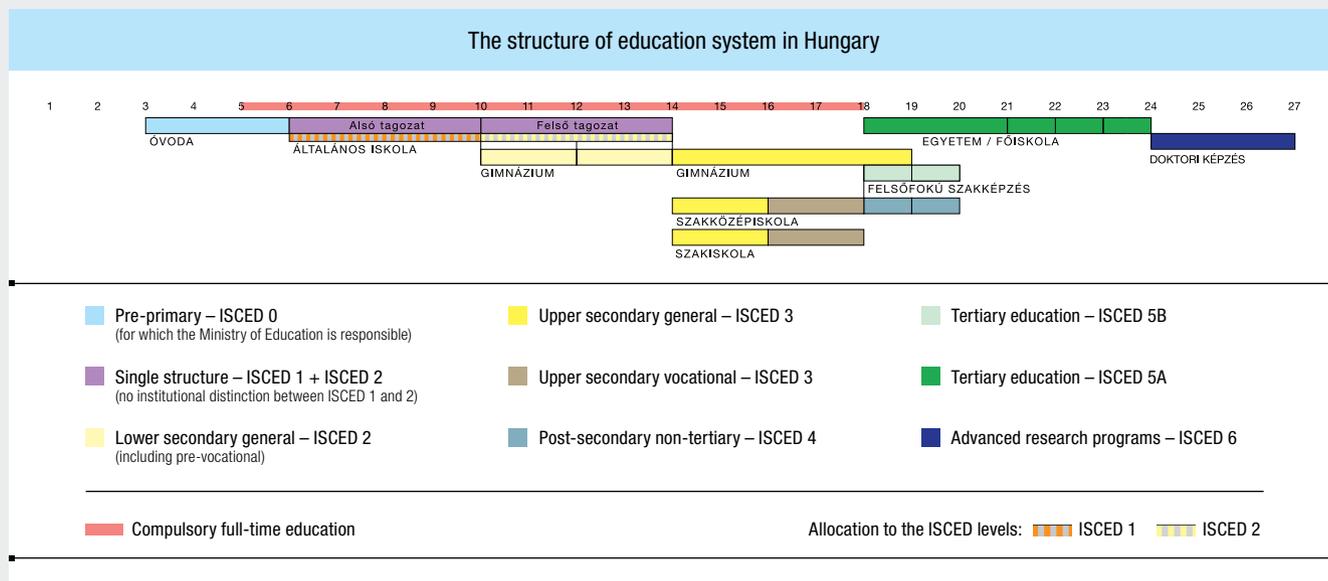
The Minister responsible for education has several advisory bodies to resort to: the Higher Education and Science Council (Felsőoktatási és Tudományos Tanács) represents social and economic relations; the National Scientific Student Council (Országos Tudományos Diákköri Tanács) organizes and fosters the work of student scientists; the National Credit Council (Országos Kredittanács) is responsible for the development and harmonization of the credit system in the higher education; the Hungarian Rectors' Conference is the highest

representative body for higher education institutions; while the Hungarian Doctoral Council advises the Minister on different issues concerning doctoral schools and Ph.D. programs. From 2006 onwards, the Educational Authority has been the authority responsible for higher education, making it more visible that the Ministry's main function is policy development and implementation.

On an institutional level the most important agent in the higher educational sector is the rector. The rector is responsible for the institution – although a significant number of decisions are made by the institution's senate. The senate nominates the rector, and the responsible Minister recommends him/her to the State President, who finally inaugurates him/her. The senate's organization is based on corporate logic: its members are elected faculties, students, management representatives, and, ex officio, the rector; while there is one representative of either the workers' union or the council of employees. A tendency of recent years is that the proportion of ex officio (i.e. who are not elected) members has decreased, while elected members have become more important. The corporate structure of the senate

may cause serious challenges in times of necessary organizational or financial transformation.

Since 1996, the opportunity has been open for leaders at an institutional level to develop formal connections with actors in the regional and local environment. As a first step, the Social Council was formed by representatives of local mayors, executives and other stakeholders to act as an advisory board for the senate. Then, in 2005, the new Act defined and set up the so-called Economic Councils, which give an advisory role to different external stakeholders, ones delegated by the state and institutions in equal proportions. These Economic Councils have a right to review an institution's strategy, financial plans and large investments, to be able to make preliminary recommendations. In accordance with the amendment of the existing act, in 2011 the Economic Councils' role and structure changed: the state-delegated members nominated by various governmental departments became a majority. The new Act gave more extended rights to the Economic Councils in terms of controlling asset management and making financial transactions.



# 3. FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

The institutions of higher education have independent financial management. They have various resources: one part of their income comes from the state budget, while other sources of income are tuition fees or entrepreneurial activities. The main part of the state-financed universities' budget is a formula-based grant per student. The government lays down the number of state-financed students for every degree program, then its subdivision among the different institutions and departments. State-financed students need not pay any tuition fees, though less successful students and those who already have a university degree have to pay their own tuition fees and expenses. Part-time students mainly fall into this latter category.

Other aspects of the state's financial support are in proportion to the number of academic and management staff (support for R&D and maintenance). Institutions also receive financial support, termed Social Support, depending on student numbers. State and non-state institutions get the same amount per student, yet the latter do not receive additional funds for maintenance.

Subsidies are based on a Maintenance Agreement between the Ministry and each institution. One part of the subsidies remains the same every year, while the other is amended yearly according to the number of the students enrolled in the institution. In state-financed institutions this agreement is valid for 3 years, in others for 1 year. The allocation of financial resources is based on different formulas: state resources allocated to teaching are calculated according to educational field and grades; and there are 3 subdivisions according to field, and 5 according to grades, so allocation is differentiated into fifteen major branches. On the state level, the maintenance subsidy and the subsidy for R&D must be at least the half the amount paid for teaching.

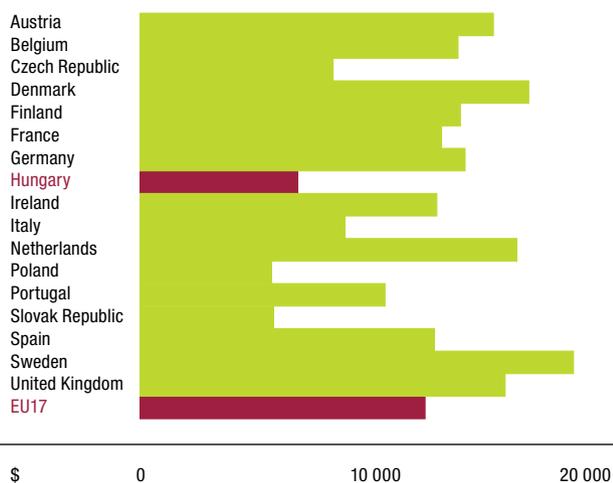
In 1996, a system of formula financing was introduced, and its standard is yearly defined by two factors: the number of new admissions funded by the state (as defined by the government), and the budgetary limit of state support as defined by the Budget Act. This system forced institutions to increase student admis-

sion, contributing to the general expansion of higher education – yet it finally led to inflation of the grant per student in real value. Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education and the gradual reduction in new admissions have tamed this tendency in more recent years, however.

In the first half of the '90s, the number of both state-funded and fee-paying students grew dramatically. In the first part of the 21st century such growth was prolonged, though it became more differentiated: the number of state-funded students grew by only approx. 10 per cent, and almost three quarters of the growth came from self-financing students. But by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the tendency became dramatically reversed, though - mostly because of the decrease in the number of fee-paying students. This latter turn-about led to financial shortages both in the public and in the non-public sectors, as the decrease in the income from tuition fees was more pronounced than the growth of the grant per student in real value.

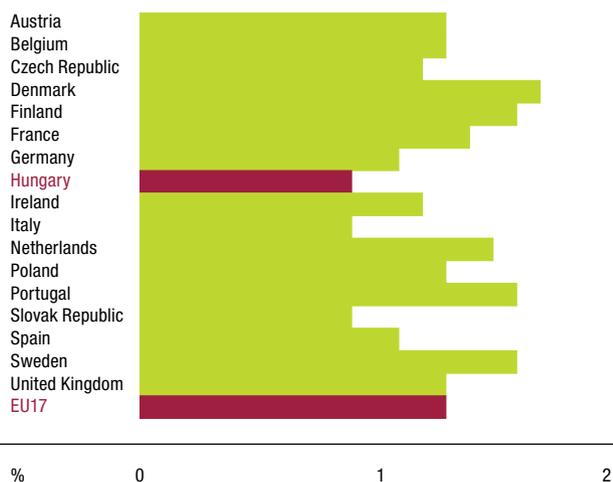
In 2008, state expenditure on higher education ran into 0.97 per cent of GDP, and 1.9 per cent of the state's budget. These amounts have gradually decreased since 2000, however. The expansion of tertiary education actually had a very limited financial background – something confirmed with the following statistic: that from 17 EU member states Hungary spends the 3rd smallest amount per student in relation to tertiary education. The internal structure of such expenditures shows that both the basic service (education) and the R & D functions are underfunded. Other statistics give a healthier picture of other, additional services – whose weight is, however, not greatly significant in most EU member countries. When these expenditures are compared to the GDP instead of being calculated using nominal terms, the proportions are more favourable, especially if expenditure on R&D is not brought into the calculation. However, among the OECD member countries only one other example can be found, i.e. besides Hungary, where state expenditure on tertiary education went down between 2000 and 2007.

### State expenditures per student in higher education, 2007



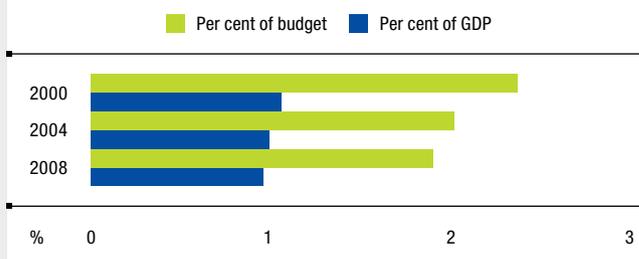
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Expenditures on HE institutions as a percentage of the GDP, 2007



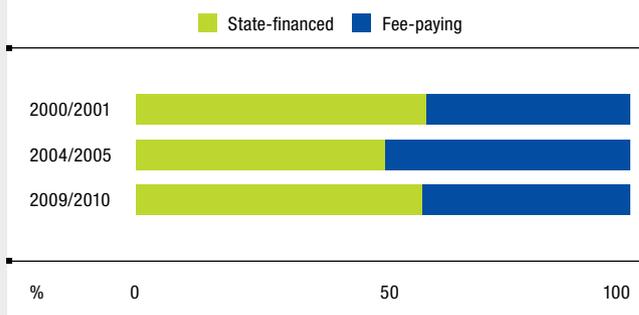
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### State expenditures on higher education in Hungary as a percentage of the state budget and the GDP respectively, 2000–2008



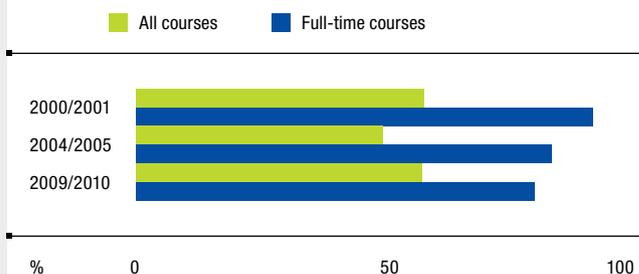
Source: Statistical yearbook of education, 2008/2009

### State-financed and fee-paying students in Hungary, 2000–2010



Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### State-financed students as a percentage of the total number of students on all courses and on full-time courses, 2000–2010



Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

## 4. THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Hungary has a large and extended tertiary educational infrastructure both in terms of its proportion in relation to the general population and to the core student population; however, the system is by no means over-sized.

In 1990, a parliamentary ruling instigated the first wave of transformations in higher education, as it made possible the establishment and accreditation of private and church-maintained institutions. Since then, the number of state-funded higher education institutions has gradually, albeit slowly, gone down. The number of religious institutions had tripled within three years up to 1993/94, while the number of private institutions has increased steadily.

In the academic year 1992/93 (the year of the largest institutional boom), there were, altogether, 90 different universities and colleges, including 15 established in that academic year. This number of institutions remained more or less the same till the end of the decade. However, expansion in terms of the number of students was far less dynamic. These two factors pointed the way to a fragmented institutional system, where small and, on numerous occasions, professionally highly specialized institutions functioned with a localized importance. Educational standards generally remained high in this period, in part because admission was still selective. Yet the aforementioned processes lead to a rigid institutional structure, one which was incapable of promptly reacting to changes in the social-economic environment; and it was also relatively expensive.

Different governments repeatedly tried to rein in such institutional expansion. Eventually, in January 2000, a Governmental Decision re-organised the state-funded system of institutions on a regional basis, merging institutions in the same agglomerations and merging institutions with the same profiles in the capital city of Budapest into larger organizations; though the Decision left institutions with some flexibility and freedom regarding implementation. As a result, the number of state-funded institutions went down to less than

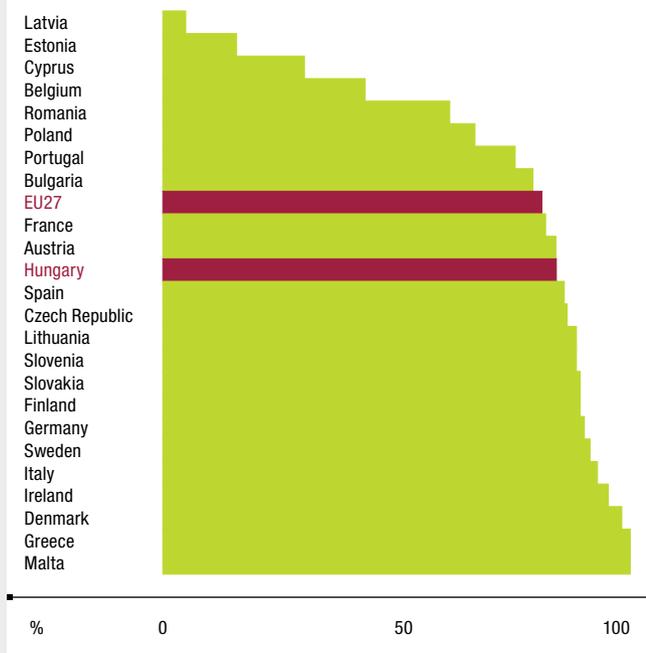
50 per cent – while the number of faculties (schools and departments) continues to rise.

A special feature of the Hungarian higher education institutional system is that the proportion of colleges (*fachhochschule*) is relatively high, and their distribution as regards maintainers is uneven. While the majority of state-funded higher education institutions are universities, the non-state sector is dominated by colleges. Non-state universities make up one-tenth of the higher education system.

This pattern of differences in types of institutions in relation to maintainers is reflected in both the number of institutions and in the distribution of students in universities and colleges. In the academic year 2009/10, two-thirds of students in higher education studied in large, state-funded universities, while 20 per cent of them studied in state colleges. Students in church-maintained institutions represent 5.8 per cent of the student population, with two thirds of them studying in universities and one third of them in colleges. Other private institutions serve to educate 7.5 per cent of students in higher education, the vast majority, 98 per cent, of them being in colleges. The amount of non-state institutions in higher education is 58 per cent – which is significantly above the 37.3 per cent European average. At the same time, though, only 15.8 per cent of students study in such institutions, this being around the European average.

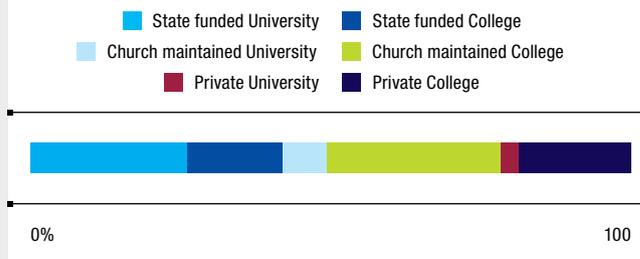
One most often-mentioned problem of this system is that Budapest, the capital, represents an absolute and unbalanced centre in the structure. Another concern is that a proper regional coverage of higher education has not been established as yet. This latter problem was principally highlighted at the time of institutional mergers, and it fuelled arguments around social-economic issues and debates about social equality. Today, in Hungary 69 higher education institutions are located in 26 different cities/towns, and their campuses reach an additional 18 (44 locations altogether), which guarantees nation-wide coverage.

### Students in higher education (ISCED 5. 6.) by type of institution, EU27, 2008 – Public



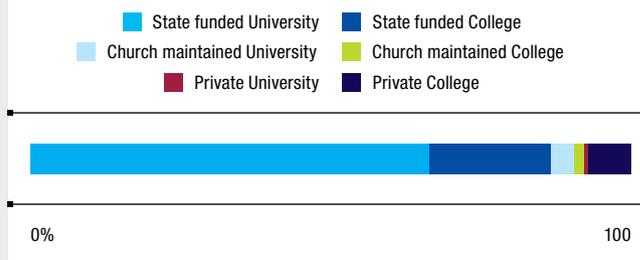
Source: Calculations based on Eurostat

### HE institutions by maintainer and the type of institution, 2010



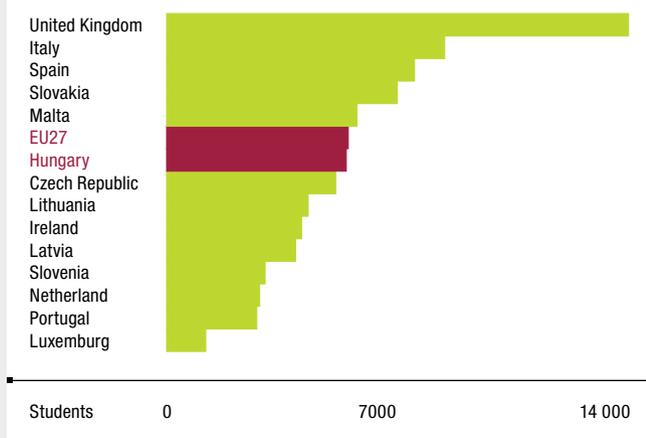
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Students by maintainer and the type of institution, 2010



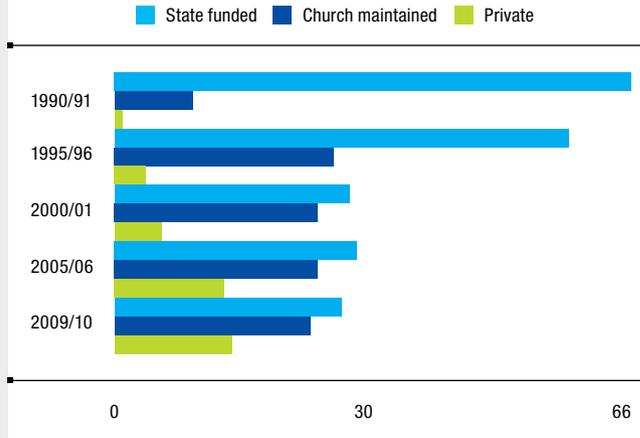
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Number of students per higher education institutions in EU27 and various countries, 2008/09



Source: Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The impact of Bologna Process

### HE institutions in Hungary by maintainer, 1990–2010



Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

## 5. AIMS AND TYPES OF STUDY PROGRAMS

In 2003, Hungary implemented the ECTS-based credit system in higher education. The first trials for a transition from the dual system (colleges/universities) to the Bologna-system (BA/BSc, MA/MSc) started in 2005, first with the BA/BSc pilot courses, and following their full-scale introduction, the first MA/MSc courses were launched. The basic structure contains 180 (Bachelor) + 120 (Master) credits, but there are Bachelor courses with 180+30 or 240 credits. A Master course consists of 120 credits, and 150 credits are required for a teacher's qualification. The previously established doctoral programs require 180 credits. However, there are still 300 and 360 credit one-tier courses in the areas of law, medicine, theology, in some courses in the fields of technology, and art. During the Bologna process the institutional structure of higher education remained mostly untouched: it is still formed by universities and colleges (fachhochschule), and the degrees acquired in the same majors coming from different universities are considered equivalent.

The so-called higher level vocational training belongs in the first cycle, though it runs independently of Bachelor programs, being chiefly focussed on professional skills. This higher level vocational training - which began in 1996 - is incorporated into both secondary and the tertiary education. Such programs (ISCED 5B) give students a higher vocational certificate, yet not a diploma; and they generally last 4 semesters. Their goal is to assure a more flexible form of higher education, one that is more adaptive to the ever-changing demands of the labour market. Students are trained for high-standard professional work; moreover, a given amount (30-60) of acquired credits can be recognized in Bachelor programs, helping in any transition from vocational training to traditional higher education.

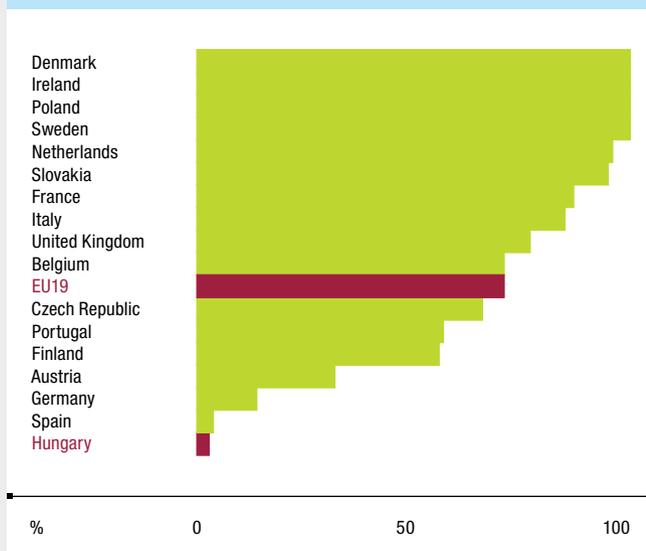
In the first years of its introduction, interest in higher level vocational training remained relatively modest. Generally, the majority of students with higher vocational certificates continue their studies in Bachelor programs, and only a minority enter the labour market. Today, higher vocational training is facing the

following challenges: it has to be adjusted to the Bologna cycled system, while rethinking its connections with the Bachelor programs; it additionally needs to establish its integration into the new system of higher education. Importance may be attached to a strengthening of relations with future employers, involving business representatives in the planning of courses and in training processes.

Higher level vocational training offered in secondary education institutions is dominated by the private sector (non-state and non-religious sector); while in the segment within higher education the majority of students do their studies in state-funded institutions. The right to organize higher level vocational courses belongs exclusively to universities and colleges, though the training can take place in secondary schools, too, if they have previously made a contract with a higher education institution. From this duality it follows that although the attainable qualifications are equivalent, the legal status of students as well as the statistical, financial and governmental systems can vary according to the host institution.

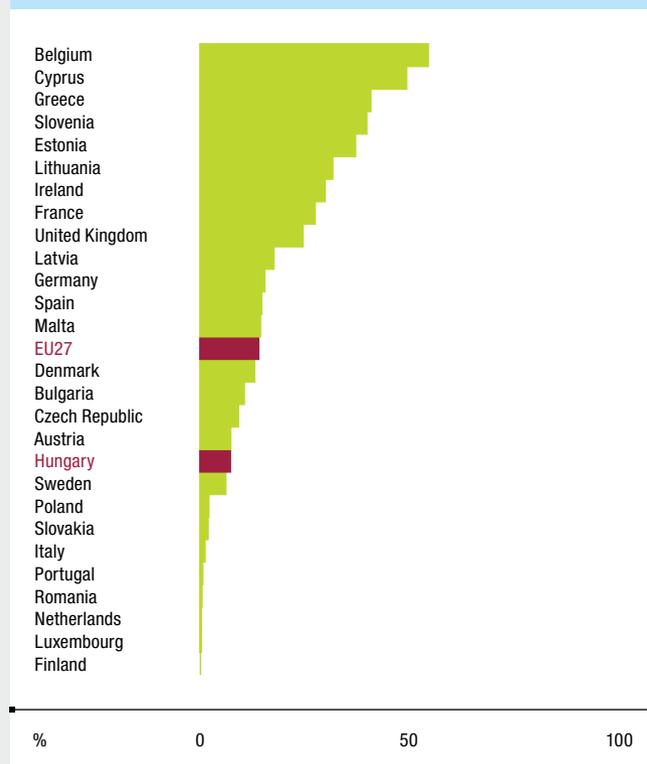
The first cycle that provides a higher education degree in the three-cycle higher educational system is the Bachelor one. It offers a marketable degree, but also entitles the holder of a BA/BSc degree to carry on his/her studies in the second cycle. One difference between the first and the second cycle is that while the former offers a more practical form of knowledge, the latter is more theoretical and scientific. PhD courses offer a solid scientific training to the most talented students. Bachelor and Master courses can be given by universities and colleges possessing the necessary accreditation. After full-scale introduction of the multi-cycle system, the number of students participating in Master programs has shown a dynamic increase during the last two years. By the academic year 2009/10, the majority of students have studied in the Bologna structure, with approx. 15 per cent of students still studying within the former one-tier system. Part-time courses are dominant in postgraduate courses, but they are typical of Master programs, too.

### Proportion of graduations/graduates following the Bologna structures, 2008



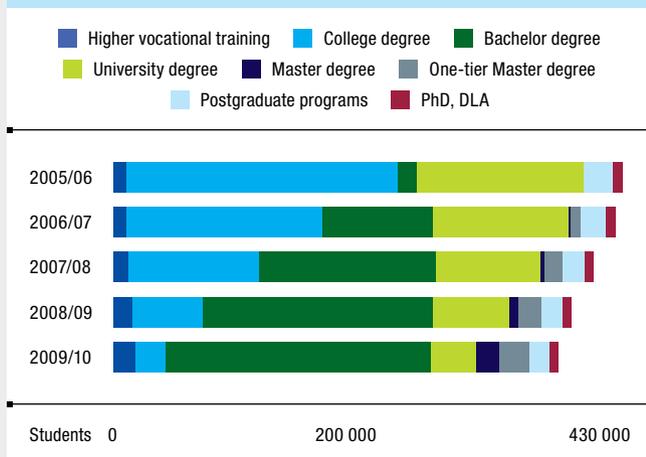
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Students studying at ISCED 5B level in the EU member countries, 2008



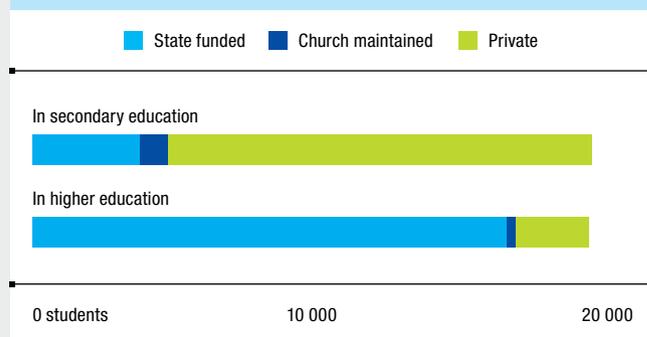
Source: Eurostat

### Students by the degree level of education, 2005–2010



Source: Higher Education Statistics Report, 2009

### Number of students in higher level vocational training in Hungary, by type of institution, 2009



Source: KIRSTAT, FIRSTAT

## 6. ACCESS TO AND PATHWAYS IN EDUCATION

A student's admission to the first cycle (Bachelor and higher vocational training programs) depends on his/her study performance as expressed in scores. Scores are, on one hand, calculated from the student's end-of-year certificates in relevant subjects in the last two years of secondary education – and, on the other, from the student's secondary school-leaving certificate's scores in the relevant subjects. The minimal requirements for admission are expressed in scores that are standardized and defined annually by a governmental agency. Aptitude tests are also required for admission to certain areas of study (e.g. sports, art).

After completion of the first cycle, students are entitled to continue their studies either in a 60–120 credit postgraduate course (which only provides a further qualification but does not award a degree of higher level) or in a MA/MSc program, following a successful entrance examination. Legal requirements stipulate that all Bachelor programs have their counterparts at a Master level. There are no requirements for continuing BA/BSc studies on a corresponding MA/MSc course. Enrolling on a different Master's program, however, may require the completion of specific courses, ones determined by national guidelines, and requirements relating to the given qualification. Students who lack the necessary credits have an opportunity to acquire them by enrolling in a supplemental program. After acquiring the required credits they are eligible for admission to the Master level.

With a Master degree, students can either enrol on a 60–120 credit postgraduate course (again, which only provides a further qualification) or matriculate to a doctoral school after taking an entry examination. During their doctoral studies students need to earn at least 180 credits. In Hungary, there are currently 146 different Bachelor's and 274 Master qualifications, and the number of accredited doctoral schools is 173.

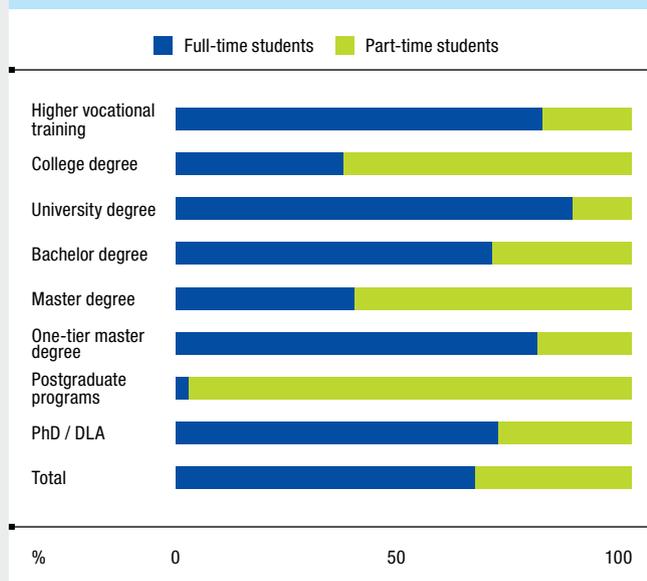
Higher education plays a many-sided role in lifelong learning. It gives multiple opportunities for acquiring a higher level of qualification, such as via full time training in follow-up cycles or flexible, part-time training for those working as employ-

ees, courses for the unemployed and also degree-supplementing courses. From an international perspective, the number of Hungarian adults getting formal or non-formal adult education is very low. Among the participants in adult education – as in other countries – employed and more educated layers of society are overrepresented. In 2007, the number of graduates participating in adult education was twice as high as that of people whose secondary school leaving certificate was their highest qualification; and this proportion still remains far below the EU average.

One key element for enhancing lifelong learning is to establish common principles for evaluation and in recognising learning outcomes acquired in various kinds/ways of learning. This highlights the significance of proper qualification frameworks. The Act on Higher Education and relating regulations from 2005, prior to the Bergen Conference of the Ministers responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area, decreed the establishment of a qualifications' framework for higher education in Hungary; and the national level of outcome-orientating descriptors for the first and the second cycle were laid down. In 2008, the Hungarian government decided to establish a National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning by 2013 – which refers to the European Qualifications Framework. The new National Qualifications Framework for Hungarian qualifications consists of 8 levels, and its outcome-oriented level descriptors apply 4 dimensions of competence.

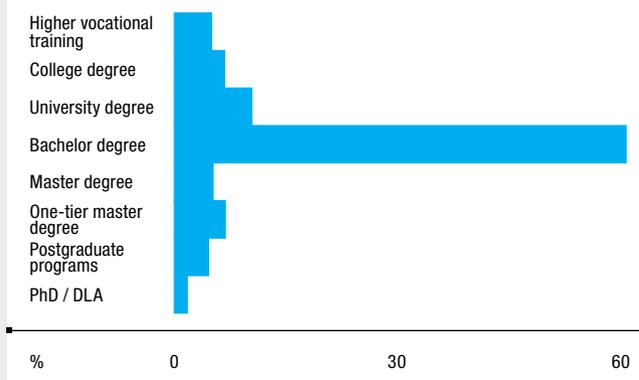
There is a wide range of co-operation between multi-national companies and higher educational institutions in Hungary, giving numerous benefits to educational institutions: there is an opportunity to access the most advanced technologies, the integration of corporate educators into their educational programs, support given to the most talented students with scholarships, fellowships and professional training programs, all ensuring a constant supply of highly-qualified professionals and researchers and opening the possibility of participating in joint R&D and patent projects.

### Proportion of students by degree levels and type of training, 2009/10



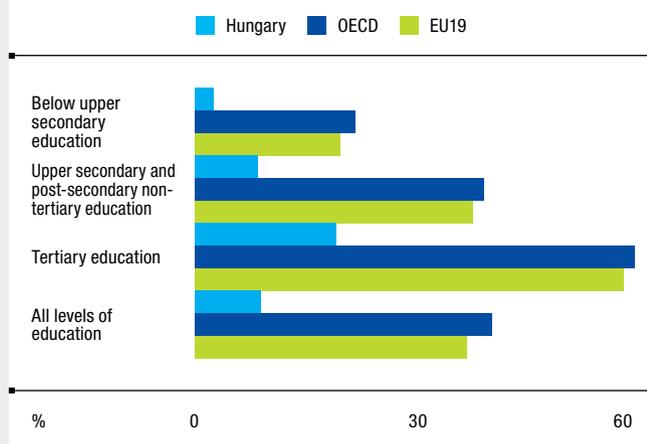
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Proportion of students by degree levels, 2009/10



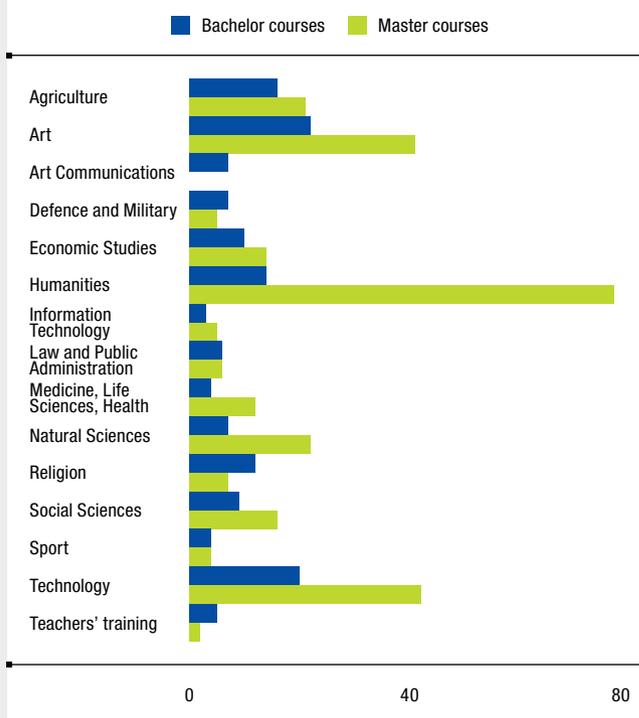
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Participation rate of the 25-64 year-old population in formal and/or non-formal education by educational attainment, 2007



Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Higher education courses in Hungary by field of training, 2011



Source: Register of Qualifications in Higher Education, Ministry of National Resources, 2011

## 7. ENROLMENT INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

Looked at internationally, slightly more than two thirds of the relevant age group finishes upper secondary education. In Hungary, this proportion is a little higher – and the minor recession in 2008 was due to the restructuring of secondary level education. When analysing application tendencies, it is useful to separate the group of fresh secondary school graduates from those who are re-entering the education system later on. In the case of the latter group it can be stated that a decreasing tendency can be seen in the last decade; since 2009, however – and owing to the full-scale introduction of Master programs – a slight increase is noticeable. The further education characteristics had by younger generations is pre-conditioned by the fact that since the early '90s the structure of secondary education had been subjected to fundamental structural reforms. As a result, training programs ending with GCSEs generally attract more students; also, the number of trade school training programs has diminished.

Since the 2000s, there has been an increase in the number of those graduating from grammar schools. This deserves special attention as motivations for and the amounts of students willing to continue their studies is not balanced between the types of secondary education ending at a GCSE level. The proportion of grammar school students applying for tertiary education institutions can attain percentages of 75–80% – while this figure for vocational schools is only two thirds of total student numbers. What is more, grammar school graduates also have better chances of being admitted.

The percentage of students entering ISCED 5A type programs of higher education is somewhat higher than the international average – even though in OECD countries the same index value increased by 20% between 1995 and 2008. Despite the dynamic growth of the past decade, the ratio of students in ISCED 5B type programs is much lower in both OECD countries and EU member states alike, including Hungary. The proportion of those entering research programs is 2.4% in the case of OECD countries and 2.7% in 19 states of the EU. Hungary in this respect falls behind the international average.

Looking back at the last 20 years, the most noteworthy change has been in student numbers. In the academic year 2009/2010, the number of tertiary education students was three times the number measured in 1990/91, although a slight decrease can be observed after the historical peak of 2005/2006, when more than 420 thousand persons were registered as students in tertiary education institutions. This number covers all college and university level students studying at a Bachelor or Master level, older students from the one-tier system, doctoral students, those taking part in postgraduate specialist training, regardless of whether the program is full time, part time or correspondence and distance education.

Twenty years ago only 12 per cent of the 18–25 age group studied at a tertiary education institution; today, this number shows an almost four-fold increase, so the last two decades must be generally considered the period of higher educational expansion in Hungary.

The higher education structure was unable to satisfy the growing demand for tertiary education – thus, it is no coincidence that, in parallel to the increase in student numbers, a rising proportion of non-full time courses and fee-paying training programs has become visible; while in an international context, the ratio of part-time trainings is relatively high, in the last few years a slight lowering of numbers can be seen with these types of program.

To sum up here, it can be stated that higher education accessibility has shown major improvements in the last 10 years, though persons' chances of admission to various types and areas of education/training may be radically different. Based on data from recent years it can be said that chances of being admitted to state-financed education programs are significantly lower than what relates to fee-paying courses.

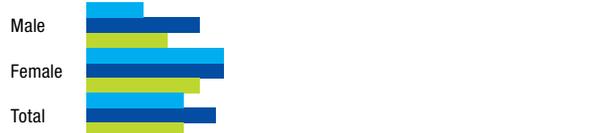
### Entry rates into the different levels of tertiary education by gender, 2008

■ Hungary ■ OECD ■ EU19

#### Tertiary-type A education



#### Tertiary-type B education



#### Advanced research programs

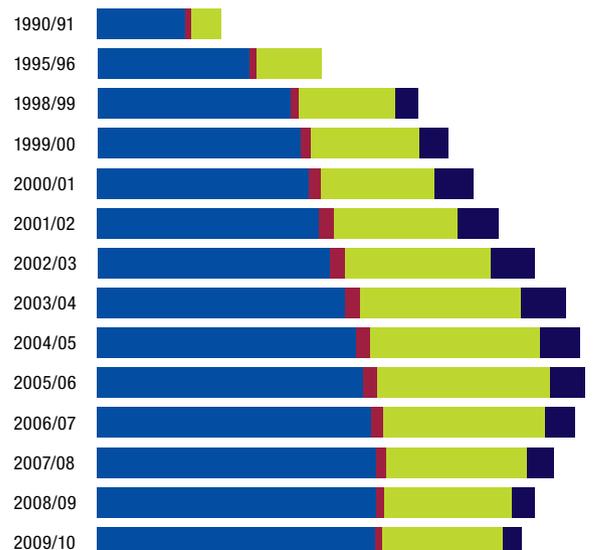


% 0 30 65

Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Students enrolled in higher education in Hungary, by types of training, 1990–2010

■ Full-time training ■ Evening training  
■ Correspondence training ■ Distance learning course



Students 0 225 000 450 000

Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Previous studies/qualifications of full-time students entering higher education (university, college, Bachelor and one-tier programs and higher vocational training), 2000–2010

■ General secondary school qualification ■ Secondary vocational school qualification  
■ Secondary vocational school with specialisation year qualification  
■ Higher education qualification ■ Foreign qualification

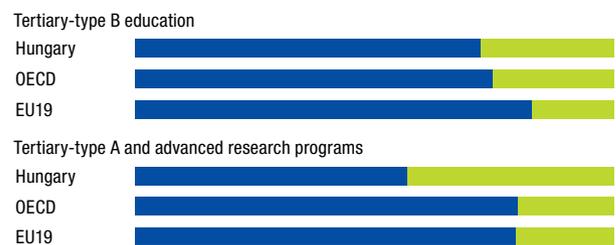


% 0 50 100

Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Students in tertiary education, by mode of enrolment, 2007

■ Full-time ■ Part-time



% 0 50 100

Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

## 8. THE COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY

There has been a major rearrangement of ratios regarding areas of study in tertiary education. In 1990/1991, 37 per cent of students participated in teacher training, 20 per cent in technical, and 10 per cent in both health and economics, respectively; also, there were 4-5 per cent in social sciences, law and in agricultural studies. Demand for training in the field of economics grew significantly by 2005/2006 – the number of students entering it shows a nine-fold increase, and their 9.3 per cent ratio rose to 23 per cent.

State financing has not been able to keep up with the increase in student figures: the amount of students participating in state-funded higher education was reduced from 92.4 per cent in the academic year 2000/2001 to 80 per cent in 2009/2010, the number of those receiving scholarships (based on academic merit) dropped from 50 per cent to 30 per cent, and the number of social grant recipients went down from 37 per cent to 20 per cent.

The number of women enrolled in tertiary education has seen a continuous increase in the last 20 years: while their ratio was somewhat below 50 per cent around 1990, today it has almost reached 60 per cent. There is an above-average participation of women in part-time programs (61.5 per cent), and a lower one in doctoral programs (48 per cent). The tendency for a greater percentage of women seeking to attain a tertiary qualification is not unique to Hungary – it is also present in a European comparative context. Hungarian figures can be explained by women's above-average participation not only in the field of teacher training, medicine and health, but also in humanities and in the social and economic sciences.

The higher education law in force at present includes a detailed regulation dealing with establishing, maintaining, putting on hold, and finally terminating full-time student status; and this could extend itself to doctoral candidacies and residential college membership as well. In harmony with European measures, there are legal provisions for securing the equity of the disadvantaged and the disabled; to facilitate their entry into tertiary education, the disabled, parents and disadvantaged applicants

are given extra points during the admission process (thereby giving a few thousand young people an increased opportunity). Students already admitted and enrolled are further assisted by monthly and occasional social assistance scholarships, and they can also apply for a merit-based scholarship; inside the faculties rapporteurs and coordinators help in their work and, alongside this, special scholarships and NGO-s exist as another way of assisting such students in higher education institutions.

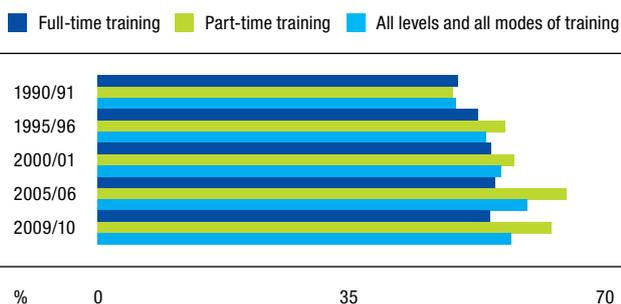
In Hungary there are a number of national initiatives and programs helping students that are disadvantaged or who are members of an ethnic minority to attain a graduation certificate from high school. There are outreach programs, financial and other support schemes, and special methodology programs targeting under-represented groups, with this aiming at improving their access to higher education.

Student loans are another way of enhancing equal opportunities; and there is also a possibility of forms of mobility between state-financed and tuition fee training modes based on a student's academic achievements. Student loans were first introduced in 2001 by the government, for students who are less than 40 years old. All students at any faculty participating in both state-financed and tuition fee modes of training are eligible for a student loan. A total of approx. 300 thousand students applied for student loans in its first 10 years of existence, making an issued total of more than 0.7 billion Euros.

There are a number of modules inside institutes of higher education promoting academic excellence, such as the student scholars group, and also specialisation institutions, where additional knowledge can be attained via accredited courses.

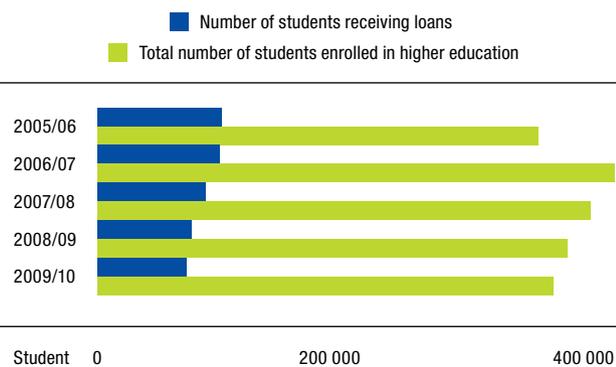
Student self-governments function as representative bodies for the student population at an institutional level, and their voice can be heard in decision making processes looking at institutional strategies. Their national organisation is called the National Conference of Student Self-Governments.

### Proportions of women enrolled in higher education, 1990–2010



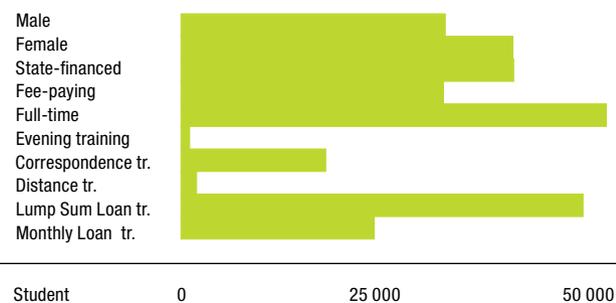
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Student loan ratios per academic year, 2005–2010



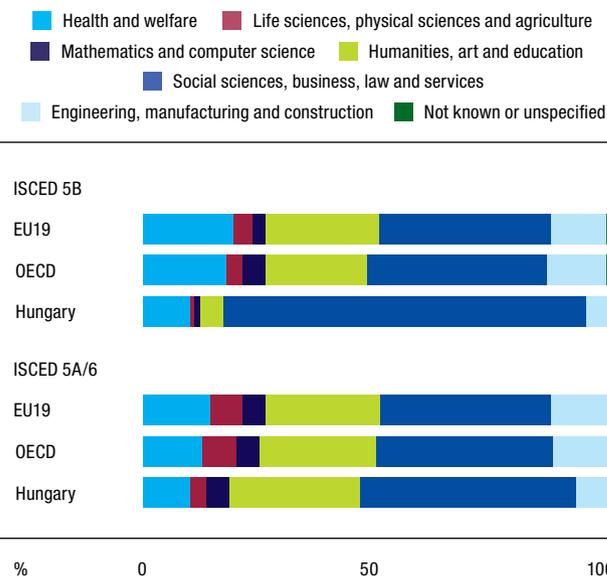
Source: Student Loan Centre

### Distribution of students receiving student loans by gender, financing status, type of training and type of loan, 2009/2010



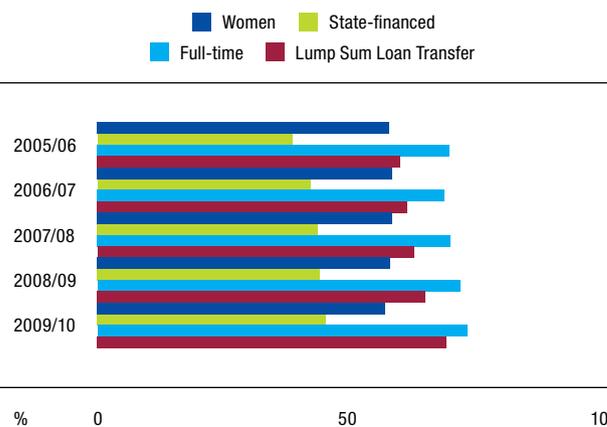
Source: Student Loan Centre

### Distribution of graduates by fields of education and by ISCED levels, 2008



Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Relative proportion of different type of students among those receiving student loan, 2005–2009



Source: Student Loan Centre

## 9. HUNGARIAN AND GUEST STUDENTS – STUDIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

Hungarian colleges and universities have a long tradition of welcoming foreign students (the rate was 2.2 per cent in 1970). The number of foreign students increased almost tenfold in the past thirty years: in the academic year 2010/2011 their number reached 18,154 (being 4.9 per cent of the total number of students).

Nowadays, foreign students in Hungary tend to pursue studies full-time, attending above all Bachelor degree courses; only one sixth of them take part in correspondence or distance-learning courses.

Before the political changes the majority of students came from Asia, but after the 1980s ever more European students decided to study in Hungary. Today, approximately three quarters of guest students come from European countries, while the ratio of Asian students has dropped to 20 per cent (even though their number has tripled). The majority of foreign students come from neighbouring countries: nearly 30 per cent come from Romania or Slovakia. Most of these are members of the Hungarian minority in the respective countries, so studying in Hungarian is not a challenge but, rather, a great opportunity for them. Students from Romania, Serbia and the Ukraine mainly opt for Bachelor's courses and enrol in teacher training or economics courses. As opposed to this, students coming from Western Europe (mainly Germany and Norway) are mostly interested in five-year courses and are inclined to study medicine (general practitioner, dentist) or veterinary training. There have been courses offered in German and English (often both at the same university) specifically for these students since the mid-1980s. Apart from medicine, faculties offering technical training courses in English are popular among foreign students: chemistry, architecture and other engineering courses attract young people from Israel, Greece and Arabic countries.

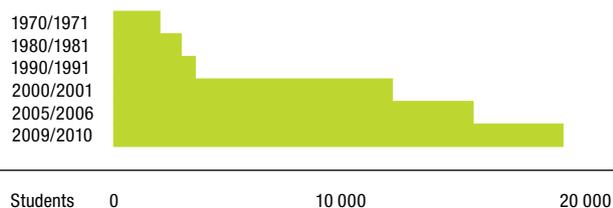
Hungarian students may well study abroad in Western European countries, but their 2 per cent ratio is somewhat lower than the average for the 27 EU member states. While in other

member countries student mobility is on the rise, the ratio of Hungarian students is stagnating amongst those enrolling for full training programs abroad. Proportionally speaking, their number is significantly lower, and is fluctuating. This probably has to do with certain prerequisites for mobility abroad, i.e. fluency in a foreign language and often significantly higher expenses.

Those who venture to study abroad principally go to German-speaking countries (more than 45 per cent of them to Austria and Germany); while 20 per cent of them study in English-speaking countries (in the United Kingdom and in the USA).

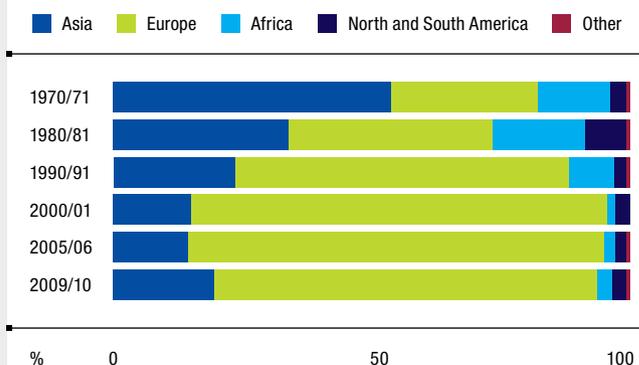
Hungarian students are not reluctant to study abroad, yet it is more affordable for them to engage in part-time courses or practical training programs with a one-semester to five-month average duration. International schemes (e.g. operated by the Tempus Public Foundation, Hungarian-American Fulbright Commission, Hungarian Scholarship Board) act as motivating and funding sources. In these schemes Hungary has a delegator role, for only half as many students come to study in Hungary via these as are sent abroad. The number of Hungarian students travelling abroad has increased year after year. In 2008, a total of 3 500 students and nearly 1 000 instructors were involved in the different exchange schemes. Amongst the most popular destinations, Germany, France, Italy and Finland should be mentioned. Most scholarship holders went to study social sciences, business, law, fine arts or technical sciences.

### International students in Hungary, 1970–2010



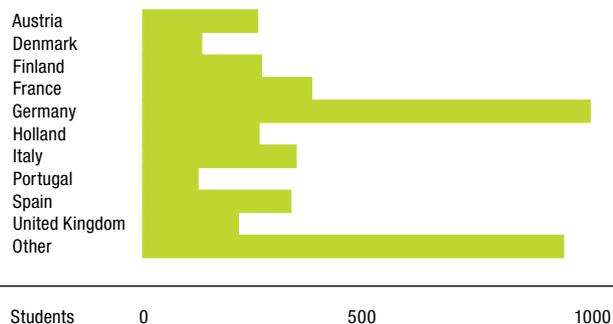
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Geographical distribution of international students in Hungarian higher education institutions, 1970–2010



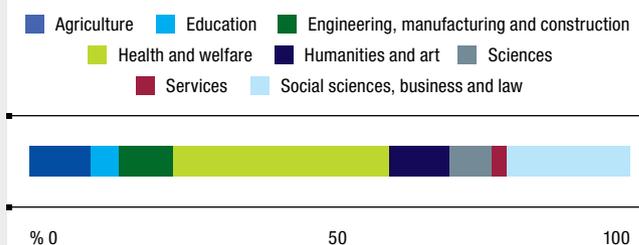
Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Number of Hungarian students studying abroad in the Erasmus program by destination states, 2008



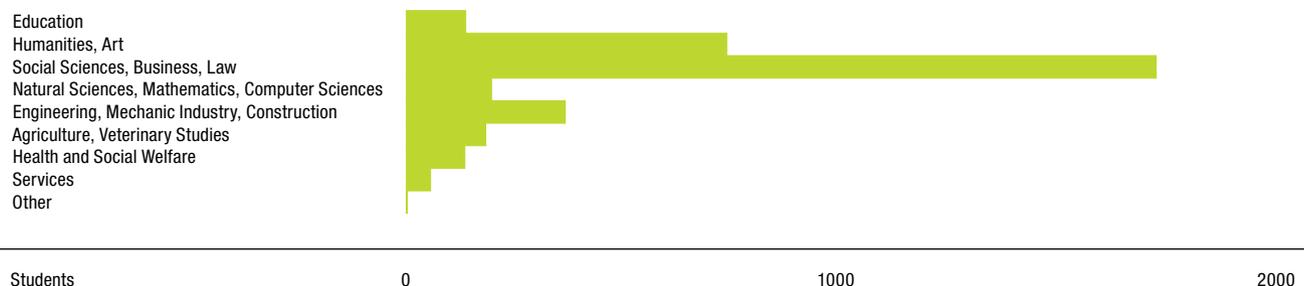
Source: Tempus Public Foundation, 2010

### International students in Hungary, by field of education, 2008



Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Number of Hungarian students studying abroad in the Erasmus program, by fields of study (excluding practical training), 2008



Source: Tempus Public Foundation, 2010

# 10. TEACHING STAFF

Institutes, students, demand and capacity in the labour market have for many years been determining matters of discussion about university education, and the same themes crop up again and again – while the role of instructors was rarely talked about. As university education is turning into a quantity-based subject, the work of instructors has become ever more of a focal point within scientific and public discussion. An early goal of the Bologna Process and for the founding of the European University Education Area was to enhance Europe's competitiveness through improving student mobility, establishing quality evaluation systems, tightening connections with the labour market and strengthening the relationship between education and research. Instructors therefore have to face up to more and more significant challenges.

The number of instructors in Hungary was between 22 000 and 23 000 since the beginning of the millennium; in 2009/2010 it was 21 934. Given that the headcount of students had continually gone up until 2006 – and since then it has seen slight reductions – the number of students per instructor is equal to the European average in any international comparison. However, while the student/instructor ratio has not changed notably in Europe in the last decade, in Hungary it has doubled (between 1995 and 2004), to then stabilize itself.

The age structure of the teaching staff can be considered consistent. A high ratio of young instructors is probably a result of the sudden emergence of mass education – in other words, deriving from the fact that the process took only a decade, while in other countries in Europe it has been longer. Yet an important fact is that in 2008/2009 as many as 12 per cent of instructors were at retirement age, while in 2004/2005 this was only 5 per cent. Although in Hungary there is a high number of the younger generation (below age 36) of instructors compared to developed countries, the ratio for the older generation is also among the highest.

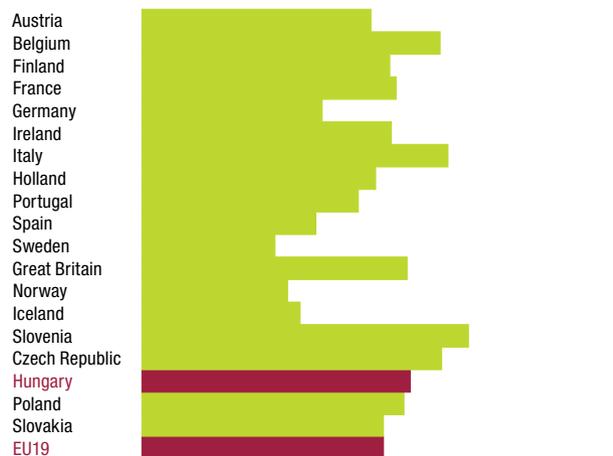
At present, approximately 8 000 qualified instructors work in higher education institutions, and among full-time employed

ones 50 per cent have an academic degree. In the last one and a half decades the ratio of qualified teaching staff has gone up significantly: in 1995 it was slightly more than 25 per cent, in 2000 slightly more than 33 per cent; today, 50 per cent of them are qualified. However, the differences in tertiary education can be seen in the number of qualified instructors existing, for qualified instructors are concentrated in five universities, while differences between faculties are additionally significant: qualification ratios are traditionally high in science faculties and are low in faculties of law and economics, while colleges have a noticeably lower ratio of qualified instructors than do universities.

In Europe, tertiary education and research are of equal importance, and are connected in many respects, but in Hungary signs of this cannot be really seen as yet. Even though the notion of a 'research university' took root in 2009, this is hardly reflected at all when looking at the staff of higher education institutions.

Although statistical data indicates a dynamic increase in research-and-development positions in Hungary (jumping from 1 256 to 2 821), the number of researchers has not really changed in the last two decades (17.5 to 18.4 thousand). Although the number of research positions in tertiary education is still significant, the dynamic increase in research-and-development positions has led to a convergence: while tertiary education had in it 74 per cent of R&D positions in 1990, the rate went down to 52 per cent to 2008. The number of research staff changed less significantly: 30-31 per cent of Hungarian researchers worked in tertiary education in both 1990 and 2008. Comparing to the time of the political changes, the number of those working in research institutes has decreased, though the number of those operating in the R&D sector has significantly increased. The qualification has improved in a striking manner since the political changes: while in 1990 only 32 per cent of researchers possessed an academic degree, in 2008 their ratio had risen to 73 per cent.

### Ratio of students to teaching staff in higher education in EU states, 2008



Students 0 15 30

Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Ratio of students to teaching staff in higher education institutions in Hungary, 1990–2009



Students 0 9 18

Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Proportion of qualified teaching staff among full-time academic staff in higher education in Hungary, 2001–2009

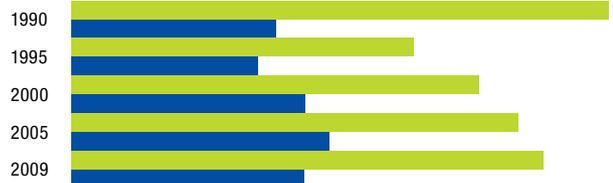


% 0 30 60

Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

### Number of employees in R&D activities, 1990–2009

■ Total number of employees in R&D  
■ Number of researchers in higher education

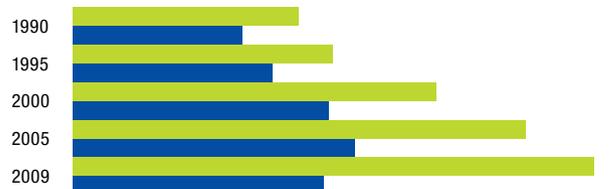


0 Employees 30 000 60 000

Source: KSH

### Number of R&D units, 1990–2009

■ Total number of R&D units  
■ Number of research units in higher education



0 1500 3000

Source: KSH

# 11. NEW ENTRANTS' POSITIONS ON THE LABOUR-MARKET

Hungarian higher education institutions regularly track their graduates' employment and positions, but the methods and scales used in these reports differ greatly in this respect, which prevents their being of comparable value. A new tracking method and national infrastructure is under construction, though – via which, institutions will be able to compare their output with one another. The first results are expected in the near future. Up until now, the only evidence that could be used to map the general situation has been based on periodic surveys targeting large populations. The first such survey occurred in 1999/2000, and it was aimed at new entrants' (i.e. persons who had graduated in the previous year) positions on the labour-market. The next survey, from 2004, was aimed at the same population, so it offered a basis for a longer-term analysis. The third significant survey was launched in 2010, and its general purpose was to prepare the field for the introduction of a uniform career-tracking system. The 2010 survey's immediate aim was to report on the labour-market position of persons graduating in 2007.

On the basis of national surveys we have an opportunity to compare the outputs of universities and the position in the labour-market of those who have graduated in different areas. According to the available data, new entrants' positions on the labour-market gradually improved from 1999/2000 to 2010 (by 2010 the employment ratio had reached 85 per cent of graduates). However, given further analysis of the general trend we are able to see very different sub-data as related to different areas of higher education: between 1999/2000 and in 2010 the data indicates a minimal reduction in employment in only two training fields (medicine and health, and teacher training). In all other cases we have a generally increasing trend, although steady expansion occurs only in two fields (economic studies, humanities). At the same time, another general trend emerges: job/employment opportunities become gradually more balanced between different areas. The average deviation of different training fields from the average employment ratio was 6.8 per cent back in 1999/2000, though it had sunk to 5.3 in 2004 and to 4.2 in 2010.

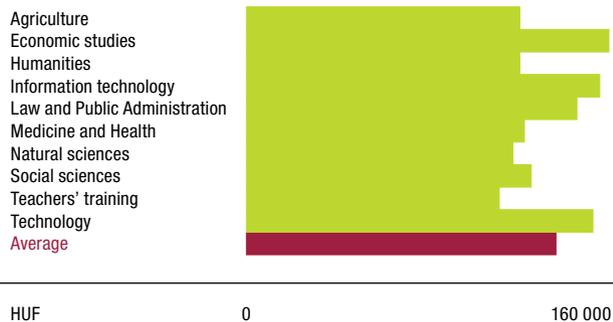
Earnings also varied widely in the three surveys, but the main tendency is that the gap has been closing here, too. The highest earners are those who are employed in areas of information technology, economics, law, and technology in general.

However, employment and earnings are only two factors among many others that can be used to measure the output of a field of training: among other issues, there is the highest reachable position of one's career, the duration of the job searching period, whether there is an opportunity to continue one's career with the same employer – and these are also important factors characterizing the labour-market position of a specific field and of graduates in this field. Taking all of these into account, graduates in the areas of law and medicine are in the most beneficial position: they have the biggest opportunity to find a job going with their training – though in case of the latter this increasingly means finding a job abroad. These advantages do have drawbacks, however, as employees in these fields have relatively low incomes and cannot expect a rapidly advancing career.

Careers in areas of economics, information technology, law and technology offer more favourable incomes, though drop-out rates among employees here are relatively high, because they are looking for ever higher incomes.

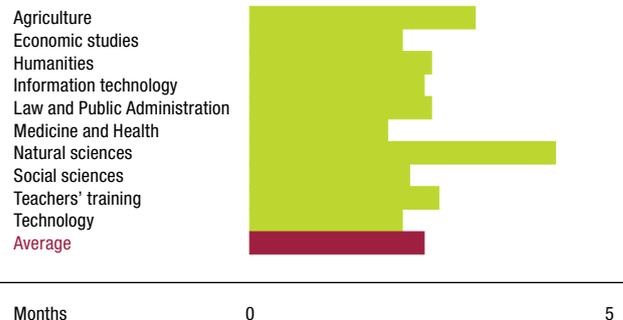
Teachers, graduates in the humanities, natural sciences and agrarian studies are in a weaker position in terms of both finding a job and getting a good income – and one can find the highest drop-out rates amongst new recruits in these areas.

### Net incomes of new recruits by field of training, 2010



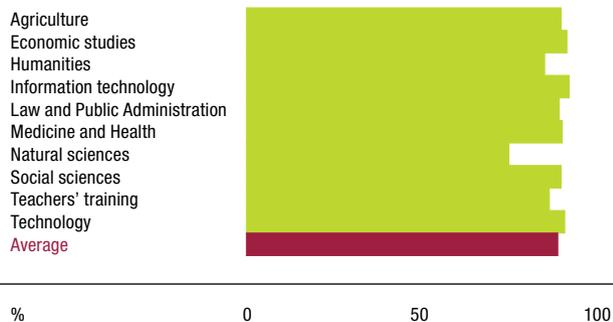
Source: Graduate survey 2010. Educatio Nonprofit Kft.

### Months spent with job search after graduation by field of training, 2010



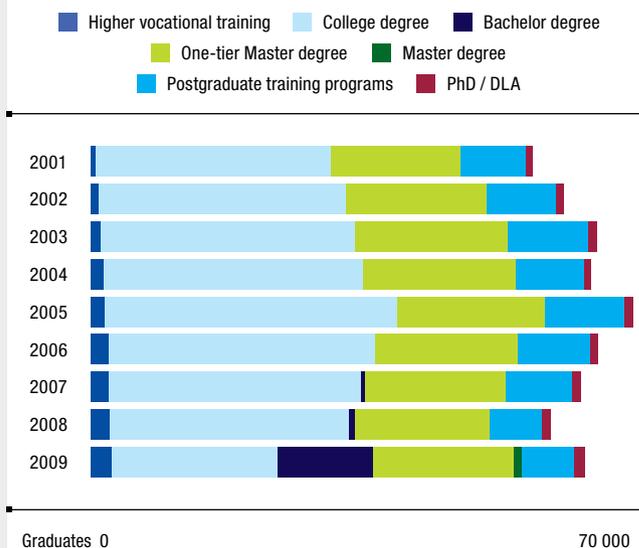
Source: Diplomás kutatás 2010. Educatio Nonprofit Kft.

### Employment rates of new recruits by fields of training, 2010



Source: Graduate survey 2010. Educatio Nonprofit Kft.

### Number of graduates in Hungary by degree levels and forms of training, 2001–2009



Source: Higher Education Statistics Report

# 12. RATE OF RETURNING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In Hungary, graduates have a major advantage on the labour-market. In the late '90s the number of unemployed graduates was only one third of the number unemployed in the core, non-graduate population taken as a whole. Around the time of the millennium, the prospects of those without diplomas improved on the job market, yet after 2004 the gap began to widen again. According to current data, the unemployment rate for graduates is around 2 per cent, compared to the more than 6 per cent unemployment rate among those who studied to a secondary, but not tertiary education level. In the EU the benefits for graduates here are significantly less on average, and they have been gradually decreasing over a ten-year period.

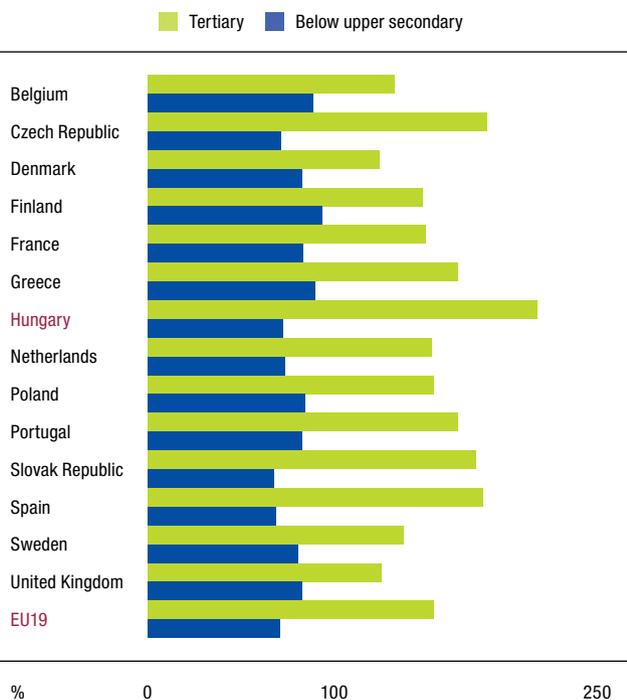
A detailed analysis of EU member countries' data shows that the mentioned gap in Hungary is the second largest in the EU; there are only three other countries in the EU with similar data. The unemployment of graduates has a relatively small ratio in Hungary, which means that higher education lessens the probability of one's unemployment. In the background, there is a special feature of the Hungarian job market serving to explain such data: the number of inactive people is high, lowering the employment ratio, and the vast majority of inactive people are represented by those who have only secondary or lower-level education. In this way, inactivity is another indicator of the advantages had by graduates.

Graduates not only have a lower unemployment ratio and better job prospects, but their incomes are higher too. In a ten-year overview, one is able to see major time periods phases of growth and small drops in salary. Such tendencies are determined by both labour-market dynamics and governmental measures (such as the pay-rise given to public servants in 2002). In general, the gap between the incomes of employees with a secondary or lower education level and those with a tertiary-level education has widened, the difference having increased from 80 per cent in the late 90s to 110 per cent currently, which means that the wages of persons with diplomas are more than twice as much as the wages of those with only a secondary or lower-level education.

In Europe, Hungary has the biggest wage gap. The immediate and very notable benefits of gaining a tertiary education contributed to the expansion in higher education, increasing the numbers and rates of enrolled students. As a side-effect this also caused a drop in the number of students enrolled in correspondence and part-time courses. More and more students with a secondary school-leaving certificate have decided to continue their studies in higher education institutions, in full-time courses – which has resulted in a lowering of the number of students in part-time or distance education.

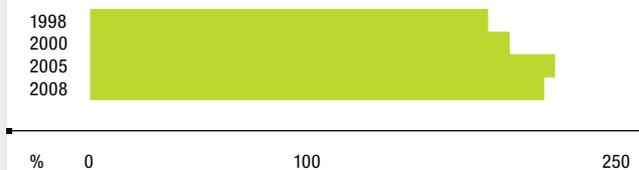
A tertiary level education guarantees a better position not only on the labour-market, but in many other aspects of life as well (see e.g. the relating data of OECD EAG). However, the advantages are not direct consequences of education; rather, differences in both education and ways of life are manifestations running in parallel with similar underlying differences existing between various social strata. International data indicates that this advantage is most notable when it comes to health care, social connections and support, and is almost non-existent as regards having an interest in politics. Yet all of these benefits are relative to employees in Hungary with a secondary level education, though they cannot be seen as major advantages in any absolute sense. In the field of both health care and interpersonal trust, indicators for graduates from higher educational institutions are far below the average for EU member countries.

### Relative earnings by educational level, for 25-64 year-olds, 2008 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education = 100)



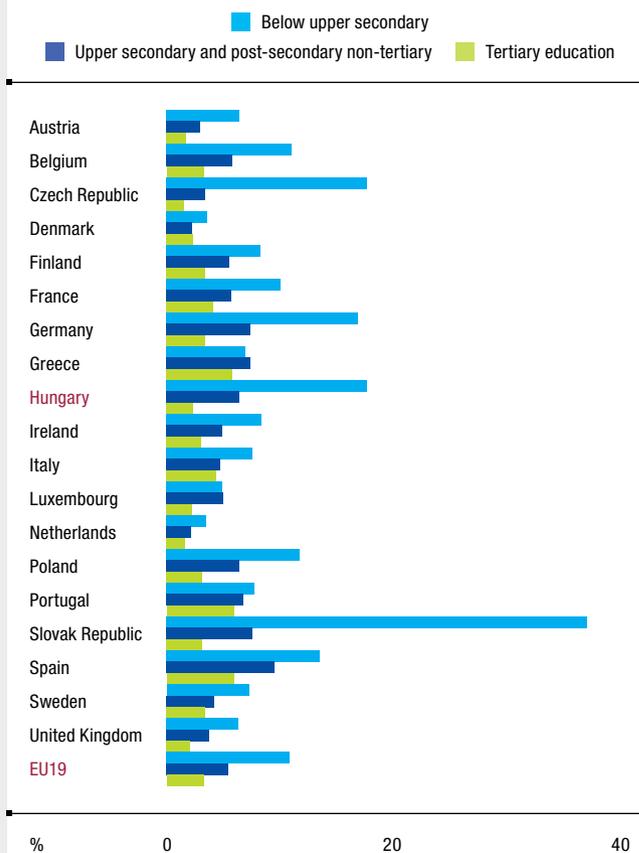
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Trends in relative earnings by holders of tertiary degrees, for 25-64 year-olds in Hungary, 1998–2008 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education = 100)



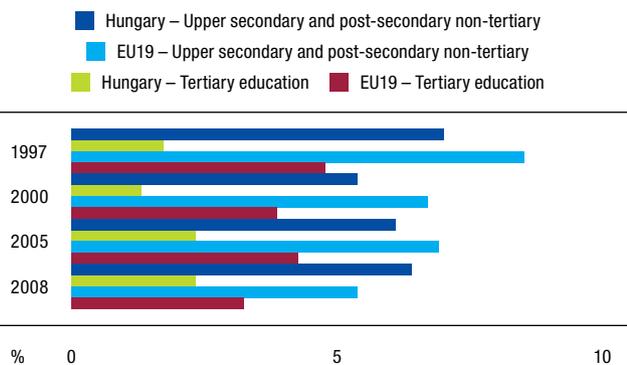
Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Unemployment rates of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment, 2008



Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

### Trends in unemployment rates of 25-64 year-olds, by highest educational level, 1997–2008



Source: Education at a Glance, 2010

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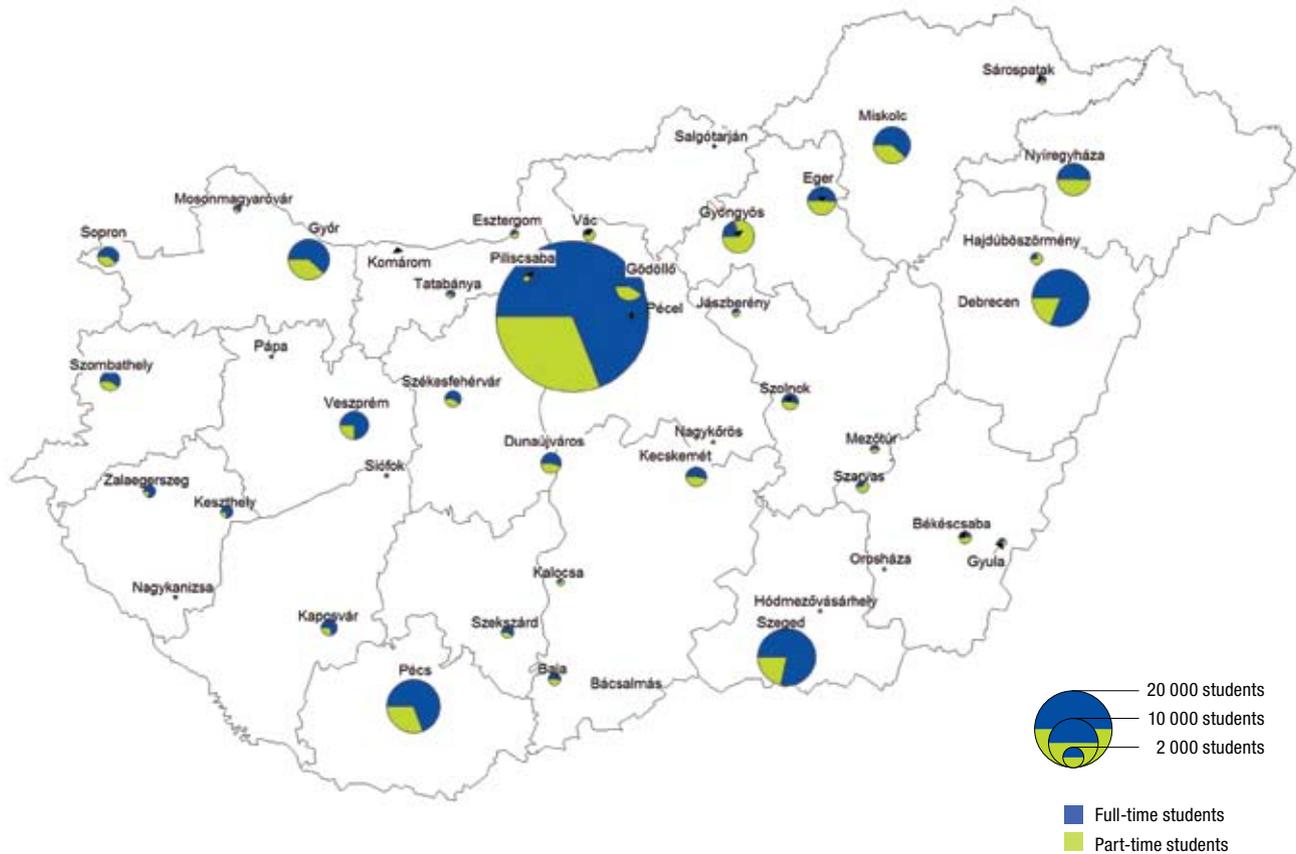
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## HE institutions in Hungary, 2009/2010



Source: NEFMI, edited by Tamás Híves, 2011

# HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*The Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development is a budgetary institution maintained by the Ministry of National Resources. It is an institution providing general and strategic support services for the educational sector under the direction of the Ministry. Research and development activities are carried out and related services are provided in the fields of pre-school education, public (primary and secondary) education, higher education, vocational training, teachers' careers, special education, in the education of ethnic and national minorities, and for school-based and non-formal adult education.*

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*Research is also carried out on classroom procedures, looking at the activities of the most important actors in education (teachers and pupils) and examining their interactions. Development activities aim to increase the effectiveness of school education and are supported by related research. Program and curriculum development activities include the development of new pedagogical-professional methods, educational programs, textbooks, teaching aids and related instruments. The societal and social situation of the young and the educational opportunities they have are also analysed, focusing especially on the integration of Roma and special needs pupils.*

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József Kaposi  
*Director-General*



This booklet provides interested readers with an unusual 3-dimensional snapshot. It gives up-to-date information on the relevant facts and data pertaining to the Hungarian higher education system, and it also describes, as background information, the trends and changes that have occurred during the last 20 years. We hope that this report along with the tables and diagrams that serve to complement each section provide the reader with a convincing demonstration of the fact that the processes and developments of the last two decades have made the Hungarian higher education system a genuine and legitimate member of the European Higher Education Area.

As the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union comes to an end, we offer this booklet to anyone seeking to make themselves familiar with the country's education system. The accomplishments of the Presidency period - in terms of politics, diplomacy, professional areas and communication - have greatly contributed to Hungary's reputation among Member States. The last six months have made Hungary more visible and, at the same time, more open and transparent by bringing the country into focus within Europe - and this should be the mission of the present publication, too. Our desire is that, with the help of this report, Hungary, as a part of European Higher Education Area, will become more attractive to students from all over the world.

