

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Executive summary

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# INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research was to describe processes and problems in the internationalisation of higher education in Hungary. Internationalisation is a dynamic process all over the world and it is not easy to grasp the essence and the meaning of it. These processes are often seen only as a trend in student mobility and foreign language courses but this is a simplification. Experts call the attention to the fact that internationalisation has a deeper meaning and should affect higher education in more fundamental aspects. In Europe, the two powerful driving forces affecting the internationalisation of higher education are the social, educational and training policy of the European Union, and the European labour market. The aim of the former is to build a more cohesive European society. The latter is motivated in building a competitive labour market: firms are interested in recruiting from a larger pool of competent labourers. Success in a very competitive international labour market largely depends on strategic planning in education, and the concentration and use of resources adequate to the goals and objectives. At the European level, Erasmus+ is a financial instrument to support international student mobility with social policy goals. In addition, the Hungarian government established the scholarship programme, Stipendium Hungaricum, in 2013. This programme supports economic policy goals and, at the same time, stimulates the use of the institutions to full capacity, which is also meant to give impetus to quality development.

For analytical purposes, we thought it worthwhile to distinguish other dimensions of internationalisation as well, for example the quantitative and qualitative aspects of internationalisation and the external and internal aspects of internationalisation (Derényi, 2014). The quantitative aspect of internationalisation can be described by indicators related to the availability of courses in foreign languages and the number of participants in such courses. The qualitative aspects of internationalisation may be described by indicators of student and staff mobility and the internationalisation of content. As far as the external and internal dimensions are concerned, the former includes international activities such as delivering study programmes in another country, whereas by internal processes of internationalisation we mean developments affecting the learning environment within the institution, for example, the internationalisation of teaching content, sharing international experiences, etc. (Derényi, 2014).

## Research methods

The study focussed on undergraduate courses (BA, BSc), master's courses (MA, MSc) as well as undivided long courses ending in a master's degree. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Qualitative methods included document analysis, website analysis, study of relevant literature, interviews with students and staff members of institutions. Quantitative methods included on-line student and teaching staff surveys. Table 1 summarises the methods used. The research was carried out by T-Tudok Zrt. in the second half of 2017. The target populations of the study included Hungarian students, mobile students and staff members of higher education institutions..

Table 1. Instruments and data used in the research

INSTRUMENT	TARGET GROUP/ TARGETED DOCUMENTS	SAMPLE SIZE	COMPONENTS OF THE SAMPLE
<b>QUANTITATIVE METHODS</b>			
1. Analysis of higher education registers	FIR ( <i>Higher Education Information System</i> ), DPR ( <i>Graduate Career Tracking System</i> ), TPF ( <i>TEMPUS Public Foundation</i> ) databases	Large scale	–
2. On-line data collection October-November, 2017	Managers, international co-ordinators, faculty members in higher education institutions	205 individuals from 32 higher education institutions	45% in top management positions, 44% faculty members or department managers, 11% international coordinators
	Domestic and international students studying in a Hungarian higher education institution	2739 individuals from 35 higher education institutions	61% international students, 37% domestic students, 2% cross-border students of Hungarian nationality
<b>QUALITATIVE METHOD</b>			
3. Document analysis, literature study	Websites of HE institutions, strategic documents of HE institutions	Large scale	
4. Interviews with university and managers, international coordinators, interviews with domestic and international students	Managers, international co-ordinators, faculty members in HE institutions	28 interviews	Corvinus University Budapest University of Technology and Economics Eötvös Loránd University Óbuda University University of Pécs University of Szeged Central European University
	Domestic and international students studying in a Hungarian higher education institutions	44 interviews ( <i>of which 22 with international and 22 with domestic students</i> )	Corvinus University Budapest University of Technology and Economics Eötvös Loránd University Óbuda University University of Western Hungary, Sopron Campus Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design University of Pécs University of Szeged University of Debrecen Pázmány Péter Catholic University



## Internationalisation of higher education in figures

In international comparison, the percentage of international students is high in medical and agriculture education, whereas it is relatively low in science and social sciences. The percentage of international students is higher than the OECD average, however, the majority of international students study in Ba/BSc or MA/MSc courses, relatively few of them participate in PhD programmes. Inward and outward mobility are well balanced: the ratio of outgoing students matches the ratio of incoming students (Education at a Glance, 2017).

Using university register data, statistical analysis was made of the internationalisation of Hungarian higher education. Four characteristically different groups of students were distinguished, these are as follows:

- Group 1: Degree mobility students (except for medical students)
- Group 2: Degree mobility students studying medicine
- Group 3: Credit mobility students in BA/BSc and MA/MSc courses
- Group 4: Cross-border students of Hungarian nationality

A dynamic increase in the ratio of students of foreign citizenship could be observed over the past ten years. Whereas 3.9 per cent of all students studying in Hungary were foreign citizens in 2006, the ratio of foreign students was 6.1 per cent in 2011, and grew to a total of 9.6 per cent of all students in higher education. Over ten years, the ratio of foreign students more than doubled in Hungarian higher education.

The background factors behind this development are twofold. On one hand, the total number of students of foreign citizenship has grown by 70 per cent. On the other, however, the higher ratio of international students is also attributable to the fact that the number of domestic students dropped significantly (by more than one third) during the same period. During the 10 years in question, the total number of students in Hungarian higher education dropped by 140 000. The growth of the number of international students by 11 000 could but counterbalance this loss. (Table 1).

Table 2. Ratio of the number of students with foreign citizenship to the total number of students by level of training

Level of training	Total number of students (headcount)			Number of students with foreign citizenship (headcount)			Ratio of foreign students to the total number of students in the given year (%)		
	Year 2006	Year 2011	Year 2016	Total 2006/07	Total 2011/12	Total 2016/17	Year 2006	Year 2011	Year 2016
First degree courses (BA/BSc)	91 365	226 841	174 158	2 858	8 335	10 261	3.1%	3.7%	5.9%
University courses	113 438	8 107	51	6 392	636	1	5.6%	7.8%	2.0%
Higher vocational training in HE institutions	10 842	21 115	13 317	164	288	166	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%
College undergra- duate courses	163 323	8 632	5	3 803	367		2.3%	4.3%	0.0%
Master's courses (MA/MSc)	110	39 039	36 620	29	1 946	4 105	26.4%	5.0%	11.2%
Undivided long university courses	7 583	33 766	39 873	1 619	9 202	11 140	21.4%	27.3%	27.9%
Postgraduate specialisation courses	21 903	15 070	15 636	472	317	447	2.2%	2.1%	2.9%
Doctoral educa- tion (PhD/DLA)	7 784	7 254	7 358	719	805	1 351	9.2%	11.1%	18.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>416 348</b>	<b>359 824</b>	<b>287 018</b>	<b>16 056</b>	<b>21 896</b>	<b>27 471</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

Source: FIR ad hoc query; CSO on-line statistics on education, Students, graduates in higher education

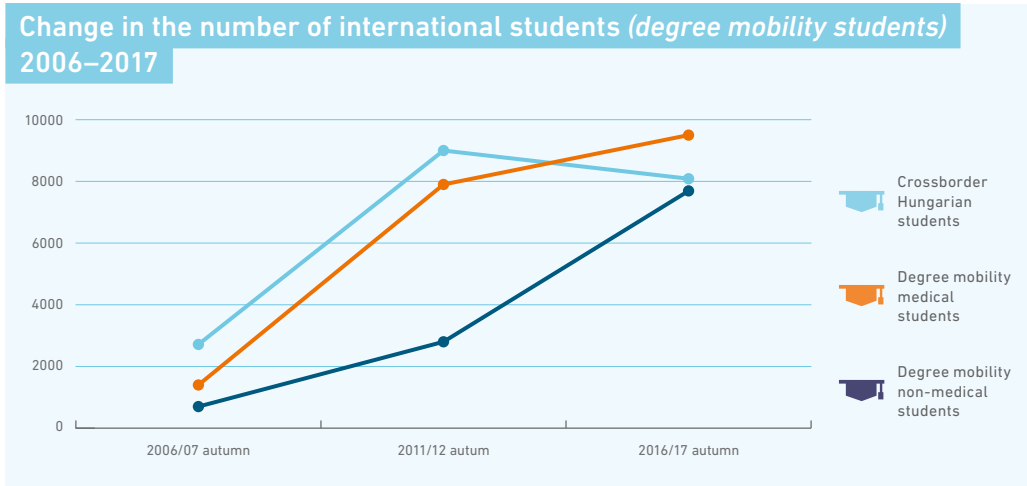
Among international students enrolled in degree courses, the most dynamic increase in numbers were found in Group 1, where Chinese students constitute the largest group with over 1000 students. An increase in student numbers can be seen in Group 2 (medical students) as well, though the growth rate is slowing down. In this group German students represent the largest nationality.

On the other hand, there is a marked decrease in the number of cross-border Hungarian students. In total, the number of cross-border Hungarian students dropped by 1700 in the last five years (Figure 1). International students with a Hungarian background mostly chose to study in universities near the Hungarian border, such as the University of Szeged, the University of Debrecen, Széchenyi István University (Győr), Szent István Egyetem (Gödöllő), but a significant number of students study in Budapest at universities with great tradition like the Eötvös Loránd University or the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. Interestingly, the university of Pécs did not seem to be so attractive for cross-border Hungarian students.

As far as credit mobility is concerned, the distribution of students by foreign citizenship does not show a marked over-representation of any nationality. Within the target group German, Chinese, French, and Turkish students are the most numerous subgroups. Universities in Budapest are the main targets of credit mobility. Only universities with a Budapest campus are able to receive more than 500 international students.



Figure 1. Change in the number of international students in Hungary between 2006 and 2017



Source: FIR ad hoc query; CSO on-line published statistics in education, Students, graduates in higher education

Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest is the most significant credit mobility partner receiving nearly 1300 international students. Besides the Budapest campuses, three large universities across the country should be mentioned as most active participants in credit mobility programmes: the University of Debrecen, the University of Szeged, and the University of Pécs.

On examination of the forms of financing we find the following: Of the students who study on state grant/scholarship, nearly 100 per cent are cross-border Hungarian students (Group 3 students). In the group of self-financing students Group 1 (degree mobility) students have a 42 per cent share and Group 2 (medical) students have a 45 per cent share. Of the students who study on a defrayal basis and started their studies before 2012, two thirds are medical students and one fifth are international students with some Hungarian background.

65 per cent of cross-border Hungarian students are financed by Hungarian state scholarships, 26 per cent of them study on a defrayal basis. Credit mobility students receive financial support from EU funds (Erasmus+, Leonardo, CEEPUS programme, etc.).

Degree courses for mobile students are organised on a defrayal basis or on a self-financing basis. 4 per cent of Group 1 (non-medical) students and 16 per cent of Group 2 (medical) students study on a defrayal basis, whereas 95 per cent of Group 1 and 84 per cent of Group 2 students study on a self-financing basis. 9 per cent of mobile students are financed by the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme.

An inquiry into the distribution of mobile students by field of study reveals that the training of physicians and health workers plays a prominent role in inward student mobility. Data on the distribution of degree mobility students by field of study (unfortunately not containing the data of Group 3 students) show that the health study field alone (medical training and the training of health workers and healthcare specialists and managers) have a share of 40 per cent in the total of incoming degree mobility students. Further study fields of significance include economics with a share of 13 per cent of mobile students, agriculture, technology and humanities with a share above 8 per cent each, and social sciences with a share of somewhat more than 5 per cent. Without the share of cross-border Hungarian students, training in medical sciences and economic sciences provide for two thirds of incoming degree mobility students.

The distribution of cross-border Hungarian students is much more balanced with respect to field of study and more or less follow the pattern characteristic of the domestic student population. For mobile students with a Hungarian background, language competence in Hungarian is decisively important as shown by the fact that 97 per cent attend Hungarian language courses as part of their studies. The trend of participation numbers of students with a Hungarian background follows the decreasing trend of participation of domestic students, which is due to changes of regulations in higher education. Thus the decrease in the number of mobile students with a Hungarian background is much more an indicator of the change in the participation rate in higher education in general than of the internationalisation of the Hungarian higher education system. It is worth noting that the number of students dropped most in the field of study where the state financed study places suffered the greatest restriction, i.e. in law and economics.

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, 2622 credit mobility students came to Hungary from 23 countries in 2015, the largest numbers from France and Germany. Less than one fifth of the students came to participate in the Student Mobility of Placement (SMP). Of 864 mobile students in practical training (SMP) the majority came from Romania.

4040 students from Hungary participated in credit mobility or practical training programmes abroad in 2015, Germany being the major target country. Regarding the rate of mobile students, Corvinus University in Budapest plays an eminent role in promoting student mobility. The ratio of international students studying at Corvinus University is the highest among Hungarian universities (4.8 per cent) and the same holds for the ratio of outgoing students of Corvinus University participating in the Erasmus+ programme abroad (4.1 per cent). Compared to the total number of students, Debrecen University receives the smallest rate of Erasmus+ students. Regarding the absolute number of Hungarian Erasmus+ students abroad, Eötvös Loránd University is the largest sender institution (489 students) followed by Corvinus University (452 students) and Budapest University of Technology and Economics (404 students, 2.1 per cent of the total number of students).

As for staff mobility, the number of incoming professors and other staff members totalled 1633 coming from 31 countries in 2015, of which 514 came from Romania, presumably most of them of Hungarian nationality. The highest numbers of foreign teaching staff members were received by the University of Szeged within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Regarding outward staff mobility, the University of Szeged is the largest sender as well with 16 per cent of the staff participating in the Erasmus+ programme. Szeged University is followed by the University of Pécs (9 per cent), and the University of Debrecen (6 per cent). Altogether the staff members participating in the Erasmus+ outward mobility programme represented 45 Hungarian higher education institutions.

The number of international students receiving a Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship and an active student status grew from 420 to 1687 between 2014 and 2016 (autumn semester). Many of them studied at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, at the University of Pécs and at Eötvös Loránd University. As far as follow up data is available, Nigerian students seem to be the most successful: of the 40 students enrolled in the 2014 autumn semester, 39 graduated with a diploma. Compared to domestic students, the drop-out rate of foreign students is relatively low. While over 40% of Hungarian students leave their studies without graduating, only 4% of foreign students on the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship fail to obtain a diploma. It must be noted, however, that this is an estimation because drop-out data on international students is incomplete.



## Internationalisation from the point of view of HE institutions

An online questionnaire was developed asking higher education managers, professors and other staff members about the goals, practices and problems related to the internationalisation of higher education in general and within their institution.

Most respondents mentioned mobility as a main objective of internationalisation (38%). Joint projects, international conferences and research was the second most frequently named objective (26%), while international visibility, improvement of the quality of education and enriching the offer of foreign language programmes were mentioned in third and fourth place respectively (15-13%).

Among mobility objectives, attracting foreign students was mentioned most frequently. Related to scientific goals, international publication and access to conferences seemed the most important objectives of internationalisation. Few respondents mentioned the inflow of foreign professors as an internationalisation objective.

Among the responses to the question about the institution's strategic goals, one can distinguish three markedly different attitudes toward internationalisation. For some respondents, mobility as such is a value in itself and within this general goal, mostly outward mobility of students and staff is meant. According to another approach, internationalisation should mainly mean the promotion of research, international publications and conferences (interestingly, this attitude does not distinguish members of doctoral schools from university staff in general). The third approach is business oriented: attractiveness for foreign students raises prestige and revenues for the institution while research projects, international publications and conferences do not play a relevant role in reaching these goals. Mobility goals were mentioned mainly by top managers and other leaders of the institutions including international coordinators, whereas prestige and revenue goals were mostly preferred by the teaching staff. Middle managers were those who had the most complex approach including international conferences, publications along with mobility and business aspects in their vision of internationalisation.

Analysing the strategic goals of institutions by field of study we found that respondents working in medical faculties had the least detailed vision of internationalisation. Besides mobility goals and enhancing inward mobility, hardly any other goals were mentioned. The training of physicians, the most international study field in Hungarian higher education, is paradoxically quite unidimensional as far as the interpretation of internationalisation is concerned. It is remarkable that hardly any of the respondents mentioned conferences, publication and research as goals related to internationalisation.

To the question whether their institution has an internationalisation strategy, 124 respondents (61%) gave a positive answer, 36 per cent thought the university does not have such a strategy, 3 per cent did not answer. These percentages correspond to the international trends: about half of the European higher education institutions have an explicit internationalisation strategy. A further 35 per cent have no specific strategy document, but elements of internationalisation are included in the general development plans of the institution (Sursock, 2015).

Respondents who know their institution's internationalisation strategy in detail agreed that enhancing the prestige and international visibility of their institution are of eminent importance. Furthermore, 90 per cent mentioned that the improvement of education quality and enhancement of students' multicultural competences are explicitly stated goals in the strategy. Three-quarters of the respondents reported that raising revenues is an explicit goal in the strategy. Yet, this is the main theme of monitoring and feedback in the evaluation of the institution. Thus, although raising revenues may not appear explicitly in every strategy, this is the most latent objective influencing strategic thinking and the institution's development practice. At the same time, student related goals, such as providing international environment for non-mobile students or developing international competences are much less emphasised in the evaluation of institutions. The interviews confirmed that the monitoring of detailed international strategies is not a standard practice. Evaluation is based on a few cardinal indicators, mostly related to the number and ratio of international students.

Regarding the instruments of the internationalisation of Hungarian higher education, there are important elements that are still missing. Such instruments are, amongst others, the following: franchising, internationally accessible distance education, virtual mobility, advertising in foreign media, submission of claims for patents abroad, training courses for the staff of partner institutions, student ambassadors, staff members with permanent domicile abroad, study programmes leading to joint /double/multiple degrees, promotions and use of alumni activity, researchers with a foreign qualification employed (see Figure 2).

## Number of mentions of existing elements (Number of respondents=81)

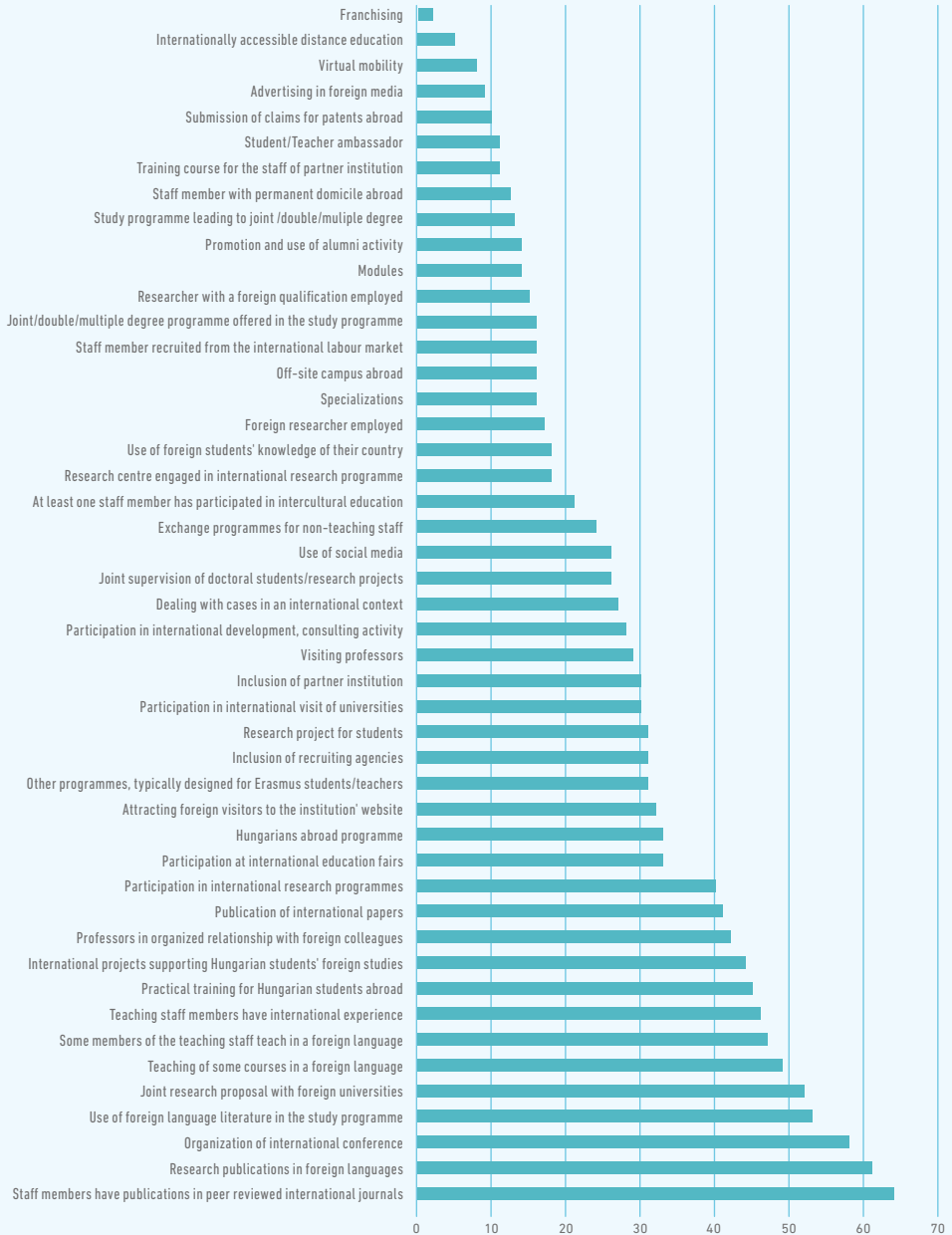


Figure 2. Frequency of mentions of activities indicating internationalisation (%) N=81

A growing number of institutions have a special unit for tasks related to internationalisation, and more and more institutions have a vice-rector responsible for international affairs. In our survey, 42 per cent of the respondents named the vice-rector, 15 per cent named the director of international affairs as the person responsible for the internationalisation strategy. 7 per cent named the rector, the rector's office or the director of foreign affairs. About one third of the respondents reported that the unit or department of international affairs is responsible for the internationalisation strategy. At the faculty level, the dean or his/her deputy was mentioned by three-quarters of the respondents and 11 per cent named the director of international affairs as the person responsible for the internalisation strategy.

Universities show different levels of integration of faculties with respect to internationalisation. Eötvös Loránd University is the extreme case of faculty autonomy, where the international office has been enlarged and the faculty management has become stronger as well, yet, the faculties are basically independent and the university does not have a unified or common appearance at the international level. Typically, faculties act autonomously and their international units reconcile their steps on a case to case basis. The University of Pécs established a permanent post for the administration of international affairs at their Faculty of Music and Visual arts two years ago. At Corvinus University, a staff committee writes the internationalisation strategy, and a unit with three posts has been set up for the administration of international affairs. At the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, there has been a vice-rector responsible for the internationalisation strategy for three years. The University of Szeged appears to have established a delicate balance of faculty autonomy and a common internationalisation strategy.

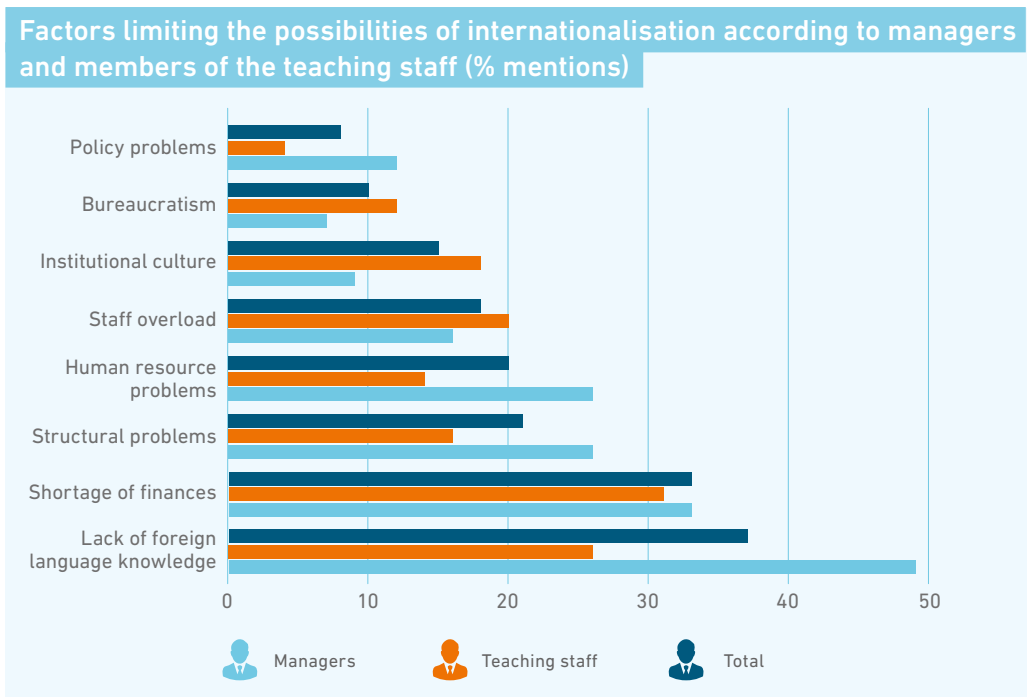
The institution's website is an essential point of orientation, it is the gateway to the world, so to say. The quality of its information content and attractiveness are of cardinal importance. In the case of some universities, each faculty has their own website, and in some cases there is even more than one central website as well. These are sometimes redundant, often of old style appearance and hardly able to function as branding the international appearance of the university. Although our respondents perceive this as a problem, only few institutions have managed to develop a common English language website fit to advertise a 21st century university. However, improvement of the website is one of the most important development objectives in most institutions.

Quite often, change in the management brings about the reform of internationalisation strategy in higher education institutions. The new trend is obviously an integrated approach and the reorganisation of tasks and responsibilities related to international activities enabling the university to feature as a branded centre of international education.

# Obstacles to internationalisation

Half of the respondents think that insufficient foreign language competence of students, lecturers and the administrative staff is the most important obstacle to the internationalisation of higher education. The second most frequent obstacle mentioned was the shortage of financial resources. About one respondent in four mentioned structural problems and problems with human resources. This latter covers remarks regarding the fragmented nature of the organisation, the incompatibility of the structure and content of the degree courses with international practice, unsatisfactory quality of human resources, and few international connections. 10 per cent of the factors mentioned is related to inadequate regulations, the wrong approach of the management, the overcomplicated processes in application for grants, and bureaucracy (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Obstacles to internationalisation according to managers (43 people) and members of the teaching staff (51 people) (% mentions)



In two items, there is significant difference in the responses of respondents in management position and members of the teaching staff. Managers see the lack of foreign language competence and structural problems (fragmentation of leadership, incompetence, incompatibility of the content and structure of courses with international practices) as much more serious problems than members of the teaching staff do.



## Lack of financial and human resources – dominance of revenue policy

Underfinance may cause insufficient capacity for internationalisation. For example, it may be responsible for the shortage of staff members with sufficient competence in English. An equally or more serious problem is that the lack of financial resources together with bureaucratic obstacles and envy of peers – often characterising institutional culture – seriously hinders the employment of foreign professors, which is a main obstacle to raising internationalisation of higher education to a higher level.

As for student mobility, the existing scholarships are insufficient to cover the costs of studying abroad, in most cases the greater part of costs must be raised by the students themselves. This can be detected in the decreasing percentages of Hungarian Erasmus+ mobility students as reported by several universities. At the same time, several of our interviewees state that tight finances are not the primary obstacles to internationalisation. They think that the policy that puts university revenues in the first place and above everything else is the main hindering factor in internationalisation. In their view, internationalisation manifests itself in immaterial goods not necessarily involving financial transactions at the level of the institution's budget. Exchanges and mutual support in kind, enriched connections and networking do not bring in revenues at once, they also have costs, but they should be looked at as investments. In the chancellery system, however, this kind of scientific or cultural approach and solidarity of the international academic world is of secondary importance. Unless they bring immediate revenues for the university, research, development and exchange programmes are difficult to carry through even if no great expenses are involved – these activities do not fit the logic of state administration. Hungarian universities are under an ever-increasing pressure to raise funds to complement state financing as the loss due to the declining numbers of Hungarian students in the past decade cannot be counterbalanced by the increasing number foreign students. For several universities, this amounts to a tightening budget, which means that the growing number of foreign students and foreign language graduation courses cannot be used to invest in quality development (i.e. by employing foreign professors, initiating and participating in international courses and research projects, submitting claims for patents).



# Integration of international students – the organisational culture of institutions

## Services to students

As shown above, recruiting foreign students and offering courses in foreign languages are a high priority among the goals of internationalisation in Hungarian universities. It follows from this that services to foreign students are the most important activities of the staff appointed to international tasks.

As expected, responses to the online questionnaire show that the most frequently used service is counselling and information related to the student's studies. Beyond this, sharing information on practical matters and multilingual communication were judged as most important. These services are present in most cases and their quality was judged satisfactory.

Respondents found the provision of board and lodging, the help to obtain grants and the financial support very important, but they were far less satisfied with these services. They were most critical of the quality of board and lodging, which is unquestionably due to the insufficient number of college and dormitory places and, in many cases, their low quality.

The interviews revealed that the extension of mentoring services is one of the most important elements in the internationalisation strategy and in the structural changes to be implemented at the university level. The University of Szeged and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics have such mentoring services serving all foreign students of the university. This service functions as part of the organisational unit responsible for internationalisation. Strikingly, there is hardly any connection between the mentors and the student self-government.

## Support of credit mobility

Credit mobility students arrive from very different academic backgrounds. It is often problematic to fit their studies into the structure and content of the university's course programme. At the same time, this sometimes inspires the teaching staff to find new solutions to the problem. One of our respondents reported that Erasmus+ students are given an innovative project based course package at the Faculty of Architecture of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. Admittedly, one of the aims of developing this course package was for it to eventually be offered to Hungarian students, too. It seems, however, that such innovations are difficult to carry through in the given institutional culture.

The majority of our respondents who are teaching staff members report that their institution ascribes credits to the studies abroad. 15 per cent say that foreign credits are rarely acknowledged in their institution and 20 per cent say they are acknowledged in some cases but not in others. Accepting credits obtained abroad is a persistent problem as was shown by a study of the Tempus Public Foundation several years ago (Tempus Közalapítvány, 2015), and it still exists as we see from the interviews. On the one hand, credit mobility students typically choose courses without due consideration to how they fit their study programme and, at the same time, basic courses in the universities' programmes are expected to be accomplished at the home university.

For Hungarian students, lack of non-acceptance of the Erasmus+ semester often means a delay in graduation. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ grant covers only a smaller part of the costs of studying abroad for the student. On top of this, many Erasmus+ programmes are not equally accessible for Hungarian

students. Amongst others, this may be one reason why universities and their faculties differ in how far they can use the Erasmus+ programme for students. As far as staff mobility is concerned, institutions are able to make use of the opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme much better and the places available are usually filled.

Hungarian students stated in the interviews that several factors hinder the use of opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme. They said the grant does not cover the costs and it is often paid too late. Students who work alongside their studies do not want to lose their job. Many students find problems with the acknowledgment of their studies abroad and they fear of a delay in graduation. The lack of sufficient language competence is also a major reason why many students would not embark on credit mobility. Hungarian credit mobility students were generally satisfied with the higher education institution receiving them. On the other hand, they believe there is much to be improved in their own institutions with regard to preparation for credit mobility and the acknowledgement of the skills and knowledge acquired abroad. They thought their institution was generally efficient in helping them contact the university abroad but rather less efficient in preparing them to study and live in another country.

Faculty members' views are partly consistent with the judgement of students: they believe it is not as much their task to prepare the students to study abroad than it is to help returning students readapt themselves after the study tour. Only one teacher in five thought their department was good in preparing their students to live abroad, whereas twice as many thought that they were helpful in the readaptation of their students.

## Organisational culture and leadership

Teachers and managers who were interviewed, as well as those who filled out the online questionnaire, emphasised that institutional culture and the inadequate interpretation of leadership have a hindering effect on the internationalisation of higher education. The data of the online questionnaire suggests that middle managers have a remarkably more mature conception of internationalisation than top managers.

Unity of action, level of internal cooperation and coordination are features determining how far an institution's organisational culture supports internationalisation. It is no accident that the most frequent mentions of internationalisation are publications, conferences and research in our survey. All are typically individual activities of staff members. The impact of such activities on the university largely depends on the organisational strength of the university's academic community. Unfortunately, excessive decentralisation does not favour unity of action with respect to internationalisation apart from the fact that its side effects are the wasting of capacities and the ineffective sharing of knowledge and information.

On the other hand, budget constraints and a total lack of autonomy at lower levels of the organisation (a feature of the chancellery system) do not promote internationalisation either. Top managers often have to manoeuvre between the Scylla and Charybdis of university interest and individual ambitions without being able to attain synergy. Harmony can only be achieved in an institutional culture of trust and cooperation. The most successful institutions are the ones capable of establishing the delicate balance between the unity of action at the university level and academic autonomy at the faculty, and at the department and teaching staff level, which is a sine qua non of high quality education and research.

Students are also part of the institutional culture. Incidentally, wherever foreign and Hungarian students are taught together, the common experience of staff members is that Hungarian students are

more restrained, less active, and less motivated than their international counterparts. If this attitude is the product of public education, it is no wonder that public education has a direct impact on the internationalisation of higher education.

## Communication, integration

Internationalisation of higher education partly depends on how international students can be integrated into the professional and informal communities of Hungarian universities and how much they mix with Hungarian students. Our results show that a greater proportion of international students are open to contact Hungarian students than vice versa and they are also willing to do something about it. Hungarian students seek acquaintances among foreign students less frequently. Common course work, parties and sports events organised by the university are the typical scenes where the two groups mingle, but a large proportion of both Hungarian and international students do not spend any time with members of the other group. According to the majority of respondents, the reason for this is not the lack of motivation but rather the lack of opportunity. Both groups think that more social events should be organised by the university to help members of the two groups meet informally. The interviews reveal that social events for the two groups are organised separately and there is no interaction between them. Hungarian students do not attend programmes organised for foreign students and vice versa – for want of English language information or invitation, foreign students rarely participate in social events organised for Hungarian students, often not knowing about such events at all.

Both Hungarian and foreign students expressed their wish to have more common courses or projects. Hungarian students who have participated in joint programmes or projects mentioned that it was a very positive experience to get to know the views of international students with a different background. Nevertheless, several of our interviewees stressed that cooperation sometimes became stuck due to professional or communication problems, or because they did not know each other.

Our Hungarian respondents admit that mingling between the two groups is also hindered by the fact that Hungarian students are less interested and open towards international students. Evidence of the interviews suggests that Hungarian students mostly seek the company of the international group out of personal motivation and on their own initiative. Several of them mentioned the importance of social events and programmes initiated by international students or the university. It is rare for Hungarian students to initiate the mingling of the two groups. Hungarian interviewees expressed their awareness of the problem. On average, more international students said they had Hungarian friends than Hungarian students mentioned they had friends amongst the international students.

The leaders of the universities are aware of the lack of communication between domestic and foreign students (perhaps with the exception of Szeged University, where students mingle easier). However, they think that this is a private affair and that this depends on the students themselves. It is clear however, that the courses offered are a lot different from what foreign students expected and the lack of common courses is the main reason why there are insufficient opportunities for Hungarian and international students to interact. Efforts on the part of staff members who wish to create a common sphere of interaction and communication for the two groups usually fade either because of the problems of prevailing regulations or because of the lack of interest on the part of students.



## Internationalisation within the organisation

### Foreign language environment, foreign language competence

The use of a common language is a problem in the cooperation of Hungarian and international students. Although there is a similar proportion of domestic students and international students who speak English, our respondents from the international group felt much more confident in English than their Hungarian counterparts. Although about half of the Hungarian students speak English, they often underestimate their own knowledge of English while international students typically do not. The responses of domestic students suggest that the more intensive use of foreign language literature in Hungarian courses and a wider access to foreign language courses for Hungarian students could possibly improve the situation. Universities apparently do not make optimum use of these opportunities.

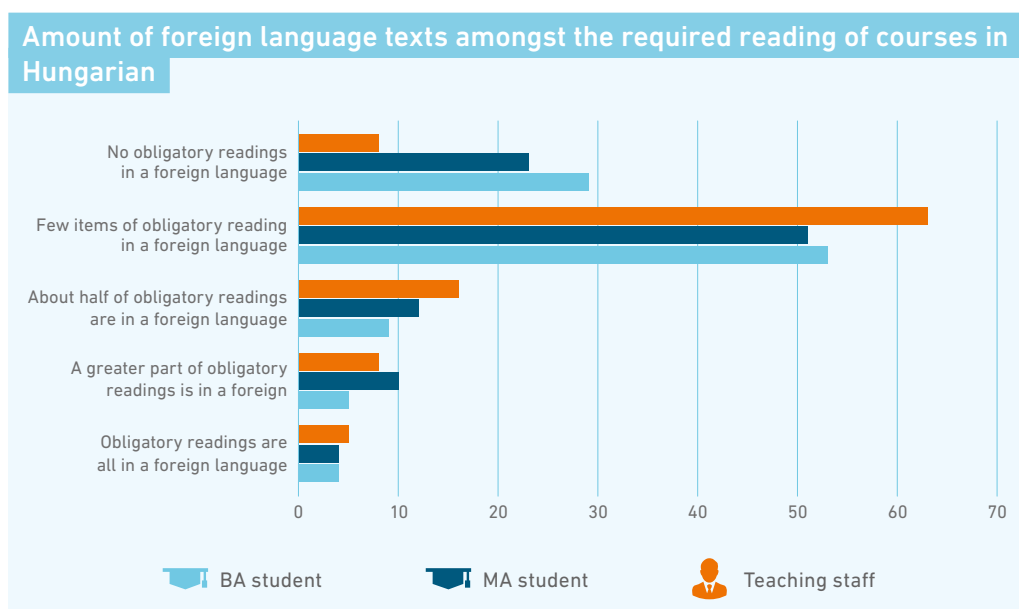
Leaders of higher education institutions are of the opinion that insufficient language competence is the greatest obstacle to mobility. Regarding the question about language learning possibilities in their institution, 4 per cent answered that there are no foreign language courses at all in their institution. 36 per cent replied that there are general language courses for students and 29 per cent reported that professional or technical language is taught in their institution. One fourth of staff members and department managers answered that students must finance their language learning themselves.

Out of all the students asked, the largest proportion reported that technical language courses gave them the opportunities to improve their foreign language competence, followed by the proportion of students reporting that there are general language courses available. 5 per cent of PhD students and 10 per cent of undergraduates had not even heard of language learning possibilities at the university. Hungarian students of faculties of humanities, economics, and social sciences felt most that the university urges and encourages them to improve their foreign language competence, students in teacher training find the least encouragement to develop foreign language skills.

One of the greatest problems of internationalisation is that the institutional culture of Hungarian higher education is rather introvert. The reading of foreign language literature is not really required in most Hungarian higher education courses and the offer of foreign language courses is rather limited. Although there are good examples of higher education institutions organising language courses from internal resources, this is not the general practice.

Most students report that they are given required reading in foreign languages, but this is a rare occasion for the majority. Foreign language reading is mainly required at the postgraduate level, less so on Master's courses and it is least required in undergraduate courses. The majority of our respondents belonging to the teaching staff confirm that the list of required reading contains few foreign language texts if any at all (see Figure 4). 49 per cent of the respondents report that they sometimes use foreign language texts in their work with students, 8 per cent report that they never do. 31 per cent report that they use foreign language texts in several courses, but only 12 per cent seems to use foreign language texts almost all the time.

Figure 4. Extent of the use of foreign language texts and literature in Hungarian higher education courses reported by teachers (N=75) and students (BA students=329, MA students=99)



The idea that English should be used as the language of instruction at least in parts of the courses is emerging in more and more institutions. Supporters argue that this could improve students' language skills, enhance communication and exchange experiences between domestic and international students, and it would contribute to openness towards foreign students. However, the lack of capacity, tight budgets as well as legal impediments are serious obstacles to this. The Higher Education Act states the preference of Hungarian as the language of instruction and, at the same time, the teaching staff are not encouraged to take on extra burdens.

## Sharing of international experiences

It was mentioned that universities are reluctant to build on foreign students' knowledge and experiences in their teaching. This is not independent of staff members' views of training in other countries. In general, they believe their courses are better than the ones in which their international students participate at home. This is also why they refrain from acknowledging the credits obtained abroad and, even more, why they are not very interested in their students' experiences with foreign institutions.

According to the data of the online inquiry, less than half of the students think that their experiences abroad are made use of in their home university or help improve learning conditions and internationalisation. Students who were interviewed thought that they were not really expected to share their experiences abroad in their institution, and what and how much they shared of their experiences depended largely on their initiatives.

Lecturers' and professors' willingness to share their experiences abroad varies a lot. It depends on the individual, although some faculties have a protocol which describes the obligations of homecoming professors including obligations to share professional experiences of study tours.

## Regulations, bureaucratism

Although language difficulties and lack of finances were reported as the primary obstacles to internationalisation, the most detailed critical remarks referred to the excessive bureaucratism in state regulations as the main impediment to internationalisation. It seems that initiatives like the invitation of foreign professors, starting of a new English graduation course, setting up an exchange programme mostly get stuck in the meshes of bureaucratic state regulations and public procurement processes before they can be realised.

Experts view that imposing the alien logic of state administration on higher education is fundamentally wrong. In the world of research and education, immaterial goods like knowledge, prestige, social contacts and access to a larger, sometimes worldwide infrastructure or knowledge base often count just as much or more than a pile of money, but they can only be utilised in an adequate regulatory environment. Trust and magnanimity paired with reasonable control are needed to make the most of immaterial goods at the lowest cost in a higher education institution. Tight control even in the smallest affairs without real consequences or sensible feedback proves entirely counterproductive, and hampers development. Respondents from lower level administration and members of the administrative staff agree that English language competence and organisational culture need further development. They are generally satisfied with the administrative system of Tempus Public Foundation. However, they think there is room for improvement in the administrative units and chancellery offices of the universities and suggest that they should be more active partners in the institutions' mobility programme.

## Phases of the internationalisation of higher education

Higher education has reached a point where it should be raised to a higher level of quality. Top-ranking universities in the field of internationalisation are of the opinion that more innovative solutions would be needed, solutions for attracting self-financing students in a larger number and not only students who are state financed or receive Hungarian government support. They find it striking that universities are deprived of income sources like patent rights and inventions because the government supports R&D activities of firms rather than the R&D activities of universities.

The key to quality in higher education lies in the selection of professors. As part of the internationalisation policy, it would be important to attract distinguished professors to our universities. There are manifold problems with this. Bureaucratic procedures alien to the world of research and higher education and insufficient finances available for this purpose are two of the most important obstacles. It is more or less impossible to employ a high ranking foreign professor for a longer period of time because of the cost and because it also raises tensions among the local staff paid at a lower level. Practically, the only possibilities are to invite professors for a short period of time or invite them on condition that they are paid by their home university. Some institutions have discovered however, that high teaching quality should be paid for and this has to be accepted by their organisation.

Regarding future plans, three approaches can be distinguished and these largely depend on the level of internationalisation within the university. For those who are at the starting level of internationalisation, offering more foreign language courses, increasing the number of foreign students and the number of lecturers who can deliver lectures in English are still priorities. Besides these, they seek to establish more bilateral contacts with foreign institutions and they try to be present at more professional fora. At a higher level of internationalisation, institutions embark on establishing double degree programmes or their aim is to become a bilingual university. This involves employing a larger number of foreign professors and participate in international higher education networks.

At the third level of internationalisation (where 20 to 25 per cent of international students is a realistic target) quality standards of content and cultural atmosphere are also given attention. Such institutions are characterised by openness toward other cultures, by learner oriented approach in teaching, by real interest in the higher education experiences of students in other parts of the world and by awareness of the institution's strengths and weaknesses (the opposite of arrogant provincialism). In such universities, revenues – the import side of internationalisation so to say – is not the only focus of attention. Equally important is the new knowledge generated by the multicultural population of the university, which is part of the export goods of the university. These aspirations are present in the changing attitudes of the teaching staff. For example, one staff member of the Faculty of Architecture at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics whom we interviewed has written a book on the reception of different cultures. At the Central European University, teaching materials are adjusted to the requirements of globalisation. Our respondent from the University of Szeged finds that preparations for a student oriented approach in teaching is essential if a university wants to attract Asian students in growing numbers.





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