

STUDYING AND LIVING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

REPORT ON RESEARCH
AT CZECH UNIVERSITIES



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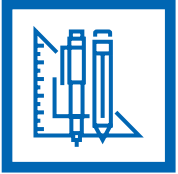
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PART I. INTRODUCTION

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This national report presents the results of a survey conducted at the end of 2019 to **evaluate activities promoting the Czech Republic as a study destination, monitor the quality of courses and availability of support services at universities, and, consequently, improve the study conditions for foreign students in the Czech Republic.** The survey was conducted by the Czech National Agency for International Education (DZS) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic (MŠMT) and higher-education institutions. It was tied to the implementation of the Action Plan for Polytechnic Education under the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030 and reflected the **Priority Objective 3: Internationalisation under the Implementation Scheme for the Long-Term Plan of Educational, Scientific, Research, Development and Innovation, Artistic and Other Creative Activities in Higher Education for 2020¹.**

Although numerous Czech universities have already been conducting their own similar surveys among foreign students attending full degree programmes, this is the first national survey of this focus and scope. **This is a unique document that, for the first time, comprehensively maps the situation of foreign students at Czech universities.** It can help shape policy, strategies and practices in the recruitment, admission, retention and prospects of international students at both the national and institutional levels. The results of the study will, therefore, serve as a reference for the **Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for Higher Education from 2021**, the subsequent **Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education from 2021**, and for the preparation of strategic plans and **strategies for the internationalisation of individual universities.**

The survey's conclusions will also be used to evaluate and plan further promotional activities under **Study in the Czech Republic**, a national initiative coordinated by the Czech National Agency for International Education that aims to introduce foreign students to university studies in the Czech Republic and support Czech universities in their international activities. Activities carried out under Study in the Czech Republic include the administration of www.studyin.cz, a website offering an interactive portal of university study programmes, attendance at foreign higher education fairs, promotion through social media and online events, and cooperation with student ambassadors.

^{1/} <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/vysoke-skolstvi/dlouhodoby-zamer>



RESEARCH FOCUS

Through universities, **full-time foreign students at all levels, i.e. bachelor's, master's or doctorate, were approached with an online questionnaire in both Czech and English.** Data was collected from 15 November 2019 to 27 January 2020 from a total of 55 universities, of which 26 were public, 28 private and one state-run. The survey data was evaluated in the first quarter of 2020.

In its content, the survey focused on four basic areas. The first two followed the path taken by foreign students to reach a Czech higher education institution, and thus focused on the stage before they started their university studies. These parts map the **promotional activities** within the “enrolment funnel”.² The other two parts are geared towards **evaluating the study-related and social aspects of foreign students' stay** in the Czech Republic, and the support provided to them by universities in these areas.

The first area focused on how foreign students learn about the opportunities to study in the Czech Republic and what motivates their decision to study at a Czech university. It provides information fundamental to decision-making concerning the selection and also to the setting of promotion methods. This promotional work currently takes place nationally under the **Study in the Czech Republic** initiative and is also carried out by **consortia of colleges** (e.g. Study in Prague) or **individually** by universities on their own.

The second area aims to support foreign students who have already decided to study in the Czech Republic and now have to manage the **procedures associated with entering a Czech university**, such as the admissions procedure, the recognition of their previous education and the visa process. These tend to be long-term systemically set procedures linked to laws, decrees, methodological guidelines and directives. Another characteristic of this area is the fact that, in some respects, the procedures can go beyond the sphere of not only a university, but also of higher education itself, and therefore become a matter for inter-ministerial cooperation. This is particularly true for the visa process.

The third area monitors how the **quality of study itself** is perceived, i.e. whether it meets the expectations foreign students had when they arrived at a Czech university. Another important issue is whether study programmes take into account the specific needs of foreign students in terms of the language of instruction, study materials, and cultural differences.

^{2/} <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/erm/about/process.php>

The fourth area of the survey deals with the **living and social needs of foreign students and the conditions that universities create for them**. Universities need to consider that the requirements of foreign students differ in certain ways from those of domestic students. Foreign students are coming to a foreign country where, besides the language issue, they also lack the social bonds and background that domestic students have normally built up, as well as the knowledge of the environment they are in and its written and unwritten rules and procedures. The integration of foreign students into the student community and Czech society at large is therefore a major topic. Besides social factors, the survey also centred on important economic factors, such as housing and labour.

Clearly, students from different countries and regions are going to respond to the situation in different ways, because their answers will reflect the education system and the economic, social and cultural situation in their home country, including that country's processes, be it internal procedures or the Czech Republic's approach to the country in question (e.g. in visa matters or the recognition of studies). The perception of the Czech Republic and its higher education and institutions plays an important role, as do students' expectations related to studying in the Czech Republic and whether or not these are met, especially in comparison with the perception and expectations associated with studying in their home country or a country that serves as a quality benchmark for them.

This is one of the reasons why the report includes a chapter on **regional differences**. Specific regions are often represented by their most important countries and perhaps overly reflect the attitude of students in these countries. Even so, the similarity of countries and the behaviour of students in those regions means that this cohort is still useful for transferring the survey results to the regional level.



FOREIGN STUDENTS AT CZECH UNIVERSITIES

To put the survey results into context, we should present basic statistical data on foreign students. In the Czech Republic, a foreign student is considered to be a student who has non-Czech citizenship. The statistical data available from the Combined Information of Student Registers (SIMS)³ encompasses only foreign students enrolled in the study programmes in Czech or another language at Czech universities; foreign students arriving for study visits under mobility programmes are not included in these statistics.

As of 31 December 2019, the Czech Republic had **46,534 foreign students** in full-degree programmes. They accounted for **16.1%** of the total number of Czech university students, which was 288,915 on the same date.

Almost 88% of students from other countries were studying at public institutions, with the remaining 12% at private colleges.

Table 1:
**Public universities with the largest number
of foreign students (over 1,000 students)**

Name of institution	Number of foreign students
Charles University	9,021
Masaryk University	6,775
Brno University of Technology	4,006
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague	3,473
University of Economics, Prague	3,412
Czech Technical University in Prague	3,102
Palacký University Olomouc	2,104
Mendel University in Brno	1,611
VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava	1,056

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Table 2:
**Private universities with the largest number
of foreign students (over 500 students)**

Name of institution	Number of foreign students
University of Finance and Administration	962
Metropolitan University Prague	679

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Table 3:
**Classification of foreign
students by form of study**

Form of study	Number of foreign students	Share (%)
Full-time studies	42,039	90.5%
Part-time studies	4,522	9.7%

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Table 4:
**Classification of foreign students
by type of study programme**

Type of study programme	Number of foreign students	Share (%)
Bachelor's	22,918	49.3%
Master's, 4 to 6 years (non-structured)	7,432	16.0%
Master's, 1 to 3 years (following Bachelor's programme)	11,619	25.0%
Doctorate	4,696	10.1%

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

The **number of foreign university students in the Czech Republic has been growing** throughout the period in which SIMS has been monitoring this statistic, i.e. since 2000. As the number of university students with Czech citizenship has declined in the light of demographic developments, the share of foreign students in the total number of students has also grown. Since 2011, when the number of Czech students first began its gradual decline, the proportion of foreign students has increased by 6.2 percentage points.

Breaking foreign students down by country of origin, **students from Slovakia have long been the largest group**. As of 31 December 2019, 21,105 Slovaks were studying in the Czech Republic, accounting for 45.4% of the total number of foreign students. However, since 2012, there has been a decline in the number of Slovak students, mirroring the falling number of Czech students. Even so, the Slovaks are still the largest group of foreign students, and therefore have a significant influence on the statistics. Slovak students are quite a specific group, though. This is due to their country's historical development, its cultural proximity to the Czech culture and the fact that there are no language barriers between the two countries – Slovaks can use their mother tongue while studying in the Czech Republic. In many respects, they behave like Czech students and therefore, when assessing statistics and surveys, they need special consideration and should perhaps be assigned to a special group so that their weight and peculiar status do not distort the outputs and the resulting important information about the attitudes and behaviour of foreign students from other countries.

Another prominent group of foreign students is **students from the countries of the former Soviet Union**, mainly Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. With Slovakia leading the way, these countries then rank second, third, fourth and seventh. In total, students from the countries of the former Soviet Union alone make up **27.2%** of foreign students at Czech universities, and their absolute and relative shares have been surging in recent years, with students from Ukraine reporting the fastest growth. The number of Ukrainian students increased by 8.2% annually and has gone up by 64.6% over the past five years.

Table 5:
Number of foreign students from the most represented countries of the former USSR

Country	Number of students	Share (%)
Russia	6,221	13.4 %
Ukraine	3,622	7.8 %
Kazakhstan	1,970	4.2 %

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Other states with more than 200 students, ranked by the number of students on 31 December 2019, are India, Germany, China, Italy, United Kingdom, Vietnam, United States, Israel, Iran, Poland, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Portugal, Uzbekistan, Serbia and Norway. The Czech Republic is experiencing an increase in the number of students, sometimes a very significant one, from most of these countries, even though the numbers of students from some countries are declining.

Table 6:
Change (%) in the number of foreign students of foreign students from the most represented countries in the last five years

Country	Change from previous year (%)	Change (%) in last 5 years
China	34.6 %	394.0 %
Iran	23.1 %	311.9 %
India	17.9 %	299.2 %
Turkey	12.4 %	195.9 %
Israel	8.2 %	121.0 %
Italy	16.7 %	119.8 %
United States	11.5 %	83.4 %
Germany	5.9 %	81.0 %
Uzbekistan	3.3 %	67.3 %
Ukraine	8.2 %	64.5 %
Kazakhstan	7.5 %	38.4 %
Serbia	13.3 %	31.5 %
Belarus	7.6 %	30.1 %
Azerbaijan	7.5 %	29.7 %
Russia	7.6 %	19.5 %
United Kingdom	-9.5 %	-5.4 %
Poland	-5.7 %	-6.0 %
Portugal	-8.6 %	-32.7 %
Norway	-17.4 %	-44.6 %
Vietnam	-17.7 %	-46.6 %

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Broken down by the field that foreign students most often study at Czech universities, the **economic, medical and technical (including ICT) programmes** are most popular, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7:
Classification of foreign students by field of study,
as per the CZ-ISCED-F 2013⁴ Classification of Education

Level-one ISCED – broad fields	Number of foreign students
Business, administration and law (ISCED 04)	9,703
Health and welfare (ISCED 09)	8,366
Engineering, manufacturing and construction (ISCED 07)	6,173
Information and communication technologies (ISCED 06)	5,512
Social sciences, journalism and information (ISCED 03)	4,983
Arts and humanities (ISCED 02)	4,278
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (ISCED 05)	3,759
Services (ISCED 010)	1,671
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary (ISCED 08)	1,541
Education (ISCED 01)	788

Level-two ISCED – narrow fields (top 10)	Number of foreign students
Health (ISCED 091)	8,129
Business and administration (ISCED 041)	6,079
Social and behavioural sciences (ISCED 031)	4,244
Information and communication technologies (ISCED 061)	4,224
Inter-disciplinary programmes and qualifications involving business, administration and law (ISCED 048)	3,175
Engineering and engineering trades (ISCED 071)	3,166
Arts (ISCED 021)	1,683
Architecture and construction (ISCED 073)	1,665
Biological and related sciences (ISCED 051)	1,565

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

^{4/} https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/37519282/cz_isced_f_metodika.pdf/fa192327-9b96-425c-9e19-a87a8cb2a06f?version=1.0





PART II. METHODOLOGY

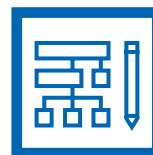
Classification criteria

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The underlying material for this report is data from a survey of foreign students in the Czech Republic that was conducted **between 15 November 2019 and 27 January 2020**.

All public, state, and private universities were invited to participate. Altogether, **86%** of universities took part. **The questionnaire was started by 10,248 respondents. Out of these, 6,975 provided complete responses.** The answers of those who filled in at least the whole of the first section (up to Question 11), i.e. a total of 8,410, were used. Students could choose whether to fill in the questionnaire in English or Czech. About two thirds completed the questionnaire in English (63%), the rest in Czech. The survey's return rate was 18.1%. During the field survey, universities were given the number of students who participated in the questionnaire to ensure smooth progress at their institution. Assistance was available for all universities in case they had technical problems or questions. This support made a significant contribution to the good return rate for this type of survey. The composition of respondents in terms of their country of origin, the individual host universities, and the study programmes is consistent with the actual breakdown, so the **results are representative of the total number of foreign students in the Czech Republic, of which there were 46,534 at the time the data was collected.**

Besides basic graphs, broken-down graphs are also used in this report. They reveal the differences between the individual groups, offer a deeper insight into the issue, and are thus helpful for a better understanding of the context. Not all types of breakdown have been used in all cases. With some questions, it is important to incorporate the view, for example, from various types of fields, while for other questions, there are larger differences when the results are broken down by region.



CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

The **basic classification graph** consists of three elements that always appear in the graphs together and in the same order: the student's country of origin, the language of study, and the study programme.

The first classification (Slovakia and other countries of origin) has been chosen to reflect how predominant Slovak students are in the data (39% of the entire sample). At the same time, Slovakia stands out from other countries because of its cultural and linguistic proximity to the Czech Republic. Slovak students are therefore not that different from Czech students and their experience may differ from those of other foreign students.

The language of study divides study programmes into two types: those taught in Czech and those taught in English. When the language of instruction in a study programme is Czech, the tuition is free of charge. On the other hand, study programmes with English as the tuition language are charged and are intended primarily for foreign students.

The third classification breaks down study programmes into bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes. As students are in different phases of study, they may be dealing with problems and experiencing situations specific to that particular phase.

The **second type of classification graph** shows the distribution by fields of study. The detailed ISCED-F 2013 classification was used in the questionnaire. For the purposes of these graphs, the responses are grouped into fifteen categories.

The **third type of classification graph** shows the distribution according to the seven countries of origin that are most represented in the data. Such countries were selected that had at least 100 respondents. Together, these countries account for three quarters of all the respondents. They are Slovakia (N = 3,294), Russia (N = 1,261), Ukraine (N = 707), Kazakhstan (N = 320), India (N = 254), Belarus (N = 200) and Germany (N = 150).

The **last type of classification** comprises a breakdown by region. For the purposes of this study, countries are classified into ten groups, based on a combination of geographical, linguistic and cultural factors, while also drawing on the experience that the Czech National Agency for International Education gained in the recruitment of students from these countries.

The first category consists of a single country – **Slovakia**. Foreign students from here are very different from other foreign students. Slovak students make up almost half of all foreign students. The language barrier is minimal, if it exists at all, and they have a sound knowledge of the Czech environment. Since the two countries shared history as a single state, even the cultural differences between them are minimal.



The second category, again represented by a single country, is **Russia**. After Slovakia, Russia has the second largest student diaspora in the Czech Republic, accounting for 13.5 per cent of foreign students. Considering the significant percentage of Russian students in the total number of foreign students in the Czech Republic, the figures for Russia are not combined with other countries in the data analysis.

The **European Union – Western Europe and EFTA** category comprises the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Austria, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The main core of this group is formed by the countries of the “old fifteen” (EU15) which are still designated as such in OECD statistics because of their similar historical development and economic situation. The group includes three additional countries that are culturally, geographically and economically close: the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), namely Norway, Iceland and Switzerland. Cyprus and Malta were included in this group due to their cultural ties with the two EU15 countries - Italy and Greece.

The remaining countries of the European Union from its 5th, 6th and 7th enlargements were included in the category entitled **European Union – Eastern Europe**. Specifically, these countries are Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.

The following were included in the last European category, **Eastern and South-eastern Europe**: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. These are the European countries that are not part of either the European Union or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The category of **South and Southeast Asia** comprises Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The **Central Asia** group consists of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

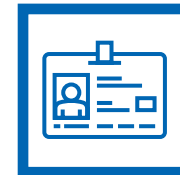
The **Middle East** encompasses Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Syria.

The last Asian category is **East Asia**, i.e. China, Hong Kong, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan.

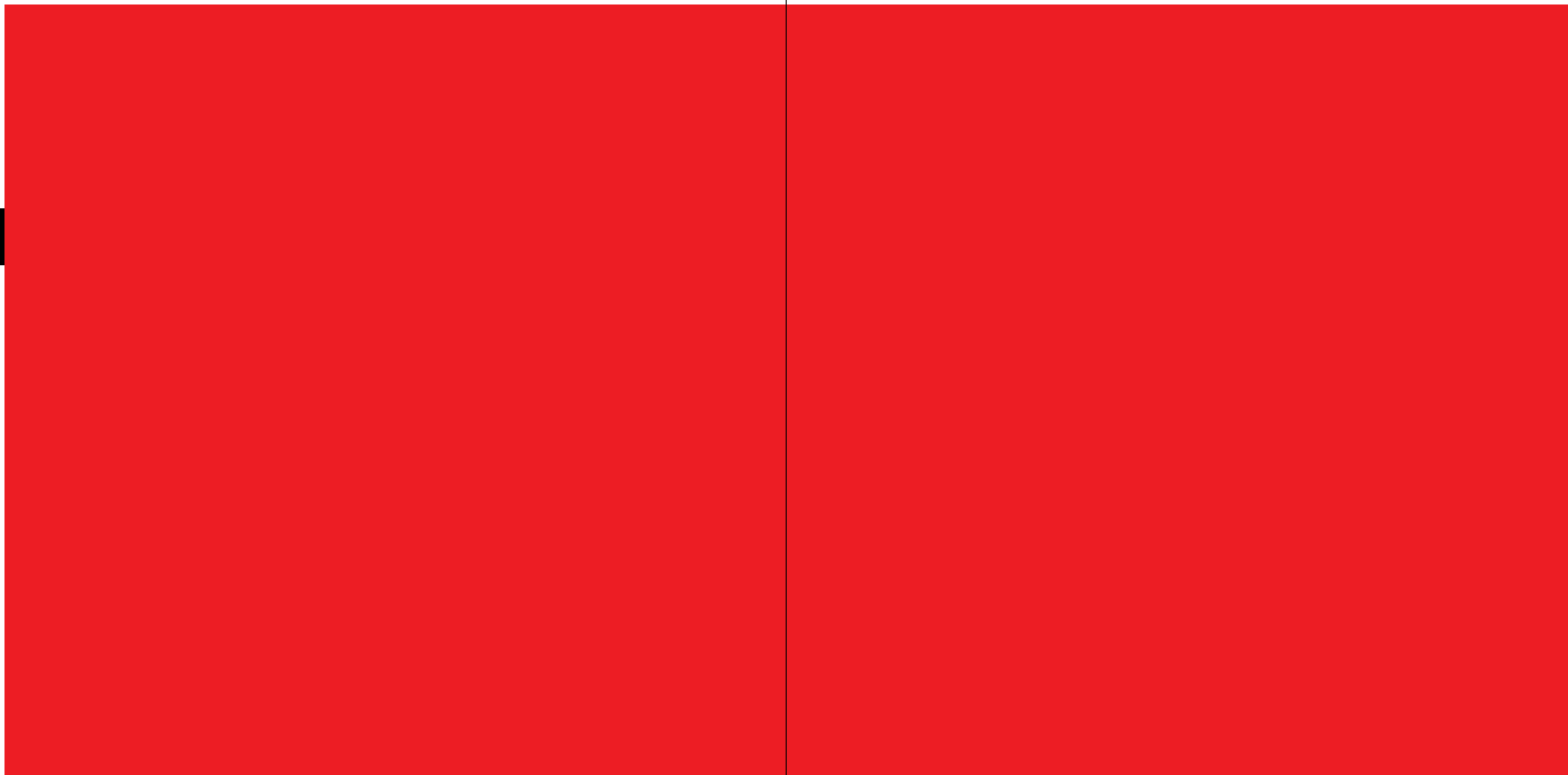
The category **Africa** includes all the African countries represented in the analysis. Specifically, these are Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Latin America encompasses the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking parts of the American continent, i.e. the whole of South and Central America. In this analysis, the countries in question are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, Jamaica, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, El Salvador and Venezuela.

North America comprises Canada and the United States.

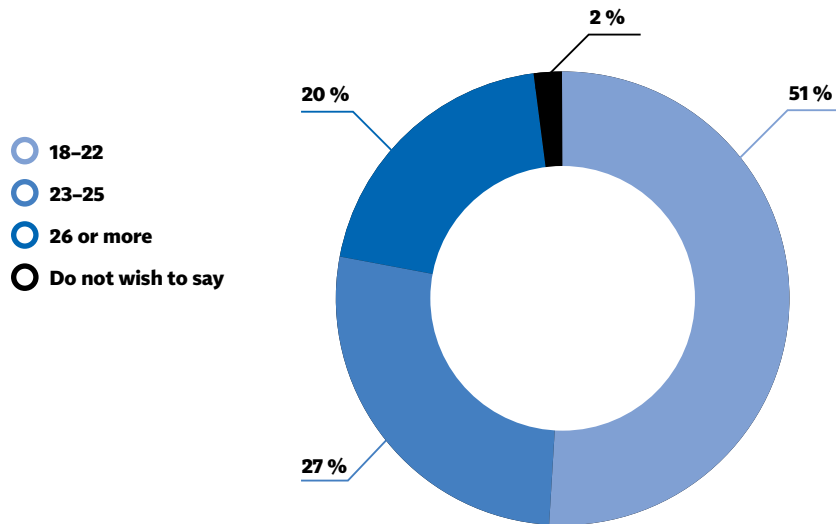


PART III. DESCRIPTION
OF RESPONDENTS



As far as basic socio-demographic characteristics of foreign students in the Czech Republic are concerned, the absolute majority are **women (56%), 41% are men**, and 3% of respondents did not wish to answer this question. Among foreign students, the lower age categories prevail: half of the respondents are under **23 years of age (51%)**, just under a third are students from **23 to 25 years of age (27%)** and a fifth are over 26.

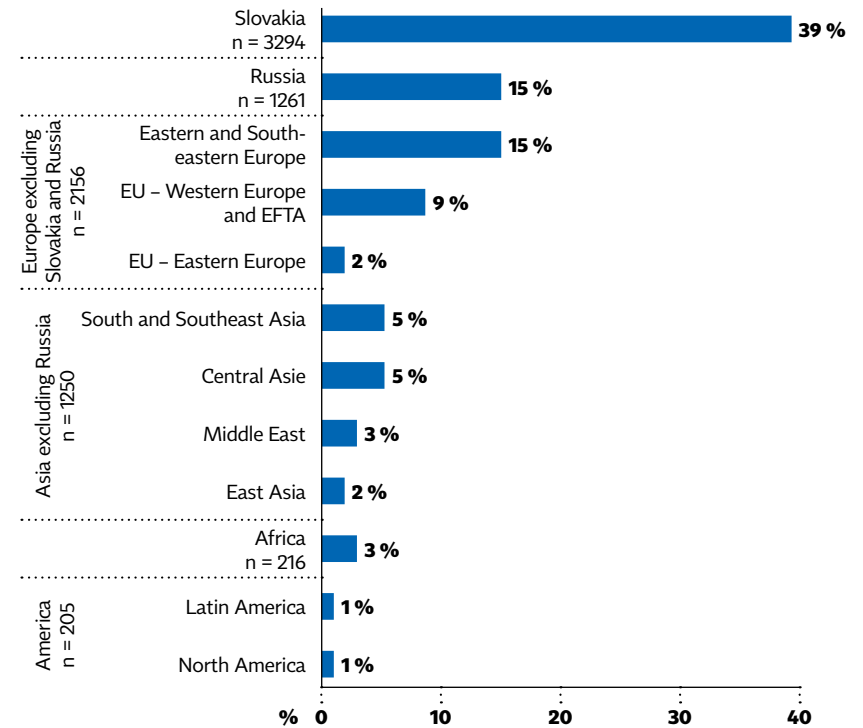
Graph 1:
Share by age (N = 6979)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

In terms of nationality, **Slovak students (39%), Russian students (15%) and Ukrainian students (8%)** are the most numerous in the dataset. In the category of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, students are mainly from Ukraine and, partly, from Belarus. Western Europe is predominantly represented by students from Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Students accounting for South and Southeast Asia are mainly from India. Central Asia is represented mainly by Kazakhstan.

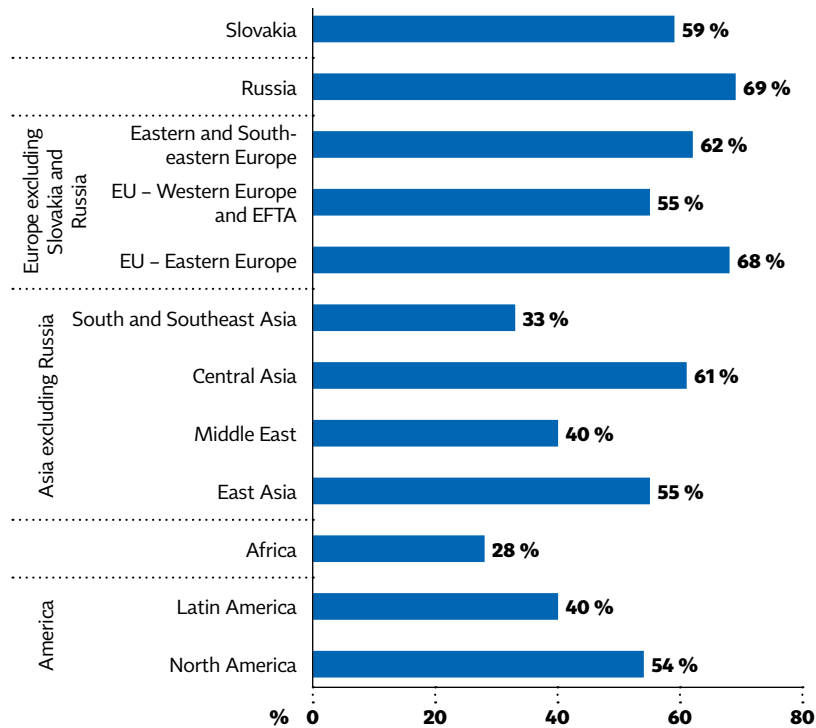
Graph 2:
Share by region (N = 8382)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

In the groups of students from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (especially from the countries of the former Soviet Union), women are represented much more often. Women in the group of students from South and Southeast Asia, mainly from India, account for a low share. This may be caused not only by the cultural aspects, but also by the field of study (technical subjects). Among students from the Middle East and Africa, the culture of the countries may be of importance too.

Graph 3:
Share of women by region (N = 3891)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Table 8 shows that the share of students from the individual countries is very similar to the share of students taking part in the survey. The data on the share of students from the individual countries is therefore representative and did not need to be weighted for the purposes of the survey.

Table 8:
Share by region and shares of the total number of foreign students in the Czech Republic

Country of origin	Number of foreign students in the Czech Republic	Share of students out of the total number of foreign students in the Czech Republic*	Number of respondents	Share of respondents in the questionnaire
Slovakia	21,105	45,44 %	3,294	39,20 %
Russia	6,221	13,40 %	1,261	15,00 %
Ukraine	3,622	7,80 %	707	8,40 %
Kazakhstan	1,970	4,24 %	320	3,80 %
India	966	2,08 %	254	3,00 %
Germany	878	1,89 %	150	1,80 %
Belarus	817	1,76 %	200	2,40 %
China	736	1,58 %	87	1,00 %
Italy	565	1,22 %	91	1,10 %
United Kingdom	495	1,07 %	80	1,00 %

*The table shows only those countries with a share of foreign students higher than 1%

Source: SIMS 31 July 2020

Table 9 shows the number of foreign students and the number of completed questionnaires, broken down by university. **The most popular, naturally, are the largest and most well-known universities, such as Charles University, Masaryk University and the University of Economics, Prague.** The return rate is more or less consistent with the total number of foreign students at the individual universities (except for those where there are very few students in which case a single response is enough to generate a high return rate, as, for instance, with PRIGO).

Table 9:
Actual number of foreign students in 2019, number of completed questionnaires and rate of return for each university

University of return	N reality	N questionnaire	Rate of return
Charles University	9,021	2,353	26.1%
Masaryk University	6,775	1,434	21.2%
Brno University of Technology	4,006	726	18.1%
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague	3,473	431	12.4%
University of Economics, Prague	3,412	473	13.9%
Czech Technical University in Prague	3,102	685	22.1%
Palacký University Olomouc	2,104	291	13.8%
Mendel University, Brno	1,611	214	13.3%
VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava	1,056	79	7.5%
University of Finance and Administration	962	69	7.2%
Tomas Bata University in Zlín	831	177	21.3%
University of Ostrava	770	64	8.3%
University of Chemistry and Technology Prague	754	120	15.9%
University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno	714	179	25.1%
Metropolitan University Prague	679	74	10.9%

University of return	N reality	N questionnaire	Rate of return
University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice	548	93	17.0%
University of West Bohemia	476	91	19.1%
Technical University of Liberec	467	105	22.5%
AMBIS – College of Regional Development and Banking Institute	463	6	1.3%
University of New York in Prague	429	73	17.0%
University of Pardubice	424	69	16.3%
Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague	410	4	1.0%
Anglo-American University	396	85	21.5%
College of International and Public Relations Prague	393	3	0.8%
VSO – University College of Business	359	3	0.8%
Silesian University in Opava	303	35	11.6%
Academy of Performing Arts in Prague	283	48	17.0%
ŠKODA AUTO University	229	48	21.0%
University of Economics and Management	214	8	3.7%

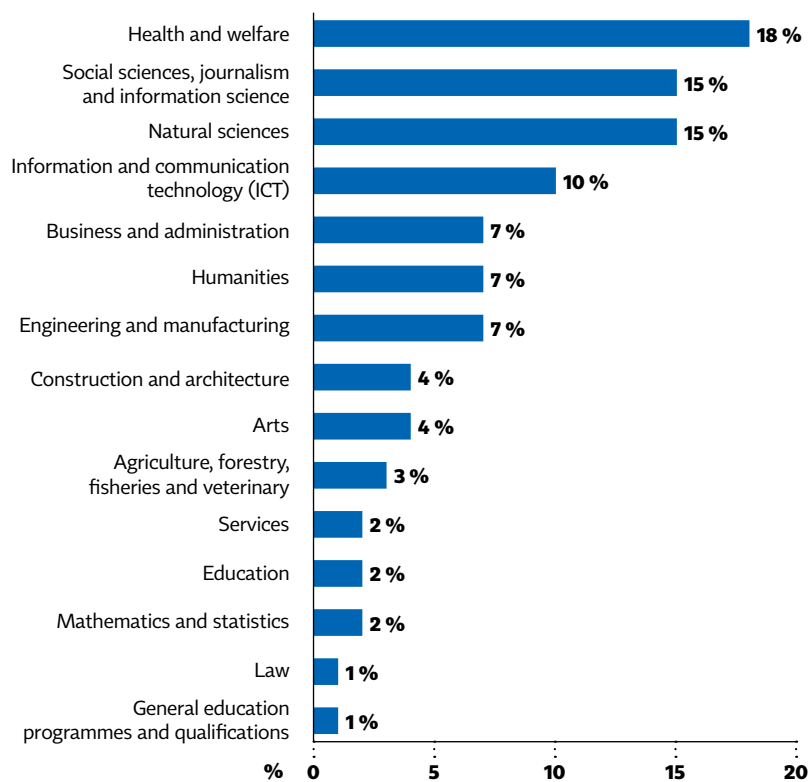
University of return	N reality	N questionnaire	Rate of return
Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem	203	51	25.1%
University of Hradec Králové	158	52	32.9%
College of Entrepreneurship and Law	141	19	13.5%
Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts Brno	128	30	23.4%
Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice	115	4	3.5%
Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague	110	19	17.3%
Unicorn College	110	14	12.7%
College of Logistics	103	1	1.0%
College of Business and Hotel Management	101	14	13.9%
College of Polytechnic Jihlava	99	50	50.5%
Jan Amos Komenský University Prague	99	33	33.3%
University of Creative Communication	92	26	28.3%
University of Defence	64	1	1.6%
ART & DESIGN INSTITUTE	62	6	9.7%
College of Nursing	52	2	3.8%
Architectural Institute in Prague	46	4	8.7%

University of return	N reality	N questionnaire	Rate of return
Academy of Fine Arts in Prague	37	2	5.4%
CEVRO Institute	34	8	23.5%
PALESTRA College of Physical Education and Sport	32	14	43.8%
Police Academy of the Czech Republic, Prague	23	4	17.4%
Film Academy of Miroslav Ondříček	18	5	27.8%
STING Academy	13	3	23.1%
Private College of Economic Studies Znojmo	12	1	8.3%
AKCENT College	9	2	22.2%
College of European and Regional Studies	5	2	40.0%
Academia Rerum Civilium – College of Political and Social Sciences	3	2	66.7%
PRIGO University	1	1	100.0%
Total	46,534	8,410	18.1%

Source: SIMS, 31 December 2019

Graph 4 shows that **medicine** and related medical disciplines account for a significant share of foreign students' study: most respondents (18%) are studying Health and Welfare, which includes medicine – a very popular field among students studying in English. **Economic fields** are also important (these are included under social sciences as “economy” and under business and administration as “economics”). In terms of meeting the Czech Republic's development needs in the field of science, research and innovation, the number of foreign students in fields such as **science, ICT, technology and manufacturing, construction and architecture, and mathematics and statistics** should be pointed out (38% in total).

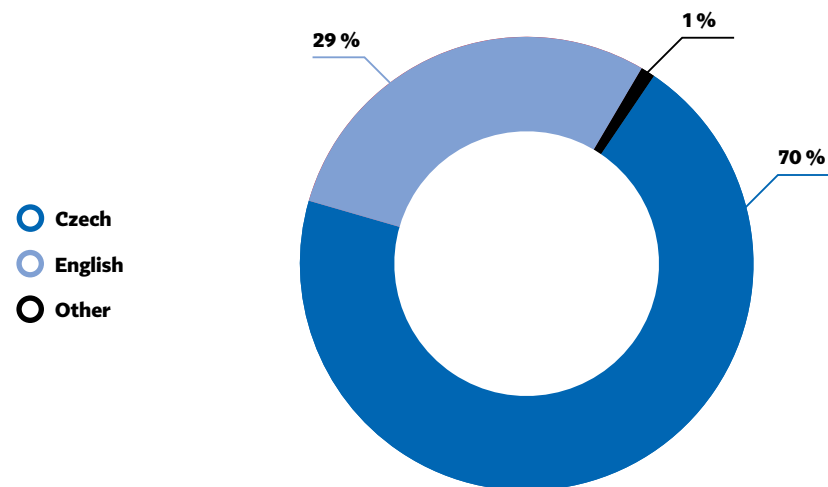
Graph 4:
Share by field of study (N = 8202)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

70% of responding foreign students study in a study programme taught in Czech and thus, free of charge. Comparing the varying citizenship of those studying in such programmes, it is evident that, **in addition to Slovak students**, those studying primarily in Czech are **students from the countries of the former Soviet Union**, such as Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, who speak a Slavonic language or have at least a good knowledge of Russian. Nevertheless, there is also a relatively high proportion of students from other regions. The possibility to study in Czech for free is clearly a very attractive option. If combined with the opportunity to attend a preparatory Czech language course before the start of the studies and the chance to develop language proficiency during the studies, this is a major factor in the recruitment of students. The difference between the choice of the language in which to fill in the questionnaire and the actual study language is also interesting. **Only 37% of respondents answered the questionnaire in Czech** which probably means that students feel more comfortable communicating in English than in Czech.

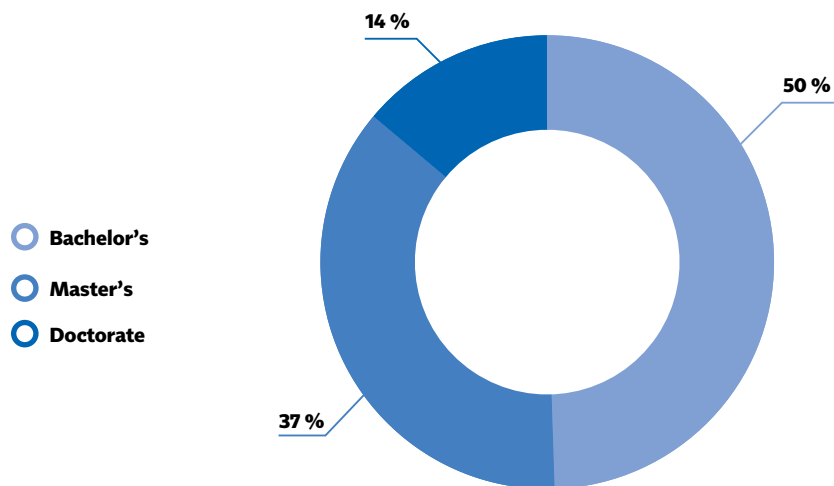
Graph 5:
Share by language of course (N = 8410)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

When we compare the shares of foreign students at individual levels of study against the total share of Czech students at individual levels of study at Czech universities, the statistics are as follows: 50% versus 61% in Bachelor's programmes, 37% versus 33% in Master's programmes (including the "long" Master's programme), and 14% versus 7% in doctoral programmes. **Foreign students clearly aspire to higher levels of study than Czechs**, with the biggest difference noticeable in doctoral studies. Differences in the level of study will be even more obvious when we compare studies in Czech and studies in English. Bearing in mind the complicated system for the recognition of secondary education, it stands to reason that bachelor's studies will mainly concern such countries where these problems are not so great, e.g. Slovak students studying in Czech. Studying in English is offered by universities, partly with regard to recognition procedures, mainly for Master's and doctoral degrees, including medicine, the study of which begins after high school but also represents a Master's programme. In our sample, the share of women studying a Bachelor's or a Master's degree at Czech universities is about 60 per cent. By contrast, when it comes to doctoral programmes, women account for less than a half in those.

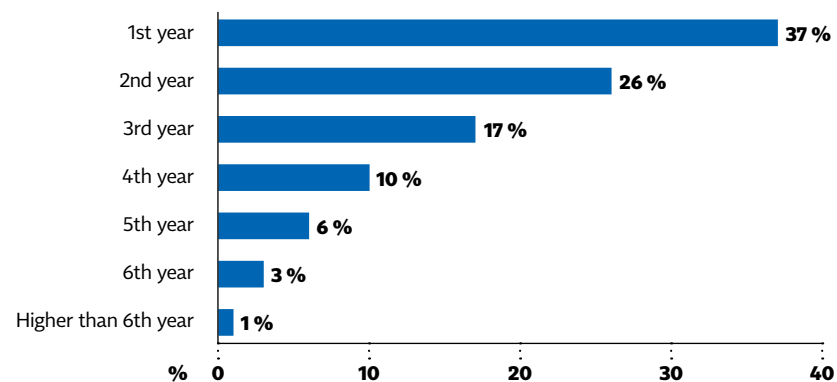
Graph 6:
Share by degree (N = 8410)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Besides their degree level, students were also asked about their **current year of study**. Students in the first two years have a more recent experience of the university selection process, the admissions procedure, visa processing, and of comparing their actual experience with their initial expectations, so their responses to these questions are of interest. In Graph 7, the current year of the study is stated. This means that first and second year students include students of Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral programmes, because these are always separate courses according to the Bologna Process. Only certain disciplines, such as medicine and law, are classified as a master's degree with a five- or six-year duration. The higher years also include doctoral students.

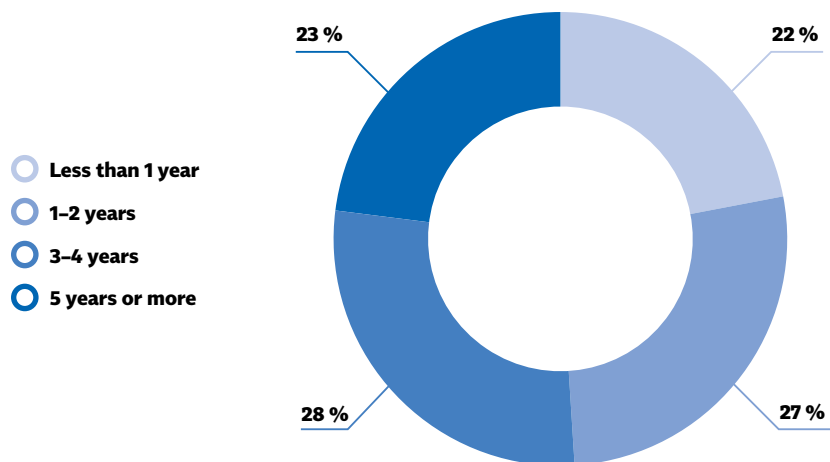
Graph 7:
Share of respondents by year of study (N = 6979)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Graph 8 shows the **length of stay**. Half of the students spend two years or less in the Czech Republic. Interestingly, just under a quarter of the students have lived here for a long time – for more than five years. This means that some foreign students are recruited from among foreign nationals living permanently in the Czech Republic. Again, the advantage with new students is that they remember why they chose their study destination, the admissions procedure and the visa process better.

Graph 8:
Length of stay in the Czech Republic to date (N = 6979)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



PART **IV.** PROMOTION
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
AND CZECH HIGHER
EDUCATION ABROAD



Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic	40
Deciding to study in the Czech Republic	52
Awareness of studying in the Czech Republic	54
Reasons for choosing a university	60
Summary	67

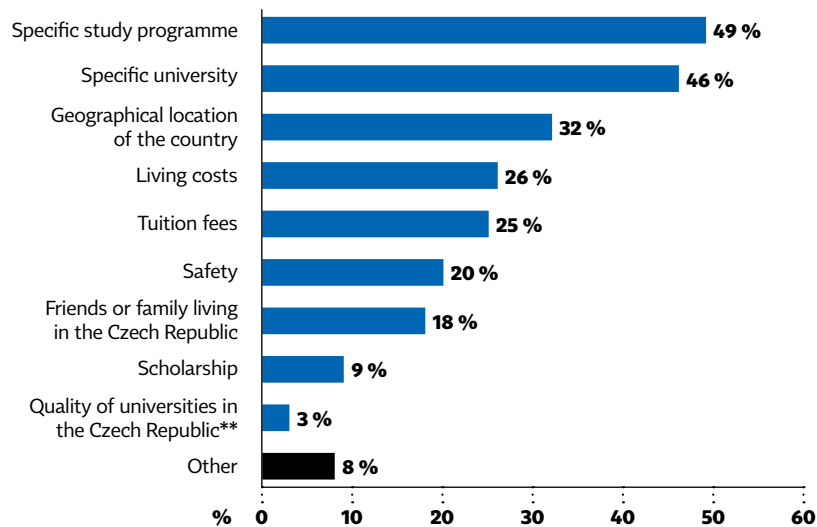


REASONS FOR STUDYING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Specific programmes are of fundamental importance to those choosing to study in the Czech Republic (**49% of the answers**). In addition to the programme, the other most common reasons for deciding to study in the Czech Republic include a **specific university (46%)** and the **geographical location of the country (32%)**. For about a **quarter of the respondents**, the relatively **low living costs**, the **low** (or complete absence of) **tuition fees, safety**, and **friends and family** in the host country were also important factors.

Graph 9:

Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic (N = 8410)*



* Respondents could choose up to 3 of the answers offered.

** This option was added only on the basis of comments made in the questionnaire.

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Slovak students in particular are well acquainted with Czech universities which they consider to be of good quality. This awareness of specific institutions, therefore, plays a crucial role in their decision-making (for 68% of Slovaks, specific universities were the reason why they chose the Czech Republic). Costs (10%) and the security situation (4%) do not come into their thinking too much because both of these criteria are comparable to the situation in Slovakia (Numbeo, 2020b, 2020a). There is a pronounced difference here compared to other countries. **Students studying in such programmes where English is the tuition language emphasise their affordability (41%).**



Reason for choosing the Czech Republic – other:

Better conditions for “student life”.

A better future and a better life.

The closeness of my native language to Czech and the Czech mentality.

I was here as an exchange student, I liked it here and I decided to continue my higher education here.

The university's very good value for money.

I was unable to get on the course I wanted in my own country.

The Czech Republic is a member of the European Union. It has certain traditions and a mindset that belongs to the West, but (for historical reasons) it also has something in common with my country of origin, so for me it was the perfect compromise.

I have longed to live in Prague ever since I first visited the city.

Easy procedure for the submission and processing of visa applications.

I had to pay university fees in my country as a foreign national. These were almost the same as university fees in Europe, so I decided to go to a better-rated university.

I chose the Czech Republic because of my specific research topic.

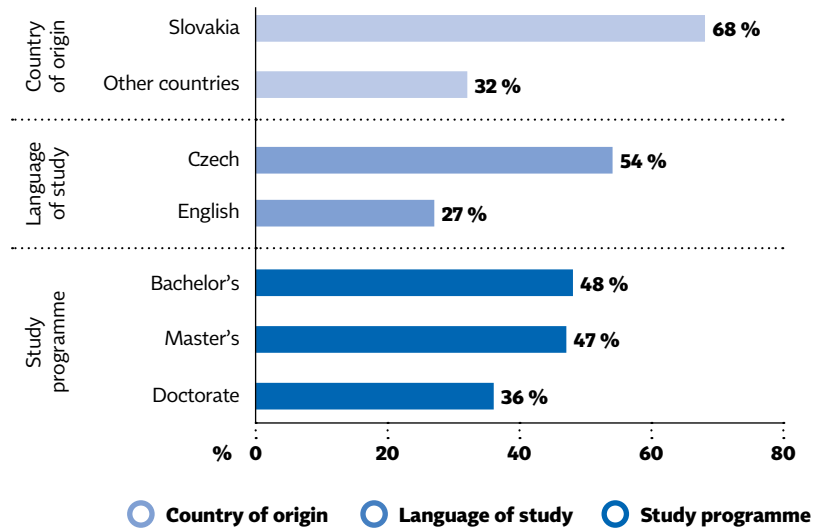
The quality of Czech (or even European) education in general, recognition of education abroad.

The companies where I can put my education to use are easier to access.

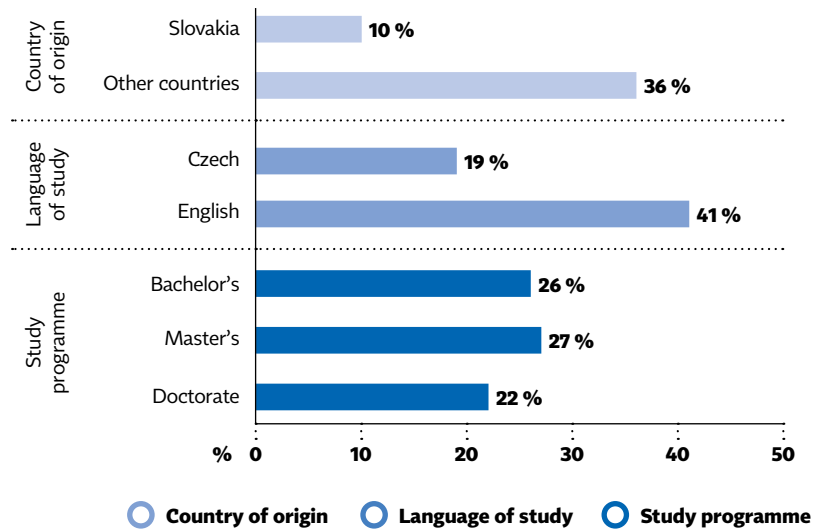
The small number of other English programmes in Europe that are not very expensive (for example, the United Kingdom).

Graph 10:
Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic, by indicators selected (N = 8410)

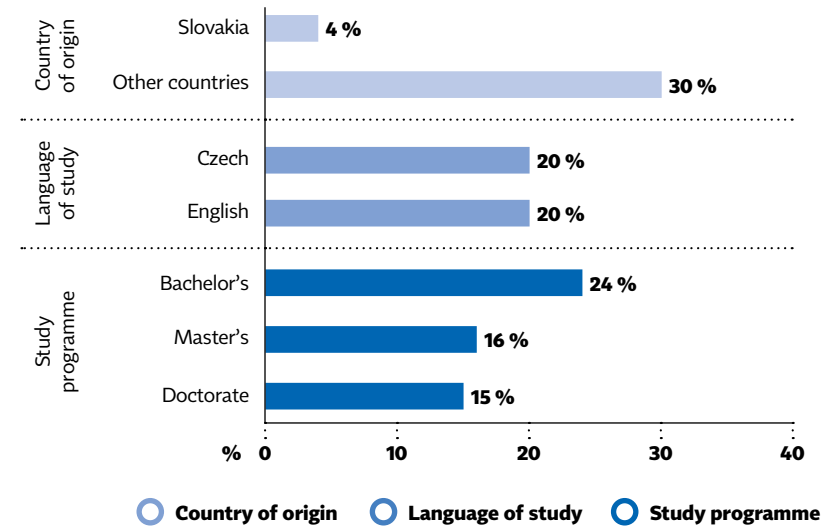
Specific university



Living costs



Safety



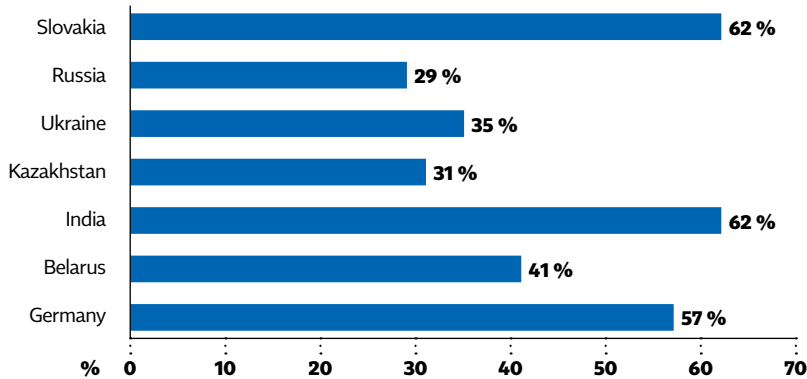
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The range of specific programmes is particularly important for Slovaks (62%).

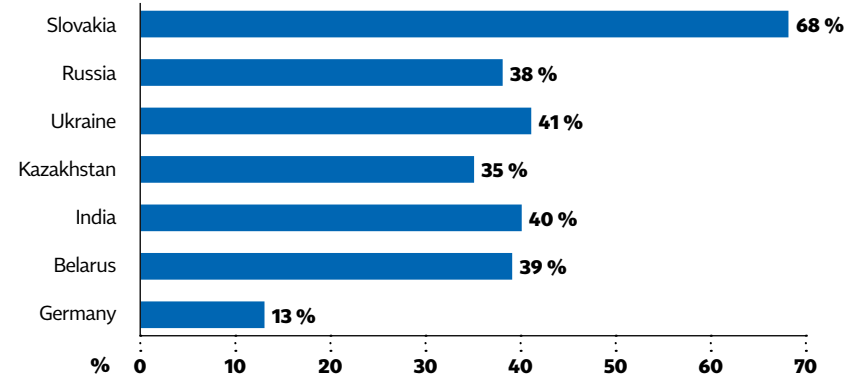
Again, they have detailed knowledge of not only the universities, but also of the fields of study. In addition, the way Slovaks understand what university study is about is similar to that in the Czech Republic, with students primarily choosing a field of study. However, the reputation and the **prestige of the university** also play an important role. Fields of study are important for Indians (62%), who are specifically looking, for example, for quality technical fields, and Germans (57%), who account for a large group focused on the affordable study of medicine. Graph 11 also shows that foreign students, with the exception of Slovaks, do not know much about specific Czech universities and cannot really distinguish between them. **Safety issues** are important primarily for **students from outside the European Union**. Using Germany and Slovakia as examples, it transpires that students from the safe neighbouring countries have confidence in the safety of the common European space and therefore do not include this in their decision-making.

Graph 11:
Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic, by selected country (N = 6186)

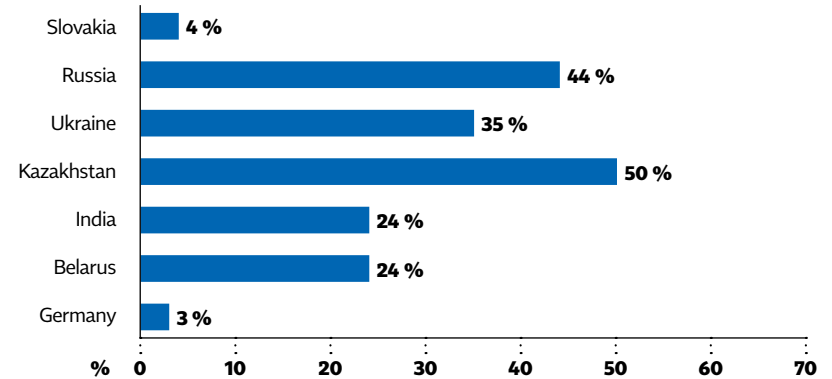
Specific course



Specific university



Safety



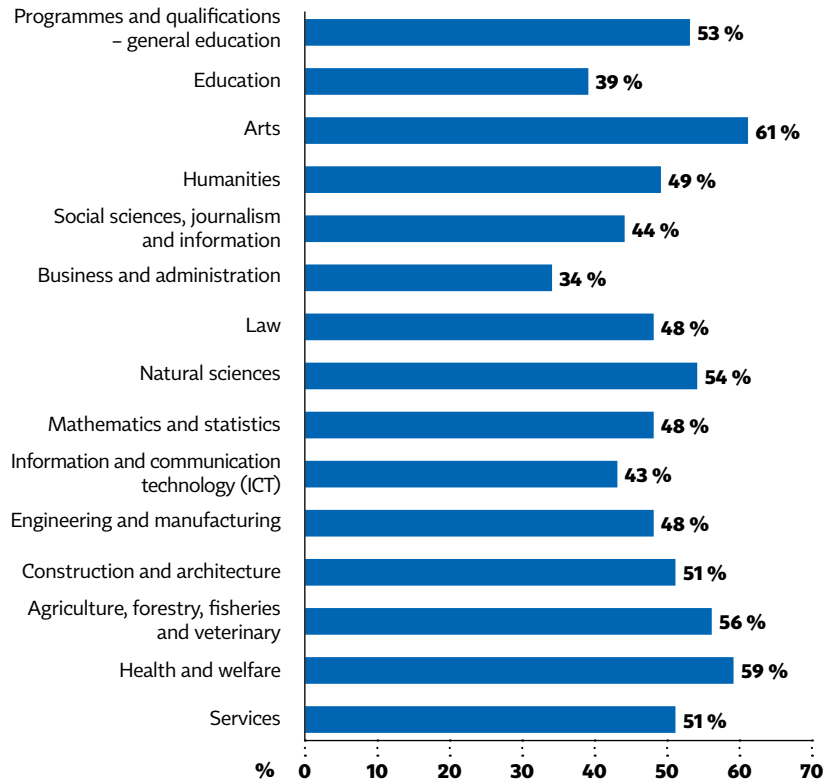
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Emphasis on the reputation and quality of the study programme is particularly pronounced in arts (61%), medicine (59%), natural sciences (54%), and agriculture and forestry (56%). However, as the differences are relatively small, it can be presumed that the specific field of study is the most decisive factor for students. It plays the smallest role, although still a relatively significant one, in relation to business and administration (34%) and education (39%).

Graph 12:

Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic – the opportunity to enrol in a “specific study programme” (N = 8202)

Specific study programme



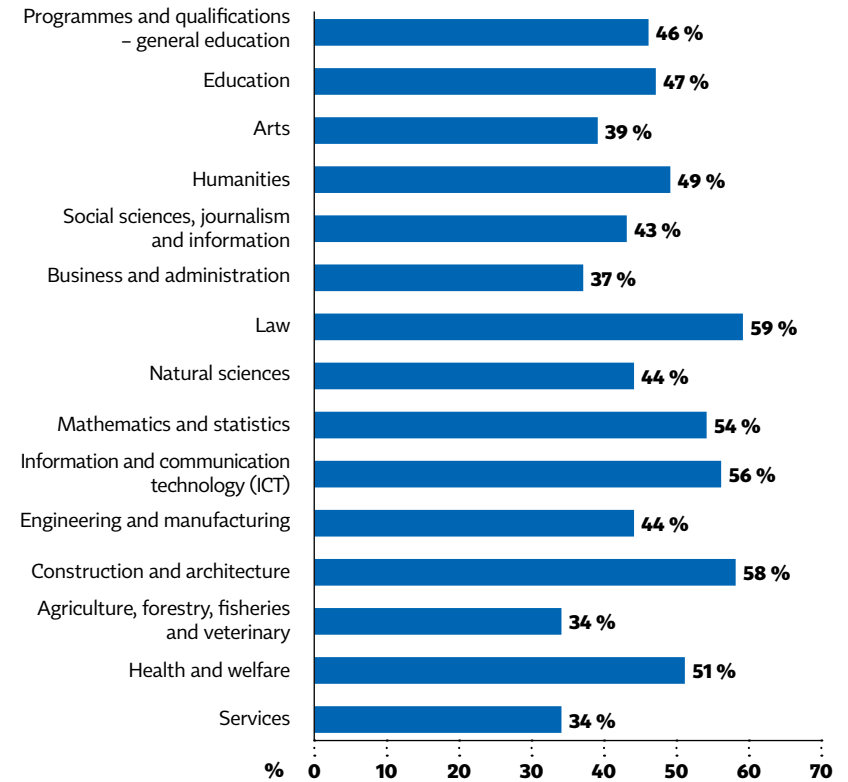
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

In decision-making on studies in the Czech Republic, **a particular faculty is important mainly for the fields of law (59%), construction and architecture (58%), ICT (56%), mathematics and statistics (54%) and medical fields (51%).** This indicator partially combines faculties and fields of study – law, medicine, architecture and ICT require specific faculties, so the core interest effectively is still the quality of fields, even if at specific faculties.

Graph 13:

Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic – the opportunity to study at a “specific university” (N = 8202)

Specific university

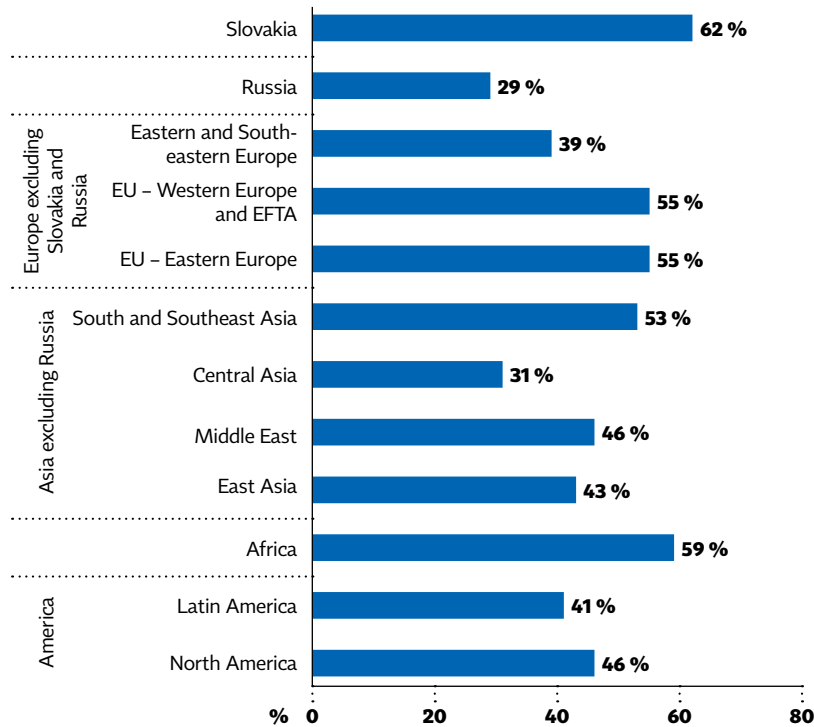


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

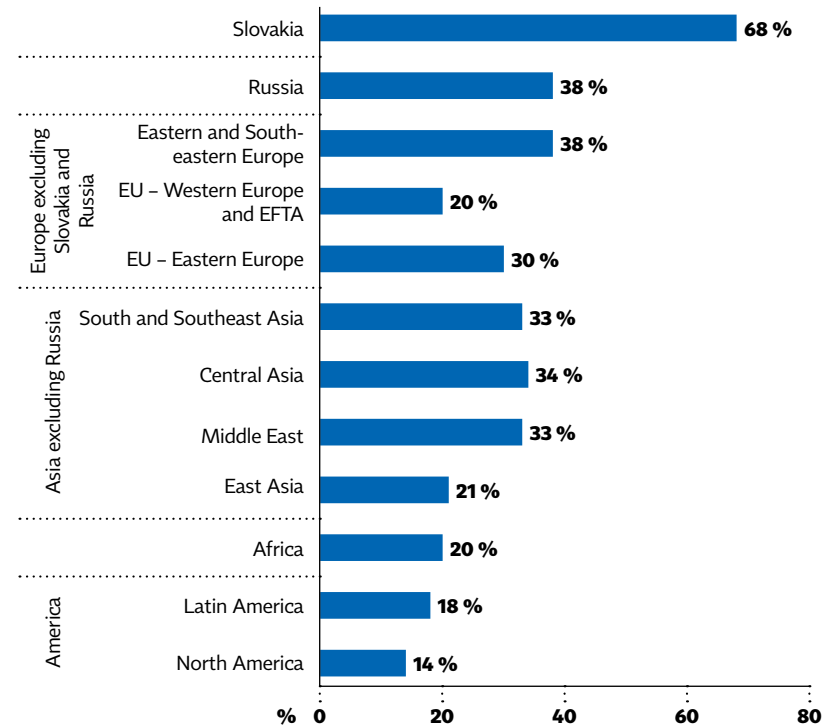
Most students – especially those from Slovakia, Western Europe, Asia and Africa – come to the Czech Republic to study medicine. The second most represented group of disciplines is social sciences – these are most often chosen by students from Russia, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Central and Eastern Asia, Africa, and North and Latin America. Natural sciences are preferred primarily by students from Slovakia, Russia, Eastern and Southeastern Europe and Latin America. From their decisions on specific universities, it is evident that students from East Asia (21%), Africa (20%), Latin America (18%), North America (14%), and even Western Europe (20%) have little knowledge of individual universities. Their decisions are based on parameters other than the reputation of the school, because Czech universities are something of a mystery to them.

Graph 14:
Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic, by region (N = 8382)

Specific study programme



Specific university

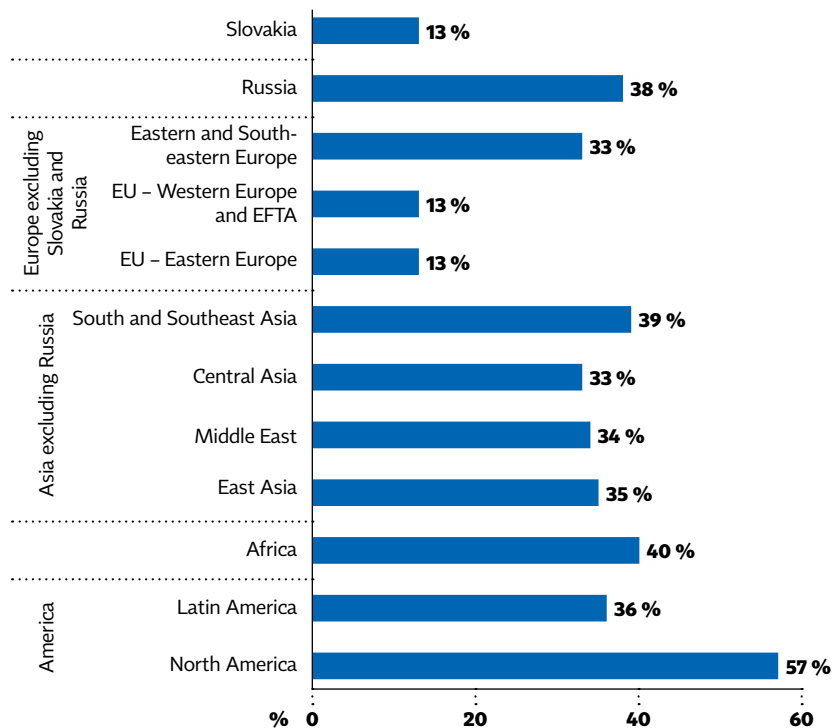


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

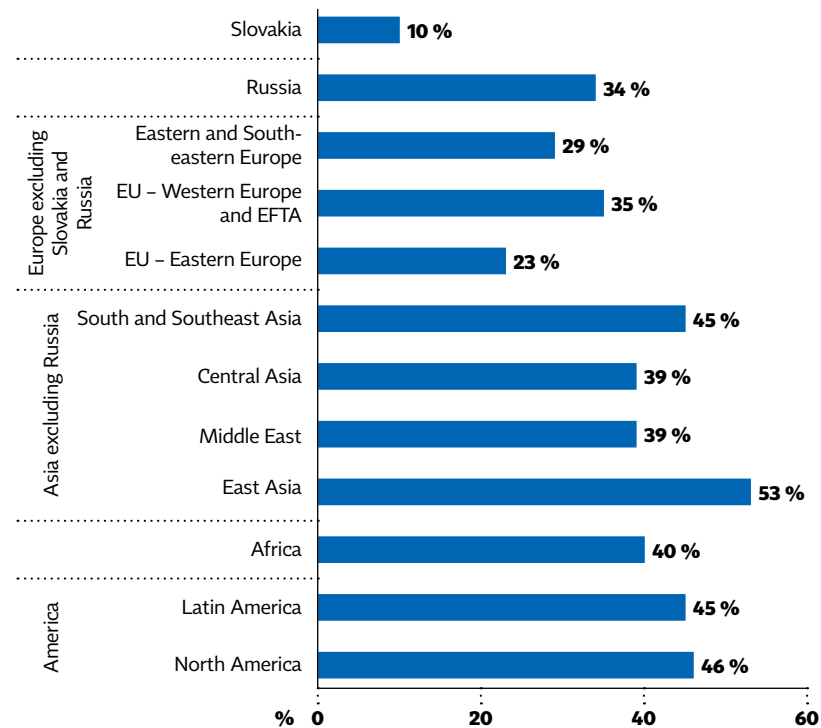
When students choose a university, one of the factors is always the **environment the students come from** and what they are using as a benchmark. In the United States, studying medicine is extremely costly, so tuition fees are an important criterion (57%). Students therefore look for an affordable alternative that will not compromise on quality. The study of medicine in the Czech Republic meets this requirement. Students from countries with a lower standard of living are also palpably more sensitive to the cost of study. The **low cost of living in the Czech Republic compared to other European countries is obviously a great comparative advantage**, especially in Asia (this is an important factor for more than a third of Asian students) and other non-European countries where one of the goals is to study in Europe but Western European universities are not affordable.

Graph 15:
Reasons for studying in the Czech Republic, by region (N = 8382)

Tuition fees



Cost of living



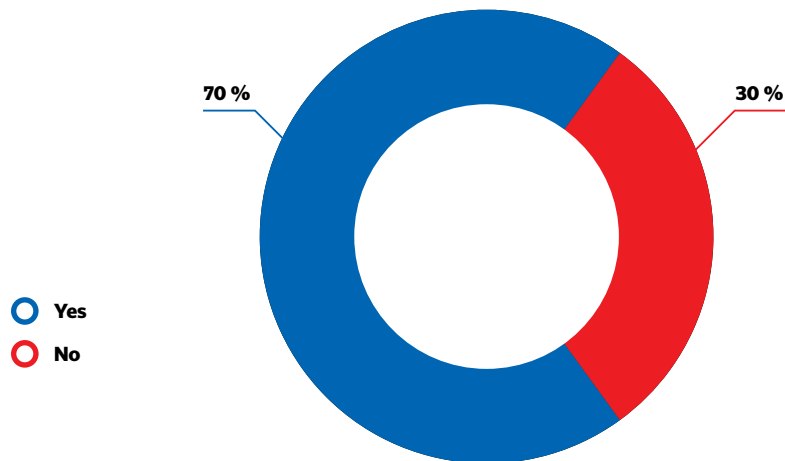
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



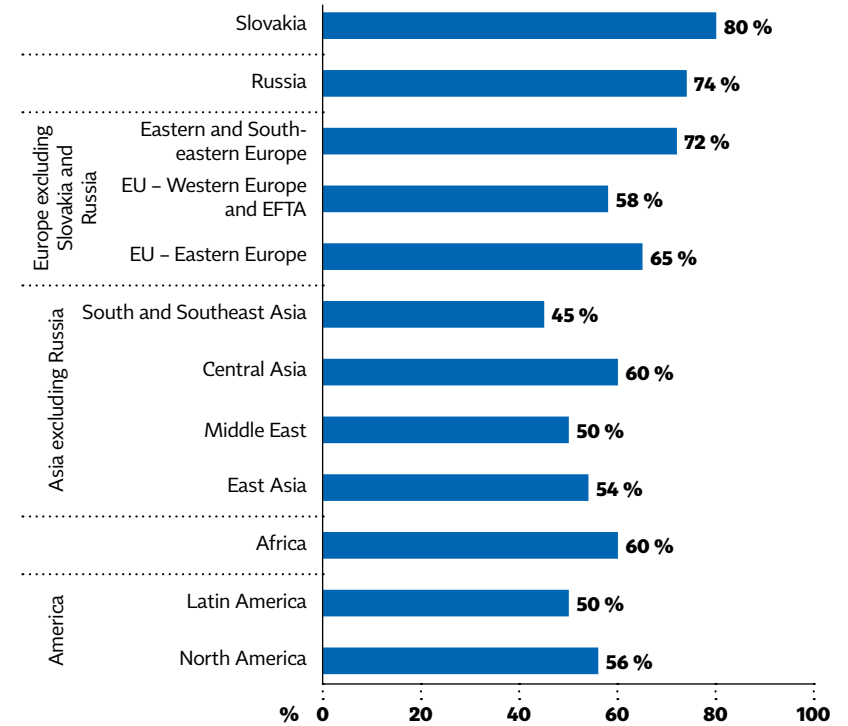
DECIDING TO STUDY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

For about two-thirds of foreign students, the Czech Republic was their first choice: this is most often the case for students from Slovakia (80%), Russia (74%) and the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe (72%). The Czech Republic is often the first choice, in particular, for students who can study in Czech and enjoy the benefits of studying free of charge, as well as the cultural and linguistic proximity of their home country and the Czech Republic (for example, Ukrainian students – 77%). For students looking to study in English (for example, from India – the Czech Republic was the first choice for 41%), there are many more alternatives around the world, and the Czech Republic becomes an acceptable option only if they do not reach their preferred country. However, in order to consider the Czech Republic, they have to become aware of what Czech universities have to offer in the first place. The website Study in the Czech Republic plays an important role in reaching out to them, as does the presence of offers by Czech universities in the world’s online search engines for university studies.

Graph 16:
Czech Republic as the first choice when choosing a country in which to study (N = 8410)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

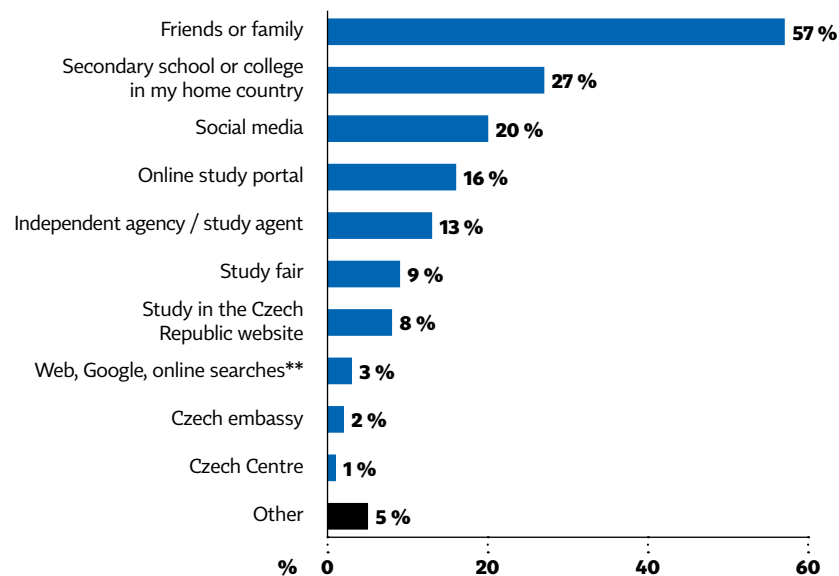


AWARENESS OF STUDYING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

This graph strongly reflects the preferences of Slovak students, who are strongly aware of how Czech higher education works due to the two countries' historical, cultural and linguistic affinity, including family and personal ties (for example, due to the number of Slovaks living and studying in the Czech Republic). In addition, it is interesting that **social media, such as Facebook or Twitter**, are a relatively **strong communication channel** that informs students about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic.

Graph 17:

Where students learnt about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic (N = 8410)*



* Respondents could choose 1 to 3 answers.

** This option was added only on the basis of the comments made in the questionnaire.

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

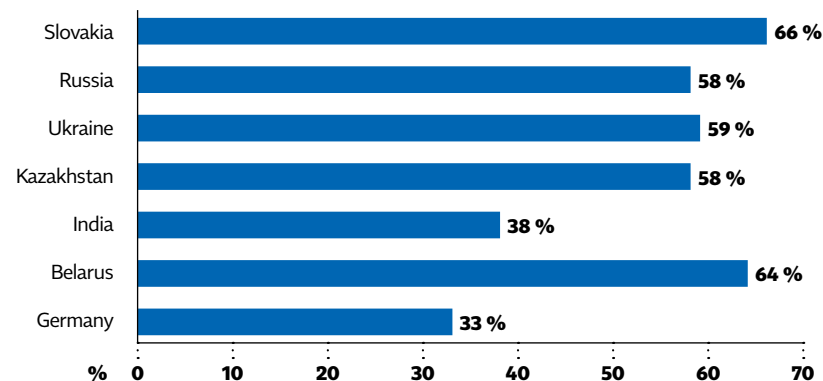
Recommendations by family and friends to study at a Czech university are important for 66% of Slovak students. The extent to which their school in their home country made recommendations is also a strong factor, having an impact for 47%. Word of mouth is generally very important. In other words, the recommendation or non-recommendation of a current student or graduate of a Czech university carries a lot of weight and, in the best-case scenario, will trigger a snowball effect that draws in other interested parties. It is therefore necessary to make sure that students enjoy their experience. Considering how many students there are from Slovakia and the former Soviet Union studying in the Czech Republic, a recommendation has a truly significant influence as there are already many students with experience of the Czech Republic with a potential to powerfully affect their communities.

It is interesting to look at the **comparison of recommendations made by friends/family and agents** (Graph 18). The exceptionally **large influence of agents in Kazakhstan, Germany and Russia is surprising, as is – conversely – the low percentage of agents attracting students from India.** Although, according to information we received from universities, fairs are pointless for the promotion of Czech higher education in India, the results of the survey suggest that this is not so and that, in fact, fairs do play a role. The **role of schools in the home country** also appears to be more important than expected. If someone is already studying in the Czech Republic and their original secondary school or college gains information from them, it seems that the snowball effect can work again. This also implies how **important it can be to directly address education advisers and schools**, a factor which may often be even more important than fairs.

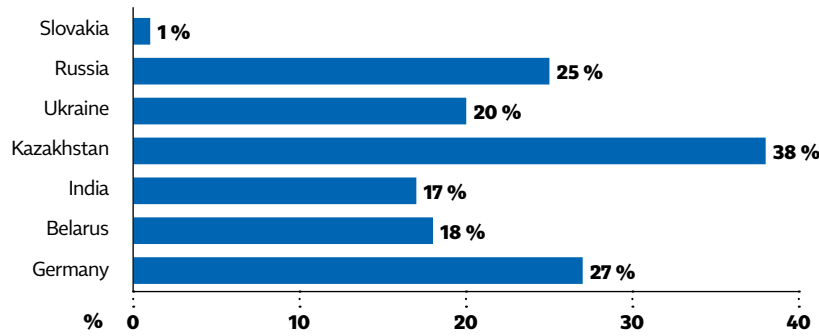
Graph 18:

Awareness of studying in the Czech Republic, by selected country (N = 6186)

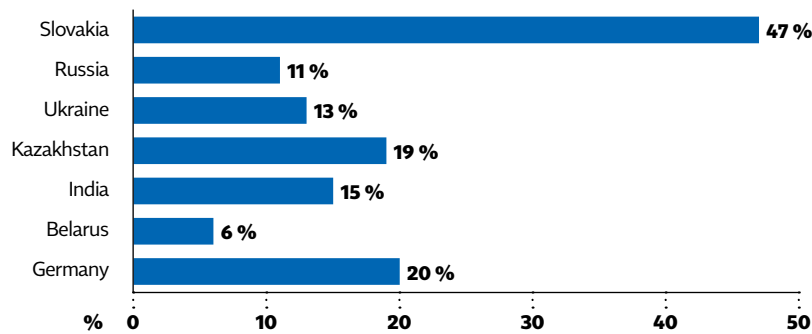
Friends or family



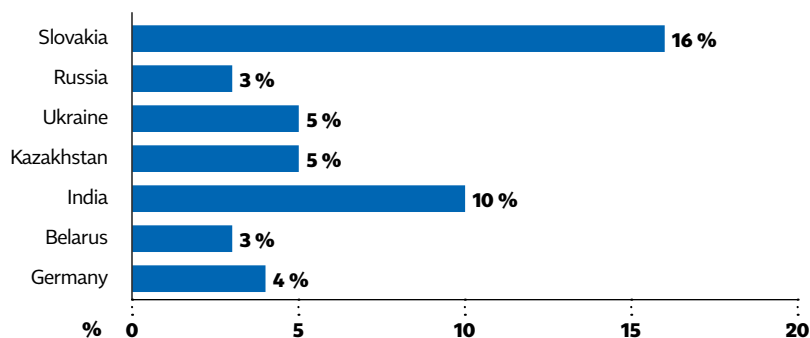
Independent agency / study agent



Secondary school or college in my home country



Study fair



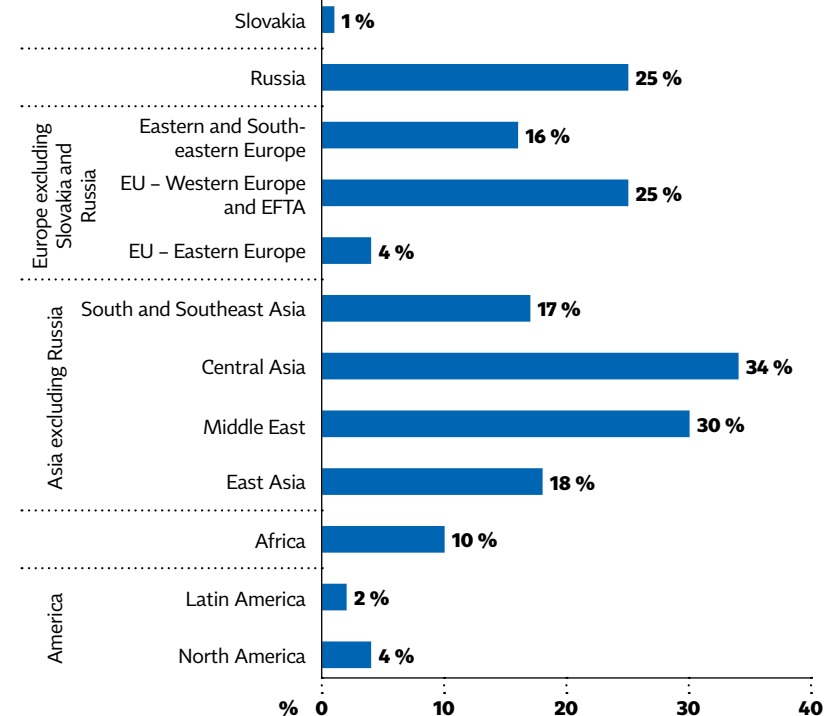
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

For students in study programmes in Czech, these recommendations are more important than for students studying in English. They comprise **recommendations from family and friends** (63% versus 43%) and **from a school in their home country** (31% versus 18%). The **effect that agents have** is also quite significant, especially on students studying in English (18%), as there is plenty of supply and competition in terms of countries, universities and disciplines, and also on secondary school students, who cannot navigate their way round so adeptly and do not yet have clear ideas about the field they wish to study. For students in Czech study programmes, agencies influenced decisions in only 11% of cases, dropping to less than 1% among Slovak students.

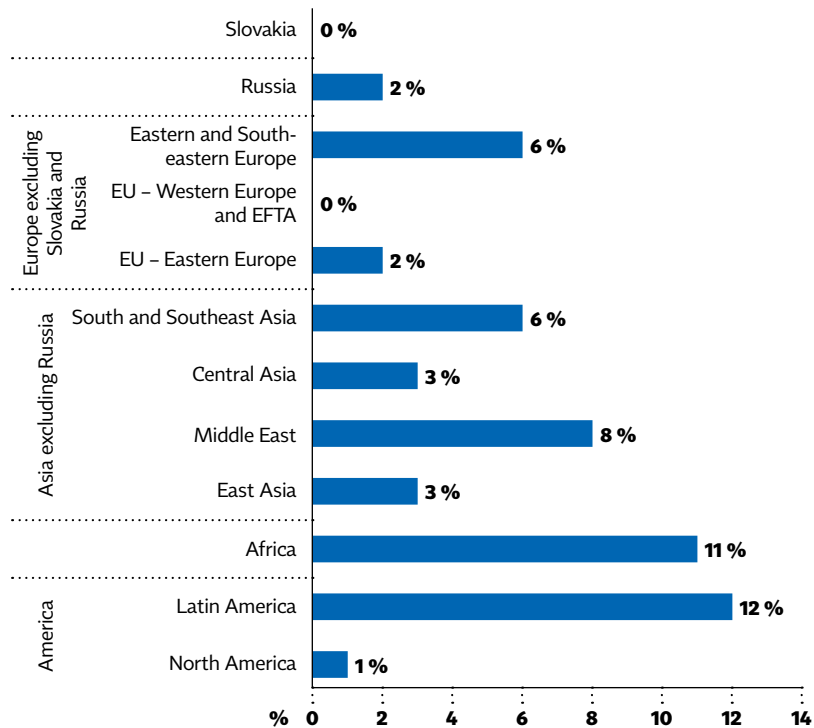
The importance of using agents is particularly evident in certain selected regions: Central Asia (34%; in Kazakhstan alone, for example, it is as high as 38%) and the Middle East (30%), but also Russia (25%) and Western Europe (25%). This is relatively surprising information, as the use of agents has traditionally been associated mainly with South, Southeast and East Asia. In these regions, however, the use of agents is a key factor for less than a fifth of respondents (for example, in India alone, it is just 17%).

Graph 19:
Awareness of studying in the Czech Republic, by region (N = 8382)

Independent agency / study agent



Czech embassy



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

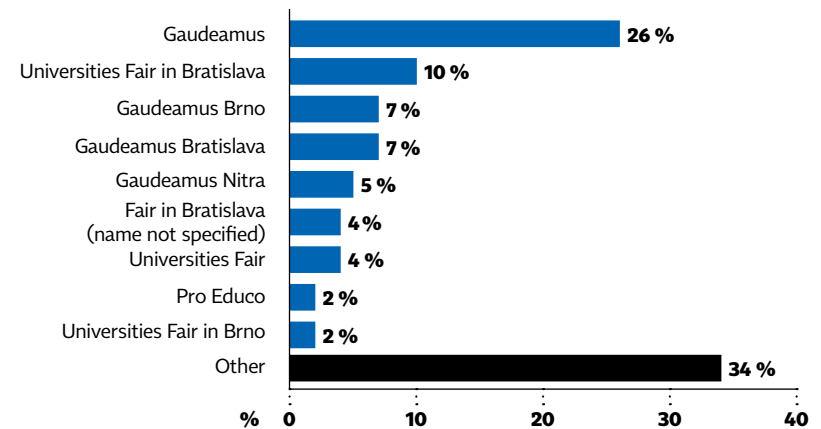
One tenth of African students cite the Czech embassy as a source of information. This may be related to the traditional offer of government scholarships as part of foreign development assistance to these countries – the scholarships are offered through embassies (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2019). Latin America also immediately draws the eye, as we do not have many scholarship holders from here. What is interesting in this case is the answers provided by some students.

The **Study in the Czech Republic** website was mentioned as a source of information by almost a quarter of students from Africa and from South and Southeast Asia.

Awareness-raising of studying in the Czech Republic via study fairs is most pronounced among Slovak students (16%). These are mainly the **Gaudeamus** fairs which have a lot of visitors.

Graph 20:

Awareness of studying in the Czech Republic – study fair (N = 711)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



Where they learnt about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic – other:

During a stopover, I met someone who was studying in Prague.

Advertising for a project on the homepage of another research institution.

During Erasmus in the Czech Republic.

A blog on the possibilities of studying my specialisation in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

By looking for places in Europe where you can study veterinary medicine.

A call for PhD students in a scientific journal.

I went on a summer course and learnt about the possibilities of studying in the Czech Republic.

The CEEPUS programme, and also at work.

Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in the Dominican Republic.

During a visit to the Czech Republic as a tourist.

Czech language courses.

I wanted to study abroad and I found out on the internet that the Czech Republic is the cheapest.

I received a letter saying “Come and study here!”

I am Slovak. I know that it's possible to study in the Czech Republic.

The Korean community in the Czech Republic.

It was recommended by new colleagues I met at a conference.

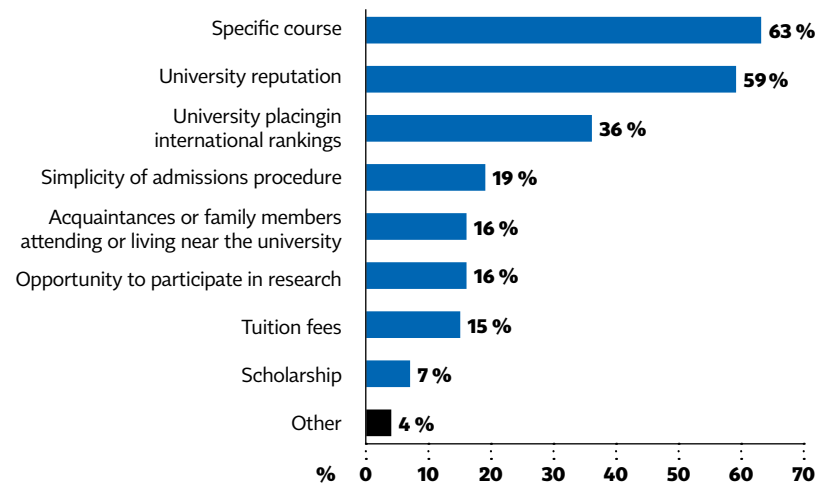


REASONS FOR CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

The combination of the field of study (63%) and the university's reputation (59%) as reasons for choosing a particular university, if students are aware of it (this is especially true for Slovakia and the former Soviet Union), is not surprising in the light of the findings above. The importance of **international rankings** is also considerable (36%). These rankings can also be regarded as a reflection of a university's reputation, especially for students who do not know too much about Czech universities, such as students from Asia, and must therefore rely on other available sources of evaluation. Czech universities should focus on simplifying and streamlining admissions procedures. Students would find studying in the Czech Republic, especially in certain particular fields, more lucrative if there were more frequent opportunities to gain experience by becoming involved in research (mainly in social sciences, but also in other fields). This is another recommendation for Czech universities.

Graph 21:

Main reasons for selecting a specific university (N = 8410)*



* Respondents could choose up to 3 of the answers offered.

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Again, much like Czech students, Slovaks clearly know about Czech universities and their reputation and take this into account (72%). For other countries (i.e. other than Slovakia), reputation (50%) will probably be more closely linked to university rankings. **Scholarships** play a surprisingly small role, but this may be due mainly to the fact that the cost of studying is relatively low, and that the option of studying for free in Czech is not perceived as a scholarship. The amount of a scholarship starts to play a more significant role only in doctoral studies (24%), where it is common around the world that doctoral students do not pay for their studies, but, conversely, are the ones receiving some money. In the Czech Republic, however, these financial conditions are not very advantageous for doctoral students. This is an area that universities should focus on if they wish to attract foreign doctoral students. Likewise, the opportunity to participate in research is most important for doctoral students (44%). Research opportunities also depend heavily on the field of study – students from South and Southeast Asia (33%) often study science and technology and do so at higher levels where research is key. Tuition fees are important in poorer regions such as Africa (37%), or for those who cannot afford to study in their own countries – especially in the United States (50%). This aspect is not so important for those who study for free in Czech – particularly students from the countries of the former Soviet Union.



Reason for choosing a particular university – other:

Beautiful country.

Because of the specific PhD programme and subject.

I liked this university the most and it was not so distant as others with a similar focus.

The diploma from this study programme carries a relatively high value among experts in my country.

English as the language of instruction and the multicultural and multilingual environment.

Great approach by professors during the application process.

I just needed somewhere to study and I was accepted.

Good marketing by an independent agency.

I wanted to work with my tutor who is now a professor.

The possibility of choosing optional and compulsory elective subjects, resulting in unique profiling for each student.

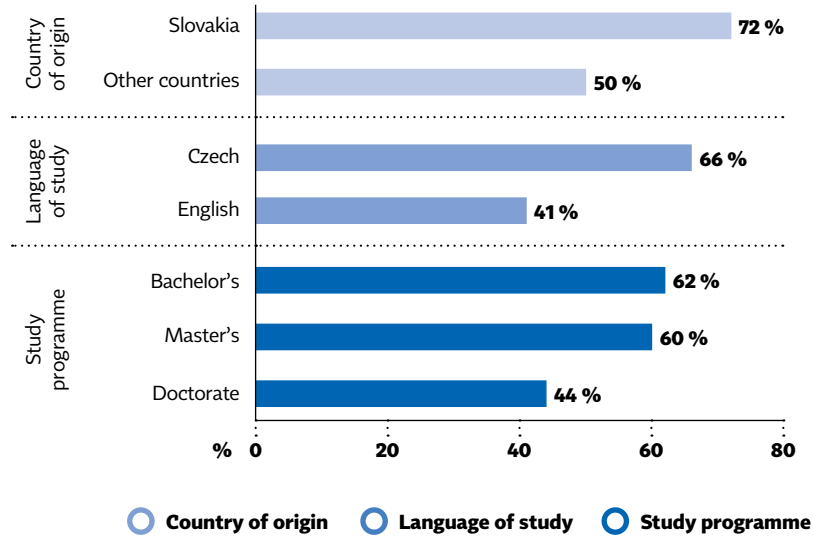
Nice weather, geographical location, cost of living.

Opportunities to work with world-class leaders.

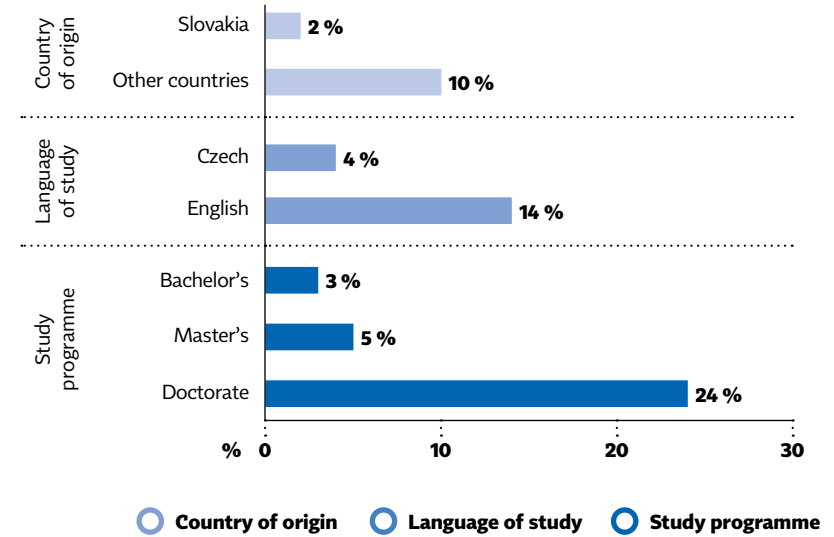
The personality of T.G. Masaryk.

Graph 22:
University selection criteria, by selected indicators (N = 8410)

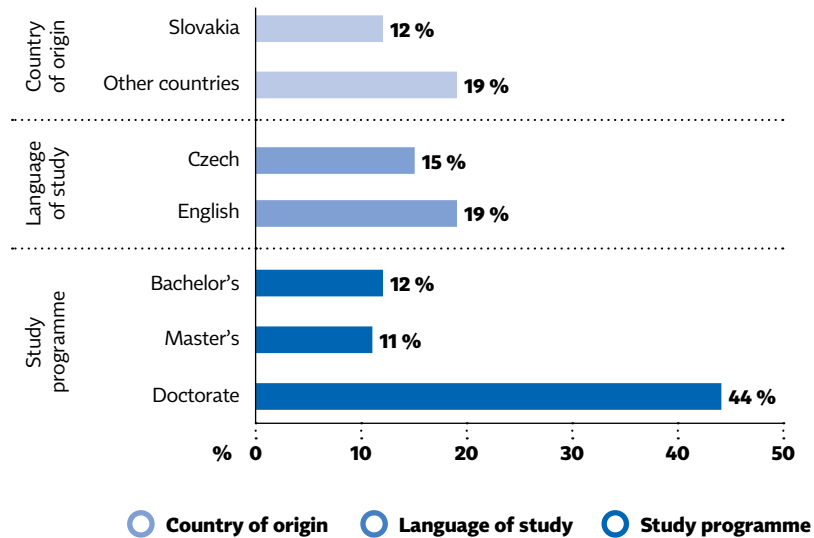
University reputation



Scholarship



Opportunity to participate in research

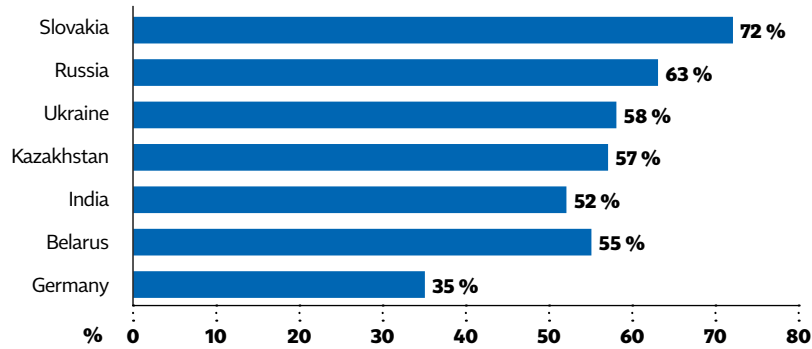


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

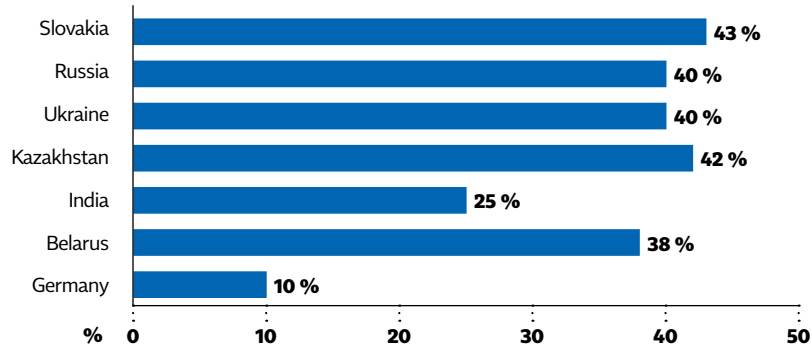
The importance attached to international rankings was surprisingly low for India (25%). This may be related to the fact that Indian students, who place more emphasis on the rankings, prefer foreign and better-rated universities (British, Australian, American, Western European, etc.). Students from Germany, who are guided by rankings in only 10% of cases, may follow a similar pattern. Candidates who eventually go to the Czech Republic to study are those for whom the rankings, for some reason, play a smaller role than other factors (e.g. funding or the ease of admission). As for the simplicity of the **admissions procedure**, in all likelihood, this is another situation where students apply the system they come from as a benchmark. In the case of Germany (32%), students are likely to compare Czech admissions procedures – moreover in the field of medicine on which they focus most often – with the simpler admissions procedure in Germany, based primarily on grade average achieved in previous studies (VysokeSkoly.cz, 2011). **University reputation** and rankings also play a role in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. Conversely, again rather surprisingly, reputation and ranking is not an important factor in South and Southeast Asia. This may be due to the fact that Western universities are simply too expensive for Eastern European students who also place heavy demands on the quality of education. Study candidates from other regions also choose Western universities and those with limited funding go to the Czech Republic.

Graph 23:
University selection criteria, by selected countries (N = 6186)

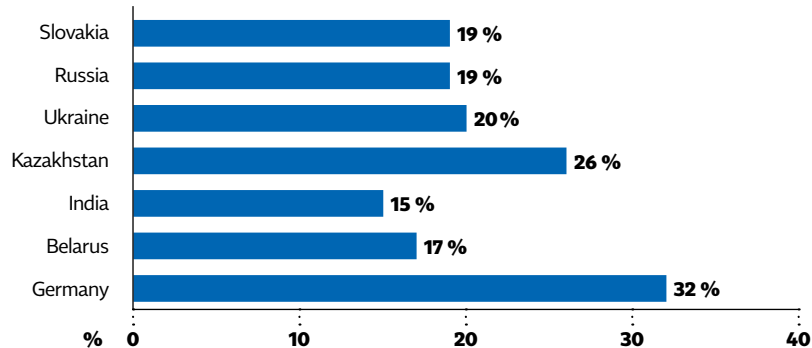
University reputation



University placing in international rankings



Simplicity of admissions procedure

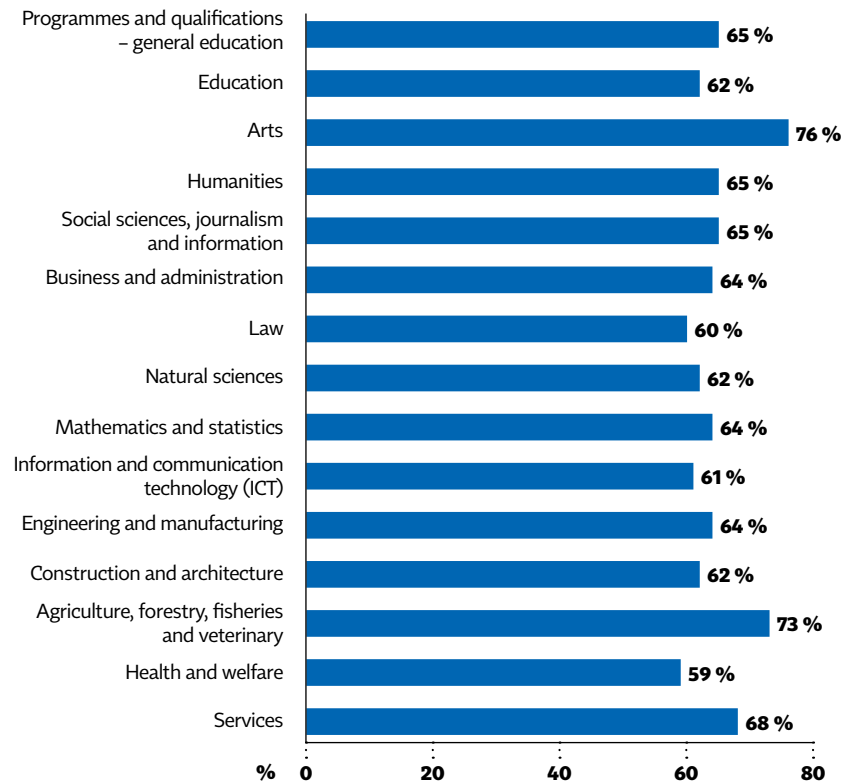


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The **particular study programme** is most important for more specific and narrowly profiled fields, such as arts (76%) or agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary medicine (73%), but in general it can be argued that differences in perceptions of the importance of a particular study programme are relatively small (the vast majority – more than 60% answered affirmatively) and this is a criterion that is important for all students, regardless of their field of study.

Graph 24:
University selection criteria – specific course (N = 8202)

Specific course

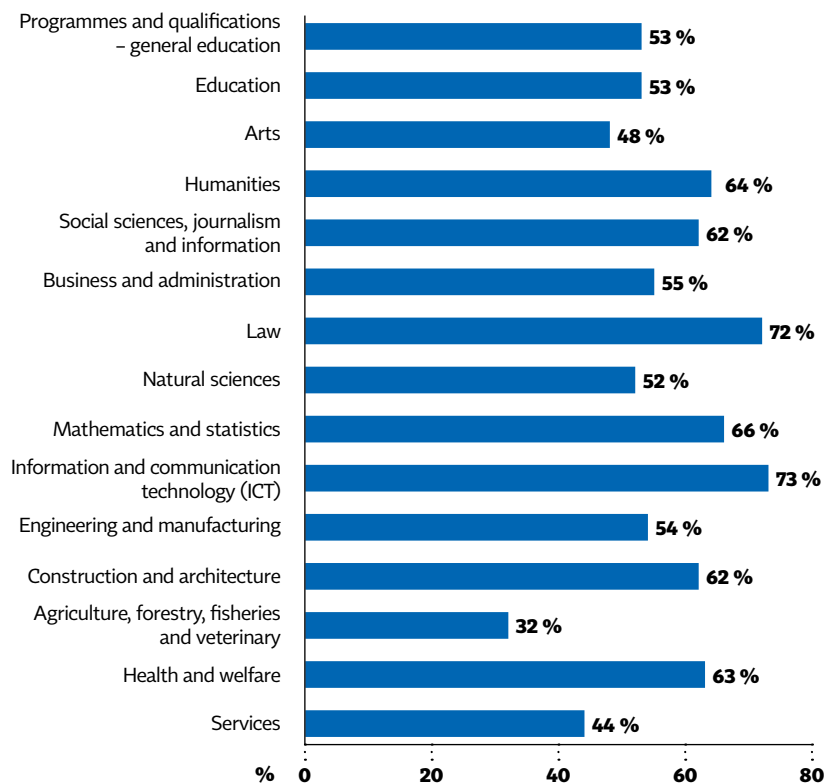


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The same can be said of a **university's reputation**: this is a particularly strong factor in the fields of ICT (73%), law (72%) and mathematics and statistics (66%). Conversely, reputation is not so important for students in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary (32%) or in services (44%). In other fields, reputation is usually important for the half, or a little more, of students, but the differences are relatively small.

Graph 25:
University selection criteria – university reputation (N = 8202)

University reputation



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



SUMMARY

The Czech Republic was the first choice as a study destination for **77% of respondents studying in Czech** and for **54% of students studying in English**. Most respondents **learnt** about studying in the Czech Republic **from friends or family** (57%). 47% of Slovaks mentioned a **secondary school or university in their home country** as a source of information. 21% of respondents who are not from Slovakia heard about studying in the Czech Republic **from an independent agency or study agent**. Specific programmes and universities are of fundamental importance here. There must be someone (a relative or a friend, agent, graduate) or something (the Study in the Czech Republic website, an online search engine, social media) to introduce potential students to the availability of such studies. The most common reasons for deciding to study in the Czech Republic are: a **specific study programme** (stated by 49%) and a **specific university** (stated by 46%). **Slovak students are a group that stands apart from the rest** – they have strong ties to the Czech Republic which means information is readily accessible to them (including visits to fairs in the Czech Republic, such as Gaudeamus Brno) and they thus have a good knowledge of Czech universities. In Slovakia, Czech universities also actively recruit not only at fairs, but also directly at schools. Geographical accessibility plays a role too, especially at universities in Moravia and Silesia. For non-Slovak students, an important factor is recommendations of people who know Czech universities. In almost a quarter of these cases, these people are agents.



PRE-ARRIVAL SUPPORT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Admissions procedure **70**

Visas **74**

Recognition of previous education **77**

Communication with institutions **78**

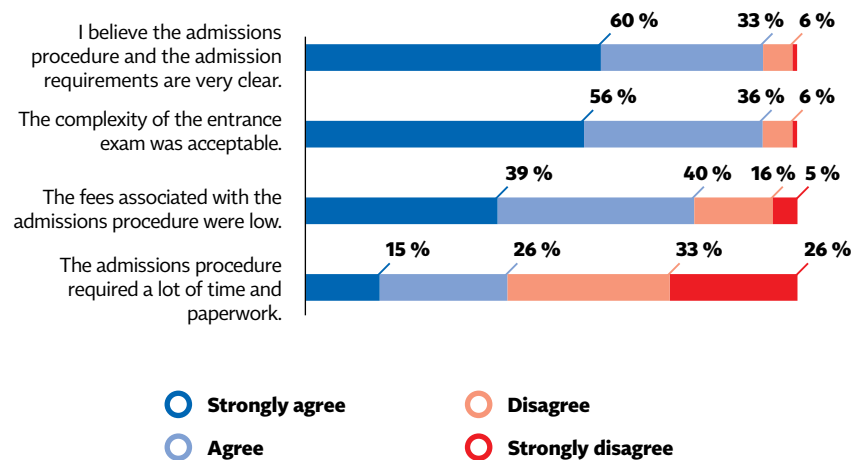
Summary **79**



ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

The admissions procedure can be time-consuming and the Czech Republic is no exception. Although the **admissions procedure** itself and the admission requirements are clear and **comprehensible** for students (93% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed) and entrance exams are considered **acceptable** (92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed), a fifth of students consider the **fees** for them to be **relatively high** (21% of the answers), and the main burden for students is the required **time and paperwork** (41%).

Graph 26:
Complexity of admissions procedure (N = 7660)



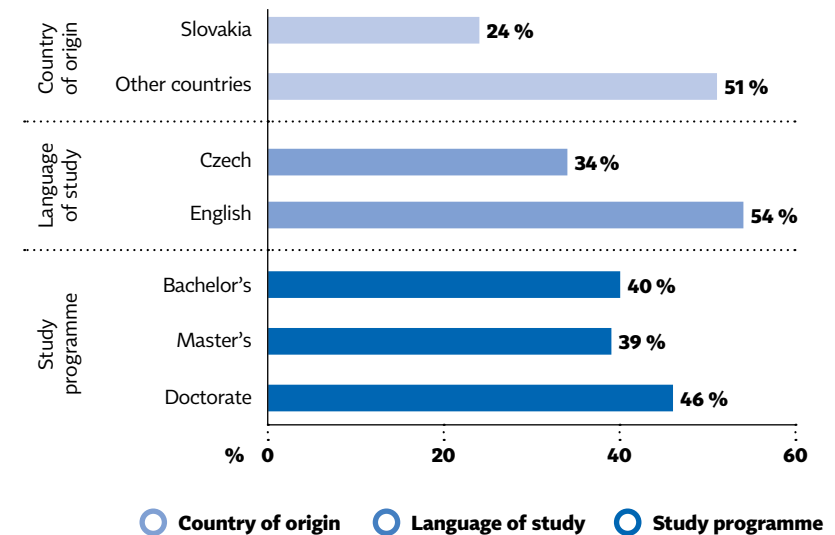
Note: The statement "The admissions procedure was time-consuming / administratively demanding" is negative (compared to the other three).

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Students in English study programmes feel the **administrative intensity and time-consuming nature** of the admissions procedure more acutely (54% compared to 34%). Slovak students find the procedure less administratively demanding (24%) than those from other countries (51%). As far as different degrees are concerned, the most demanding in terms of time and administration is the doctoral programme, an opinion held by 46% of doctoral students. However, the differences are not that big.

Graph 27:
Admissions procedure, by selected indicators (N = 7660)

The admissions procedure was time-consuming and administratively demanding.

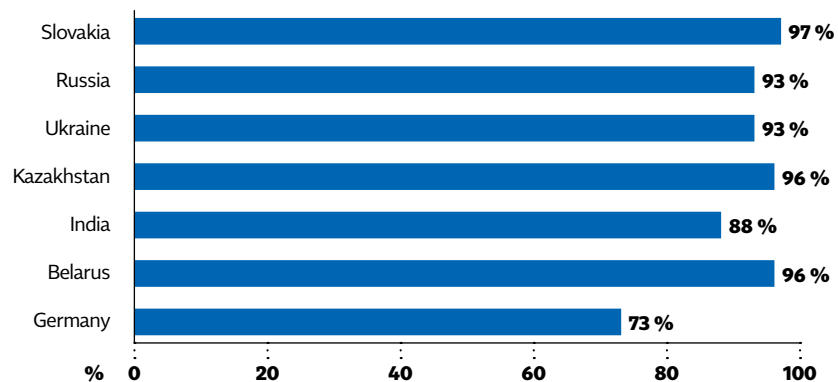


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

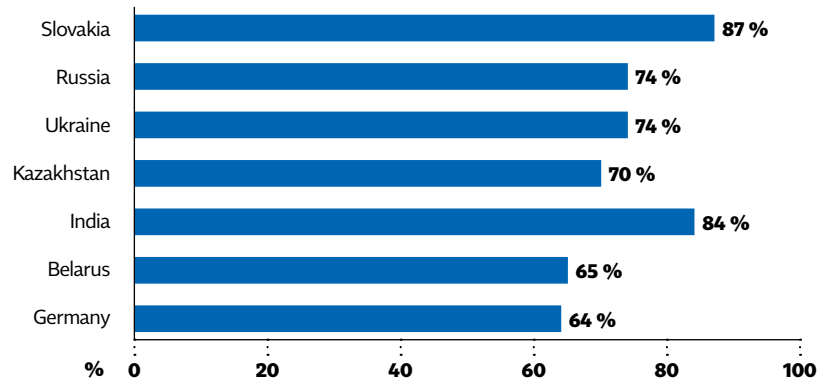
The admission requirements are, again, **most comprehensible** for Slovak students (97%), but less so for German students (73%), although this is still a relatively good result. The slightly worse results among German students may be due to a considerable difference in the approach to the admissions procedure. 87% of Slovaks consider the **financial fees** for the admissions procedure to be low. This figure slips to 65% for Belarusian students and 64% for German students. Here, too, comparisons of the Czech educational system with the student's country of origin are probably play of importance. Of the countries most represented in the survey, German (66%) and Indian (60%) students have the biggest problems with administration.

Graph 28:
Admissions procedure, by selected countries (N = 5586)

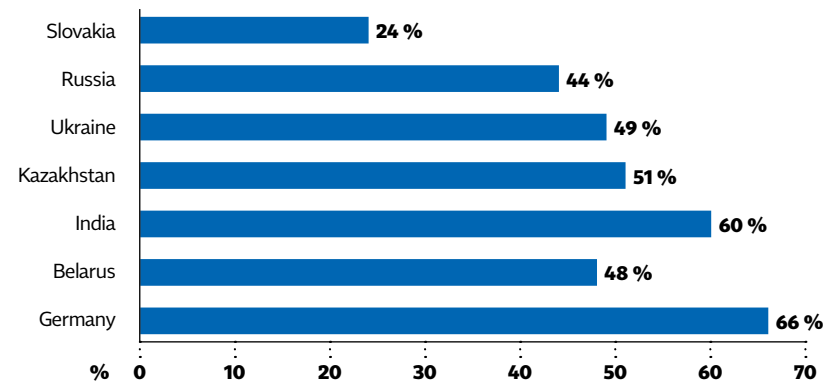
I believe the admissions procedure and the admission requirements are very clear.



The fees associated with the admissions procedure were low.



The admissions procedure was time-consuming and administratively demanding.



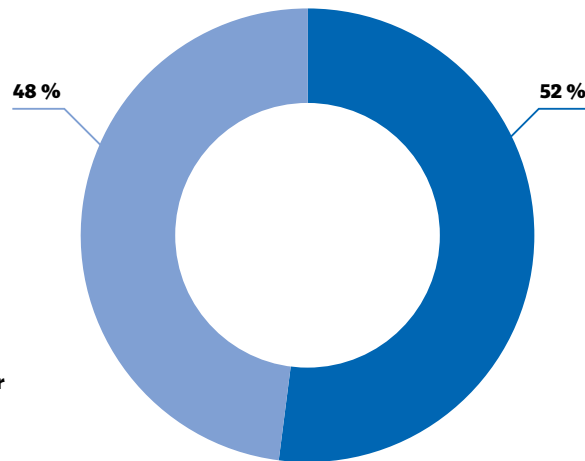
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



VISAS

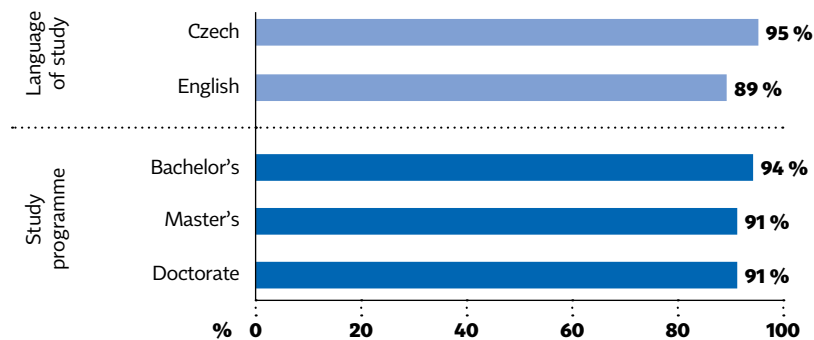
About a half of students come to the Czech Republic on the basis of **visa-free travel** (48%). Of countries outside the European Union, 95% of foreign students in Czech study programmes and 89% of foreign students in English study programmes use a **long-term study visa**.

Graph 29:
Visa type (N = 7271)



- Visa-free travel
- Visa for a stay of over 90 days (long-stay) in order to study

Long-stay visa – only non-EU countries

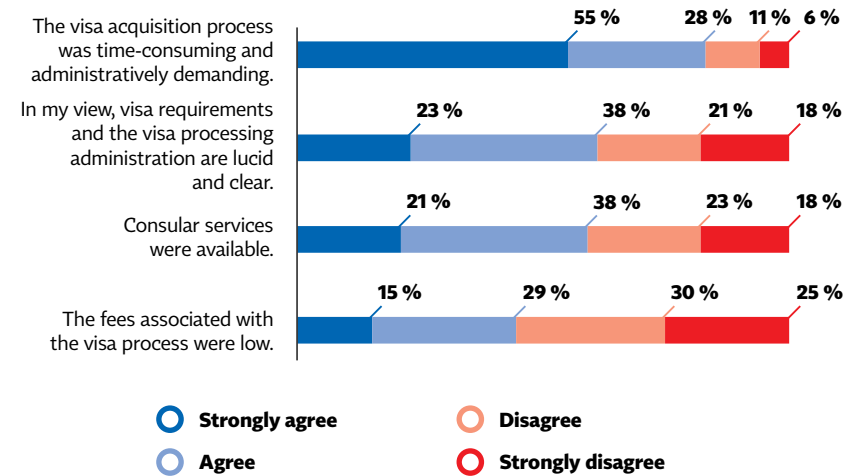


- Language of study
- Study programme

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The procedures of processing and obtaining a visa is **time-consuming and administratively demanding for students (83%)**, the visa requirements were relatively **confusing and unclear (39%)**, with **difficult-to-access consular services**, than students would like (41%), and **financial fees were considered not low by more than a half of students (55%)**. The administration involved in the processing of visas is slightly clearer for students in Czech study programmes (66%) than for students in English study programmes (53%). Financial fees are viewed as low by students in English study programmes (58% of responses; this mainly concerns 68% of Indian students who probably compare the fees with those in the UK, the U.S. or Australia which are high), while students in Czech study programmes probably work with a different frame of reference (only 35% of responses). This is probably due to the country of origin (most often the former Soviet Union) where there is also a different level of income and willingness to pay for visas. It is also interesting that 59% of doctoral students consider the fees to be low, as opposed to 38% of bachelor's and 46% of master's degree students. Income may also play a role here: the higher the degree, the more likely it is that students are working and earning while studying. This is all the more true considering that foreign students often build on previous studies at an older age (OECD, 2019, p. 249), i.e. after several years of work, either in the field or in another branch.

Graph 30:
Visa processing and acquisition – excluding EU countries (N = 4027)



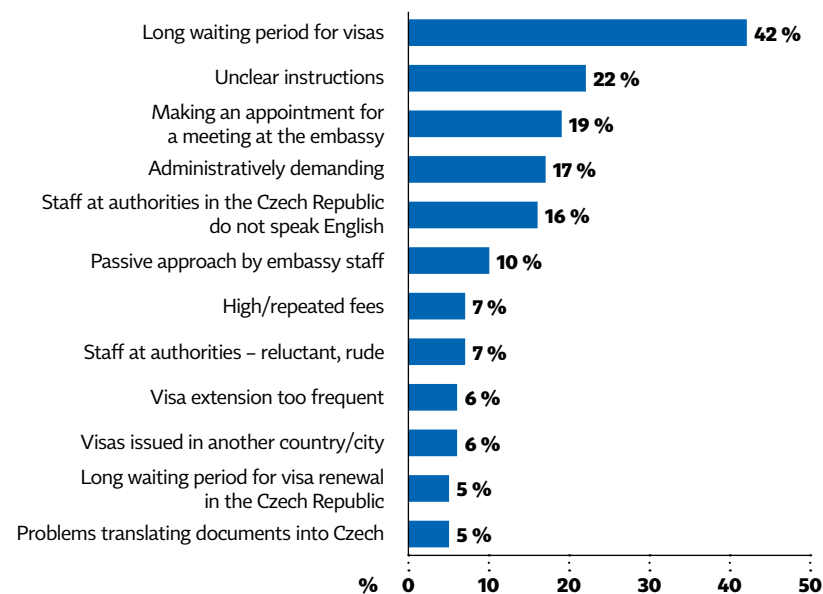
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

However, the main problem lies in the **duration of the visa acquisition process**, especially in comparison with other countries. This is a factor that significantly **reduces the competitiveness of the Czech Republic** and thus of Czech universities. Under the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals, visas must be processed within a period of 60 days (MVČR, 2020). The regional assessments of the visa process again depend on the yardstick that the student has set, based on the country and culture they come from. American students consider the instructions to be confusing (57%), but visa processing in the United States is significantly faster than elsewhere (only 13% said there was a long waiting period). In contrast, only 10% of students from Africa and 11% of students from East Asia stated that the instructions were unclear. Instead, they have a problem with the unbearably long waiting period, cited by 45% of African students and 50% of East Asian students. Students from Africa (38%) and South and Southeast Asia (29%) most often said that **making an appointment for an embassy meeting** was a significant problem. This problem may be caused by either a keen interest in Czech visas or the insufficient capacity of consulates (or a combination of the two). One-fifth of Latin American students also mentioned as a problem that **visas were issued in another country or another city**.

Graph 31:
Specific visa-related problems (N = 904)*

If you encountered significant problems in the processing of your visa, please describe them.



* The graph summarises the answers from the open-ended question.

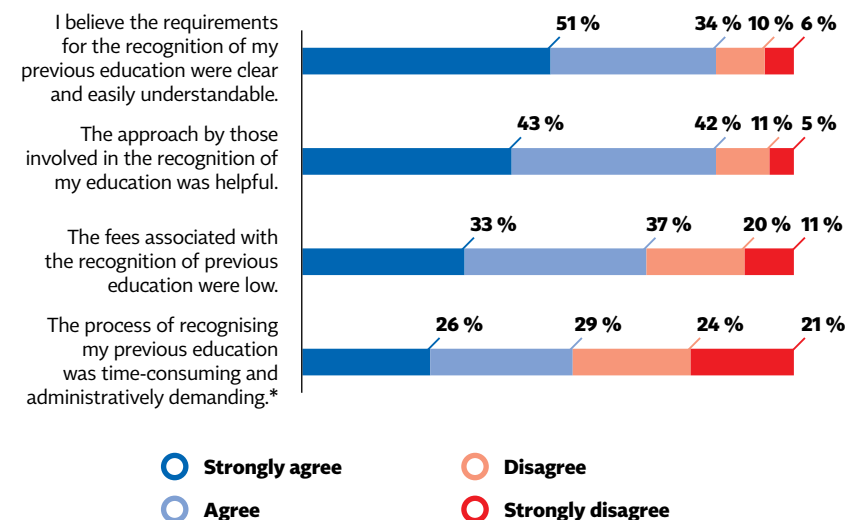
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



RECOGNITION OF PREVIOUS EDUCATION

Here again there is a big difference between the opinions of Slovak students and others. **96% of Slovak and 80% of other students believe that the requirements for the recognition of their previous education are clear. Financial fees** are low according to 91% of Slovak and 62% of other students. **By contrast, 27% of Slovak and 66% of other students consider the process for the recognition of previous education to be demanding.**

Graph 32:
Process of having previous education recognised in the Czech Republic (N = 6280)



* This statement is negative, unlike the other (positive) statements in this group.

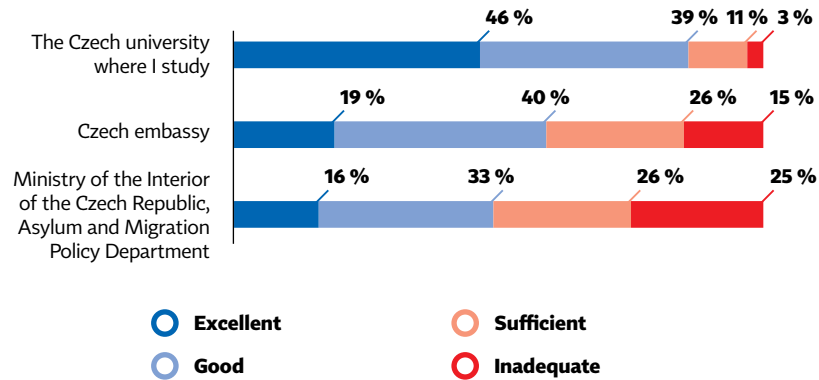
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



COMMUNICATION WITH INSTITUTIONS

85% of students rate the quality of communication with universities as excellent or very good. 59% evaluate communication with embassies positively. A quarter of all students are very dissatisfied with communication with the Asylum and Migration Policy Department.

Graph 33:
Quality of communication with institutions (N = 7222)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



SHRNUTÍ

The admissions procedure is **clear and comprehensible** in terms of requirements and the complexity of examinations (93% and 92%), but **administratively demanding and time-consuming** for 41% of respondents. Half of students in the Czech Republic have a **long-stay visa to study**: 83% of them consider the process of obtaining visas to be **demanding**, 55% of them rate the **fees for visas as high** and 42% of respondents stated that the **long waiting period** for visas was a problem. Problematic visa processing is also noticeable from how the **quality of communication** with the competent authorities is assessed: 51% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction with the quality of applicants' communication with universities in the admissions procedure is high (85%). The process **of recognising previous education** was thought to be clear and comprehensible by 85%, but time-consuming and administratively demanding by 55% students.



VI. CZECH UNIVERSITIES

QUALITY OF STUDY PROGRAMMES AT

**Evaluation of study programmes
at universities** 82

Teaching methods 85

Satisfaction with the quality of teaching 86

Assessment of the study choice 89

**Recommendations to others to study
in the Czech Republic** 92

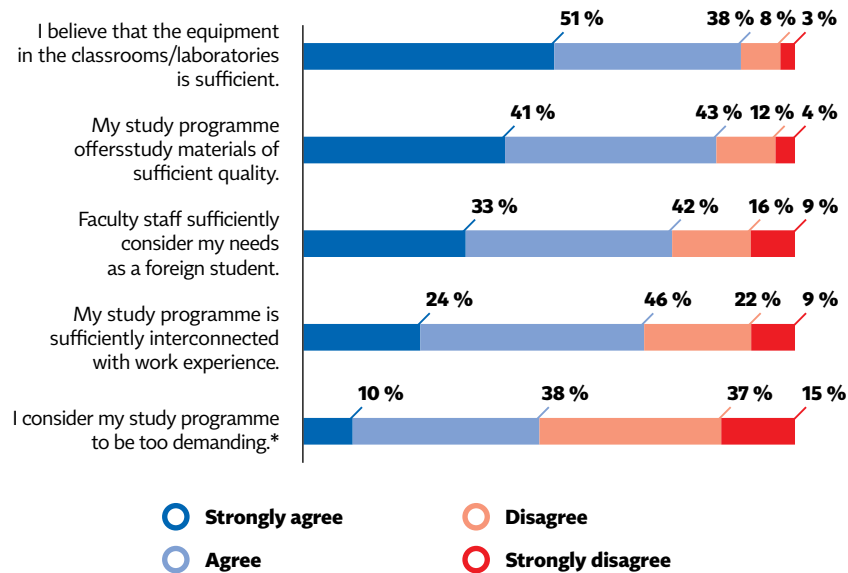
Summary 94



EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES AT UNIVERSITIES

Foreign students are generally **satisfied with the equipment in classrooms and laboratories** (89%) and with the **quality of study materials** (84%), although there is a relatively large difference between students studying **in English** (74% satisfaction with study materials) **and those studying in Czech** (88% satisfaction). However, they are slightly less satisfied with the way **faculty staff approach** them and their needs (75%) – again, this mainly concerns students studying in English (64% compared to 79%) – and with **how their study programme links up to real-world experience** (70% of students are rather very satisfied or satisfied). In addition, about a half con-

Graph 34:
Course evaluation (N = 7187)



* This statement is negative, unlike the other (positive) statements in this group.

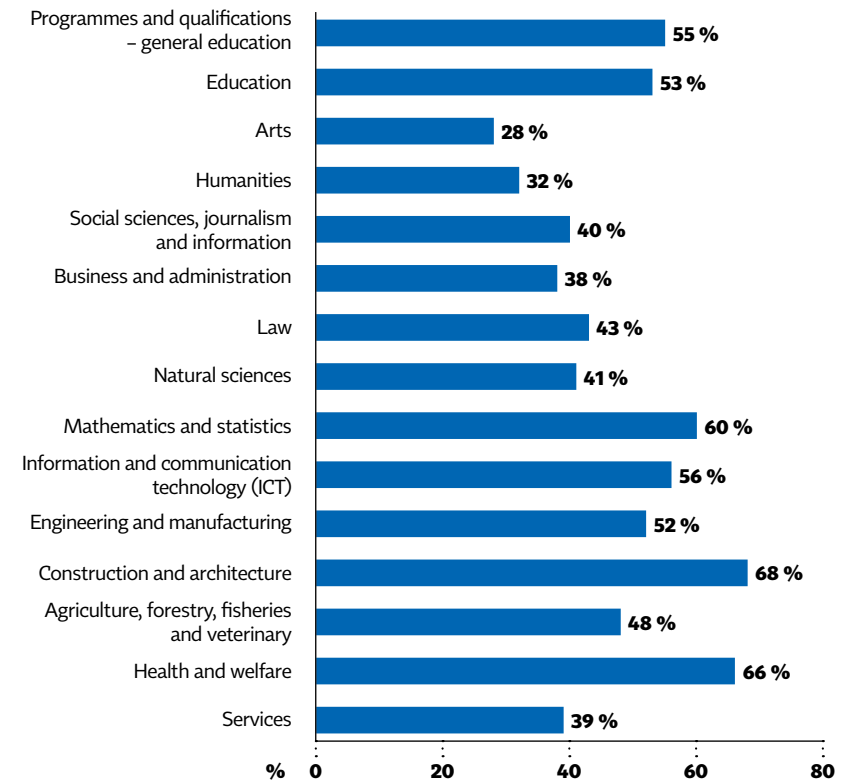
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

sider **the studies to be very demanding or demanding** (48%). Looking at selected nationalities, Slovak students are generally among the most satisfied, but at the same time, they consider studying in the Czech Republic to be relatively demanding (54%). German students are the least satisfied, with only about a half of them considering study materials to be of good quality (54%) and being satisfied with the interconnection between studies and work experience (55%). Only about a third of them consider the studies to be demanding (30%). In this respect, students from Western Europe, the Middle East and the United States tend to place higher demands on education.

Fields of study are rated as too demanding most often by students of **construction and architecture (68%), health and welfare (66%), and mathematics and statis-**

Graph 35:
Study programme difficulty, by field of study (N = 7161)

I consider my study programme to be too demanding.



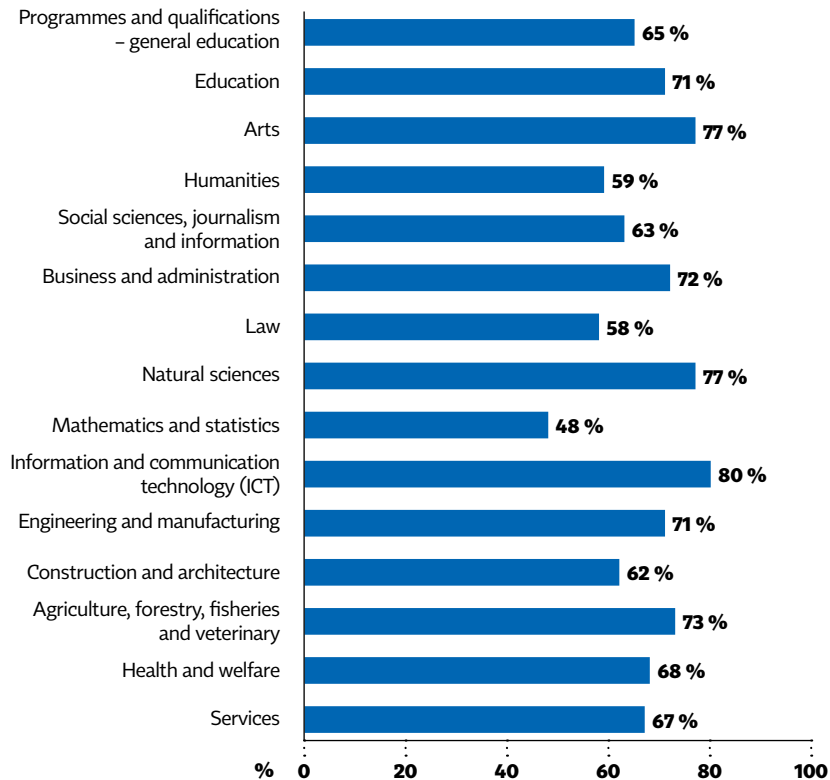
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

tics (60%) and teaching fields (more than 50%). Although the first-named field may be rather surprising, the other fields mentioned are also considered demanding by Czech students (Fischer and Vltavská, 2016). In contrast, **arts (28%), humanities (32%) and business and administration (38%)** are perceived as the **least demanding**.

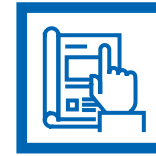
In terms of the **interconnection with work experience**, students mainly praise **information and communication technologies (80%), natural sciences (77%) and arts (77%)**. However, students of **mathematics and statistics are less satisfied in this respect (48%)**.

Graph 36:
Interconnection of the field of study with work experience, by field of study (N = 7097)

My study programme is sufficiently interconnected with work experience.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

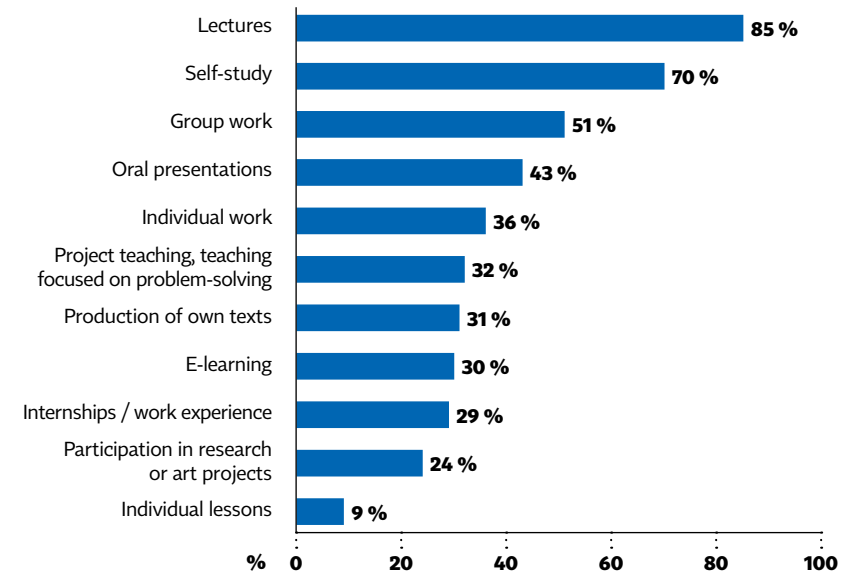


TEACHING METHODS

Unsurprisingly, **lectures are the most commonly used teaching method** (85% of students describe them as the predominant teaching method). However, **self-study (70%), group work (51%) and oral presentations are also common (43%)**. Similar methods are commonly encountered by Czech students (Fischer and Vltavská, 2016, p. 65). However, the graph also reflects a **low share of learning through internships (only 29%) and project-based learning (24%)**. One of the answer choices to this question was individual lessons which was chosen by 9% of students, but it is unclear whether an individual approach is more of a response to the needs of Czech students or primarily a reaction to the needs of foreign students.

Graph 37:
Teaching methods (N = 7241)

Which of the following teaching methods is mostly used in your study programme?*



* Respondents could choose all of the answers offered.

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



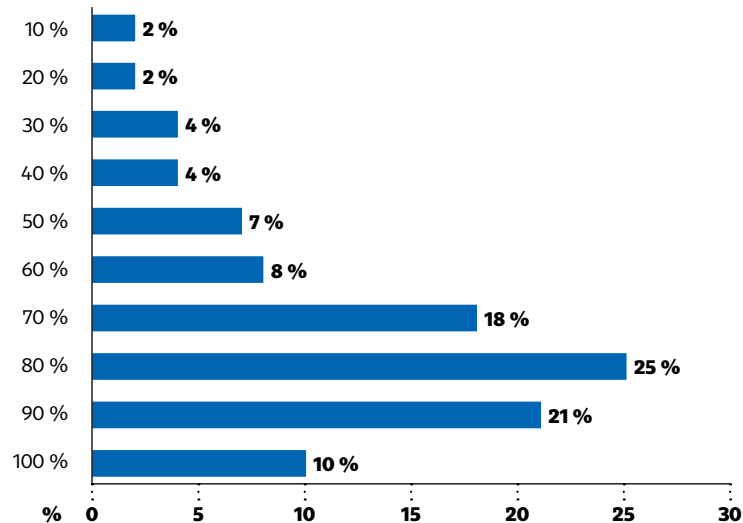
SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

Three quarters of foreign students (74%) rate the **share of quality teachers** at their university as **70% or higher** and only **12% of foreign students rate the share of good teachers at 40% or less**. If we compare the results with satisfaction with the quality of teaching in the pan-European research survey Eurostudent,⁷ where a quarter of students in the Czech Republic are generally dissatisfied with the quality of teaching, the overall results for foreign students are somewhat better.

There are big differences in the evaluation of the quality of teachers, especially depending on the language of the study: **only 7% of students studying in Czech**

Graph 38:
Teacher evaluation (N = 7241)

Please rate the share of quality teachers at your university:



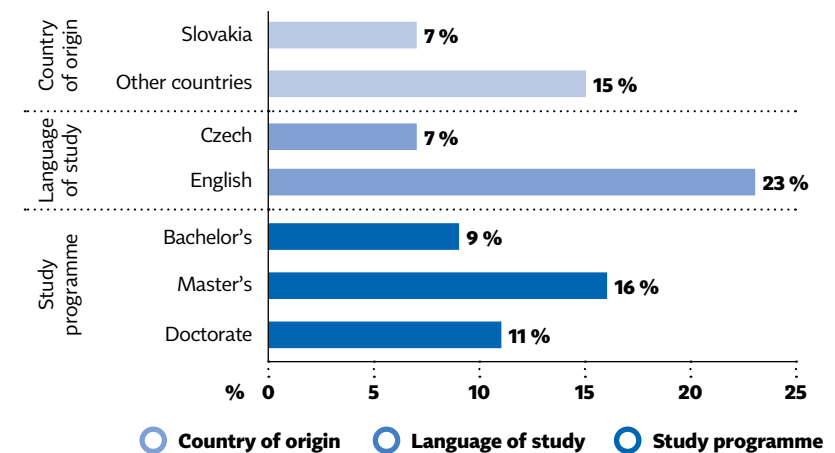
Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

^{7/} https://www.msmt.cz/uploads/odbor_30/TF/Analyticke_materialy/Eurostudent/E_VI_zaverecna_prava.pdf

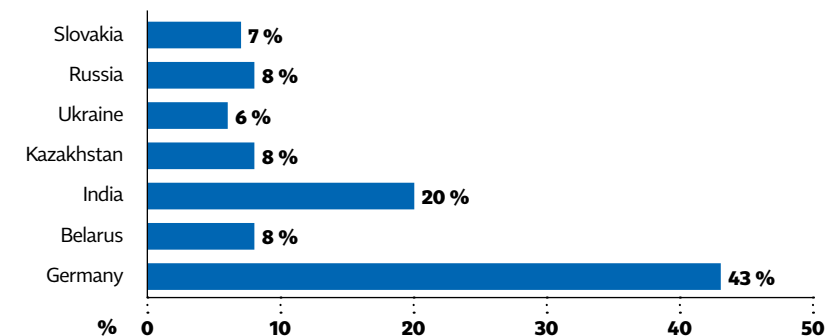
are dissatisfied, while the figure for those studying in English is more than three times higher (23%). Broken down by types of degree programmes, the most demanding are master's students (16% of them consider the share of quality teachers to be less than 40%). Breaking students down by region, Western Europeans in particular have reservations about the quality of teachers (32% of them state that the share of quality teachers is below 40%). Other less satisfied students are those from the Middle East (29%) and North America (24%). From the point of view of the fields of study, students of agricultural (24%) and medical fields (23%) are more critical.

Graph 39:
Responses up to 40% (dissatisfied), by selected indicators (N = 855)

Dissatisfied = 40% or less



Dissatisfied = 40% or less

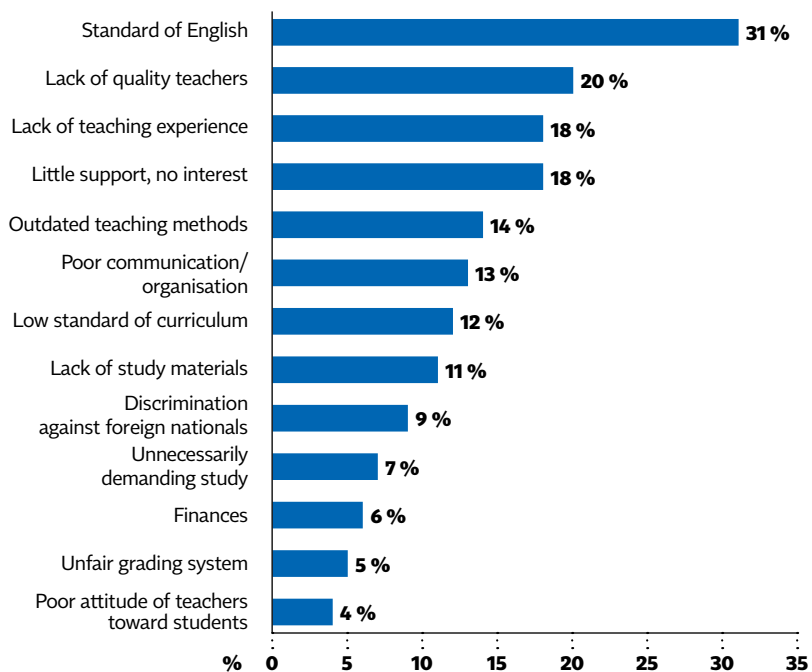


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

What do students criticise about their universities and teachers? Almost a third of them criticise the **low quality of teaching in English due to poor language skills on the part of some teachers (31%)**, while a **fifth** see the **lack of quality teachers** as a problem. Once again, there is a **lack of teaching experience**, but also **outdated teaching methods and a paucity of support**. Unfortunately, discrimination also appears among the negative factors, reported by approximately a tenth of dissatisfied students (9%).

Graph 40:
Open-ended question on the quality of teachers for dissatisfied students (up to 40%) (N = 650)

What is the main reason for your dissatisfaction?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

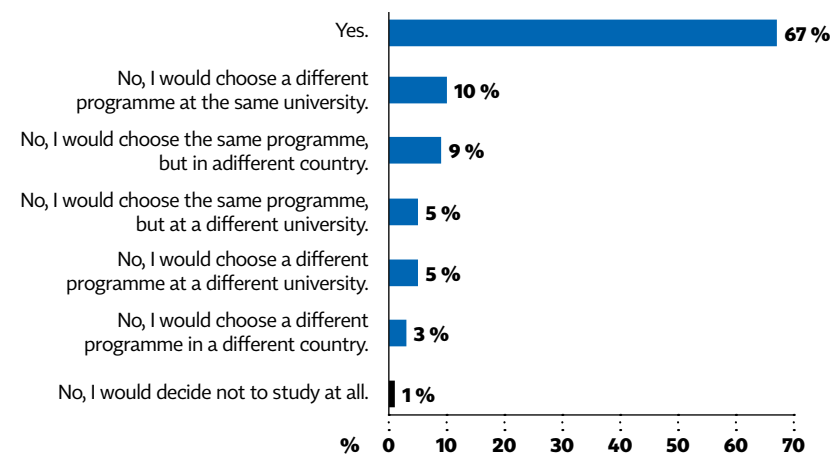


TEACHERSASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY CHOICE

Two thirds (67%) of students **are happy with their choice**, but a fifth would consider either **a different study programme or a different university in the Czech Republic**. Only **12% of students** would choose **a different country** if they were to make their decision again.

Graph 41:
Assessment of the study choice (N = 7174)

If you had the opportunity to decide again, would you choose the same programme and the same university in the Czech Republic?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

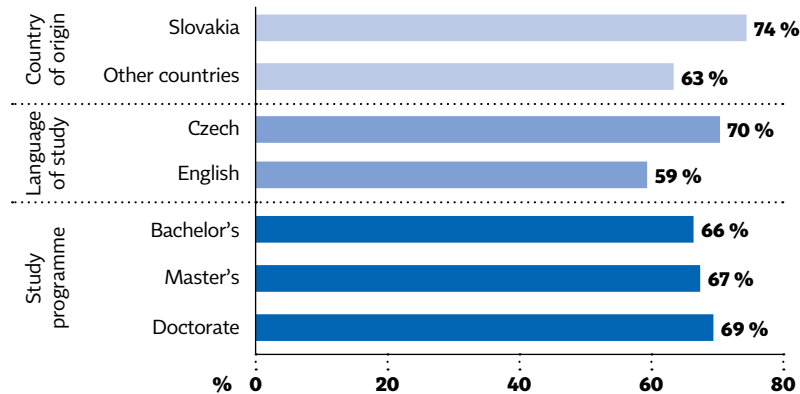
Mainly Slovaks (74%) and students in Czech study programmes (70%) believe that **the Czech Republic and their current university were a good choice**. If they had the opportunity to decide again, a fifth of students in English programmes would choose a different country and the higher the degree, the higher the proportion of the students who would go somewhere other than the Czech Republic, although the differences are not significant. A closer look at the individual countries again shows that there are slightly more Indian students (25%) and German students (29%) thinking this way. It is very likely that the Czech Republic was not originally their first choice, plus they place higher demands on their studies than their fellow students from other countries.

Graph 42:

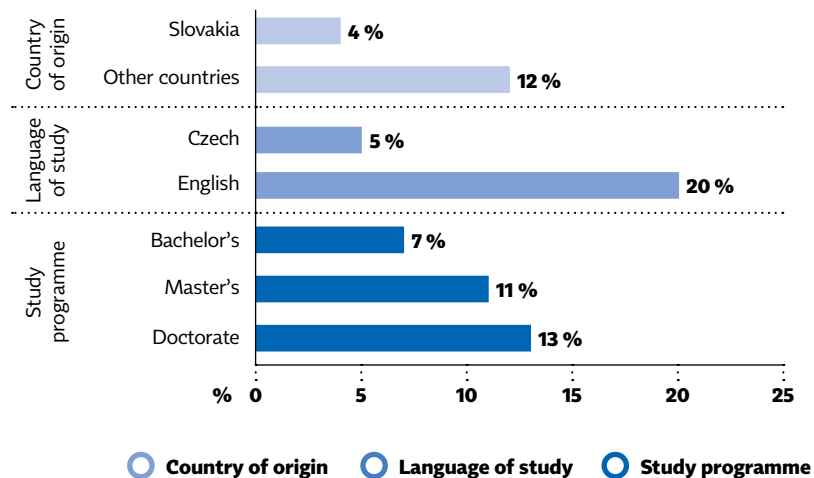
Question on the possibility of re-selecting a study programme, university and country of study (N = 7174)

If you had the opportunity to decide again, would you choose the same study programme and the same university in the Czech Republic?

Yes, I would choose the same programme at the same university.



No, I would choose the same programme, but in a different country.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

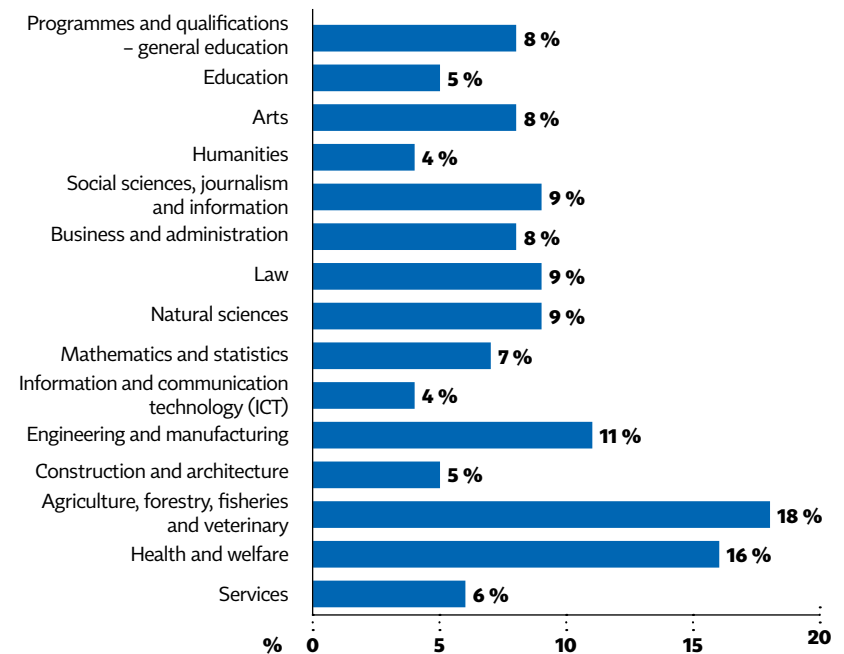
Among the various fields, the best rated are law (78%), information and communication technologies (74%) and arts (70%). In other fields of study, about 60% to 70% of students would apply for the same field at the same university in the Czech Republic; the differences are relatively small. A rather larger proportion of students in agricultural fields (18%) or, for example, medicine (16%) would prefer to study in the same programme in a different country, but here the results are largely influenced by generally more demanding students from Western Europe (26%). Broadly speaking, there is a certain group of students in English study programmes who would rather see themselves elsewhere. This group mostly includes students from such regions where students traditionally study elsewhere than in the Czech Republic, for example, students from the United States or East Asia.

Graph 43:

Question on the possibility of re-selecting a study programme, university and country of study – evaluation by fields of study (the same study programme in another country) (N = 6999)

If you had the opportunity to decide again, would you choose the same study programme and the same university in the Czech Republic? – evaluation of the choice of study, by field

No, I would choose the same study programme, but in a different country.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



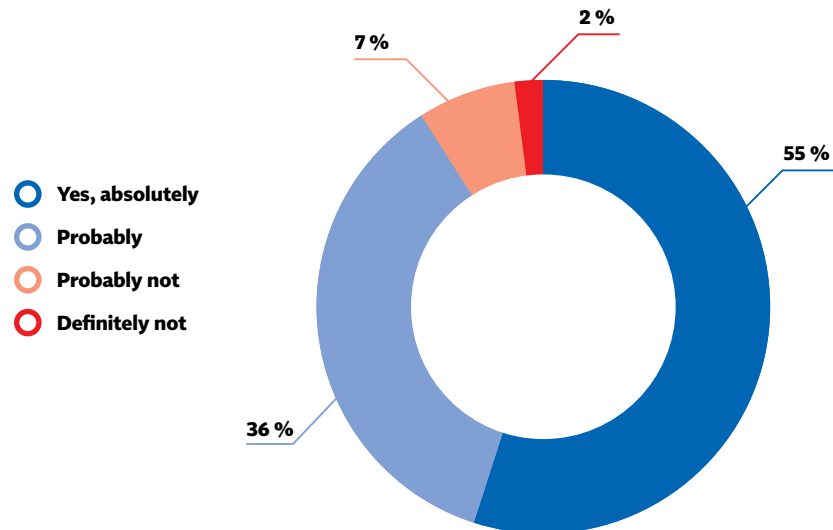
RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHERS TO STUDY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

How satisfied or dissatisfied students are with their Czech experience is, naturally, reflected in their willingness to recommend to others to study here. While Slovak students are generally satisfied and are also inclined to recommend studying in the Czech Republic to friends and acquaintances (97% of answers), students from Western Europe are slightly less inclined to this (75% recommend studying), as are students from India and the Middle East (76%). **In general, however, 9 out of 10 foreign students would recommend studying in the Czech Republic.**

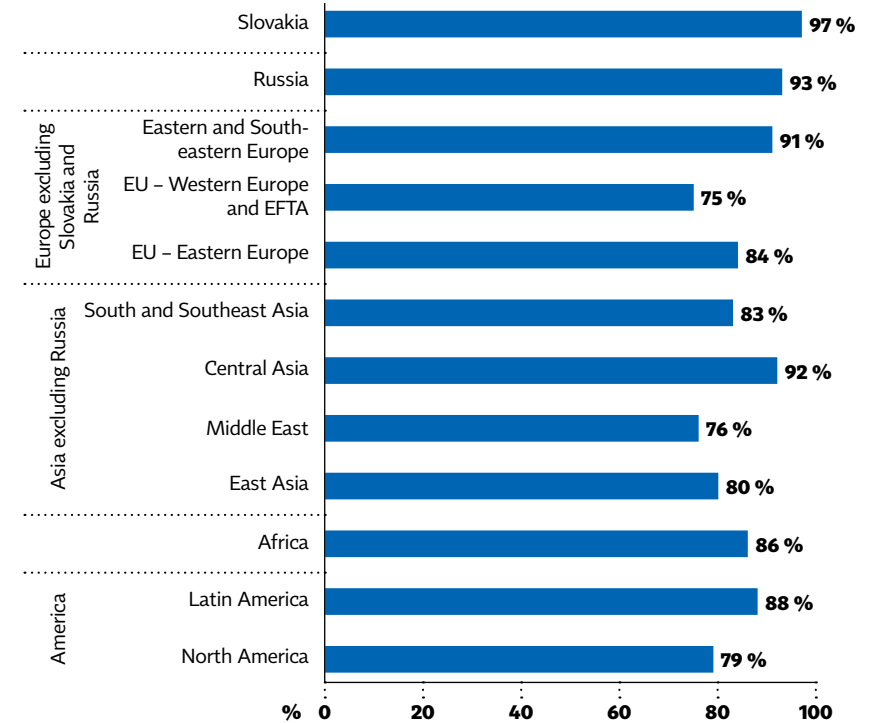
Graph 44:

Recommendation to study in the Czech Republic (N = 7174)

Would you recommend studying in the Czech Republic to your friends or family?



Yes



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



SUMMARY

In general, **greater satisfaction with teaching and teachers can be observed among students studying in Czech and among Slovak students.** The same study programme at a specific university in the Czech Republic would be chosen again by 74% of Slovaks and 63% of students from other countries. **As many as 91% of all students would recommend studying in the Czech Republic to their friends or family.** 89% of foreign students are also satisfied with the facilities of universities and 84% are satisfied with the quality of study materials.

Significant differences between Czech and English study programmes also appear in students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching. **While 93% of students in Czech study programmes are satisfied with the quality of teaching, for those in English study programmes the figure is 77%.** As reasons for their dissatisfaction, they most often cite the low standard of English spoken by teachers, the lack of quality teachers, and few opportunities to gain work experience in their field of study.

Lectures and self-study predominate among the teaching methods at Czech universities. 75% of foreign students are satisfied with teachers' attitude towards them. 48% of foreign students view studying in the Czech Republic as demanding or rather demanding.





PART **VII.** SERVICES AND LIVING
CONDITIONS

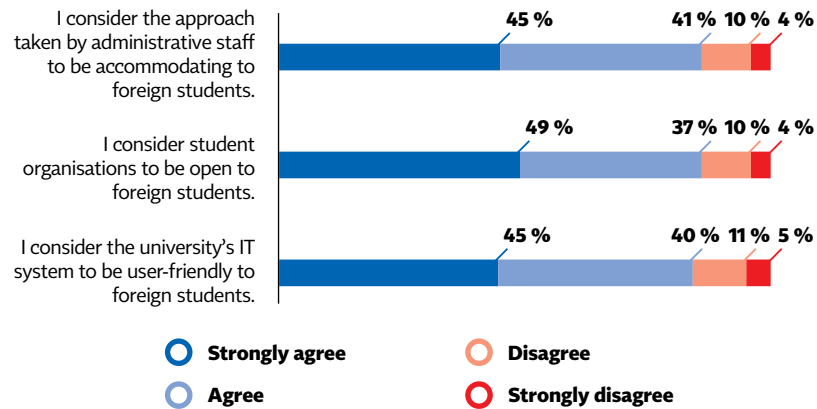
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EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY SERVICES

Foreign students generally praise university services, both in terms of administrative staff's (86%) and student organizations' (86%) approach and from the perspective of information technology and systems used at universities (85%). The values do not differ significantly between countries. In individual regions, students are generally satisfied with the services. There are only small differences among regions (for example, the aforementioned Western Europe – 71%, Israel in the Middle East – 76%, and North America – 76%) that prove the students from these regions to be more demanding about services, probably because they compare services in the Czech Republic with the support system in universities in their home countries.

Graph 45:
Evaluation of university services (N = 6834)

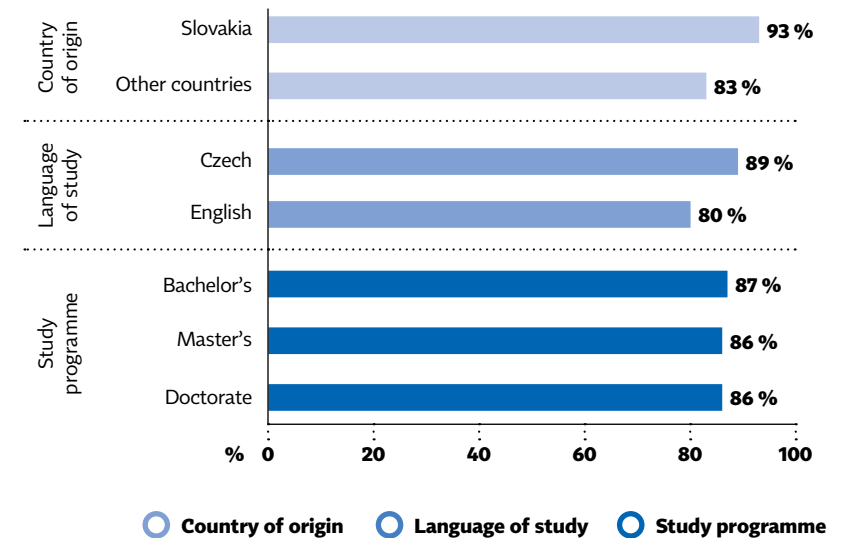


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

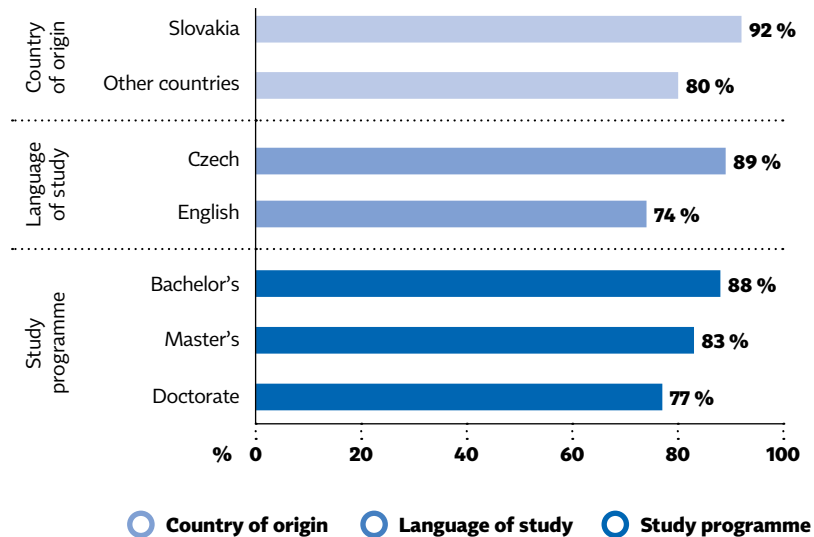
When breaking down questions by selected indicators (Graph 46), it is evident that, in general, **students studying in Czech report a higher satisfaction in all the questions than students of English study programmes**; the difference can be as much as fifteen per cent. English-speaking students are therefore likely to need a little more care, as many university-related matters are new to them. The poor English of the host university staff is also a frequent obstacle. Although the differences in the study programmes are not major, undergraduates appear to find it easier to work their way around the IT system, and these students also give a better assessment of the stance taken by student organisations. These differences may also be partly due to age or a break between the different levels of study which is more likely to take place with master's and doctoral students.

Graph 46:
Evaluation of university services – selected questions, by selected indicators (N = 6834)

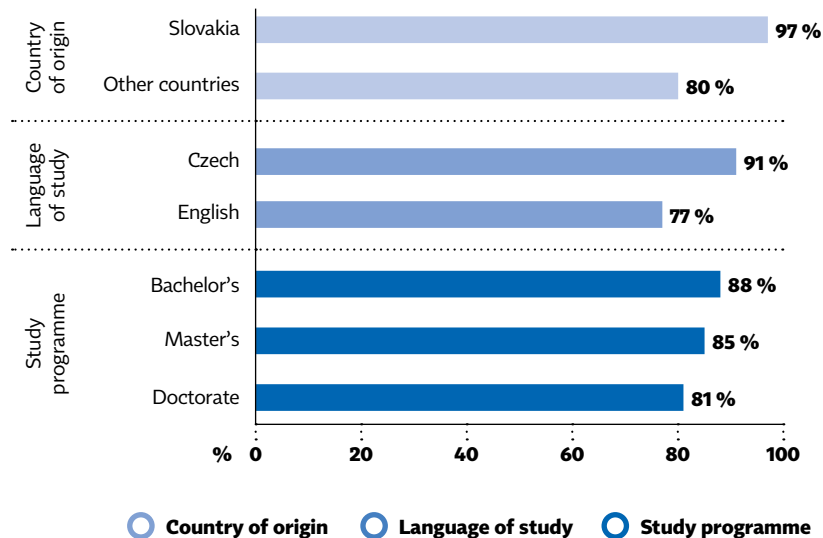
I consider the approach taken by administrative staff to be accommodating to foreign students.



I consider the university's IT system to be user-friendly to foreign students.



I consider student organisations to be open to foreign students.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

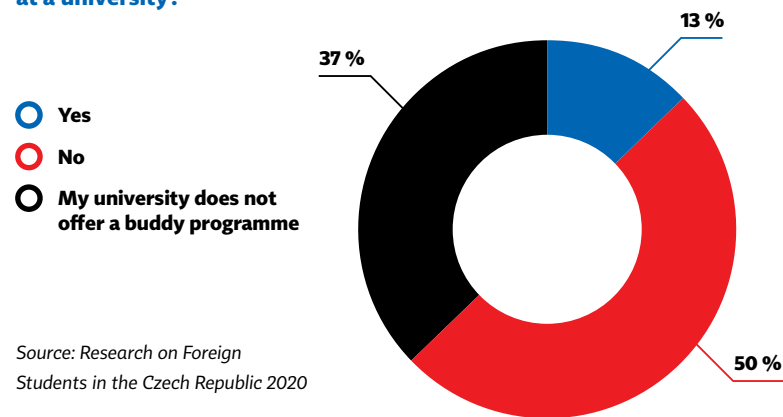


BUDDY PROGRAMME

The buddy programme is a voluntary service provided by certain universities or student organisations. The aim is to build bridges between Czech and foreign students. A Czech student plays the role of assistant and guide for a foreign student. They help them to work their way around their new environment and to handle the necessary formalities. For Czech students, involvement is an opportunity to get to know another culture and improve their language skills, or simply to make a new friend (e.g. ESN CU Prague, 2020). Students may, but are not obliged to, use this service. In addition, even if foreign students enrol in the buddy programme, there is no guarantee that there will be a sufficient number of Czech students who are interested in participating in the scheme. **One third (37%) of students point out that their university does not provide "buddy services" at all. Only 13% have been allocated a buddy. This is also due to the fact that the buddy system for universities is usually arranged by branches of the Erasmus Student Network which primarily care for exchange students, not students enrolled in degree programmes.** Therefore, half of the students interviewed had no buddy. They were either not allocated one, probably because this support is intended only for students on shorter study stays, or they were not interested in it, which mainly concerns Slovak students who largely function as domestic students in the Czech system.

Graph 47:
Buddy programme (N = 7130)

Have you been assigned a student ("buddy") to help you settle at a university?

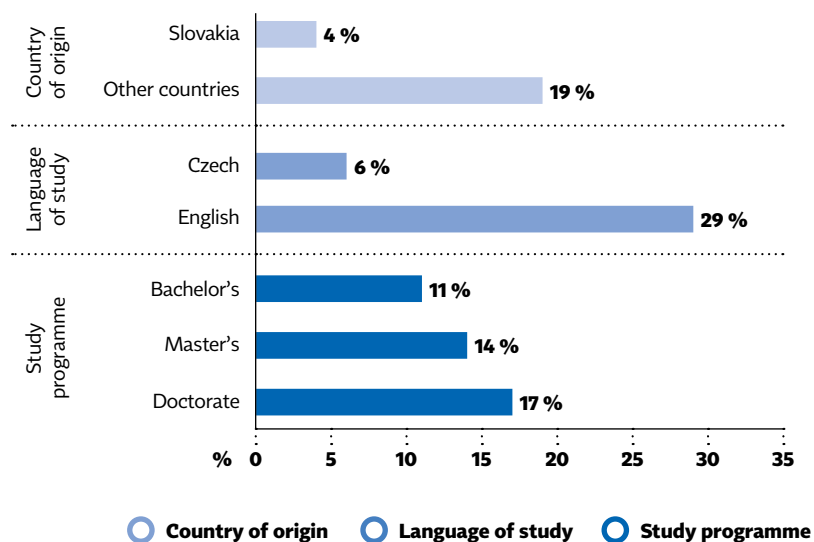


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

Of the students to whom a buddy is assigned, the majority are in the English study programmes (29% compared to 6% in Czech study programmes). At the same time, although the differences are not great, the use of the buddy system seems to be more frequent the higher the level of study.

Graph 48:
Buddy programme, by selected indicators (N = 7130)

Have you been assigned a student (“buddy”) to help you settle at a university?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



Reasons for not using the buddy programme

A friend from a higher year was already studying at the university and helped me to find my way around.

I'm Slovak, so it would be pretty weird. :-D

I was here with Erasmus last year, so I already knew the necessary procedures and formalities. In addition, the administrative staff, the programme coordinator, etc., were keen to advise me whenever I had questions or if anything was unclear, so I had all the help I needed.

I don't like the idea of "assigned friends". Plus, I have my own friends.

Because I took preparatory Czech courses here last year and got all the support and help I needed.

Buddies are only available for Erasmus students, but I was assigned a mentor from the faculty's student organisation.

I have lived in the Czech Republic for a long time, so I don't need help to adapt.

I can find my way around without help. I can speak Czech. I found friends myself, I don't need anyone to assign them to me.

I found a buddy on my own.

I applied for one, but no one was assigned to me, because there are not enough people who would like to join the programme.

I didn't need one because at the beginning, my parents were here with me and helped me before I settled in.

I don't know how to get one!

No one offered one to me, but the university staff were helpful enough.

I didn't know about it at all, nobody told me and I didn't read about it anywhere. I would definitely like to do it, even now. It would improve my studies, if I didn't have to search for information all over my university's website.

I didn't know about this possibility, but now I'm sorry I didn't use it. I would like to communicate a little more with my fellow students. The biggest problem foreign nationals have is with everyday conversation. We can learn everything we need from the course, but we cannot tell others about our weekend without making mistakes and speaking in a foreign accent. Because we worry about looking stupid, we listen more than we speak.

I have been living in Prague for 10 years, so if anything I should be the buddy. :)

The programme is intended mainly for international students who study in English, not Czech.

We had an "introduction to studies" at the beginning of the semester which made adaptation easier.

At the beginning of my studies, it was quite difficult to understand how it works, and it was necessary to register in advance, so I did not use the buddy programme because there was a lack of information.

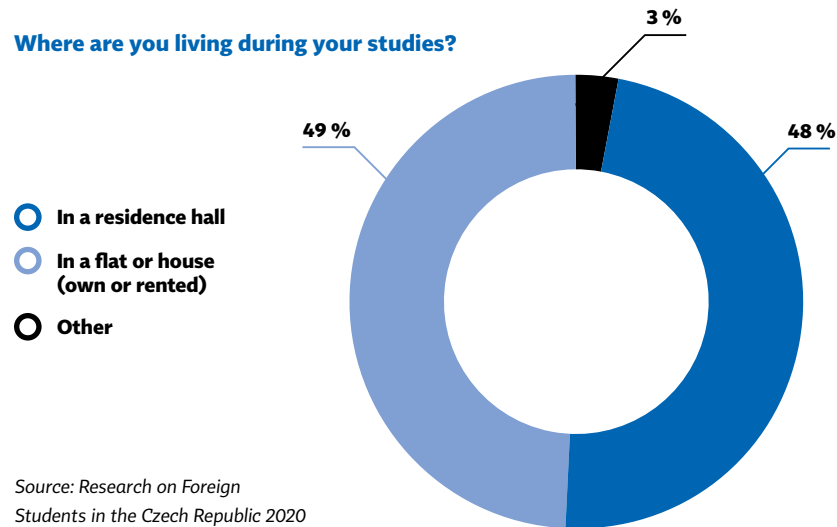


STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Another important aspect of living in a new country is undoubtedly housing. Here, the number of students living in residence halls and in private accommodation are more or less balanced. **In all, 49% of students live in a flat or a house (either owned or rented) and 48% stay in a residence hall.**

Graph 49:
Accommodation (N = 7025)

Where are you living during your studies?

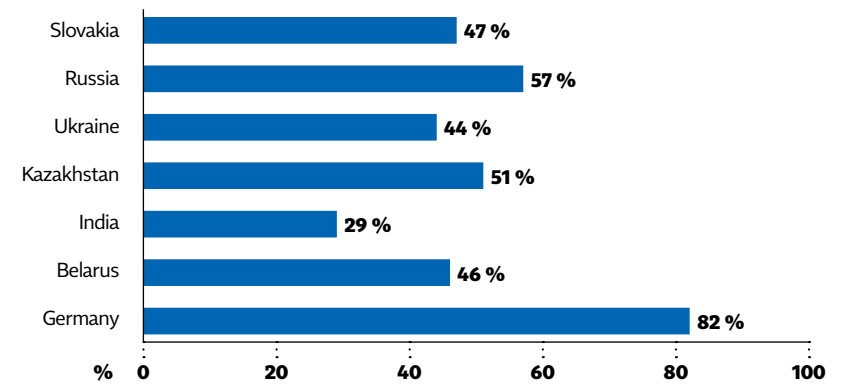


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The **private route** (flat or house) is chosen in particular by four fifths of **Germans (82%)** and by a relatively large percentage of Russians (57%). **Half of the students from Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Belarus and Ukraine** also arranged their own housing. Private housing may thus also be a sign of the disproportion between prices and quality in comparison with residence halls and rented flats. The prices often do not differ much, but flats, although slightly more expensive, offer incomparably better quality of housing (iDNES.cz, 2019).

Graph 50:
Accommodation in a flat or house, by selected countries (N = 5174)

In a flat or house (own or rented)



Source: Research into Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



Who they would like to live with:

Literally with anyone.

It doesn't really matter, but I have a great Czech flatmate and we get along very well.

It doesn't matter where people come from, as long as they are nice, calm and positive.

I don't care, but definitely not with my parents. :-D

Apart from living with my partner, I have no other preferences – I can live with anyone I get along with well.

In my own room, but with people nearby.

Preferably with someone from the Czech Republic to improve my language skills, but that's not possible, so I'd rather be alone.

With people my age. Not necessarily students or people of a certain nationality.

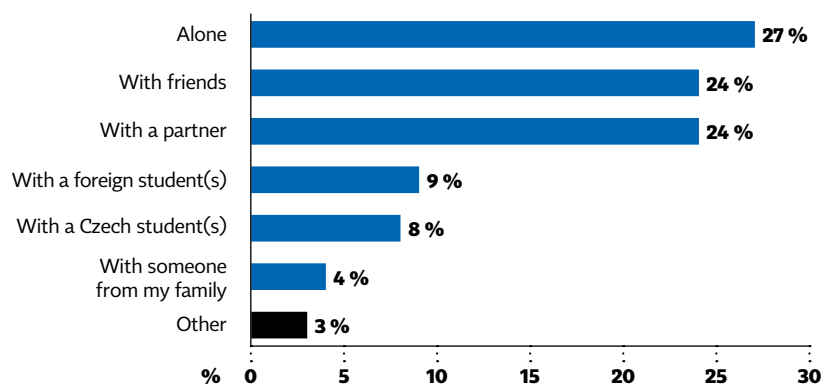
I would prefer to live alone, but I no longer have the money for it.

With my cat, because my partner is studying somewhere else. :)

In addition to questions about existing housing, we also asked about students' preferences. **A quarter prefer living alone (27%), a quarter with friends (24%) and a quarter with a partner (24%). Less than a tenth are interested in living with other foreign students or Czech students.** This is despite the fact that sharing a place and communicating every day with Czech students could help them with integration. Housing with other foreign students is favoured more by those in English study programmes (22% compared to 3%), specifically by Germans (30%) and Indians (28%). Slovaks (37%) and, again, Indians (27%) would prefer to live with friends. Kazakhs (39%), Russians (38%) and Belarusians (36%) would prefer to live by themselves in a flat/house.

Graph 51:
Housing preferences while studying in the Czech Republic (N = 7025)

Who would you like to live with?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

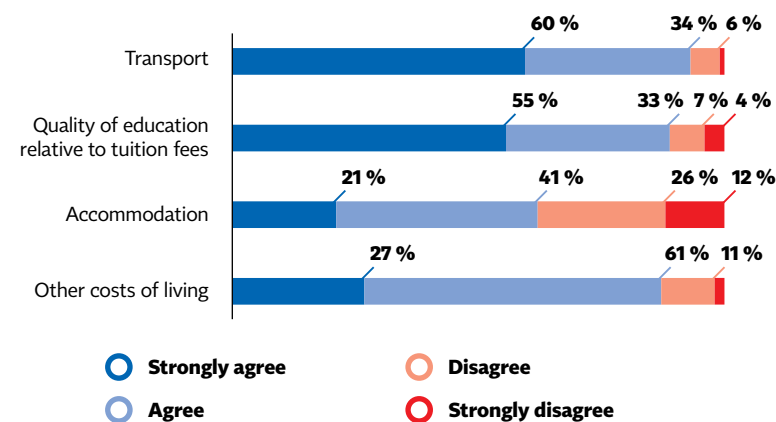


**QUALITY OF SERVICES
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

This section covers the quality of services throughout the country, not just at universities. Students assessed the value for money of several services in several areas. **For example, they expressed great satisfaction with transport (94%) and education after considering the amount of tuition fees (88% satisfied).** Satisfaction with the cost of living in the Czech Republic (88%) is also evident. **The worst rated item is accommodation (62%).** This probably reflects dissatisfaction with relatively expensive housing in residence halls, but in the last year may also have indicated the disproportionate price of private housing (C., L. and Delmendo, 2019). Although the quality of education generally turned out well in the survey, **among students in English study programmes, the satisfaction is lower (only 73%) compared to students in Czech study programmes (95%).**

Graph 52:
Value for money of services (N = 6899)

Do you think that the quality of the following services is consistent with their price?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

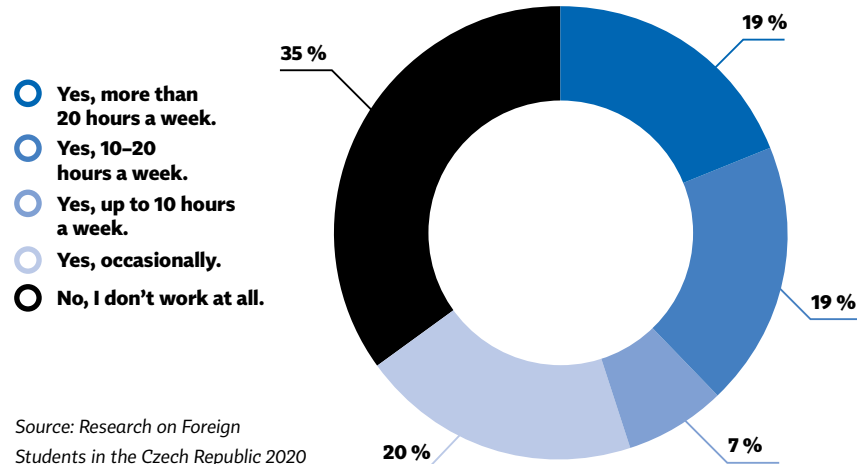


STUDENT JOBS

The results of asking about student jobs are also interesting: **only a third of students (35%) do not work at all.** Other foreign students earn extra money in some form – **a fifth occasionally and about a quarter (27%) up to 20 hours per week.** **About a fifth of students (19%) also have more than part-time work.** Students with Czech language skills that make it easier to find work on the labour market and from countries with a lower standard of living work the most. This translates into a quarter of Kazakhs and Ukrainians and a fifth of Russians and Slovaks. Conversely, survey found that Indians (59%) and Germans (53%) did not have jobs.

Graph 53:
Student jobs (N = 7025)

Are you working during your studies?



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

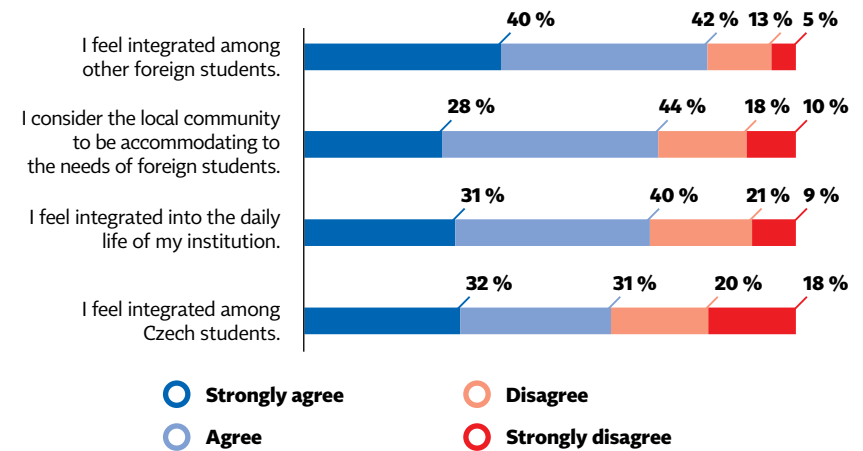


INTEGRATION INTO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The integration of students into the community is essential for the successful course of their study and life in the country. **Foreign students feel the greatest sense of community among each other (82%).** Approximately two thirds of students consider the local community (72%) and institutions (61%) to be friendly. **In terms of inclusion among Czech students, 64% of students declared that they had successfully integrated.** Unsurprisingly, while Slovaks manage to integrate, students from other countries, and especially those in English study programmes, face greater difficulties.

Graph 54:
Feel of integration into the local community (N = 6871)

How do you rate your integration into the local community?

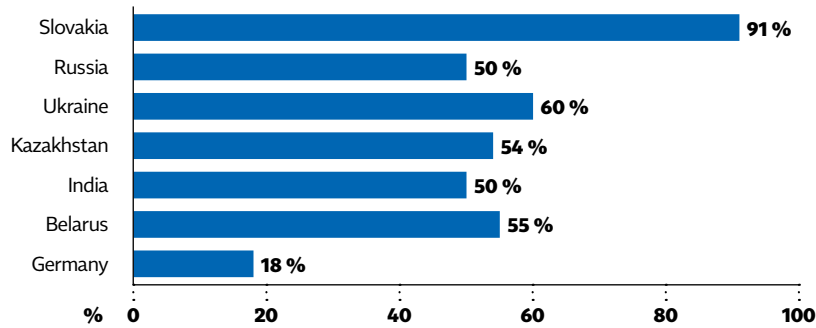


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

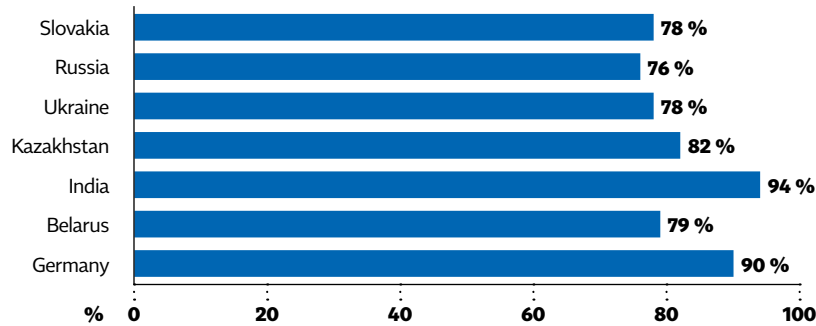
Focusing on the countries most represented in the survey, we find that Germany deviates significantly from the views of students from other countries. They feel the least integrated among Czech students (only 18%), but most integrated among other foreign students (along with Indians), although the differences are not generally so big. Similarly, they are dissatisfied with their feeling of belonging to their institution (only about half of them are integrated).

Graph 55:
Feel of integration into the local community, by selected countries (N = 4981)

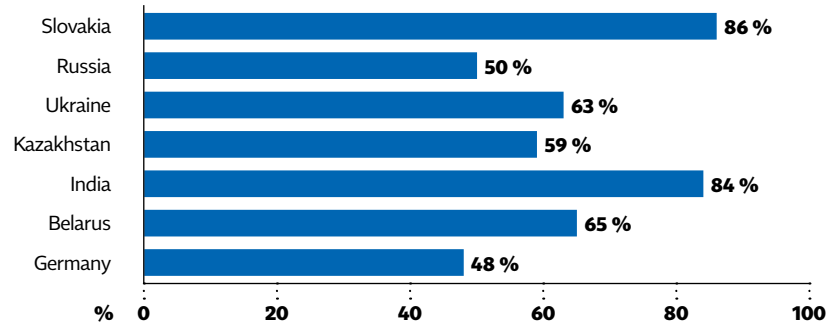
I feel integrated among Czech students.



I feel integrated among other foreign students.



I feel integrated into the daily life of my institution.

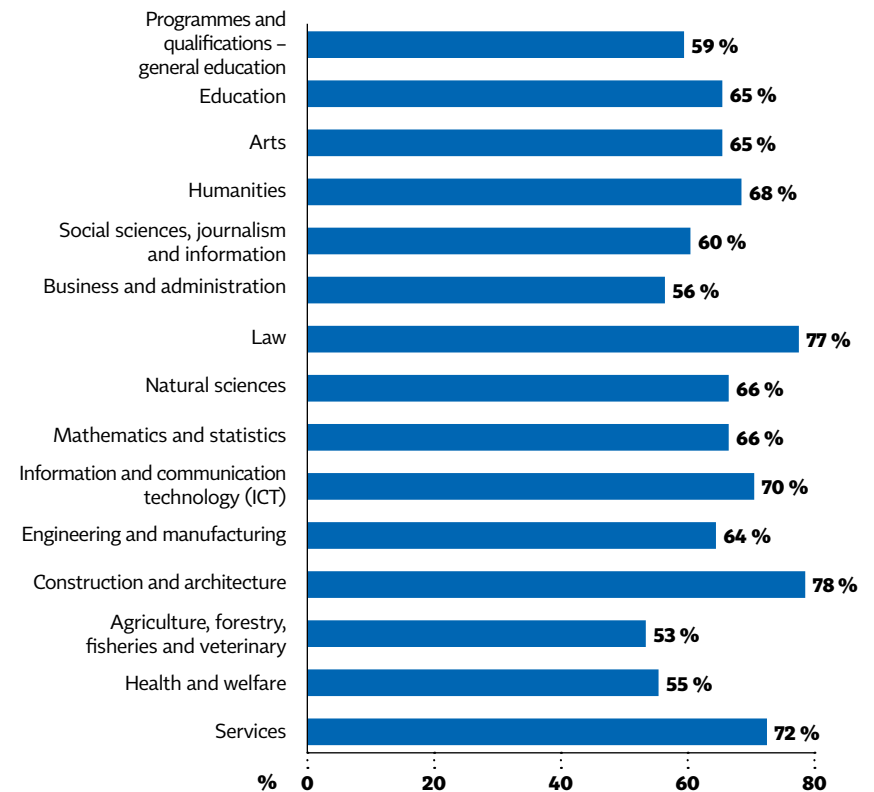


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

The evaluation of integration is related to individual fields. While medicine (55%), which is very often studied by German students, does not do very well in the evaluation, information technology (70%), construction (78%) and law (77%) do better. The evaluation of integration into the life of students' institutions fares similarly, although slightly better when expressed as a percentage.

Graph 56:
Feel of integration among Czech students, by fields of study (N = 6701)

I feel integrated among Czech students.

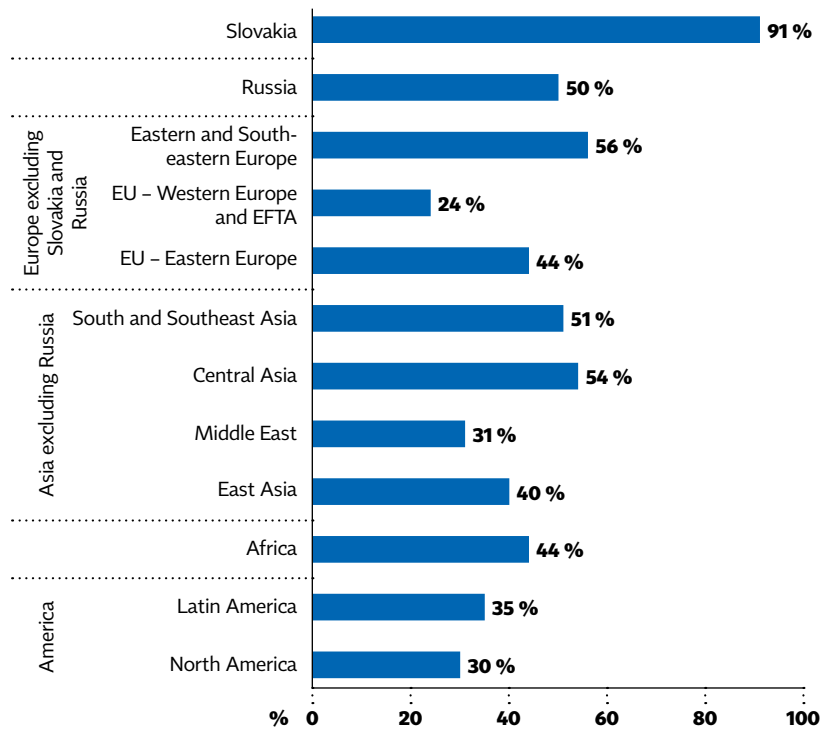


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

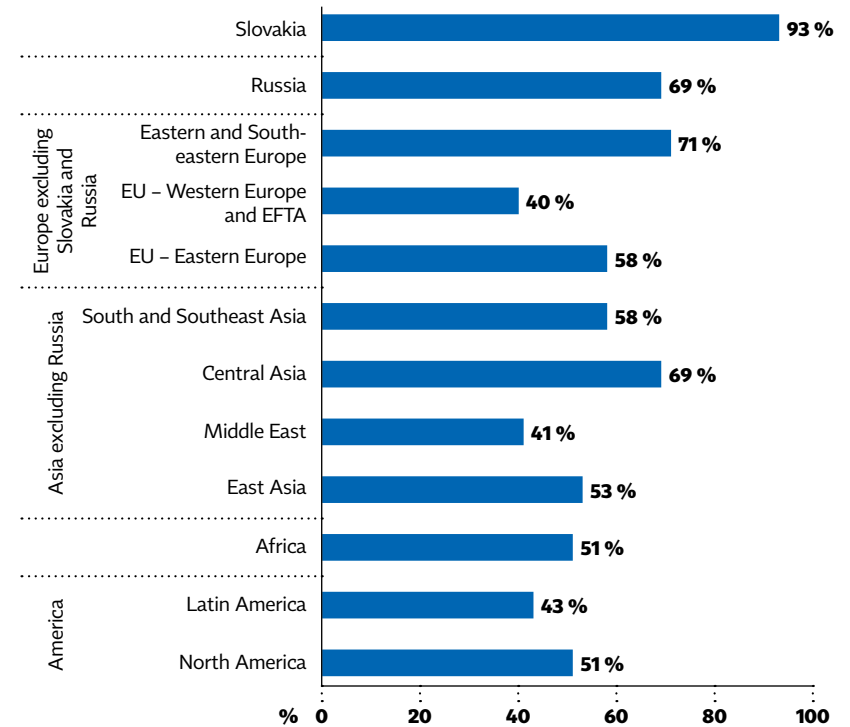
In general, the slightly less satisfied students from Western Europe and the Middle East and America also feel less integrated. The data also shows a significantly smaller sense of integration among Czech students. These students rate the friendliness of the local community better, but even here the difference is considerable compared to other regions.

Graph 57:
Feeling of integration into the local community, by region (N = 6852)

I feel integrated among Czech students.



I consider the local community to be accommodating to needs of foreign students.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



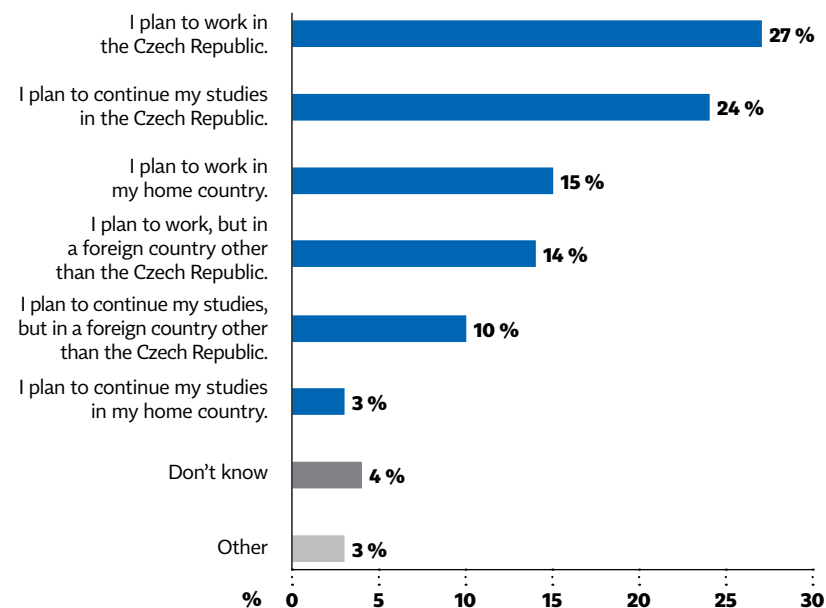
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to ascertaining foreign students' current situation in life, questions were also asked about their future plans. **Half are interested in staying in the Czech Republic:** a quarter (27%) would like to find a job here and a similar number of students (24%) would like to continue their studies. A small proportion of students would like to **start working in their home country (15%)**. One tenth of students see themselves studying in another foreign country, with only a minimum of respondents (3%) wishing to continue their studies at home.

Graph 58:

Foreign students' plans after completing their studies (N = 7025)*

What are your plans after completing your studies?



* Respondents could choose 1 of the answers offered.

Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

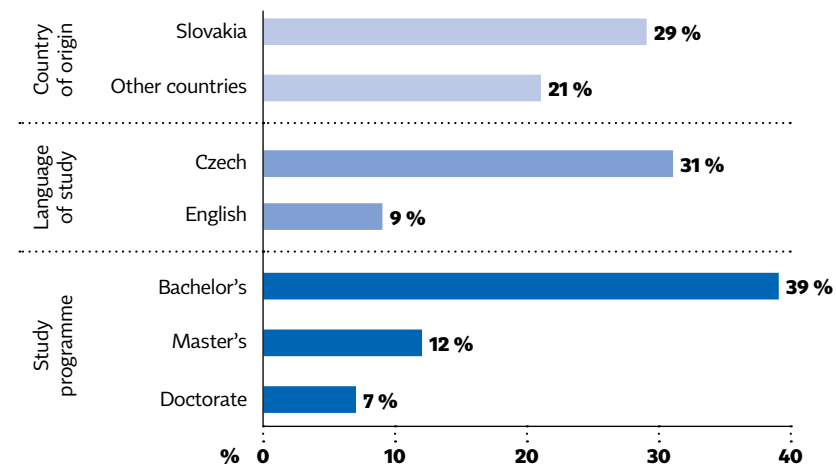
Slovaks (29%), students in Czech study programmes (31%) and undergraduates (39%) **are particularly interested in continuing their studies in the Czech Republic.** Again, undergraduates (14%) more than those at other levels of study, and those more in English study programmes (15%), plan to continue studying, but in another country. English-speaking people (22%) and mostly doctoral students (22%) would also like to work in another country.

Students who want to either continue their studies in the Czech Republic or find a job here are also more satisfied with many aspects related to study and everyday life. More than 96% of them would recommend the Czech Republic to their friends or acquaintances. Three quarters feel integrated among Czech students and also have a positive view of their involvement in the local community (84% of respondents who plan to continue their studies here and 80% of those who want to find a job here were satisfied). Respondents who want to stay in the Czech Republic for further study also rate the quality of teachers very positively (96%).

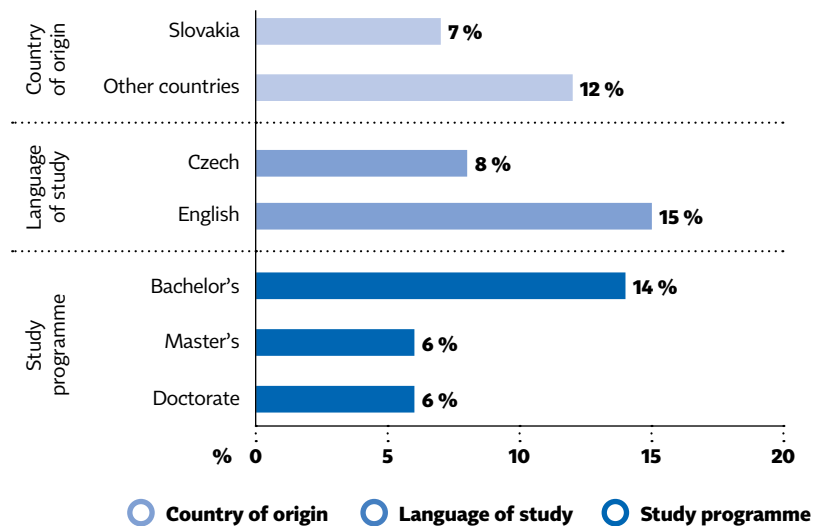
Graph 59:

Plans for the future, by selected indicators (N = 7025)

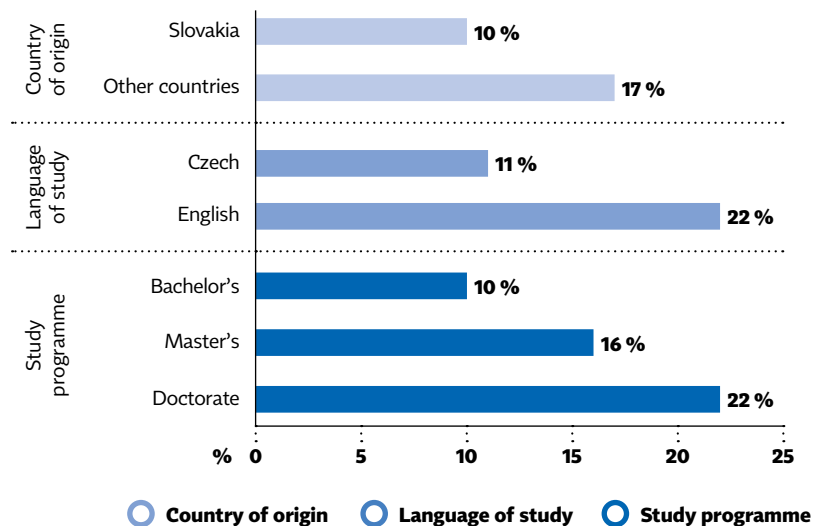
I plan to continue my studies in the Czech Republic.



I plan to continue my studies, but in a foreign country other than the Czech Republic.



I plan to work, but in a foreign country other than the Czech Republic.

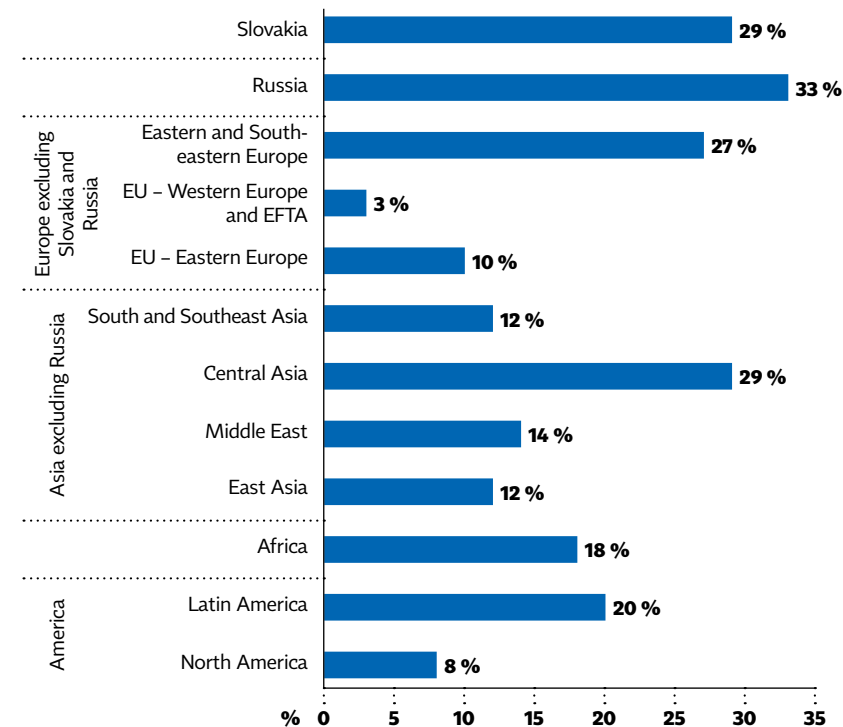


Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020

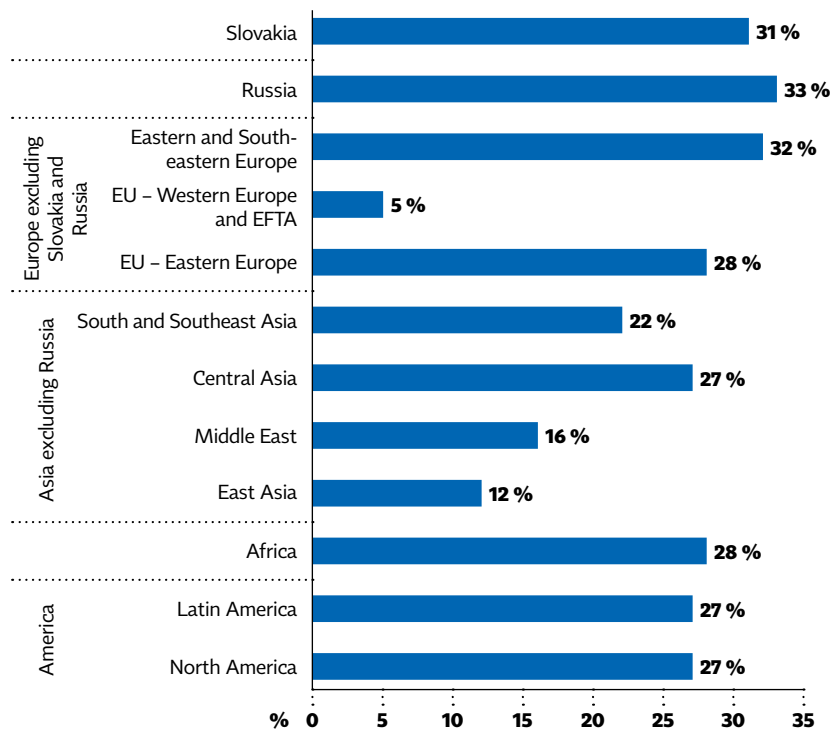
Students from Eastern and Southeastern Europe in particular (27%), together with students from Central Asia (29%) and, partly, from America, **plan to continue their studies in the Czech Republic**. Students from the countries of the former Soviet Union are the most likely **source of labour for companies in the Czech Republic** (for example, Russia 33%), complemented by Africa (28%) and Latin or North America (27%). The reason is probably an improvement in students' living conditions. Students from Western Europe (31%) will return home for work. Significantly fewer Russians and Slovaks and, in general, students from East Asia and Eastern Europe, will go abroad to work, but many more Western European students plan to do so (23%).

Graph 60:
Plans for the future, by region (N = 7006)

I plan to continue my studies in the Czech Republic.



I plan to work in the Czech Republic.



Plans for the future – other:

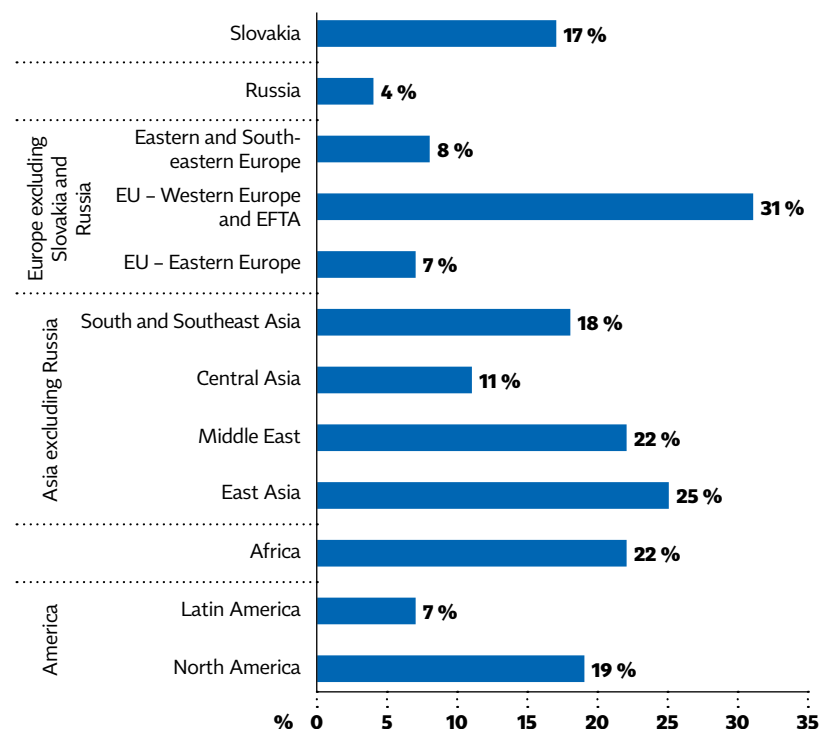
Anything could happen: I'll either continue studying in the Czech Republic or in a neighbouring country, or I'll go back to my home country to work, and after that I will continue studying in Europe.

I came to the Czech Republic to study for a master's degree and now I am continuing by studying for a doctorate. When I get my doctorate, I will go abroad to gain work experience and then I will probably return to the Czech Republic.

I feel fully integrated into Czech society and I am grateful for the opportunity. Even so, I cannot say whether I will stay in the Czech Republic in the future – my priority is to finish my studies. I'm currently focusing on successfully completing my studies, not thinking about what will happen next.

I've lived here for four years. I plan to start a family here and then we'll see. We would like to return to Poland in a few years, but that may change, I like it here.

I plan to work in my home country.



I plan to accept the first good job offer I receive, wherever that may be.

I plan to work in the Czech Republic for a year first and then start studying for a master's degree, either in the Czech Republic or abroad.

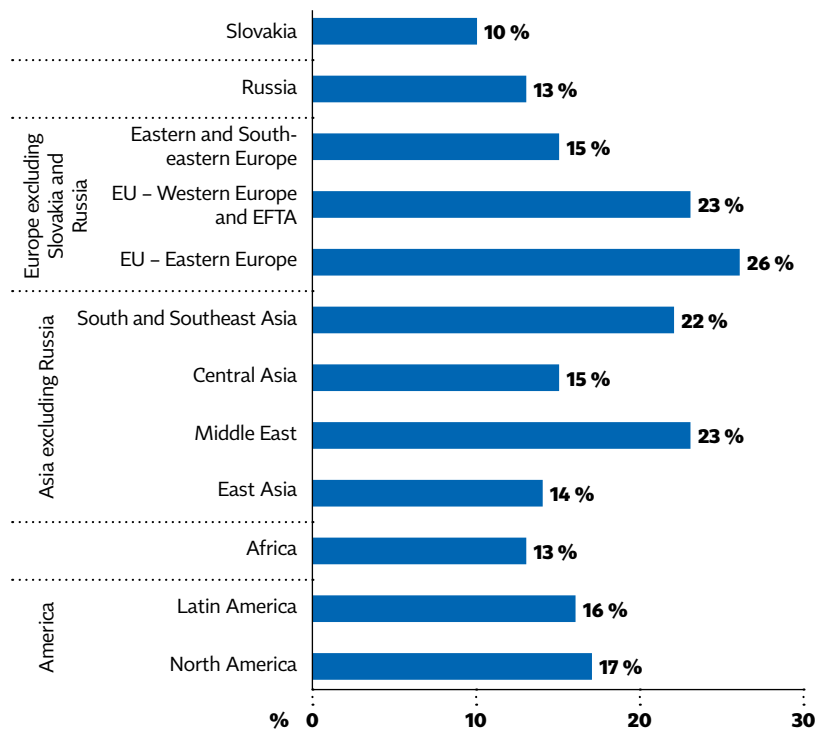
I will join the army in my home country for a year and then return to work in the Czech Republic.

My field is very international, so I can work in many countries, including the Czech Republic and my home country.

Work abroad, then return to Brno, then grow old at home in Orava.

Represent Czech companies in my home country.

I plan to work, but in a foreign country other than the Czech Republic.



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



SUMMARY

Overall, the standard of services at universities is assessed in a very positive light by foreign students, with students studying in Czech and Slovak students being more satisfied again.

The overall quality of services in the Czech Republic is also rated positively in terms of **value for money**. Foreign students especially appreciate the quality of transport, the **quality of education relative to tuition fees, and the overall cost of living in the Czech Republic. The worst rated area is accommodation.** The evaluation of the value for money of accommodation in a residence hall and the need to use private accommodation as housing during studies are probably reflected here. The survey indicates that the ratio between students housed in residence halls and private accommodation is essentially balanced.

Integration among Czech students is successful for about two thirds of foreign students. Integration is logically easiest for students from Slovakia. Students from other countries (and especially those in English study programmes) feel more integrated with each other in the community of foreign students. More than a half (54%) of students who do not come from Slovakia do not feel integrated among Czech students. Only 13% of students had the opportunity to use a buddy programme which helps to connect Czech and foreign students.

As for future plans, **half of the students are interested in staying in the Czech Republic, and a quarter (27%) would like to find a job here.** Students studying in English are more interested in continuing their studies or working in a foreign country other than the Czech Republic.

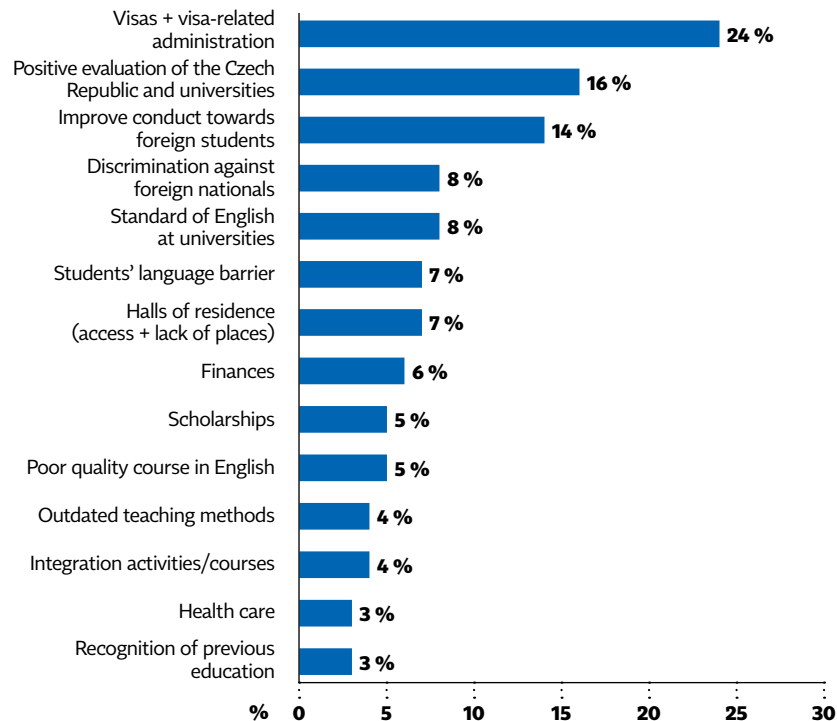
STUDENTS' FINAL
COMMENTS AND



The survey included some **space for students to make comments, voice their opinion, or send a message**. The resulting answers provide a valuable qualitative sounding board. The open-ended question allowed students to say what they themselves believed to be of fundamental importance. 1,044 students (approximately one in eight) used this opportunity. The resulting answers were categorised, as shown in Graph 61. One of the main spontaneous answers returns to the issue of the **visa requirement**, which indicates that, in general, this is a fundamental problem for some students. The second most frequent answer, on the other hand, is positive – a general **positive “report card” for the Czech Republic and its universities**. If we aggregate the answers concerning the **conduct towards foreign nationals and their discrimination** – that is, answers that generally concern xenophobia and aloofness – the result is a significant 22%. The answers set out in Graph 61 suggest that it makes sense to pay attention to less represented areas, such as **teachers’ standard of English, accommodation, health care and the recognition of previous education**. Spontaneous answers have a higher informative value and are more urgent in their communication than answers to directly asked question.

Graph 61:

Final comments (N = 1044)



Source: Research on Foreign Students in the Czech Republic 2020



Final comments

I love the Czech Republic. I feel at home here and I do not regret being here for a second. The Czech Republic has given me the most important things in life: I started a family and am studying for a Ph.D. I feel comfortable and safe here. Beautiful nature, lots of oxygen, suitable for families with children and for children, an amazing transport system, relatively low cost of living and much more.

In my opinion, the Czech Republic is the best country in the world for studying, living and housing.

Students should be eligible for discounts even if they are over 26 years old. Especially in transport.

It would be good if the university provided integration programmes for students from abroad, because I basically have no Czech friends and I know a lot of people from abroad who also mostly remain within their foreign communities. I think they tend to lack confidence and the label that they are “foreign” still plays a role, even if it’s usually exaggerated.

There is a division between Czech and foreign students. Perhaps it would be better, if there was a compulsory adaptation programme for new students (like the buddy programme, but for all foreign nationals, even for those studying in Czech) at every university. I would also like to take part in something like this, even though I am in my second year.

I came to the Czech Republic with a law degree I received after studying in Ukraine. For it to be recognised, they set me an exam in law, but in Czech law, which I found really strange. The diploma shows that I am versed only in Ukrainian law. In any case, I had to take an exam in Czech law after only three months of residence in the Czech Republic. Eventually, I studied a new field which I turned into something I could approach as a continuous test.

It would certainly help to make medical care accessible – so that we can see doctors regularly and not have to travel home for health care.





PART **IX.** REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

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Latin America 135

North America 135

In this chapter, we summarise the main findings that apply to the regions as a whole. The exceptions are Slovakia and Russia, which, due to the high number of student responses (23,090 Slovaks and 6,948 Russians, see Table 8), can be treated as separate regions for these purposes.



SLOVAKIA

The most common **reasons for choosing the Czech Republic** among Slovak students were a specific university (68%) and a **specific study programme** (62%). The main **reason for choosing a particular university** is the **reputation of the institution** (72%). **Slovaks most often obtain information about study opportunities in the Czech Republic** from friends or family (66%), at their home secondary school or university (47%), or at a university fair (16%). The **most frequently studied fields** include health and welfare (19%) and natural sciences (14%). For four-fifths of Slovak students, the **Czech Republic was the country of first choice**, so it is not surprising that 97% of them would recommend studying here to friends. This is perhaps also because, according to their responses, these students feel **integrated among their Czech fellow students** (91%) and in the daily life of their university (86%). About a third plan to **continue their studies** (29%) **or work** (31%) in the Czech Republic in the future. Roughly half (55%) consider their study programme to be **too demanding**.

The survey shows that Slovak students are well acquainted with the higher education system and Czech institutions and do not sense any significant language barrier. Another plus is that studying in Czech is free for students at public and state universities. The Czech context therefore appears very easy for Slovak students to understand and the Czech Republic could be an ideal choice for their studies, also in view of the fact that its universities are perceived to be of better quality than those in Slovakia.⁸

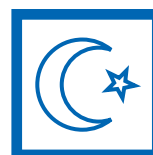
⁸ / <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2020>



RUSSIA

For Russian students, the most common **reason for choosing the Czech Republic** was its convenient location (41%). A compelling **reason for choosing a particular university** was the reputation of the institution (63%). Russians obtain **information about study opportunities in the Czech Republic** mainly from friends and family (58%). For 74% of these students, the Czech Republic was their first choice. They **most often study fields** such as social sciences (19%) and natural sciences (13%). About two thirds of students (66%) consider the **cost of visa processing** to be very or quite high, and a half of the respondents feel that they are integrated into the daily life of their institution. A third (33%) plan to **continue their studies** here and a third (33%) plan to **work** here. 93% of respondents from Russia would **recommend** studying in the Czech Republic **to friends or family**.

Linguistic proximity and the already existing large Russian diaspora in the Czech Republic, on which they can rely, also play a role. For 63% of Russian students, the **reputation of the institution** is important when choosing a university (this is the second largest percentage after students from Slovakia). Therefore, the position of a university in international rankings, its good name and its long-standing tradition may be important for this group.



EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

(Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine)

The primary reasons for **choosing the Czech Republic as a study destination** for this group are a specific study programme (39%) and a specific university (38%). The main **reason for choosing a particular university** is the specific study programme (66%). They **have information about study opportunities in the Czech Republic** from friends or family (56%) and social media (26%). The **most frequently studied fields** include natural sciences (23%) and social sciences (18%). For 72% of students from Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Czech Republic was their first choice. 77% consider the staff of their faculty to be **responsive to the needs of foreign students**. Roughly half (56%) of students in this group feel integrated among Czech

students and a full 71% believe that the local **community is accommodating to foreign students**. A quarter plan to **continue their studies** (27%) or **work** (32%) in the Czech Republic.

The most important members of this group are **countries of the former Soviet Union**, which have a large number of students in the Czech Republic – Ukraine and Belarus. The responses provided by students from these countries have the biggest influence on the results in this group. Like Russians, in the Czech Republic, they are tightly interconnected through their **diasporas** and belong to the same language group.



EUROPEAN UNION – WESTERN EUROPE AND EFTA

(Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Austria, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom)

For West European students, the core **reason for choosing the Czech Republic** is a **specific study programme** (55%). The most common **reason for choosing a given university** is the simple admissions procedure (25%). The position of a university in international rankings is important for only 15% of West European students. The **most frequently studied field** is health and welfare (45%). Compared to other regions, Western Europe stands out because of its more critical evaluations, mainly by German students. According to 60% of West European students, their chosen study programme is not sufficiently practice-oriented and almost a third consider the **share of quality teachers** in the given field to be low (40% or fewer quality teachers). A quarter of students would choose to study in the same study programme, but in a different country, and the same number **would not recommend** studying in the Czech Republic **to friends or family**. Although they feel well integrated among foreign students, they rate **integration** among Czech students, the local community and the daily life of the university as **below average**. **Only 3% plan to continue their studies in the Czech Republic**. Almost a third (31%) **plan to work in their home country** and about a quarter (23%) **in a country other than the Czech Republic**.

The evaluation shows **dissatisfaction mainly among German medical students studying in English**. It seems that they are not that keen on travelling to the Czech Republic to study. They may come here because of a limited access to the study of medicine in their own country (for example, due to the German *numerus clausus* system where students are admitted based on their grade average), and therefore an appealing aspect of studying in the Czech Republic may be the more flexible admissions procedure. However, this fact probably ends up as a source of a somewhat negative attitude voiced by some of them.



EUROPEAN UNION – EASTERN EUROPE

(Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia)

The most frequently cited **reason for choosing the Czech Republic** was a specific study programme (55%). The main **reason for choosing a university** was a specific study programme (61%). Only 17% of students made their choice according to how the university was performing in the international rankings. East Europeans mainly obtain **information about study opportunities in the Czech Republic** from friends and family (42%), but also from their home university or secondary school (22%). The most frequently studied fields in the Czech Republic include natural sciences (23%) and humanities (17%). For 65% of students, the Czech Republic was their country of first choice and a quarter plan to **work in a country other than their home country or the Czech Republic** in the future.

The Czech Republic is probably not very attractive for these East Europeans as students in their countries or neighbouring countries (within the region) have access to studies of a similar quality at similar costs. However, foreign students in our country often have their reasons for choosing a Czech university, typically particular study fields.



SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

(Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam)

For students from South and Southeast Asia, the primary **reason for choosing the Czech Republic** is a specific study programme (53%), and the **reason for choosing a given university** is the opportunity for research (33%). More often than in other regions, these students obtain **information about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic** on the Study in the Czech Republic website (24%) and via online study portals (27%). These Asian students **most often study** natural sciences (26%) and health and welfare (21%) **in the Czech Republic**. The Czech Republic is the first choice for only a half of them (45%); a fifth would prefer to study in the same study programme, but in another country. The fact that **87% of**

students consider visa processing to be time-consuming and administratively demanding doesn't paint the Czech Republic in a positive light.

Students from this region primarily aim for the Anglo-Saxon countries, or Western Europe, but due to the high financial cost of living in these countries, they head to the more affordable Czech Republic, where good quality education is offered at a relatively low price. Because they do not know the Czech system, they are unable to work their way around it easily, they often know no one who studied here, and they find it difficult to distinguish between the individual universities, they make most use of information online and mainly make their choice according to the field of study.



CENTRAL ASIA

(Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

For students from Central Asia, the main reasons for choosing the Czech Republic are safety (48%) and location (40%), and the main **reason for choosing a given university** is the simple admission process (26%). They most often obtain **information about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic** from friends or family (57%), but also partly from independent agencies or consultants (34%). The **most frequently studied fields** are social sciences (21%) and business and administration (18%). This group of Asian students is also dissatisfied with the **visa process**, specifically with its financial side: they consider the cost of visa processing to be very high or high (66%). Only 57% would decide again, if given the opportunity, to study in the same study programme at the same university. Surprisingly, a high 92% would recommend studying in the Czech Republic to friends and almost a third **plan to continue their studies** (29%) or **work in the Czech Republic** (27%).

Central Asian students are evidently heavily **influenced by agencies and consultants**. The point of essence for these students is that they are studying in Europe, in a very convenient location, and, as with students from Eastern Europe, including Russia, value for money (e.g. the possibility of studying for free in Czech) plays a role.



MIDDLE EAST

(Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Syria)

The most common **reasons in this group for choosing the Czech Republic** were the opportunity to enrol in a particular study programme (46%) and the cost of living (39%). The main **reason for choosing a particular university** was the institution's international ranking (43%). Students from the Middle East most often obtain **information on study opportunities in the Czech Republic** from independent agencies or consultants (30%). The **most frequently studied field** is health and welfare (51%). The Czech Republic was the country of first choice for only a half of the respondents. As many as 61% think their study programme is too demanding, while 29% consider the **share of quality teachers in the given field to be low** (40% or fewer quality teachers). In addition, 27% of students rate the **tuition fees** as disproportionate to the quality of study on offer. It therefore doesn't come as a surprise that, if they could choose again, a fifth would prefer to study in the same study programme, but in another country. The frustration that the Czech Republic was all that was left for these dissatisfied students and that their studies are relatively demanding is reflected in the fact that almost a quarter would not recommend studying in the Czech Republic to their friends.

Medical students from Israel, i.e. a developed country, account for the largest share of this group. They have similar characteristics to German students: the Czech Republic is not the country of first choice for many of them and, furthermore, medicine is a very demanding field.



EAST ASIA

(China, Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan)

East Asian students most often cited the cost of living (53%) and a specific study programme (43%) as their key **reasons for choosing the Czech Republic**, and singled out a specific course (55%) as the **reason for choosing a particular university**. They generally obtain **information about study opportunities in the**

Czech Republic from friends or family (45%). The **most frequently studied fields** are health and welfare (21%) and social sciences (19%). For 54% of these students, the Czech Republic was their first choice. As with students from the Middle East, more than half of students rate their course as **too demanding** (54%). In addition, a quarter of respondents are **dissatisfied with the quality of teaching materials and classroom/laboratory equipment**. This group of students also had reservations about **visa processing**: 88% consider the visa process to be time-consuming and administratively demanding. A fifth would rather have studied the same field in another country.

Students from these countries, like students from South and Southeast Asia, typically tend to head for Anglo-Saxon countries. For 46% of students, the Czech Republic was not their first choice and they chose it for reasons of availability and affordability. This group of students may not cope well with such “forced” motivation.



AFRICA

(Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

The most common **reason for African students to choose the Czech Republic** is a specific study programme (59%), with only 20% of respondents citing a specific university. The main **reason for choosing a particular university** is a specific study programme (64%). They obtain **information about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic** on the Study in the Czech Republic website (24%) and from the Czech embassy (11%). The **most frequently studied fields** are health and welfare (22%) and social sciences (18%). Even in this region, too, only 55% of students would decide to study in the same study programme at the same university again. From a social point of view, however, African students are doing very well: the dominant majority (93%) feel integrated among foreign students.

Like students from Asia, they do not know too much about the Czech system, so they use the resources available to them (the internet, embassies). Nor do they have much insight into the individual universities and the differences between them, so the field of study plays the main role in their decision-making.



LATIN AMERICA

(Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, Jamaica, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, El Salvador, Venezuela)

The core **reason for choosing the Czech Republic** is the low cost of living (45%), with only 18% citing a specific university. The **reason for choosing a given university**, as elsewhere, is the specific study programme (67%). Like African students, they obtain most of their **information on study opportunities in the Czech Republic** from the Czech Embassy (12%). The **most frequently studied fields** in the Czech Republic are natural sciences (26%) and social sciences (20%). Although the Czech Republic was the country of first choice for only a half of the respondents, it seems that Latin American students are satisfied at least with their field of study: 85% of students consider their field to have sufficient links with a real-world environment. Unfortunately, only 43% consider the local community to be friendly.

Study in Central Europe is attractive to students from this region because of the affordable cost, but if they had more resources, they would go study a little more west.



NORTH AMERICA

(Canada, United States)

The main reason why North American students choose the Czech Republic is the tuition fee (57%). The main reasons cited for choosing a given university are a specific study programme (72%) and, again, the tuition fee (50%). These students obtain information on the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic through online study portals (39%) more often than students in other regions. The most frequently studied field is social sciences (37%). Even in this region, students point out the complicated visa processing: this is considered time-consuming and administratively demanding by 94% of them, with 72% viewing the visa process and requirements as unclear. 13% rate communication with their university as poor, while 29% rate it as excellent. A quarter of North American students consider the share of quality teachers in the

given field to be low fewer quality teachers). These students did not manage to integrate into the local student community either, as only 30% feel fully accepted by Czech students. The evaluation made by students from this region is therefore, again, more critical. However, 51% consider the local community to be friendly.

These students are looking for an affordable alternative to expensive but high-quality study at home (including top-class student services), in other Anglo-Saxon countries or in Western Europe. This difference may lead to some of them feeling disappointed.



Preferred areas of study

- Slovakia:** health and welfare (19%), natural sciences (14%)
- Russia:** social sciences (19%), natural sciences (13%)
- Eastern and South-eastern Europe:** natural sciences (23%), social sciences (18%)
- European Union – Western Europe and EFTA:** health and welfare (45%)
- European Union – Eastern Europe:** natural sciences (23%), humanities (17%)
- South and Southeast Asia:** natural sciences (26%), health and welfare (21%)
- Central Asia:** social sciences (21%), business and administration (18%)
- Middle East:** health and welfare (51%)
- East Asia:** health and welfare (21%), social sciences (19%)
- Africa:** health and welfare (22%), social sciences (18%)
- Latin America:** natural sciences (26%), social sciences (20%)
- North America:** social sciences (37%)

The segmentation of countries is a key factor in making the right choice of promotional methods. With categorisation, marketing messages can be better targeted according to how and on what basis potential students make their decisions to come to the Czech Republic. Suitable methods of promotion within each segment are proposed in the table below:

Characteristics of segments	Countries	Methods of promotion	Main message
Positive perception of the Czech Republic and good knowledge of the country and its universities, the possibility of studying for free in Czech	Slovak Republic	Direct promotion of universities through secondary schools, universities and education fairs, strong involvement of faculties into promotion	Quality Czech universities offer something for everyone
Positive perception of the Czech Republic as a culturally close destination for study and life, with the possibility of studying for free in Czech	Countries of the former USSR, East and South-eastern Europe	Familiarisation with what universities and study programmes are available through social media, fairs, agents and online search engines, either individually or with the backing of Study in the Czech Republic, e.g. at fairs	High-quality study and life in a linguistically and culturally close European country
Specific offer of particular study programmes (e.g. medicine) in English as a more affordable alternative to studying at home universities	Western Europe, North America, Middle East	Familiarisation with the range of specific study programmes via agents and online search engines, broken down by field, strong involvement of faculties in promotion	Affordable study of attractive fields
Students who do not know about the Czech Republic where the main motivation is the opportunity for low-cost study in English in Europe as a stepping stone to further academic or professional careers in developed countries	South and Southeast Asia, Central and South America, Africa	Online presence, including on social media and search engines, use of agents, emphasis on prestige and the opportunity to advance to further levels of study in an attractive destination (Western Europe, North America). It is essential to construct a unified presentation of the Czech Republic as an attractive study destination and to make use of Study in the Czech Republic, e.g. at fairs	You too can afford a global career

Source: Centre for International Cooperation in Education (2020) Foreign promotion of studies in the Czech Republic in conditions where government measures are in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUMMARY AND
CONCLUSIONS

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It can be inferred from the survey among foreign students studying at a university in the Czech Republic that the Czech Republic is an attractive destination for them, both in terms of specific study programmes and specific universities. The students' interest in what is going on at universities is also evidenced by their positive approach to participating in this survey. Some findings apply to universities in general, others may differ from one university to another. Therefore, it is appropriate to make the outputs available to students, to communicate with them on the topic, and to let them know what other measures will be taken at their university in response to the survey. Discussion between a university and its students is an important part of the study process and the outcomes of this report may prove to be a good means of enriching that.



MAIN FINDINGS: PROMOTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND CZECH HIGHER EDUCATION ABROAD

Foreign students **choose the Czech Republic** mainly because of the **specific range of study programmes** (49%) or **specific universities** (46%). The geographical location of the country (32%) also plays an important role, with a quarter also citing the cost of living and studying here. The perception of the Czech Republic as a safe destination is also relatively strong (20%). This is especially true for non-European students. Friends or family living in the Czech Republic are important factors for students from nearby countries, especially from Slovakia. Thanks to these ties, Slovak students have a very good knowledge of Czech universities. They are also able to make informed decisions based on the reputation of a particular school or study programme.

Most students – especially students from Slovakia, Western Europe, Asia and Africa – come to the Czech Republic to study **medicine**. The second most represented group of disciplines is the **social sciences** – most often chosen by students from Russia, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Central and Eastern Asia, Africa, and North and Latin America. **Natural sciences** are preferred primarily by students from Slovakia, Russia, Eastern and Southeastern Europe and Latin America.

The **affordability of studies** works strongly in favour of studying at Czech universities. Although study programmes conducted in English are not free of charge, they are still more financially affordable than the same programmes in many Western European countries. If students choose a programme taught in Czech, they are subject to the same conditions as Czech citizens, i.e. no tuition fees apply. This option is ideal for those students who do not have difficulties with the Czech language (this applies primarily to Slovak students, but also includes Russian and Ukrainian students). The possibility of studying for free may be one of the reasons why the Czech Republic is the first choice for three quarters of students in Czech study programmes.

Students most often learn about the possibility of studying in the Czech Republic from **family or acquaintances** (57%). However, these are mainly students from Slovakia or the countries of the former Soviet Union, who make up more than a half of the respondents in the data collected. At the same time, it is more likely (compared with, for example, students from North America) that their parents, for instance, will have had personal experience of the Czech Republic. The second most common source of information is **school in the student's home country** (27%). A fifth of students mentioned **social media**. 13% of respondents learnt about studying in the Czech Republic through **independent agencies**. However, there are large differences within certain countries or regions: one third of Central Asian students and 30% of Middle Eastern students mentioned this possibility. There are also significant differences in the use of

the **Study in the Czech Republic** website: almost a quarter of students from Africa and South and Southeast Asia mentioned this option, but only a small proportion of respondents from Slovakia (3%) and Western Europe (6%).

Foreign students choose a specific university mainly because it offers a specific study programme (63%) or because it has a good reputation (59%). However, more than a third of the students also took into account the university's international ranking. In addition, students consider the simplicity of the admissions procedure (19%). The opportunity to participate in research is a major factor only for doctoral students (44%). The level of tuition fees is important for half of North American students.



MAIN FINDINGS: PRE-ARRIVAL SUPPORT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

The vast majority of students (93%) consider the **admissions procedure** and admission requirements to be clear and easily comprehensible. The **complexity of the entrance exam** is also found to be adequate (92%). The **fees associated with the admissions procedure**, however, are viewed in a rather less positive light (a fifth of respondents consider them high). The biggest burden cited by applicants is the **administrative and time-consuming process** of the admissions procedure. Students in English study programmes view administration as a bigger problem (54%) than those enrolled in Czech study programmes (34%).

Half of respondents use a **long-stay visa** to study in the Czech Republic. Of countries outside the European Union, 95% of foreign students in Czech programmes and 89% of foreign students in English programmes use a long-term study visa. The majority (83%) believe the **visa process is time-consuming and administratively demanding**. More than a half consider consular services to be difficult to access and say that the visa and administrative requirements are unclear. In the open-ended question, respondents singled out the **duration of the visa waiting period** as the biggest problem (42%).

Two-thirds of students in English study programmes consider the **process of recognition of their previous education** to be demanding. However, the recognition requirements are clear to the vast majority of them (76%).

In their assessments of the quality of communication with institutions, students are **most satisfied with the communication with their university** (85%). Conversely, they are less satisfied with communication with the Asylum and Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (49% satisfied).



MAIN FINDINGS: QUALITY OF STUDY PROGRAMMES AT CZECH UNIVERSITIES MAIN

When assessing their study programme, respondents rated the **equipment of school facilities** (89%) and the **quality of study materials** (84%) best, but even here there is a difference between students in Czech study programmes, where satisfaction is higher, and students in English study programmes, where it is lower. Students in English study programmes are rather less satisfied with the way faculty staff deal with their needs.

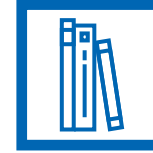
Just under a half of foreign students consider their studies **too demanding**. Students in the fields of construction and architecture (68%), health and welfare (66%), and mathematics and statistics (60%) rate their study programmes as the most demanding.

70% of students consider their field to have sufficient **links with a real-world environment**. Students rate information and communication technologies (80%), natural sciences (77%) and arts (77%) as best in this regard.

The most frequently used **teaching method** is lectures (85%), which are largely supplemented by self-study (70%), as well as group work (51%) and student presentations (43%).

Three quarters of foreign students rate the **share of quality teachers** at their university as 70% or higher. Only 12% rate the share of good teachers as 40% or less. Large differences in evaluations occur when we take into account the language of study: there are three times more dissatisfied students in English study programmes (23%) than in Czech study programmes (7%). Students from Western European countries express the greatest dissatisfaction (32%). One third of dissatisfied students in English study programmes criticise the **low quality of teaching in English** due to particular teachers' poor language skills.

Two-thirds of students would not change their choice of study or university in the Czech Republic – in some fields this figure is significantly higher (e.g. 78% of law students and 74% of information technology students). One-fifth would consider studying a different field or studying at a different university, but still in the Czech Republic. Only 12% of students would opt for another country if they could choose again, but in some regions this choice would be significantly more frequent: 26% of Western European students would choose another country. **When asked whether they would recommend studying in the Czech Republic to their friends or family, 9 out of 10 students answered in the affirmative.**



MAIN FINDINGS: SERVICES AND LIVING CONDITIONS

In the section on the **evaluation of university services**, foreign students **mostly expressed satisfaction**, mainly with the approach taken by administrative staff (86%) and student organisations (86%), as well as with information technology and systems which 85% of students rate as user-friendly. Overall, however, satisfaction is again significantly higher among students studying in Czech than among those studying in English.

Only a small group (13%) of foreign students enrolled in full degree programmes benefit from the **buddy system**. Those who do tend to be students in study programmes in English.

The research also examined the situation faced by students in the field of **housing**. Half of them have accommodation in a residence hall and the other half live in a private flat or house. Private housing is mostly used by German students (82%) and also by an absolute majority of Russian students. Approximately a quarter of respondents prefer living alone, living with friends, or living with a partner. Less than a tenth of respondents are interested in living with other foreign or Czech students. Students in English study programmes are more inclined to live with foreign students.

As for other aspects of life in the Czech Republic, foreign students are highly satisfied with **transport** (94%) and with the **quality of education** relative to tuition fees (88%). 88% of respondents are happy with the **cost of living**. Accommodation is not rated quite so well, with two thirds stating that they are satisfied. Again, overall satisfaction is slightly lower among students in English study programmes.

Only a third of foreign students do not work while studying. **A fifth work occasionally and a quarter work up to 20 hours a week**. Another fifth of students have more than 20 working hours a week. Students from economically weaker countries work the most and can use their knowledge of the Czech language to help them find a job.

The **integration of foreign students into the local community** has not been particularly successful. Although students feel a sense of belonging to each other (82%), almost a third do not consider the local community or their university to be friendly. Two thirds of students in English study programmes failed to integrate among Czech students. Only a quarter of students from Western Europe and a third of students from the Middle East feel integrated among Czech students. Naturally, this problem hardly affects Slovaks, 91% of whom feel integrated.



A half of the students confirmed that they would be **interested in staying in the Czech Republic in the future** – a quarter would like to work in the Czech Republic, and another quarter are keen to continue their studies here. 15% of students would like to start working in their home country and a tenth would prefer to continue their studies in another foreign destination. Very few students want to return to their home country to continue their studies. Students in study programmes in Czech are most interested in staying in the Czech Republic. Students in study programmes delivered in English more often express a preference to go to another country, whether to study or to work. Students who want to either continue their studies in the Czech Republic or find a job here are also happier with the quality of teachers and feel more integrated among Czech students and the local community. Almost all of them would recommend the Czech Republic to their friends and acquaintances.



Final comments

The Czech Republic provides quality education almost free of charge. It is comparable to education at paid universities in other countries and, as such, offers a great opportunity to young students who cannot afford to pay such fees.

I would like to add that coming to study in the Czech Republic has been one of the best decisions of my life. Although it was sometimes difficult, it's been worth it!

Thank you for this great opportunity. Interesting culture and history, nice people, a rising standard of science. Thanks.

I would like Czechs to have fewer stereotypes and clichés and to be more open to the world. The Czech Republic has a huge potential and I believe that it will continue to improve!

I am very happy to be studying in the Czech Republic. It is beautiful here.

I am sincerely grateful for everything I have. However, I do believe that there is still plenty of scope for improvement. If a university or any institution gives me a platform and opportunity, I will be happy to help improve things with others.

The Czech Republic is a great place to study, but the language is a major barrier. For example, if you need to see a doctor or want to do some sports, sometimes it can be difficult for foreign nationals.

Whatever happens, I will always be grateful to this country and to my home university for the support I had in coming to study in Europe: my dream has come true. :)



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