



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPORT AND YOUTH

ANNUAL REPORT

MAPPING OF THE FIELD OF CYPRUS HIGHER EDUCATION

2023-2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY) collected data and conducted analyses for the survey entitled “Mapping of the Higher Education Field in Cyprus” for the academic year 2023–2024. A total of 60 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operated in 2023-2024: 12 Universities (3 Public, 9 Private) and 48 Institutes of Tertiary Education (7 Public, 41 Private). Data was collected using standardized Excel files, which were completed by the HEIs based on their registry data.

The data collected from all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) relate to the following three thematic areas: a) Student Population, b) Academic/Teaching Staff, and c) Programs of Study. For the data collection, national and international classifications were used (e.g. National Qualification Framework, the ISCED taxonomy for the field of study). The Department of Higher Education (DHE) prepared and distributed standardised excel files to all HEIs in Cyprus. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software. The presentation of the results is structured around the three aforementioned thematic areas.

Student Population

In relation to the first thematic area, "Student Population", data was collected concerning the following aspects: a) the overall size of the student population, b) demographic characteristics and study-related variables of students enrolled in HEIs in Cyprus, c) Social dimension of Higher Education in Cyprus, d) Participation in mobility programmes, e) Scholarships, f) Students who began their studies in Higher Education Programs during the academic year 2023-2024, and g) Students who completed their studies in Higher Education Programs during the academic year 2023-2024. Regarding the size of the student population, the total number of students enrolled in HEIs in Cyprus during the academic year 2023-2024 was 58 941, of whom 49 704 (84,3%) attended Universities and 9 237 (15,7%) attended Institutes of Tertiary Education. Compared to the previous academic year (2022–2023), this represented a 5% increase in the total number of students.

As for the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in HEIs, 41,7% were male and 58,3% were female. The students' ages at the beginning of the academic year, as reported by the HEIs, ranged from 17 to 73 years, with an average age of 27,42 years (standard deviation: 8,82). The countries of origin of the students were classified into three categories: Cyprus, European Union (EU) countries, and Third Countries. Based on the data collected for the academic year 2023-2024, 43,8% of students came from Cyprus, 40,2% from EU countries, and 16% from Third Countries. Regarding study-related variables, it was found that the majority of students—both in Universities (72,3%) and Institutes of Tertiary Education (88,6%)—were enrolled in Private Higher Education Institutions. With respect to the level of studies, the majority (49,2%) were enrolled in level 6 programs (Bachelor's degree), while a significant percentage (43,1 %) were enrolled in level 7 programs (Master's degree) according to the National Qualifications Framework. In terms of the field of study, the revised International Standard Classification of Education for scientific fields was used for the academic year 2023-2024, which includes 19 categories instead of ten. Most students were enrolled in programs under the fields of “Business and Administration” (31,3%) and “Teacher Training” (13,7%). On the other hand, the fields of “Languages,”

“Humanities,” “Architecture and Town Planning,” and “Welfare and Care” showed low participation rates, each below 2%. The field “Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary” had the lowest participation, with just 244 students (0,4%). The majority of students were enrolled on a full-time basis (85,1%). Most students at Universities (56,6%) and Institutes of Tertiary Education (97,3%) were enrolled in programs delivered through face-to-face instruction. A significant percentage of University students were enrolled in distance learning programs (42,3%), while the corresponding figure for Institutes of Tertiary Education was very low (0,7%). Finally, in the academic year 2023–2024, 9,1% of the total student population participated in practical training placement as part of their program of study (8,3% participated in internships corresponding to ECTS credits, while 0,8% participated in internships without ECTS credit allocation).

Regarding the variables related to strengthening the social dimension of Higher Education in Cyprus, data was collected from all HEIs concerning: a) students with disabilities, b) mature students, c) students with children, d) students from national minorities, and e) Cypriot students from displaced families due to the Turkish invasion. In addition, gender participation in Higher Education was also examined. During the academic year 2023-2024, the number of students with disabilities in Cyprus' HEIs was 868 (1,5%). Of these, 737 students (85%) were enrolled in Universities and 131 (15%) in Institutes of Tertiary Education. The vast majority of students with disabilities face learning difficulties (64,5%). This is followed by mental health disorders (15,9%), social and communication difficulties (15,67%), language disorders (14,4%), and chronic illnesses (13,02%). Regarding the type of support provided by HEIs to students with disabilities, most of them (76,2%) received accommodations related to assessment and assignments, followed by teaching-related support (42,4%), and general academic support during their studies (28,8%). Mature students (aged over 30) accounted for 17,701 (30%) of the total student population during the academic year 2023-2024. Concerning the number of students from Cyprus belonging to minority and religious groups (Latins, Armenians, and Maronites), data was not provided by the HEIs for a large portion of the student population (15 751 out of 25 798 students or 61%), as this information was not available in their databases. Among those for whom data was available, 0,2% originate from the Turkish Cypriot community, while 4,3% belong to the religious groups of Maronites, Armenians, and Latins. The number of Higher Education students who have children could not be determined, as the HEIs did not hold such information in their records for a significant part of the student population (89,5%). The same applies to the number of students from displaced families due to the Turkish invasion. Regarding gender participation in Higher Education, as previously mentioned, the majority of the student population are women (58,3%). Specifically, 60%-63% of students in Public and Private Universities are women, whereas the opposite is true for Public and Private Institutes of Tertiary Education, where the majority (62%-73%) of the student population are men. With regard to gender distribution across fields of study, the majority of students in most fields are women, with the highest proportions (above 80%) observed in the fields of “Teacher Training,” “Education Sciences,” “Languages,” and “Psychology.” The fields with the lowest female participation are “Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction” (24%) and “Information and Communication Technologies” (22%).

Regarding student participation in mobility programs for study or training abroad, only a very small proportion of students (557 or 0,9%) took part in mobility programs during

the 2023-2024 academic year. The majority (554 students or 99,5%) participated in Erasmus+ mobility programmes, with Greece being the top destination (44,6%), followed by Spain (12,6%), Portugal (6,4%), and France (6,2%). Regarding the purpose of mobility during the academic year 2023–2024, the main reasons for participation were studying at an educational institution abroad (credit mobility), which accounted for 56,3% of cases, and undertaking traineeships in workplaces, which accounted for 40,4%. Regarding incoming mobility, in the academic year 2023–2024, the number of incoming mobility students reached 469 students.

Concerning the number of scholarships provided, HEIs did not have available information in their records for a significant portion of the student population (17 541 ř 29,8%). However, 23,8% of the total student population received some form of scholarship. The vast majority of scholarships covered partial tuition fees (97,7%), and in most cases, the provider was the HEI where the student was enrolled (94%). The number of scholarships awarded to students from developing countries, small island developing states, and African countries—aimed at enhancing access and participation in Higher Education (according to UNESCO’s SDG 4.7b indicator for sustainable development by 2030)—was 705 for the academic year 2023-2024.

A total of 26 268 students (33,3%) began their studies in Higher Education in 2023-2024, with 81,3% attending Universities and 18,7% in Institutes of Tertiary Education. Of these, 10 380 students (40%) were first-time entrants to Higher Education. It is noted that this information was not available in the administrative records of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for 5426 students (20,7%). Regarding the number of graduates, a total of 13 475 students completed their studies in HEIs in Cyprus during the 2023-2024 academic year across programs at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework. Specifically, 11 295 graduates (83,8%) graduated from Universities, and 2180 (16,2%) from Institutes of Tertiary Education.

Academic/Teaching Staff

The second thematic area concerns the academic/teaching staff of HEIs. During the academic year 2023-2024, data on the academic/teaching staff of Cyprus’ HEIs was collected for the first time. According to the data provided by the HEIs, the total number of academic/teaching staff was 5212, of whom 3801 (72,9%) were employed at Universities and 1411 (27,1%) at Institutes of Tertiary Education. Regarding demographic characteristics and specifically gender, 2875 were men (55,2%) and 2332 were women (44,8%). The average age was 45,95 years, with a standard deviation of 10,70 years. More than half (57%) of the academic/teaching staff held qualifications at level 8 (Doctorate), and a significant proportion (36%) held qualifications at level 7 (Master’s degree), based on the National Qualifications Framework. Most of the academic/teaching staff in Cyprus’ HEIs held qualifications in the fields of “Business and Administration” (16,5%), “Education Sciences” (8,2%), “Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction” (8,1%), and “Health Sciences” (7,7%). In contrast, a very small percentage held qualifications in the fields of “Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary” (1,1%), “Welfare and Care” (0,7%), and “Pharmacy” (0,5%). In terms of employment variables, 60,9% of the academic/teaching staff was employed on a part-time basis, while 38,8% held full-time positions. With regard to job categories, “Teaching and Research Staff” accounted for 41,3% of the total academic/teaching staff population in Higher Education Institutions

in Cyprus (Professors: 13,2%, Associate Professors: 8,6%, Assistant Professors: 8,1%, and Lecturers: 11,4%), while Special Teaching Staff / Adjunct Teaching Staff / Teaching Assistants accounted for 48,7%.

Programs of Study

The third thematic area concerns Programs of Study. During the academic year 2023-2024, all Higher Education Programs of Study offered by Cyprus' Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were recorded. Specifically, data was collected for 1367 programs. The majority of programs were offered by Universities (73%), by private HEIs (78,1%), and correspond to level 7 (44,5%) of the National Qualifications Framework. In terms of academic fields, the majority of programmes offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) belong to the fields of "Business and Administration" (402 programmes or 29.4%), "Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction" (162 programmes or 11.9%), "Services" (96 programmes or 7%), and "Health Sciences" (92 programmes or 6.7%). A very small number of programmes are offered in the fields of "Pharmacy" (17 programmes or 1.2%), "Welfare and Care" (14 programmes or 1.0%), "Medicine and Dentistry" (13 programmes or 1.0%), and "Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary" (12 programmes, or 0.9%). The majority of programs of study (51,3%) followed a two-semester structure (Autumn and Spring), including a summer period. As for the mode of attendance, most programs (67,2%) were offered under both full-time and part-time study options, while a significant portion (32,7%) was offered exclusively full-time. The main language of instruction for the majority of programmes of study (51%) was English, reversing the pattern observed in previous academic years when Greek was the main language of instruction for most programmes. A significant proportion of programmes of study (48.5%) have Greek as the language of instruction. Only 25,6% of programs of study included practical training that contributes to ECTS credits, and just 2,4% programs offered practical training without awarding any credits.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the results of this report are based on the data sent by the HEIs to the DHE for the academic year 2023-2024.