

Chapter B2

Socio-economic background of students

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Key

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Parental education of students

Students with tertiary educated parents are in the majority across countries. 52 % of students have at least one parent with a Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral degree; and 7 % have parents whose highest degree is at ISCED level 5 (short-cycle). Students whose parents did not complete tertiary education are in the minority (41 %).

Students without tertiary educational background

Across countries, non-tertiary educational background is more common among women, older students, students having entered with a delay or alternative access pathways, and domestically educated students. Students without tertiary educational background more often rely on their own income from jobs or public support, rather than family support, and more often pursue their studies with lower intensity and part-time. With regard to study choices, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are predominantly found in non-university settings and short-cycle programmes, if these are offered.

Underrepresentation of students from non-tertiary educational background

Based on fathers' education, on average, the enrolment of students from non-tertiary backgrounds is 16 % lower than expected based on the educational levels within the general population. Austria, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden present exceptions to this pattern, with student representation of at least 90 % of the expected level based on their fathers' educational attainment.

findings

Parental financial status of students

In the majority of countries, students typically categorise their family's financial status as 'average', with nearly half expressing this view. About one third of students perceive their families as very or somewhat well-off, while approximately one in five considers their family to be not well-off. Parental education is clearly associated with parental financial status.

Availability of study resources by educational background

Overall, a majority of students has access to the resources they need for their studies (electronic devices, desk, internet, quiet place to study). Distinct differences emerge across all four resources when comparing students from low and high educational backgrounds. Computer access, a desk, and a quiet place to study are less commonly available to students from lower educational backgrounds. Internet availability shows a mixed pattern of results.

Main issues

A key determinant of students' educational experiences is their socio-economic background, defined primarily by parental education levels and occupational/financial status. Research has consistently demonstrated that these factors show significant associations with educational inequality across Europe (Palmisano et al., 2022), predicting outcomes from the school level (European Commission et al., 2020) to higher education (European Commission et al., 2022). After leaving higher education, graduates without an academic background are at a higher risk to have a job below the level of their education (Mühleck et al., forthcoming). Given the pervasive patterns, this chapter delves into the relationship between students' parental socio-economic conditions and their educational experiences in higher education, analysing how these factors contribute to ongoing disparities.

Equity policies in higher education

Students lacking a tertiary educational background – those from families without parental tertiary educational attainment of higher education – form a critical demographic in the diversity and inclusion efforts within higher education policy. The term varies – ‘first-generation students’, ‘students from non-academic backgrounds’, ‘students without higher educational backgrounds’ – yet consistently points to challenges of underrepresentation and disadvantage (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020).

The European Commission's Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 recognises that “Education is failing to reduce inequalities linked to socio-economic status [...]” and highlights “[...] that the highest performing education systems are those that put a premium on equity” (European Commission, 2020, p. 6). The goal of the European Education Area is to decouple educational attainment and achievement from social, economic, and cultural status, thereby ensuring that educational systems enhance the capabilities of every individual and facilitate upward social mobility. In the realm of higher education, the Bologna Process initially outlined the social dimension as the representation of the broader population's diversity within the student body, i.e. participative equity (Mühleck & Griga, 2010) from entry through to completion, as described in the London Communiqué (2007). Building on this foundation, which has been reinforced through subsequent ministerial communiqués, more recently, the ‘Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA’ (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020) have broadened the definition. They emphasise a higher education environment that is not only inclusive, but also actively promotes equity and diversity while meeting the needs of local communities by supporting the interest and well-being of disadvantaged, vulnerable and underrepresented students (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022). These European efforts align with global objectives, notably the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations, 2019). At the country level, nearly all European nations have at least one strategy or major policy focused on equity in higher education, though only a few exclusively target the social dimension (European Commission et al., 2022).

Socio-economic disparities

Research has consistently shown that the socio-economic status of students, particularly parental education levels and financial background of their families, plays a crucial role in determining educational outcomes from early education to after graduation from higher education. Students from more affluent and educated families are more likely to enter and complete higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020; OECD, 2018).

Within higher education, it has repeatedly been demonstrated that there are disparities in educational choices depending on students' socio-economic background (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021; U-Multirank, 2022), especially in the context of widened access to higher education. Students tend to cluster in specific types of educational institutions, disciplines, and degree types, creating a horizontally stratified system (Marginson, 2016; Shavit et al., 2007; see also >Chapter B4). The resulting differences in outcomes can exacerbate inequalities tied to students' socio-economic backgrounds within the system (Marginson, 2016; Triventi, 2014).

Explanatory approaches to these differences between students depending on the education of their parents typically view students' experiences through either an analytical lens which highlights rational decision-making, or through a focus on group-specific resources and integration within the educational system (Hadjar et al., 2022). Boudon's (1974) framework underscores how students and their families make educational choices based on rational assessments of costs and benefits, considering their socio-economic constraints. This rational choice model explains why students from less privileged backgrounds might opt for shorter, less demanding educational paths, despite equal academic performance (Becker & Hecken, 2008; Boudon, 1974; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997; Callender & Dougherty, 2018; Thompson, 2017). In contrast, Bourdieu's analysis focuses on how cultural, social, and economic capital influences integration into the educational system, positing that it is the 'habitus' of actors in higher education (teachers, students) and the culture and practices within higher education systems which, due to their unfamiliarity and foreignness, prevent students from non-academic backgrounds from successfully integrating (Bourdieu, 1984).

Besides study-related differences, previous EUROSTUDENT reports have already highlighted clear differences to be found in students' living conditions and life situations (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021). The relevance of students' socio-economic background for the financing of studies in many countries has also been consistently pointed out as a concern by the European Students' Union (ESU, 2020).

In light of these findings, this chapter aims to investigate how students from different educational backgrounds are represented in European higher education and how their study and living situations as well as study experiences can be described.

Data and interpretation

Educational background of students

The majority of students in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have parents with a tertiary degree (Figure B2.1, Table B2.1). 52 % of students have at least one parent with a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree; and 7 % have parents whose highest

The majority of students in the EHEA have parents with a tertiary degree.

degree is at ISCED level 5 (short-cycle). Students whose parents did not complete tertiary education are in the minority (41 %).

- In Latvia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, and Denmark, at most 35 % of students' parents did not attend (short-cycle) tertiary education.
- In Portugal, Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania, the pattern is reversed – here, students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds are in the majority, representing at least 50 % of students.

Box B2.1

Methodological note: Parental educational background in EUROSTUDENT

ISCED 2011	Notes	Labour Force Survey	EUROSTUDENT focus groups	
ISCED 01: Early childhood educational development				
ISCED 02: Pre-Primary education				
ISCED level 1: Primary education		Non-tertiary education ISCED (0-4)	Without tertiary educational background	Low educational background
ISCED level 2: Lower secondary education				
ISCED level 3: Upper secondary education				Medium educational background
ISCED level 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education				
ISCED level 5: Short-cycle tertiary education	Not implemented in all countries. Not considered to be higher education in all countries. May include vocationally oriented programmes typically not considered to be higher education within a country.	Tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)	With tertiary educational background	Not assigned due to different understanding across countries
ISCED level 6: Bachelor's or equivalent level	May include vocationally oriented programmes typically not considered to be higher education within a country.			High educational background
ISCED level 7: Master's or equivalent level				
ISCED level 8: Doctoral or equivalent level				

EUROSTUDENT uses the highest educational degree attained by either of students' parents, as reported by the students, to classify students according to their educational background based on the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). Detailed information on the exact national qualifications behind each ISCED level can be found in the ISCED mappings: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/isced-mappings>.

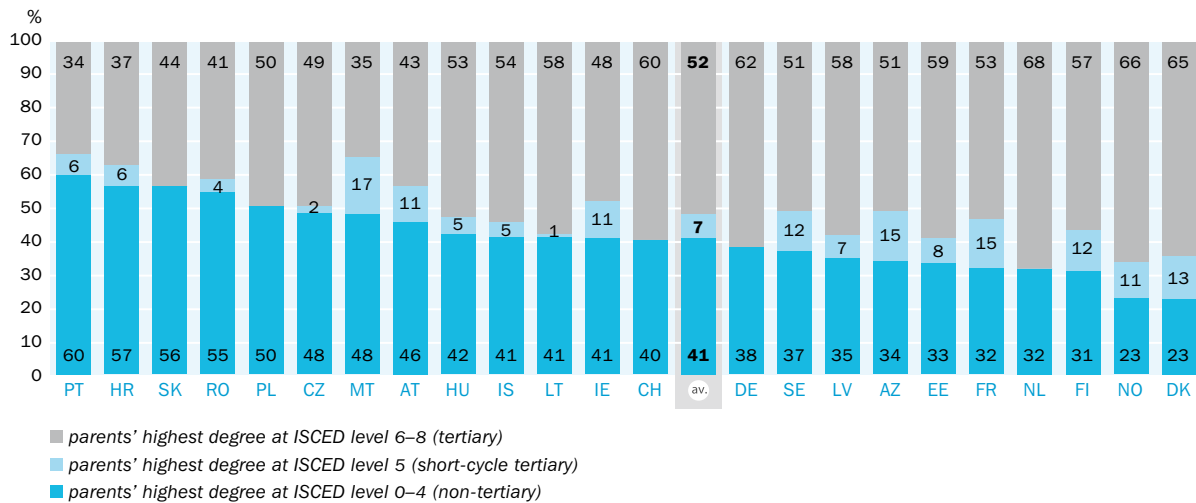
Students with non-tertiary educational background tend to be older, have entered HE later and more often work.

Tables B2.2 and B2.3 provide further information on students' educational background. Women are more likely than men to come from non-tertiary educated families in all countries except Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, and Malta (Table B2.2). Older students more often than younger ones lack a tertiary educational background, often due to their higher use of delayed or alternative entry pathways into higher education – this is more prevalent among students from non-tertiary backgrounds in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries. Domestic students more often come from non-tertiary educated families than international students in all EUROSTUDENT countries except Denmark, France, and Norway. Migration background does not present a consistent pattern in relation to educational attainment, with variations observed across different countries. In all but one country, students without tertiary educational background rely on their own income or public support, rather than family support (Table B2.3). Accordingly, students from non-tertiary backgrounds tend to study with lower intensity

Figure B2.1 [↓](#)

Education attainment of students' parents

Share of students (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2. **No data:** ES, GE.

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]

Note(s): Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.

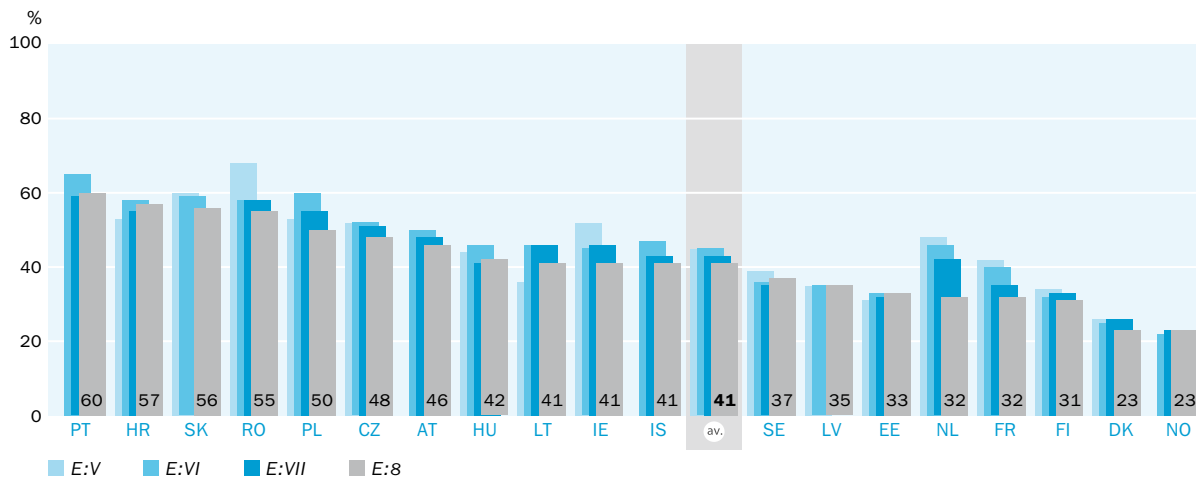
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

Figure B2.2 [↓](#)

Students without tertiary educational background in EUROSTUDENT V, VI, VII and 8

Share of students (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2. **No (comparable) data:** AZ, CH, ES, GE, MT, AT, DE, IS, NO (E:V). DE, LV, SK (E:VII).

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]

Note(s): Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: AT, FR, NL, SE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

and as part-time students more often, and in all but two countries, they can be found more often among students working a lot alongside their studies than those without a job (Table B2.3). Regarding their choice of educational institution, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are predominantly found in non-university settings, where available. Among various study programmes, those without tertiary backgrounds are most commonly enrolled in short-cycle programmes (ISCED level 5) if these are offered.

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The proportion of students without a tertiary education background has generally decreased.

In most countries, the proportion of students without a tertiary education background has generally decreased over time (Figure B2.2). In the current round EUROSTUDENT 8, three quarters (74 %) of the 19 countries with at least 3 time points of data available report lower shares than in the earliest round (EUROSTUDENT V or VI), with an average decrease between EUROSTUDENT V and EUROSTUDENT 8 of 4 percentage points. However, this downward trend has not been uniform across all countries, with some experiencing intermittent increases.

- Exceptions to this overall decreasing trend are Croatia, Lithuania, and Estonia, where the shares of students without tertiary education background are 2 to 5 percentage points higher than a decade ago.
- In Latvia and Norway, changes in the proportion of students without tertiary education backgrounds have been nonexistent or minimal, showing fluctuations of at most 1 percentage point across different survey rounds.

Figure B2.3 [↓](#)

Representation of domestic students with fathers not holding a tertiary degree

Share of students (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.1. Percentage of men age 40-59 in population: EU-LFS (reference period: 2022 except CH (2020), DE (2021)) [lfsa_pgaed].
No data: ES. No EU-LFS data: AZ, GE.

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.5 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]

Note(s): Per student, the highest educational attainment of the father is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded. The graph compares the share of students' fathers who have not attained tertiary education (ISCED 5-8) with the corresponding share of 40-59-year-old men in the population. Shares of equal size result in a position on the diagonal, indicating that there are exactly as many students from non-higher education backgrounds as would be expected based on the distribution of educational attainment in the population. Values indicating overrepresentation of this group lie above the diagonal, values below the diagonal indicate underrepresentation. Comparisons to LFS data can be influenced by several factors, e.g. the age distribution of students' parents, reproductive patterns.

Deviation from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

Compared to the general population, students whose fathers do not have a tertiary education degree are underrepresented in most EUROSTUDENT countries (Figure B2.3). On average, the enrolment of students from non-tertiary backgrounds is 16 % lower than expected based on the educational levels within the general population.

- In Ireland and Sweden, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are either exactly or even overrepresented.
- Austria, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, and Slovakia also demonstrate a comparatively high degree of alignment, with student representation of at least 90 % of the expected level based on their fathers' educational attainment.
- The lowest levels of representation are observed in Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway – here, the enrolment of students whose fathers do not have a tertiary education is less than 75 % of the expected figure.

Students with non-tertiary educated fathers are underrepresented in most countries.

Box B2.2

Methodological note: Calculating representation

As an indicator for the representation of students from different education backgrounds, the actual shares of students from a particular group are set against the share of students from this group in the general population. The comparison used in this chapter – as in previous rounds of EUROSTUDENT (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2015, 2021) – is based on characteristics of students' fathers, as the population statistics needed in the calculations regarding students' parents as a unit are not available. The share of students with fathers with a certain education background, e.g. without higher education, is set against the share of 40–59-year-old men with the same educational attainment in the population. This comparison group is chosen to represent the parent generation of students. In order to avoid different shares of international students in the national student populations biasing the index, only domestic students (i.e. students educated in the country of survey) are drawn on for the analyses.

If the shares are equal, e.g. if the share of 40–59-year-olds that attended higher education equals that of the fathers of the students who attained a tertiary degree, perfect participative equity with regard to the group in question is achieved. Values above the diagonal indicate that students with the educational background in question are more common than expected based on the population (overrepresentation); values below the diagonal indicate underrepresentation.

Parental financial status

In the majority of countries, students typically categorise their family's financial status as 'average', with nearly half (47 %) expressing this view. About one-third (34 %) of students perceives their families as very or somewhat well-off, while approximately one in five (19 %) considers their family to be not (at all) well-off, as detailed in Figure B2.4.

- The largest shares of students indicating that their family is not very or not at all well-off can be found in Romania, Ireland, France, Portugal, and Germany, where this is the case for at least a quarter of students.

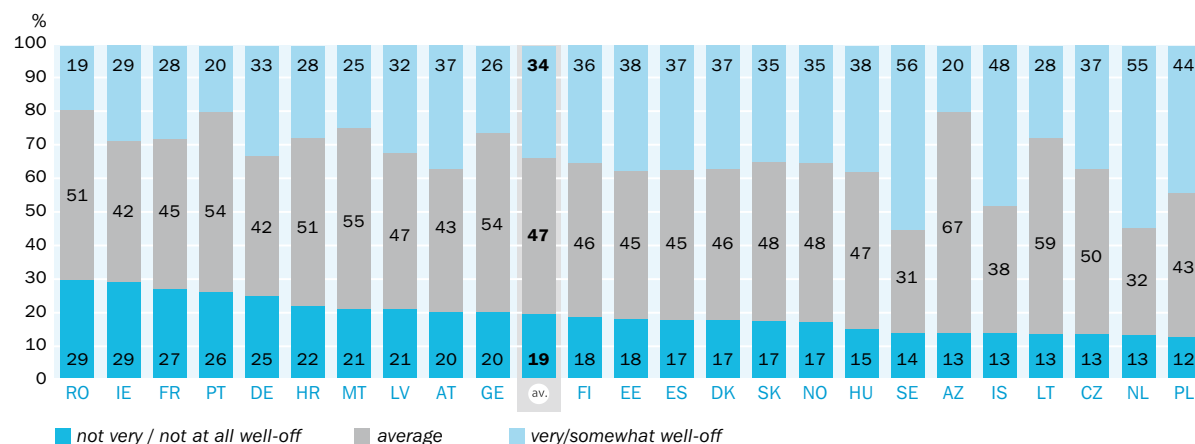
A third of students indicate their families are not well-off.

- In Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Poland, in contrast, the largest shares of very or somewhat well-off families can be found, with at least 44 % of students placing their families in this category.

Figure B2.4

Students' assessment of parents' financial status

Share of students (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.4. **No data:** CH.

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.8 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or #guardians) are compared with other families? Source: PIRLS 2006.

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Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: GE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

Box B2.3

Methodological note: Financial status of students' parents

An item adapted from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which was carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), was used to assess the financial status of students' parents. Students were asked to rate the financial well-being of their parents in comparison to other families using the five categories: (1) not at all well-off, (2) not very well-off, (3) average, (4) somewhat well-off, and (5) very well-off (Caro & Cortes, 2012).

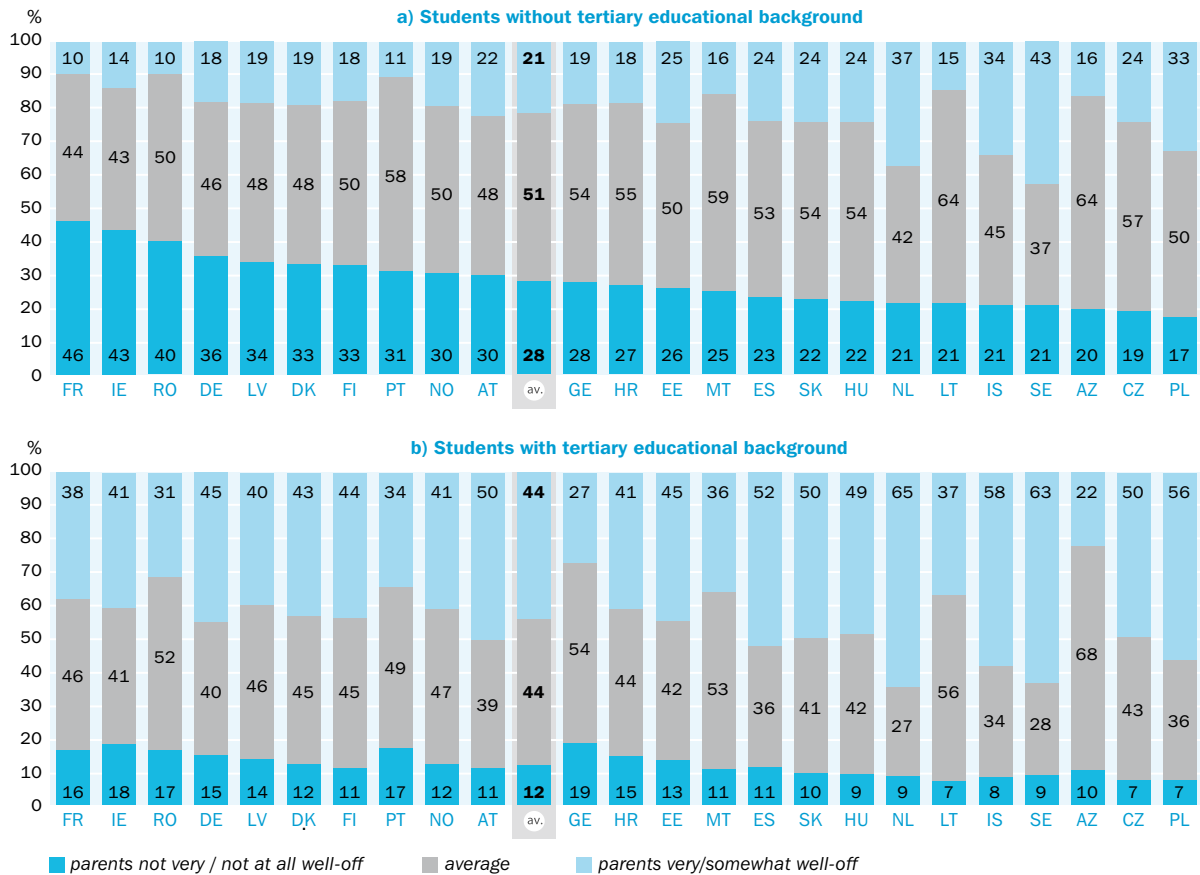
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Parental education and financial status are strongly related. The financial status of students' parents, as perceived by students, correlates strongly with their parents' education level (Figure B2.5). Students whose parents have completed tertiary education are more than twice as likely to report being from well-off families (44 %) compared to those from non-tertiary educated families (21 %). Additionally, only 12 % of students from tertiary educated backgrounds consider their families not well-off, compared to 28 % of those from non-tertiary backgrounds.

Figure B2.5

Students' assessment of parents' financial status by educational background

Share of students (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.4. **No data:** CH.

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.8 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or #guardians) are compared with other families? Source: PIRLS 2006. Copyright © 2005 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Publisher: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: GE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

Availability of study resources

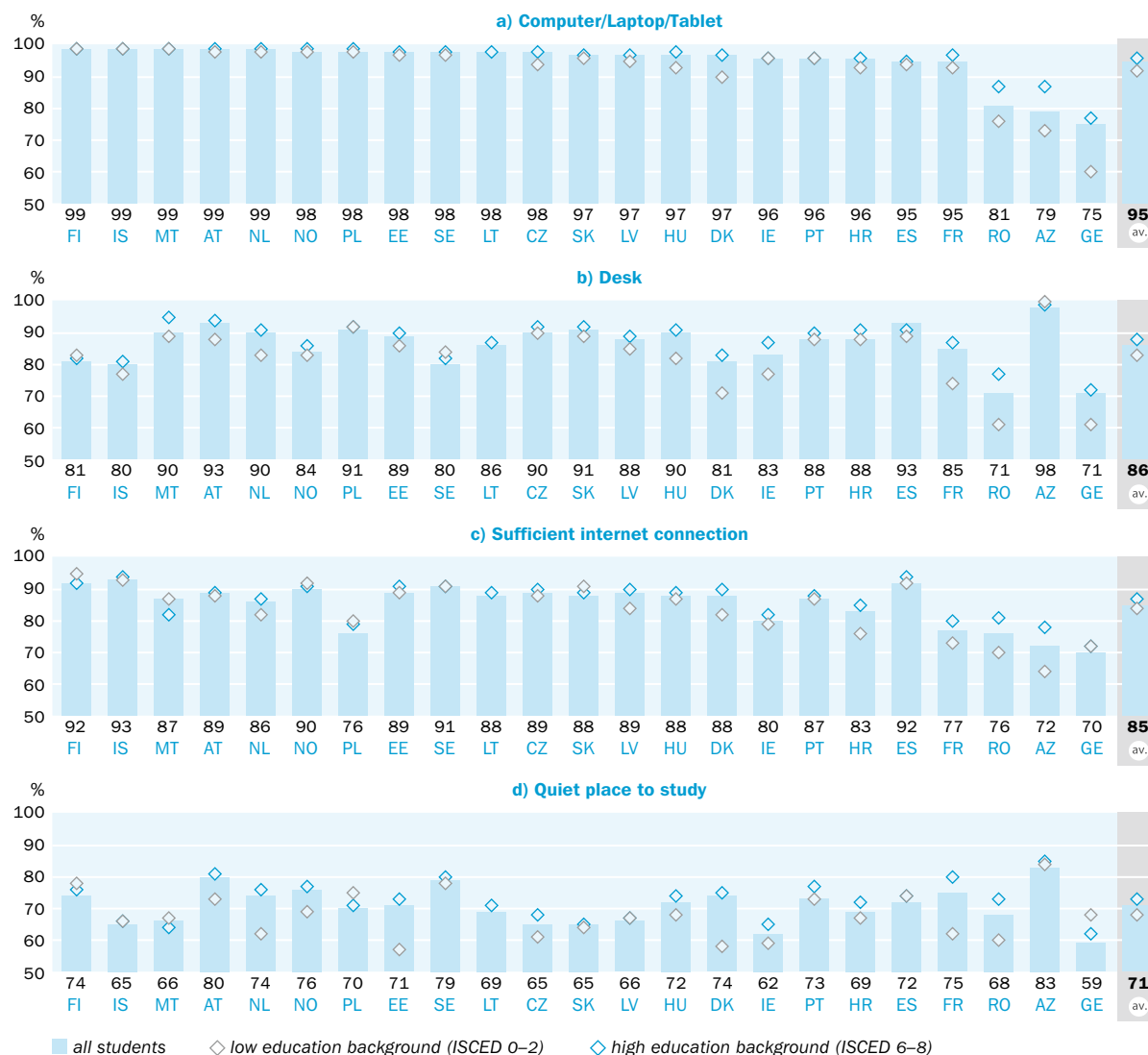
Do students from lower educational backgrounds possess adequate resources for studying? Figure B2.6 provides an overview to what extent students report (almost) always having access to a computer, a desk, a quiet place to study, and a stable internet connection when needed for their studies.

Overall, the vast majority of students (95 %) has access to the electronic devices they need for their studies (computer, laptop, etc.). 86 % of students can use a desk when needed, and 85 % have a sufficient internet connection. A quiet place to study is least available to students across EUROSTUDENT countries, with an average of only 71 % indicating that they have this.

Figure B2.6

Availability of study materials by educational background

Share of students indicating material is always or almost always available when needed (in %)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, TM 53–56. **No data:** DE, CH. **Too few cases:** LT (low educational background).

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (Spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): M3.2 In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to...? [indicated separately]. Adapted from Doolan et al. (2021).

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: NO.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

The availability of study resources such as computers, internet, desk, and a quiet place to study can depend on educational background.

Distinct differences emerge across all four resources when comparing students from low (ISCED 0–2) and high (ISCED 6–8) educational backgrounds. While an average 92 % of students from low educational backgrounds have computer access, this figure is 4 percentage points lower than that for students from higher educational backgrounds, although differences are not found in all countries.

■ In Romania, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the availability is comparatively low, with only 75 % to 81 % of all students having access to a computer when they need it.

Relatively large differences between students from low and high educational backgrounds are also apparent.

With regard to a desk, students from low educational backgrounds indicate less often that they can use one compared to their counterparts with highly educated parents (83 % vs. 88 %).

- A difference of at least 3 percentage points is found in all countries except Finland, Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, and Azerbaijan, where in some cases the availability of a desk is even rated slightly higher by students from low educational backgrounds.
- In Hungary, Denmark, Ireland, France, Romania, and Georgia, the disparity in desk availability reaches or exceeds 10 percentage points

85 % of all students report (almost) always having a sufficient internet connection for their studies. Differences based on educational background can also be identified – on average, students from low educational backgrounds report this to be slightly less often the case (84 %) than students from high educational backgrounds (87 %), but the reverse pattern is also found.

- In the Netherlands, Latvia, Denmark, Croatia, France, Romania, and Azerbaijan, the shares of students from low educational backgrounds reporting sufficient internet access are at least 5 percentage points lower.
- In Finland, Malta, and marginally also in Norway and Poland, the pattern is reversed, with students from low educational backgrounds reporting better internet availability than students from high educational backgrounds.

Finally, a quiet place to study is more easily found by students from high educational backgrounds (73 % vs. 68 %).

- Particularly in the Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark, France, and Romania, large differences between the groups exist, with students from high educational backgrounds much more often indicating that such a place is available to them.
- In Finland, Malta, Poland, and Georgia, a peaceful study environment seems to be more easily found by students from low educational backgrounds.

Subjective assessment and experiences

Exploring the subjective experiences of students depending on their educational backgrounds reveals significant differences in their original intentions to pursue higher education (Table B2.4). On average, about three-quarters (75 %) of all students report having always known they would study one day. However, this certainty drops to 68 % among students whose parents have low educational attainment and rises to 81 % for those with highly educated parents. This disparity is consistent across all countries, with 4 to 25 percentage points more students from tertiary educational backgrounds having a definite intention to study compared to their peers from less educated families.

Students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds report lower original study intentions, lower sense of belonging, and slightly higher dropout intentions.

Even once having entered higher education, students whose parents are highly educated often feel a greater sense of belonging in higher education (Table B2.4). On average, 20 % of students without tertiary educational backgrounds occasionally question their enrolment in higher education. This percentage is slightly lower (17 %) for students from tertiary educated backgrounds.

- These differences, if slight, can be found in all countries except Finland, Hungary, and Poland, with the largest differences found in the Czech Republic, Spain, and Norway (5–6 percentage points).

Students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds also show a slightly higher tendency to consider dropping out of higher education, with 10 % expressing such intentions compared to 8 % of their peers from tertiary educated families. This difference of at least 1 percentage point is noted in 80 % of countries, indicating a noticeable pattern across EUROSTUDENT countries.

- Only in Finland, Croatia, Iceland, Lithuania, and Poland, no difference is found in dropout intention based on educational background of students or even a slightly reversed trend.

Discussion and policy considerations

The findings in this chapter underscore that students' educational backgrounds continue to play a crucial role in access to and experiences within higher education across most EUROSTUDENT countries. In many countries, students from non-tertiary backgrounds remain underrepresented, highlighting a persistent educational divide. Furthermore, a strong link between parental education and financial situation emerges: students from non-tertiary backgrounds are twice as likely to report their families as not well-off compared to their counterparts from tertiary educated families. This economic disparity often necessitates that students without a tertiary educational background rely more on their own income or public support, rather than family support. These students, typically older, also more frequently opt for part-time and lower-intensity study modes (see also >Chapter B4). Additionally, disparities extend to resources, with students from lower educational backgrounds often having worse access to computers, the internet, desks, and quiet study areas. Experiences in higher education clearly vary by educational background; this variation is apparent not only in different choices of institutions and programmes but also in subjective factors. Students from lower educational backgrounds exhibit lower initial study intention, and in many countries experience a lesser sense of belonging and exhibit higher dropout intentions compared to their peers from more advantaged backgrounds. This analysis highlights the complex interdependencies between socio-economic factors and higher education experiences, suggesting a pressing need for policies to not only broaden access but also address the comprehensive needs of students from diverse backgrounds to foster true educational equity.

Addressing the inequalities described in this chapter is complex, as they are not merely snapshots of disadvantage based on individual characteristics; they emerge from a complex interplay of factors at various levels – macro, meso, and micro – and evolve over time (Hadjar et al., 2022; Wanti et al., 2022). Higher education equity depends to a large part on the openness and performance of primary and secondary education (Tavares et al., 2022), which sets the stage for the challenges faced in higher education. Therefore, the circumstances of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are influenced by preceding educational factors as well as by policies beyond the immediate scope of higher education policymakers.

Efforts to overcome these challenges are well-aligned with the ‘Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA’ (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020), which offer a comprehensive approach to removing systemic barriers and promoting equity in higher education. These guidelines emphasise the support of potential students in their preparation and transition into higher education, the creation of synergies across policy areas like finance, health, and housing to foster a supportive ecosystem for these students, and flexibility in programme design and delivery. Effective counselling and guidance, as well as addressing the cost of study materials, ensure all students have access to necessary resources. This shows that policies and measures can and should range from overarching national social dimension strategies to concrete and local ones addressing practical issues faced on the ground by students from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as access to study materials, balancing work and studies (> [Chapter B5](#)), organising internships (> [Chapter B6](#)), financial difficulties (> [Chapters B7](#) and [B8](#)), affordable housing (> [Chapter B9](#)), or planning mobility during studies (> [Chapter B10](#)).

While socio-economic background is a pivotal indicator, intersectionalities with other aspects of diversity and potentially vulnerability, disadvantage and underrepresentation (> [Chapter B1](#)) should be investigated and taken into account in the development of successful support measures and policies (Hadjar et al., 2022).

Tables

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Table B2.1

Educational attainment of students' parents

Share of students according to either parent's highest degree (in %)

	Highest degree of either parent			
	Low educational background (ISCED 0–2)	Medium educational background (ISCED 3–4)	Short-cycle educational background (ISCED 5)	High educational background (ISCED 6–8)
AT	4	42	11	43
AZ	2	32	15	51
CH	7	34	n.d.	60
CZ	1	48	2	49
DE	8	30	0	62
DK	5	18	13	65
EE	5	28	8	59
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	5	26	12	57
FR	6	25	15	53
GE	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
HR	2	54	6	37
HU	2	40	5	53
IE	15	26	11	48
IS	11	30	5	54
LT	1	40	1	58
LV	7	27	7	58
MT	27	21	17	35
NL	9	23	0	68
NO	5	17	11	66
PL	2	48	0	50
PT	25	35	6	34
RO	6	49	4	41
SE	6	31	12	51
SK	11	46	0	44
av.	7	34	7	52

n.d.: no data.

Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.

Data collection: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]

Note(s): Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: IE, NL.

Table B2.2

Students without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4) by sex, age group, educational origin, migration background, access route, and transition duration

Share of students (in %)

	All students	Sex		Age groups		Educational origin		Migration background		Access route		Transition route	
		Female	Male	Up to 21 years	30 years and over	Domestic student	International student	Second-generation migration background, domestic education	Without migration background, domestic educational background	Alternative	Standard	Direct	Delayed
AT	46	47	44	39	56	49	35	52	49	69	47	45	63
AZ	34	33	35	35	19	34	t.f.c.	32	34	t.f.c.	34	34	36
CH	40	42	39	33	52	41	32	46	41	48	39	39	50
CZ	48	51	44	44	69	52	25	46	53	57	48	46	70
DE	38	38	38	32	46	39	31	49	38	47	37	35	49
DK	23	23	23	23	34	23	23	25	22	36	22	22	24
EE	33	35	31	30	40	35	23	33	35	53	32	29	51
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	31	33	28	20	43	31	25	35	31	42	30	26	41
FR	32	34	30	30	46	32	35	39	29	51	32	31	49
GE	n.d.	15	13	14	10	15	5	13	15	13	14	14	20
HR	57	61	50	56	70	57	49	58	56	71	56	55	67
HU	42	45	39	37	60	43	30	36	44	65	41	39	65
IE	41	41	41	33	61	43	30	35	47	47	40	37	63
IS	41	42	39	17	58	42	34	36	43	59	35	34	56
LT	41	45	36	39	56	43	14	43	43	26	42	38	61
LV	35	38	30	28	54	36	18	35	36	49	34	29	53
MT	48	48	48	44	57	52	21	43	55	45	49	45	68
NL	32	34	29	30	57	33	21	34	34	42	31	28	50
NO	23	24	20	18	33	22	30	26	21	34	21	20	30
PL	50	55	43	43	73	52	26	41	52	63	49	47	74
PT	60	64	56	56	73	62	38	45	65	70	59	58	75
RO	55	59	50	52	68	55	33	22	56	71	54	51	78
SE	37	41	31	29	49	38	28	40	37	51	36	32	47
SK	56	60	51	51	77	58	32	57	58	71	55	53	77
av.	41	42	37	35	53	41	28	38	41	51	39	37	55

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.**Data collection:** Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).**EUROSTUDENT question(s):** 6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]**Note(s):** Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions:** AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group:** IE, NL.

Table B2.3

Students without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4) by type of HEI, study programme, study intensity, extent of paid work, dependency on income source, and official status

Share of students (in %)

	All students	Type of HEI		Study programme			Study intensity		Extent of paid work		Dependency on income source			Official status	
		University	Non-university	Short-cycle	Bachelor	Master	Low intensity	High intensity	0 hrs. paid work / week during semester	>20 hrs. paid work / week during semester	Dependent on family	Dependent on self-earned income	Dependent on public student support	Full-time	Part-time
AT	46	43	55	n/a	47	46	50	43	40	54	32	52	64	46	n/a
AZ	34	34	n/a	n/a	35	22	27	30	35	31	35	31	38	34	30
CH	40	34	49	n/a	42	36	45	37	36	51	33	48	59	38	54
CZ	48	47	62	n/a	52	48	55	41	41	61	42	57	37	44	66
DE	38	35	44	n.d.	39	39	42	38	36	46	30	44	53	37	48
DK	23	18	29	36	23	18	20	24	24	26	26	24	23	23	n/a
EE	33	31	44	n/a	36	31	31	36	30	38	29	38	25	33	41
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	31	21	40	n/a	32	29	32	34	28	39	25	35	27	27	50
FR	32	33	28	44	33	35	38	26	31	35	22	37	51	n.d.	n.d.
GE	n.d.	14	14	n/a	15	14	15	15	14	14	13	21	17	14	n/a
HR	57	55	66	n/a	60	59	60	53	53	65	59	66	74	54	66
HU	42	40	54	65	44	40	47	36	35	53	35	53	44	37	59
IE	41	34	51	62	38	38	50	34	36	53	27	48	58	35	59
IS	41	41	n/a	t.f.c.	37	46	45	37	36	52	40	43	32	40	51
LT	41	35	55	n/a	43	39	45	38	39	45	38	45	43	39	57
LV	35	32	53	52	34	25	39	31	29	41	28	39	t.f.c.	29	47
MT	48	46	54	49	46	53	54	45	39	61	29	53	t.f.c.	42	64
NL	32	22	41	54	33	24	36	29	24	44	19	40	30	29	60
NO	23	22	25	n/a	24	24	25	21	19	30	19	25	18	21	29
PL	50	45	69	n.d.	51	56	48	45	42	60	40	59	70	43	63
PT	60	54	70	79	61	61	64	58	57	72	53	68	80	59	69
RO	55	55	n.d.	n/a	57	59	54	51	50	62	52	63	70	53	68
SE	37	37	n/a	61	39	30	39	37	35	46	31	42	35	36	42
SK	56	53	78	n/a	58	58	63	51	53	68	52	65	72	53	75
av.	41	37	49	56	41	39	43	37	36	48	34	46	46	38	55

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2. **No data:** ES, GE.**Data collection:** Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).**EUROSTUDENT question(s):** 6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]**Note(s):** Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions:** AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group:** IE, NL.

Table B2.4

Study intention, sense of lack of belonging, and dropout intention by educational background

Share of students (strongly) agreeing with the respective statement (in %)

	Study intention		Lack of belonging		Dropout intention	
	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)
AT	55	76	n.d.	n.d.	10	8
AZ	89	93	8	7	3	2
CH	n.d.	n.d.	13	9	4	3
CZ	55	79	26	21	13	11
DE	54	71	14	13	9	6
DK	55	72	17	16	8	7
EE	75	84	13	11	6	5
ES	75	88	37	31	9	6
FI	53	71	11	11	5	5
FR	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
GE	76	80	20	15	20	13
HR	74	86	15	16	12	12
HU	76	83	22	22	12	11
IE	66	80	24	20	11	9
IS	53	71	20	19	10	11
LT	73	82	21	22	10	11
LV	75	82	21	18	11	10
MT	75	83	17	15	11	9
NL	68	83	16	14	8	6
NO	68	81	24	18	10	9
PL	74	86	24	24	12	12
PT	72	82	24	22	8	7
RO	76	85	16	15	8	7
SE	66	81	19	16	10	8
SK	62	79	27	25	14	11
av.	68	81	20	17	10	8

n.d.: no data.

Data source: EUROSTUDENT 8, C.12–14.**Data collection:** Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).**EUROSTUDENT question(s):** 3.1 Generally, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your studies? [indicated separately] [It was always clear I would study in higher education one day.] [I often have the feeling that I don't really belong in higher education.] [I am seriously thinking of completely abandoning my higher education studies. (Item adapted from Trautwein et al. (2007).]**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions:** NO.**Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group:** IE, NL.

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