

Georgina Kasza, Zsófia Hangyál

STIPENDIUM HUNGARICUM SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS' EXPECTATIONS AND ATTITUDES

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PUBLISHER: Péter Tordai, Director of Tempus Public Foundation
 AUTHORS: Georgina Kasza, Zsófia Hangyál
 TRANSLATION: Zsófia Hangyál
 CONTRIBUTION TO DATA COLLECTION: Gabriella Mészáros
 LAYOUT: Kata Vilimi
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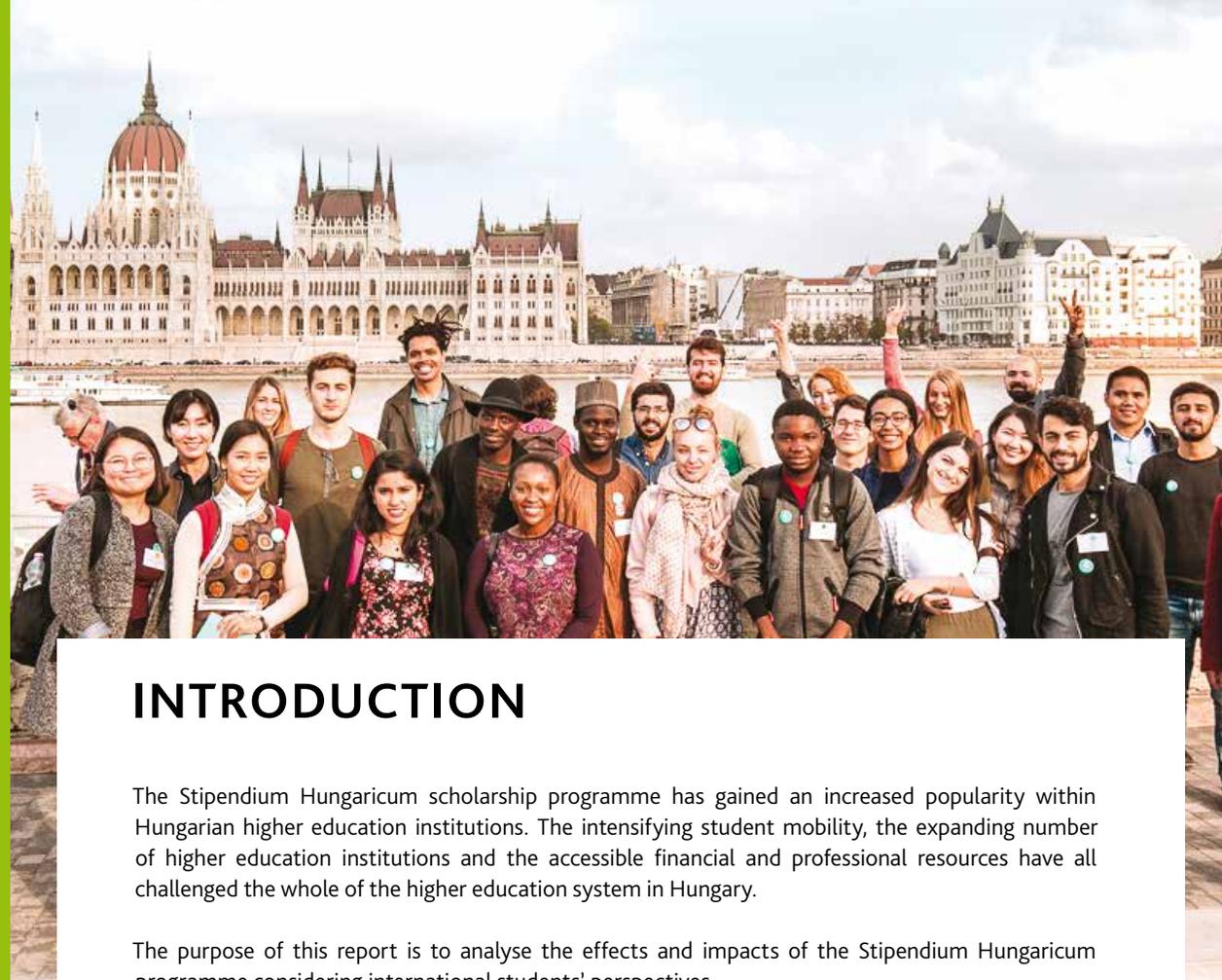
Tempus Public Foundation
 H-1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1.
 Postal address: H-1438, Budapest 70., POB. 508.
 Infoline: (+36 1) 237 1320
 Phone: (+36 1) 237 1300
 E-mail: info@tpf.hu
 Internet: www.tka.hu, www.campusmundi.hu

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INTRODUCTION

The Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme has gained an increased popularity within Hungarian higher education institutions. The intensifying student mobility, the expanding number of higher education institutions and the accessible financial and professional resources have all challenged the whole of the higher education system in Hungary.

The purpose of this report is to analyse the effects and impacts of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme considering international students' perspectives.

With the help of available databases, the report describes the tendencies of international student mobility regarding the Stipendium scholarship programme, specifically, it presents students' perceptions, satisfaction and feedback on key issues. As a result of several years of relevant research, the current study also identifies concerns and questions that can generate valuable discussion within a wider, professional audience.

The report is based on statistics and administrative databases thus elaborates the results of past years' consecutive research on international students' satisfaction.

The Higher Education Information System (Felsőoktatási Információs Rendszer; FIR) of the Educational Authority (Oktatási Hivatal; OH) gathers data separately about international students who study in Hungary within the framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme since 2015.

Tempus Public Foundation plays a key role in the scholarship's application and administration process; therefore, it is essential to investigate who the applicants are and why they apply for this specific programme. Next to the above mentioned databases, it is the second year that the international students evaluate a certain aspects of the scholarship programme.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HUNGARY

The changing number of foreign students in recent years

The number of foreign students studying in Hungarian higher education institutions has been increasing for years. While in 2008 nearly 17,000 students studied in Hungary, in 2016 28,628 students started their studies in part-time or full degree programmes; and this number increased to 32,309 foreign students in 2017.

The ratio of foreign students compared to the total number of students has also increased in the long run: this proportion expanded from 5.2% in 2010 to 9.97% in 2016. This significant growth was also influenced by the fact that the total number of students studying in the Hungarian tertiary education has been decreasing for many years. The table below shows that in recent years, the 'presence' of foreign students has only slightly affected the downward tendency of students in Hungarian Higher Education, that is to say, it reduced the rate of decline by only a few percentage and could not compensate for the declining number of Hungarian students.

The Higher Education Information System collects data separately about the students participating in the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme. The table below represents clearly that the number of SH students has almost doubled in the last two years, and that their share within foreign students has increased by nearly one third. This also indicates that the SH programme plays an important role in increasing the number of foreign students.

Table 1. The number of international students between 2008 and 2017 (Resource: OH FIR)

	2008	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number of international students (capita)	381 033	361 347	320 124	306 524	295 316	287 018	283 350
Total number of full-time students (capita)	-	-	-	217 248	210 103	205 560	202 278
Number of students with foreign citizenship (capita)	16 916	18 850	23 208	24 598	26 155	28 628	32 309
Number of full-time students with foreign citizenship (capita)	-	-	20 782	22 442	23 967	26 519	30 276
Number of international students who study at Hungarian-taught degree programmes (capita)	-	-	9488	9022	8825	8651	8639
Students involved in the Stipendium Hungaricum programme (capita)	-	-	47	768	1270	2942	5148
Number of SH students who study in degree programmes conducted in Hungarian (capita)	-	-	-	-	333	378	393
Ratio of foreign students compared to the total number of students – including all departments	4.4%	5.2%	7.2%	8%	8.9%	9.97%	11.4%

Ratio of foreign students compared to the total number of students – full-time studies	-	-	-	10.33%	11.41%	12.90%	14.97%
Ratio of Stipendium Hungaricum students compared to the total number of international students	-	-	0.2%	3.1%	4.9 %	10.28%	15.93%

A decisive tendency can be seen *in the last ten years regarding the number of students from four neighbouring countries* (Serbia, Ukraine, Romania and Slovakia): that is to say, the number of 'Hungarian diaspora' students (ethnic Hungarian population located outside current-day Hungary) is decreasing. Although their share among foreign students still remains decisive, however, this ratio is gradually decreasing. In 2007, 51 percent of international students came from the above mentioned four countries, compared to 41 percent in 2011; down to 24.6 percent in 2016 and only 21 percent in 2017. Despite some years' rising and falling trend of students coming from neighbouring countries, the total number of students enrolling in higher education institutions in Hungary is decisively declining over the long term. Considering the last two years, the number of students from Romania and Serbia has somewhat increased, meanwhile the number of students from Ukraine and Slovakia has decreased.

The most appealing scientific field to study in Hungary is still *medical and health sciences*: study programmes within this field are the most popular for foreigners. In 2017, 20 percent of international students studied in the general medicine programme and 4 percent in dentistry.

In recent years the number of students from Germany has been rising steadily; as a result, in 2016, Germany became the country sending the most students. In the autumn semester 2016/2017 3234 German students started their studies in Hungary; 17 percent of them came to Hungary for part-time studies and credit mobility programmes. In 2017, the number of German students slightly increased to 3,258. Over the last 6-7 years, the rising number of Iranian students was decisive; most of them study medicine, dentistry and pharmacy (72 percent in 2016) and this proportion has dropped to 69 percent in 2017. Related to this scientific field it is important to note that the number of students coming from Sweden has decreased in recent years: while in 2011 Sweden was amongst the top 10 sending countries with 440 students choosing medical studies in Hungary, in 2016, this number decreased to 264 students and it was down to 231 in 2017.

Over the last few years, *several countries have become dominant sending countries*. China, being one of the most powerful sending countries internationally, has become actively involved in Hungarian higher education mobility grants and activities. Thanks to governmental and higher education institutional efforts, the number of Chinese students studying here has risen nearly threefold over the past three years. While in 2010 the proportion of Chinese students among international students was 1.5 percent, in 2016 this proportion rose to 5.5 percent and in 2017 to 6.4 percent. In the past five years, Turkey has also become a dominant sending country. The number of Turkish students has shown an increasing tendency, too in recent years: in the academic year of 2013/2014 768 students, in 2016/2017 964, and in 2017/2018 1113 Turkish students started their studies in Hungarian higher education institutions.

International students in Hungarian higher education. The role of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme in student mobility

In the autumn of 2017, the number of international students rose by nearly four thousand people compared to the previous year: this year, in total, 32 309 foreign students began their studies at a higher education institution in Hungary. The data includes the number of students enrolled into both part-time and full-time degree programmes. The impacts of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme can be felt in the growing of numbers: from 2942 scholarship holders in 2016 to 5148 in 2017. In specific, master- and doctoral degree programmes have gained increased popularity.

Table 2. Number of international students per training level in the last 3 years (Resource: OH FIR)

Level of training	Autumn 2015	Autumn 2016	Autumn 2017
College level programme	24		
University level programme	32	3	
Advanced vocational programme	94	128	116
Postgraduate specialist training course	338	370	300
Doctoral programme (PhD/DLA)	852	1085	1489
Master programme (MA/MSc)	2830	3592	4520
One-tier Master programme	9308	9884	10 259
Bachelor programme (BA/BSc)	12 677	13 566	15 625
Total	26 155	28 628	32 309

The number of undergraduate students has increased in recent years. There were 4481 students participating in partial studies in 2017; and 1466 people studied preparatory studies. In addition to the surrounding countries, a significant amount of students came from China, Turkey, Germany and Italy. Among the undergraduate degree programmes, the following fields were popular: business and management, nursing and patient care (physiotherapist), computer science, computer science engineering and tourism. 61 percent of the undergraduate students was enrolled in programmes conducted in English, but the proportion of students studying in Hungarian language is also very high (37%).

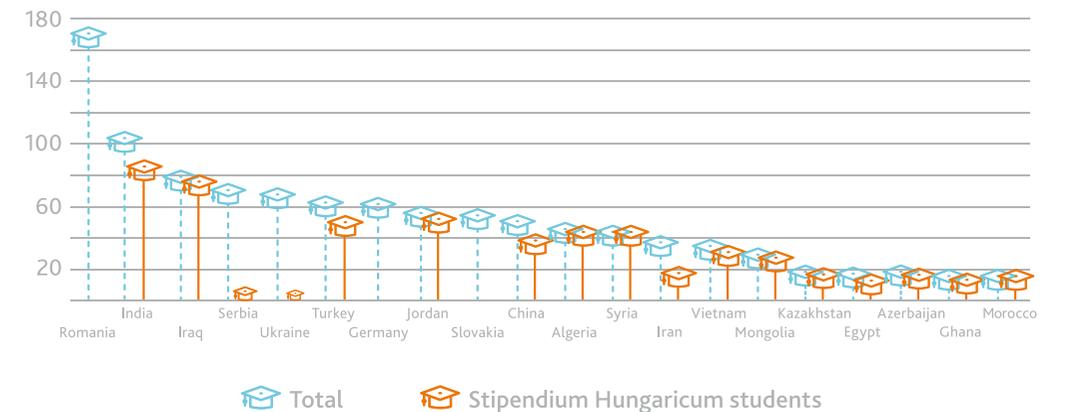
The number of students studying at Master's level has increased by nearly one and a half times in the past years. The number of students enrolled in Master's degree programmes reached 4520 in 2017. A considerable number of international students – besides neighbouring countries – came from China, Syria, Azerbaijan and Jordan. The most popular courses of 2017 were: international relations, international economics and business, psychology, management and leadership, and computer science engineering. The impact of the SH programme is already apparent regarding master's degree programmes: in 2017, 45,3 percent of all the master's students in Hungary were SH scholarship holders, while this rate was only 37 percent in 2016.

The number of students pursuing one-tier master (undivided) study programmes has risen at a slower pace in the past two years. Among the courses, most of the international students chose medical-, dental-, veterinary and pharmacy programmes. The most popular sending countries in 2017 were Germany,

Iran, Norway, Israel and Nigeria. The language of instruction for the one-tier master (undivided) study programmes is mainly English and German. In 2017 the number of SH students studying in the framework of undivided studies was 418. Most of the SH scholarship students came from Jordan, Japan and Mongolia and they studied general medicine and architectural engineering.

International students within doctoral programmes have increased in number in the past two years: it was 1,489 in 2017; accounting for 4.6 percent of all international students. In 2016 this ratio was 3.8 percent (1085), and in 2015 it was 3.2 percent (852 people). Romania, India, Serbia, Slovakia and Iraq were amongst the most popular sending countries for the doctoral programme. In 2017, 175 students came from India for doctoral studies, 82 from Iraq and 60 from Jordan. Perhaps it is surprising that we can meet a larger number of students in scientific fields of business and management, humanities and social sciences. The language of instruction is primarily English, but many international students (mainly Hungarian students from neighbouring countries) also study in doctoral programmes conducted in Hungarian. Amongst the universities, the University of Debrecen, the University of Szeged and the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest are the most popular for international doctoral students. It is also notable that 52 percent of all the international doctoral students studied in Hungary with Stipendium Hungaricum scholarships. This proportion has considerably increased in recent years, taking into account that in 2016 only 44% of doctoral students studied within the framework of this scholarship.

Figure 1. The number of students studying at doctoral level, including the SH scholarship holders according to the most popular sending countries, 2017 (Resource: OH FIR)



Stipendium Hungaricum Programme

The Stipendium Hungaricum programme was launched by the Hungarian government in 2013. As an educational policy, the purpose of the programme is to promote the quality improvement of Hungarian higher education through the support of internationalisation processes, and to strengthen the Hungarian scientific elite's international relations by increasing the cultural diversity of higher education institutions. Another main objective of the scholarship programme is to promote a competitive Hungarian higher education by expanding the number of international students.

The scholarship not only aims to increase the number of incoming foreign students, but also to intensify higher education cooperation with international partner organisations. In 2016-2017, nearly 60 sending partners participated in the Stipendium Hungaricum programme from 5 different continents. The range of countries participating in this scholarship programme has been steadily expanding in the last years. In 2017, Brazil, Paraguay, South Africa, Albania, Israel, Kuwait and Kyrgyzstan joined the programme as new sending countries.

Tempus Public Foundation plays a decisive role in the coordination of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme. The foundation that was established in 1996 is a public benefit organisation under the supervision of the Ministry of Human Resources and manages most of the international mobility programmes and grants in Hungary. Its mission is to help the Hungarian higher education sector to efficiently and effectively exploit the opportunities offered by the EU integration, all of which can be achieved through the coordination of national and international tendering programs.

STIPENDIUM HUNGARICUM STUDENTS IN HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The current situation of scholarship students

The number of Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship students has risen sharply in recent years. This growth is mainly due to the specific operating system of the programme: the number of participating countries and the number of student quota for each partner country is constantly expanding. This process has also been accompanied by the expansion of available degree programmes offered by an ever increasing number of Hungarian higher education institutions.

In the academic year 2017/2018 26 higher education institutions and one institution with a ministry background accepted future scholarship students. This institutional circle is anticipated to expand over the next academic year with two institutions: the University of Veterinary Medicine and the Semmelweis University. The training programmes announced under the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme are based on the higher education institutions' training offers. The results of the research on the online applications indicate that the available trainings offered play a decisive role in choosing a *higher education institute*: 10% of the SH applicants indicated that the main reason for deciding on a given university was that the particular university /college offered a training programme that the applicant wanted to pursue.

In the academic year of 2017/2018 scholarship applicants were able to apply for a total of 415 training programmes; a wide range of degree programmes conducted in a foreign language was provided to the candidates. Most of the degree programmes were offered by the University of Debrecen (65 degree programmes), Eötvös Loránd University (58 degree programmes) and the University of Pécs (53 training programmes). 168 training programmes were Budapest-based, meanwhile the rest were based in rural cities: 64 in Debrecen, 53 in Pécs and 37 degree programmes in Szeged. These three higher education institutions accounted for 42.4 percent of the degree programmes for the scholarship students. Most of the degree programmes (91%) are in English, but in addition to English, eight more languages are available. Regarding language skills, 75% of the degree programmes require a B2 level language-knowledge, and 19% of them a C1 or C2 level language-knowledge. For the remaining percentage of degree programmes the required level of language skills is lower. According to the levels of training programmes, the ratio of Master's degree programmes is the highest (39.5%), while the number of undergraduate programmes is 28.7%. 29.15 percent of all degree programmes offered were at doctoral level. The announced 415 training programmes encompass nearly 300 specialisations: IT, engineering and economics were the most represented study fields. The higher education institutions hold entrance examinations for 92.53 percent of the degree programmes.

Student Satisfaction Survey in 2017

The feedback of the students is an important indicator of the quality of the programme. In 2017, as in the previous year, students reported their opinion regarding the priority areas related to the implementation of the programme in the form of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the following four topics: the characteristics of the training programmes, the motivational factors behind choosing Hungarian higher education and background information, various student and other services provided by the universities, and the students' social and educational background.

Fellowship students filled in the questionnaire between June and August 2017; 2942 students studied under the scholarship in 2017, resulting a total of 2825 students participating in the sample.

The social and educational background of scholarship students

The financial and family backgrounds of students influence not only their integration into university life but their learning outcomes as well. The disadvantageous financial situation also increases the chances of students dropping out.

The research examined the financial situation of scholarship students compared to the financial situation of other foreign students studying in Hungary and compared to their sending country's students relatively. The latter shows that more than a quarter of Budapest students have a poor financial status, meanwhile those studying in rural areas see their own financial situation somewhat more optimistically. According to the level of education, a significant proportion of the students participating in doctoral degree programmes consider their own financial situation somewhat better (21 percent) or much better (6.5 percent) than average (altogether 27.6 percent). This rate is much higher than the ratio among students studying at bachelor's and master's level.

In cases where students had to compare their financial position to other international students studying in Hungary, most of them assessed their own situation as worse than average. Movement towards the two lower financial categories can also be observed in the results of the satisfaction survey of 2016. While the answers to the average category made up 42 percent in both years, 39 percent of the students in 2016 and 43 percent in 2017 reported a slightly or much worse than average financial situation. By contrast, in 2017 only 14.4% of students believed that their financial situation was better or better than the average foreign student.

Table 3. Respondents' financial situation compared to the students of their home country and compared to other international students studying in Hungary (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)

'How do you evaluate your financial situation?'	Compared to other students in your country? (%)	Compared to other foreign students here? (%)
Much worse than average	6.1	15.9
A little worse than average	18.9	27
Average	51.6	42.8
A little better than average	18.2	11.2
Much better than average	5.2	3.2

Table 4. Respondents' financial situation compared to the students of their home country according to international students studying in Budapest or other major towns and rural areas (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)

'How do you evaluate your financial situation compared to other students in your country?'	Students of Budapest (%) N=1200	Students of other major towns and rural areas (%) N=1625
Much worse than average	7	5.4
A little worse than average	19.5	18.4
Average	49.7	53
A little better than average	18.3	18.2
Much better than average	5.6	5

79.5 percent of the scholarship students do not receive any other financial support besides the Stipendium Hungaricum grant. A small number of students receive some additional state subsidies from abroad or other Hungarian (0.9 percent) and foreign grants (1.3 percent) that are funded by various foundations and companies.

The academic life and learning outcomes of SH scholarship students

For the effectiveness of the programme, it is very important that the international students who have been awarded the Stipendium scholarship successfully complete their degree programmes as much as possible. The Annual institutional feedback shows that the academic achievement of SH students is essentially no different from the average student performance, and even analysis of early dropouts indicate that scholarship students are more successful than the national (Hungarian) average. Similar feedback came from students' self-assessments: in the student satisfaction survey of 2016, 93 percent of the students rated their study performance as average or above the average.

At the same time, institutional reports to Tempus Public Foundation also indicate problems in student motivation, foreign language skills and student dropouts. In the student satisfaction survey, 7 percent of the international students thought that their study performance was slightly worse or worse than their peers. This ratio is similar to the proportion of students who can be identified as students at risk of dropping out, i.e. those whose learning outcomes differ significantly from the average grade. Managing these problems at individual level is only possible with the cooperation of all the institutional parties who are involved.

In judging the academic results and learning outcomes, only a small percentage of scholarship students think that they are slightly worse or worse than their average international peer (4.7 percent and 2.2 percent). Most of them in this respect fall into the average category, while one-fourth of students think that their academic performance is much higher than the average foreign student's. The majority of scholarship students do not speak Hungarian, 63% of them can only speak a few words, 20% of them have many difficulties in speaking/writing/reading Hungarian. In contrast, most international students have no problem with the English language; they communicate in English without any difficulty (55 percent), and 25 percent of them are on a native speakers' language level.

THE SATISFACTION OF SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS WITH HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

During the implementation of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme, a continuous feedback from the scholarship students is essential; along the same measures and indicators their feedback is reflected and systematically integrated into the development and implementation of the programme. Students' satisfaction and feedback also help the stakeholders to focus on identifying key issues or problems in the programme. The feedback from the scholarship students gives input not only at the programme's level but also in specific cases at the institutional level.

At the end of each academic year, students report on their satisfaction and expectations according to certain criteria with the help of an online survey. The most important topics in the survey of 2017 were: the services available at the university, institutional student services, services related to the implementation of the scholarship programme, factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning, and motivational factors influencing the higher education decision-making.

Student services related to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship

Among the student services, the services related to student life and scholarship are an important part of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme. These services are provided by the higher education institutions for students, however, the SH programme also aims to improve the quality and visibility of such services not only in the form of financial support but also as professional support. In recent years – both at institutional and programme level – developments have taken place accordingly in areas of mentoring international students.

Students' satisfaction is one of the most important feedback on the quality and quality of the various services – it is currently a commonly used practice that student satisfaction is a key indicator of quality. Many international and national research also confirm that students' opinions are relevant and cannot be questioned; they can clearly evaluate different areas of their own learning path and draw up conclusions of satisfaction (Pusztai 2011).

During the initial integration of the scholarship holder, he or she needs support and assistance in various administrative areas. For example, help is needed in finding accommodation or in applying for a tax ID or student ID. Compared to last years' reports, the satisfaction of scholarship students has increased in many area of services. In 2017, students were more satisfied with important services such as the timing and regularity of the distribution of the monthly living allowance, assistance in obtaining the visa, the TAJ health insurance card, tax number or student ID.

Two major services for scholarship holders can be identified where student satisfaction has decreased or has not changed over the last two years. One of these is the quality of student accommodation and the other is the satisfaction with the mentoring and counselling services.

Table 5. Students' satisfaction with student services related to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2016, N=1269; Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)

	2016 average (1: very dissatisfied 5: very satisfied)	2017 average (1: very dissatisfied 5: very satisfied)
timing and regularity of the payment of the scholarship	3.69	3.89
assistance from the institution in finding accommodation	3.50	3.52
assistance with health care services (reimbursement)	3.66	3.78
assistance in applying for visa and residence permit	3.98	4.11
assistance in applying for a social security (TAJ) card	3.69	3.98
assistance in taxpayer registration (VAT identification nr)	3.77	3.97
assistance in applying for a student identification card	3.72	3.96
student counselling services	3.73	3.76
student mentoring services	3.64	3.68
payment of the accommodation allowance	3.43	3.37
dormitory	3.35	3.30
rented flat	3.35	3.37

The quality of student accommodation and student mentoring services

As it was mentioned above, the quality of student accommodation and the satisfaction with mentoring and counselling services are problematic issues. The scholarship students have been reporting problems for several years about accommodation facilities.

This feedback is also important because the programme supports scholarship holders in the form of a monthly allowance for accommodation or by providing accommodation within the campus in the form of a dormitory placement. Therefore, in the case of the quality of the programme it would also be important if these subsidies were not spent on financing a poor quality service, as indicators have shown student dissatisfaction in this matter. On the other hand, the role of the dormitory in community development and socialisation is of key importance for SH students.

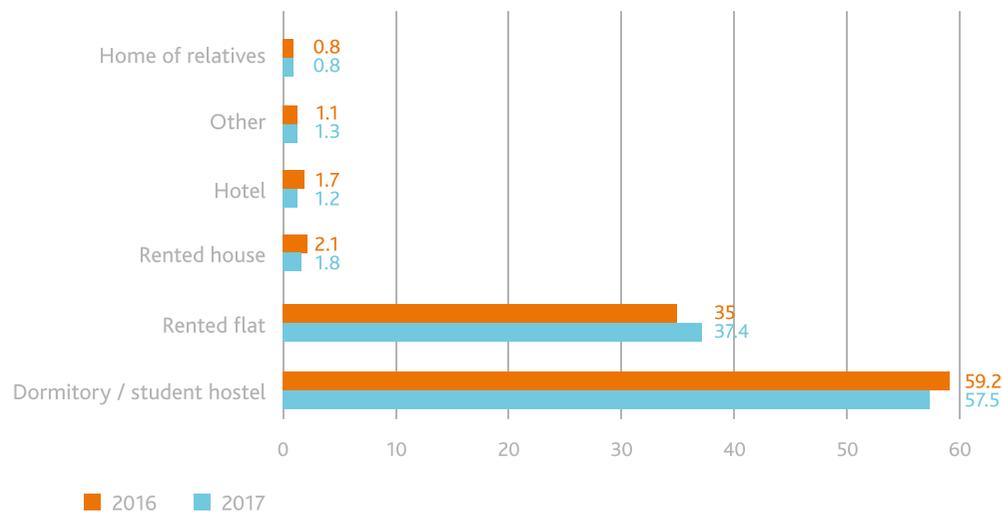
An important trend is that this is the most undervalued area of service, and student satisfaction related to accommodation issues have decreased in many aspects in recent years. Students are moderately satisfied with the quality of the dormitory and rental facilities, and the level of satisfaction regarding the dormitory has decreased in the last two years.

Satisfaction with accommodation varies widely between cities and higher education institutions. Last year scholarship students in some medium-sized Western Transdanubian cities – such as Kaposvár, Dunaújváros or Veszprém – were very satisfied with the accommodation facilities. In contrast, students were less satisfied with accommodation facilities in the capital. In major university towns (Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs) scholarship holders were somewhat more satisfied than average.

Accommodation-related services such as the assistance in searching for accommodation or the provision of a monthly accommodation contribution are also among the services where students are less satisfied. Satisfaction with the provision of the monthly accommodation contribution has been decreasing over the last two years.

The variety of dormitory standards may be the reason why the proportion of students renting rooms or apartments has risen in the past two years. In 2016, 35 percent of scholarship students and 37.4 percent of students in 2017 lived in rental accommodation. Also as a consequence, the proportion of students living in dormitories and student housing is decreasing, with a decrease of nearly two percent. The proportion of students living in dormitories was 57.5 percent in 2017.

Figure 2. Accommodation of scholarship students in the last 2 years (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2016, N=1269; Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)



Within the framework of the SH programme, institutions should provide mentoring services for the incoming scholarship holders. The purpose of the mentoring service is to ensure the initial integration of incoming students without major difficulties. Support upon arrival is crucial for scholarship students; so it is important to set up this service at an appropriate level in all higher education institutions. Satisfaction with the mentoring service varies from institution to institution: in many universities students are particularly satisfied with the services they receive during mentoring.

Satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning

The 2017 student satisfaction survey focused more specifically on factors that could determine the quality of higher education in Hungary, such as assessing and evaluating the quality of educational infrastructure. Scholarship students were satisfied with the general characteristics of higher education institutions (quality of the degree programme, variety of courses and course selection, the prestige of university/college). In general, it can be said that doctoral students are more satisfied with these factors; only the variety of available courses had a disadvantageous rating, however, in this case the research-oriented feature of doctoral programs could also play a significant role.

The professional and methodological preparedness of university instructors was also examined throughout: besides the teaching methods applied and the English language-skills of the lecturers, the questionnaire examined the quality of instructors' feedback, the quality of their communication skills and the clarity of their explanations. The indicators generally show a high level of satisfaction, although the judgment of the undergraduate and master students shows lower values for certain factors. The availability of special tools (e.g. labs), library services, and IT tools was unequivocally low in their opinion.

Table 6. Satisfaction with factors related to the quality of education on a scale of 1-5 (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)

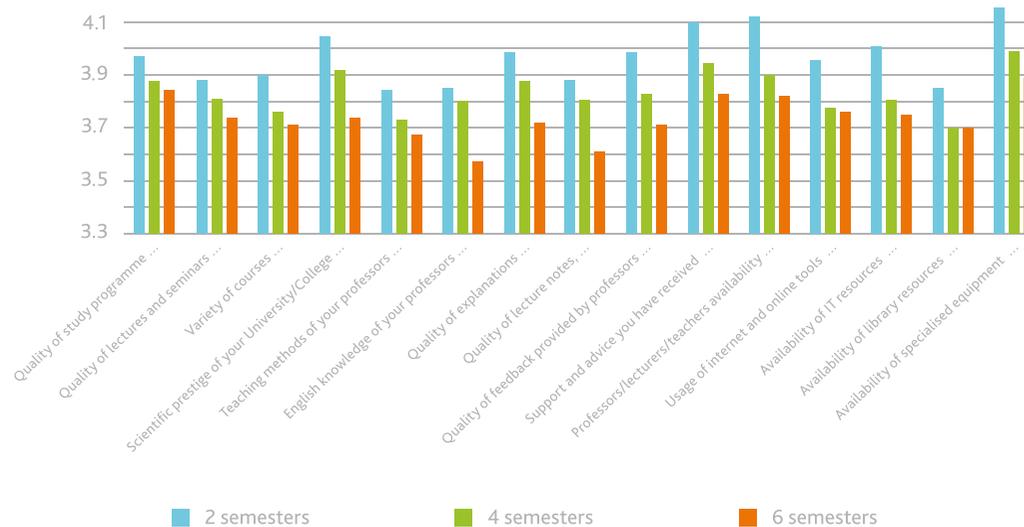
	The average of the 2016 SH sample (N=1269)	SH students 2017 (N=2739)	Average of the Doctoral degree programmes (N=444)	Bachelor's degree programmes (N=1080)	Master's degree programmes (N=1139)
quality of study programme at your University/College	3.84	3.93	4.04	3.99	3.82
quality of lectures and seminars at your University/College	3.81	3.85	3.96	3.84	3.81
variety of courses at your University/College	3.74	3.85	3.79	3.9	3.79
scientific prestige of your University/College	3.86	3.97	4.04	3.94	3.98
teaching methods your professors/lecturers/teachers use in your courses	3.74	3.8	4.02	3.76	3.73
English knowledge of your professors/lecturers/teachers	3.76	3.8	4.1	3.61	3.85
quality of explanations provided by your professors/lecturers/teachers	-	3.92	4.16	3.8	3.91
quality of lecture notes, teaching materials	3.75	3.83	4.02	3.76	3.81
quality of feedback provided by professors/lecturers/teachers	-	3.91	4.12	3.86	3.89
support and advice you have received from your professors/lecturers/teachers	-	4.02	4.23	3.93	4.04

professors/lecturers/teachers availability of keeping contact with students	-	4.01	4.15	3.92	4.05
usage of internet and online tools in courses	3.92	4.08	4.1	4.06	4.11
availability of IT resources when needed	3.74	3.89	3.89	3.87	3.9
availability of library resources when needed	3.96	3.92	3.92	3.91	3.91
availability of specialised equipment when needed (e.g. laboratory)	-	3.79	3.82	3.91	3.76

The satisfaction of international students with the quality of teaching and learning is influenced not only by the level of the degree programme but also by the years spent in Hungary and in higher education. With time spent here, average values generally decrease, for example: the degree of satisfaction with some services (such as library services, internet and online tools) is no different for students studying in semester 4 and 6. This may be due to the fact that after a couple of semesters or years, students are more critical about formulating their opinions, or perhaps bad experiences may also cause more negative opinions.

Figure 3. Satisfaction of students according to the number of semesters spent in Hungary

(Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N =2825)



➤ CHOOSING HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: INFORMATION AND MOTIVATIONAL BACKGROUND

The motivational factors and aspirations for choosing to study in Hungarian higher education are monitored by a number of international and national researches. There are many social, institutional and individual factors behind the reasons for pursuing a degree programme abroad. Within the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme, the scholarship itself is a great motivational factor for prospective students: the possibility of a tuition-free higher education degree programme is an unequivocal reason for choosing to study in Hungary. The student satisfaction survey also asked about motivational factors that could give feedback on individual decision making as well as on national higher education.

What about Hungary, and how much knowledge do the scholarship holders have about the country and the quality of universities? What motivated them most in their choice to study in Hungary? 60% of students had some prior knowledge of Hungary before their studies began (this figure shows a 5% increase compared to 2016). However, the motivation of scholarship holders for why they chose Hungary is quite diverse; most of them already had some information about the quality of higher education, the prestige of the country or about the affordable prices. In addition, a significant part of the respondents justified their choice with their existing social network; personal relationships (relatives, partners, friends) and academic, institutional relationships play a significant role in student motivation. An outstanding number of respondents (42 percent) have visited Hungary as tourists which influenced their decision to study here.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that personal attachment and country-related experiences play a very important role in determining where young people choose to study in higher education. Many students also pointed out that there is a low level of discrimination against foreigners in Hungary and that the local higher education institutions offer unique training programmes. At the same time, motivational indicators generally decreased by a few percent compared to the 2016 satisfaction survey, for example, 6 percent less chose Hungary just to get to know another culture; and there were considerably fewer answers to the 'affordable prices' category as well.

Among the people influencing the decision on where to study, the role of friends or parents is decisive. The family's influence on the decision-making continues to be significant. As for Hungarian students, it has been observed that the role of friends gradually increased in recent years, meanwhile the role of the family had somewhat decreased. In the case of Stipendium Hungaricum students, apart from mentioning friends and parents, few respondents mentioned students studying in Hungarian higher education institutions. At the same time, the staff of various higher educational institutions (e.g. professors, instructors) had a lesser influence on the students' decision-making process.

Among the factors influencing higher education decision-making, the quality of education, the country's attractiveness and the variety of degree programmes offered by the institutions are the most decisive. International research shows that foreign students make their choice mostly based on the available degree programmes, the given country and the specific higher education institution (*Beyond the data, 2014*). Respondents were given the opportunity to identify what the main reasons were for applying to Hungarian universities and colleges: 45 percent of the students indicated the high quality of education. It is a type

of 'external learning motivation' that 11.4 percent of respondents said this is also the country where they want to build their future career, while 10.2 percent of respondents said that the given institution's training offered was a decisive factor. In addition to defining the main reason for the decision-making, respondents also had the opportunity to list any additional reasons that influenced their decision. In this case, the high quality of education is the most determining factor, besides the possibility to get to know another culture and the reputation of the country are the most marked reasons for choosing Hungary.

According to international studies, the most important motivational factors for higher education studies abroad are: the quality of education (compared to the quality of education at home), the international recognition of qualifications, the attitudes of the given country to international students, security, tuition fees and visa issues (*Beyond the data, 2014; OECD 2016*). This is also in line with the experiences of Stipendium Hungaricum students' experiences. In the Stipendium survey there are open-ended questions regarding security and the European-level recognition of Hungarian diplomas.

Table 7. Motivational background of studying in Hungary (Source: Student satisfaction survey 2017, N=2825)

	I had some prior knowledge before, but not much	No, I hardly had any knowledge	Yes, I had a lot of knowledge	2017	2016
Total	60.2%	23.3%	16.5%	SH	SH
The quality of the education is high	62.8%	18%	20%	49%	51%
I wanted to get to know another culture	63.5%	22%	15%	40%	46%
It is a financially affordable country	63.6%	20%	17%	36%	38%
The country has a good reputation	64.9%	15%	21%	23%	26%
I know people who studied here before and they recommended it	63.2%	18%	18%	20%	20%
It was easy to get accepted into the University/College	51.2%	32%	17%	14%	18%
There is a partnership between my host and my home University/College	61.8%	23%	15%	13%	10%
Low level of discrimination against foreigners, respectful people	66.5%	15%	19%	16%	19%
I wanted to live in Hungary	53.2%	15%	31%	14%	16%
The University/College here offers a unique programme	60.6%	19%	20%	15%	17%
It is the country where I would like to develop my future career	57.2%	19%	24%	17%	16%
I have friends here	54.7%	14%	31%	8%	10%
I visited Hungary as a tourist and I really liked it here	54.9%	10%	35%	6%	7%
No special reason	48.2%	48%	4%	5%	6%

Other	45.7%	39%	15%	3%	6%
I have relatives here	54.8%	13%	32%	3%	4%
I have my partner here	51.2%	10%	39%	2%	1%

> CONCLUSION

The Stipendium Hungaricum programme creates a specific framework and for international students to study in Hungary. On one hand a certain number of foreign countries are participating in the programme, on the other hand national higher education institutions supported by the programme offer the applicants degree programmes in Hungarian and in certain other languages. However, this specific framework does not lead to an interest differing from international tendencies in the means of social and educational background. Based on a number of variables (e.g. gender composition, training preferences, and the educational background of the candidates) the background of the applicants show similar tendencies to the international mobility trends.

The student's satisfaction survey provides an overview of the international students' opinions studying within the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship and also analyses the relationship between the students, the institution and the given degree programme. The multitude standpoints of the analysed indicators facilitate a deeper understanding of such complex relationships. Stipendium Hungaricum students are basically satisfied with the quality of education and their higher education studies in Hungary.

Students' satisfaction related to Hungary and the higher education institutions is also indicated by the fact that students would choose our country again and also the higher education institution respectively if they could make the decision again. However, this bond varies by the degree level and by specialty. 56% of the students would surely, and 25.5% of them are likely to choose Hungary again. Previous research findings have shown that there is a significant, positive relationship between the satisfaction with student services, Hungary as an ideal target for educational tourism and the willingness to study in Hungary again (Malota 2016).

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