

Tytti-Maaria
Laine

International Degree Students

A survey of studying, working
and living in Turku



Institute of Migration | *Migration Studies C 28*

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International degree students are an important resource for Finland and Turku. The number of them in Turku has almost tripled since 2004. It is vital for the local economy that the students stay in Turku after their graduation and find employment. This study examines what attracts international students to Turku, how are they integrating into Turku, what could be done to help this integration process, and finally, what do the students plan to do after their graduation.

The study is based on a survey sent to all international degree students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences' Turku campus. 303 students responded to the survey in September 2015.

The results of this study show that although international students seem to be very happy with their studies in Turku, many students need more help with career planning, finding internships and learning Finnish. Most of the international students graduating in 2015/2016 had either completed an internship in Finland or had been employed in Turku. A third of the respondents had done both. Internships were found to be an extremely efficient stepping stone towards employment. Two thirds of the respondents stated that they would prefer staying in Finland after graduation if work was available. Also, two thirds of the respondents were interested or possibly interested in becoming self-employed in Turku.

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the EU
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Contents

Preface	5
Summary	7
List of figures	9
List of tables	10
1 Introduction	11
2 International student mobility.....	15
2.1 The global view	15
2.2 The competition on international students in Europe	18
2.3 International degree students in Finland	20
2.4 International degree students in Turku	23
3 Survey data	29
3.1 Methodology	29
3.2 The respondents' profile	30
4 The attraction of Turku	34
5 Studies in Turku	36
5.1 Studies at Åbo Akademi University	37
5.2 Studies at the University of Turku	39
5.3 Studies at Turku University of Applied Sciences	41
5.4 Studies at Novia University of Applied Sciences	43
5.5 International students and Turku as a place to study and live	44
6 International students' Finnish language skills and availability of Finnish language courses	47
7 Internship and employment.....	51
8 Who decides to stay in Turku?.....	58
9 Main findings	64
10 Conclusion.....	67
References	69
Appendix: The survey questions	76



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Preface

International migration has increased, and people are in growing numbers receiving their education or a part of it outside their home countries. When looking at international degree students, their stay can become permanent if, upon graduation, they do not return to their home countries but stay in the new countries of residence. Transitions to other countries' labour markets further expand the international migration flow of skilled persons for whom countries often compete.

The research of International Degree Students – A survey of studying, working and living in Turku brings new knowledge of what attracts international students to Turku, how they are integrating into Turku and what are their plans after their graduation. Turku has been an international city attracting foreign-background people during its long history and present time. It is also one of the main regions where the immigrants have been concentrated in Finland. International students are one important segment of immigrants who enrich the life in the City of Turku. Important factor affecting to this flow is the high reputation of the Higher Education Institutions there.

The research is part of the International talents as resource for expanding companies (PATH) project (2015–2017) which aims to help international students in Higher Education Institutions in the Turku area to stay and act as a productive part of the local industry after graduation. The project is funded by the European Social Fund and coordinated by Åbo Akademi University in Turku. The other partners, together with the Institute of Migration, taking part in the project, are the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences, and the City of Turku.

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Turku 18.3.2016

Elli Heikkilä
Research Director
Institute of Migration



Photo: University of Turku/Communications Unit

Summary

Due to the economic depression and the looming labour shortage in Finland it becomes more and more important every year to be able to hold on to the highly skilled immigrants we already have in the country. International degree students are an important resource for Finland and Turku and it is vital that they stay after their graduation and find employment.

The *International talents as resource for expanding companies (PATH)* project (2015–2017), funded by the European Social Fund and coordinated by Åbo Akademi University, attempts to improve the existing services for international students in Turku, so they would receive as much help in integration and finding employment as possible. As part of the project, Institute of Migration conducted a survey in the autumn semester of 2015, for all the international degree students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences. 303 students responded to the survey. Answers were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The main research questions were: what attract international students to Turku, what does their socio-economic integration into Turku look like, and what do they plan to do after their graduation.

The results showed that 85% of the respondents had moved to Finland for their studies, 9% for social reasons. The most important reasons to choose Turku as a place to study had been a specific study program and the good reputation of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Turku. Many students had also arrived to Turku as exchange students but had liked the place so much they had decided to stay or go back to complete a degree in Turku.

International students seem to be very happy with their studies in Turku. 98% of the students of Åbo Akademi University would recommend their HEI and 93% of the students of the University of Turku and 83% of the students of Turku University of Applied Sciences would do so. However, around half of the students of the universities of applied sciences and two thirds of the students of the universities needed more help with career planning and finding internships.

The need for more Finnish language courses and especially for the more advanced ones seems to be great in all the HEIs in Turku. Positive fact is that 71% of the respondents were either motivated or very motivated to learn more Finnish. Only 5% had no motivation at all to learn more Finnish.

86% of the international students who estimated to graduate in 2015 or 2016 had either completed an internship in Finland or had been employed in Turku. 31% of the respondents had done both. One third of the internships had led to paid work and nearly two thirds of the students who received paid employment through an internship worked full-time and 94% of them in a job matching their level of education. It was the Doctoral students, however, who were the happiest with their jobs, while the Master's and Bachelor's Degree students were mostly working in low-level jobs, such as cleaning. The difficulty of finding a suitable job was brought up time after time, and rather than blaming the economic situation, the students felt the reason was more related to employers preferring Finnish employees.

61% of the respondents stated that they would prefer staying in Finland after graduation if work was available. Most of them would like to stay in Turku (44% of respondents). 26% of the respondents were planning to leave the country. The willingness to stay was the highest among those who had just arrived, and seemed to decrease with time. This is most probably the case because work is difficult to find. Lack of job opportunities is the number one reason why students plan to leave both Turku and Finland.

Two thirds of the respondents were interested or possibly interested in becoming self-employed in Turku. The most interested were the students studying IT/Technology/Engineering and Business. Men were more interested in becoming self-employed than women, but from the existing ten entrepreneurs who responded to the survey, 70% were women.

List of figures

1. Top 5 countries of origin of international students globally in 2013.	16
2. Top 5 countries of destination for international students globally in 2013	16
3. International degree students studying in the higher education institutions of Turku in 2007–2015	24
4. Top faculties for international students of Åbo Akademi University in September 2015.....	25
5. a) International students of Åbo Akademi University in 2014 by area of origin, and b) Top 10 countries of citizenship of the international students of Åbo Akademi University in Oct 2015.....	26
6. Top faculties for international students at the University of Turku in 2014.	27
7. a) International students of the University of Turku in 2014 by area of origin, and b) Top 10 countries of citizenship of international students of the University of Turku in 2014.	27
8. Top study areas for the international students at Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015	27
9. a) International students of Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015 by area of origin, b) Top 10 nationalities of international students of Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015.....	28
10. International students of Novia University of Applied Sciences in 2015 by area of origin.	28
11. Suggested improvements for Åbo Akademi University	38
12. Respondents’ suggestions for improvements in the University of Turku.....	40
13. Respondents’ suggestions for improvements in the Turku University of Applied Sciences	42
14. Respondents’ suggestions for improvements in Novia University of Applied Sciences	43
15. Reasons to recommend Turku as a place to study.....	45
16. Development of the Finnish language proficiency by time spent in Finland.....	49
17. Work experience gained in Turku and internships completed in Finland by students graduating in 2015 and 2016 from higher education institutions of Turku	52
18. The percentage of students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku and Turku University of Applied Sciences having completed an internship in Finland and those having received work through their internship.....	53

19. Percentages of international students having worked in paid employment in Turku by gender and higher education institution of students having lived in Finland for at least a year in 2015	55
20. Respondents' plans after graduation	58
21. Respondents' wish to stay in Finland after graduation by area of study	59
22. Respondents' plans to stay in Turku by area of study	60
23. Respondents' plans to stay in Turku after graduation by area of origin	61

List of tables

1. Top 5 destination countries of mobile tertiary level students in Europe and their top 5 countries of origin in 2013	19
2. Top 10 nationalities of international students studying in Finland in 2004, 2008 and 2012.....	21
3. The cities with the largest international student population in Finland in 2004, 2008 and 2012.....	22
4. Top 10 nationalities of international students in Turku in 2014–2015.	24
5. Respondents' area of study in 2015	31
6. Respondents' nationalities by area of origin.	32
7. Respondents' primary reasons to move to Finland by area of origin,	33
8. Source of information used by top 10 nationalities (other than Finnish) about study opportunities in Turku	37
9. Most common places for international students to meet locals	46
10. Employment by nationality of students having lived in Finland for at least a year in 2015.....	55
11. Respondents plans after graduation by area of origin, percentage.....	60
12. Students' interest in becoming self-employed in Turku after graduation	62
13. Main reasons why international students leave Turku after graduation.....	63

1

Introduction

The demographics of Finland are changing; the population is aging and labor shortage is believed to be a great problem in the near future. Finland is also in an economic recession. On the other hand, there are thousands of international students studying in Finland. Staying here after graduation, they could not only pay back the funds used for their education, but become employees, tax-payers, consumers, even employers in the country that needs all of these. The threat is that these students will leave, because they cannot find work. Many students of Turku also move elsewhere in Finland, mainly to Helsinki, where the employment opportunities are better. With them, we lose all the cultural and social capital that these people possess.

This research is part of the *International talents as resource for expanding companies* (PATH) project (2015–2017), which aims to help international students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Turku area to stay and act as a productive part of the local industry after graduation. The project is funded by the European Social Fund and coordinated by Åbo Akademi University in Turku. There are four other partners taking part in the project, namely the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences, the Institute of Migration, and the City of Turku. The task of the Institute of Migration is to provide knowledge about international students in Turku for the actors of the project and for the wider academic community.

The main research questions are:

1. What attracts international students to Turku?
2. How are international students integrating into Turku and what could be done to help their integration process? Integration here is analysed by social relations, language skills and employment.
3. What do international students plan to do after their graduation?

International students bring several benefits for the receiving country and its higher education institutions. They are the most central factor in the internationalization of higher education, which goes hand in hand with the more general globalization of economies and societies (OECD 2013). In those countries that collect tuition fees, international students are often an important source of revenues. For example, in Canada, international student expenditure on tuition, accommodation and living expenses contributed more than CAD 8 billion (approximately 5 billion €) to the economy in 2010 (OECD 2013). Even in the countries where education is free of charge the long-term influence is great if the graduates stay on and find employment in the host country. According to the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education, this *“increases the labour force and leads to increased employment and consumption which results in higher tax revenues”* (Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education 2013).

In policy terms Ministry of Education’s Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015 aimed to increase the *“quality and attractiveness of Finnish higher education system”* because the internationalization is *“at the core of societal renewal”* and it *“promotes diversity in the society and business community, international networking, competitiveness and innovativeness, as well as improves the wellbeing, competence and education of the citizens”* (Ministry of Education 2009). The aim was also to increase the number of international students to 20,000, and this target of student numbers has been reached. In 2014, there were 20,255 international students studying in Finland (CIMO 2015a).

However, the benefits that the international students can bring to the host country cannot be measured only in euros. The amount of knowledge, experience and international contacts (i.e. cultural and social capital) they possess are a valuable asset to any country (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013; Naphy 2013). The aim of the government is to triple the number of international students in Finland by 2020 (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2013), but not much is being done to help the students to find work. This study aims to give a voice to the

students of Turku and find out what can be done to keep them in Turku and what can they in turn offer.

Earlier studies on international degree students' integration into Finland have been conducted, for example by Johanna Kärki (2005), who studied the international degree students in five Finnish universities in 2005. Her study revealed, for example, that international students were rather dissatisfied with the Finnish language studies. 96% were keen on learning Finnish, but only half of the students were satisfied with the Finnish language courses on offer. Lack of Finnish or Swedish language skills was found to be one of the biggest obstacles in receiving work. Kärki also found out that 43% of the students wanted to stay in Finland after graduation. The rest wanted to leave, mainly due to lack of work opportunities and difficulties in adjusting in Finland.

Elli Heikkilä and Maria Pikkarainen's (2008) study on international students of the University of Oulu found out that as many as 84% of the students were interested in staying in Finland after their graduation. Most interested in staying in Finland were the students from Japan and China. Lack of work and Finnish language skills were again found to be the biggest obstacles in staying in Finland.

VALOA -project produced a publication by Julia Shumilova, Yuzhuo Cai and Elias Pekkola (2010), who conducted a survey for international graduates of 15 Finnish universities. They had very similar findings with the earlier studies. Five years after Kärki's study, Finnish language training was still seen as insufficient, and lack of Finnish skills as a big obstacle in getting work. Higher education institutions were also found to offer insufficient help in finding internships for students.

While the international degree students in Finland, and the student mobility in general, has been studied widely, Turku specific studies are rare. As mentioned before, Johanna Kärki (2005) has used students of the University of Turku in her nationwide study. In addition, two students of Turku University of Applied Sciences have written their thesis about the integration of international degree students in their own higher education institution: Tomi Aunio (2011) about students of information technology and Jennika Aaltonen (2013) about international business students. Both of these studies had similar findings with the national research. Lack of Finnish language skills was a great problem for students' employment and social integration, and the services provided by Turku University of Applied Sciences for the international students were seen as insufficient. This study aims to find out the situation in all of Turku in 2015, and whether the same problems still continue to exist.

The study was conducted using SurveyPAL internet survey, which was sent to international degree students in four higher education institutions in Turku: Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences (Turku campus). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the responses.

This study is structured as follows. Survey data is introduced in chapter 2, after which the empirical analysis starts by looking at the attraction of Turku for the international degree students in chapter 3. Chapter 4 focuses on the international students' perception of their studies in Turku and their suggested improvements for the higher education institutions. Chapter 5 examines international students' Finnish language skills and the availability of Finnish language courses in Turku, and chapter 6 focuses on internships and employment during studies. Finally, in chapter 7, the profiles of the students who are planning to stay in Turku, and in Finland in general, are examined.



Photo: en.wikipedia.org

2

International student mobility

2.1 The global view

The internationalization of the business world and the heightening competition in the global job market has made a lasting impact on the higher education worldwide. The global flow of tertiary level students increases every year. Whereas 2 million students studied outside their country of origin in the year 2000, in 2013 the number was almost 4.5 million (OECD 2013; Unesco 2014; OECD 2015). The student flow has in recent years moved mainly from the global East to West. More than half of all the students studying abroad in 2013 (53%) were from Asia, mostly from China and India (**Figure 1**), while the most popular destinations in the same year were the United States (19% of the students), the UK (10%), Australia (6%), France (6%) and Germany (5%) (**Figure 2**) (OECD 2015). The international education market also has some big newcomers outside Europe and North America, such as China, Malaysia and New Zealand, and the competition for international students is getting tougher every year (Universities UK 2014).

Student migration can be explained with push factors, the reasons behind an individual deciding to leave his/her country of origin, and pull factors, the reasons behind an individual choosing his/her new home country. In student migration the push factors usually include poor educational opportunities, poor career opportunities and/or poor living conditions in the country of origin. These are especially true for students migrating from Asia and Africa to the Western countries. For example China, the largest sender of international students in the world, suffers from inflation of domestic degrees, pollution and high inequality between the rich and the poor (Xian & Shen 2009; Rietig 2014). Due to the only recently abolished one child policy, the only children have all their families expectations

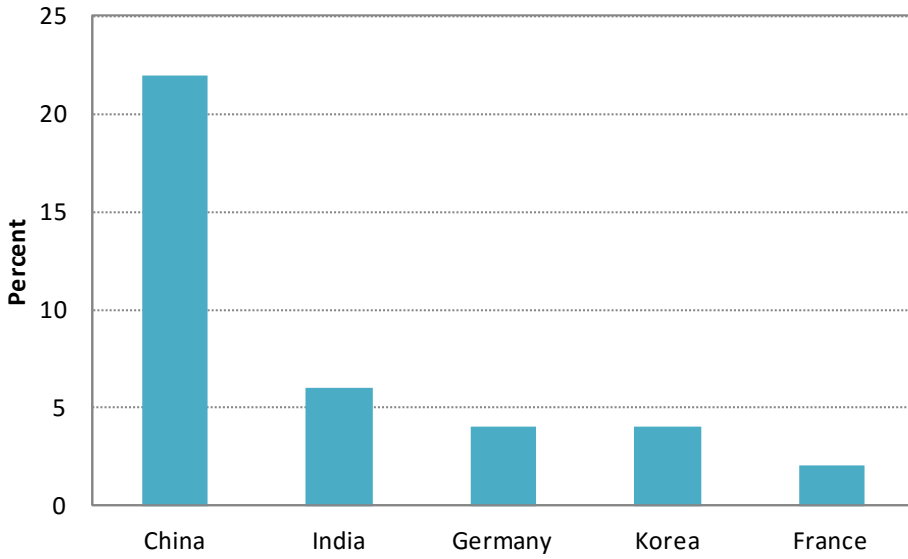


Figure 1. Top 5 countries of origin of international students globally in 2013 (Source OECD 2015).

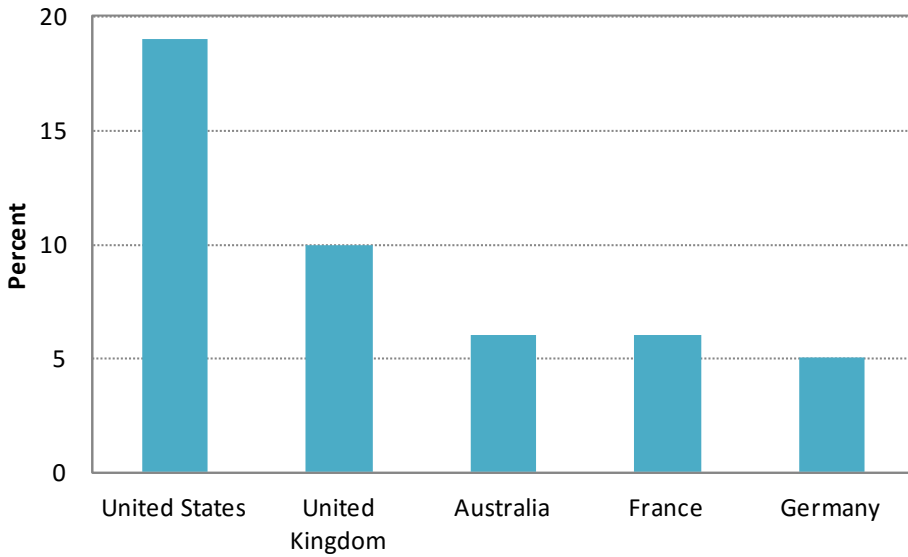


Figure 2. Top 5 countries of destination for international students globally in 2013 (Source: OECD 2015).

of success and wealth cumulated on them. They also need to be able to provide for their aging parents and grandparents when the time comes. Competition for jobs is fierce and the domestic degrees are not valued highly enough. International education is often seen as the only way to succeed in the Chinese labour market, and therefore hundreds of thousands of students (over 700,000 in 2014) seek to study abroad (Xian & Shen 2009; Unesco 2014).

In Nepal, one of the poorest countries in the world, the unstable political situation, poor quality of education, lack of economic opportunities and the competitive labour market are the most important push factors for students. As in China, overseas qualifications are highly valued in Nepal (Seddon 2005; Ghimire 2010).

Regardless of the origin of the students, studying abroad is perceived to have many benefits for the individual, such as the cultural enrichment, improved language skills, a competitive edge in the job market and knowledge of different societies, languages, cultures and business methods (OECD 2013).

The most important pull factors for international students globally have been proven to include the reputation of the country's higher education, immigration policy and the language spoken in the country and used in the studies (Findlay et al. 2012). World class institutions, such as the Russell Group universities in the UK and the Ivy League universities in the USA are therefore targets for many. English language countries are also the most popular largely due to the language. The UK and the USA together host around 1.2 million international students, nearly 30% of all the international students in the world (OECD 2013; OECD 2014; Unesco 2014). The level of tuition fees may have an impact on the attractiveness of the country or the particular HEI, but it is not necessarily the case. Australia, the UK and the USA all have high tuition fees, especially for international (in the case of the UK, non-EU/EEA) students, but because labour market opportunities are good, and the education in these countries is highly valued, this does not have a great impact on the country's attractiveness (OECD 2013). In the UK, the distance to London is found to be a more important factor than the cost of tuition fees (Soo & Elliott 2009).

2.2 The competition on international students in Europe

In 1999, the Bologna process was launched by the Ministers of Education and university leaders of 29 European countries. The purpose of the process was to create more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe (EHEA 2014). This was the starting point for a series of events that Batalova (2007) has named the *brain gain race* in Europe. During the same year, Prime Minister of the UK Tony Blair announced his five year target of attracting 75,000 extra students to the UK. In 2000, the French government announced its wish to double the number of foreign students and Ministry of National Education published its hope that in the future about 20% of the students in higher education in France would come from abroad. (Kuptsch 2006) This target has not been reached so far. During the academic year 2008/2009 the percentage was 12 (266,400 students) (Schomburg 2010). After that the numbers have dropped, and in 2012 only 10% (239,344) of the HEI students in France were international students (Unesco 2014).

The intake of international students has caused a massive debate in the UK in the past years. After Tony Blair's announcement in 1999 the student numbers did, indeed, grow, not only by 75,000 students, but by 87,525 students (from 230,870 to 318,395 students) by the academic year 2004/2005 (HESA 2002; HESA 2006). By the academic year 2010/2011 the international student numbers had increased to 428,225 (HESA 2012). During the 2000s "bogus colleges" became a problem. Hundreds of fake colleges were established to essentially enable foreigners to apply student visas to the UK and actually work illegally in the country. 870 of them have been shut down since 2010 (Ratcliffe 2015).

While the government has been trying to tackle this problem, the real students have had to suffer the consequences. The coalition government of 2010–2015 raised the tuition fees, toughened the student visa requirements in 2012 so that international graduates were no longer allowed to stay in the country for two years after their graduation. A new Immigration Act 2014 was passed in 2014 "requiring private landlords to check the immigration status of tenants, preventing those with no right to live in the UK from accessing private rented housing" (GOV.UK 2014). In April 2015 health care changes were made for the international students and their families, which means that the non-EU students and their families no longer receive free health care from the National Health Service (NHS) in England. In Scotland and Wales they, however, do (NHS 2015).

The new conservative government of 2015 has not made international students' life any easier. In 2015 foreign college students in private colleges were banned from working and are required to leave immediately after their graduation. This ban does not apply to university students (Gil 2015). The government's target is not only to tackle abuse, but also to reduce net migration, which has been aimed to be under 100,000 a year. When the number of new international students alone was 188,000 during the year ending in March 2015, this policy puts Britain's position as a world class student destination seriously at risk (Newman 2015).

While the UK seems uninterested in keeping the international graduates in the country, and more interested in making financial profit from them, many other countries are easing the student visa procedures and making it easier for the graduates to stay and look for work. Germany has also abolished the tuition fees once in place, and has offered free higher education at Bachelor level since 2005 (Deutsches Studentenwerk 2015).

Following the global trend, the largest group of international students studying in the top 5 EU destinations is the Chinese students. In the UK, 20% of the international students came from China in 2013, and 12% of the students in Italy, 11% in France and 10% in Germany were Chinese (**Table 1**). In France, the other major countries of origin were the former colonies or protectorates, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Senegal, where French is either a commonly used or an official language. The old colonial ties seem to have an effect on the student flows into the UK as well. 5% of the international students of the UK came from India and 4% from both Nigeria and the USA. As with France, the language is an obvious pull-

Table 1. Top 5 destination countries of mobile tertiary level students in Europe and their top 5 countries of origin in 2013 (Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015).

		Destination country / percent of all international students												
UK (416,693)		%	France (228,639)		%	Germany (196,619)		%	Italy (82,450)		%	Austria (70,852)		%
1	China	20	China	11	China	10	Albania	14	Germany	40				
2	India	5	Morocco	10	Russia	5	China	12	Italy	11				
3	Nigeria	4	Algeria	8	Austria	4	Romania	8	Turkey	4				
4	USA	4	Tunisia	4	Bulgaria	3	Iran	4	Bosnia & H.	3				
5	Germany	3	Senegal	3	Poland	3	Greece	4	Serbia	3				

factor for these students. Neighbouring countries were important source countries for Austria, Italy and Germany.

In order to better compete in the international education market, institutions all over Europe have increased the number of English-taught degree programs (ETPs) on offer. Between 2001 and 2014 the number of ETPs in non-English speaking Europe has gone up from 725 to 8,089. The largest number of programs can be found in the Netherlands (1,078), Germany (1,030) and Sweden (822). In their study, Wächter and Maiworm (2014, 17) created a 'league table' based on "*the share of higher education institutions in a country offering ETPs at all, the share of ETPs of all programmes, and the enrolment in ETPs as a share of total enrolment of a country.*" The European leaders in this respect are the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. At the moment, Finland is competing well in the European education market, and it remains to be seen how the future tuition fees will affect this. According to Shumilova et al. (2012) the free of charge education is one of the most important reasons for international students to study in Finland. In a survey conducted by them, over 70% of the students stated that this was one of the main reasons why they chose to study in Finland. In December 2015, the Finnish parliament ruled that tuition fees of minimum of 1,500 € will be set for non-EU/EEA students who start their studies in the beginning of August of 2017 or later (Eduskunta 2015). The new law will apply to the universities and the universities of applied sciences. After this Norway, Iceland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia will be the only OECD countries where higher education (including Master's degrees) will remain to be free of charge in the public universities (Norden 2013; OECD 2015).

2.3 International degree students in Finland

Following the global trend, the number of mobile students has rapidly increased in Finland since the Bologna process. In 2004, there were 8,442 international degree students studying in Finland. In 2008 the number had increased to 12,596 and again to 19,138 in 2012. Interestingly the most common nationalities have changed somewhat during these years. While the top two have been China and Russia throughout the time period the proportion of Chinese students has decreased from 16% (1,382 students) in 2004 to 13% (2,177) in 2012. Even though the number of students from Estonia has increased slightly, it has lost its place as number three (2004 and 2008), and in 2012 Estonians were the sixth largest nationality group in Finnish HEIs. Swedish, British, American and French students have disappeared from the top 10 altogether. Their places have been taken over by Vietnamese, Nepalese, Nigerian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students (**Table 2**). Many of these new sending countries are, thus, developing countries.

Table 2. Top 10 nationalities of international students studying in Finland in 2004, 2008 and 2012 (Source: Statistics Finland database 2014).

2004	Abs.	%	2008	Abs.	%	2012	Abs.	%
China	1,382	16	China	1,988	16	Russia	2500	13
Russia	1,127	13	Russia	1,378	11	China	2,177	11
Estonia	599	7	Estonia	684	5	Vietnam	1,162	6
Sweden	538	6	Nigeria	629	5	Nepal	1,14	6
Germany	322	4	Sweden	495	4	Nigeria	844	4
Kenya	246	3	Nepal	451	4	Estonia	790	4
UK	191	2	Germany	446	4	Pakistan	691	4
USA	187	2	Ethiopia	428	3	India	639	3
India	165	2	Ghana	370	3	Germany	607	3
France	146	2	Kenya	347	3	Bangladesh	577	3
Total	8,442	100	Total	12,596	100	Total	19,138	100

According to the statistics of Unesco (2014), which include only those students who have come to Finland for the purpose of study, the most common nationalities in Finnish HEIs in 2012 were Russian (10%), Chinese (10%), Vietnamese (5%), Nepalese (5%) and Nigerian (4%). By comparing these statistics with those of Statistics Finland, which includes all the students whose country of citizenship is not Finland, it can be assumed that around 12% of the Russian students had lived in Finland prior to their studies, as had 32% of the Estonian students and 20% of the Swedish students (Statistics Finland database 2014; Unesco 2014). In total, 11% of all the international students in Finland were Finnish residents prior to their studies (OECD.Stat 2015).

The percentage of students arriving from China is in line with many other European countries. In Germany, France and Sweden 10% of all international students arrive from China. In the UK the percentage is doubled. In the case of Nepalese students, Finland seems to be one of the favorite countries in Europe. In 2012, out of the total number of Nepalese students studying abroad (30,186) 4% came to Finland. In Europe, only the UK received more Nepalese students (6% of the total) (Unesco 2014).

4% of all the Bachelor's and Master's Degree students in Finnish universities in 2012 were international students. The percentage of international students studying for a Licentiate or a Doctoral degree and those attending medical doctor's

specialization studies was remarkably higher, 13% of all the students (Statistics Finland database 2014). In 2014, 7% of all the students in the Finnish HEIs were international students (CIMO 2015a).

In the autumn of 2015, there were 455 English-taught degree programs on offer in Finland, 333 of them in universities and 122 in universities of applied sciences. 105 of the degree programs were in the field of engineering and technology, 88 in business and 55 in IT. (CIMO 2015b)

In 2012, the most popular field of study for international students in Finland, both in universities and in universities of applied sciences, was technology and traffic (39% of the students). The second most popular field in both types of HEIs was social sciences, business and administration (32% of the students). (Statistics Finland 2014) The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture conducted a study in 2014 estimating how much the Finnish Higher Education Institutions should increase or decrease their intake of students for different fields in the 2020s to match the availability of jobs in those fields. According to this study, the biggest increase should be seen in the field that is most popular among the international students, namely technology and traffic (20% increase for the universities and 4% increase for the universities of applied sciences). Universities should also increase their intake in natural sciences (by 33%) which is the third most popular subject area for the international students in universities. (Saarinen & Leveälähti 2014) It seems, therefore, that the English-taught programs continue to be an important part of the higher education in Finland and there should be work available for international graduates in the near future.

While Helsinki hosts the largest number of international students in Finland (4,411 students in 2012), Turku and Tampere compete for the second place (**Table 3**). In 2008 Tampere had over 170 more international students than Turku, but four years later Turku had caught up and the student numbers slightly exceeded those of Tampere. Jyväskylä, Oulu and Vaasa each had around one thousand international students in 2012 (Statistics Finland database 2014). Proportionally, Hel-

Table 3. The cities with the largest international student population in Finland in 2004, 2008 and 2012 (Source: Statistics Finland database 2014).

Year	Helsinki	Turku	Tampere	Jyväskylä	Oulu	Vaasa	Finland
2004	2,501	736	737	391	334	518	8,442
2008	3,099	922	1,098	676	483	765	12,596
2012	4,411	1,552	1,503	1,087	958	931	19,138

sinki hosted 23% of the international students in Finland in 2012, while around 8% studied both in Turku and in Tampere.

2.4 International degree students in Turku

The Southwest Finland immigration policy program 2007–2015 states that employment-based immigration should be encouraged and new international and high-quality Master's and Doctoral programs should be established (Varsinais-Suomen TE-keskus 2007). The development strategies in the City of Turku immigrant integration program 2014–2017 (Turun kaupungin maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisohjelma 2014–2017) also mentions the importance of immigration of labour force, students and researchers to Turku and the importance of them staying in Turku (Luukkaa 2013). International students are, therefore, officially seen as an important asset to Turku and Southwest Finland.

The number of international students in Turku has grown steadily from the beginning of the 21st century. While in 2004 there were 736 international students studying in Turku (Statistics Finland 2014), the number in 2015 was over 1,900. In 2004 the proportion of international students of all the students studying in Turku was only 2%, while in 2012 it was 5% (Statistics Finland database 2014) and in 2015, nearly 9% of the students of University of Turku (UTU) were international students (Turun yliopisto 2015d). The student numbers have increased especially in the University of Turku, which has almost tripled its intake in the past nine years, while the student numbers in Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) have not considerably grown. Åbo Akademi University's (ÅAU) intake of international students has grown by 50% (206 students) in the past nine years (**Figure 3**). Novia University of Applied Sciences has started its first four and a half year long English-taught degree program in 2012, and in the autumn of 2015 had 37 students studying in different classes.

In the autumn semester 2015, there were 612 international degree students studying in Åbo Akademi University, 886 in the University of Turku, 371 in Turku University of Applied Sciences and 38 in Novia University of Applied Sciences. Åbo Akademi University and Novia University of Applied Sciences are Swedish language institutions whereas Finnish is the primary teaching language in the other two. All four offer several English-taught degree programs, but some international students also study in the Finnish and Swedish programs. In Turku University of Applied Sciences, for example, there were students from 36 countries studying in 33 different Finnish-taught programs in September 2015. The largest student numbers in Turku came from Russia, China and Sweden (**Table 4**).

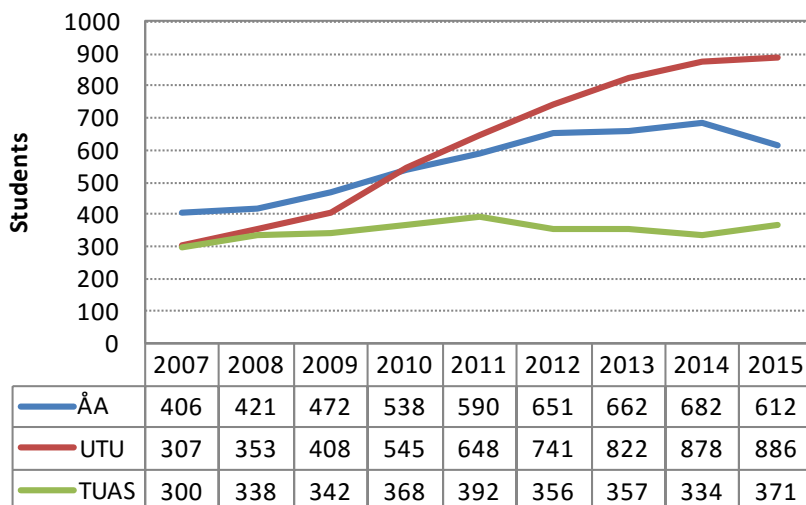


Figure 3. International degree students studying in the higher education institutions of Turku in 2007–2015. The statistics do not include the students of the Turku School of Economics prior to its merging with the University of Turku in 2010. The merge also explains the high increase of students in the University of Turku between 2009 and 2010. (Source: Turun ammattikorkeakoulu 2013; Turun yliopisto 2015a; Turun yliopisto 2015d; Abrahamsson 2015).

The University of Turku information is from calendar year 2014, others autumn semester 2015 (Source: Turun yliopisto 2015b, Lehtinen 2015, Abrahamsson 2015, Bonnet 2015).

Table 4. Top 10 nationalities of international students in Turku in 2014–2015.

Citizenship	Students	% of international students
Russia	190	9
China	180	9
Sweden	127	6
Nepal	121	6
Pakistan	119	6
Iran	99	5
India	92	4
Vietnam	91	4
Germany	82	4
Estonia	65	3

In the academic year 2015–2016 Åbo Akademi University is offering nine International Master's Degree Programs in English. The most popular faculties for international Bachelor's and Master's degree and Ph.D. students in Åbo Akademi are Science and Engineering (47%), Social Sciences, Business and Economics (26%), and Arts, Psychology and Theology (22%) (**Figure 4**). As figure 4 shows, Science and Engineering is markedly more popular among international students than among all students. Education and Welfare is, in turn, much more popular among Finnish students. In the faculties of Social Sciences, Business and Economics and Arts, Psychology and Theology there is almost no difference in percentage between international and all students.

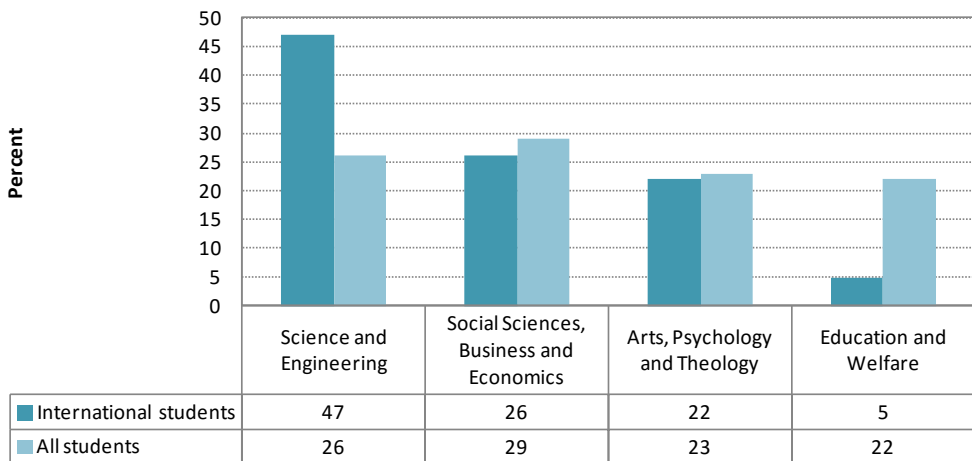


Figure 4. Top faculties for international students and for all students of Åbo Akademi University in September 2015, percentage (N=612) (Source: Åbo Akademi 2015; Abrahamsson 2015).

The most common countries of citizenship for the international students of Åbo Akademi University in October 2015 were Sweden (16%), Russia (6%), Pakistan (6%), Iran (6%), China (6%) and Germany (6%). As many as 40% of all the international students came from EU/EEA countries and 36% from Asia (**Figure 5**).

In the autumn semester of 2015, the University of Turku offered 20 English-taught Master's Degree Programs and 17 Doctoral Programs. In 2014 the most popular faculty for international students was the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (37% of the international students). It was also much more popular among international students than among all students, of whom 19% studied there. The School of Economics attracted 19% of both international students and of all students, and the faculty of medicine also 12% of students in both catego-

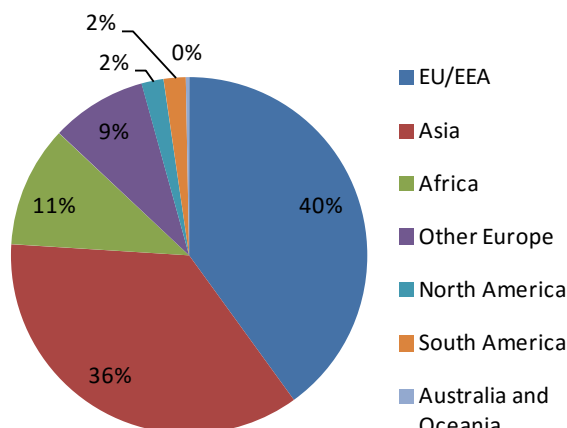
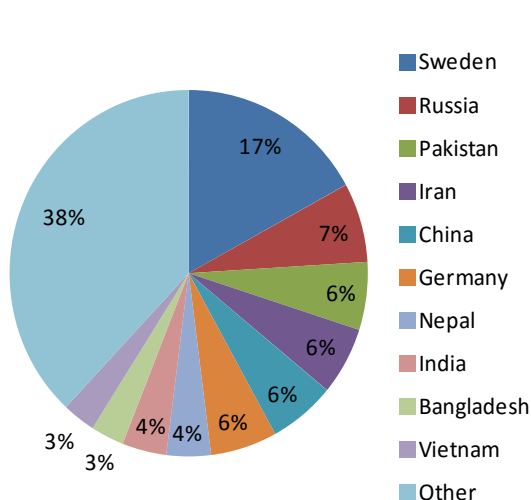


Figure 5.

a) International students of Åbo Akademi University in 2014 by area of origin, and



b) Top 10 countries of citizenship of the international students of Åbo Akademi University in Oct 2015, percentage (N=612) (Source: Abrahamsson 2015).

ries. The other faculties were a little less popular among international students than among all students (Figure 6).

From the 1,085 international degree students who were registered at the University of Turku in the calendar year 2014, 11% were Chinese, 10% Russian, 7% Pakistani and 6% Indian (Figure 7).

In the autumn semester 2015, Turku University of Applied Sciences offered three English-taught Bachelor level degree programs and three Master's Degree programs. In September 2015, 72% of all of their international students studied in these programs, while 28% studied in Finnish. 42% of their international students studied IT/ Engineering, 26% Business and 24% Health Care (Figure 8). IT/Technology/ Engineering and Business were slightly more popular among international students than among all students. Health Care and Social Work and Art and Culture were little less popular among international students than among all students.

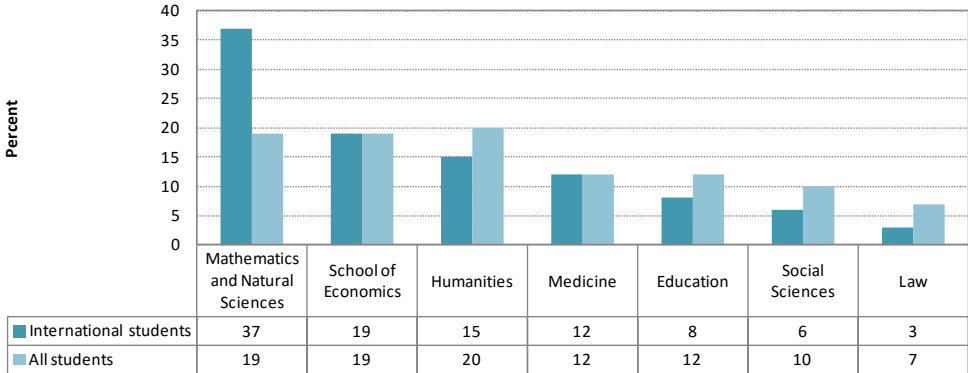


Figure 6. Top faculties for international students and for all students at the University of Turku in 2014, percentage (N=1,085) (Source: Turun yliopisto 2015c).

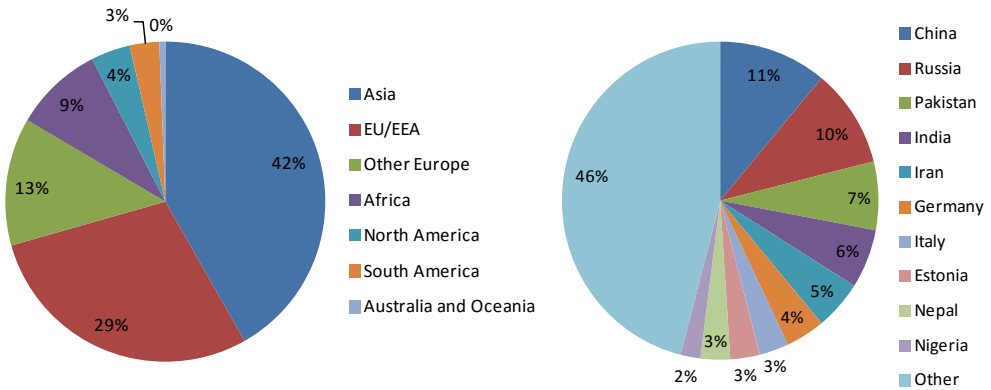


Figure 7. a) International students of the University of Turku in 2014 by area of origin, and b) Top 10 countries of citizenship of international students of the University of Turku in 2014, percentage (N=1,085) (Source: Turun yliopisto 2015b).

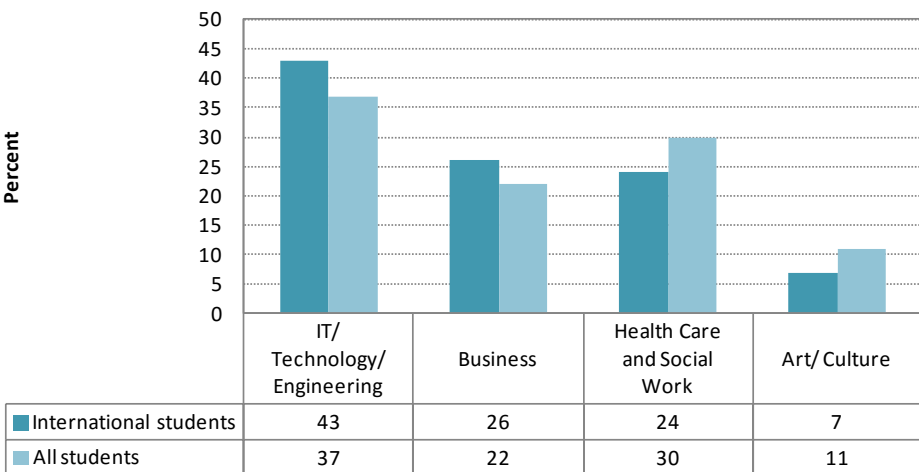


Figure 8. Top study areas for the international students and for all students at Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015, percentage (N= 371) (Source: Lehtinen 2015; Lehtinen 2016).

Almost half (46%) of the international students of Turku University of Applied Sciences were Asian, with 16% coming from Nepal, 13% from Vietnam and 8% from China. 12% of the international students were Russian. In total, 46% of the students were from Asia, 20% from EU/EEA and 15% from the rest of Europe (**Figure 9**).

In 2015, Novia University of Applied Sciences offered one English-taught Bachelor level degree program (Maritime Management) and one Master's degree program (Leadership and Service Design) in Turku. In September 2015, the Novia University of Applied Sciences had all together 37 international students in Turku. A vast majority of them (95%) studied in the Maritime Management program. 31% of the Novia students were from EU/EEA-countries and 11% from other European countries. 35% of the students were from Africa and 14% from Asia (**Figure 10**)

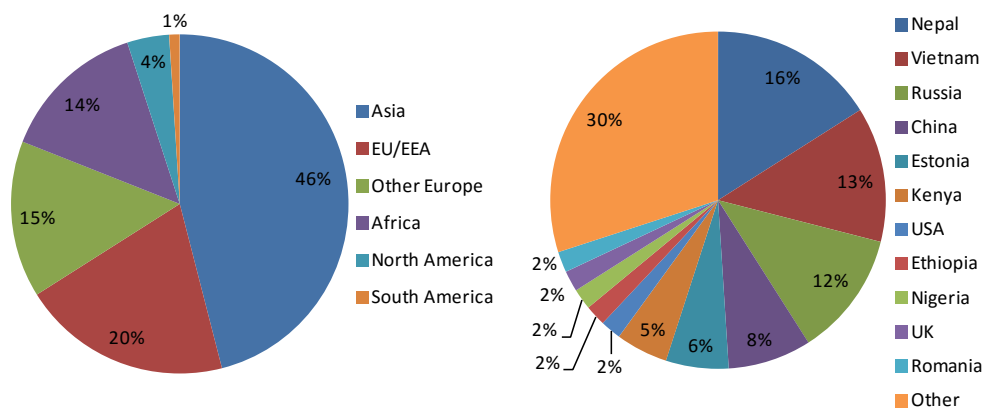


Figure 9. a) International students of Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015 by area of origin, b) Top 10 nationalities of international students of Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015, percentage (N=371) (Source: Lehtinen 2015).

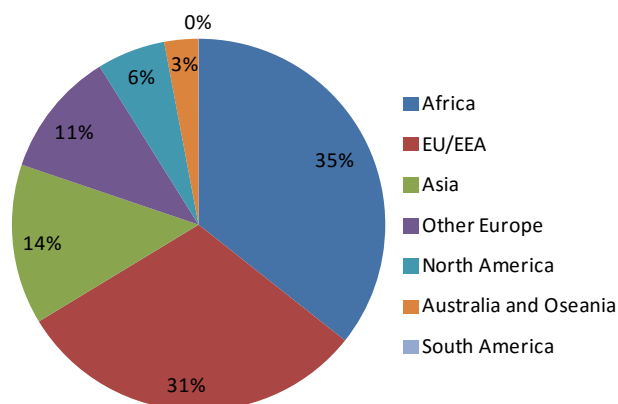


Figure 10. International students of Novia University of Applied Sciences in 2015 by area of origin, percentage (N=36) (Source: Bonnet 2015).

3

Survey data

3.1 Methodology

In the autumn of 2015, the Institute of Migration conducted a survey for all the international degree students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences studying at Turku Campus. International degree student in this study means a student whose country of citizenship in the student register is other than Finland, and who is studying for a full degree (Bachelor, Master, Licentiate or Doctoral) in Turku. Therefore, exchange students and other visitors are excluded from the study.

The link to the English-language online survey was sent to the institutions on September 22nd, 2015, and forwarded by them to 1,717 international degree students (90% of all the international degree students of Turku). Deadline for responses was October 11, 2015. A reminder e-mail was sent to all the students closer to the deadline, but no encouragement in a way of a lottery or other gifts was offered. Probably at least partly because of this only 303 students responded. The response rate was relatively low, being only 17.6%. The highest percentage (20%) came from Turku University of Applied Sciences, with the University of Turku (19%) and Novia University of Applied Sciences (18%) getting very close to same. Åbo Akademi University had considerably lower response rate (13%). In spite of the low response rate, the respondents seem to represent well the total population of international students in Turku.

In addition to the general background questions, the survey asked about the social integration of the students (Finnish language skills, contacts with local people) and economic integration (internship, work). The survey also included questions

about the student services on offer by the HEIs in Turku and how they could be improved. The students' plans after their graduation were also inquired. The full questionnaire can be found in the end of the publication.

The attempt was to make the questions in the survey easy and understandable, but some misunderstandings did happen due to the structure of the survey. For example, altogether 177 students announced having worked in Turku, but in total 209 answered to the question "Does/did your work match the level of your education?" This misunderstanding has been taken into account and the irrelevant answers have been removed from the analysis (chapter 7). The question "If you plan to move away from Turku after your graduation, which are the most important reasons for this?" was understood by many to be a conditional question, and was answered by 2/3 of the respondents regardless whether they were planning to stay or leave. In this case, only the respondents who stated to be leaving after their graduation were analysed (chapter 8).

In addition to multiple choice questions, the survey included a lot of open questions so that the students could express themselves as freely as possible. A large amount of open answers was received, which indicates that the students have a need of being heard. This did also create some problems for the researcher. Some questions that included both multiple choices and open questions received open answers even when the message was essentially the same as suggested in the multiple choices. In these instances the open answers have been categorized and included in the multiple choices and new categories were made if needed. For example, the question "What are your plans after your graduation?" received 82 open answers in the "Other" category, so the answers had to be sorted into some new categories.

The quantitative part of the research has been analyzed using frequency distribution, cross-tabulation, graphics and tables. The qualitative part has been conducted using content analysis and citations from the respondents.

3.2 The respondents' profile

Of all the respondents, 45% were female and 55% male, which represents well the total population of international degree students in Turku. 46% of the international students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku and Turku University of Applied Sciences put together were female and 54% male. However, there are some differences in representation of genders between the HEIs.

At Åbo Akademi University, 49% of the international students in the autumn of 2015 were female and 51% male, whereas 41% of their respondents in the survey were female and 59% male. Thus, men seem to have been more active in responding to the survey. At the University of Turku, 46% of the international degree students were female and 54% male, whereas 53% of their respondents were female and 47% male, which means that female students of the University of Turku responded more actively than males. At the Turku University of Applied Sciences the men were more active in responding again, 62% of the students being male compared to 67% of the respondents.

26% of the respondents were studying for a Bachelor's Degree, 55% for a Master's Degree and 19% for a Doctoral Degree. Thus, the Bachelor's and Master's degree students seem to have been more active in responding than the Doctoral students.

25% of the respondents studied IT/Technology/Engineering, 21% Business/Economics, and 20% studied Mathematics and Natural Sciences (**Table 5**). The Business and IT students seem to have been the most active in responding to the survey.

The respondents came from 60 different countries. The largest groups were Russians (11%), Vietnamese (8%), Chinese (8%), Finnish (8%), Nepalese (6%) and

Table 5. Respondents' area of study in 2015 (12% of the respondents estimated that they would graduate in 2015, 36% in 2016, 30% in 2017 and 22% some time later).

Area of study	Students	% of respondents
Technology/IT/engineering	80	25
Business/ economics	63	21
Mathematics and natural sciences	60	20
Humanities/theology/fine arts/culture	24	8
Medicine	21	7
Education	17	6
Social sciences	13	4
Health care and social services	11	4
Law	5	2
Seafaring	5	2
Futures studies	4	1
Total	303	100

Bangladeshi (5%). The survey was sent to all students with a foreign nationality. Therefore, number of Finnish citizens most likely refers to double citizens, who have registered at their HEI using their foreign nationality, but have chosen to use their Finnish nationality in the survey. Some may also have acquired Finnish citizenship after the registration at the HEI. 43% of the Finnish citizens had lived in Finland for more than 5 years (the minimum to be able to gain citizenship), while 57% had lived in Finland for less than that. 78% also stated that their primary reason to move to Finland was studying. Only one Finnish citizen was either born in Finland or had moved there as a child.

The nationalities have been grouped into six areas of origin, since there were no respondents from Australia or New Zealand. EU and EEA citizens have been grouped separately from other Europeans due to the immigrant legislations and the upcoming tuition fee, which will affect all non-EU/EEA students. In this study, Turkey is categorized as part of Asia and Russia as part of other Europe. 46% of the respondents were from Asia, 25% from EU/EEA and 13% from Other Europe (**Table 6**).

Table 6. Respondents' nationalities by area of origin.

Citizenship	Students	% of respondents
EU/EEA	78	26
Other Europe	38	13
Asia	140	46
Africa	24	8
North America	17	6
South America	6	2
Total	303	100

Among the respondents there are 16 nationalities with five or more respondents from each nationality. These nationalities are mentioned when using citations. When there is less than 5 respondents representing a nationality, the corresponding area of origin is used.

Majority (85%) of the respondents had moved to Finland primarily for their studies (**Table 7**). Especially students from Africa, Asia and Other Europe had arrived to Finland mostly for study purposes. Many of the students from the EU/EEA countries (24%) and North America (23%), however, had arrived for social

Table 7. Respondents' primary reasons to move to Finland by area of origin, percentage.

Continent	Study	Work	Social	Refuge	Born in Finland or moved as a child	Other
EU/EEA (N=76)	59	5	24	–	3	9
Other Europe (N=40)	95	3	–	2	–	–
Asia (N=140)	94	–	4	–	–	2
Africa (N=24)	100	–	–	–	–	–
North America (N=17)	77	–	23	–	–	–
South America (N=6)	83	–	–	17	–	–
All (N=303)	85	2	9	1	1	3

reasons, such as with their families or because they had a spouse or a girlfriend or a boyfriend in Finland. This spouse was not necessarily a Finn, but 60% of the students who had arrived for social reasons stated having a Finnish spouse or girlfriend or boyfriend. Many EU/EEA students chose to reply “other reasons”, which were also often related to social reasons, such as *“Social + studies + love for the place”* (EU/EEA) and *“I came as an exchange student, but stayed in Finland for social reasons”* (EU/EEA) and *“Friends and a feeling of belonging”* (EU/EEA). Therefore the actual percentage of EU/EEA students having moved to Finland for social reasons is closer to 30.

72% of the respondents had obtained a university degree before moving to Finland: 48% had a Bachelor's degree, 23% a Master's degree and 1% a Doctoral degree.

26% of the respondents had completed a senior secondary school or equivalent. 2% had most probably completed the Finnish matriculation examination or a vocational qualification in Finland, since they state having obtained no degrees before moving to Finland and all of them had moved to Finland very young and for social reasons. Two persons stated having obtained no degrees abroad and having lived in Finland for less than a year.

23% of the respondents had lived in Finland for less than a year, 33% for one or two years, 20% for three or four years, and 25% for five years or longer. At least some of the students who had lived in Finland for less than a year had only just arrived to Turku when the survey was conducted (September 2015). The newly arrived students have been left out from certain analyses concerning employment.

4

The attraction of Turku

The students were asked to tell in an open answer the most important reasons why they chose to study specifically in Turku. 103 respondents answered this question. Most of the reasons were directly related to the HEIs they were studying in. The reputation of the institution was a common reason, especially among the university students. The specific study program on offer was an equally important factor.

Strength of bioscience, pharmaceutical and diagnostics industry and universities research on these topics attracted me to Turku region. (Turkey)

The reputation of the Finnish education system in general was mentioned a few times. A number of students (18) had first come to Turku for an exchange, but had liked it so much, that they had either directly moved their status as a degree student, or had come back later to continue their studies. A large number of English-taught programs had also affected the students' decisions, as had the fact that one is able to study courses in several universities at once.

I came here as an exchange student and I liked the University. That's why I decided to come back. I especially liked that you have all the freedom to choose the courses you want to take. (France)

Turku as a city had also attracted many students. Turku was seen as a beautiful, historic, cultural, peaceful, safe and international city. The large number of HEIs and students in the otherwise small city were very attractive for many. Part-time job opportunities were seen important as was the fact that living costs in Turku are lower than in Helsinki. Some students also believe in Turku's future potential in specific industries such as IT and Biosciences, and have moved there with

this in mind. Turku's location near Helsinki and Tampere, but also by the sea, was seen convenient and it had an effect on students' choices.

*It is a Technology minded city, providing a good environment to start business.
(Africa)*

Some of the students had moved to Turku for family reasons, for work or after a recommendation by a friend or a colleague.

I moved to Turku because of work in 2009. Later I met my husband, originally Finnish, who lived and worked in Turku in that moment. Currently we both are the undergraduate Master degree students in University of Turku. (Finland)

Altogether 13% of the students had ended up in Turku rather by chance. They had applied to several places and happened to be accepted in Turku. 14% of the students had stated that the tuition free education would have been one of the main reasons to come to study in Turku.

Thus, most of the international degree students in Turku seem to have arrived there specifically to study and because of the good quality education on offer there. The city itself was also an important pull-factor and at least some of the students strongly believed in the city's future potential in the fields of IT and Biosciences and this had attracted them into Turku.

Photo: University of Turku/Communications Unit



5

Studies in Turku

In previous studies international students have been very satisfied with their studies in Finland. Measured by the International Student Satisfaction Award, Finland was the best place to study in Europe in 2014 (van der Beek & van Aart 2014) and the second best in 2015 (Raileanu 2015). The International Student Barometer has also shown that international students are very satisfied with their studies in Finland (Närger 2015).

The results of this survey also show that the international students in Turku are very satisfied with their studies there. On average 91% of the students would have recommended their HEI in Turku as a place to study. Åbo Akademi's students seemed to be the happiest, for their recommendation rate was as high as 98%. Only one student would not have recommended Åbo Akademi University. The University of Turku reached a recommendation rate of 93%, while 83% of the students of the Turku University of Applied Sciences and 71% of the students of the Novia University of Applied Sciences would have recommended their HEI. One of the two students who did not want to recommend Novia stated jokingly that the reason was that although they did like their HEI, they did not want future competition. The Novia's lower level of recommendation should not therefore be taken as a negative thing.

Most (53%) of the international students responding to the survey had learned about study prospects in Turku from the internet. 16% had learned about them from their previous school or university, and as many as 26% had heard about study opportunities from a friend or a relative. Other sources of information had been exchange programs, study councilors, professors and supervisors in Turku, employment services, and immigration consultants. Some had, of course, already lived in Turku prior to their studies.

Looking at the top 10 nationalities answering to the survey, it seems that home university or school had been much more often the source of information about studying in Turku for the students from Germany (50%), Russia (25%) and China (21%) than any other students (**Table 8**). Friends or relatives had informed the students about studies in Turku most often in Nigeria (67%), Vietnam (38%), Nepal (37%) and India (36%). The internet had been the most important source of information in most countries, especially in Iran (77%) and Pakistan (71%). The number of students replying from each nationality is, of course, low and thus one cannot draw very definite conclusions based on this information. However, studies made on information sources used by Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese students studying in the USA suggest similar results. The most important information source had been the internet for all the three nationalities, and family or friends had been the second most important information source (Bodycott 2009; Chow 2010; Chow & Putney 2010).

Table 8. Source of information used by top 10 nationalities (other than Finnish) about study opportunities in Turku, percentage.

Citizenship	Friend or relative	Internet	Home university or school	Other
Russia (N=32)	19	52	25	3
Vietnam (N=24)	38	54	8	–
China (N=24)	33	46	21	–
Nepal (N=19)	37	58	5	–
Bagladesh (N=16)	31	63	–	6
India (N=14)	36	43	14	7
Pakistan (N=14)	21	71	7	–
Iran (N=13)	23	77	–	–
USA (N=12)	8	67	–	25
Germany (N=6)	–	33	50	17
Nigeria (N=6)	67	33	–	–

5.1 Studies at Åbo Akademi University

High quality education was the most important reason why the students of Åbo Akademi University wanted to recommend their university.

High level of knowledge, professionalism and organisation, good mentors, good study conditions, perspectives... (EU/EEA)

In addition to the quality of education, the reputation or the ranking of the university was important to some of the students:

Good reputation, a variety range of programs, helpful professors. (Vietnam)

Some respondents also felt that the Åbo Akademi University helped the international students well with integration:

University and Turku have put the great effort to help international students to integrate into Finnish working life.” (Vietnam)

In spite of this, 65% of the students felt they needed more career planning and 68% needed more help with finding an internship. 41% wished there were more opportunities to learn Finnish (**Figure 11**). In addition, “more help for doctoral students with regards to funding applications” (EU/EEA) was needed, as was “help to find a related job after graduation” (Bangladesh).

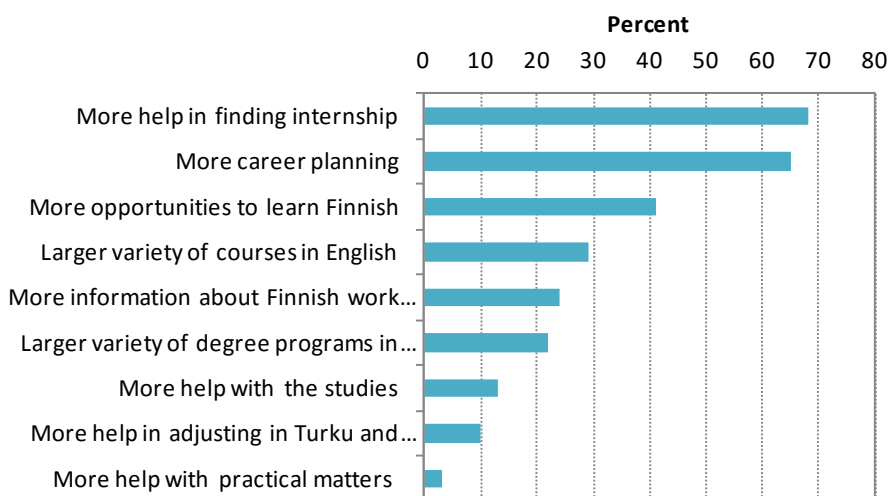


Figure 11. Suggested improvements for Åbo Akademi University, percentage (N=63).

5.2 Studies at the University of Turku

At the University of Turku, students of some subject areas gave much higher levels of recommendations than others. Humanities, Education, Business and Futures Studies students seem to have been very satisfied with their studies for they all received 100% recommendation rates. Medicine (94%), IT/Technology (94%) and Mathematics and Natural Sciences (93%) students were also ready to recommend the University of Turku. The students of Social Sciences (64%) and Law (60%) were least likely to recommend the University of Turku.

Just like Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku was praised for its high quality education.

Excellent studying environment, excellent professors, good laboratories (South America).

Good study environment and friendly atmosphere were mentioned several times, and the staff seemed dedicated, passionate and caring.

Turku School of Economics is undoubtedly one of the best and multicultural places one can wish to study at. The professors are passionate about what they are teaching and are very helpful. (Bangladesh)

“World class faculties” as a reason for recommendation came up a few times.

However, not everyone was ready to recommend the University of Turku. The lack of “[...] modern teaching methods, far from international, fairly low reputation” (EU/EEA) were reasons for one student not to recommend the University of Turku. Another one thought that “integration of foreigners is minimal and there is not the necessary ambition to make the English-speaking degrees the best in their own field.” (EU/EEA) Career related issues were also factors. One student felt that the University of Turku was “not really job-oriented.” (China) and another student said: “Simply not dynamic enough. Job fairs are limited. Scope limited to EU area.” (EU/EEA)

The respondents’ suggestions for improvements show that the area most in need of tackling is career related. 66% of the students felt they needed more care planning and 61% needed more help in finding an internship. Almost a third of the students also needed more opportunities to learn Finnish (**Figure 12**).

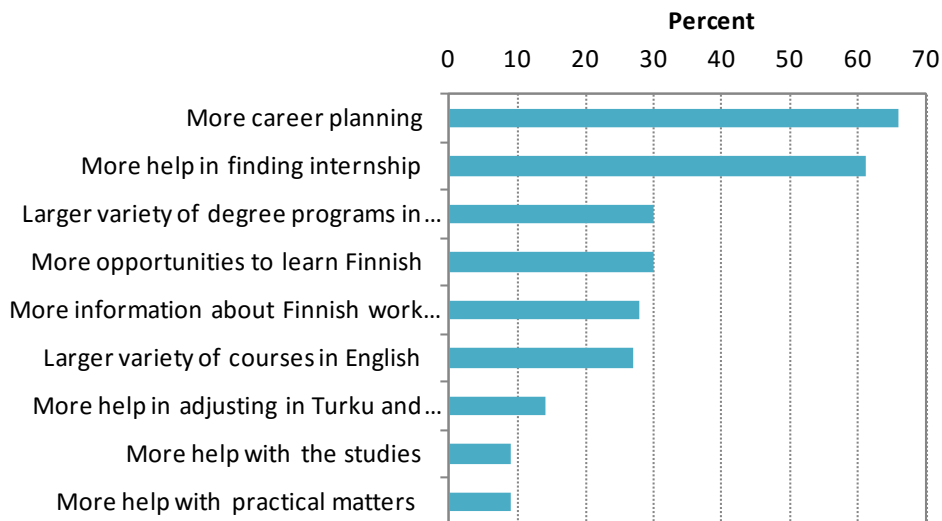


Figure 12. Respondents' suggestions for improvements in the University of Turku, percentage (N=161).

Even though the need for more opportunities to learn Finnish language was smaller in the University of Turku than the other HEIs in Turku, the problems with the Finnish language studies came up in the qualitative study.

The level of Finnish language courses is too low. There should be a course to prepare for the B1 exam.(North America)

Make Finnish learning courses faster in tempo. And don't make it compulsory for short term exchange students. A lot of them do not want and do not learn it anyway and just slow down those who want to learn Finnish. (Other Europe)

Some students also needed more help to learn to know the Finnish university culture better:

More help to know the Finnish university culture [...] by which I mean students are supposed to respect others, but also be more independent, do not compare or compete with others, just work hard and focus on their own things, and know how to communicate with their teachers and supervisors. (China)

It was also felt that the exchange students received more help than the degree students in adjusting:

I am a foreigner with Finnish residence, yet I don't get the same help as exchange students who are new to Finland. Why not? (North America)

The Doctoral students wished that the University of Turku could offer “*same health coverage system for all PhD students*” (South America) and “*more help for PhD students without funding to find financial support as well as office to work and basic academic needs*” (Iran). It was also pointed out that the university should “*actually accommodate international employees so that they can participate in work life e.g. switch to internal mails in English*” (EU/EEA). As will be pointed out in chapters 6 and 7, even when the work seemingly does not require any Finnish language skills, many aspects of it, such as internal mails, meetings and coffee breaks, still usually function in Finnish, which becomes problematic for those with minimal Finnish language skills. This seems to be a problem even in the academic environment.

5.3 Studies at Turku University of Applied Sciences

At Turku University of Applied Sciences there were slight differences of recommendation rates between areas of study, but the student numbers were also relatively small. All three Art/Cultural Studies students would have recommended their HEI, and 90% of the health care students would have done so. Of the most popular subject areas in the Turku University of Applied Sciences, Business and IT/Engineering, 80% of the students would have recommended their HEI.

As in the other HEIs, the most common reason to recommend the Turku University of Applied Sciences was the high quality education. Especially the practical side of the studies was praised:

...the level of education and especially its practical aspects are extremely high. (EU/EEA)

The hands-on approach works when learning the material as opposed to only doing theoretical work. (United States)

It's a perfect place for apply theories into actual working life. (Vietnam)

Reasons why some of the students would not recommend the Turku University of Applied Sciences were the “*limited choice of English Degree Programs*” (Vietnam) and one of the programs feeling “*a bit too disorganized*” (United States).

Students of Turku University of Applied Sciences seemed happier than the students of the other HEIs with the help they received in career planning and finding internships (**Figure 13**). Just under half (49%) of the students felt they did not receive enough help with finding internships and a little over half (53%) needed more career planning. 43% needed more opportunities to learn Finnish. Large numbers hoped for more English language courses (38%) and degree programs (47%), which there are only few.

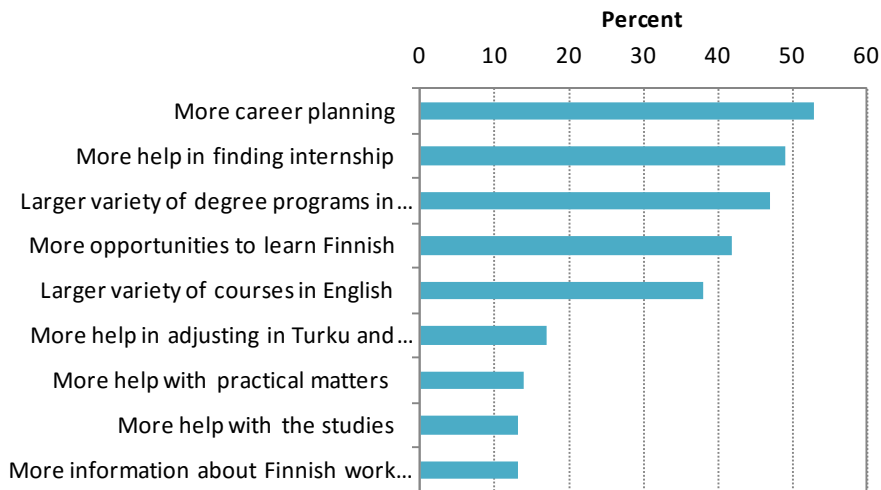


Figure 13. Respondents' suggestions for improvements in the Turku University of Applied Sciences, percentage (N=72).

The other suggested improvements for the Turku University of Applied Sciences included:

Offering more opportunities to learn foreign languages (German, French). (Russia)

Offering more help for students to find job in first year. (Asia)

Stronger integration with the rest of the school body. School isn't just about the education. (United States)

5.4 Studies at Novia University of Applied Sciences

There were only seven students responding to the survey from the Novia University of Applied Sciences. Thus, there were only very few answers for the qualitative data. "Quality of education" was again mentioned as a reason to recommend Novia University of Applied Sciences and a reason not to recommend was that "it is very practical, but the level is too easy for work life." (EU/EEA) As in the other HEIs, more career planning (57%) and help in finding internship (57%) was needed (Figure 14). The Novia students mentioned more often needing more help in practical matters than other HEI students, but the need for more opportunities to learn Finnish was in line with the others.

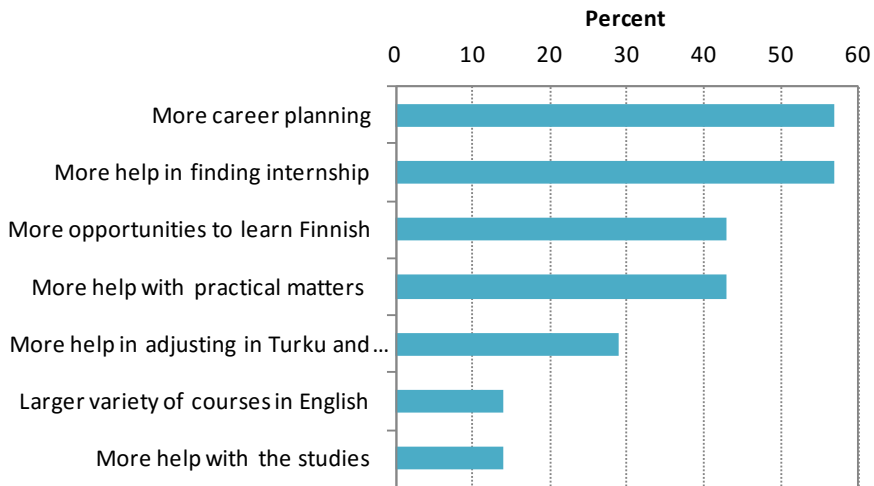


Figure 14. Respondents' suggestions for improvements in Novia University of Applied Sciences, percentage (N=7).

All in all, high quality education and facilities, together with friendly and helpful atmosphere, seemed to be the most important reasons for students to recommend their HEI. Being "world class" or "high ranked" seemed to matter for a number of university students, mostly to Asians, but exactly how high ranked one's university should be seemed to vary. Some mentioned the University of Turku and Åbo Akademi University being "top ranked" which alone was a reason to recommend these universities. It was not mentioned which ranking list they had in mind, but the only list where the University of Turku was among the top 300 (i.e. 233rd) in 2015 was the QS World University Ranking while the Åbo Akademi University's ranking on this list was 441–450 (QS Top Universities 2015). The University of Turku had the rating of 301–400 on the so-called Shanghai list (Academic Ranking of World Universities 2015), 301–350 on the Times Higher Education rank-

ing list (2015) and 309th on the National Taiwan University Ranking (2015) list while Åbo Akademi University did not reach high enough marks to be on any of these lists. Some students were aware of this and would have preferred a higher ranked university. With the new tuition fees being established in Finland in 2016, university rankings will most probably become more important for students in the future, when the free education will no longer attract non-EU/EEA students into the country.

Suggested improvements did not vary a great deal between the HEIs. More than half of the students in every HEI were in need of more career planning and also more than half of the students in all HEIs but one (Turku University of Applied Sciences) needed more help in finding internships. The university students needed more help in both of these areas than the students of the universities of applied sciences. Opportunities to learn Finnish language seemed to be the best at the University of Turku, where 30% of the respondents wished to have more language learning opportunities. In the other three HEIs, the percentage was over 40. These findings are in line with those of Shumilova et al. (2010). They found out that Finnish language teaching and finding internships were the biggest problems for international students nationwide. Kärki (2005) pointed out the same problem concerning the Finnish language teaching. It seems, therefore, that not much has improved in this field in the past ten years.

5.5 International students and Turku as a place to study and live

The students were asked whether they would recommend Turku as a place to study in a yes or no question. In addition they were able to tell qualitatively reasons to why they would or would not recommend Turku. 288 respondents answered to the quantitative part and 120 of them also wrote to the qualitative part of the question. 92% of the respondents would recommend Turku as a place to study, whereas 8% would not. Nearly half of those answering to this question would have recommended Turku because of the peacefulness, quietness or safety of the city (**Figure 15**). Turku was also seen as a student city with multiple higher education institutions and a large population of international students. This was very attractive for many. The size of the city was too small for some, but 29 respondents mentioned it being just perfect. The location not too far from other bigger cities and on the coast was also mentioned several times. Friendly locals were mentioned often.

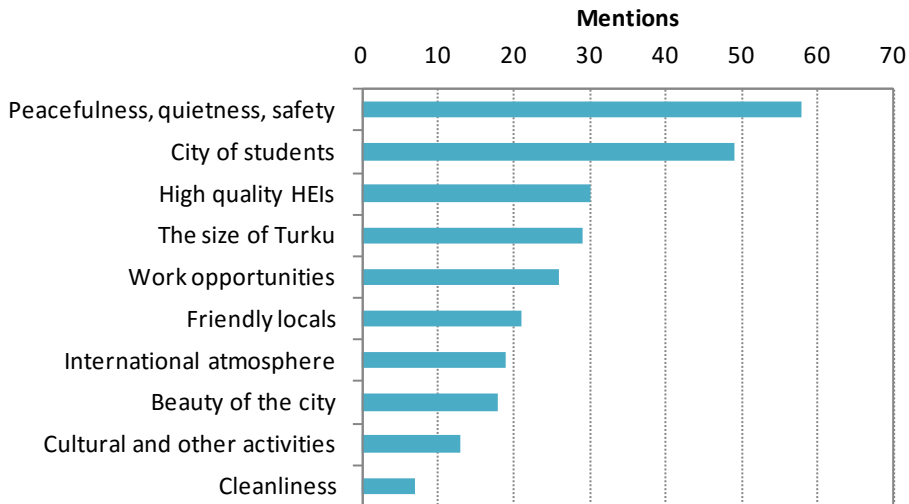


Figure 15. Reasons to recommend Turku as a place to study.

Student-friendly, [...] nice & peaceful environment, positive experiences with locals, little problem with communication (Most people can speak English). (Asia)

Small city, lax pace of life, highly supported student accommodation, very short commuting time, warmer than other places within Finland. (Vietnam)

The only negative aspects that came up more than once or twice were related to the lack of student accommodation and work. Housing was difficult to find and it was expensive near the institutions, which made the use of public transport necessary. Lack of work for international students was also a reason not to recommend Turku as a place to study. In the other hand, 26 students mentioned that part-time work was easy to find. One student felt "a sense of isolation from the community" (North America) and discrimination and racism came up twice as a reason not to recommend Turku.

I would recommend other country if possible. I know the struggle, discrimination and un-necessary language barrier to find jobs. (Nepal)

Despite of some problems, international students' integration into Turku seems to happen fairly easily. In the survey, the students were asked whether they knew any locals, and if yes, where they had met them. It is positive to notice, that most international students knew local people. Only 6% of the students of the universities and 9% of the students of Turku University of Applied Sciences did not know any locals. The percentage for Novia was 17, but included only one student. The

question “Do you know any locals?” was also understood by some respondents meaning Finns in general and by some meaning only the residents of Turku, so some of these students may have known Finns, but not any living in Turku. Furthermore, 57% of the students knowing no locals at all had lived in Finland for less than a year, meaning that most had probably arrived to Finland only a few weeks before answering the survey.

The most common place to meet locals had been the students’ own degree program (**Table 9**). Locals had also been met through friends, in other courses at HEIs and through accommodation and hobbies. The Friendship Program had been a way to meet locals especially for the students of Åbo Akademi University, although not all students had even heard of it. Other places included work, church, different organizations and CouchSurfing for the students of the University of Turku. Even though “work” was not one of the options in the multiple choice questions, it is a little surprising that only very few students wrote it down in the “other” category. This may mean that the students do not get friends or feel like they “know” the people at work, or they may have just not come to think of it, since it was not one of the options.

Table 9. Most common places for international students to meet locals, percentage

Places	ÅAU	UTU	TUAS	Novia
Degree program	59	66	67	43
Through a friend	44	48	33	14
Other courses	38	40	28	43
Accommodation	30	27	35	–
Hobby	32	25	11	14
Friendship Program	13	9	6	–
Work	8	7	3	–
Church, organisations	3	5	7	14
CouchSurfing	–	2	–	–

6

International students' Finnish language skills and availability of Finnish language courses

According to a recent survey done in collaboration between Statistics Finland, the National Institute for Health and Welfare, and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, international students in Finland were the largest group of people with a foreign background in need of Finnish language studies and other help for integration (Nieminen & Larja 2015). Jäppinen (2010) has also pointed out that both the students and Finnish as a foreign language teachers feel that the language training is inadequate and the teaching prepares the students poorly for work life. Meanwhile the employers' demand for Finnish language skills is very high. According to Söderqvist (2005), 91% of employers believe the Finnish language skill is an important criterion in recruiting. Studies have shown that the students themselves perceive the lack of Finnish skills as the single most important obstacle in getting a job in Finland (Kärki 2005; Shumilova et al. 2012).

Fact is, of course, that Finnish language skills are necessary for many professional occupations. Level B2 of national certificate of language proficiency is considered as a sufficient proof of Finnish language skills in many occupations. It is, for example, a requirement for nursing and social services. For nurses making house calls a language level C is preferable (Jäppinen 2010). In Turku University of Applied Sciences the required level of Finnish language for students entering the English-taught nursing program will be B1 from the year 2016 onward. Students are, therefore, expected to already know the language before entering. This, of course, limits the scope of students to those who are already residents in Finland.

The highest level Finnish language course at the University of Turku is B1. Also, according to Infopankki, which publishes information on Finnish language courses in Helsinki, Turku and Tampere areas, there were no part-time B2-level Finnish courses available in autumn semester 2015 (Infopankki 2015). During the term

2015–2016 Paasikivi-Opisto organized a year-long full-time course starting from level B1.1 and continuing all the way to level C, but this did not help the majority of international students who had moved to Finland for the purpose of study. Thus, the lack of Finnish language training for students seems to be a great problem in Turku and in need of urgent tackling.

Without Finnish there is no chance for anyone to get into the Good Brother system. Finns tend to think foreigners can survive in Finland with English skills, but the reality is the working language is ALWAYS Finnish. Sometimes they even demand Swedish. Meanwhile the national policy on integration requires only taso [level] B1 for foreigners to acquire citizenship, while is totally unrealistic. Because of the policy there is no motivation for anyone to offer advanced courses, so many foreigners are stuck to low-paid jobs, which are unattractive to those who have an academic, tertiary degree. (EU/EEA)

As noted in the citation, the aim of the national integration policy is that all immigrants in the integration training (i.e. usually unemployed and job seeking persons) would reach the Finnish language level B1.1 (Opetushallitus 2012). It seems that most Finnish language training in Finland, and especially in Turku, is designed for this purpose. Therefore, students in higher education seem to be left completely without help from instances outside their own HEIs.

In spite of the problems with Finnish language teaching in Turku, the international students seem to learn the language fairly well. While most, naturally, have no knowledge of the language when moving to Finland, in a few years their language skills improve significantly (**Figure 16**). The share of those, who estimated their own Finnish language skills to be intermediate or better, was 6% among those having lived in Finland for less than a year, 27% among those having lived in Finland for three or four years and 56% among those who had lived in Finland for seven or eight years. It seems, therefore, that more than a quarter of the students graduating after three or four years of studies have at least intermediate language abilities.

The complete lack of Finnish language skills (**Figure 16**) for many of those having lived in Finland for five years or more can be explained by the fact that most of them are PhD students studying in Åbo Akademi University. They most probably do not need any Finnish language skills for their studies or work, although it is surprising that one could manage living in a country for many years (more than nine years in some cases) without picking up any Finnish skills at all. Most of them are also planning to leave the country after graduation and have no motivation to learn the language.

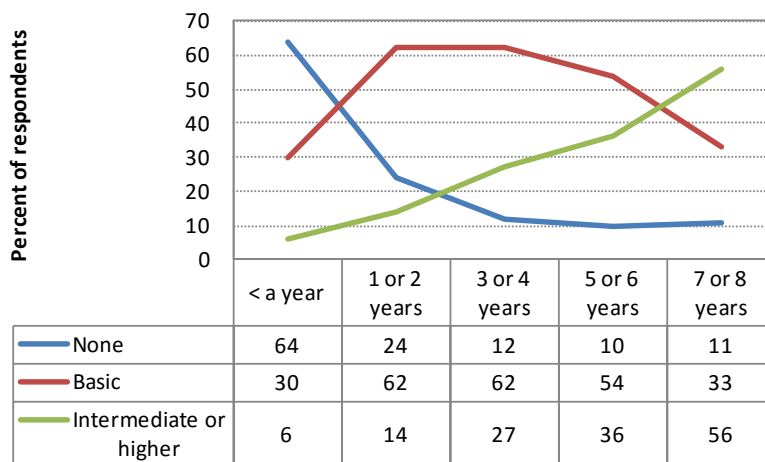


Figure 16. Development of the Finnish language proficiency by time spent in Finland, percentage (N=287).

Among those planning to stay in Finland, the motivation to learn the language and the existing language skills are naturally higher. In total, the motivation to learn is high. 71% of all students stated that they were either motivated or very motivated to learn more Finnish, while only 29% were either not very motivated or not at all motivated to learn more. Only a very small number of students (5%) were not at all motivated to learn more. The only nationality group having more non-motivated students than motivated students was the Swedes. Swedish being one of Finland's official languages Finnish skills may not seem necessary for them. Swedish students are also not very keen on staying in Finland after graduation, which naturally diminishes their motivation to learn the language.

VALOA-project commenced a survey of international graduates of 2009-2010 in 15 Finnish HEIs. It mapped out graduates' Finnish language skills two years after their graduation. The results are not completely comparable with the results of this survey, since this study looks at those still studying. However, it seems, that to catch up with the fairly good language skills of the graduates, the students of Turku have a lot of work to be done. 50% of the students of Åbo Akademi University who estimated to graduate in 2016 had no Finnish language skills at all in the autumn of 2015, 37% had basic language skills and 13% intermediate language skills. 20% of the students of the University of Turku estimating to graduate in 2016 had no Finnish language skills, 59% had basic language skills and 15% intermediate language skills. A further 5% had either advanced or fluent language skills. Only 8% of the graduates of the universities studied in the VALOA-study had no Finnish language skills at all. 46% had basic skills, a quarter (24%) had intermediate and one fifth (22%) advanced language skills. (Shumilova et al. 2012) Turku University

of Applied Sciences seems to have done better with the basic language training, since only 9% of the students estimated to graduate in 2016 had no language skills at all (5% for the students of universities of applied sciences in VALOA-survey). After that, the numbers drop again compared to the VALOA graduates. 55% had only basic Finnish skills and 18% intermediate skills while for the VALOA graduates the corresponding numbers were 37% and 45%. It seems that while most of the students in Turku do study Finnish at a basic level, most also leave it at that. This is not surprising, if higher level language courses are not available.

Not all international students in Turku study in the English-taught programs. While 93% of the respondents of the survey did study in the English-taught programs, 5% studied in Finnish and 2% in Swedish. Students studying in Finnish were all except one Europeans. 60% of them had lived in Finland for a maximum of four years and 40% for at least five years. A little under half of the students studying in Swedish were from Sweden, while the rest were from various places around the world. 57% of them had lived in Finland for four years or less and 43% for five years or longer. The majority (73%) of the students in the Finnish-taught programs had either fluent or advanced Finnish language skills while most (71%) of the students studying in Swedish reported having no Finnish language skills at all.

The fact that many employers, even the universities, demand knowledge of Finnish language from their employees is problematic for many international students. As one student pointed out, learning a new language is not as easy for everyone and the Finnish language is not one of the easiest languages to learn:

Not everyone is good in learning languages, and in the later stage of age that is the age group most of the academia Doctoral students are, it becomes even harder for some.

Moreover, it should be everyone's choice to learn it or not, no one should force anyone! It's been told all the time to learn the language, and use Finnish even they can speak English.

All the doctoral/research related committees should have foreigners and working language at that level should be English. Unfortunately, it is not practiced in our department. So no voice in management decision making, and no knowledge about most of the activities.

To become more international universities: we have to adopt the standards of the most of the universities in the world that provide equal, flexible and friendly working environment for foreigners working in academia. Current environment, maybe in my opinion, even resulting in resistance to learn language and integrate. (Pakistan)

7

Internship and employment

A major part of the positive influence that the international students bring to the receiving country's economy is generated during the post graduate employment. Therefore it is essential to attract as many of the international students as possible to stay after their graduation. Among OECD countries the average stay rate is up to 25%. In Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic and France the rate is more than 30%. (OECD 2013) The stay rate in Finland is a lot higher than any of these numbers. In Finland, of all international graduates of 2007, 67% were still in the country a year later (CIMO 2012). The figure for the graduates of 2011 was even higher, 68.9% (CIMO 2014).

It seems that the students studying in Turku are equally keen on staying in Finland. Of all the respondents of the survey, 61% would prefer staying in Finland if they could find suitable work or be able to continue their studies there. The lack of work for highly educated foreigners is the fact that pushes these students abroad.

The difficulties, that highly-skilled immigrants face trying to find employment, have been widely discussed in the past years both in research and in the media (see Ciulinaru 2010; Miettunen 2010; Kyhä 2011; Peuhkuri 2014). Employers' demand for nearly perfect Finnish language skills even for jobs in which working language is English makes employment difficult for many foreigners (Ciulinaru 2010; Kyhä 2011). Many qualifications gained outside of EU are also not accepted in Finland. Therefore many trained doctors and dentist, for example, cannot practice their occupation without retraining and upgrading their studies (Kyhä 2011).

For the new graduates, it seems to make a great difference whether or not one already had a job during the studies, or has completed an internship connected to the studies. According to a survey made by Academic Engineers and Architects in

Finland TEK, while 65% of the Finnish graduates of technology in 2014 had a job at the time of graduation, only 25% of the international graduates had a job. The numbers were the same for people from EU-countries and countries outside the EU. Over 40% of the international students were looking for a job (whether or not a job in Finland, is not specified). This was probably strongly affected by the fact that whilst only 4% of the Finns did not gain any work experience during their studies, the figures were as high as 23% for the other EU-nationals and 28% for the non-EU nationals. Furthermore, 41% of the Finns had gained more than two years of work experience during their studies and only 8% of the EU-nationals and 9% of the non-EU nationals had as much work experience. Only 32% of the graduates without work experience were employed at the time of their graduation, whilst the number was 79% for the graduates with more than two years of work experience. International graduates were also more likely to be employed by a university (around 50%) than by other sectors, while 78% of the Finns were working for the private sector and only 13% for a university. (Tekniikan Akateemiset TEK 2015)

Of the international students of Turku who were graduating either in the end of 2015 or in 2016, 86% had either worked in Turku or had completed an internship in Finland or had done both (**Figure 17**).

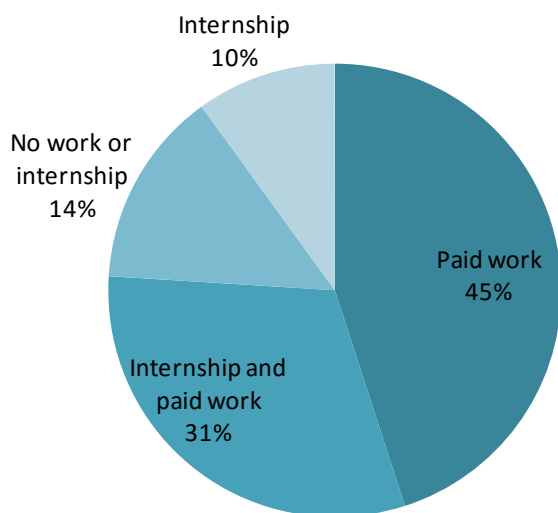


Figure 17. Work experience gained in Turku and internships completed in Finland by students graduating in 2015 and 2016 from higher education institutions of Turku, % (N=144).

69% of the students who had completed an internship felt that they had learned necessary skills for further employment. 47% had made important contacts during their internship, and for 33% the internship had led to paid employment. University students received paid employment from their host company or organization more often than the students of universities of applied sciences (**Figure 18**). 53% of the students of University of Turku, who had completed an internship in

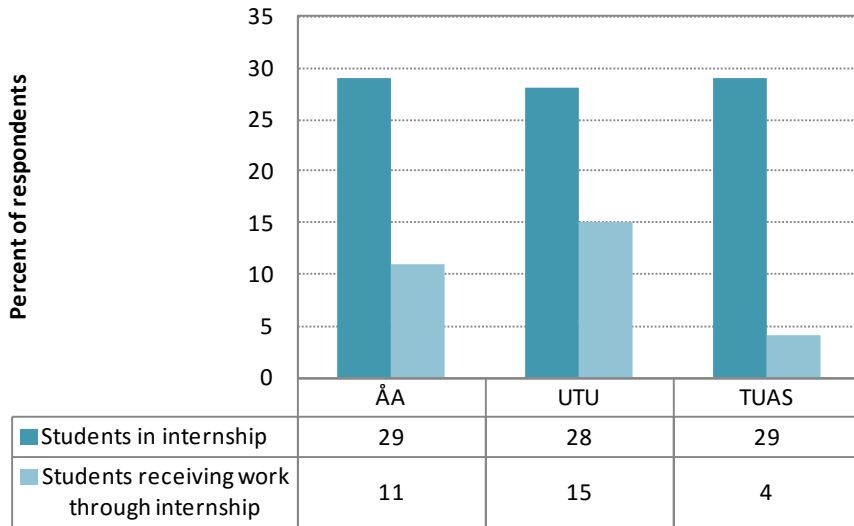


Figure 18. The percentage of students of Åbo Akademi University, the University of Turku and Turku University of Applied Sciences having completed an internship in Finland and those having received work through their internship, percentage (N=296).

Finland, received paid work through their internship (15% of all respondents from the University of Turku). The rate for the students of Åbo Akademi University was 39% (11% of total), while the same for the students of Turku University of Applied Sciences was only 14% (4% of total). 61% of the students receiving employment through their internship worked full-time, and importantly, 94% of them in a job matching their level of education.

Other ways the students felt they had benefited from their internship included earned credits, gained knowledge about Finnish working life, improved language skills (both Finnish and English), new friends and work experience. Only 8% felt they had not benefited from their internship in any way.

Relatively little is known about the employment situation of the international students graduated from the Finnish HEI's. One of the few recent longitudinal studies made is the VALOA-project. The study showed that two years after the graduation 88% of the international graduates were either employed (70%) or undertaking further studies. The remaining 12% were outside of these categories (unemployed, taking care of children etc.). The employment rate was the highest for those who stayed in Finland (72%) or returned to their home country (70%) and lowest for those who moved elsewhere (55%). (Shumilova et al. 2012) In a survey made in the UK between 2010 and 2011 for the non-EU international graduates, similar figures were found. Six months after the graduation, 86% of the international graduates were either in employment or further study, and two

and half years after the graduation, 95% were employed or studying. (Archer & Cheng 2012) Finding employment is a similarly slow process for Finns, since a longitudinal survey of all Master's Degree graduates of 2009 in Finland tells us that a third of the graduates had been unemployed at some time during the first five years, but five years after the graduation the unemployment rate was only 3% (Aarresaari uraseuranta 2014).

International students are not qualified for Finnish student benefits and loans and most support themselves by working. Compared to the 58% of the Finnish university students and 56% of the students of the universities of applied sciences who had worked during their studies in 2013 (Statistics Finland 2015), 71% of the respondents of this survey, who had lived in Finland for more than a year, had worked in paid employment in Turku. As is natural, the level of employment is higher the longer the students have resided in Finland. The employment rate for the graduates of 2017 was 47%, for the graduates of 2016 it was 73% and for the graduates of 2015 75%. The survey did not specify the length of time students had worked in Turku, and included all kind of paid work (apart from paid internship).

Students in Doctoral Degree Programs were most satisfied with their work matching their level of education. 90% felt being in a right level job. This is at least partly explainable by the fact that many Doctoral students work as researchers at the university as part of their education. 27% of the Master's Degree students felt their work matched their level of education when only 8% of the Bachelor's Degree students felt so. Most students cannot find employment from their field of study, but instead work in low-level jobs, such as in passenger ship cleaning.

Interestingly, there seems to be some differences in employment between men and women. Looking at the respondents who had lived in Finland for at least a year, 67% of the women had been in employed in Turku, while the percentage for men was 74 (**Figure 19**). Men were more often employed in the universities and in the Turku University of Applied Sciences, although the difference was greater in the universities. The fact that the students have not worked in Turku does not mean they have not worked in other places in Finland. In fact, many international students studying in Turku are known to work in Helsinki. Therefore it is impossible to say with the available evidence, what could cause the gender difference in student employment.

As **Table 10** shows, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents had worked much more often than other most common nationalities. More than half of Indian and a half of Iranian students had been employed full-time, whereas most others had mainly been in part-time work. Least often employed were the students

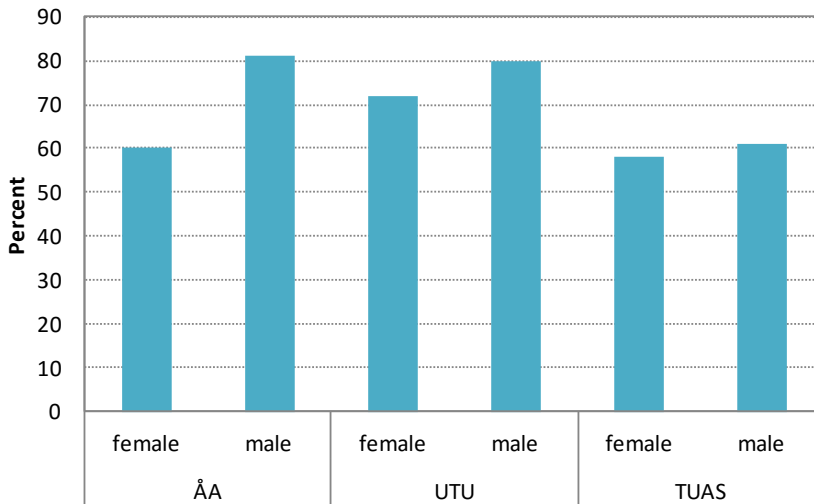


Figure 19. Percentages of international students having worked in paid employment in Turku by gender and higher education institution of students having lived in Finland for at least a year in 2015, percentage (N=232).

from the USA and Russia: 62% of the American students and 52% of the Russian students had not worked at all.

As the Table 10 shows, a number of students had worked as self-employed or freelancers. Altogether 10 of the respondents (3%) had been working as self-employed in Turku. Seven of them were Asian and the remaining three from the EU/EEA countries. Seven were studying at the University of Turku and three at

Table 10. Employment by nationality of students having lived in Finland for at least a year in 2015 (countries with more than five respondents are included), percentage.

Country of citizenship	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	No work
Russia (N=23)	13	35	–	52
Vietnam (N=19)	16	52	–	32
China (N=19)	16	32	11	41
India (N=13)	55	23	15	7
Pakistan (N=13)	23	63	7	7
Nepal (N=12)	8	50	–	42
Bangladesh (N=10)	10	80	–	10
Iran (N=10)	50	20	10	20
USA (N=8)	13	25	–	62
Total (N=303)	27	40	4	29

the Åbo Akademi University. Seven were female and three male. Most of the entrepreneurs (90%) had moved to Finland for studies and one for social reasons. Nobody had, thus, moved to Finland for the purpose of starting up a business. Eight of the ten entrepreneurs worked in a job matching their education, one stated that the work would have required a higher education than they had and one respondent's work did not require as high education as they had.

In the survey the respondents were asked to tell about their experiences, both positive and negative, about Finnish work culture. The positive aspects mentioned most often were related to the general positive quality of the working environment. Colleagues had mostly been friendly and helpful and the punctuality and honesty were greatly appreciated.

People were helpful and explained a lot when one had a question, they took time to listen and teach, even worked extra longer than working time to explain an important matter. (Africa)

Finnish working life was seen as flexible and independent. Aspects which most Finns take for granted, such as getting paid on time, paid holidays and other employee rights were appreciated by many students. Many felt respected as employees and enjoyed the equality at the work place. These findings are in line with those of Heikkilä and Pikkarainen (2008), who also found out that the most important positive aspects in work life for the foreign employees were the general positive working environment, freedom and flexibility.

The negative aspects brought up in the survey were mostly related to unfair treatment. Some students felt that foreigners were being discriminated against in the job market. The discrimination was mostly explained by the lack of Finnish language skills.

Finns are too racist when it comes to hiring educated foreigners. I am over qualified to be a cleaning lady, but I can't compete for jobs - even those which specify fluency in English and no Finnish language skills - because Finnish companies will always give Finns preference. This is a very bad attitude because unless Finns want to pay my Kela unemployment benefits forever (and foreigners like me), then they should hire us. (United States)

It was perceived that in order to advance your career, or to have one in the first place, you first need to get into the circles.

When you are in, you are really in professionally ... opportunities come more easily. Short project based work has become the norm, so you often get left out again. When you are outside getting in is painful and slow. (EU/EEA)

Finnish social culture, or the lack of it, was also seen as a negative aspect of work life. Many had gotten used to more social way of life and felt isolated and alone in a Finnish work place.

It is difficult to adjust as an international individual into a Finnish working environment as people are not that open and friendly, they prefer often to talk Finnish among themselves [...] Finnish people do not have a culture of going out together for dinner or drinks after work (which was common in my previous working place in England), and Finnish people do not invite others to their homes (which is also common elsewhere). This means that Finnish people are rather closed which makes it hard to integrate fully. Also, it would be helpful if there would have been someone who would have given some so-called insider tips when I moved to live here as then many things would have not come as a surprise. (EU/EEA)

The down side of independence at work was that there was often “*little opportunities to work together*” (EU/EEA) and the social aspect of coffee breaks, which usually gives Finns the much needed break from isolated work, was often lost due to the language barrier.

Photo: commons.wikimedia.org



8

Who decides to stay in Turku?

In the study made by Kärki in 2005, 52% of the international students in the five Finnish universities she studied, either planned to stay in Finland (43%) or would have liked to stay but felt they could not (9%). 21% planned to leave the country and 27% did not know yet what to do. In this survey made ten years later, only 35% planned to stay in Finland while 26% stated preferring to stay in Finland if they could find work. 26% planned to leave the country, which is 5% more than ten years earlier. 8% did not have any plans yet, 3% stated being ready to move anywhere for work and 2% had some other plans (Figure 20).

Also, rather interestingly, the students of the University of Turku were the most eager on leaving the country according to the 2005 survey. 28% planned to leave the country, while 38% planned to stay and 6% wanted to stay but felt they could not.

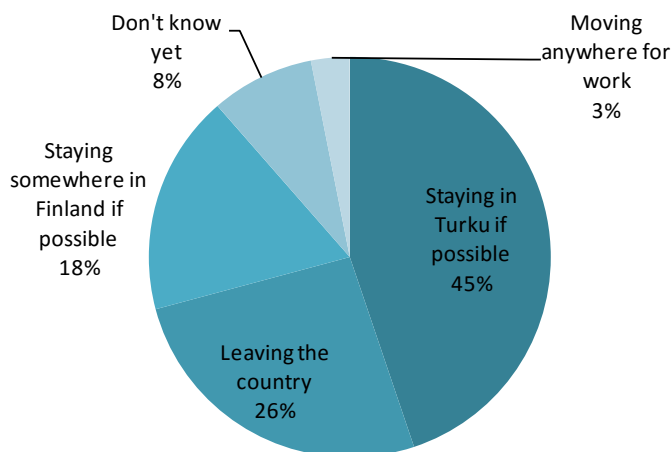


Figure 20. Respondents' plans after graduation, percentage (N=303).

In the 2015 survey, the respondents from the University of Turku were a little less interested in leaving the country (26%) than before, but only 29% planned to stay in Finland. Almost as many (28%) stated wanting to stay in Finland, though, if work was available. It is evident that the economic crisis and mass unemployment that started between these surveys have had an effect on the international students' plans to stay in Finland. At the same time, the students seem to be more willing than before to stay, if employment is available.

Figure 21 shows the percentage of students who would like to stay in Finland if work was available and the percentage of those who plan to leave the country after graduation. The variation between different fields is great. Interestingly, most of the IT students and those studying humanities, arts and culture would like to stay. All these are fields that employed very poorly in the autumn of 2015 (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2015). Least likely to leave are the health care and social services students (9% plan to leave), whose employment opportunities at the moment are great. The students of medicine are not planning to leave in great numbers either (19% plan to leave). Social sciences students were the most likely to leave. 39% of them are planning to leave Finland after their graduation.

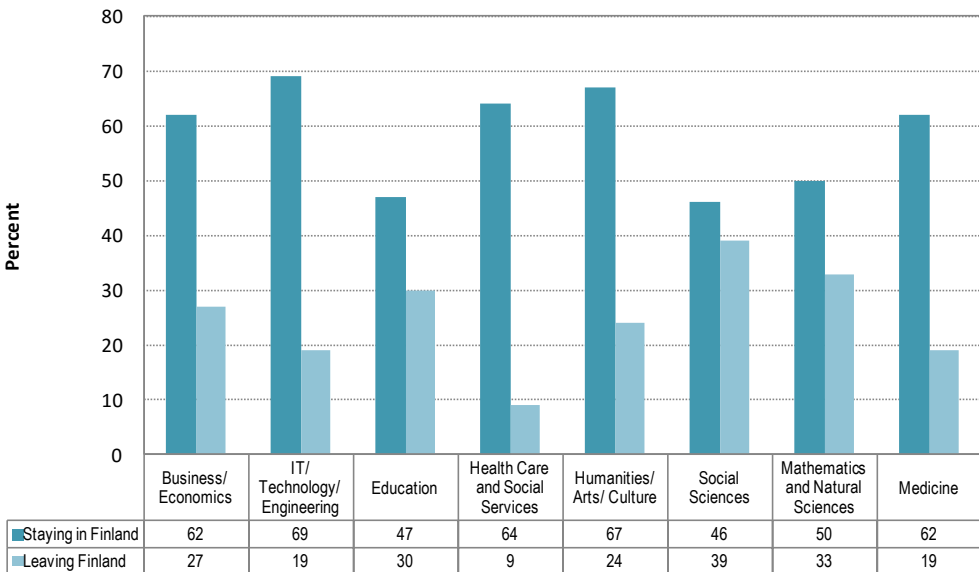


Figure 21. Respondents' wish to stay in Finland after graduation by area of study, percentage (N=303).

Interestingly, the students who plan to stay in Turku are not entirely the same kind of people who plan to stay in Finland (**Figure 22**). While the IT, engineering and technology students and the students of medicine are the ones most likely to stay both in Finland and in Turku, students of education plan to leave Turku

Europe and South America were most likely to leave the country. South Americans were most likely to return to their home countries and EU/EEA citizens to move to a third country.

Figure 23 further demonstrates the respondents' plan to stay in Turku by area of origin. While 55% of the Africans and 51% of the Asians planned to stay in Turku if possible, only 17% of the students coming from North America and 30% of the students coming from Other Europe planned to stay.

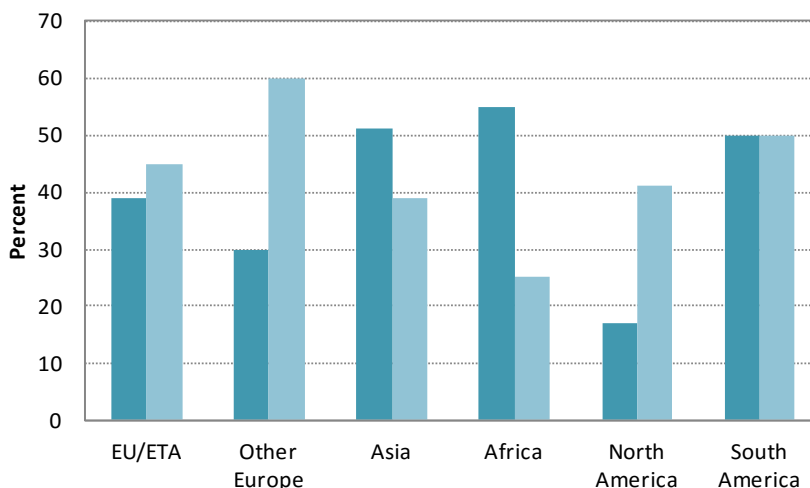


Figure 23. Respondents' plans to stay in Turku after graduation by area of origin, percentage (N=303).

The respondents were also asked whether they were interested in becoming self-employed in Turku after their graduation. Altogether 64% of the students stated to be either interested (22%) or possibly interested as a serious option (42%) in becoming an entrepreneur (**Table 12**). The most interested were those studying IT/Technology/Engineering and Business/Economics. Least interested in self-employment in Turku were the Medicine students, whose employment situation is likely to be better than most other students'.

Most interested in self-employment in Turku were the students from Africa: 75% stated to be interested (25%) or possibly interested as a serious option (50%). Asian students had the highest proportion of those definitely interested (30%). Students from the EU/EEA were the least interested in entrepreneurship, with only 11% interested and 40% possibly interested. Nearly half of the EU/EEA students thus stated that they were not interested in becoming self-employed in Turku.

Students' social life naturally makes a difference when making future plans. Only 12% of the students who had a Finnish spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend were

Table 12. Students' interest in becoming self-employed in Turku after graduation, percentage.

Study area	Yes/possibly	Already self-employed	No
Business/Economics (N=61)	67	2	31
IT/Technology/Engineering (N=78)	77	1	22
Education (N=14)	50	7	43
Health care and social services (11)	55		45
Humanities/Arts/Culture (N=21)	52	5	43
Social Sciences (N=13)	62	–	38
Mathematics and natural sciences (N=59)	61	2	37
Medicine (N=20)	45	5	50
Total	64	2	34

planning to leave the country after their graduation. Similarly only 13% of those who had dependent children in Finland planned to leave. 15% of the married and 19% of the cohabiting students planned to leave the country, while the percentage of leavers among the single students was 29. As Heikkilä and Pikkarainen (2008) found out, children and especially school aged children, are an important reason to stay in the country. A Finnish spouse also helps in the integration process when finding work, learning the language and forming social circles is easier.

The length of time the students have spent in Finland also seems to affect their plans to leave. While 22% of those who had stayed for less than a year planned to leave after their graduation, as many as 31% of those who had stayed for one or two years, planned to leave. It may well be that the students arrive with the plan to stay but realize later that the challenges ahead are too much to bear. After that the numbers even out and 21% of those having lived in Finland for 3 or 4 years and 24% of those having lived in Finland for 5 or 6 years plan to leave. At this point the students may have already tied social connections to the country and the language difficulties may have diminished making staying easier and more appealing.

However, many of the international students of Turku do plan to leave. Why is that? The students were given a multiple choice question with an ability to mark all that applied. An “other, please specify”-category was also included. It seems that most reasons were found among the multiple choice questions for only nine respondents answered the other-category. Not surprisingly, most important reasons for leaving were the lack of work (28% of the answers) and language difficul-

ties (23% of the answers) (Table 13). Other reasons were pull factors elsewhere such as family, studies and work waiting in another location, and push factors such as not feeling at home in Turku and racism experienced there.

Table 13. Main reasons why international students leave Turku after graduation (multiple answers included).

Reason to leave	Number of answers	% of answers
Lack of work	39	28
Language difficulties	32	23
Family elsewhere	23	16
Do not feel at home	16	11
Studies elsewhere	13	9
Job waiting elsewhere	8	6
Racism	3	2

Students answering to the “other”-category also complained about the job situation, especially for foreigners:

I am unsure if any company wants to employ me, a foreigner, full-time in Turku. Moreover, the new, xenophobic political climate in Finland scares me. (EU/EEA)

As I have heard that there is better opportunity for us after graduation in Helsinki along with less requirement of Finnish language. (Nepal)

From what I understand of Turku, and Finland as a whole, this is not a good place to seek employment. Jobs are scarce, and the salaries are not very competitive, which combined with Finland’s rather weak economy as a whole is not very enticing. (Sweden)

A large number of international students clearly feel that they are not wanted and that employment in Turku is an impossible dream. Weak economy and mass unemployment are, of course, a fact, but maybe it is now more than ever that Turku needs the new points of view and innovation that the international students can give.

The pessimism that has become so prevalent in Turku after some bigger companies closed a couple of years ago. People in Turku don't realize the value of their city and its surroundings for tourism and have no clue how to market it efficiently. (EU/EEA)



9

Main findings

The survey was responded by 303 international degree students from 60 different countries and from four higher education institutions in Turku. The aim was to find out why international students choose to study in Turku, what is their socio-economic integration like, how could it be improved and whether or not they are planning to stay in Turku after their graduation.

Reasons to choose Turku as a place to study

85% of the respondents had moved to Finland for their studies, 9% for social reasons. The most important reasons to choose Turku as a place to study had been a specific study program and the good reputation of the HEIs in Turku. Many students had also arrived to Turku as exchange students but had liked the place so much they had decided to stay or go back to complete a degree in Turku.

Studies and Finnish language skills

International students seem to be very happy with their studies in Turku. 98% of the students of Åbo Akademi University would recommend their HEI and 93% of the students of the University of Turku and 83% of the students of Turku University of Applied Sciences would do so. However, around half of the students of the universities of applied sciences and two thirds of the students of the universities needed more help with career planning and finding internships.

The need for more Finnish language courses and especially for the more advanced ones seems to be great in all the HEIs in Turku, but especially so in Åbo Akademi University. Even though the students of the University of Turku were the happiest with the Finnish language teaching, they did mention that the courses were

too slow and the level too low. Courses preparing for the B1-proficiency level were needed.

Only 4% of the respondents had fluent and 4% advanced Finnish language skills. 15% had intermediate language skills. Almost half (49%) of the students had basic Finnish language skills and 28% had no Finnish language skills at all. Positive fact is that 71% of the respondents were either motivated or very motivated to learn more Finnish. Only 5% had no motivation at all to learn more Finnish.

Internship and work

Of the international students who estimated to graduate in 2015 or 2016, 86% had either completed an internship in Finland or had been employed in Turku. 31% of the respondents had done both. One third of the internships had led to paid work and nearly two thirds of the students who received paid employment through an internship worked full-time and 94% of them in a job matching their level of education. It was the Doctoral students, however, who were the happiest with their jobs, while the Master's and Bachelor's Degree students were mostly working in low-level jobs, such as cleaning. The difficulty of finding a suitable job was brought up time after time, and rather than blaming the economic situation, the students felt the reason was more related to employers preferring Finnish employees.

Staying in Turku after graduation

In the case that work was available, 61% of the respondents stated that they would prefer staying in Finland after graduation. Most of them would like to stay in Turku (44% of respondents). 26% of the respondents were planning to leave the country. The willingness to stay was the highest among those who had just arrived, and seemed to decrease with time. This is most probably the case because work is difficult to find. Lack of job opportunities is the number one reason why students plan to leave both Turku and Finland.

Two thirds of the respondents were interested or possibly interested in becoming self-employed in Turku. The most interested were the students studying IT/Technology/Engineering and Business. Men were more interested in becoming self-employed than women, but from the existing ten entrepreneurs who responded to the survey, 70% were women.

10 Conclusion

Even though international degree students have been a part of Finnish educational system for at least couple of decades and their numbers have been increasing steadily, Finnish employers and the society as a whole have still to realize their full value. The cultural and social capital these students possess will be lost if they leave the country after their graduation. It is a fact that all international students, as all immigrants, see Finland from a different view point than the native Finns do. They can see things that Finns are blind to and they know how things are done elsewhere.

As a foreigner I have a different viewpoint. Additionally I am highly qualified in my field through my previous education and my work experience. As a foreigner, I had to improve myself extra to be able to compete the locals. (Turkey)

As pointed out in the citation, the international students often do have to work extra hard to get what they want. They do not have the same kind of social networks native Finns do. Among the international students there are also strong professionals with years of international work experience, connections and skills.

Having more than 10 years of software development and related industry experience, I believe I will be in a much better position to market my skills after graduation. With E-Commerce, and hands on experience in supply chain management industry automation, I can offer business automation services to both new and growing businesses. (Pakistan)

I have seven years of experience in software engineering before I move here and I just upgraded my skills with a Masters degree. I have exposure in start up and community based IT solutions. I believe I can contribute my skills to the Finnish industries. (EU/EEA)

Most of them speak at least one other language besides English and Finnish, one respondent spoke 9 languages. Besides the language skills, they also possess something that is hard to learn: the knowledge of the intricacies of communication in their own culture which would be valuable for any company dealing with international relations.

During the years leading to the new law establishing tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students, the Finnish government did make some facilitations for the international students by means of changing the Nationality Act in 2011 and the immigration law in 2015. After these changes the international students are eligible to apply for Finnish citizenship sooner than before (for example, four years of studies in Finland counts as two years of permanent residency) and the students are allowed to stay and look for work for one year after their graduation instead of six months (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2011; Oikeusministeriö 2015).

The government's aim clearly is to get more international students to study in Finland since the new target proposed by the working group for promoting education exports, set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture, is to have 60,000 international students studying in Finland by 2025 (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2013). This means that the number of international students is expected to triple in the next 10 years. Unless the aim is to take example from the British and only get the short-time financial benefit from the tuition fees, more support should be given to these students.

Photo: freeimages.com



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Appendix 1: The survey questions

International talents as resource for expanding companies (Path) -survey

This survey is made for the international students of Åbo Akademi University, University of Turku, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences (Campus Åbo). Choose the most suitable option(s) for You or write down Your answer. The questions marked with a red star are compulsory. The answers are confidential. Please reply by October 11th, 2015. Thank you.

1. Your university

- Åbo Akademi University
- University of Turku
- Turku University of Applied Sciences
- Novia University of Applied Sciences

2. What is the level of degree you are studying?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

3. What are you studying?

- Humanities/ fine arts/ culture
- Mathematics and natural sciences
- Health care and social services
- Medicine
- Law
- Social Sciences
- Education
- Theology
- Engineering
- Construction
- Business/ economics
- Other, please specify _____

4. Estimated year of graduation?

- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- later

5. What is your degree program's language of instruction?

- English
- Finnish
- Swedish

6. Gender

- Female
- Male

7. Year of birth _____**8. Country of citizenship _____****9. Highest degree obtained before moving to Finland**

- Senior secondary school or equivalent
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Master's degree or equivalent
- Doctoral degree or equivalent
- None of the above

10. Marital status and children

- Single
- Cohabiting
- Married
- Divorced/widowed
- Dependent children in Finland
- Dependent children in another country
- No dependent children

11. Do you have a Finnish spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend?

- Yes
- No

12. How long have you lived in Finland?

- less than 1 year
- 1 or 2 years
- 3 or 4 years
- 5 or 6 years
- 7 or 8 years
- 9 years or more

13. Your primary reason to move to Finland?

- Studying
- Social (family, marriage, girlfriend/boyfriend...)
- Work
- As a refugee
- Other reason, please specify _____
- I was born in Finland/ moved to Finland as a child

14. What was the main reason for you to choose Turku as your place of study?

15. Where did you learn about study opportunities in Turku?

- From a friend or relative
- In the internet
- In a study fair
- From my home university/ school
- Other, please specify _____

16. In which of these fields do you feel your higher education institution could improve? Choose 3 most important ones.

- Offering international students more opportunities to learn Finnish
- Offering larger variety of degree programs in English
- Offering larger variety of courses in English
- Offering more career planning for international students
- Offering more help for international students in finding internships
- Offering more help for international students in their studies
- Offering more help for international students in adjusting to Finland and Turku
- Offering more information about the Finnish work culture
- Offering more help with practical matters such as finding accommodation
- Other, please specify _____

17. Do you know any locals and if yes, where have you met them? Choose all that apply.

- Yes, in my degree programme
- Yes, in other courses at my university
- Yes, through my accomodation
- Yes, through a hobby
- Yes, through a friend
- Yes, through the Friendship Program
- Yes, somewhere else, please specify _____
- No, I don't know any locals

18. Finnish language skills (self evaluation)

- Fluent
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Basic
- None

19. How motivated are you to learn more Finnish?

- Very motivated
- Quite motivated
- Not very motivated
- Not at all motivated

20. Have you done an internship in Finland?

- Yes
- No

21. If you have done an internship in Finland, what were the main benefits of your internship for you? Choose all that apply.

- I received paid employment through my internship
- I learned necessary skills for further employment
- I made important contacts
- Other, please specify _____
- I did not benefit in any way from my internship

22. Do you work or have you worked (in paid employment) in Turku?

- Yes, full-time
- Yes, part-time
- Yes, as self-employed/ freelancer
- No

23. Does/did your work match your level of education?

- Yes
- No, the work did not/ does not require the level of education I have
- No, the work required/requires higher education than I have

24. If you have had an internship or a job in Finland, what kind of experiences do you have of Finnish work culture (positive and negative)?

25. What are your plans after your graduation?

- Work in Turku
- Continue my studies in Turku
- Move to another location in Finland
- Move back to my country of citizenship
- Move to another country than my country of citizenship
- Other, please specify _____

26. If you plan to leave Finland after your graduation, would you be interested in becoming a student ambassador for a Turku based company or an institution in your chosen destination?

- Yes, please leave your e-mail address here for further contact:

- No

27. If you plan to work after your graduation, what kind of work would you like to do?

28. If you plan to move away from Turku after graduation, which are the most important reasons for this? Mark all that apply.

- There are no jobs for me in Turku
- I do not feel at home in Turku
- Language difficulties are too great
- I have family somewhere else
- I have a job waiting somewhere else
- I am continuing my studies somewhere else
- Other reasons, please specify _____

29. After your graduation, are you interested in becoming self-employed/ an entrepreneur in Turku?

- Yes
- No
- Possibly, as a serious option
- I am already self-employed in Turku and plan to continue after graduation

30. In your own opinion, what are going to be your strengths in the Finnish labour market after graduation? What special knowledge can you offer the businesses?

31. Would you recommend your higher education institution in Turku as a place to study?

- Yes, please specify the reasons _____
- No, please specify the reason _____

32. Would you recommend Turku as a place to study?

- Yes, please specify the reasons _____
- No, please specify the reasons _____

33. Would you recommend Turku as a place to work?

- Yes, please specify the reasons _____
- No, please specify the reasons _____

34. Would you be interested in taking further part in the project (for example participating in an interview or in the follow-up survey)?

- Yes, please leave your e-mail address here for further contact: _____
- Not right now, but feel free to contact me with news about the project.
Please leave your e-mail address: _____
- No, thank you

THANK YOU!

