

METHODOLOGY TOOLKIT FOR PARTICIPATORY STUDENT SURVEYS

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Background: ELTE Student Survey

The Institute for Political and International Studies (POLIR Institute) at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) is a large and diverse institute with approximately 800 students. Over half are international students taking BA, MA and PhD courses, offering in Hungary a unique liberal and intercultural education with departments focused on Human Rights, Global and Development Studies and European and International Studies.

A survey of student opinions within the POLIR Institute at ELTE University was conducted and was aimed at mapping the students' opinions about topics, related to teaching, welfare, etc. and explored problematic issues based on student observations. As a result of the collected information, the POLIR Institute has gained a wide range of knowledge about students' opinions, ideas, wishes and problems which can help to improve students' time at ELTE. This has led to a series of recommendations that will create reform, change and improvement through an Action Plan. The SWOT Survey can be viewed in the appendix of this toolkit.

Context: The POLIR Institute is facing many challenges. We recently conducted a SWOT analysis of teaching staff, which revealed serious challenges for staff due to a lack of resources/low pay and fears regarding the future of academic freedom. Staff felt the diversity of the institute was a tremendous resource. The student survey in the appendix confirms many of these points and was conducted to gain deeper insights into the challenges facing the POLIR Institute. The POLIR Institute felt it was important to maximise student involvement in the development of an Action Plan.

This guide is divided into two parts. The first part, from pages 3-9, shares our reflections on the participatory research we conducted. The second part, starting on page 10, shares the final report we created based on the research results.

Participation Toolkit and Survey Methodology

Universities in Central and Eastern Europe have a tendency to introduce change from the top down and not adequately involve students in reviewing and adapting the curriculum and institutional ethos. We thus think our approach is innovative. Our participatory action research (PAR) student survey contained all the characteristics of PAR. It involved:

- participation by the people being studied;
- the inclusion of popular knowledge;
- a focus on power and empowerment;
- consciousness raising and education of the participants; and
- change and reform through the Action Plan and Toolkit to encourage further PAR inspired evaluations and reform across ELTE University and beyond in other universities in Hungary and countries in the region.

Preparation – steps before the launch of the student survey

The creation of the survey was preceded by the preliminary process which involved consultation/brainstorming meetings of the leaders of the research, Anna Sebestyén and Rusudan Margiani, with the director of the Institute of Political and International Studies Prof. Andrew Ryder, Prof. Frank Zsigó and György Bálint, an officer of the Student Union. The first two meetings were held in October and November 2023, when the main areas of the research interest were discussed together. We created an outline and timetable for the project and determined the main goals and topics of the survey. Prof. Andrew Ryder provided a draft questionnaire which the postgraduate students involved in the research modified accordingly. In order to figure out what were the most problematic areas/issues in the institute each of us (Rusudan Margiani, Anna Sebestyén, professors Frank Zsigó, and Andrew Ryder) interviewed at least one IR student to hear from them what are their major concerns in relation to the teaching and administrative processes in the institute. After receiving the feedback from our interviewees Professor Ryder adjusted the draft questionnaire and all of us met on November 17, 2023, to edit together the questionnaire by going through it question by question.

As mentioned above we also invited Bálint György, an official of the Student Union to brainstorm and listen to his ideas related to students' life at the university. During the meetings we discussed all of the topics within the survey in details and tried to collect our previous experiences related to students' feedback and requirements.



Student Survey Meeting, 19th November 2023, at ELTE, Budapest. Participants: Rusudan Margiani, Anna Sebestyén, György Bálint (President of Student Union), professors Frank Zsigó, and Andrew Ryder.

Creating the survey

We decided to create two identical surveys: one in Hungarian (for Hungarian programmes) and one in English (for English programmes). Anna Sebestyén translated the English survey into Hungarian and she placed both surveys in Google Docs after the second meeting. Four of us – Professor Andrew Ryder, Anna Sebestyén, Rusudan Margiani and Bálint György – met for the third time on February 2, 2024, when we went through the online English questionnaire and further edited it. In making the modifications to the survey a key concern was to make it easier for the students to understand/digest the questions – we changed them into simpler and clearer sentences. Some questions that seemed repetitive were removed. We set the grading system from 1 to 10 based on the local (Hungarian) understanding of less and more, as Anna pointed out: “1“for poor quality and “10“ for the best quality of the services provided by the institute.

In the end we built the survey consisting of 12 sections:

1. General information	2. Teaching	3. Facilities	4. Administration
5. Work	6. Extracurricular activities	7. Tolerance	8. Student voice
9. Next steps after graduation	10. Welfare	11. Institute of Political and International Studies	12. Additional feedback

In total there were 40 questions. There were three types of questions:

- 1) Yes/No;
- 2) 1-10 scale grading (with 1 being a negative answer); and
- 3) Open questions

On March 18th the survey was sent to the students by the administration. After receiving the survey results three of us - Andrew Ryder, Anna Sebestyén, Rusudan Margiani - met again twice in order to set the strategies for digesting the results. **We were very pleased with the participation level: about a third of the student cohort in the institute completed the survey.** One means by which we managed to get a high participation rate was by initiating an extensive poster campaign encouraging students to complete the survey:

Your institute needs YOU!

Please complete the survey you were emailed on the Institute for Political and International Studies. HELP us to improve.



Az intézetednek szüksége van RÁD! SEGÍTSETEK, hogy fejlődhessünk!

Kérem, hogy töltsétek ki az e-mailben kapott, a Politikai és Nemzetközi Tanulmányok Intézetéről szóló kérdőívet!

Another factor that we believe influenced the high level of participation was that students welcomed the fact the survey was PAR orientated, giving them a sense of ownership and voice.

Focus Group Meetings

In addition to the survey, we also planned two focus group meetings with tea and snacks, one in English for international students and the other one in Hungarian, where we discussed the survey results with them in order to hear their additional comments on the problematic areas addressed or not addressed by the survey. For the focus group interviews only two international students showed up and we had a small focus group interview with the MA students of age 24 and 25 (female and male).



Anna Sebestyén, Focus Group interview, ELTE, June 5th, 2024

During the focus group interview, we presented the survey results with graphs and diagrams in PowerPoint form to the students. We asked the students to share their thoughts/concerns along our presentation of survey topics and results. As a consequence, we had a rich discussion with them on the topics that concerned them the most: teaching methods and negative effects of work on their studies.

Presenting Results

After the focus group interview, we provided the report of the survey results and the focus group interview for the Quality Working Group of the institute which will take the results into account while working on improving the quality of the institute.

As a very final phase of the SWOT analysis, we provided this report and toolkit to serve as a Strengthening Guide to the Liberal Arts and Sciences Collaborative (LAS Collab), which funded our research.

Personal Reflection: Rusudan

Leading this research project and looking closer at students' concerns in POLIR Institute was a unique experience. It was a successful idea to ask PhD students of the institute to conduct this research for having an opportunity to research on problems I myself as a student had concerns about in the institute was very motivating. The idea that by conducting the research I was contributing to the betterment of POLIR Institute's performance and students coming after me would come to an improved academic environment was fuel to my enthusiasm as a researcher.

I remember while working on a research report for the Quality Working Group (which would take into account our research results and work on improving the institute's services) I was determined to report every single concern of our students and clearly explain every single tendency that needs to be addressed - the passion that I felt doing that and the hopes that I felt that my work would help the institute improve constitute a very valuable researcher experience.

In addition, I had a great opportunity to experience Participatory Action Research which contributed to strengthening the sense of community by giving us the researchers and the researched a chance to work together for improving our shared environment.

Personal Reflection: Anna

As a PhD student, I welcomed the opportunity to conduct a survey among International Relations BA, MA and PhD students taking part International Studies doctoral program. The fact that I am also a lecturer and I regularly meet students in classes helped me a lot to better understand students' observations and requests. In the autumn semester of the academic year 2023/2024, I started to ask students about their ideas related to university issues, and I encouraged them to freely talk and ask questions, because it would strengthen open communication between students and university staff, including professors, lecturers, and administrators. These preliminary discussions with students were mostly aligned with those ideas that we have already drafted in the questionnaire. For instance, a couple of students pointed out those facilities that should be improved, such as better technical equipment in classrooms, or longer opening hours in the library. Of course, the preliminary ideas collected by the students also shaped the form of the student survey.

The way I see it, the vast majority of students who filled out the survey were interested in it and were willing to share their honest opinions. Furthermore, some of them expressed their gratitude

towards the Institute to initiate a student survey. Most of the students have welcomed the questions related to work beside the university. More than 50% of students work beside their studies which makes them to feel overwhelmed and even more stressed. It might be especially challenging for international students to find a job and study at the same time in order to make a living in Budapest. As we have learnt from the survey, most of the students can manage their working hours with the university timetable, however, approximately 30% of them admitted that working beside the university impacts negatively on their studies. Even though the Institute is not able to completely solve the problems of students related to work, having a more supportive attitude could make a difference. For instance, if professors are more aware of the burdens of students, they can modify assignment deadlines after discussing it with students. If students find themselves in a supportive and understanding environment within the Institute, it would be a “win-win cooperation” for both sides.

As I have explained, maintaining a student-friendly and supportive environment within the Institute is crucial, however, we should be careful when students criticize the Institute groundlessly or because of personal/emotional reasons. For example, a couple of students shared their criticism without thinking about their own mistakes and tried to blame the Institute and professors. Consequently, listening to students’ voice is significant in all circumstances, but in a few cases, it might happen that the complaints of students are not justified. Students have rights, and at the same time obligations as well at the university, just like professors or administrators. Keeping this in mind can help to better evaluate the results when completing a survey.

All in all, it was a great experience to learn more about students’ opinions, ideas and needs. It was especially useful to read their additional feedback, where they could explain their needs, and raise awareness to unsolved problems. I believe that these comments bring students, professors and administrative staff closer to each other, and they can better cooperate in the future. I am sure that sharing the results with professors within the Institute would help them to better understand the standpoint of students.

Personal Reflection: Andrew Ryder (Director POLIR Institute)

The staff in the institute were very impressed with the quality of the research conducted by our PhD researchers in the SWOT survey, we will be using the findings in the coming years to make serious reforms.

The success and quality of this PAR research has also persuaded us of the value of conducting further PAR research on areas of concern highlighted by the survey which require deeper research, especially in the area of mental health and welfare.

This PAR survey has demonstrated to us the value of treating students as genuine partners in aspects of the management of the POLIR Institute. In our classes we encourage our students to strive and to explore how decision making, and institutional power can be more effectively conducted in society, we realize that we need to get our own house in order and set an example as to how institutions can better reach decisions, that entails in our mind's student empowerment and greater partnership. The PAR survey confirms our commitment to creating a more participatory ethos, students can be trusted to take a leading role and their opinions and analysis count!

APPENDIX

SWOT Analysis of ELTE Institute of Political and International Studies

Conducted by Rusudan Margiani & Anna Sebestyén

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Executive Summary

During the spring semester of 2023/2024 academic year, we conducted a student survey and small focus group interview among International Relations BA, MA and PhD students in the Institute of Political and International Studies. The questions covered various topics: teaching, facilities, administration, work, extracurricular activities, tolerance, student voice, next steps after graduation, and welfare. At the end of the survey students had the chance to share their additional feedback and elaborate on their comments. The survey and the focus group interview aimed at mapping the students' opinion about the above-mentioned topics, and exploring problematic issues based on their observations. As a result of the collected information, the Institute has gained a wide range of knowledge about students' opinions, ideas, wishes and problems which can help to improve students' time at ELTE.

Altogether 304 students filled out the survey, 127 students from the English language programmes, and 177 students from the Hungarian language programmes. Most of the students are between the age of 19 and 23. In the English language survey, 65% of students are female, and 35% male, while in the Hungarian language survey, 76,1% of students are female, and 23,3% male. Students of 41 different nationalities filled the survey¹. Most of the students (above 60%) who filled out the survey are studying in International Relations BA programme (both languages).

The survey started with questions focused on teaching. Students could rate to what extent they are satisfied with the teaching staff of the Institute from 1 to 10. In our analysis we consider 6 and less points as an undesirable result while 7 and higher points we regard as a signifier of relatively positive feedback. Most of the students (both in the English and Hungarian language programmes) gave point 8 or more to rate the teachers. In both language programmes, students rated teaching methods as the most important criteria, then secondly the knowledge of the professor. Students had the opportunity to mention further aspects that make a good professor based on their observations. They pointed out the following traits: openness to students, "friendliness", openness to other perspectives, motivating students, flexibility, accountability, transparency, and appropriate language skills. What concerns the students most (both in the English and Hungarian programmes) is the teaching style. According to the results students seem mostly satisfied with grading criteria, fairness of assessment and helpfulness of teaching staff.

The survey showed that students are mostly satisfied with the overall facilities provided by the university. Although they have concerns regarding the furniture/technology of classrooms, the washrooms, social areas, and the buffet.

Students feedback on of administrative services of the institute and the university in general is fairly positive, around 70 % evaluates the services with high points, however some concerns with regards information on subject choosing and other academic procedures still remain.

¹ Venezuelan, Bolivian/Hungarian, Brazilian, Mexican, Colombian, Nigerian, Kenyan, Tunisian, Moroccan, Portuguese/ British, Dutch, French, German, Swedish, Finnish, Hungarian, Serbian/Hungarian, Chinese -Hungarian, Slovakian, Montenegrin, Italian, Kosovar, Ukrainian, Georgian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Russian, Chinese, Mongolian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Vietnamese, Lao, Thai, Myanmar, Taiwan, Japanese, Pakistani, Palestinian, Jordanian, Israeli, Seychellois students participated

The section focusing on compatibility of students' working hours with their study schedule showed that for 46% of both international and Hungarian students, who work besides their studies, the school timetable presents a problem for their job schedule. 34% of international and 26% of Hungarian students are concerned that their job impact negatively on their studies.

Based on the result of the survey, Hungarian students are more satisfied with extracurricular activities (social and academic events) offered by the Institute, than international students.

In the section on tolerance, students shared their experience with racism, sexism, and homophobia at the university. 16% of international students and 10% of Hungarian students experienced racism at the university. 10,4% of international students and 14,1% of Hungarian students experienced sexism, and 5,7% international students and 9,4% Hungarian students experienced homophobia or any kind of LGBTQ+ discrimination at the university.

The following section focused on students' voice in the institute. Here we see that great number of students enjoy the opportunity to give feedback on the courses and to express their opinion in class. However, the result is not very desirable when it comes to their representation in Student Union. An alarming number of international students - 68.3% is not even familiar with the work of the Student Union (association). More than half of those who are familiar with it don't feel that the union (association) represent their academic interests.

The survey discovered that students are less satisfied with careers advice and information on future studies: 68,8% of international students, and 63,5% of Hungarian students gave 6 or less points to evaluate this service.

Welfare of students was another issue that the survey covered. It turned out that 54,4% of international students and 46,3% of Hungarian students have felt seriously depressed during their studies. Meanwhile, only 41,6% of international and 27,7% of Hungarian students are aware of mental health services at the university.

At the end of the survey students had the opportunity to share their additional feedback where the most frequent comments elaborated on their concerns related to: style/methods; classroom equipment; academic events; social spaces; language learning opportunities; subject choosing; communication with international office and administrative information.

SWOT analysis - short summary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise of teaching staff • Well-established grading criteria • Hungarian students believe that professors' feedback (when given) is useful and it helps them improve their work • Students give feedback on courses • Freedom of expressing opinions in class • Academic and cultural events • library • Most of the students would recommend studying in the Institute • More than 95% of students support the Institute's mission statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of innovative/interactive teaching methods • Lack of feedback from teachers • Lack of clarity of grading criteria in case of some teachers • Lack of friendly, compassionate attitude from teachers towards students • Lack of technologically well-equipped classrooms • Lack of social areas • Lack of social events • Lack of sits on 1st floor buffet • High prices at buffet • Short working hours of library • Lack of information on subject choosing and other academic procedures • Lack of information on teaching and other requirements for PhD students • Lack of careers advice for students
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving teaching methods • Becoming more student friendly (being flexible, understanding students' problems and requests) • In some cases, grading criteria should be revised and made more precise • International students would like more feedback from professors • Improving helpfulness • Improving classroom facilities • Providing more information to students in the case of choosing subjects • Organizing more academic and social events • Improving career advice and information • Promoting mental health services provided by the university. • Creating more social spaces for students • Establishing more effective informative channels for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of depression among students • Low awareness of existence of the mental health service in the university • Lack of representation of students' academic interests in Student Union • Difficulty of adjusting the students' working hours with their class schedule • Low financial support from the Stipendium Hungaricum, due to which many students have to take up work which is a threat to the quality of their academic performance

Introduction

The student community of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) has undergone a significant transformation in the past few years. Students from all over the world study at the university. The Institute of Political and International Studies welcomes both Hungarian and international students which creates a culturally rich and diverse environment. In order to help the institute meet the challenges of the educational and administrative processes we conducted the SWOT analysis during the spring semester of 2023/2024 academic year. The analysis was based on the student survey and the focus group interview. The survey was sent to the students of International Relations BA, MA and PhD programmes in the Institute of Political and International Studies. The questions covered various topics: teaching, facilities, administration, work, extracurricular activities, tolerance, student voice, next steps after graduation, and welfare. In addition, students had the chance to share their additional feedback and elaborate on their comments at the end of the survey.

SWOT Analysis

Weaknesses & Threats

Teaching

While around 72% of surveyed students seem more or less satisfied with teaching methods in the institute some serious concerns still remain. The focus group interview and comment section feedback showed that students wish for **more innovative and interactive teaching methods** in the institute:

“Assessments/exams - Having only multiple-choice exams for most of the classes is unproductive. This type of exam does not really measure how much the student knows about the topic and gives them the worldview that there's only one solution for the problems or questions they encounter. Essays, short text answers, oral exams, or even a project we can apply what we are learning in class is much more productive for learning. It's more challenging for the students, but this way we will remember what we study later on, instead of memorizing slides or textbooks in order to select a choice.”

Around 90% of students of both language programmes seem satisfied with grading criteria (gave 8-9-10 points), although based on the focus group interview there are cases when the **grading**

criteria of the teacher is either vague or doesn't reflect the official grading system of ELTE (translating 100 into 5 point system).

The survey also showed that students wish for more feedback from the teachers that would help improve their performance. They also wish for a **more compassionate, understanding, friendly attitude from teachers.**

Facilities

Students feedback on university facilities indicated that they wish for **technologically more well-equipped classrooms, more social areas inside and outside the university building and longer library hours.** The survey also showed that more than half of the surveyed students are not satisfied with **washrooms.** A significant number of students have concerns with the **buffet/cafeteria.** They wish for **lower prices for food and more sits at the cafeteria.**

Administration

While around 70 percent of both language group students seem satisfied with the work of the administration of the institute and the university there is around 30 percent of students who wish for **more effective administrative support and information provision.** Their major concern is that the **information on subject choice is not clear** and well-communicated in the university.

Work

For 46% of both international and Hungarian students, who work besides their studies, the school **timetable presents a problem for their job schedule.** 34,1% of international students who have a job say that their work impacts negatively on their studies, this number is slightly lower in the case of Hungarian students (26%). The interviewees from the focus group also highlighted the problem that due to the small amount of Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship they have to **work, and it affects their studies negatively.**

Extracurricular activities (academic and social events)

46,3% of international students and 37.1% of Hungarian students are **not very satisfied with the extracurricular activities** in the institute. In the comment section we got a few recommendations:

“[...]more higher profile conferences with for example IR scholars or politicians and diplomats, visiting lectures or perhaps visits to important political institutions such as embassies, the Hungarian Parliament, EU/NATO/UN offices or anything similar which is

related to our studies which would both elevate the standard of the faculty and greatly improve the experiences and instructiveness for students”

“I felt there was a lack of social activities to create a community including students and teachers. There are plenty of academic activities and conferences and so on, which is good, but non-academic activities are a bit neglected in my opinion.”

Tolerance

Within the topic of tolerance, students shared their experiences with racism, sexism, and homophobia at the university. 16% of international students and 10% of Hungarian students experienced racism at the university. 10,4% of international students and 14,1% of Hungarian students experienced sexism, and 5,7% international students and 9,4% Hungarian students experienced homophobia or any kind of LGBTQ+ discrimination at the university.

Student voice

Interestingly, the survey shows a noticeable difference between the Hungarian and International students’ experiences when it comes to the “the staff’s attitude towards students’ opinions” and willingness to engage with them. While 42% of Hungarian students seem dissatisfied by marking 6 and less points, this number is 26.2% in case of the international students indicating better experiences of the international students with the staff.

Student Union(association)

An alarming number of international students - 68.3% is **not familiar with the work of the student’s union (association)**. More than half of those who are familiar with it are not very satisfied with the degree of representation of their academic interests in **the union (association)**.

Career Advice and information on future studies

The survey discovered that students are **not very satisfied with the career advice and information on future studies**: 68,8% of international students, and 63,5% of Hungarian students gave 6 or less points to evaluate this service. In the comment section, six students elaborated on their concerns regarding the lack of career advice and future studies information provided by the institute. Some of those comments:

“From my experience, given the size of the Institute and the relevance of ELTE, the opportunities to engage on research groups and academic events are very limited. I feel,

as a MA student, that most events are not directed to me or not even advertised properly. Would be great to have more interaction with the academic community”

“Something that would be nice to see are more openings for the students who are motivated to help with the institute to support however they can. It can be through an internship, or even as a small consultancy, giving space for the motivated students to engage with the administration and support in organizing the events and general experiences.”

“It would be of great help if the faculty presented more opportunities to students of this course such as in available internships and/or scholarships.”

“I would try to include more events related to jobs in fields of social sciences or help students acquire knowledge on international organizations operating in Hungary, internship opportunities, and get ELTE connected to external organizations and partners so that they can hire our students as interns.”

Welfare

The survey showed that 54,4% of international students and 46,3% of Hungarian students have felt seriously **depressed during their studies**. Meanwhile, 58.4% of international and 72.3% Hungarian students are **not aware of mental health services at the university**.

The survey showed that a great number of students - 62% international and 46.8% Hungarian students do not feel that their needs are well-met by the welfare and student services.

Additional feedback

The additional feedback commenting section at the end of the survey gave us a more qualitative picture of what students' concerns are. Here some of them voiced their dissatisfaction with: teaching style/methods; classroom equipment; lack of academic events; lack of social spaces; lack of interactive classes/seminars; lack of free courses to take (causing them hardship to complete “plus 10 credit requirement”); lack of language learning opportunities - especially for Hungarian students; lack of information related to subject choosing and other administrative processes; difficulties with solving problems with international office and also, very importantly, some students expressed their concerns about having too many subjects in the thesis writing semester and they wished they had the last semester free for thesis work only.

Strengths & Opportunities

Strengths

According to the survey results one of the greatest strengths of the Institute is the **expertise of professors**. There are three departments within the Institute: Department of Human Rights and Politics, Department of International Relations and European Studies, and the Department of Global and Development Studies. The Department of Human Rights and Politics is “the only Department in Hungary that focuses on human rights and politics through the lenses of social sciences, thereby offering a broader perspective to discuss the major developments in these fields” (POLIR, 2024). The Department’s research profile covers several study areas ranging from political theory, constitutional theory, comparative constitutional law, comparative politics, democracy studies, European politics, human rights, resistance and resilience, gender studies, and minority protection (ibid, 2024). The Department of International Relations and European Studies’ diverse research community bridges International Relations (IR) theory, Security Studies, European Studies, Migration Studies, Nationalism Studies, and Foreign Policy Analysis.

The Department of Global and Development Studies was established in 2023, as an organizational unit within the Institute of Political and International Studies. It is the first university department in Hungary that focuses on development studies with a global scope. The department’s teaching profile is linked to the International Relations BA and MA programmes. It teaches courses, such as International Political Economy, International Development Policy, Postcolonial Theory, and Migration Studies, among others (POLIR, 2024).

Another strength of the Institute is related to the **grading criteria and feedback** that students receive from professors based on their results. According to the survey the significant number of the Hungarian students believe that receiving feedback from professors improve their work and helps with their studies. Furthermore, students can also give **feedback on courses**, which promotes a dialogue between students and professors. This way that students are involved, both parties can share their experience, make suggestions, and make additional improvements.

It is an additional strength of the Institute that students can **freely share their opinions in class**. 79,7% of international and 87,5% of Hungarian students gave 7 or higher points to evaluate this aspect. Consequently, this data shows that the level of **freedom of speech** and expressing opinions is high in the Institute.

We believe that we can evaluate it as a strength given that most of the students would recommend studying in the Institute to others, in spite of facing weaknesses and several fields requiring improvement. In addition, more than 95% of students support the Institute's mission statement which is committed to academic freedom.

Opportunities

The list of opportunities and fields to improve is wide-ranging. The following aspects on one hand could be understood as weaknesses, but on the other hand they provide an opportunity to improve these fields within the Institute.

First of all, improving the teaching methods includes numerous opportunities. The focus group interviewees also pointed out to the methods of some teachers that they appreciate and find effective such as actively engaging students in the class process, asking them questions and having discussions with students.

A more engaging and interactive teaching method would mean an opportunity for students to better understand the material of a course. Beside this, creating a more student friendly environment would include a flexible approach from lecturers, for instance listening to students' problems and requests.

Also, in some cases, grading criteria should be revised and made more precise. For example, based on the focus group interview there are cases when the grading criteria of the teacher is either vague or doesn't reflect the official grading system of ELTE (translating 100 into 5 point system).

In the case of international students, it might happen that some of them need more help and would require additional feedback from professors. When a student is from a foreign country, it might be challenging to follow classes and understand the learning material. Realising this need would create the opportunity of establishing a more supportive learning environment. Providing more information to students in the case of choosing subject is also an important issue, that would help students' decision on elective courses or on specialization.

Another significant issue is improving classroom facilities. According to one of the students who filled in the survey *"Classrooms and facilities could be improved especially as IR students we have 2 different buildings and some of our lectures are in chemistry classrooms. I believe our field needs a different type of environment than chemistry classes. Also, technological devices*

are not very suitable (several times we had problems during the lectures and it's not about the lecturer it's about the facility.” Having better classroom facilities would create an opportunity to involve more diverse and more modern teaching methods. Another student also raised this problem: *“Classes can be better. Because when we need projector, our professors have to carry it.”*

Improving the quality of administration services would help students to better plan their timetables, and choose classes that they are interested in. A notable number of students showed concerns regarding the clarity of choosing the subjects as well. 38.1% English and 34.5% Hungarian programme students marked 6 points and less indicating that they find the information on choosing subjects unclear or not very clear. In the comment section one student complains about the poor clarity of the “choosing the specialization”.

Organising more academic and social events would create great opportunities for both students and professors to discuss scientific questions, debate, and get to know more about each other’s perspectives. Advertising these events better and making them more visible would be the key to involve more students. Also, it would be very important to establish more effective informative channels for students.

Improving the career advice service and promoting mental health services provided by the university among students would also create the opportunity for students to becoming more conscious in connection with their future, and their preferences.

Finally, creating more social spaces for students would help build better communities. Students could gather together, discuss university issues, make friendships.

Final reflections

The SWOT analysis showed that 70 to 80 % of students at the Institute of Political and International Studies are mostly satisfied with the great portion teaching and administration aspects. These aspects are: Teaching staff, teaching methods, clarity of marking/grading criteria, fairness of assessment, feedback from professors, supportiveness of teaching staff, overall facilities, library, administrative support from the institute and the university, responsiveness of administration, tolerance, opportunity to give feedback on courses, attitude towards students' opinions, freedom of expression in class.

The most problematic areas, where students are mostly dissatisfied are: information on choosing

subjects, lack of careers advice and information on future studies, lack of opportunities for volunteering/internship, lack of extracurricular activities, incompatibility of study schedule and working hours of students, students' union (association), mental health services at the university, welfare and student services, certain facilities: social areas, classrooms, washrooms, buffet.

Improvement in these areas would significantly improve student experience in the institute and would cherish their motivation and enthusiasm to study. It would also contribute to developing emotional connection with the institute which would further foster their will to continue studying and/or working at the institute.

Recommendations

Institute of Political and International Studies should:

1. Encourage professors to implement more innovative and interactive teaching methods. Maybe the institute can organize a workshop/course where contemporary innovative teaching methods and their results would be presented.
2. Make it obligatory for professors to provide students with clear grading criteria from the beginning of the course.
3. Motivate professors to give fuller feedback to their students.
4. Organize social events where students and professors gather, this would create more friendly atmosphere for students.
5. Create more social areas inside and outside the campus
6. Have longer working hours in the library.
7. Raise the issue at the university meetings regarding the buffet and ask the responsible authorities for improvement of the sitting areas.
8. Provide students with clearer information on subject and specialization choice.
9. Organize visits of students to important political institutions such as embassies, the Hungarian Parliament, EU/NATO/UN offices etc.
10. Encourage students' and Student Union's in better collaboration and to greater more representation to international students.
11. Provide careers advice and information on future studies for students and encourage the ELTE

careers service to improve its outreach to students.

12. Have more volunteering projects/internships for students in the institute or in partner institutions.
13. Promote health care service among IR students and appeal to the faculty leadership to try and establish a professional and free of charge counselling service
14. Promote Sport and other physical activity classes among IR students
15. Have more free courses in the institute for students to choose that will not clash with other subjects from their curriculum (to complete “plus 10 credit requirement”)
16. Conduct a more in-depth survey to learn more about student experiences of sexism, racism and homophobia.

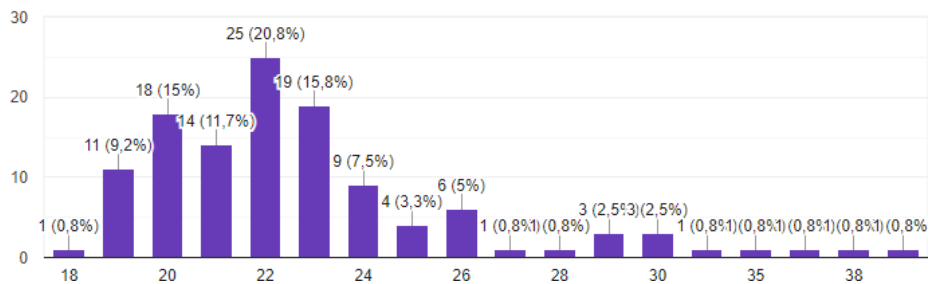
Appendix:

1st SECTION: Age, gender, citizenship, programme

Age: Most of the students are between the age of 19 and 23.

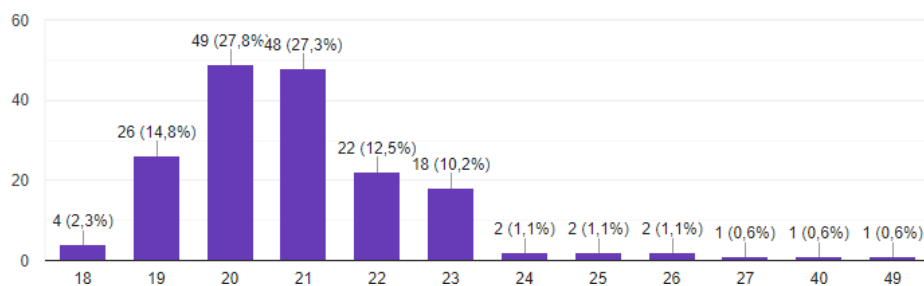
English:

120 válasz



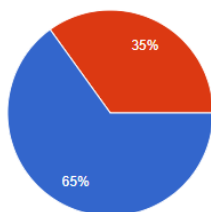
Hungarian:

176 válasz



Gender

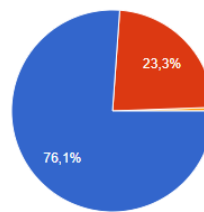
123 válasz



English

176 válasz

● Female
● Male
● Other



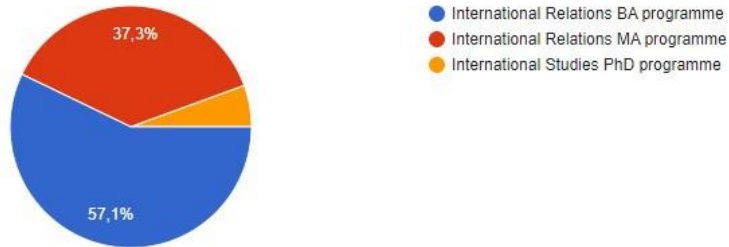
Hungarian

● Nő
● Férfi
● Egyéb

Programme

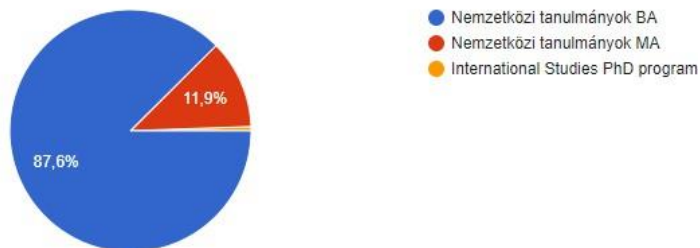
English:

126 válasz



Hungarian:

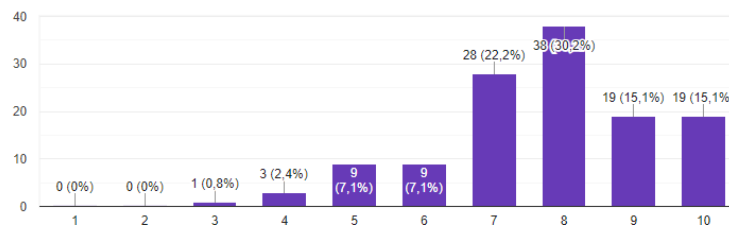
177 válasz



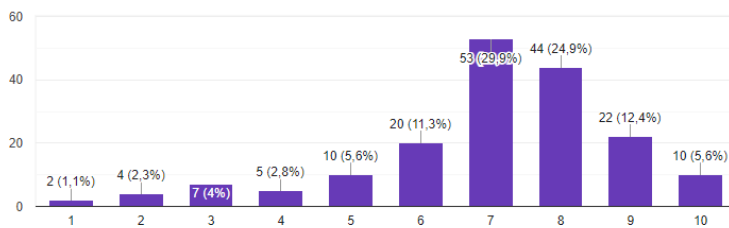
2nd SECTION: TEACHING

1. Are you satisfied with the teaching staff in the Institute?

126 válasz



177 válasz

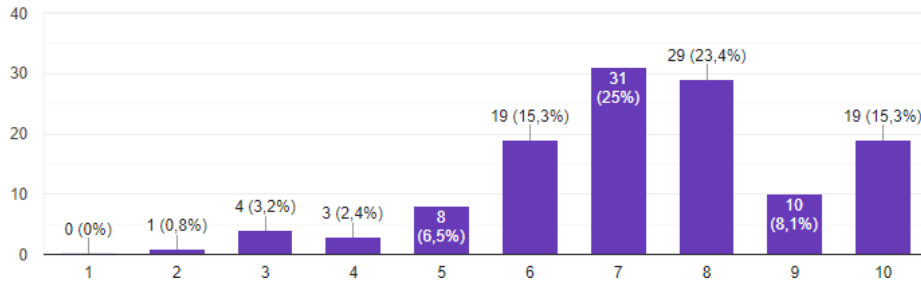


English

Hungarian

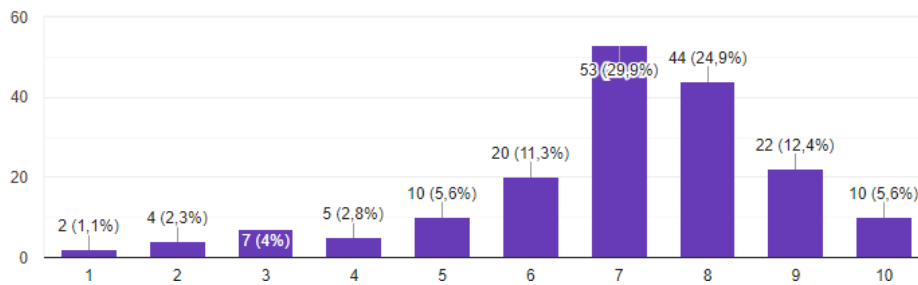
2. Are you satisfied with the teaching methods in the Institute?

124 válasz



English

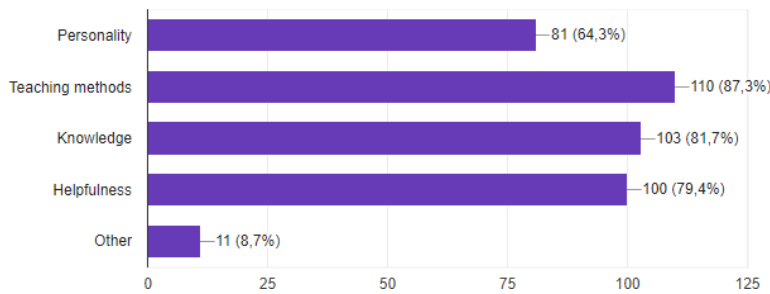
177 válasz



Hungarian

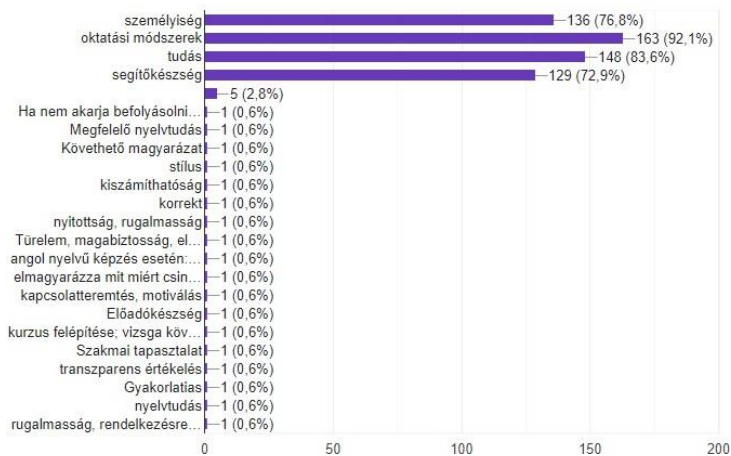
3. What makes a great class/professor? Tick on boxes, more than one choice can be made.

126 válasz



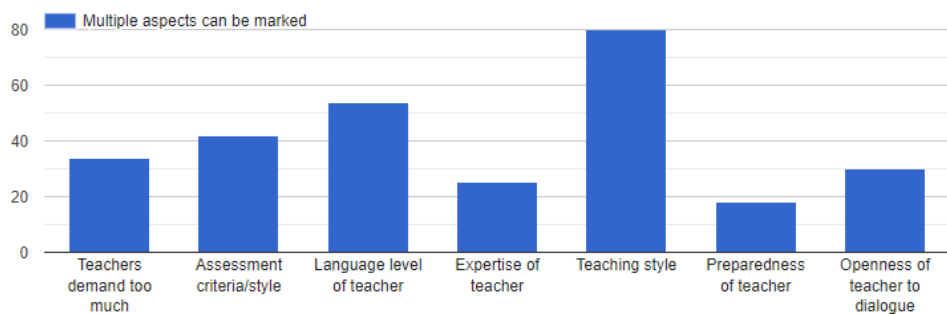
English

177 válasz

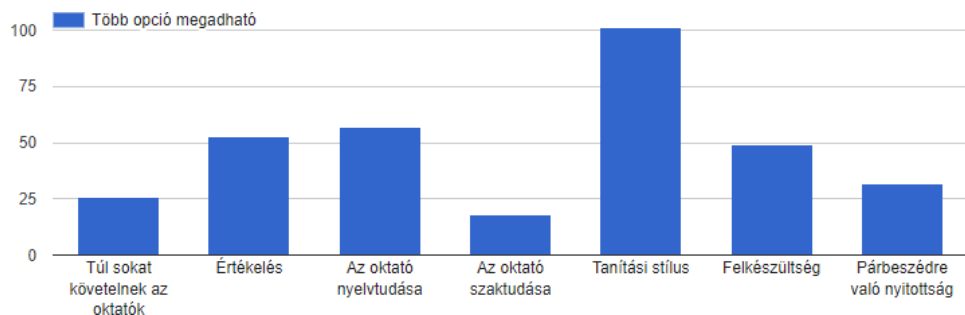


Hungarian

4. Which aspect/s of the teaching process concern/s you the most in the Institute?



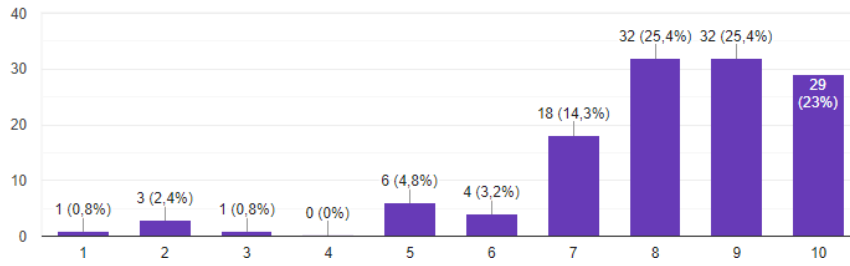
English



Hungarian

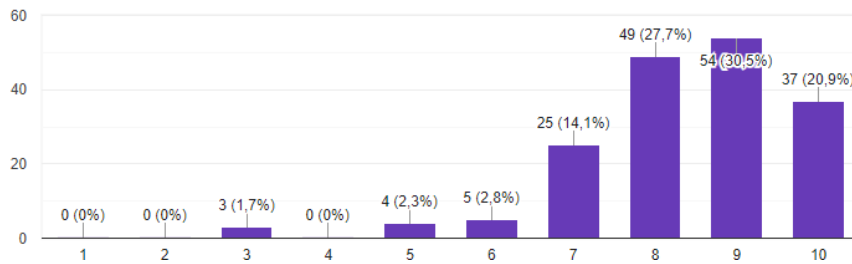
5. How clear was the marking/grading criteria used to assess your work?

126 válasz



English

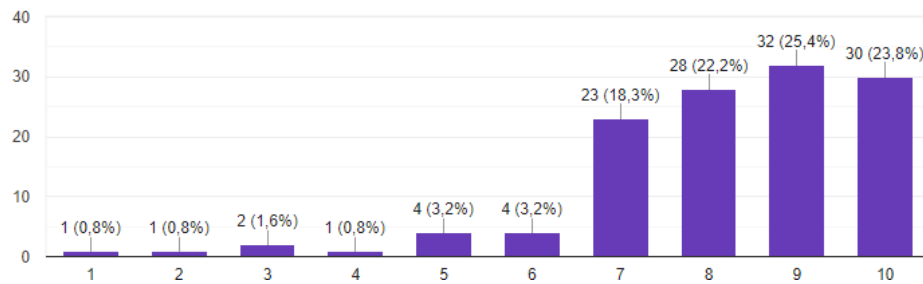
177 válasz



Hungarian

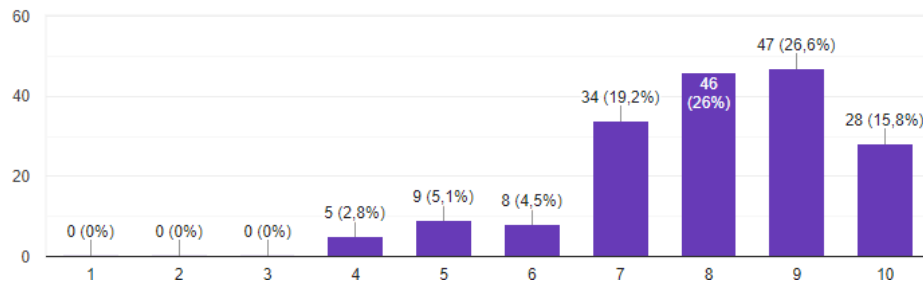
6. How fair has the marking and assessment been?

126 válasz



English

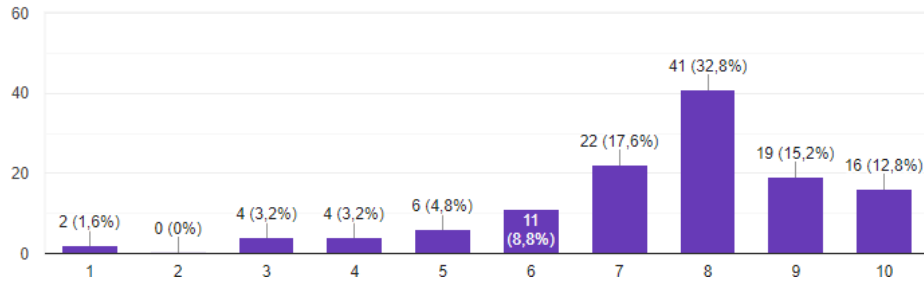
177 válasz



Hungarian

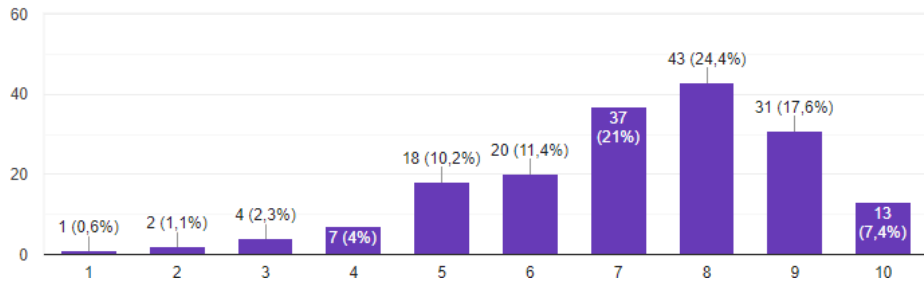
7. How well have the assessments shown what you have learned?

125 válasz



English

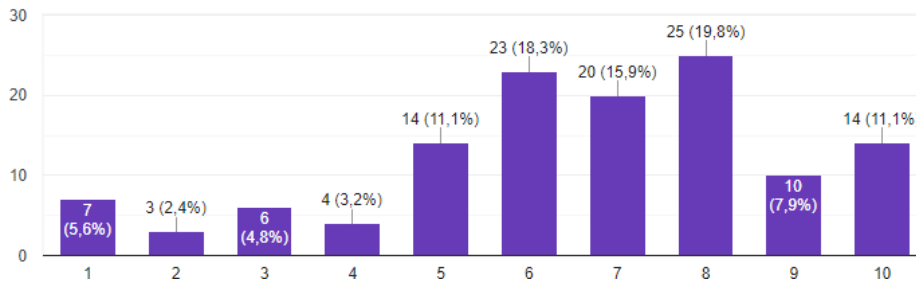
176 válasz



Hungarian

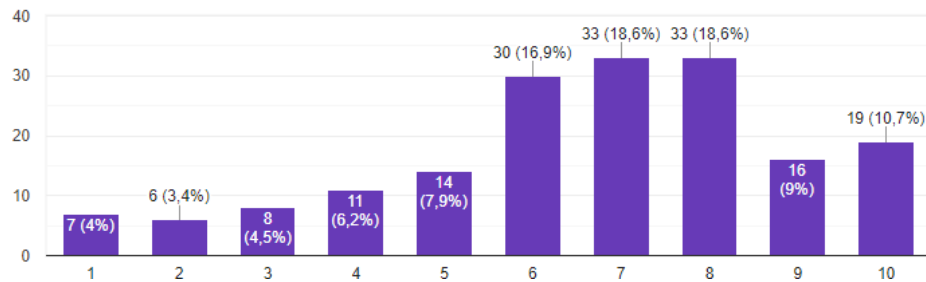
8. To what degree have you received feedback from professors?

126 válasz



English

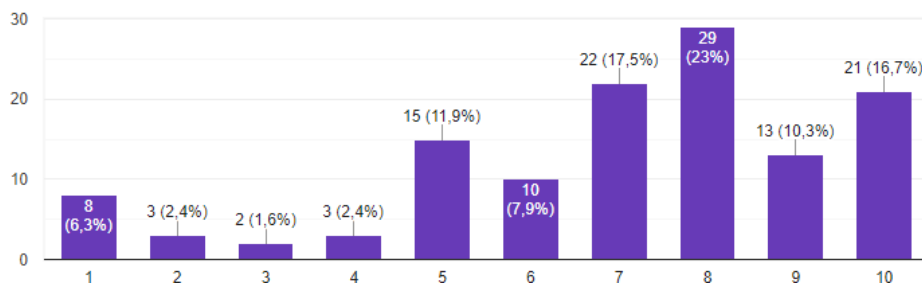
177 válasz



Hungarian

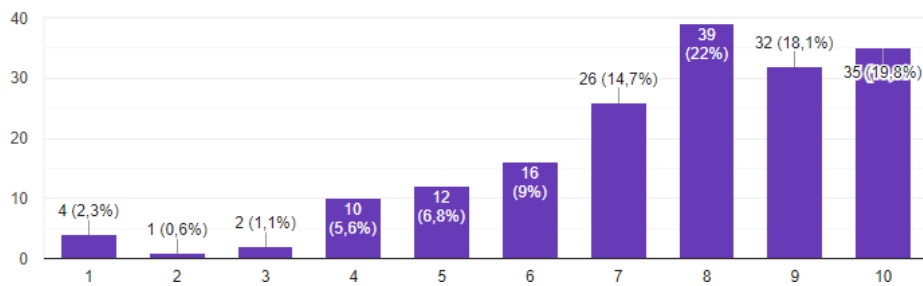
9. To what degree did the feedback given help you improve your work?

126 válasz



English

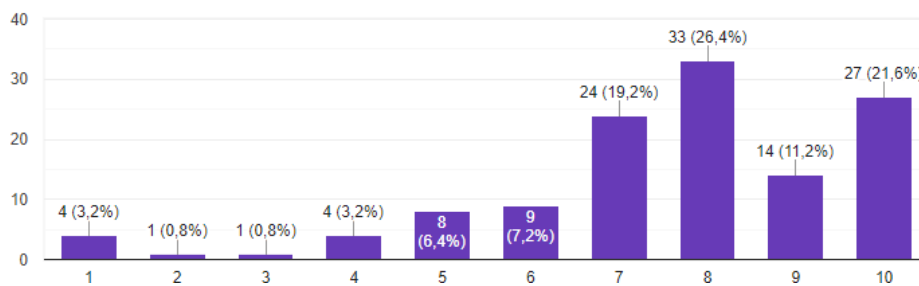
177 válasz



Hungarian

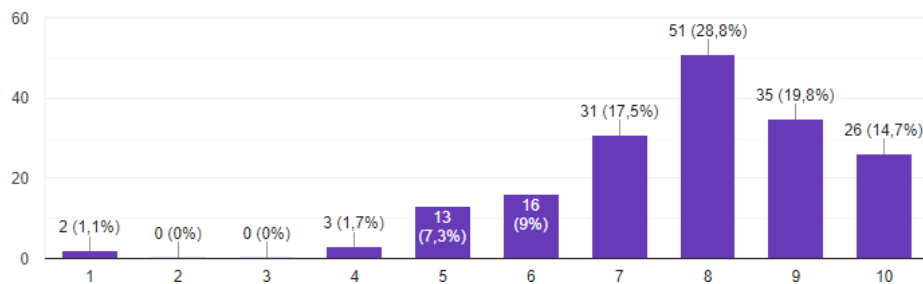
10. To what degree are the Institute teaching staff supportive?

125 válasz



English

177 válasz

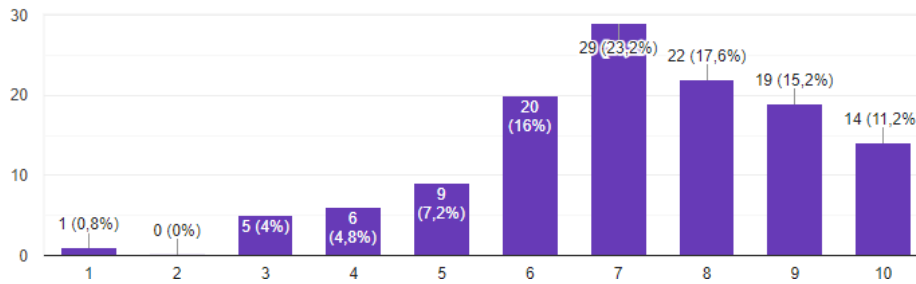


Hungarian

3rd SECTION: FACILITIES

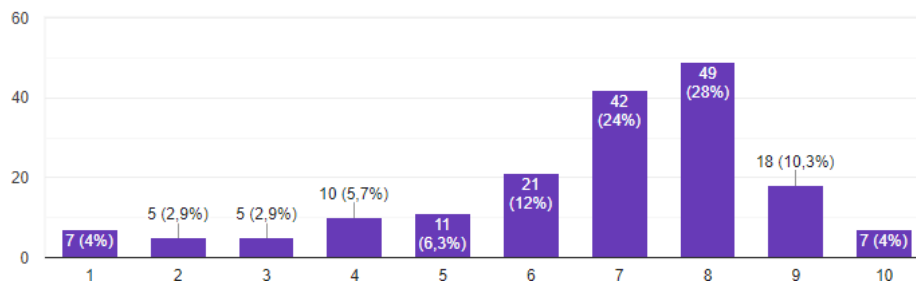
11. How satisfied are you with the overall facilities provided by the university?

125 válasz



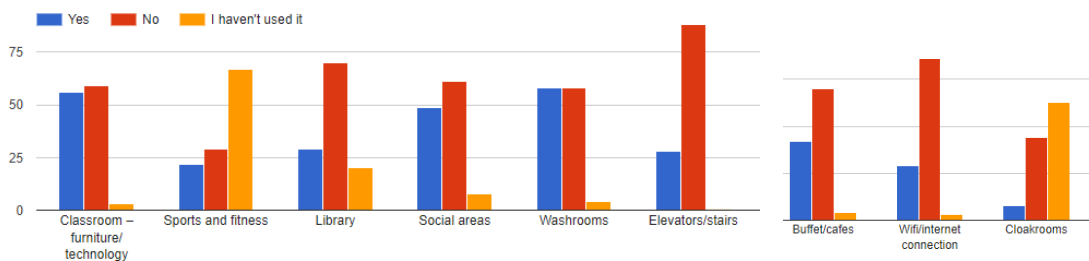
English

175 válasz

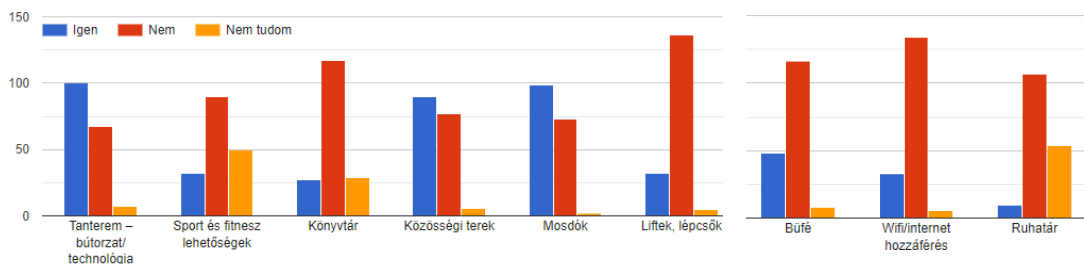


Hungarian

12. Do you have concerns about the following facilities? Please tick your answer.



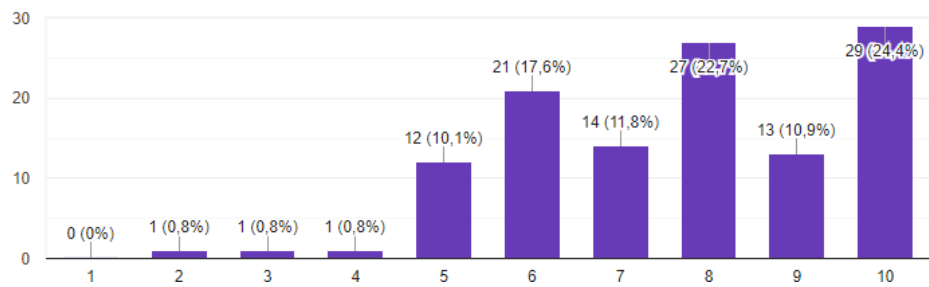
English



HU

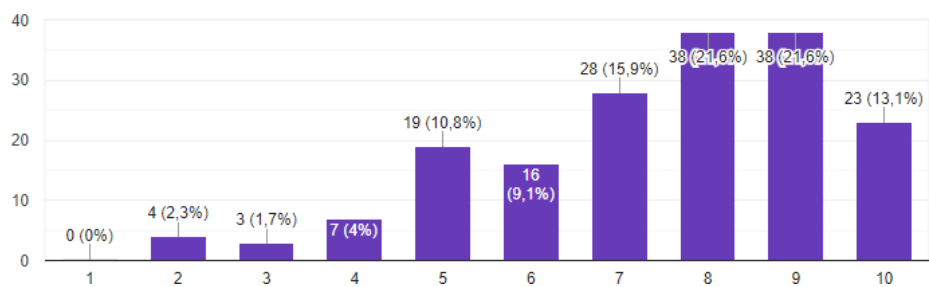
13. How satisfied are you with the library?

119 válasz



English

176 válasz

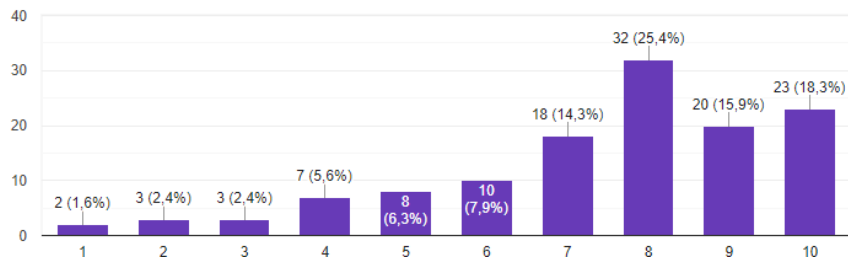


Hungarian

4th SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

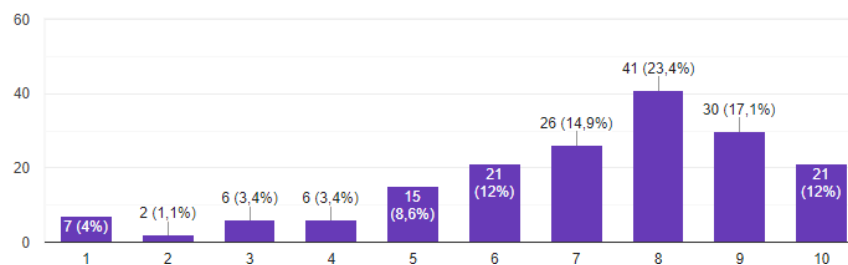
14. To what degree are you satisfied with the administrative support provided by the Institute of Political and International Studies?

126 válasz



English

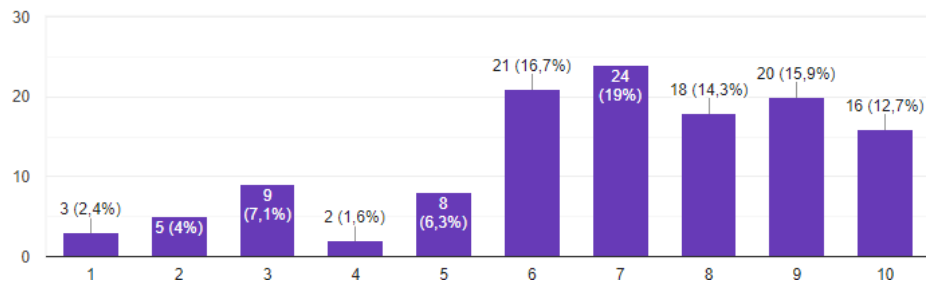
175 válasz



Hungarian

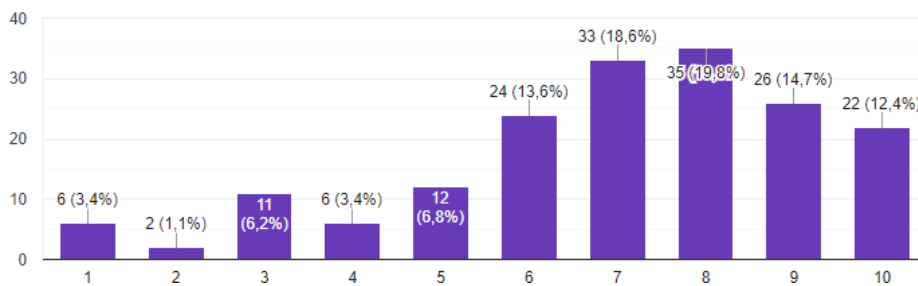
15. How clear is the information on choosing subjects?

126 válasz



English

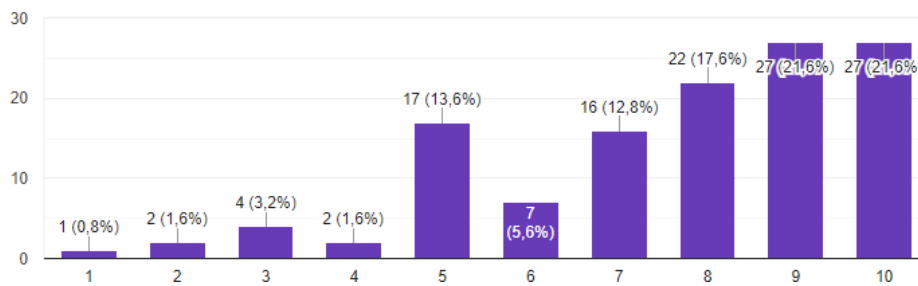
177 válasz



Hungarian

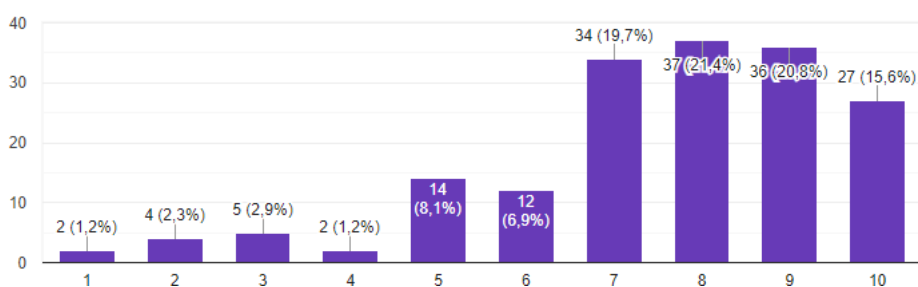
16. How responsive is the administration of Institute of Political and International Studies?

125 válasz



English

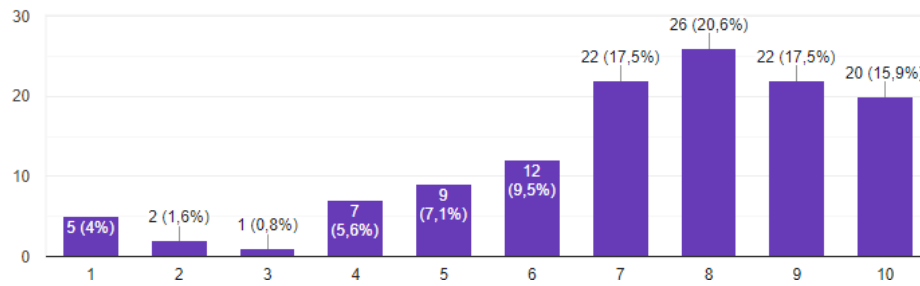
173 válasz



Hungarian

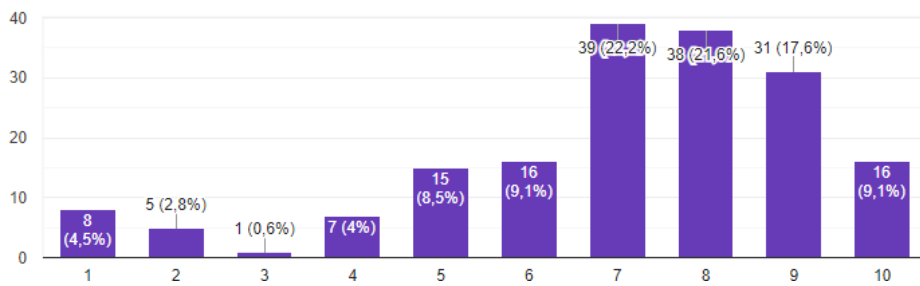
17. How efficient is the university administration of ELTE?

126 válasz



English

176 válasz

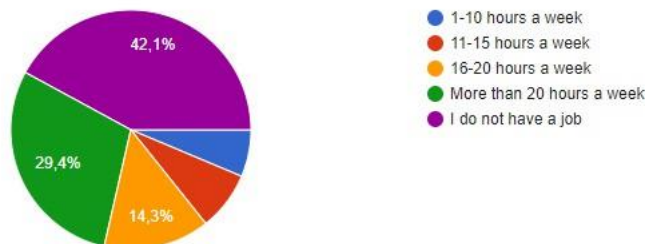


Hungarian

5th SECTION: WORK

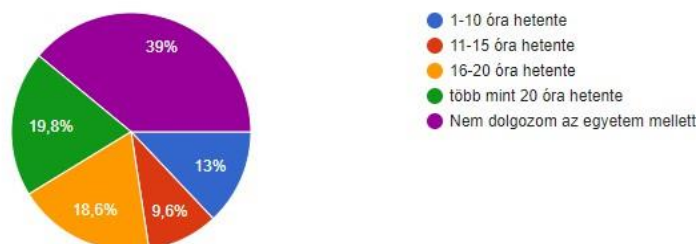
18. If you have a job how many hours a week do you work at that job?

126 válasz



English

177 válasz



Hungarian

19. If you work, does the class timetable present a problem for your job schedule?



English

Hungarian

20. If you work, does your job impact negatively on your studies?

88 válasz

127 válasz



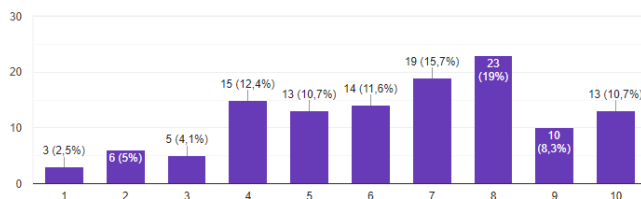
English

Hungarian

6th SECTION: EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

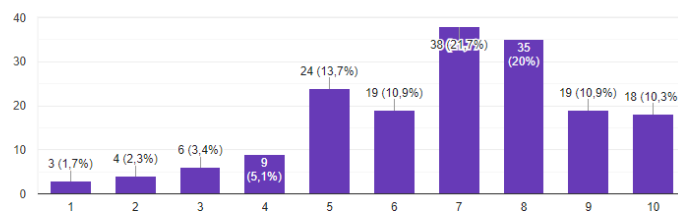
21. To what degree are you happy with extracurricular activities (social and academic events) offered by the Institute of Political and International Studies?

121 válasz



English

175 válasz

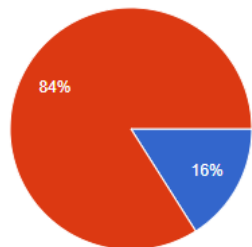


Hungarian

7th SECTION: TOLERANCE

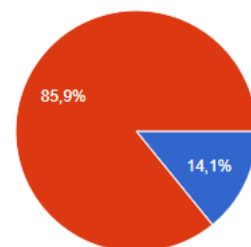
22. Have you experienced racism at the university?

125 válasz



English

177 válasz

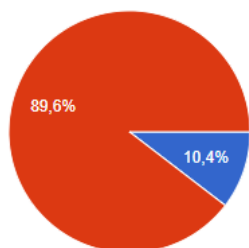


Hungarian

● Yes
● No

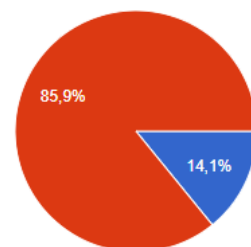
23. Have you experienced sexism at the university?

125 válasz



English

177 válasz

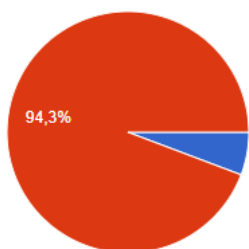


Hungarian

● Yes
● No

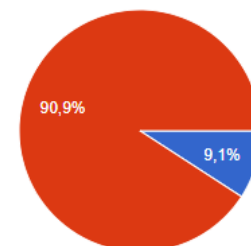
24. Have you experienced homophobia or any kind of LGBTQ+ discrimination at the university?

122 válasz



English

175 válasz



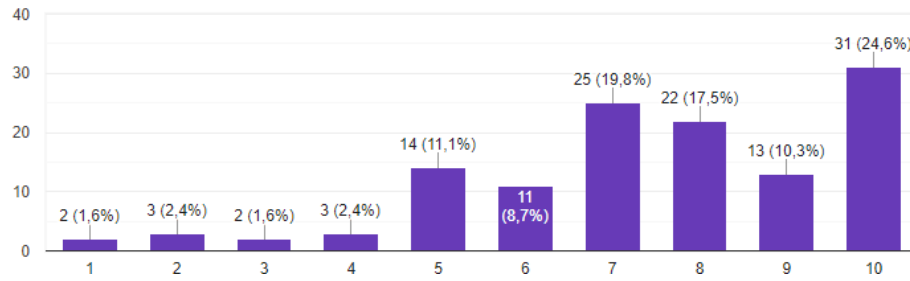
Hungarian

● Yes
● No

8th SECTION: STUDENT VOICE

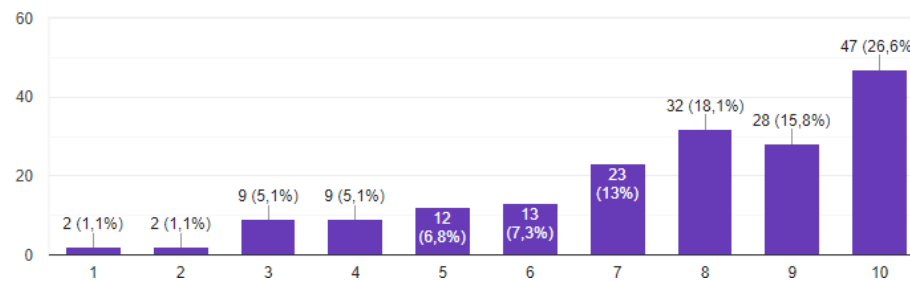
25. To what degree are you satisfied with the opportunities to give feedback on your course?

126 válasz



English

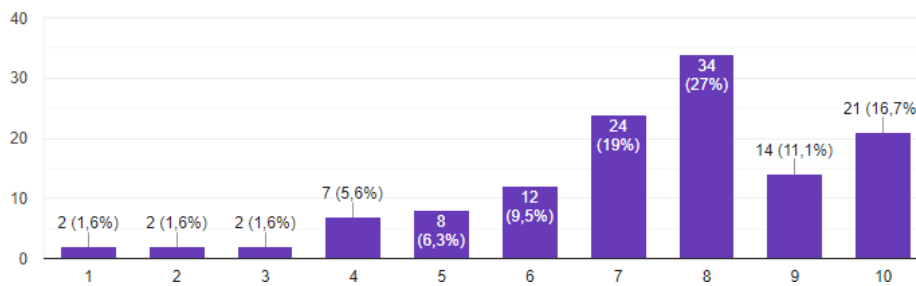
177 válasz



Hungarian

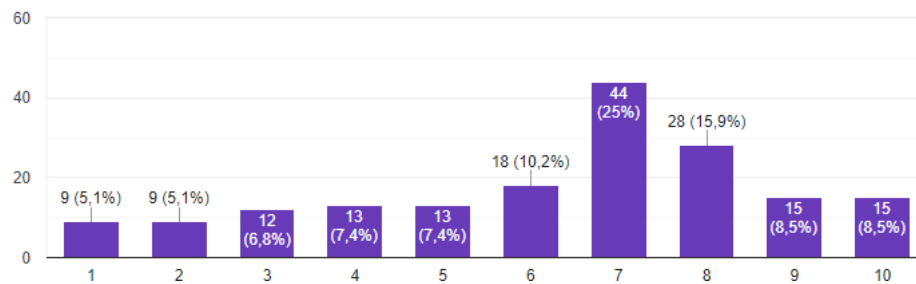
26. To what degree are you satisfied with the staff's attitude towards students' opinions?

126 válasz



English

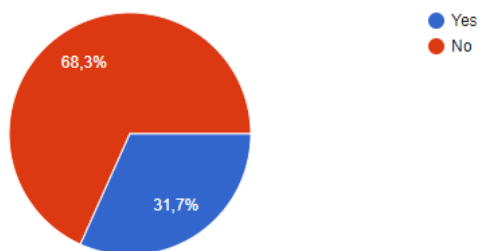
176 válasz



Hungarian

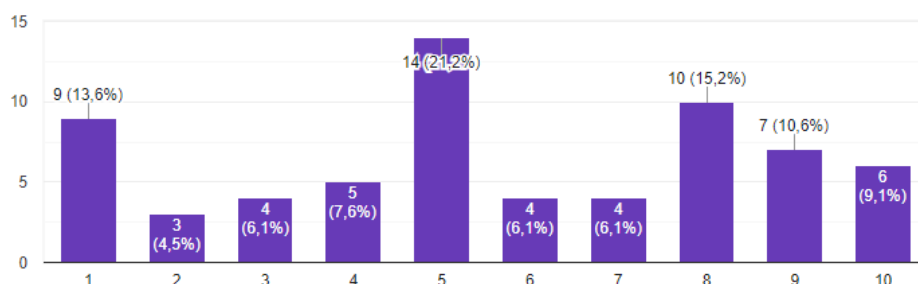
27. Are you familiar with the work of the students' union (association)?

123 válasz



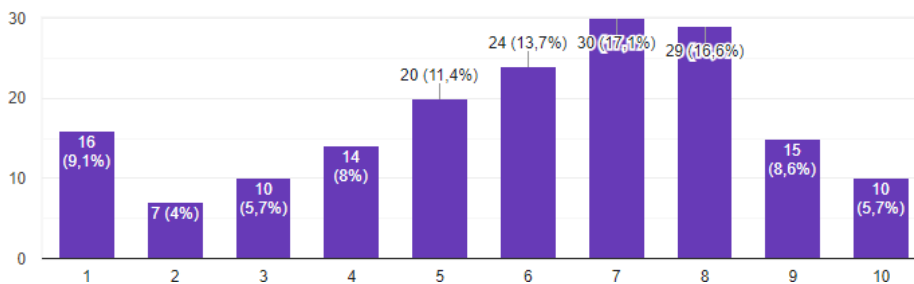
28. If you are familiar with it, to what degree are you satisfied with the students' union (association) representation of your academic interests?

66 válasz



English

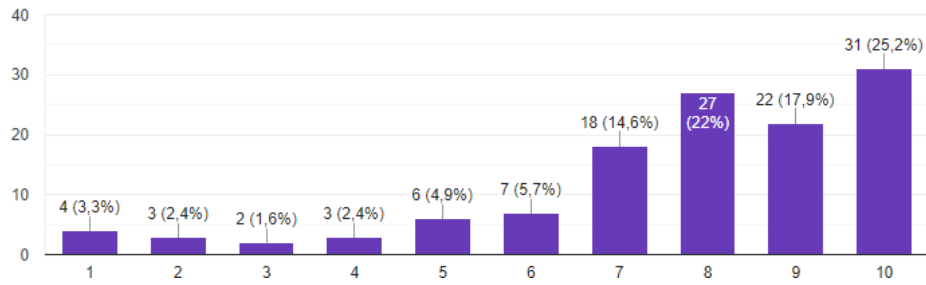
175 válasz



Hungarian

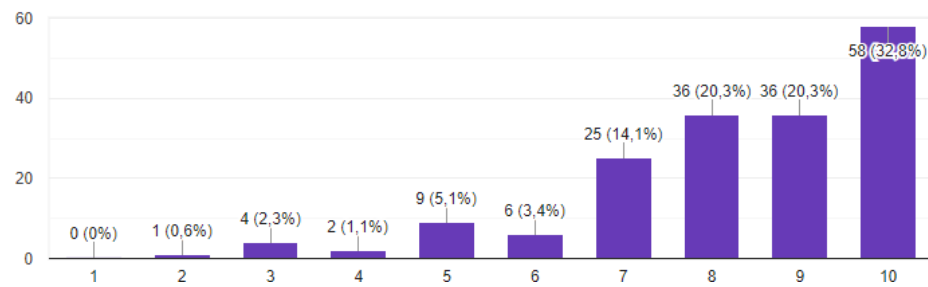
29. To what degree are you satisfied with expressing freely opinions in class?

123 válasz



English

177 válasz

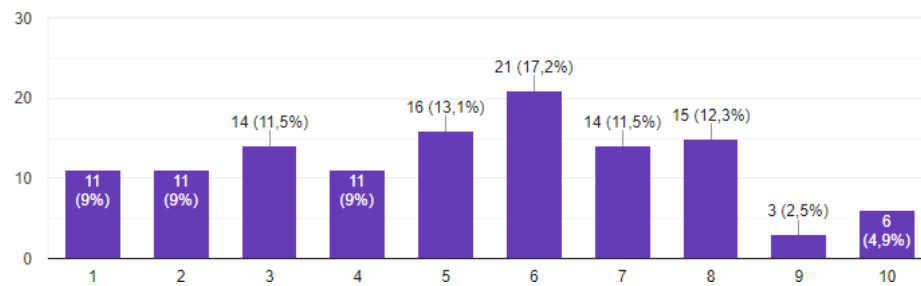


Hungarian

9th SECTION: NEXT STEPS AFTER GRADUATION

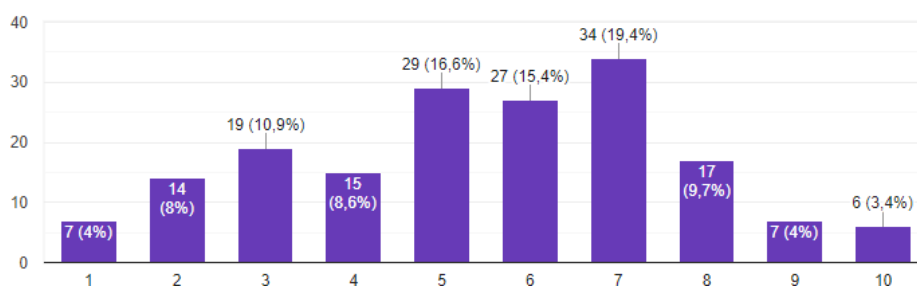
30. How satisfied are you with careers advice and information on future studies?

122 válasz



English

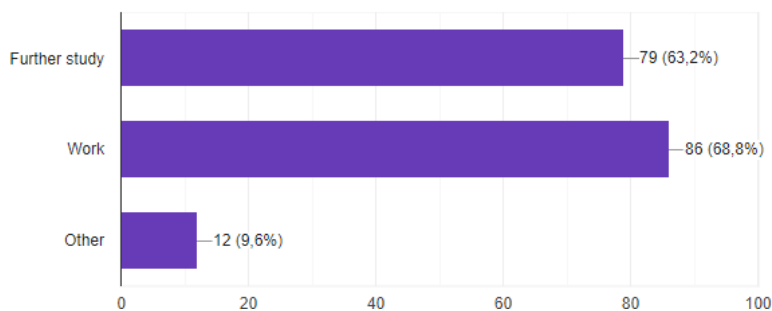
175 válasz



Hungarian

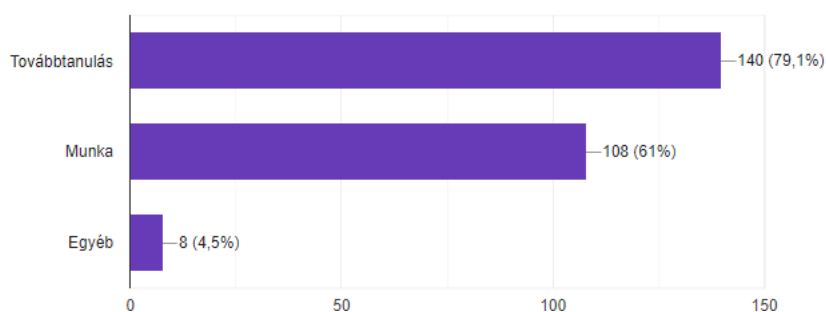
31. What is your next step after leaving ELTE?

125 válasz



English

177 válasz

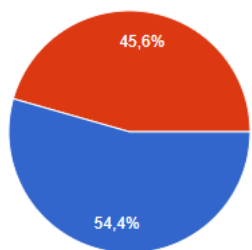


Hungarian

10th SECTION: WELFARE

32. Have you ever felt seriously depressed during your studies?

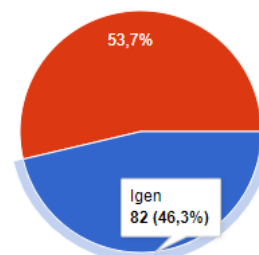
125 válasz



English

177 válasz

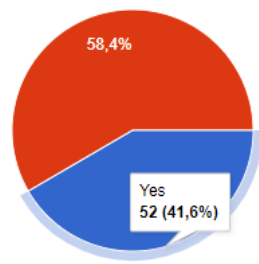
● Yes
● No



Hungarian

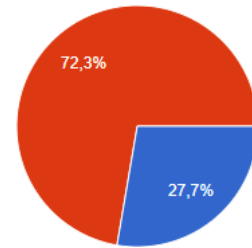
33. Are you aware of mental health services at the university?

125 válasz



English

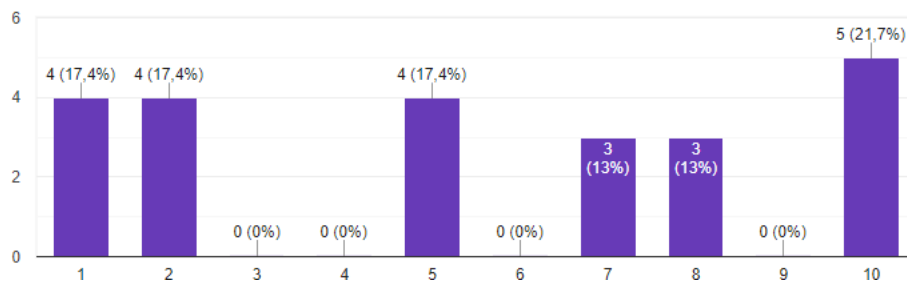
177 válasz



Hungarian

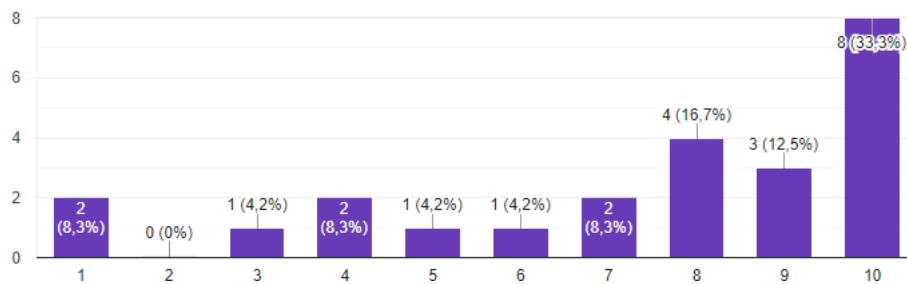
34. If you have used the mental health services provided by ELTE, how satisfied are you with it? - Ignore the question if you have never used the service.

23 válasz



English

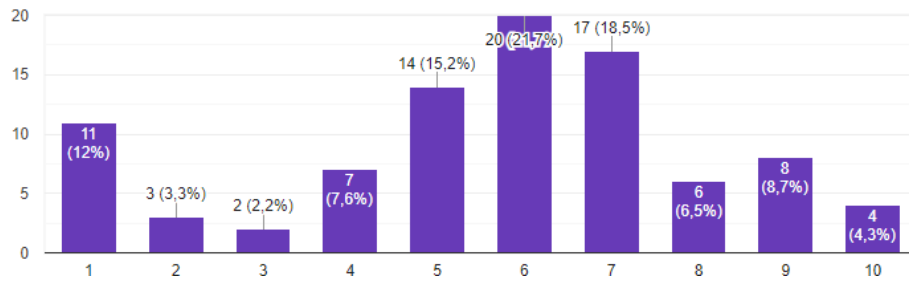
24 válasz



Hungarian

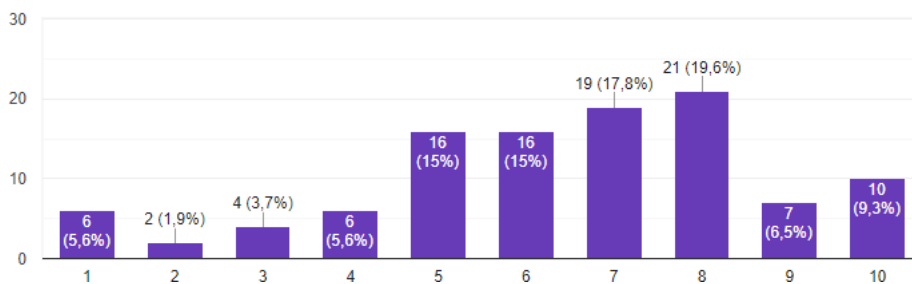
35. There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs.

92 válasz



English

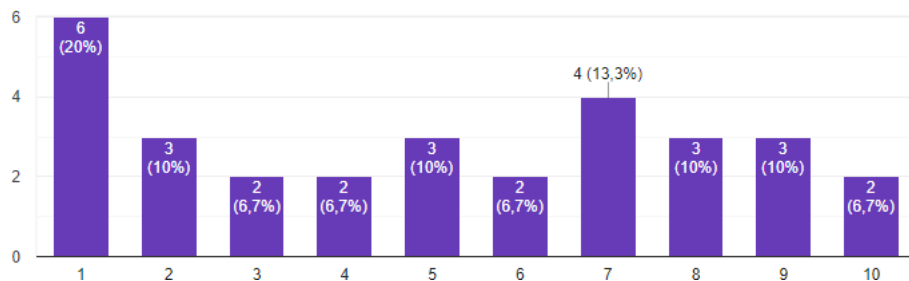
107 válasz



Hungarian

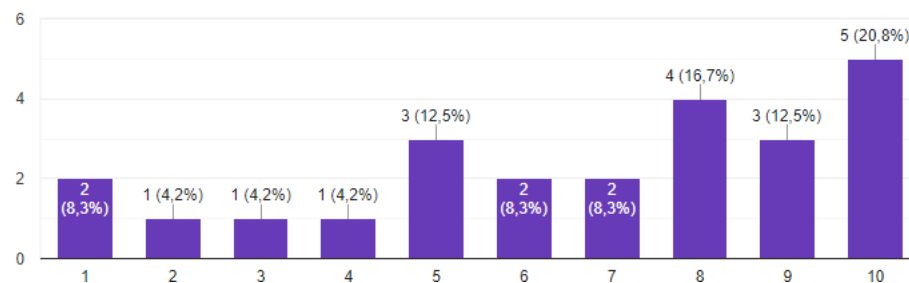
36. When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful. - Ignore the question if you have never used the service.

30 válasz



English

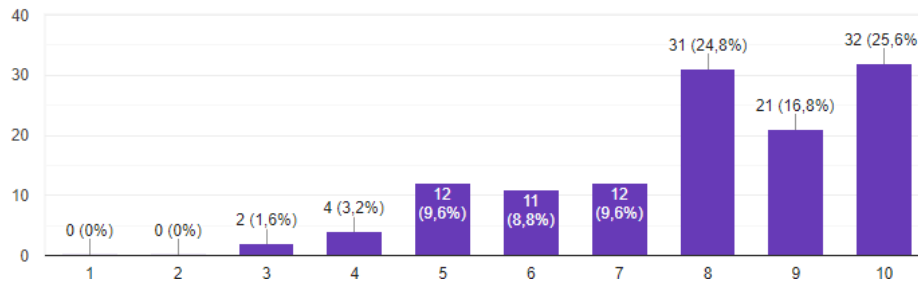
24 válasz



Hungarian

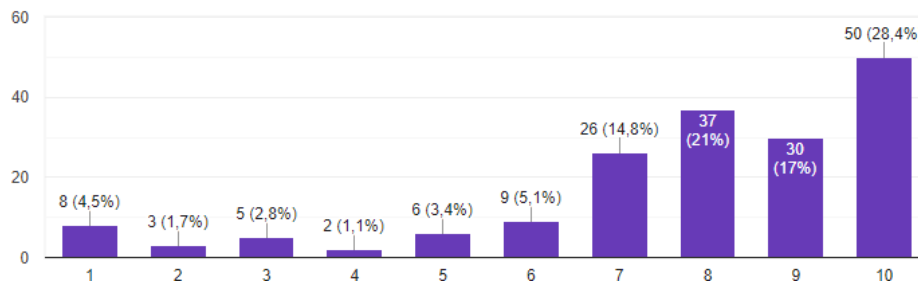
37. Will you recommend studying at Institute of Political and International Studies to others?

125 válasz



English

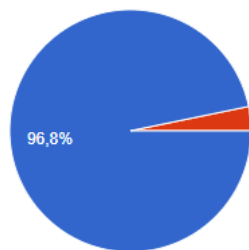
176 válasz



Hungarian

38. Do you support the Institute's mission statement?

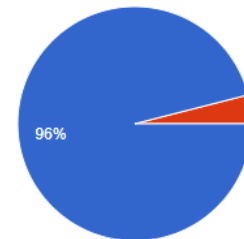
124 válasz



English

176 válasz

● Yes
● No



Hungarian