

BBVA FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

**DESIGN AND ANALYSIS: BBVA FOUNDATION DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
STUDIES AND PUBLIC OPINION
FIELDWORK: IPSOS. MARCH TO JUNE 2010**

DECEMBER 2010

BBVA FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

- University students in the six European countries surveyed have a negative view of the world situation. However they see their personal situation in a positive light, and are generally upbeat about their employment prospects
- Greater personal and financial independence among university students in Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom and France versus the greater dependence of their Spanish and Italian peers, most of whom live with their parents and rely on help from the family to finance their studies
- University students tend to choose their degree for vocational reasons. Choice of university is based more on practical concerns – closeness to home or the fact it was the only one offering the desired course – than the prestige of the institution
- Though globally satisfied with their studies, students in Spain, France and Italy perceive a degree of mismatch between university training and the job market
- Students take a relaxed view on social conducts giving rise to controversy: ample acceptance of same-sex marriage, being a parent without having a steady partner, euthanasia in cases of incurable disease and, a little more weakly, adoption of a child by homosexual couples and abortion.

Madrid, December 2, 2010- The BBVA Foundation presents the findings of its **“International University Students Study”**, based on a broad-ranging survey of the lives and opinions of university students in six European countries with reference to their degree courses and their personal and work prospects.

This international study breaks new ground in examining the views and perceptions of the university students segment across a wide group of countries and with a large sample size (3,000 cases per country) supporting disaggregation by branch of knowledge.

This is the BBVA Foundation’s fourth study of the university population. The three earlier rounds (2003, 2004, 2006) were confined to Spain, but it was decided this year to enlarge the geographical catchment to France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Empirical information was gathered through 3,000 face-to-face interviews in each of the six countries (around 18,000 interviewees in all) with students having completed at least two years of studies belonging to Category 5A of the ISCED classification (UNESCO)¹. Fieldwork was conducted by IPSOS between the months of March and June 2010. The design and analysis of the study are the work of the **BBVA Foundation’s Department of Social Studies and Public Opinion**.

According to the latest data published by Eurostat², the EU-27 countries have a university population (including bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate cycles) of

¹ Category 5A comprises tertiary-level programmes which are largely theory-based and are designed to provide sufficient qualifications for accessing advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements

² Eurostat Yearbook 2010.

approximately 19 million people. The United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Spain (together with Poland) are the countries with most students (more than two million in all except Spain, which has around 1.7 million), and together account for over 50% of the total higher education population within the European Union.

Higher education today confronts the twin challenges of gathering globalisation – and its repercussions for knowledge markets, labour markets and competition between institutions – and the onward march of the knowledge society. In a society characterised by the development and intensive application of knowledge and the demand for increasingly complex skills, higher education has a vital part to play as a transmitter of scientific and technological content and analytical and professional skills.

Other very present factors like the economic crisis, public spending cuts in education and research, and the lack of employment opportunities in certain countries, with the consequent migration of human capital, must of course condition the outlook for today's students and tomorrow's university graduates.

The process of European convergence in the higher education area is intimately connected with the aforementioned challenges of globalisation and the knowledge society, and is also a fundamental ingredient of the new map being drawn for Europe's universities. The interviews on which this study is based were carried out in the thick of the Bologna Process, which lays the groundwork for the construction of a European Higher Education Area and thereby the compatibility and convergence of the region's university systems. Differences in the structure and organisation of national university sectors means the European convergence process has placed different demands on each. In the United Kingdom, for instance, universities have traditionally followed a cycle framework resembling that proposed for the European Higher Education Area. In Spain, conversely, although the old diploma/degree/doctorate structure is being phased out in favour of the new model, implementation will not be complete until 2012.

In Spain, the methodological and organisational transformation brought by this convergence process comes to join the many radical changes that have swept the system in past decades, characterised by the quantitative expansion of centres, the transfer of powers in tertiary education to the autonomous communities and the creation of private universities.

In an increasingly knowledge-based society, university students will shortly become a majority professional segment. And an understanding of their views and values can inform and help shape institutional responses to this all-important public. Also, given that the goals of Bologna are to provide citizens with choices from a transparent and comparable range of courses, to promote student mobility and to give higher education a genuine European dimension it is vital to know which points unify and differentiate the academic experience in individual countries and what each one offers in terms of future opportunities.

This study examines the views and perceptions of students with reference to the differences between countries and branches of study. Its analysis extends over two major dimensions, the first touching on more general aspects and values and the second referring to matters more strictly within the academic sphere:

- I. **Personal life. Values, religiosity and ethics:** assessment of world, national and personal situation, ideological self-identification, religious membership and religiosity, views on the universality and application of ethical principles, acceptance of emerging social conducts giving rise to controversy.
- II. **Views and experience of the university:** student profile, personal and financial independence, sources of student finance, reasons for choice of degree course and

university, satisfaction with degree course and university (education, teaching staff, facilities, services), study patterns, study materials, attitudes towards the European Higher Education Area, feelings about research in the university, future plans and job expectations.

KEY FINDINGS

PERSONAL LIFE. VALUES, RELIGIOSITY AND ETHICS

- Against today's backdrop of economic crisis, students are negative overall about the world situation, divided in their views on the national outlook (predominantly positive in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany and negative in Spain, France and Italy), and **positive on the personal score**.
- University students in the six countries analysed tend to occupy a **centre-left** position on the ideological self-identification scale.
- **The majority belong to some religion, but express a low degree of religiosity.** The exception is the Italians with an average of 5.1 on a religiosity scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 means not religious at all and 10 means very religious). Swedes and Spanish score lowest by this measure (2.7 and 3.2 respectively).
- **University students are not ethical relativists, but accept that moral principles can be flexibly applied as the situation demands:** a majority believe there are clear ethical principles of what is right and wrong. The consensus in most countries however is that ethical principles should be applied "according to the circumstances of the moment". Swedish students are most in favour of this flexible approach, with Italians expressing the most reservations.
- **Social conducts arousing controversy and rejected by some religions meet with wide acceptance among university students:** from living as a couple without being married, divorce or being a single parent through to same-sex marriage, euthanasia and, rather less so, adoption by homosexual couples and abortion. Sweden and Spain occupy the upper reaches of the acceptance map in regard to these conducts.
- **Major divergences in acceptance of practices contravening intellectual property rights,** like downloading music and films from the Internet without paying, illegally downloading software and installing copies of programmes. This kind of conduct is viewed with lenience in Spain and, to a lesser extent, in Sweden, Italy and France, while ambivalence or rejection dominate in the United Kingdom and Germany.
- A large majority of university students in all the countries surveyed see it as unacceptable to copy material from the Internet without citing the source, copying in an exam or presenting other people's work as if it were their own.

VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

- Consistent with their positive feelings about their personal situation (not so that of the world or their country), students affirm that **"being a higher education student is a privilege nowadays", "gives you an outlook on life different from everyone else's" and "leaves you better prepared to get on in life"**.
- **Differences in degree of independence:** a majority of students in Italy and Spain have not moved away from the parental home (around 70%) and tend not to be in paid work (with only around a third working in both countries). At the other extreme, students in Sweden, followed by the Germans and British and, some way behind, the French, tend to live independently of their families. Most Germans and over half of Swedes combine their studies with some kind of paid employment

- **Italian and Spanish students are the most reliant on their families for help in meeting their outlays** (73% and 70% respectively), while grants or financial assistance are of marginal importance only, and loans almost non-existent. The family is also the main source of income for a majority in France (50%) and a plurality in Germany (43%), though note that a large number of Germans (31%) draw the funds for their studies from some kind of paid work. In the United Kingdom and Sweden, finally, financing sources are more diversified.
- **Students base their choice of degree course on vocational rather than instrumental considerations.** Over 50% in all countries spontaneously state that they enrolled for their current course because “it was the one I liked best”. The existence of better employment prospects is only a reason of weight among students of economics and legal sciences.
- **The choice of where to study rests mainly on practical considerations** (nearness to home, the only university offering the desired degree course) in contrast to more competitive models, like the U.S. university system, where the centre’s prestige and quality plays a determining role. Spanish students are the likeliest of all to choose their centre for reasons of proximity.
- In some countries, overall satisfaction with the university experience coexists with a perceived **mismatch between their expectations and the realities of training for professional life**. Only 4 of every 10 students in Spain, Italy and France believe that higher education institutions prepare students well for their future professional lives, compared to 7 out of 10 Britons and 5 out of 10 Germans and Swedes. How students rate the university’s success in training for professional life is also strongly conditioned by their branch of study: in almost all countries, students taking health sciences or technical degrees are likelier to think that universities prepare students well for professional life, while students of social sciences and arts and humanities tend to stress their shortcomings in this respect.
- **The share-out of hours devoted to academic activities (study, classwork) differs widely by country: a reflection of two starkly contrasting educational styles.**
 - Students in Sweden and Italy (around 20 hours on average) followed by Britain (19 hours) devote most time to personal study in a standard week, with Germany occupying an intermediate position (16 hours) and France and Spain bringing up the rear (13 and 13.5 hours respectively).
 - Classwork takes up more hours per week for students in Germany, Spain and France.
 - The hours spent in theory classes far outnumber those spent in practical classes across the European countries in the sample.
 - Overall, personal study and classroom hours tend to balance each other out. Thus the students who spend most hours studying in the course of a standard week (those in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Italy) tend to spend less time in class; while those studying fewer hours (in Spain, France and Germany), have a busier classwork schedule.
- **Students see research as a key goal of higher education, but perceive little information or encouragement to take up a research career.** Teaching staff, it seems, are not making an organised effort to encourage students into research. Students declare themselves unfamiliar with the research their professors are pursuing and unconvinced of receiving any stimulus to do research work. So while they see research as one of the key goals of higher education, a majority do not feel well enough informed to contemplate a research career.

- Although a majority believes that research carries a lot of prestige, they also see researcher salaries as not that attractive and consider that the work itself requires more effort than other professions.
- University students are generally **upbeat about their chances of finding a job that fits their qualifications** on completing their degree. Confidence runs high in all survey countries, from the Swedes at the top (average of 8.4 on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means it is not very likely and 10 that it is very likely) down to the Spanish with 6.8. Students of health sciences and engineering, manufacturing and construction tend to be most optimistic, while those doing arts and humanities are more moderate in their expectations.
- **Forming a family is a clear aspiration** for students, with a majority saying they would like to form a steady couple and have children at some point in their lives.

STUDENT PROFILE BY COUNTRY:

Students divide into two large groups by reference to their way of life while at university:

- United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and, to a lesser extent, France: more independent of their families, likelier to work, financing study outlays from a variety of sources (help from family, work, grants, financial assistance or loans, depending on the country).
- Spain and Italy: less independence, a majority living with their parents, only a minority in work, and reliant on help from the family to finance their studies, with little access to grants or other forms of financial assistance.

Although satisfied overall with the academic experience, students are divided in their views about their preparation for later professional life:

- Spain, France and Italy: students perceive a mismatch between university education and the job market.
- The United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, Sweden and Germany: the dominant view among students is that the university is equipping them well.

Work patterns too divide students into two large segments:

- United Kingdom, Sweden and Italy: more hours per week devoted to personal study than classwork.
- Germany, Spain and France: classroom hours outnumber personal study hours in a standard academic week.

Generally speaking, students in the United Kingdom differ from those in Continental Europe in their greater satisfaction with the university experience, more intense sense of institutional pride (bond with their university) and firmer conviction of their centre's success in equipping them for professional life. In keeping with work patterns that emphasise personal study over time spent in class, they are also the most frequent users of university libraries and the likeliest to employ books and specialist journals as study materials.

Spanish students are among those most reliant on the family (for both accommodation and finance). They are the likeliest to choose a university for reasons of proximity. Against a backdrop of global satisfaction with the university, they are the most sceptical about its success in preparing students for professional life. Regarding the European Higher Education Area, they join with the Germans in opposing the adoption of a system based on three cycles (bachelor's, master's and doctorate). Finally, they are among the least aware of the kind of research being done by their teachers and those feeling least well informed about the possibilities of a research career.

STUDENT PROFILE BY BRANCH OF STUDY³:

Although students' views and perceptions by branch of knowledge are not the same in every country, it is possible to distinguish certain common patterns:

- Students of **health sciences** stand a little apart from the rest: they are among the likeliest to choose their degree for vocational reasons, and tend to stand at the extreme of most satisfaction with their university experience and, particularly, the preparation it gives them for professional life. In a majority of countries, they tend to be the students devoting most time per week to personal study. They are also more confident than their peers about the possibilities of finding work that fits with their qualifications.
- Students of **engineering, manufacturing and construction** stand close to their health science fellows on a number of counts, while tending to be less positive in their assessments (views on professional training, optimism about finding work). Although a majority state vocational factors among those guiding their choice of degree course, a significant percentage (larger than in health sciences) was also influenced by what they saw as better employment prospects.
- Students of **economic and legal sciences** respond to a rather different profile than the rest. The prospect of better employment opportunities is a reason of weight in their choice of degree course. At the same time, they are among those likeliest to perceive a mismatch between university training and the job market. Economics students rank alongside other social science students as those devoting least hours per week to study.
- Students of **arts and humanities** stand out for the clearly vocational nature of their degree course choice. At the same time, they are the most vehement about the shortcomings of practical teaching and about the university's failings in equipping students for professional life. They are generally optimistic about the prospects of finding work but less so than other students. Students of **other social sciences** (sociology, information sciences, political sciences, psychology among others) have a profile similar to this group.
- Students of **experimental sciences** tend to occupy a middle ground between those in health sciences and arts and humanities. They stand out clearly for their affinity and familiarity with research: they are the most aware of the research projects being conducted at their universities and those who feel best informed about the possibilities of going on to a research career.

³ To facilitate a more detailed analysis, and in view of the size and heterogeneous nature of the social sciences category, respondents were broken down into those studying legal sciences, economic sciences and other social sciences.

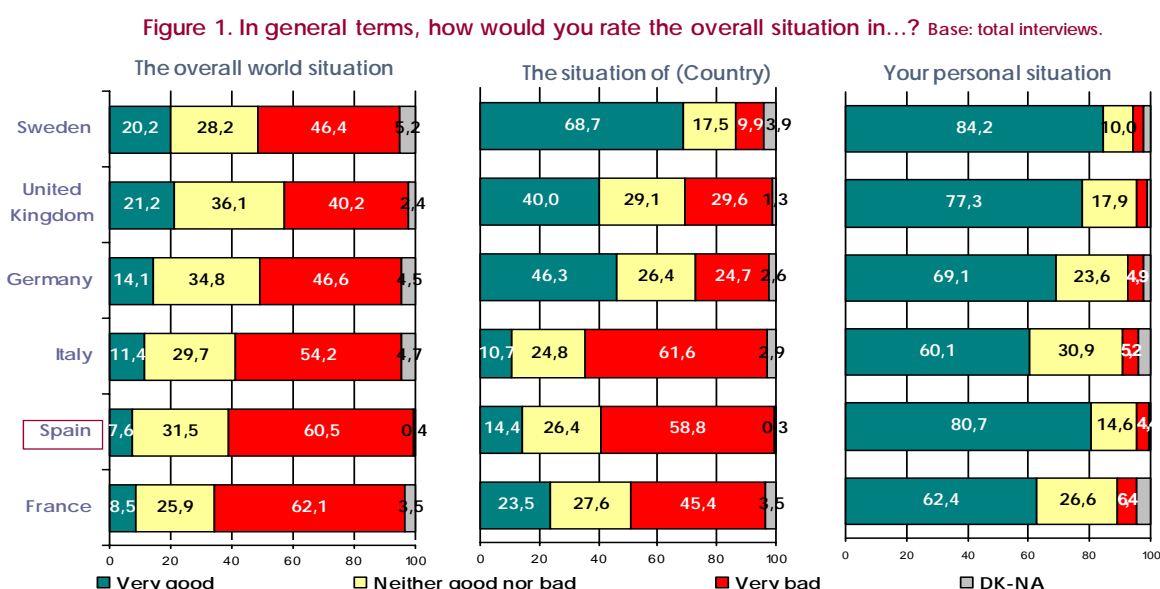
I. PERSONAL LIFE: VALUES, RELIGIOSITY AND ETHICS

THE WORLD, THE COUNTRY AND PERSONAL LIVES

Strong satisfaction with their personal situation

In these times of crisis, university students manage to be upbeat about their personal lives. The strength of this feeling is thrown into relief when viewed from a comparative perspective versus the world and even their own country (see figure 1). Students, in effect, draw a clear distinction between their views of the world situation, the situation of their country and their personal situation. They score the latter very highly, are divided in their views on the state of their country and are negative overall about the state of the world. This breach is especially striking in Spain (81% are positive about their personal situation against only 14% and 8% saying the same of their country and the world respectively).

The biggest inter-country differences emerge when students assess the situation of their country. Very positive in Sweden (69% rating it good or very good) ahead of Germany (46%) and the United Kingdom (40%), and clearly negative in France (45% rating it bad or very bad), Spain (59%) and Italy (62%).



IDEOLOGICAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Political views are closely similar

Asked to rate themselves ideologically on a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 means extreme left and 10 extreme right), university students in the six European countries opted for intermediate values broadly equivalent to the political centre, with a slight leftwards skew. As table 2 shows, the distance from the lowest average score, corresponding to Germans (4.4), to the highest, that of the Italians (5.1), was only seven decimal points. Spanish higher education students fall between these two countries with an average of 4.6.

However, clearer differences emerge if we examine the response distribution in full. In Germany, France, Spain and Sweden, over 40% of students place themselves on the left

of the political spectrum, dropping to just 30% in the United Kingdom and Italy. In Italy and Sweden, over a third place themselves to the right, while Germany is the country with the lowest percentage of avowedly right-leaning students (19%).

Table 2: When talking about politics, we tend to use the expressions left and right. Imagine a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 corresponds to the extreme left and 10 to the extreme right. Where would you locate yourself? Base: all cases.

	Average	Ideological distribution (%)			
		Left (0-4)	Centre (5)	Right (6-10)	DK/NA
Germany	4.4	43.3	29.7	18.5	8.6
France	4.6	40.7	22.3	25.8	11.1
Spain	4.6	41.1	28.4	27.3	3.2
Sweden	4.9	39.8	16.4	36.1	7.7
United Kingdom	4.9	30.2	31.4	28.2	10.2
Italy	5.1	31.1	15.2	36.7	17.0

In all countries, students in arts and humanities and other social sciences tend to lean more to the left, while the centre is most popular with social science specialties like economics or law (see figure 3).

Figure 3: When talking about politics, we tend to use the expressions left and right. Imagine a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 corresponds to the extreme left and 10 to the extreme right. Where would you locate yourself? Base: total interviews



RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY

Low degree of religiosity

A varying majority of students in the 6 countries belong to some religion. The highest percentages of religious membership correspond to Italy, Sweden and Germany, with around 70%, followed by 60% in United Kingdom and Spain and 50% in France.

Although most belong formally to a religion, university students tend to describe themselves as not very religious. The exception are the Italians who obtain 5.1 on a religiosity scale from 0 to 10. Swedes and Spanish come out bottom by this measure with 2.7 and 3.2 respectively (see table 4).

Table 4: Whether or not you consider yourself part of a church or a religious faith, how would you describe yourself? Base: all cases. Mean on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you are “not religious at all” and 10 means that you are “very religious”.

Italy	5.1
United Kingdom	3.5
Germany	3.4
France	3.4
Spain	3.2
Sweden	2.7

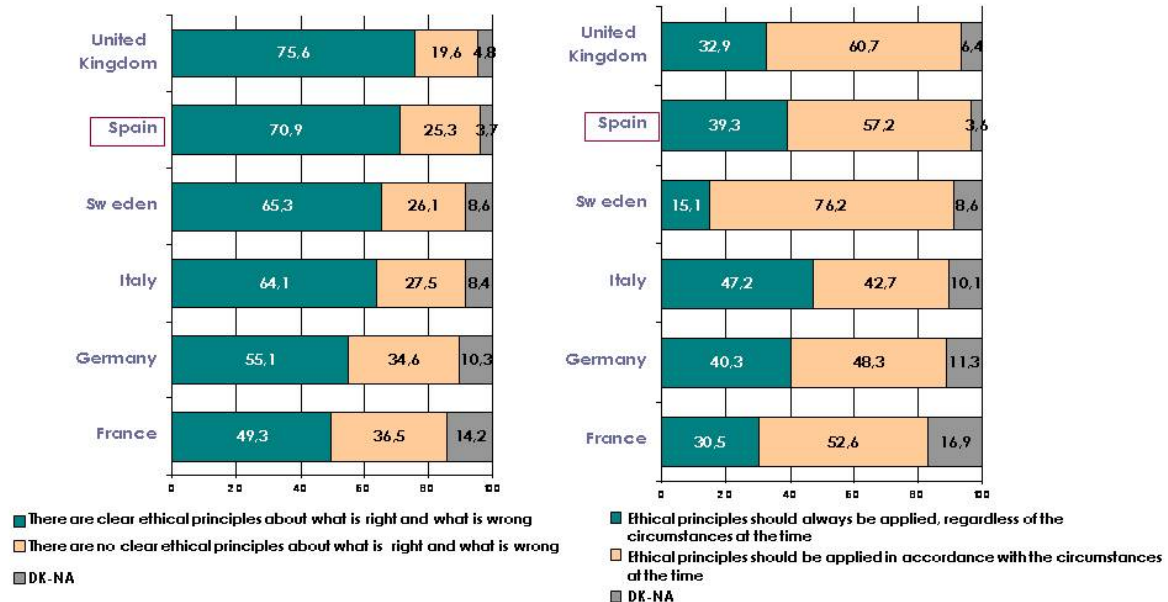
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

University students are not ethical relativists, but accept that moral principles can be flexibly applied

University students in all survey countries agree that “there are clear ethical principles about what is right and what is wrong”. Consensus on this point is strongest in the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden and Italy, and rather less accentuated in Germany and France (see figure 5).

A majority also believe that ethical principles “should be applied in accordance with the circumstances at the time”, though here we find more discrepancy from one country to the next. Swedish students are those who incline most to this pragmatic viewpoint, followed at a distance by the British and Spanish. The exception is Italy, where opinions are divided but with a small predominance of those affirming that ethical principles should be applied always, regardless of the circumstances.

Figure 5: Which of the following two opinions do you tend to agree with more? Base: total interviews



ACCEPTABILITY OF SOCIAL CONDUCTS

Ample acceptance of contemporary social realities

In tune with the weak influence of religion, we find young university students to be generally relaxed about emerging social conducts raising degrees of moral controversy.

A wide range of conducts are viewed in this relaxed manner, with students avowing a high level of acceptance for living as a couple without being married, divorce and being a single parent, along with same-sex marriage, euthanasia (defined as providing medical help to sick people who have an incurable disease and do not wish to carry on living) and, more weakly, abortion. The adoption of a child by homosexual couples is also widely accepted in all countries except for Italy.

As table 6 shows, degree of acceptance of these practices is greater in Sweden and Spain and tends to moderate in Italy.

Table 6: Regardless of what you yourself do or might do, can you please tell me if you think each of the situations and behaviours I am going to read out is acceptable or not? Base: all cases. Average on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is totally unacceptable and 10 means you think it is totally acceptable

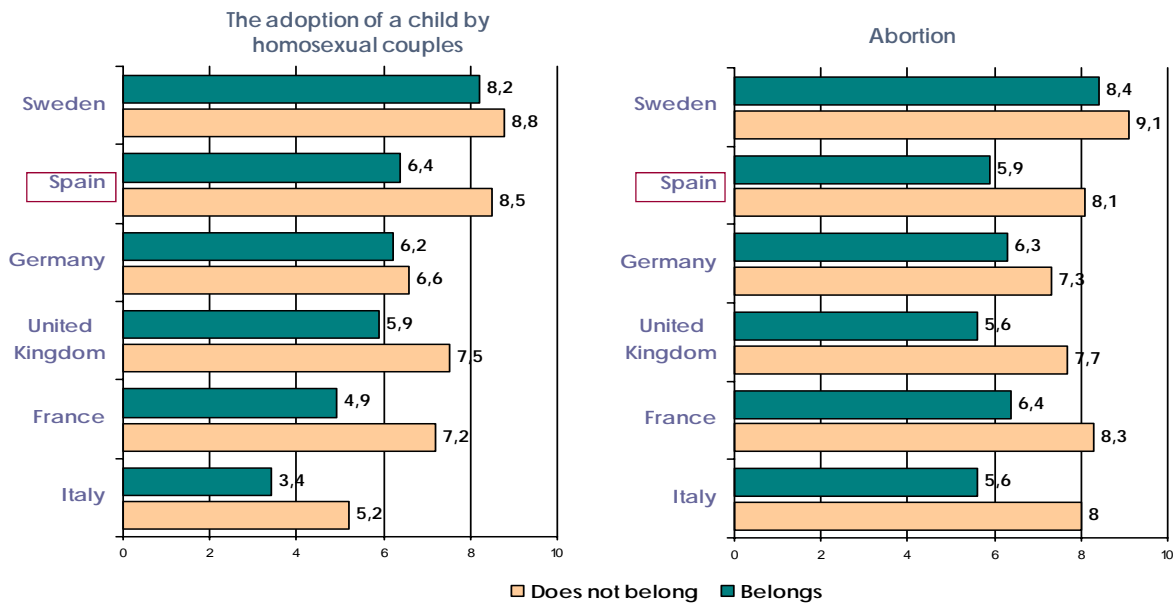
	Sweden	Spain	Germany	United Kingdom	France	Italy
Living as a couple without getting married	9.5	9.0	8.9	8.5	8.0	8.3
Divorce	9.0	8.7	8.2	7.6	7.8	7.6
Being a father or a mother without having a stable partner	8.2	8.4	7.9	7.4	6.6	6.5
Marriage between people of the same sex	8.8	8.0	7.4	7.3	6.5	5.6
The adoption of a child by homosexual couples	8.3	7.3	6.3	6.6	6.0	3.9
Abortion	8.7	6.8	6.6	6.5	7.3	6.3
Euthanasia (providing medical help to sick people who have an incurable disease and do not wish to carry on living)	7.4	7.4	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.7

Religious values remain a touchstone for judgments on certain matters, even though students' low religiosity means they pay little heed to the official doctrine of their respective faiths.

In effect, analysis of two concrete situations reveals significant differences of opinion depending on religion. Across all survey countries, both the adoption of a child by homosexual couples and abortion obtain higher levels of acceptance among students not belonging to any religion. In Sweden and Germany, the differences in acceptance between members and non-members of a religion are smaller than elsewhere (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Regardless of what you yourself do or might do, can you please tell me if you think each of the situations and behaviours I am going to read out is acceptable or not?

Base: total interviews. Scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is totally unacceptable and 10 means you think it is totally acceptable.



Intellectual property and new technologies

The study also broached the subject of certain conducts involving intellectual property that may be legally outlawed but nonetheless viewed as socially acceptable.

The results show that Italian, Swedish, French and, especially, Spanish students justify certain situations and behaviours that contravene the law, while the Germans and British consider them unacceptable or are at least divided in their opinions.

Downloading music and films from the Internet without paying is clearly accepted in Spain (7.7) and rather less so in Sweden (6.3), Italy (6.1) and France (5.9), but rejected in the United Kingdom (4.8) and Germany (4.8). Downloading software from the Internet without paying or installing copies of programmes or software in your computer instead of the originals meet with the same pattern of response, i.e., treated with lenience in Spain and less so elsewhere.

Buying copied or pirate CDs or DVDs is the conduct most widely rejected by Europe's higher education students, with only Spain (5.8) and, to a lesser extent, Italy (5.0) inclining to acceptance (see table 8).

Table 8: Regardless of what you yourself do or might do, can you please tell me if you think each of the situations and behaviours I am going to read out is acceptable or not? Base: all cases. Average on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is totally unacceptable and 10 means you think it is totally acceptable

	Spain	Sweden	Italy	France	United Kingdom	Germany
Downloading music and films from the Internet without paying	7.7	6.3	6.1	5.9	4.8	4.8
Downloading software from the Internet without paying	7.5	6.3	6.0	6.0	4.7	5.0
Installing copies of software in your computer instead of the originals	7.3	6.3	5.8	5.9	4.8	5.3
Buying copied or pirate CDs or DVDs	5.8	4.6	5.0	4.6	4.3	3.7

Copying material directly from the Internet for degree course assignments without citing the source, copying in an exam or presenting other people's work as if it were your own are reproved by higher education students in all countries (see table 9).

In all the above cases, the British and Swedish are the most vehemently against.

Table 9: Regardless of what you yourself do or might do, can you please tell me if you think each of the situations and behaviours I am going to read out is acceptable or not? Base: all cases. Average on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is totally unacceptable and 10 means you think it is totally acceptable

	Spain	Italy	France	Germany	United Kingdom	Sweden
Copying material directly from the Internet for degree course assignments without citing the source	4.2	4.1	3.0	2.6	1.7	0.9
Copying in a university examination	3.7	3.4	2.1	3.6	0.8	0.5
Using other people's work as if it were your own in a university assignment	2.9	2.2	1.7	1.7	0.9	0.5

II. VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

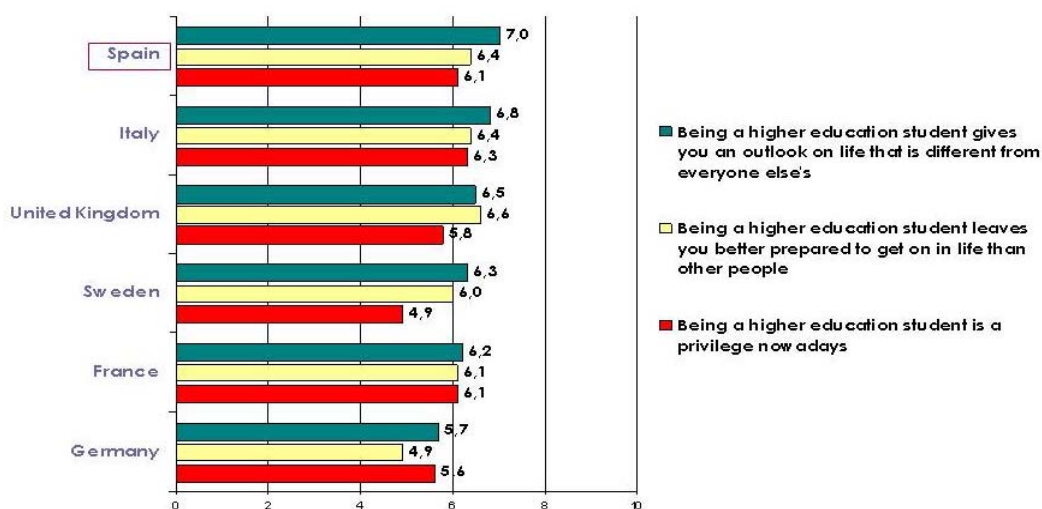
Students feel privileged to be at university

Given students' contentment with their personal lives, it is interesting to analyse what importance they attach to the fact of being at university, and whether they see this condition as somehow setting them apart from the general population.

On this score, there is a broad consensus that being a university student "leaves you better prepared to get on in life than other people", as well as "giving you a different outlook". In almost all the countries surveyed, these two statements obtained agreement scores of above 6 points, with students in Spain and Italy the most convinced. Only in Germany did a majority reject the idea that a university education means you are better prepared to get on in life.

Further, a majority of students believe that "being a higher education student is a privilege nowadays". The Italians, Spanish and French are the readiest to take this view (average agreement of just over 6 points on a scale from 0 to 10), with Britons and Germans a few decimals behind (5.8 and 5.6) and the Swedes bringing up the rear (4.9) (see figure 10).

Figure 10: Now I am going to read out some sentences about being a higher education student and I would like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each. Base: total interviews
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you totally disagree and 10 that you totally agree

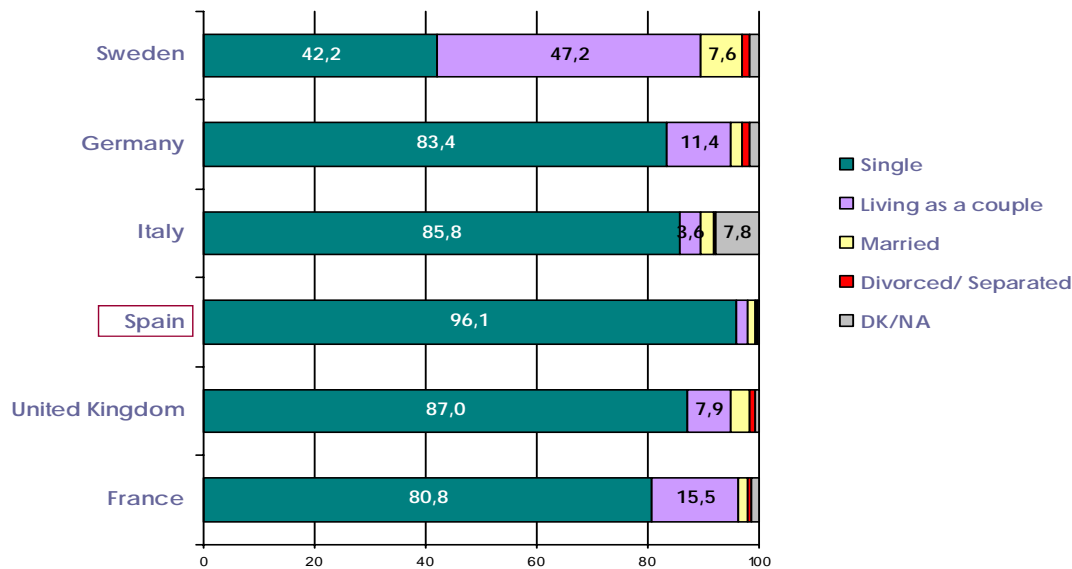


PROFILE AND WAY OF LIFE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The average age of higher education students varies with the country, rising from the 22.4 average of the United Kingdom and France through Spain (22.8) to Italy (24), Germany (24.6) and Sweden (24.7).

An ample majority of students (over 80% in all cases) report their marital status as single, the exception being Sweden, where a plurality (47%) say they live with a partner (see figure 11).

Figure 11. Student profile by marital status. Base: total interviews.

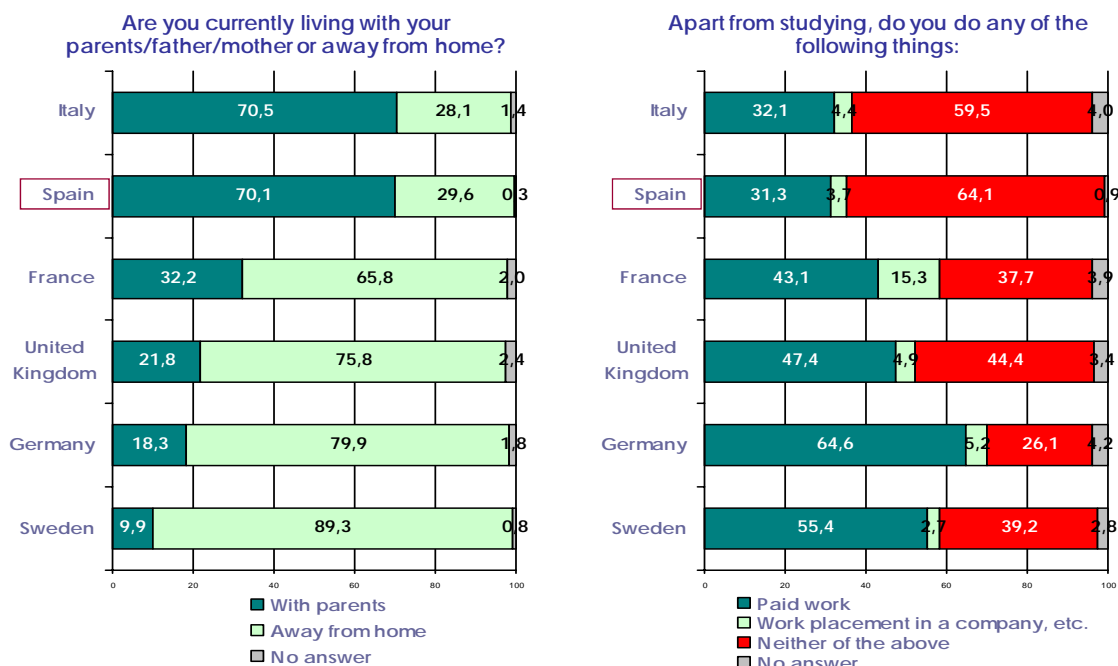


Reliance on the family is greater in Spain and Italy

The profile of university students varies in some respects like age or marital status, but it is in their way of life that the starkest differences emerge. In effect, seven of every ten students in Italy and Spain live at home with their parents, compared to only one out of ten in Sweden, two out of ten in Germany and the United Kingdom and three out of ten in France.

As is logical, living independently is correlated to having a degree of economic freedom. Hence the majority of Germans (65%), Swedish (55%) and British (47%), and a plurality among the French (43%), combine their studies with some kind of paid work, while in Spain and Italy this percentage drops to around a third (see figure 12).

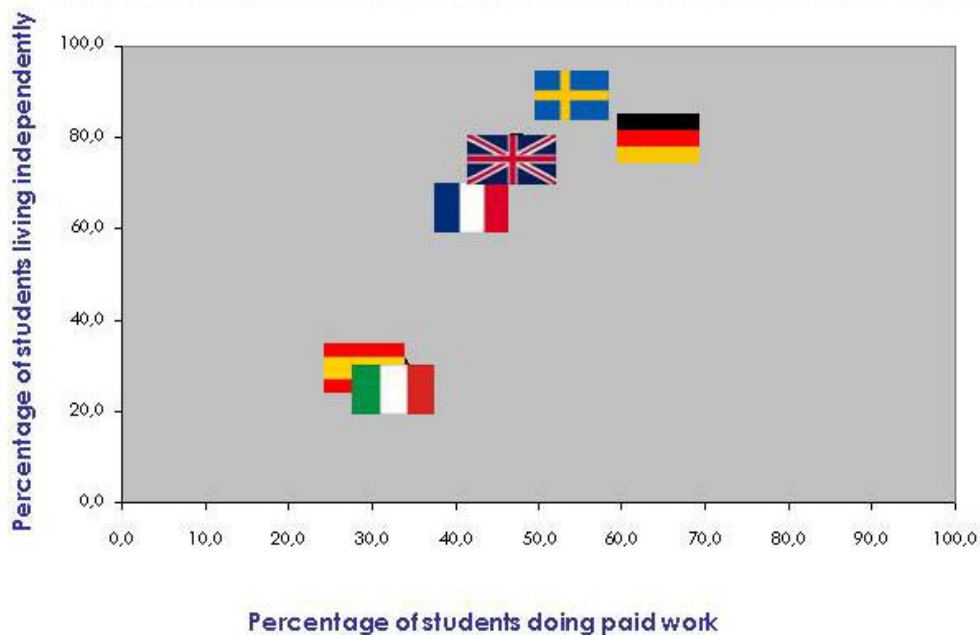
Figure 12. Living conditions. Base: total interviews



Combining the percentage who work and the percentage who live independently, we arrive at a highly differentiated map of the ways of life of Europe's students (see figure 13).

- The Spanish and Italians live the least independently and are the least likely to do paid work,
- The Swedes and Germans are likeliest of all to live away from home and have a paid occupation
- In the middle, though closer to the second, stand the French and the British.

Figure 13. Map of countries by independence from family. Base: total interviews



In keeping with this greater dependence, a large majority of Italian and Spanish students rely mainly on help from the family to meet their expenses (73% and 70% respectively). A majority in France (50%) and a plurality in Germany (43%) also cite the family as their main source of income, although a significant portion of Germans (31%) finance their studies through paid work. Students in the United Kingdom and Sweden draw their income from more diversified sources: in the United Kingdom, grants (24%), help from the family (23%) and financial assistance (18%); and in Sweden, mainly government loans (29%) and financial assistance from the university or some other institution (28%).

Income sources other than help from the family and personal savings, such as grants, loans or financial assistance, are of marginal importance only in Italy and Spain (see table 14).

Table 14: Thinking about all your outlays including accommodation, food, transport, going out, and study expenses like matriculation fees, materials, etc., from which of the following sources do you draw the money to pay for them? In the first place? Base: all cases

	Italy	Spain	France	Germany	United Kingdom	Sweden
Help from family	72.7	70.0	49.9	42.6	22.9	6.4
Work at or outside the higher education institution	17.3	15.9	19.7	31.0	16.7	16.6
Personal savings	5.5	4.9	5.8	4.6	6.6	7.6
Grant from higher education institution/other institution	20.0	80.0	16.1	2.0	23.7	0.8
Financial assistance from the higher education institution/other institution	0.6	0.3	3.3	11.2	18.0	28.2
Bank loan	-	0.1	1.5	3.1	7.9	8.1
Government loan	-	-	-	-	-	29.3
Other	-	0.5	1.3	3.6	3.6	1.4
DK/NA	1.9	0.2	2.4	1.9	0.5	1.6

REASONS FOR CHOOSING DEGREE COURSE AND UNIVERSITY

Degree choices are vocation-driven

A majority of students are guided in their choice of degree by **vocational considerations**. Over 50% in all countries spontaneously state that they decided to enrol in their course because “it was the one I liked best”.

Instrumental considerations like good employment prospects were the next to be mentioned, especially in the United Kingdom and, second, France (see figure 15).

Figure 15: ¿What is the main reason you enrolled in the course you are currently studying?

Base: total interviews

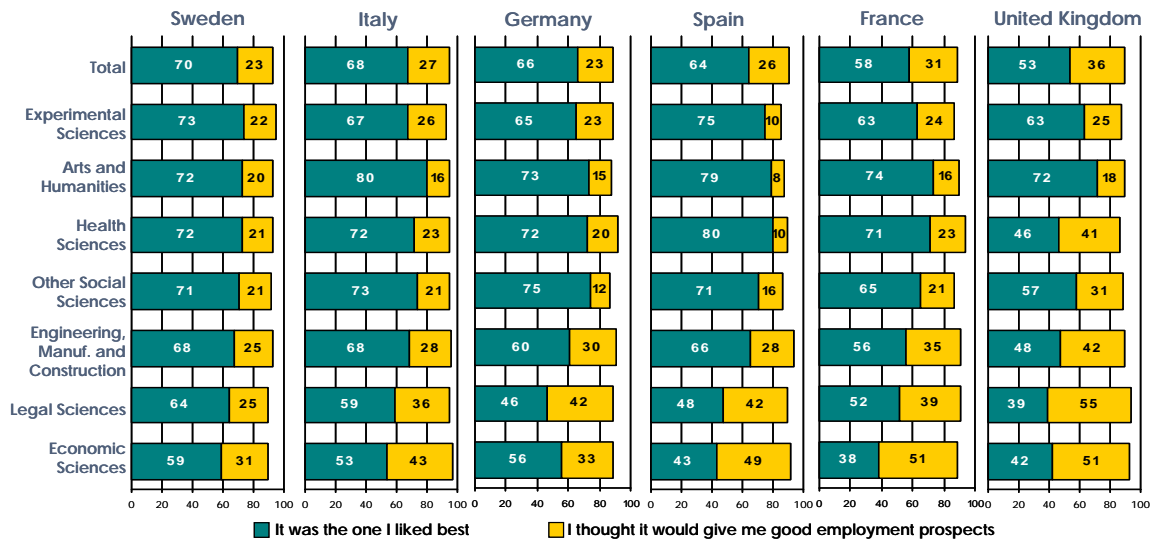


Within each country, the branch of study being followed differentiates the reasons for degree choice. Although vocational factors predominate in most cases, they are most strongly to the fore among students of arts and humanities, and among those of health sciences, other social sciences and experimental sciences, depending on the country (see figure 16).

Conversely, among students taking economic sciences, legal sciences and, to a lesser extent, engineering and technical degrees, instrumental aspects like employment prospects predominate or at least weigh more heavily.

Figure 16. What is the main reason you enrolled in the course you are currently studying?

Base: total interviews



In all countries, as table 17 shows, interest in degree course contents was stated as the most important factor. But a majority had also thought about the possibilities of finding work (average approaching or exceeding 7 in all countries) and of making money (average of over 6 in almost all cases). Students in the United Kingdom and Italy were those assigning most importance to these two aspects, while students in Sweden were the least influenced in their choices by the possibilities of earning money.

Although a majority of students considered the prestige of the degree course when arriving at their decision, it was also the factor assigned least relative weight. Swedish students, in particular, gave it little thought and German students not much more.

Table 17: And how much did you consider the following factors when making your choice of your current degree course? Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, in which 0 means you didn't consider them at all and 10 means that you considered them a great deal.

	Germany	Sweden	Italy	United Kingdom	Spain	France
Interest in the contents	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.3	7.7	7.7
The possibilities of finding work	6.9	6.9	7.4	7.6	7.1	6.9
The possibilities of making money	6.2	5.4	6.9	7.2	6.7	6.2
The prestige of the degree course	5.1	4.5	6.2	6.3	6.1	5.6

The importance of proximity in choice of university

Students' choice of university tends to be based on practical considerations, though the reasons given vary from one country to the next. The main practical reasons stated were closeness to home and the fact of offering the desired degree.

As we can see from table 18, Spanish students are especially prone to mention closeness to home as a decisive factor (49% give this reason). The fact of being the only centre offering the desired degree course was most often mentioned in Sweden and Italy.

The centre's prestige was stated as the main deciding factor by just over 20% of students in almost all countries, with the United Kingdom to the fore (mentioned by 30%).

Factors like better employment prospects come further down the list, receiving most attention in Italy and France.

Table 18: Of the following statements, which one best reflects your main reason for choosing this higher education institution? Base: all cases						
	Spain	Germany	Sweden	Italy	France	United Kingdom
It is near home	49.2	36.4	33.1	31.6	29.6	24.6
Because it is a prestigious institution	22.2	22.8	26.6	19.2	24.7	29.8
It was the only one offering the degree course I wanted to study	10.4	8.5	21.6	20.9	16.2	12.7
I wanted to study at another higher education institution but I wasn't accepted/my grades weren't good enough	5.9	9.3	5.8	1.7	4	8
Because it offers better employment prospects	5.6	8.5	6.2	18.6	14.5	11.7
Because it was cheaper	2.4	7	0	3	3.3	2.9
Some other reason	3.8	4.9	4.8	1.8	5	8.4
DK-NA	0.5	2.6	1.8	3.1	2.7	1.8

In Spain, Italy and France, nearness to home is more often mentioned by those choosing a public university, while those attending private universities refer more to the centre's prestige and better employment prospects (see table 19).

Zeroing in on Spain, 53% of those choosing public centres give nearness to home as the principal motive. The reasons among those choosing private are more spread out, with prestige in the lead (30%), followed by failure to get accepted by their first-choice centre (21%).

Table 19: Of the following statements, which one best reflects your main reason for choosing this higher education institution? Base: all cases

	Spain		Italy		France	
	Public centres	Private centres	Public centres	Private centres	Public centres	Private centres
It is near home	52.7	13.3	33.0	6.7	33.7	6.9
Because it is a prestigious institution	21.4	29.9	17.8	43.9	22.5	36.7
It was the only one offering the degree course I wanted to study	10.1	14.4	21.0	17.7	17.2	10.8
I wanted to study at another higher education institution but I wasn't accepted/my grades weren't good enough	4.4	20.7	1.6	3.0	3.2	8.2
Because it offers better employment prospects	4.9	12.9	18.4	22.6	11.4	31.5
Because it was cheaper	2.5	0.7	3.2	1.2	3.6	1.5
Some other reason	3.5	7	1.8	2.4	5.4	2.6
DK-NA	0.5	1.1	3.2	2.4	3	1.7

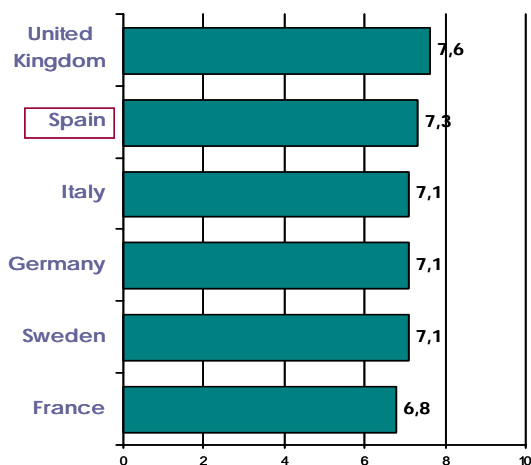
SATISFACTION WITH DEGREE COURSE AND UNIVERSITY

University students in the six European countries included in the survey declare themselves satisfied with their chosen degree course. Average satisfaction stands at around 7 points or more on a scale from 0 to 10 in almost all countries. The highest satisfaction score corresponds to the United Kingdom with an average of 7.6, while French students assign a more modest rating of 6.8.

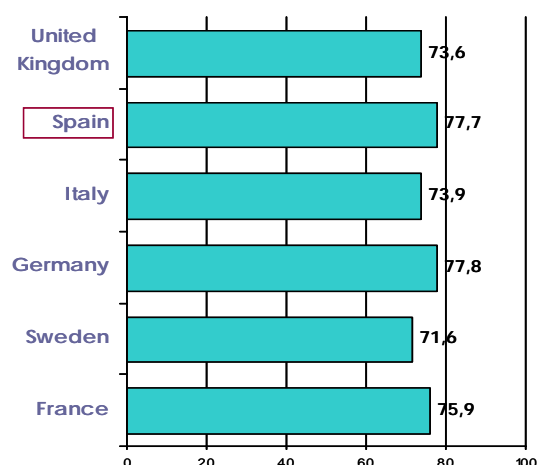
In keeping with this high level of satisfaction, over 70% of students say that if they could go back in time, they would enrol for the same degree (see figure 20).

Figure 20: Satisfaction with the degree course. Base: total interviews

Thinking about the degree course you are doing at the moment, in general, how satisfied would you say you were with the course you are studying?
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, in which 0 means "not at all satisfied" and 10 means "completely satisfied".



If you could go back in time, would you enrol for the same degree or for a different degree?
Percentage that responds affirmatively



In Spain, strong satisfaction with the degree being studied is maintained over the years, while students become firmer in their choice of the same degree in the hypothetical case of being able to turn back time (see table 21).

Table 21: Satisfaction with degree course in Spain. Base: all cases in Spain				
	2003	2004	2006	2010
Average satisfaction with degree course (scale from 0 to 10)	6.8	6.8	6.9	7.3
Percentage responding that "if you could go back in time, you would enrol for the same degree"	72.0	75.0	74.0	78.0

A more favourable assessment of theoretical vs. practical teaching

Students' overall satisfaction with their degree is reflected in their favourable assessment of diverse aspects of course contents and the standards required.

As table 22 shows, a majority of students were happy overall with the general knowledge acquired and the theoretical teaching (all these aspects score above 6 on average in all countries on a scale from 0 to 10). They were, as a rule, significantly less convinced by the quality of practical teaching (with modest scores of 5.4, 5.6 and 5.7 on a scale from 0 to 10 in Spain, Italy and France respectively), and assessment systems. Except in the United Kingdom and Sweden, the average rating assigned to theoretical teaching exceeds that assigned to practical teaching by one full point or more.

Finally, in all countries surveyed⁴, the worst rated feature was the matriculation fee. Opinion on this point was divided albeit with average ratings hovering near the five-point mark.

Table 22: Now I would like you to give me your views on different aspects of your degree course. Specifically, to what extent do you think the following aspects are satisfactory or unsatisfactory?						
Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means it is very unsatisfactory and 10 that it is very satisfactory						
	United Kingdom	Germany	Italy	France	Spain	Sweden
The general knowledge acquired	7.3	6.7	7.3	6.9	6.0	6.0
The theoretical teaching	7.2	7.1	7.2	6.6	6.5	6.3
The practical teaching	7.0	5.9	5.6	5.7	5.4	5.9
The assessment systems	6.9	5.9	6.5	5.5	5.6	5.5
The matriculation fee	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.6	5.1	-

Practical teaching not only attracts different scores between but also within countries, with branch of study as the differentiating factor. In all countries surveyed, views on the practical teaching received are more favourable among health science students and more modest among those in arts and humanities and social sciences (see table 23).

In Spain, students of economic sciences are the least enthused about practical teaching followed by those studying law.

⁴ Swedish students were not asked about matriculation fees since this charge does not exist

Table 23: Assessment of practical teaching. Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, in which 0 means it is very unsatisfactory and 10 that it is very satisfactory

	United Kingdom	Germany	Sweden	Italy	France	Spain
All	7.0	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.7	5.4
Health sciences	7.6	6.5	6.7	6.0	6.6	6.6
Experimental sciences	7.2	6.4	6.3	5.7	5.9	6.2
Legal sciences	6.9	5.2	5.0	4.2	5.5	5.0
Arts and humanities	6.9	5.4	5.9	5.4	5.0	5.5
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	6.9	6.7	5.9	6.3	6.3	5.4
Economic sciences	6.8	5.1	4.6	5.6	6.2	4.8
Other social sciences	6.7	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.2	5.3

The type of study centre also influences views on the quality of practical teaching. In Italy, France and Spain – countries where students interviewed belonged to both private and public universities – students at private centres offered a more favourable assessment of practical teaching (6.4, 6.7 and 7.0 respectively) than their public centre peers (5.5, 5.5 and 5.3). In the case of Spain, the difference between one kind of centre and the other exceeded one and a half points on the scale.

Good marks for teachers

Views on teaching staff also reflect students' general contentment with the university experience. Overall, this key collective gets a highly positive rating, with special plaudits for their "up-to-date" knowledge of their subject, approachability, and reputation within their specialty (see table 24). In almost all countries, teaching staff score lower on their ability to encourage students to participate and be creative, albeit with average scores still exceeding 6 on a 0 to 10 scale.

Again students in the United Kingdom assigned the highest scores on all teaching staff qualities put forward for consideration.

Table 24: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the teaching staff at your higher education institution? Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you totally disagree and 10 that you totally agree.

	United Kingdom	Italy	Germany	France	Sweden	Spain
Are knowledgeable about the latest developments in their subject	8.3	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.3	6.9
Can be easily approached for help or advice	7.6	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.4	6.7
Are reputed in their speciality	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	7.0
Explain things clearly	7.5	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.2	6.1
Encourage students to participate and be creative	7.3	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.6	6.0

Satisfied with the university

Students are also favourably impressed by the higher education institutions where they are studying (average satisfaction above 6.5 in all cases on a scale from 0 to 10). Students in the United Kingdom stand out from the rest in their high satisfaction ratings (7.6 on average) (see table 25).

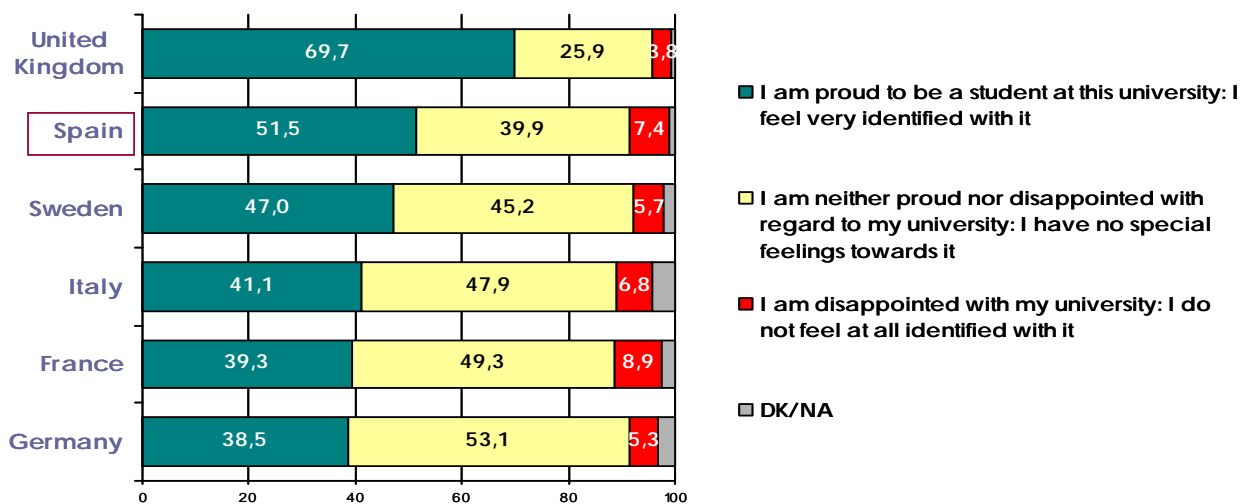
Table 25: How satisfied would you say you were overall with your higher education institution? Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, in which 0 means not at all satisfied and 10 means very satisfied

United Kingdom	7.6
Sweden	6.8
Italy	6.8
Germany	6.8
Spain	6.6
France	6.6

Despite this high overall satisfaction with the university where they are studying, institutional identification is on a relatively modest scale. Only in Britain and, to a lesser extent, in Spain do a majority feel proud of and identified with their university. Opinions elsewhere are more divided, particularly in Germany, France and Italy, though only a minority in all countries declare themselves disappointed with their centre and not at all identified (see figure 26).

Figure 26: Which of the following statements best defines your feelings about your university ?

Base: total interviews.



Pass mark for facilities and services

Centres' facilities and services also merit an overall pass, though with major differences between countries. The British are again the most positive in their assessment of service quality (see table 27).

In general, IT and library resources are highly rated in all countries.

Career guidance/employment services tend to be the least highly valued, scraping a bare pass mark in France, Spain, Germany and Sweden. The choice of extracurricular activities scores particularly low in Italy as do information services in France.

Table 27: What is your opinion of the following services or facilities at your higher education institution?

Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means "very poor" and 10 means "very good".

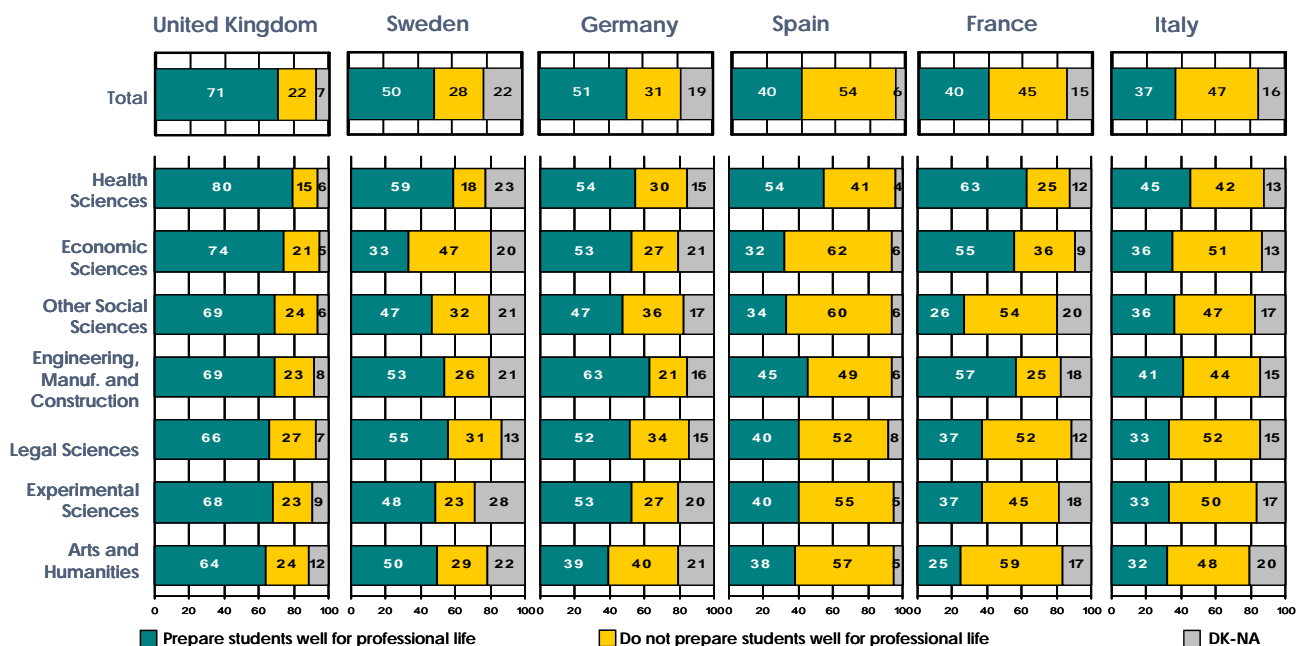
	United Kingdom	Sweden	Spain	Italy	Germany	France
The library: quantity and quality of books and/or materials	7.6	7.4	7.1	6.9	6.9	7.1
IT resources: quantity and quality of computers, Wi-fi zone, etc.	7.3	6.7	6.6	6.4	7.1	6.6
Choice of extracurricular activities (cultural activities, volunteer work, etc.)	7.3	6.0	6.1	5.2	6.3	6.1
Information services	6.9	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.3	5.4
Career guidance/employment services	6.6	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.3	5.1

Failings in preparation for professional life

The extent to which universities prepare students for professional life is seen very differently from one country to the next: while a large majority of Britons – 7 out of every 10 – believe that higher education institutions prepare students well for professional life, only half of Swedes and Germans are ready to say the same, and the Spanish, Italians and French incline to the opposite view. In Spain, specifically, 54% perceive a mismatch between university training and the job market, compared to the 40% taking a favourable view (see figure 28).

By branch of study, students doing health sciences or engineering and other technical degrees tend to see the preparation offered in a more positive light, while those studying social sciences and arts and humanities are those that see this kind of preparation as most clearly lacking. This is true, moreover, of almost all countries in the sample.

In Spain, views on this facet are heavily influenced by students' knowledge area: whereas over half of health science students believe the university prepares students well for professional life, only a third of those doing economic sciences and other social sciences are willing to concede that this is so.

Figure 28: In your opinion, universities in (COUNTRY)...Base: total interviews

This perceived shortfall in the training provided by Spanish universities is a trend carried over from earlier national surveys. In effect, the percentage affirming that Spanish centres do not prepare students well for professional life has held more or less flat since 2004 (in the region of 55%).

Table 29: In your opinion, higher education institutions in Spain ... Base: all cases in Spain			
	2004	2006	2010
Prepare their students well for professional life	38.0	37.0	40.0
Do not prepare their students well for professional life	55.0	53.0	54.0
DK-NA	7.0	10.0	6.0

STUDY HABITS

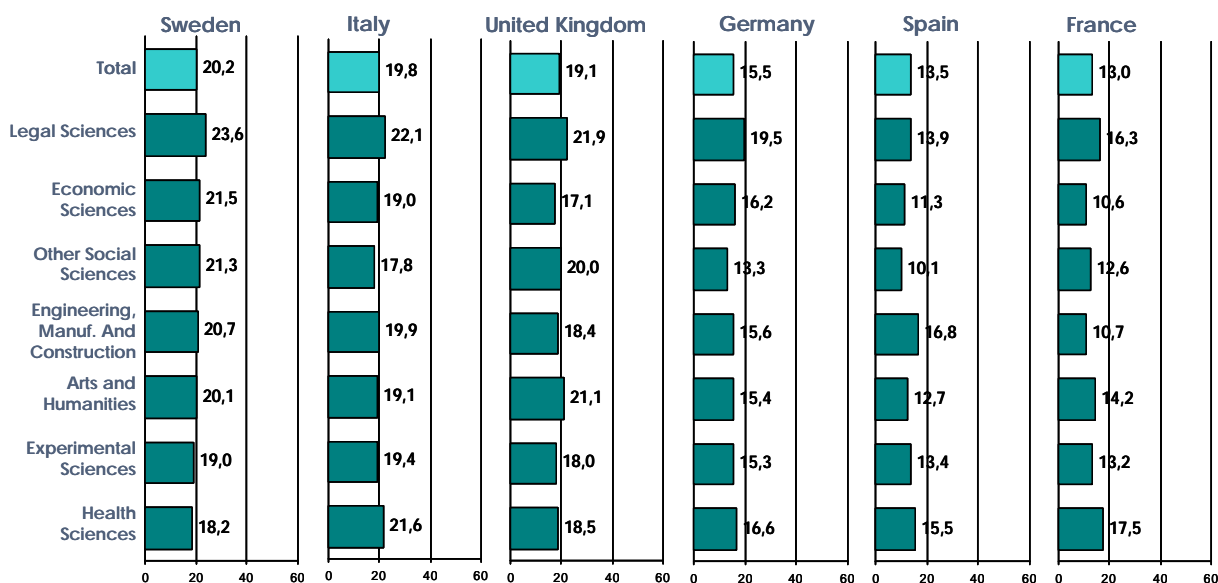
The average time devoted to study varies markedly across European countries. Students in Sweden and Italy put in the longest hours (around 20 hours a week) with France and Spain at the other extreme (13 and 13.5 hours respectively) (see figure 30).

Branch of study is a differential factor for academic effort, but one that operates in different ways and with varying intensity depending on the country. In France and Spain, concretely, the differences in the length of study time by knowledge area are greater than in the remaining survey countries.

Despite these contrasts in the distribution of academic effort by branch of study, we can see some points of similarity: in most countries, students of legal sciences and health sciences stand out for their greater dedication, while in some, economics and other social sciences students are those devoting least time to study (see figure 30).

In Spain, the longest study hours are put in by students doing engineering and other technical degrees (an average of roughly 17 hours a week) and health sciences (16). Students of legal sciences (14), experimental sciences (13) and arts and humanities (13) occupy the middle of the study range, while students of economic sciences (11) and other social sciences (10) are those studying the fewest hours.

Figure 30: On average, how many hours a week do you spend studying your degree course subjects excluding classroom hours? ? Base: total interviews.
Average hours per week



Turning to classroom time, students spend far more hours in theory classes than practical classes across all survey countries.

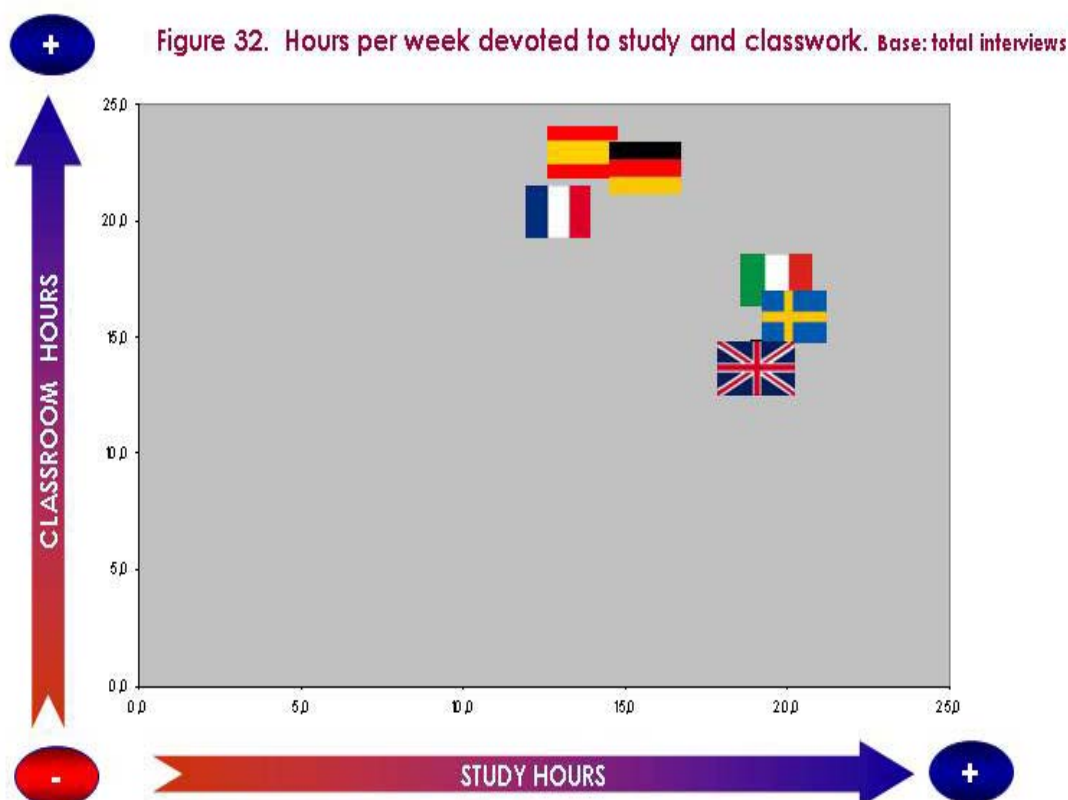
As we can see from table 31, students in Germany and Spain are those spending most time in theory classes (over 16 hours per week). At the other extreme, students in the United Kingdom attend theory classes for approximately 9 hours per week.

Students in Spain also devote more hours per week to practical classes compared to the rest (approximately 7 hours on average), while students in Italy occupy the rear spot with 4 hours on average.

Hours devoted to study and classwork tend to balance each other out. Summing the hours employed in study with the hours spent in practical and theory classes, we find smaller inter-country differences in the total hours that students devote to their academic activities, which range from 33 to 38. Students in Germany spend the most time on academic work (38 hours) with Italy and Spain just a little behind, while those in France and the United Kingdom devote the least time overall (around 33 hours).

Table 31: Hours per week devoted to study and classwork. Base: all cases.				
	Average classroom hours per week		Average hours of study per week	Average hours per week devoted to all academic activities
	Theory classes	Practical classes		
Germany	16.4	5.9	15.5	37.8
Italy	12.9	4.2	19.8	36.9
Spain	16.1	6.9	13.5	36.5
Sweden	10.9	5.0	20.2	36.1
France	14.3	6.1	13.0	33.4
United Kingdom	8.5	5.3	19.1	32.9

Looking at the time spent on study and classwork in a standard week, we can distinguish two training styles or approaches: the first based predominantly on individual effort – students spend more time in personal study – and the other prizing attendance at classes. Hence British, Swedish and Italian students spend more hours studying and fewer in class, while those in Spain, France and Germany spend more time in class than they do studying (see figure 32).



As table 33 shows, the time students in Spain devote to theory classes is more evenly spread across branches of study, and tends to range from 15 to 17 hours per week. The time devoted to practical classes is a different proposition, with hours varying from 11 per week among students of health sciences to less than half that number among students in legal sciences, economics and arts and humanities.

In Spain, the time spent on classwork and study does not balance out across knowledge areas. Indeed the average distribution of hours spent on all academic activities reveals differences in the profile and workload of each. Students doing health sciences and technical degrees are those spending most hours on academic activities with students of humanities, economic sciences and other social sciences at the opposite extreme.

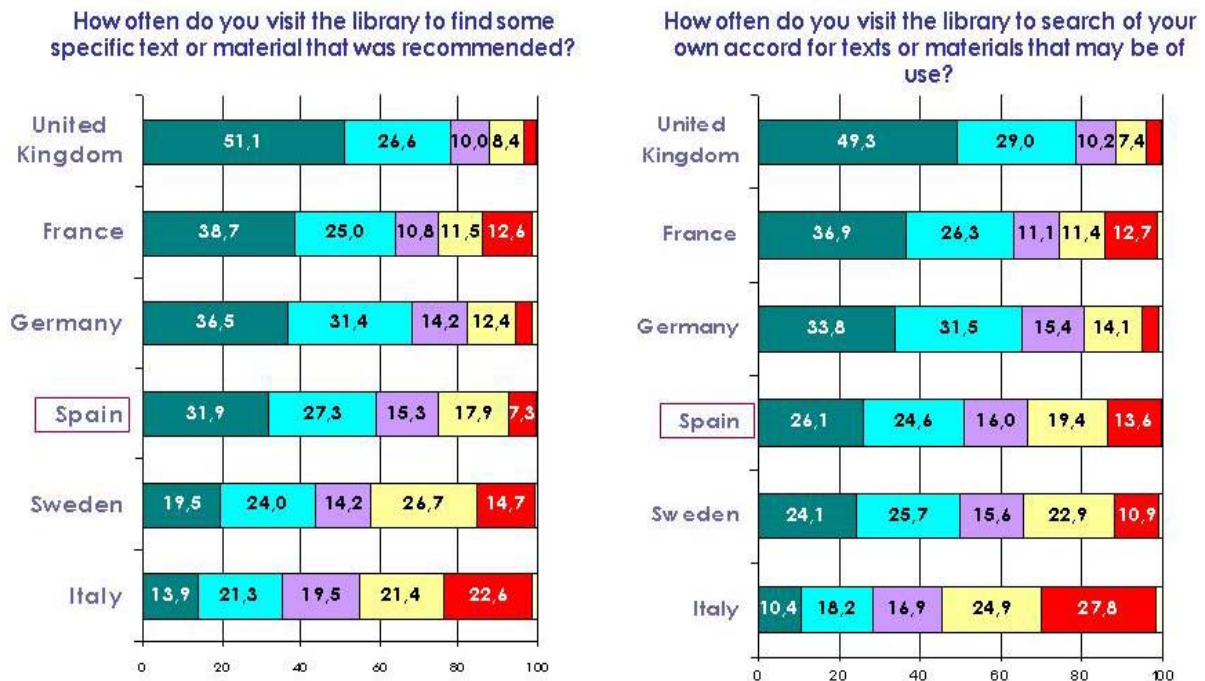
Table 33: Hours per week devoted to study and classwork in Spain. Base: all cases.				
	Average classroom hours per week		Average study hours per week	Average hours per week spent on academic activities
	Theory classes	Practical classes		
Total	16.1	6.9	13.5	36.5
Health sciences	14.7	11.4	15.5	41.6
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	16.8	7.3	16.8	40.9
Experimental sciences	16.1	9.2	13.4	38.6
Legal sciences	15.7	4.9	13.9	34.5
Arts and Humanities	14.8	5.6	12.7	33.1
Economic sciences	16.6	4.9	11.3	32.8
Other social sciences	16.4	6.2	10.1	32.7

USE OF THE LIBRARY AND STUDY MATERIALS

Students use the library to find specific materials that were recommended in class slightly more often than they do to search of their own accord for texts or materials (see figure 34).

But use of the library for either activity is far from uniform: starting from the frequent use made in the United Kingdom, it drops through France and Germany, then Spain around the mid-way mark, down to Italy, whose students are the least assiduous visitors of all.

Figure 34: Frequency of going to the library. Base: total interviews



Students also differ in the study materials they utilise, the most popular being lecture notes, Internet materials and course books. The use of both own books and library books or specialist journals is less frequent as well as more variable (see table 35).

Those in Spain and the United Kingdom are the most regular users of Internet materials, with Italian students at the other extreme. Students in Italy, concretely, and Sweden make more frequent use of course books. The use of library books is more common among British students than those of other countries.

Finally, the use made of articles in specialist journals is particularly uneven: a minority habit in Spain and Italy, moderate in Sweden, Germany and France and highly frequent in the United Kingdom.

Table 35: When you study, how often do you use the following materials?

Percentage responding "Very often+Quite often". Base: all cases.

	Spain	Italy	France	United Kingdom	Germany	Sweden
Lecture notes	96.8	92.8	89.6	89.3	830.0	81.6
Material found on the Internet	87.9	66.9	79.8	91.3	76.9	84.4
Course books	70.8	92.9	66.8	73.7	80.2	91.9
Library books	60.0	43.2	61.7	81.8	68.6	50.9
Books you buy yourself	44.6	64.1	53.7	60.0	60.3	66.7
Articles in specialist journals	24.4	28.5	46.2	75.1	40.4	38.7

THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Adoption of a three-cycle higher education system finds little support in Spain or Germany

The European Higher Education Area contemplated in the Bologna Declaration has been implemented to differing degrees in the study countries. While for some it has meant a profound reorganisation of study cycles and methods and has been the subject of a major and ongoing debate, in others it has been grafted onto the existing education system with only the barest discussion.

To encourage interviewees to evaluate the Bologna project from the same angle, they were offered a brief introduction to its content and asked how far they agreed with some of its goals.

The finding was that some aspects of the European Higher Education Area meet with widespread agreement across all countries: students declared themselves in favour of the alignment of degree systems, the promotion of mobility and cooperation, and adoption of a common credits system.

The adoption of a system based on three cycles proved to be more controversial, with students in Sweden, France, United Kingdom and Italy giving it their support and those in Germany and Spain remaining unconvinced (see table 36).

Table 36. The Bologna Declaration lays the foundations for a "European Higher Education Area", which envisages the convergence of higher education throughout the European Union by the year 2010. Can you please tell me what you think about the following aims of this project? Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you are strongly against and 10 that you are strongly in favour

	Italy	Sweden	France	United Kingdom	Germany	Spain
Adoption of a degree system that is both transparent and comparable between countries	8.4	8.1	7.8	7.6	7.2	6.9
Promotion of European cooperation to assure quality and develop comparable educational standards and methodologies.	8.2	8.1	7.3	7.5	7.0	6.6
Adoption of a common credits system which considers the overall volume of work done by the student and not just the classroom hours	8.2	7.4	7.3	7.5	6.6	6.4
Promotion of the mobility of students, lecturers and administrative staff across European countries	8.0	8.2	7.7	7.5	7.3	7.2
Adoption of a system based on three cycles: bachelor's, master's and doctorate	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.5	4.9	4.8

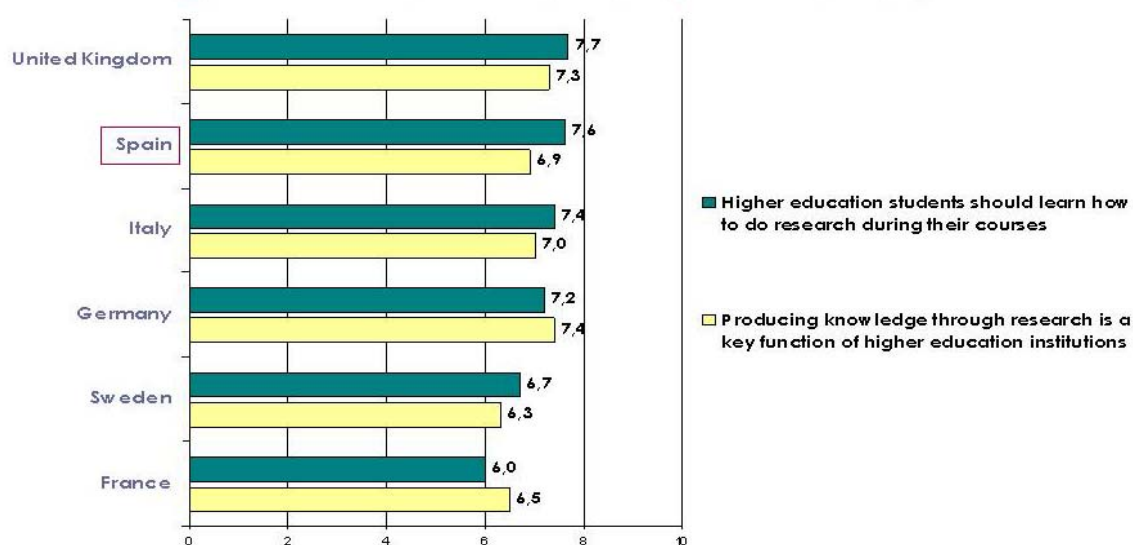
RESEARCH IN THE UNIVERSITY

It is assumed that familiarising students with the process of creating knowledge through research is a key component of the university experience.

Students in all the countries surveyed believe they should learn research skills as part of their degree course (average above 6 points on a scale from 0 to 10), with agreement strongest in the United Kingdom and Spain and somewhat weaker in France.

A majority also share the view that producing knowledge through research is a key function of higher education institutions. Support for this idea is widest in Germany and the United Kingdom (see figure 37). However around half of students are aware of some research project or programme going on at their university.

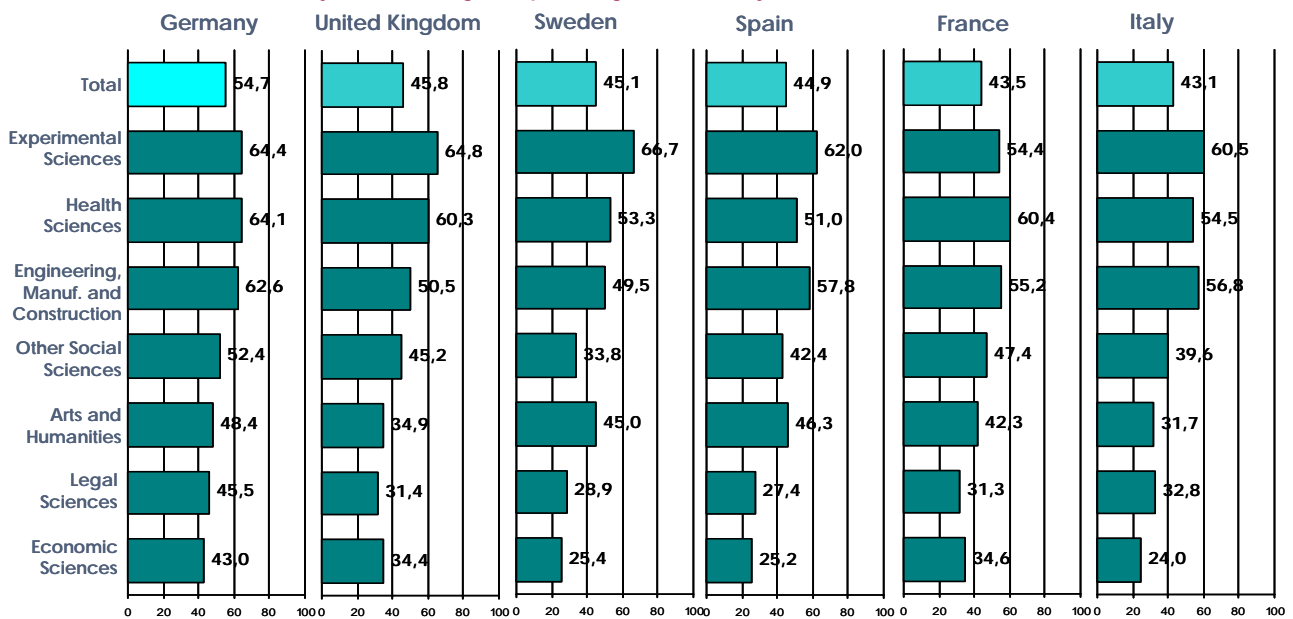
Figure 37. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences? Base: total interviews.
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you totally disagree and 10 that you totally agree



Just over 50% in Germany and 40% in remaining countries are familiar with some research project going on in their faculty.

Branch of study is a discriminatory factor for familiarity with research projects. Students in experimental sciences tend to be most informed about research projects at their centre, followed by those taking health sciences and engineering and technical degrees, while students of legal and economic sciences know the least (see figure 38).

Figure 38: Do you know of any research programme or project currently being undertaken in your faculty? Percentage responding affirmatively. Base: total interviews

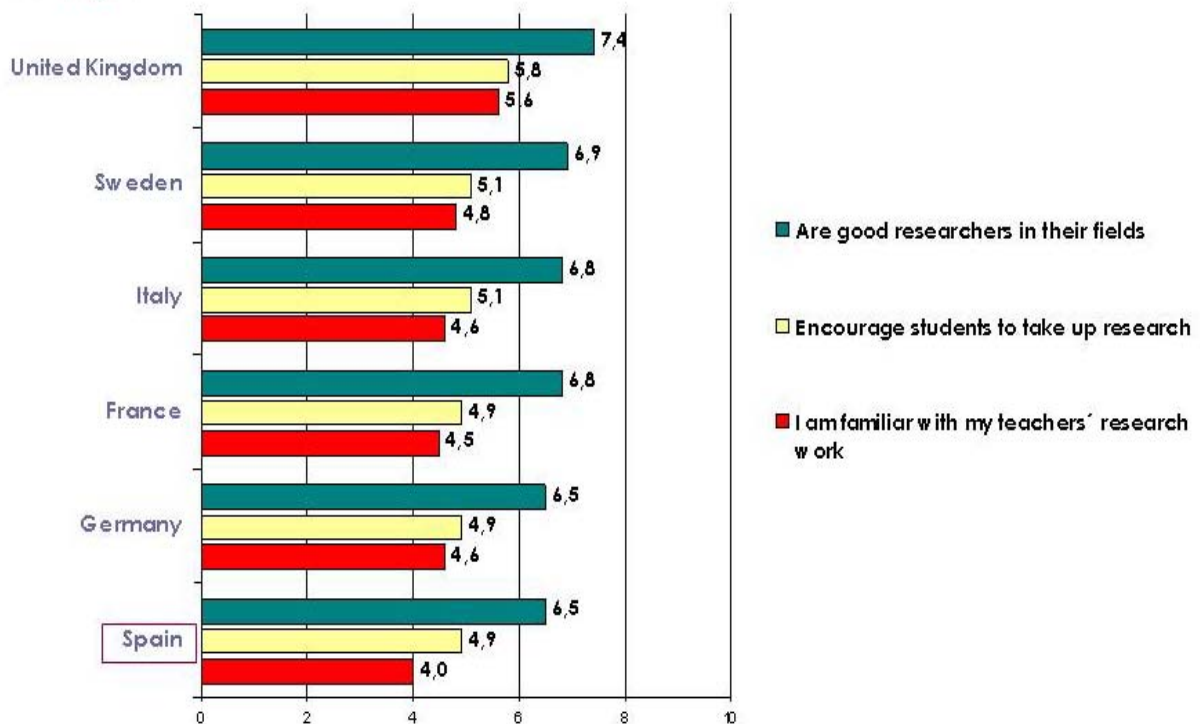


In all survey countries, a large majority believe their teachers to be good researchers in their field (average above 6.5 on a scale from 0 to 10, with the highest average scores accorded in the United Kingdom).

However, they are less sure that they encourage students to take up a research career, with scores in a majority of countries converging in the middle ground. Only British students are clearly within the approval zone (5.8) on this count, while the rest stand around the half-way mark (between 5.1 and 4.9) (see table 39).

Except in the United Kingdom, a majority of students have little idea of the research their teachers are engaged in. This feeling is particularly strong in Spain (average agreement score of 4.0 with the statement "I am familiar with the research my teachers are doing").

Figure 39: ¿ How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the teaching staff at your university ? Base: total interviews. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you totally disagree and 10 that you totally agree



A majority in all countries are prepared to say that research confers prestige, although they also see it as a tough career that is not well paid. In effect, agreement predominates in all countries with the idea that “research work carries a lot of prestige” but also that “researcher salaries are not attractive” (a consideration particularly strong in Italy) and “research work requires more effort than most professions” (see table 40).

But differences emerge around the perception that the state supports researchers. In Spain, France and, especially, Italy, a majority do not believe that the state supports researchers, while a majority in Sweden, Germany and United Kingdom take the opposite view.

In a context of poor familiarity with teachers' research and the perception that they are not being encouraged into a research career, a majority of students, particularly in Spain, do not feel well informed about how they could become a researcher.

Table 40: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences? Base: all cases. Average on a scale from 0 to 10, from 0 to 10, where 0 means you totally disagree and 10 that you totally agree.

	Sweden	Germany	Spain	United Kingdom	Italy	France
Positive facets						
Research work carries a lot of prestige	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.1	6.0	5.8
The state supports researchers	6.1	6.1	4.8	5.9	3.8	4.5
I feel I am well enough informed about how to become a researcher	4.5	4.8	4.1	4.9	4.9	5.2
Negative facets						
Researcher salaries are not attractive	6.5	5.5	6.3	6.0	7.5	6.6
Research work requires more effort than most professions	6.1	5.9	6.4	6.2	6.6	6.0

FUTURE PLANS: JOB EXPECTATIONS

Most students expect to find work after finishing their studies

As we can see from table 41, a majority of European students plan to work when they finish their degree course (over 60% in France and Germany and over 70% in the other countries analysed). Some plan to go on studying while they work, an option particularly popular in Spain, while the dominant expectation among the remainder is to devote themselves exclusively to work.

The percentage who plan to go on studying (either exclusively or combined with work) is generally more moderate as well as varying across countries, with Spanish students the likeliest to choose this option followed by the French.

In effect, Spain stands out as having the highest percentage of students who expect to combine both activities.

Table 41: When you finish your current degree course, do you plan to go on studying, to find work, both of these things, neither of these things or are you still not sure?

Base: all cases

	France	Germany	Spain	Italy	United Kingdom	Sweden
Go on studying	31.7	22.8	20.9	19.4	17.9	15.2
Work	45.0	52.2	35.6	53.8	58.0	54.7
Both	15.0	10.4	38.2	20.1	11.7	21.5
Neither of these two	1.3	1.4	0.2	0.2	2.6	0.6
Still unsure/DK/NA	6.9	13.3	5.1	6.6	9.8	8.0
Total planning to study	46.7	33.2	59.1	39.5	29.6	36.7
Total planning to work	60.0	62.6	73.8	73.9	69.7	76.2

Though respondents in some countries perceive a mismatch between their university training and the labour market, European students are upbeat about their chances of finding a job that fits their qualifications on completing their degree. However the degree of optimism is not the same in every country. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means it is not very likely and 10 that it is very likely, the Swedes come top with 8.4 (the most optimistic in employment terms) while the Spanish bring up the rear with a more moderate 6.8.

Employment expectations are to some extent conditioned by students' branch of study, since each tends to target a different segment of the labour market. Hence students of health sciences are more optimistic than the rest, while those doing arts and humanities tend to be more moderate in their expectations (see figure 42).

Figure 42: Do you think you are likely to find a job that is related to your degree course? Base: total interviews
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means it is not very likely and 10 that it is very likely.



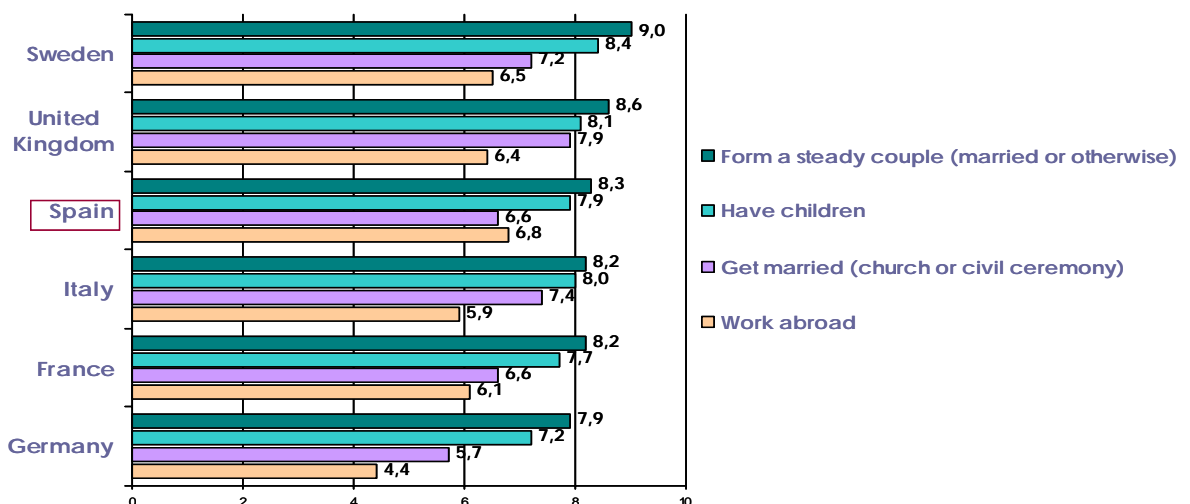
Forming a family is a widespread aspiration among university students

Study data show that practically all students would like to form a steady couple at some point in their lives (scores between 8 and 9 on a scale from 0 to 10), and a large majority also say they would like to have children (scores between 7 and 8). A majority say they would want to institutionalise this coupledness by marriage, though with respondents in Germany, France and Spain a little less keen (see figure 43).

Students differ regarding the desire to work abroad at some point in their lives. This aspiration predominates in all countries, Spain especially (6.8). The exception is Germany, where only a minority of respondents would welcome such an opportunity.

Figure 43: Thinking about what you would like to do with your life, to what extent would you like or not like to do the following things at some point in your life?

Base: total interviews. Scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you would not like it at all and 10 means that you would like it a lot.



STUDENT PROFILE BY COUNTRY

Table 44 shows the positioning of survey countries on certain key points that differentiate their student populations.

Table 44: Student profile by country						
	Germany	Spain	Italy	France	United Kingdom	Sweden
Live independently						
Work as well as study						
Finance studies and outlays with help from the family						
Content with the preparation offered for professional life						
Feel proud of and identified with their study centre						
Time devoted to personal study						
Time devoted to classwork						

Key	
	To a greater extent
	To a lesser extent



The section that follows gives a more detailed account of the main traits characterising students' academic experience and personal life.

GERMAN STUDENTS

- Together with the Swedish and British, the likeliest to have moved away from home, with 80% living independently.
- They are also the likeliest to combine their studies with some kind of paid work (65% against 55% of Swedes, 47% of British, 43% of French and just under a third of Spanish and Italians).
- Though a plurality (43%) get help from the family to meet their outlays, Germany is the country with the highest percentage of students (31%) drawing their main income from work.
- Less so than the British and on a par with the Swedes, a majority of German students believe the universities in their country prepare students well for professional life: 51% against 31% affirming the opposite and 19% offering no opinion.
- A majority have fairly neutral feelings towards their university: 53% are neither proud of nor disappointed with their centre against the 39% declaring themselves proud to study there.
- Students spend more time in class (an average of 22 hours per week) than on personal study (16 hours). They also devote more hours to theory classes (16) than practical classes (6) and are, together with the Spanish, those spending most time in theory classes in a standard week. They are also the students devoting most time to all academic activities (around 38 hours compared to 37 in Italy and Spain, 36 in Sweden and 33 in France and the United Kingdom).
- Regarding the goals of the European Higher Education Area, they join with the Spanish in their low support for the three-cycle education system stipulated in the Bologna Process.
- They are, alongside the British, the least inclined to accept a series of conducts affecting intellectual property, like downloading music or films from the Internet without paying (average acceptance of 4.8 on a scale from 0 to 10) or downloading software without paying (5.0).

SPANISH STUDENTS

- Most Spanish students (70%) live with their parents, and the percentage of those doing paid work (31%) is lower than in other countries. Spaniards are the most reliant on help from the family to finance their studies (70% state it as their main income source). Only a small minority are paying their way with grants or financial assistance, and those holding bank loans are few and far between.
- Likelier than other European students to select their university on the basis of closeness to home (49% against around a third of Germans, Swedish, Italians and French and a quarter of Britons).
- Satisfied with their degree studies, a majority say they would enrol again for the same course (78%). Positive on the theoretical teaching they receive (average of 6.5 on a scale from 0 to 10), but less impressed with the practical teaching (5.4).
- They are, along with the Italians and French, the most critical about how universities equip their students for professional life. 54% believe higher education institutions do not prepare students well for professional life. This negative feeling is strongest among those studying economics and other social sciences, while students in health sciences tend to the opposite view.
- Among those spending fewest hours per week on study (13.5) and the most hours in the classroom. The longest hours are put in by students doing health sciences and engineering and technical degrees, with those in economics and other social sciences at the other extreme.
- With the British, the most assiduous users of material found on the Internet. Conversely, they are among those least likely to utilise articles in specialist journals (24%).
- Regarding the goals of the European Higher Education Area, they join with the Germans in their low support for a system based on three cycles (bachelor's, master's and doctorate).
- Among the least aware of the kind of research being done by their teachers and those feeling least well informed about the possibilities of a research career.
- Second only to the Swedish in the acceptance expressed for emerging social forms and conducts, particularly same-sex marriage (average acceptance of 8.0 on a scale from 0 to 10), the adoption of a child by homosexual couples (7.3) and euthanasia (7.4).
- The most relaxed about practices contravening intellectual property rights via use of new technologies, with average acceptance scores of 7.7 and 7.5 respectively for downloading music and films without paying and downloading software without paying. They consider it unacceptable, however, to copy material directly from the Internet for degree course assignments without citing the source (4.2), to copy in an exam (3.7) or to use other people's work as if it were their own (2.9).

FRENCH STUDENTS

- A majority live independently (66% against the 32% living with their parents). 43% of students work, which is more than in Italy or Spain (around 30%) but less than in the United Kingdom (47%), Sweden (55%) and Germany (65%).
- Half of students depend on help from their family to finance their studies. This is considerably less than the 70% of Italians and Spaniards, but higher than the percentages recorded in Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Satisfied with their degree courses, they value the theoretical teaching (average 6.6 on a 0-10 scale) and the general knowledge acquired (6.9), but are rather less impressed with the practical teaching (5.7) and the assessment system (5.5).
- Along with Italians and Spanish, they stand out for their greater scepticism about how well higher education institutions prepare students for professional life. 45%, concretely, believe today's universities fail to prepare students well for professional life against the 40% responding affirmatively and the 15% declining to comment. Most critical are students in arts and humanities, law and other social sciences; least critical are students taking health sciences and engineering or other technical degrees.
- They put in the fewest weekly study hours of all survey countries (13 hours) but, after the Germans and Spaniards, are the students spending most time in class. Students in health and legal sciences devote most hours to study per week, with those doing technical degrees and economics bringing up the rear.
- French students accept marriage between people of the same sex (average 6.5 acceptance on a scale from 0 to 10), adoption by homosexual couples (6.0), euthanasia (6.6) and abortion (7.3).
- A majority also tend to accept practices like downloading music or films from the Internet without paying (5.9) or downloading software without paying (6.0).
- They are however firm in their rejection of conducts affecting intellectual property in the academic sphere, such as copying material from the Internet for course assignments without stating the source (3.0), copying in exams (2.1) or using other people's work as if it were their own (1.7).

ITALIAN STUDENTS

- Like Spaniards, most live with their parents (71%). The percentage of those doing paid work is lower than in remaining countries (32%). They are also the most reliant on help from the family to pay for their studies (73%), and, in contrast to other countries, only a small minority draw funding from grants, other kinds of financial assistance or loans.
- Satisfied with their degree courses and higher education institutions, though they see the theoretical teaching received as superior to the practical (average scores of 7.2 and 5.6 respectively on a scale from 0 to 10).
- The most critical alongside the Spanish and French about universities' role in equipping students for their future professional lives. 47% believe today's higher education institutions do not prepare students well for professional life against 37% who feel they do. Most critical in this respect are students in experimental sciences and legal sciences, with the least critical in health sciences.
- Though positive about university services such as IT and library resources, Italian students are less impressed by the choice of extracurricular and cultural activities.
- Along with the Swedish, they are those who spend most time studying per week (20 hours), with students in law and health sciences putting in most hours and social science students the least.
- They visit their university libraries less than the other European students analysed. They also make most use of course books as study materials, and least use of library books and specialist journals.
- They are also the most sceptical about the virtues of the research profession: the most convinced that researcher salaries are not attractive, that the job requires more effort than most other professions and, particularly, that the state does little to support researchers.
- Italians stand apart from their European peers by degree of religiosity. On a scale from 0 to 10, average declared religiosity stands at 5.1, compared to average scores of 3.5 or less in remaining survey countries.
- Unlike students in remaining survey countries, Italians are divided about the application of ethical principles. A plurality believe that they should always be applied regardless of the circumstances of the moment (47% against 40% or less in other countries).
- Although a majority accept conducts like living as a couple without being married, divorce, being a single parent, abortion or euthanasia, opinions are more divided on same-sex marriage (average acceptance score of 5.6 on a scale from 0 to 10 against 6.5 or more in remaining countries), and they are the only nationality rejecting the adoption of a child by homosexual couples (average acceptance of 3.9 against 6.0 or more respectively).

BRITISH STUDENTS

- A majority live independently (76%) and almost half do some kind of paid work. They finance their studies from a number of sources, notably grants (24%), help from family (23%), financial assistance (18%) and work (17%).
- Although a majority chose their degree course because it was the one they liked best, over a third (the highest percentage of any country) say the main deciding factor was the better employment prospects it offered.
- The most satisfied of all with the university experience by various yardsticks including degree course, teachers and institution.
- They also consider that their university education is a good preparation for professional life. 71% rate it positively on this score, compared to the more critical view of students in other countries.
- As well as being very satisfied with their higher education institution (average of 7.6 on a scale from 0 to 10), they differ from contemporaries elsewhere in Europe in expressing a clear sentiment of institutional pride (70% feel proud to be a student at their university).
- British students are among those devoting most hours per week to study (19), though they also spend the least time in class. Students of law and arts and humanities spend most time studying with economics students at the other extreme.
- They are the most assiduous users of university libraries, and head the list of nationalities by use of library books and specialist journals as materials for study.
- They are generally accepting as regards conducts like marriage between people of the same sex (7.3), adoption by same-sex couples (6.6), euthanasia (6.8) or abortion (6.5).
- Together with the Germans, they are the most opposed to practices affecting intellectual property such as downloading music and films (4.8) or software (7.7) from the Internet without paying.
- Britons and Swedes express the strongest rejection of practices in the academic setting such as copying material from the Internet for course assignments without stating the source (2.6), copying in exams (3.6) or using other people's work as if it were their own (1.7).

SWEDISH STUDENTS

- More upbeat in their views of the national context than European peers: almost 70% rate the situation of their country "good" compared to under 50% in the United Kingdom and Germany and under 25% in remaining countries. Swedes stand out for their positive view of their personal situation and optimism about the future.
- Swedish students tend to be older than their counterparts in other countries (24.7 on average) and a plurality (47%) are living with a partner against less than 15% elsewhere. Just 42% describe themselves as single compared to over 80% in the other five countries surveyed.
- Likeliest of all to live independently (89%). Over half (55%) engage in some kind of paid work, the highest percentage after the Germans (65%).
- Students draw funds from diverse sources, particularly financial assistance from their university or some other institution (28%) and government loans (29%). Only a small minority rely on help from the family (6%).
- A majority of Swedish students believe their country's universities prepare students well for professional life (50% agreeing vs. 28% disagreeing and 22% offering no opinion), on a par with the Germans and behind the British. Health science students are the most inclined to this view while economics students are the most sceptical.
- Together with the Italians, those studying most hours per week (20), though classroom hours are lower than in other countries like Germany, Spain or France. Legal science students are those devoting most time to study.
- Swedish along with Italian students make most use of course books as a study material (92% say they use them often against 80% or less in remaining countries).
- Swedes are more inclined to be flexible in the application of ethical principles: although a majority believe in the existence of clear principles about what is right and wrong, 76% say they should be applied in accordance with the circumstances at the time compared to 60% or less in remaining countries.
- They are the most relaxed of all about conducts like marriage between persons of the same sex (average acceptance of 8.8 on a 0-10 scale), adoption by homosexual couples (8.3), abortion (8.7) and euthanasia (7.4).
- Together with the British, they are the most reproving of practices like copying material from the Internet for a course assignment without citing the source (0.9), copying in an exam (0.5) or presenting other people's work as if it were their own (0.5).

ANNEX. TECHNICAL NOTES

Universe: students who have completed at least two years of higher education studies belonging to Category 5A of UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), segmented by branch of study and type of institution.

Method: administered face-to-face survey in study centres.

Sample size and distribution: 3,000 valid cases per country stratified according to region, type of centre and branch of study. The final unit was arrived at by random selection in the frame of the above stratification. The sample included from 35 to 50 universities in each country.

Sampling error: the estimated sampling error is $\pm 1.8\%$ for a confidence level of 95.5% and in the worst-case scenario ($p=q=0.5$).

Fieldwork: coordinated by IPSOS between the months of March and June, 2010.

In countries like Italy and Spain, private university students were oversampled with a view to providing a more robust sample base for this segment. Data were subsequently weighted to re-establish the real weight of each group within the study universe.

Explanatory note: Fieldwork was conducted during the implementation of the Bologna process. Since not all countries or universities are at the same stage of rollout, and in view of the non standard structure and duration of study cycles (bachelor's, master's, etc.), the criterion applied was to select students in at least the third year of their courses whose studies belonged to category 5A of UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Category 5A corresponds to tertiary programmes that are largely theory-based and are designed to provide sufficient qualifications for accessing advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements. Note that certain degrees are considered to come within the ISCED 5A category in some countries but not in others.