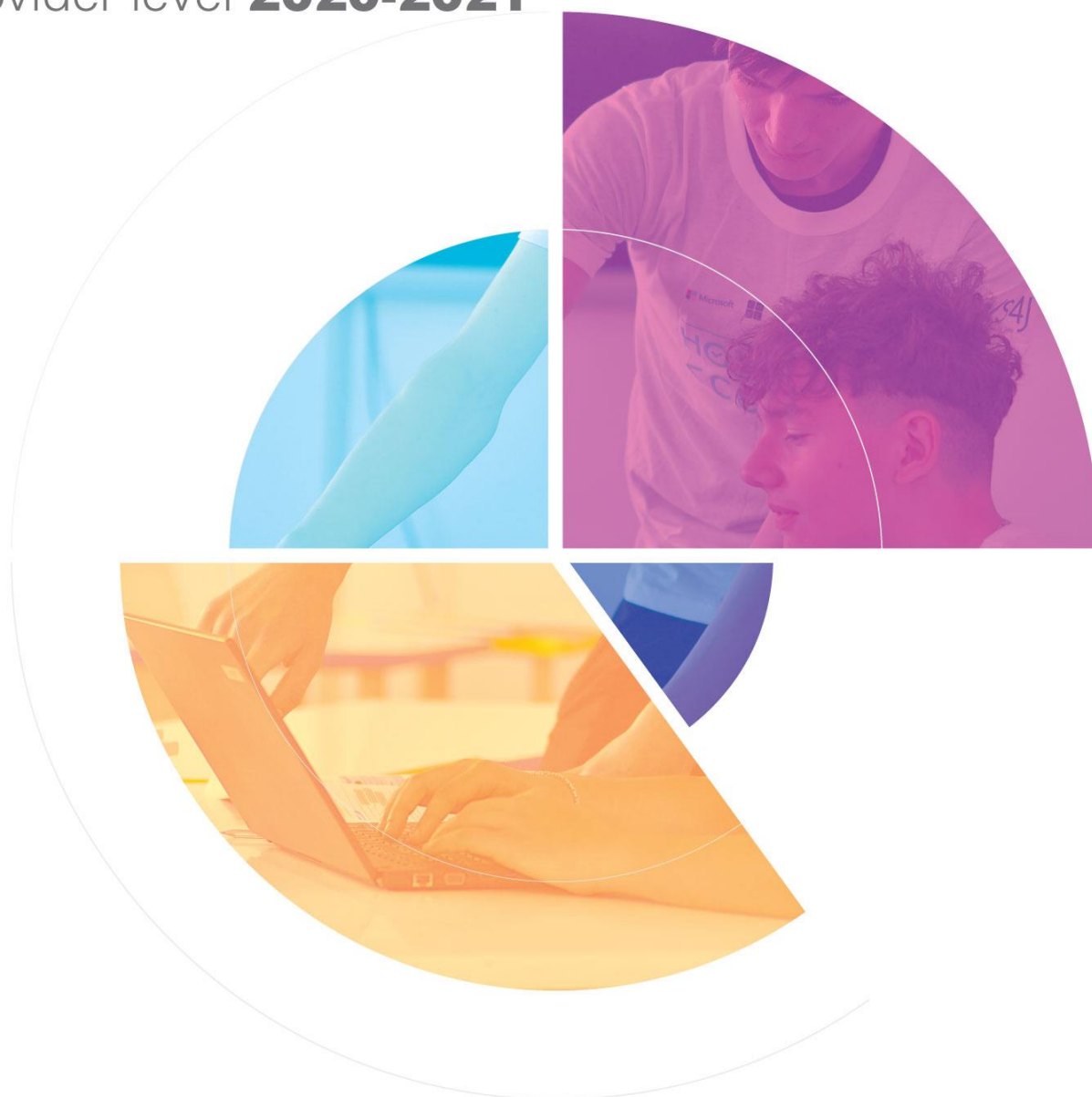
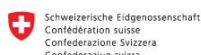


What happens to vocational education graduates after leaving school?

Findings from tracer at the provider level **2020-2021**



A project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

In partnership with:



Implemented by:



WHAT HAPPENS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GRADUATES AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL?

FINDINGS FROM TRACER AT THE PROVIDER LEVEL *Cohort 2020-2021*

October 2022

The report was prepared by Rudina Rama, project consultant.

About Skills for Jobs

'Skills for Jobs' (S4J) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Swisscontact Albania.

S4J addresses the main challenges of the Albanian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system by focusing on ensuring systemic change, capacity development and empowerment of key actors. Based on this approach, S4J supports partner VET providers in Albania in terms of employers' and partners' relations, diversification of VET offer, new ways of inclusive learning and quality, work-based learning in cooperation with employers, and organisational development.

Disclaimer

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Tracer Highlights

9 Vocational Education (VE) schools in Albania, with the support of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) Project¹, are promoting annual VE offer decisions to be made based on structured evidence and the involvement of their regional business sector. This approach aims to increase the relevance of their offer and contribute towards labor-market oriented skills development. This, in turn, will lead to faster labor market transitions for young men and women graduating from VE, more qualified employees and increased productivity for companies.

Tracer studies offer a better understanding of the performance of VE graduates in the labor market by measuring the productive employment that graduates find after education. They represent one of the sources for assessing and helping towards improving the quality and labor market relevance of VE. To this end, S4J has supported the implementation a provider- based tracer system in its partner providers as of September 2017².

This report presents the ***results from the tracing of graduates in the 6 initial providers supported by S4J*** starting with the 2015-2016 cohort. Some of the key findings from the 2022 Tracer Study covering the 2020-2021 cohort are summarized below:

What is the incidence of employment, self-employment, and further education among graduates?

- 71% of the 2021 graduates were employed³ within the first year of graduation. growth has been incremental throughout the years/cohorts.
- The unemployment rate has steadily decreased to 18% in the 2021 cohort compared to 36% in 2016, scoring the lowest unemployment rate among all cohorts.
- Only 10% of the 2021 cohort were attending higher education or further training compared to 24% in 2016.
- Among the 2021 graduates attending further education, 89% were following university studies, 6% professional college and 4% were attending professional courses.

Do the labor market outcomes differ with respect to gender?

- For the 2021 graduates, 58% of females were employed or self-employed compared to 74% of males.
- Among cohorts there is a significant increase of the proportion of employed/self-employed females (from 16% in 2016 to 58% in 2021) compared to males (from 42% in 2016 to 74% in 2021)
- There is a decrease in the proportion of females pursuing further studies, from 45% in 2016 to 11.5% in 2021.
- In the 2020 and 2021 cohorts there is an increase in the proportion of females starting a job before graduation as opposed to males, specifically 47.8% males and 57.1% females in 2020 and 47.8% males and 57.1% females in 2021.

¹ S4J is mandated by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Swisscontact Albania.

² During its first phase (2016-2019), S4J supported 6 VE schools. In its second phase, S4J is supporting a total of 9 VE schools.

³ From all over 71% employed, 53% are employed, 8% are self-employed and 10% are employed and studying in the same time

Do the labor market outcomes differ with respect to the vocational direction?

- For the 2021 cohort, Tourism and Hospitality graduates have the higher employment rate (80%) followed by Electrotechnics (70%), and ICT (70%).
- The higher rate of unemployment for the 2021 cohort according to vocational direction results for the Textile & Clothing with 50%, and Social and Health services with 29%.
- Among all cohorts, the four top vocational directions with the highest number of graduates that get employed within a year of graduation are Mechanic direction with 80%, Thermo-hydraulic with 71%, SHMT with 70% and Tourism and Hospitality direction with 68%.

What are the waiting times for first employment?

- For the 2021 graduates, more than half or 58% transitioned to the labor market before graduation.
- Among the 2021 employed graduates, 10% started their first job one month after graduation while 11% within the first three months after graduation.
- The vast majority or 79% of graduates (or 8 out of 10) report to have started the first job within three months of graduation, which is the highest rate among the cohorts.

What are the means by which graduates acquire employment? How does the VET institution assist them through their transition?

- Personal connections of family members and friends remains the main method through which graduates acquired employment (52%), followed by apprenticeships in businesses (15.7%), and job advertisements 14.2%.
- Among those who reported to have received help from their schools, 77% stated that the school helped them connect to potential employers, 65% said to have been taught how to search and apply for jobs and 60% were provided with information on career opportunities.

Are the present occupations of graduates related to their vocational education/training? How are the work tasks of graduates related to their study programme and their competencies?

- Among the employed graduates in 2021, 59% have a job related to their area of education, which is the highest rate from all cohorts.
- Among the graduates who work in occupations not related to their area of study, 41% stated to not having been able to find a job in their field of study while 33% stated to have a better salary and conditions at their current job position.
- 45% of the employed graduates reported to use their knowledge either 'at a high' or 'very high' extent in their current jobs.

What are the economic returns on the received education/training?

- 29% of employed graduates in 2021 have a monthly net income less than 35,000 Lek/month.
- 31% of employed graduates in 2021 have a monthly net income ranging from 35,001-50,000 Lek/month. Compared to previous cohorts of graduates for the same income range, the current cohort scores the lowest percentage.
- 21% report a monthly net income between 50,001 - 80,000 Lek.
- Other 19% report a monthly net income over 80,000 Lek/month, reaching the highest percentage among all groups.

- Among the cohorts, there is an increase in the percentage of net income from 35,001 to over 80,000 ALL/month.

How secure/stable do graduates feel in their first-destination employment arrangement?

- Graduates typically felt secure and satisfied with their jobs one year after graduation.
- 60% of employed graduates in 2021 report that they felt secure in their job. While 20% of the same cohort reported that they felt unsecure or very unsecure.
- Among all the cohorts, the highest percentage related to the security is the level/category of those feeling “secure” with a rate of 62%, in the 2016 graduated cohort.
- When asked on the perceived job satisfaction, 66% of 2021 graduates reported to be satisfied to very satisfied, with only 9.4% reporting to be very unsatisfied.

What are some of the difficulties encountered by those graduates that have not been able to find relevant employment?

- Of the 2021 unemployed graduates, 57% are actively searching for a job while the other 43% are not. Compared to the 2020 cohort where 66% of the unemployed graduates were searching for a job, it is obvious that the rate of the unemployed graduates searching for a job in 2021 has slightly declined.
- Of the unemployed graduates who are not searching for a job, 30% experience a lack of feeling to work, 26% intend to leave the country, 11% are waiting to start a new job and 15% take care of children or other family members.
- From all unemployed graduates, 19.7% perceived that they were unemployed due to lack of experience and the same rate of 19.7% stated that job opportunities did not match with their field of study. Other 18% reported lack of contacts in finding a job and 10 % attributed their unemployment to the general job scarcity in the regions they lived.

How do graduates assess the relevance, usefulness and prospect of their vocational education and training?

- 45% of the graduated assert that have directly used the knowledge in the current job in a high to very high scale.
- According to the 2021 graduates the top three areas in which their school needs to improve in are: the apprenticeships in businesses (62%), collaboration with employment office (58%) and vocational school practice (56%). This proportions results the highest needs for improvements among all cohorts.
- 84% of the 2021 graduates would again choose the same field of study, while 80% would also choose the same school.
- When asked on the most desirable achievement in the next two years in terms of employment and further education, 38% of the 2021 graduates said they wanted to start their own business, followed by 31% who wanted to be employed in their field of study and 26% wanting to migrate/leave the country.

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Introduction and Methodology

Monitoring of labour market outcomes of graduates is carried out using ‘tracer studies’ that trace or follow students or trainees once they have left the education or training provider. Provider-based tracing represents a convenient tool that serves as a basis for determining providers’ capability in preparing graduates that meet the demands of the labour market. It also complements the tracing system at the national level.⁴

In line with these aims, the two major objectives of the provider-based tracer are:

- To determine empirically the labour market outcomes of VET graduates (objective indicators);
- To assess the horizontal link between education and work by graduates’ retrospective evaluation (subjective indicators).

The successful implementation of a provider-based tracing brings the following advantages to the provider:

It provides for a systematic monitoring of labour market outcomes of graduates

- It helps providers towards reforming their data collection processes and to make better use of existing data

It is a management tool for planning and monitoring of VET offer

- Curricula
- Labour market orientation
- Business relations
- Other aspects of study conditions and provisions
- It informs providers’ internal quality assurance efforts and evaluates their overall effectiveness and efficiency

It facilitates targeted student support systems that underpin all phases of the student’s lifecycle

- It supports career guidance and counselling
- It fosters the providers’ relationship with their alumni

It helps towards the marketability of the provider and of its directions/profiles

- It informs potential VET students and their parents on future career paths to be pursued to choose the appropriate education and career path

It is a tool adaptable to the needs of the provider

To this regard, the Skills for Jobs project (S4J) developed a specific methodology and piloted a provider-based tracer system as of September 2017. Tracer data in this report cover six cohorts of graduates (2015-2021) from 6 S4J VET partner providers in 5 regions of Albania.⁵ Below the list with the providers.

⁴ See Schomburg (2016) for a more detailed overview of institutional tracer studies.

⁵ For Gjergj Canco and Hamdi Bushati tracing data are available as of the 2017 cohort when the project started supporting these schools.

Figure 1 Targeted VET Institutions

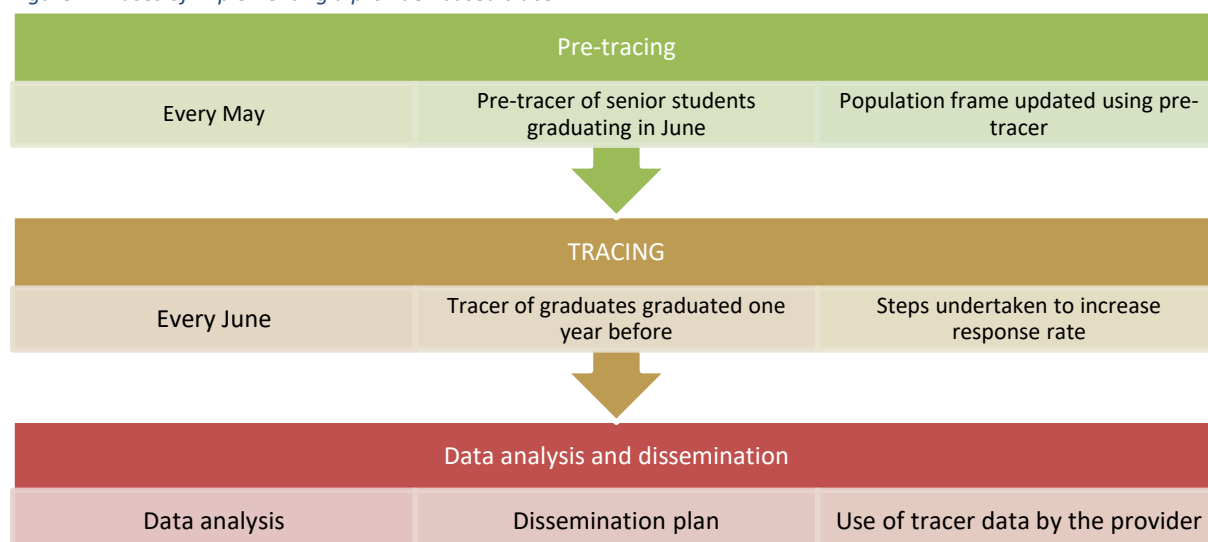


The implementation of the tracer studies for each provider entails three basic phases. During the first phase or the preparation phase, the target population (graduate cohort) and the time after graduation are determined. Next, the pre-tracer questionnaire is administered. The key objective of the pre-tracer questionnaire is to collect baseline data of future graduates regarding their subjective career plans and expectations, socio-demographic characteristics and contact information. Pre-tracing is conducted every May or approximately 3-4 weeks before the graduates leave their respective institutions.

In the tracer phase, tracing data are collected. Tracing employs a cross-sectional research design and adopts a quantitative approach using a standardized questionnaire survey. Given that the target population size is small at the provider level, a census rather than a sample survey is employed. Kobo Toolbox is the data collection method used. It is implemented through Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI).

Following the data collection phase, quantitative data are analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Data processing includes descriptive findings along with relational statistics. Individual provider-based reports are prepared along with the comparative report. The reports are disseminated with VET providers in individual participatory workshops.

Figure 2 Phases of implementing a provider-based tracer



In total, 588 graduates out of 648 of the cohort 2020-2021, with a response rate of 92% participated in the sixth wave of tracing. This is up by 6 percentage points from the fifth wave in 2019-2020 in which 554 graduates out of 643 from 6 partner provider schools participated. Table 1 summarizes the response rates by VET providers. As shown, the sample size at provider level is relatively small and varies between providers.

The table below lists the respective vocational directions of graduate for each cohort. The most represented direction for the 2021 cohort is tourism and hospitality with 29.9% followed by ICT with 22.6%, electro-technics with 18.5%, and economy and business with 11.9%. The lowest rates are for thermos-hydraulic (1.4%), textile (2%) and social and health services (2.9%). The rates range from 2-5%.

Table 1 Directions by sample size

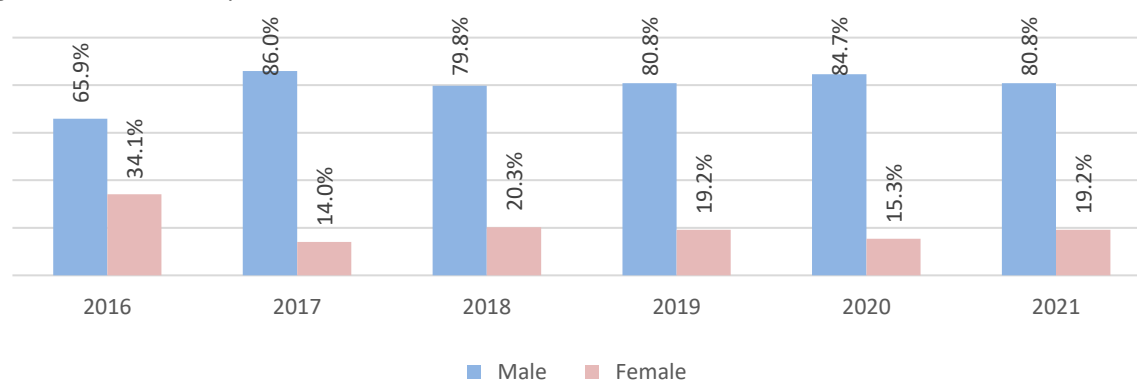
Direction	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Office administration	22%		2%			
Agriculture			5%			
Economy & Business	45%	25%	16%	19%	17%	11.9%
Electro-technics	6%	22%	25%	36%	24%	18.5%
Electronics		10.4%	8.3%	11.5%		
Tourism & Hospitality	11%	14%	25%	16%	27%	29.9%
Thermo-hydraulic	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1.4%
Textile		4%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Mechanics	1%	4%	4%	3%	3%	5.8%
Transport Vehicle Services	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%	4.9%
Food technology			1%			
ICT	11%	18%	13%	17%	19%	22.6%
Social and health services						2.9%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=132, N2=363, N3=403, N4=407, N5=554, N6=588

Regarding the gender composition of the sample, the sample for the 2021 cohort was composed of 19% females and 81% males. This reflects national trends of vocational education being predominantly male dominated. Across years the gender composition remains quite stable with male being in the range of 66-86%.

Figure 3. Gender composition



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=132, N2=363, N3=400, N4=407, N5=554, N6=588

The vast majority of the 2021 graduates live in Albania at 82% compared to 89% of the 2020 graduates. The remaining 18% live outside Albania respectively in Italy (6%), Germany (4%), Greece (3%), England (2%) and a limited number in few others EU countries and USA.

The majority of the 2021 graduates are currently living in the same region in which their schools are located with 31% in Tirana, 30% in Vlore, 15% in Shkoder and 17% in Lezha. The rest are distributed among the remaining regions.

Tracer Results

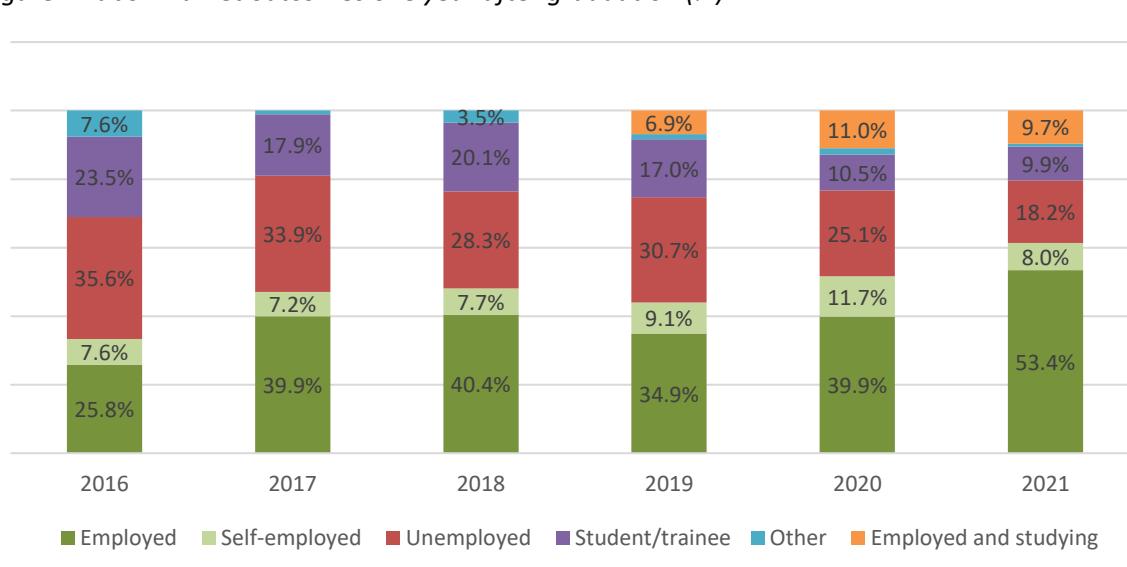
The following is a summary of the most relevant results. This report focuses on the 2021 cohort, while also drawing on comparisons between the 2016-2020 cohorts. For some categories, a general overview of the current situation is provided for all cohorts. The descriptive statistics present only aggregate-level information from all providers. Individual providers have their own reports with specific information and further broken-down data. For the 2016 cohort, since data is available only for 4 partner providers, the comparative analysis is limited.

2.1 Employment outcomes of graduates

Data on graduates' employment in 2022 indicate that 71% are employed or self-employed within/after a year of their graduation, 18% are unemployed and the rest of them, specifically 10% are pursuing further studies or vocational training courses.

Since the first cohort, there has been a proportional increase in employment and a decrease in pursuing studies further studies. For 2021 graduates the unemployment rate decreased to 18.2% and it is the lowest percentage of unemployment in all cohorts. Since 2019, there has been an increase in the number of graduates who are working and studying at the same time.

Figure 4 Labor market outcomes one year after graduation (%)

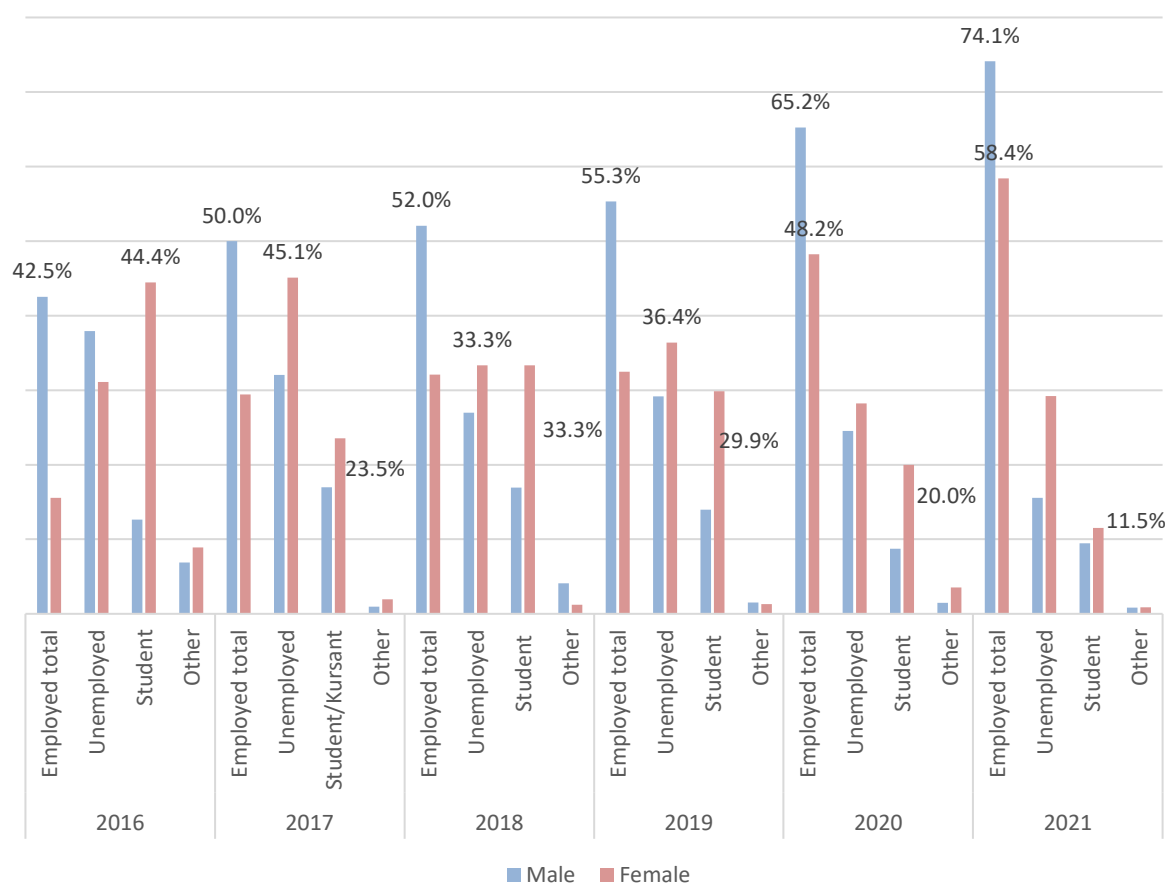


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=132, N2=363, N3=403, N4=407, N5=554, N6=588.

With regards to gender differences, it resulted that employed/self-employed males graduated in 2021, as in previous cohorts, continue to be in higher level (74%) as compared to females (58%) graduated in the same year. Data from the previous cohorts shows that there is a significant increase in the percentage of the employed/self-employed females from 33%/2019; 48%/2020 to 58% /2021). For the 2021 graduates, 11.5% of females pursue further studies compared to 9.5% of males. This difference has been much higher in the previous cohorts resulting in proportional decrease of the females pursuing the university studies or vocational training, respectively 33% in 2018, 30% in 2019, 20% in 2020 and 11.5% in 2021.

Figure 5 Labor market outcomes one year after graduation by gender (%)



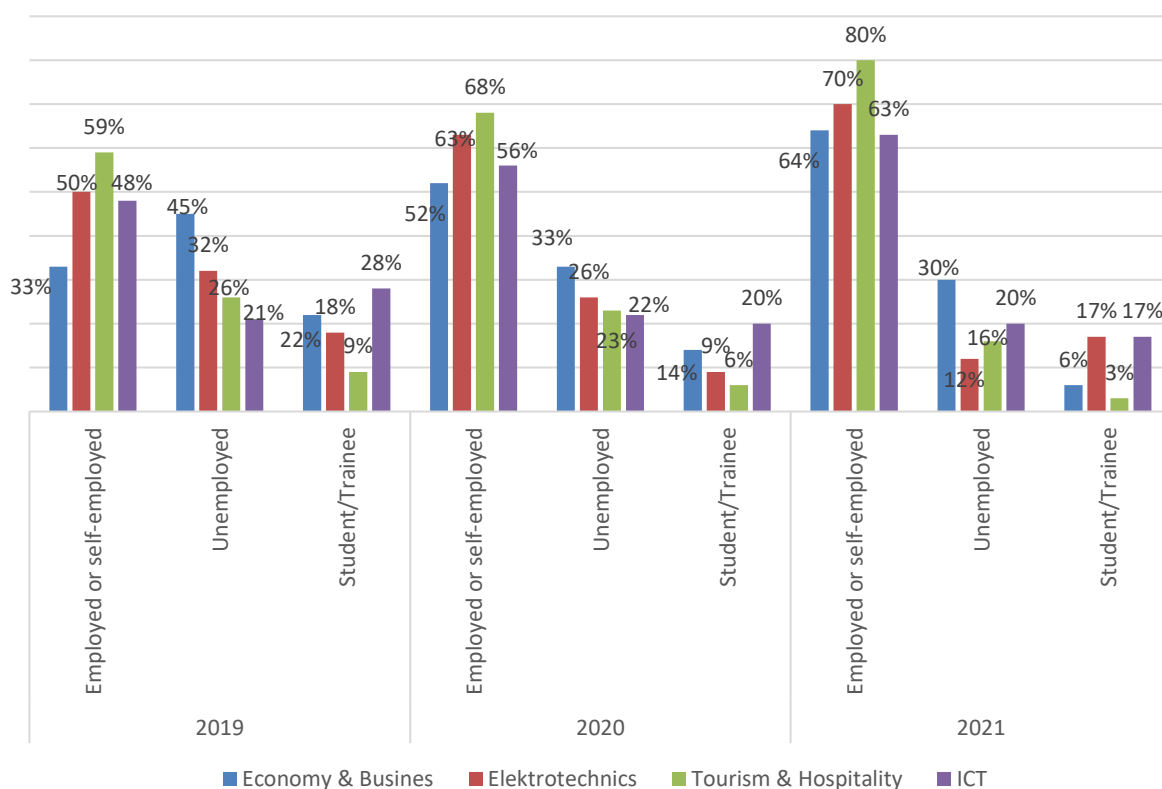
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=132, N2=363, N3=400, N4=406, N5=554, N6=588

2.1.1 Labor outcomes based on vocational directions

In terms of employability of 2021 graduates with regards to their vocational direction, tourism and hospitality have the higher employment rate (80%), followed by electro-technics (70%), and ICT (70%). Electrotechnics and ICT graduates (17% each) pursue postgraduate studies more than graduates in other directions, followed by graduates in Economy and Business (6%) and Tourism and Hospitality (3%). The considerably low percentages show a decreasing trend of postgraduate studies after graduation for all directions.

Figure 6 Labor market outcomes one year after graduation by vocational direction 2021 (%)



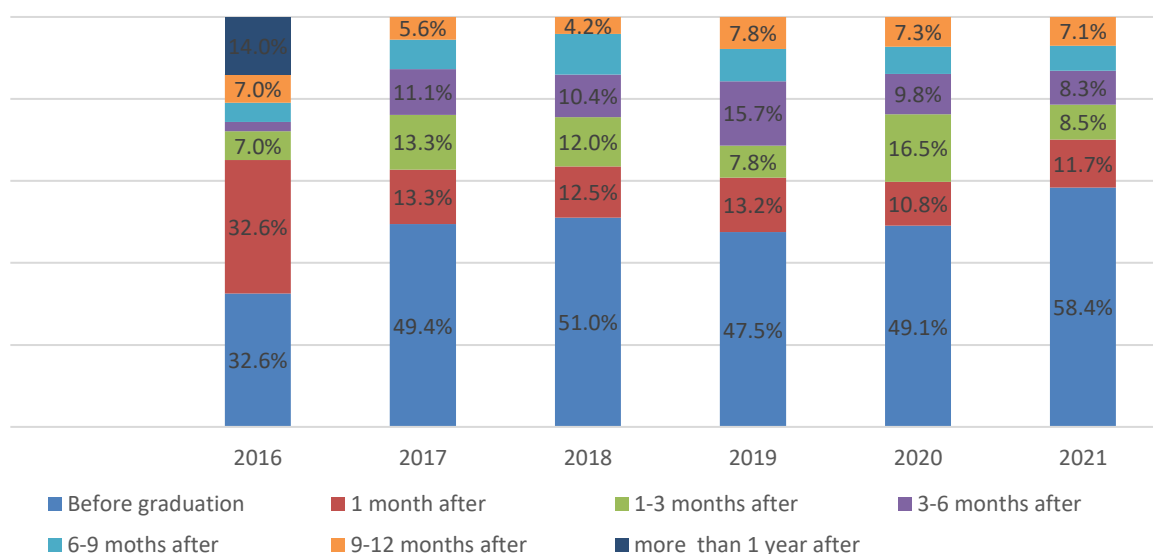
2.2 Status of employed graduates

The following sub-sections describe in more detail the status of the 2021 employed graduates while also drawing comparisons with previous graduate cohorts. The analysis elaborates on trends related to employed graduates' transition into the labor market, work conditions, salary range as well as the extent to which their current jobs match their field of studies.

2.2.1 Patterns of labor market transition

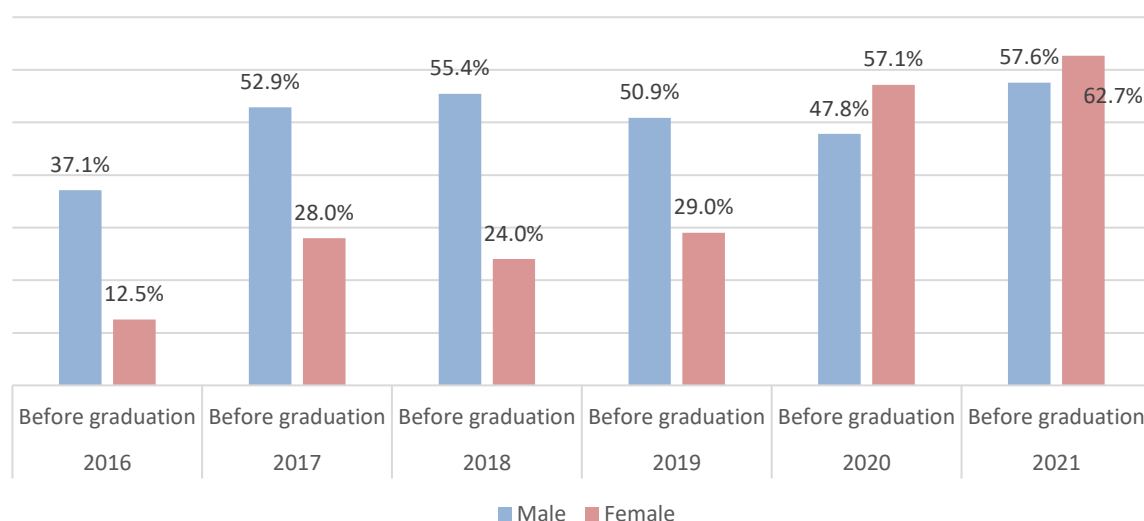
Data shows that more than half (52.3%) of the graduates in all cohorts have started their first job before the graduation with the exception of the 2016 cohort. The vast majority of graduates in 2021 have transitioned to the labor market before graduation, scoring the highest level of employment before graduation among all cohorts (58.4%). This is followed by those who have started their first job one month after graduation (11.7% in 2021) and the ones who have started their first job within the first three months after graduation (11.2% in 2021). The rates of the graduates who took longer than 6 months to transition to the labor market in 2021 (7.1%) are slightly lower than 2020 (7.3%) and 2019 (7.8%).

Figure 7 Time starting the first employment for all graduates' cohorts



When analyzing the transition to the labor market of graduates based on gender, it is evident that from 2016 – 2019, male students have a higher employability rate than female students, which ranges from 22% to 32% higher. However, the scenery has changed in the past two years. From 2020-2021, employability for female students is 57.1% in 2020 as opposed to 47.8% male students and 62.7% female students in 2021 as opposed to 57.6% male.

Figure 8 Time starting the first employment for all graduates' cohorts by gender



Regarding the means of acquiring first employment and job-search after graduation, for the 2021 graduate's cohort as in all other cohorts, personal connections remain the most prevalent form for finding a job. For 2021, personal connections have remained in the first place with 51.5% of graduates claiming to have found a job through family members or friends, followed by apprenticeships in businesses being the second most widespread form (15.7%). Job advertisements (14.2%) as well as

school teachers (5.4%) were also amongst the sources students used the most to acquire first time employment.

From the table it is evident that the prevalence of personal connections as the most used means to acquire a job has decreased with 25.2% from 2016 to 2021, while apprenticeship in businesses and the development unit have become more prominent means in 2021 as compared to other years. Specifically, acquiring a job from apprenticeship in businesses has an increase of 4% in 2021 which is also the highest percentage throughout all the other cohorts.

Table 2 Ranking of means of acquiring first-time employment

Means of acquiring first-time employment	Year of graduation						Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
<i>Job advertisement</i>	4	16	10	16	31	58	135
	9.3%	8.9%	5.2%	7.8%	9.8%	14.2%	10.1%
<i>Personal connections</i>	33	124	124	136	211	210	838
	76.7%	68.9%	64.6%	66.7%	66.8%	51.5%	62.4%
<i>Apprenticeship in the business</i>	3	11	17	17	34	64	146
	7.0%	6.1%	8.9%	8.3%	10.8%	15.7%	10.9%
<i>Through contacting directly, the employer</i>	3	16	25	16	21	31	112
	7.0%	8.9%	13.0%	7.8%	6.6%	7.6%	8.3%
<i>From school teachers</i>	0	1	4	7	7	22	41
	0.0%	0.6%	2.1%	3.4%	2.2%	5.4%	3.1%
<i>Employment Office</i>	0	5	2	1	2	4	14
	0.0%	2.8%	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%
<i>Other</i>	0	2	7	4	5	5	23
	0.0%	1.1%	3.6%	2.0%	1.6%	1.2%	1.7%
<i>From the Development Unit</i>	0	5	3	7	5	14	34
	0.0%	2.8%	1.6%	3.4%	1.6%	3.4%	2.5%

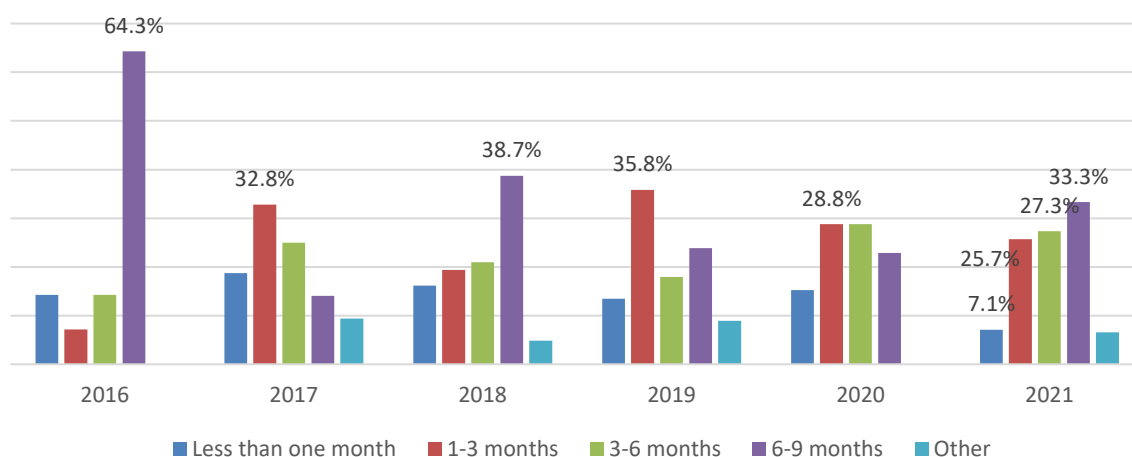
32% of the graduates of 2021 who are employed one year after graduation are still employed in their first job, 11% have changed one job and 16.5% have changed 2 jobs. About half (47.4%) of graduates of 2021 who got their first job from a business apprenticeship are still working in the same business.

2.2.2 Work conditions

Data regarding the duration of the job, for the 2021 graduates showed that 33% are working at the current job in a range between 6-9 months, followed with 27% in the range 3-6 months, and 26% are working in the current job in a period between 1-3 months.

The longest time interval of a job for all graduates of all cohorts seems to range between 6-9 months, respectively in 2016 (64%), in 2018 (39%) and 2021 (33%), followed from the range 1-3 months in 2019 (36%), 2017 (33%) and 2020 (29%).

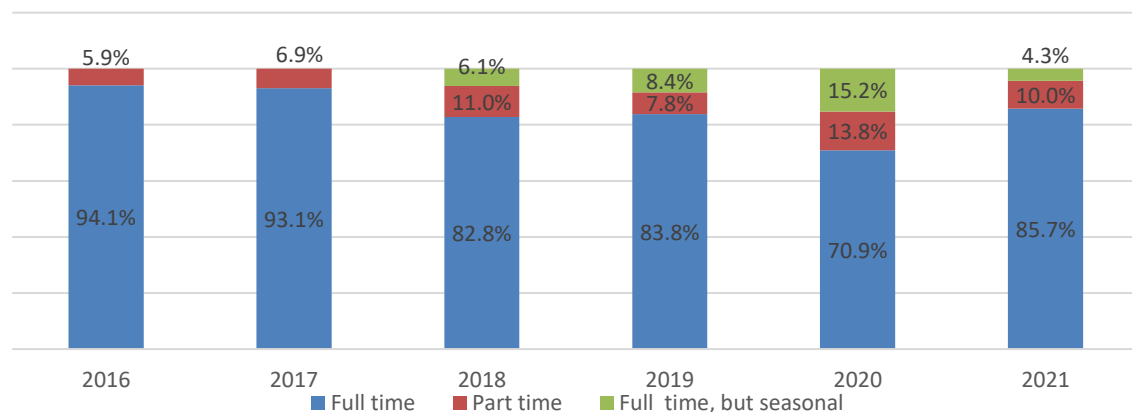
Figure 9 Months at the actual job (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.
Base: N1=14, N2=64, N3=62, N4=67, N5=118, N6=588.

Out of all employed graduated in 2021 86% have a full time job, 10 % are employed in a part time job and 4.5% have a full-time seasonal job. The analysis showed that the overwhelming majority of graduates in each cohort worked full time. The highest percentage of full-time employment was scored in 2016 with 94.1% and the lowest in 2020 with 70.9% working full-time. In 2021, there is a 15% increase in the percentage of full-time employed graduates. Meanwhile the 2020 cohort has the highest level of part time jobs with 14%, and full-time but seasonal with 15%.

Figure 10 Full-time vs. part-time employment (%)

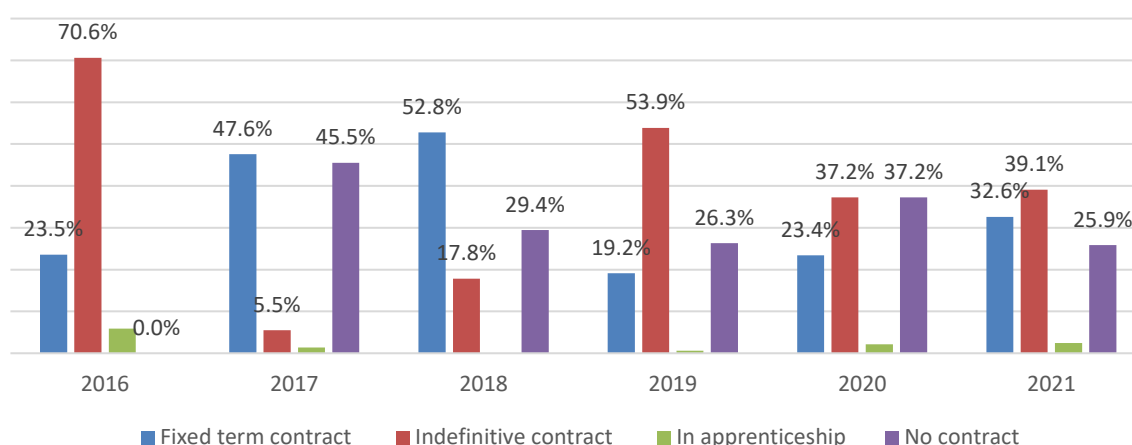


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.
Base: N1=34, N2=145, N3=163, N4=167, N5=282, N6=588.

The situation of employed graduated in 2021 shows that 72 % of them have a work contract with their employer, 33% have a fix-term contract, 39% have indefinite contract while 26% report to have no work contract, which is the lowest percentage among previous cohorts excluding the 2016 cohort.

The percentage of the employed graduates who have job contracts has slightly increased from 2018 to 2019, and decreased again in 2020 potentially from the Covid-19 situation to increase again in 2021.

Figure 11 Type of contract (%)



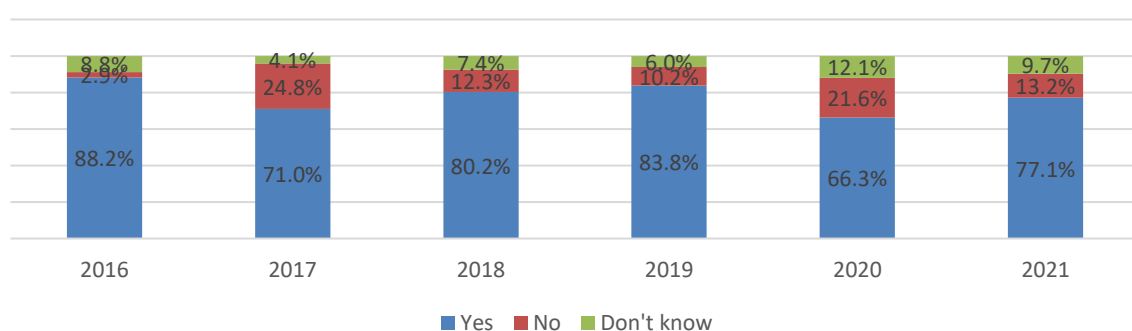
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=34, N2=145, N3=163, N4=167, N5=282, N6=588.

As a proxy for capturing informal employment, graduates were asked about their awareness on the payment of social and health insurance by their employers. From the 2021 graduates 77% reported that social and health insurance contributions are paid, 13% reported that insurance contributions are not paid and 10% are not sure if any insurance contributions are paid.

The current cohort compared to the 2020 cohort reports an increase of 10% for the graduates whose insurance contributions are paid for by the employer and a decrease with 9% of those whose insurance contributions are not paid for. The 2016 employed graduates composed the highest percentage of those who reported that their contributions were being paid for, specifically 88%. This was followed by 84% in 2019 and 80% in 2018. From all cohorts, 2020 scored the lowest percentage of employed graduates who were aware that their employers were paying for contributions. On the other hand, the highest percentage of employed graduates whose contributions are not paid for were reported in 2017 (25%) and 2020 (22%).

Figure 12 Awareness if employers pay contributions (%)



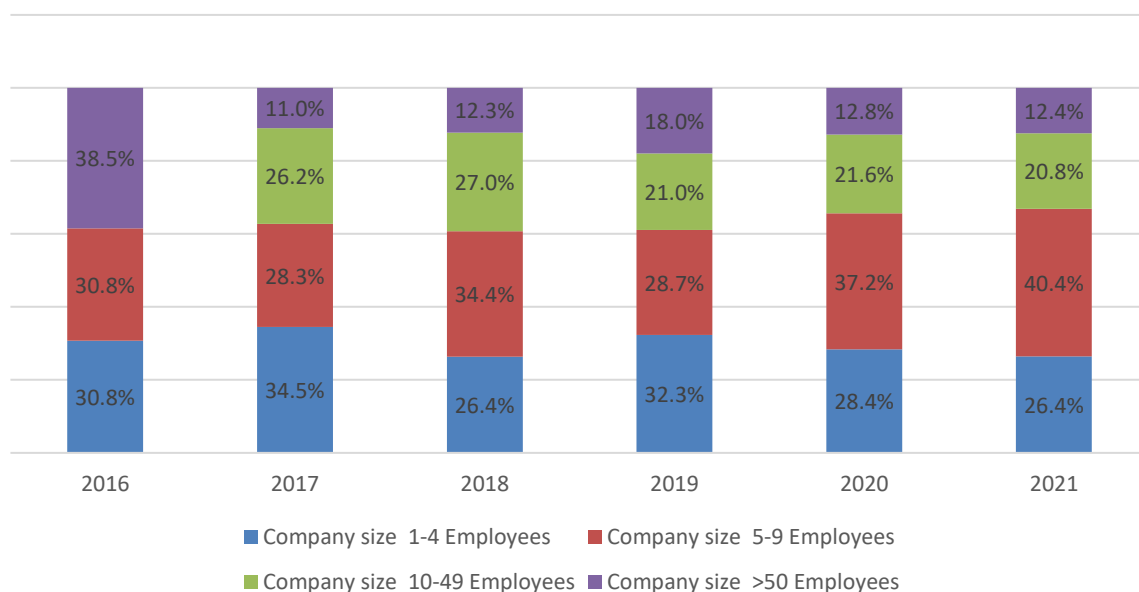
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=34, N2=145, N3=163, N4=167, N5=282, N6=588

Asked on the size of the company where they work, across cohorts the majority worked in small size businesses of up to 9 employees. This percentage is the highest for the 2021 cohort where 67% worked

in companies with up to 9 employees. Across the cohorts, this percentage varied from 62% for the 2016 cohort, 62% for the 2017 cohort, 60% for the 2018 cohort, and again to 62% for 2019 cohort and 64% for 2020. Medium size enterprises employed almost the same percentages of graduates for 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively 21%, 22% and 21%. In 2021, the numbers of graduates employed in large businesses with more than 50 employees has remained the same as in 2020 with 12% each. The percentage of the 2021 graduates was close to that of the 2018 and 2020 graduates of 12%.

Figure 13 Company size (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=26, N2=145, N3=163, N4=167, N5=282, N6=371.

2.2.3 Salary range

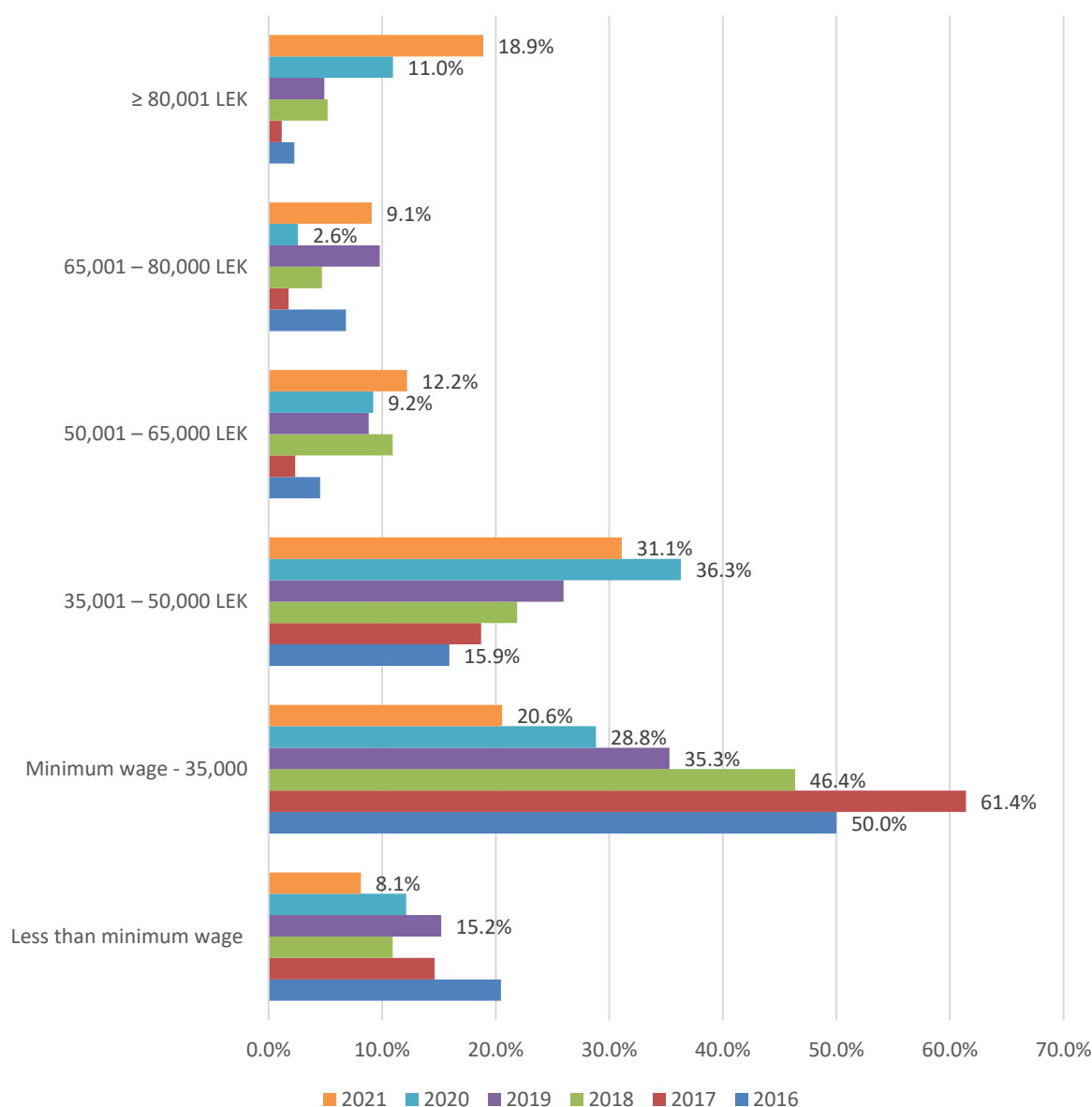
The following graph shows the salaries for employed graduates across all cohorts. Reporting of graduate salaries includes both graduates in employment and in self-employment.

Regarding monthly net income from employment the 2021 graduates reported that: 29% of employed have a monthly net income of less than 35,000 Lek /month; 31% of employed have a monthly net income in the range of 35,001-50,000 Lek/month; 21% of the same group report a monthly net income between 50,001 - 80,000 Lek/months and 19% report a monthly net income over 80,000 Lek/month, reaching the highest percentage for this range, among all groups.

Compared with the 2020 cohort there is an increase with 8% of the net income over 80,000 Lek/ which is the highest for this category among the cohorts. Also, the last cohort reports an increase with 6% of the net income over 65.001 Lek/month.

The proportion of graduates with salaries less than the minimum wage has shown a decreasing trend from 2019 (15%) to 2021 with 8%.

Figure 14 Net monthly income (%)

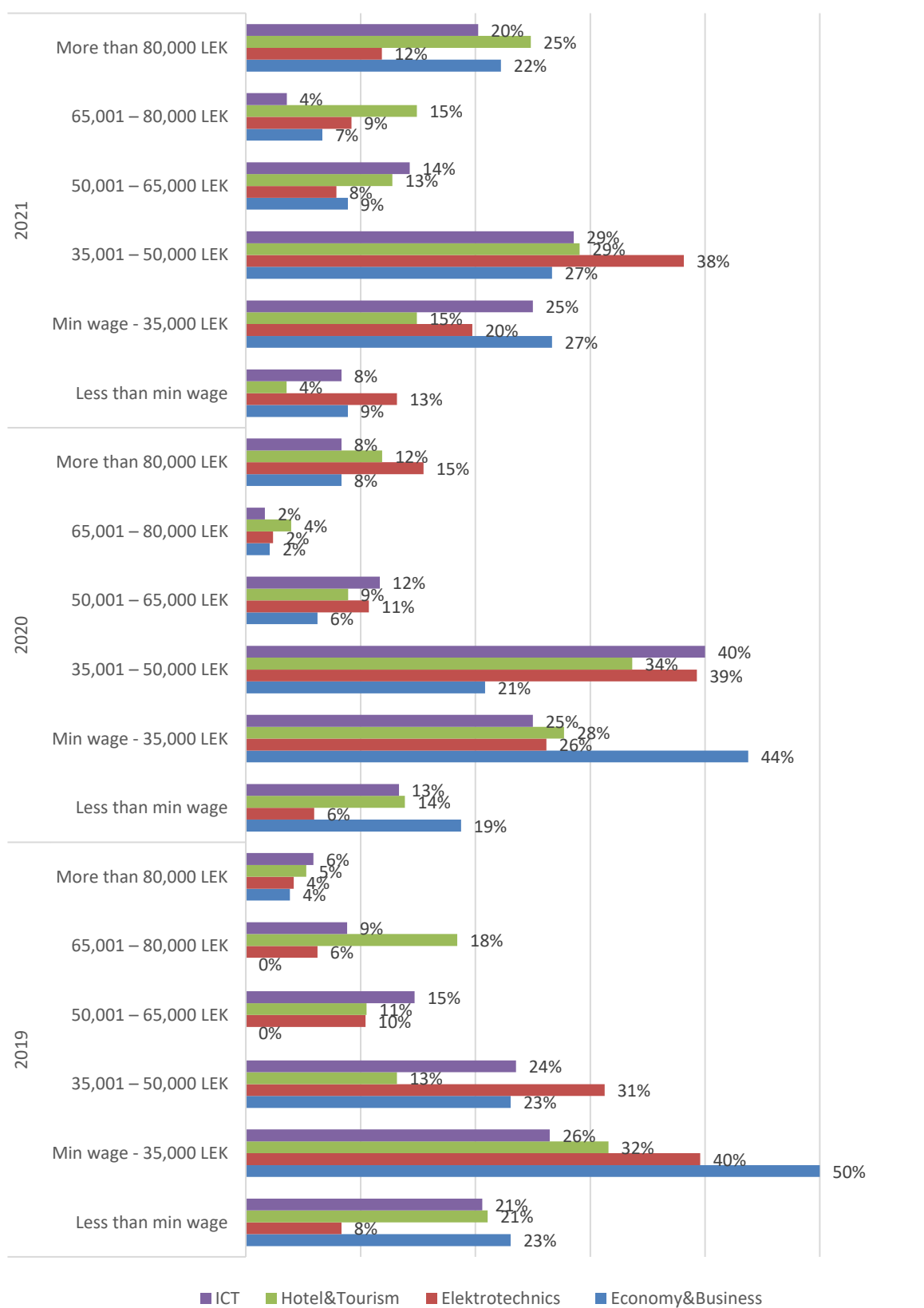


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=44, N2=171, N3=192, N4=204, N5=347, N6=588. Data include both employment and self-employment.

Differences in income by direction show that Electrotechnics direction has the highest percentage of recipients for the 2021 graduates in the category 35,001 – 50,000 ALL at 38%, and this resulted to be the highest proportion among all net income for all directions. For the category 50,001-65,000 ALL, ICT has the highest percentage with 14% for the 2021 cohort, followed by tourism and hospitality direction with a rate of 13%.

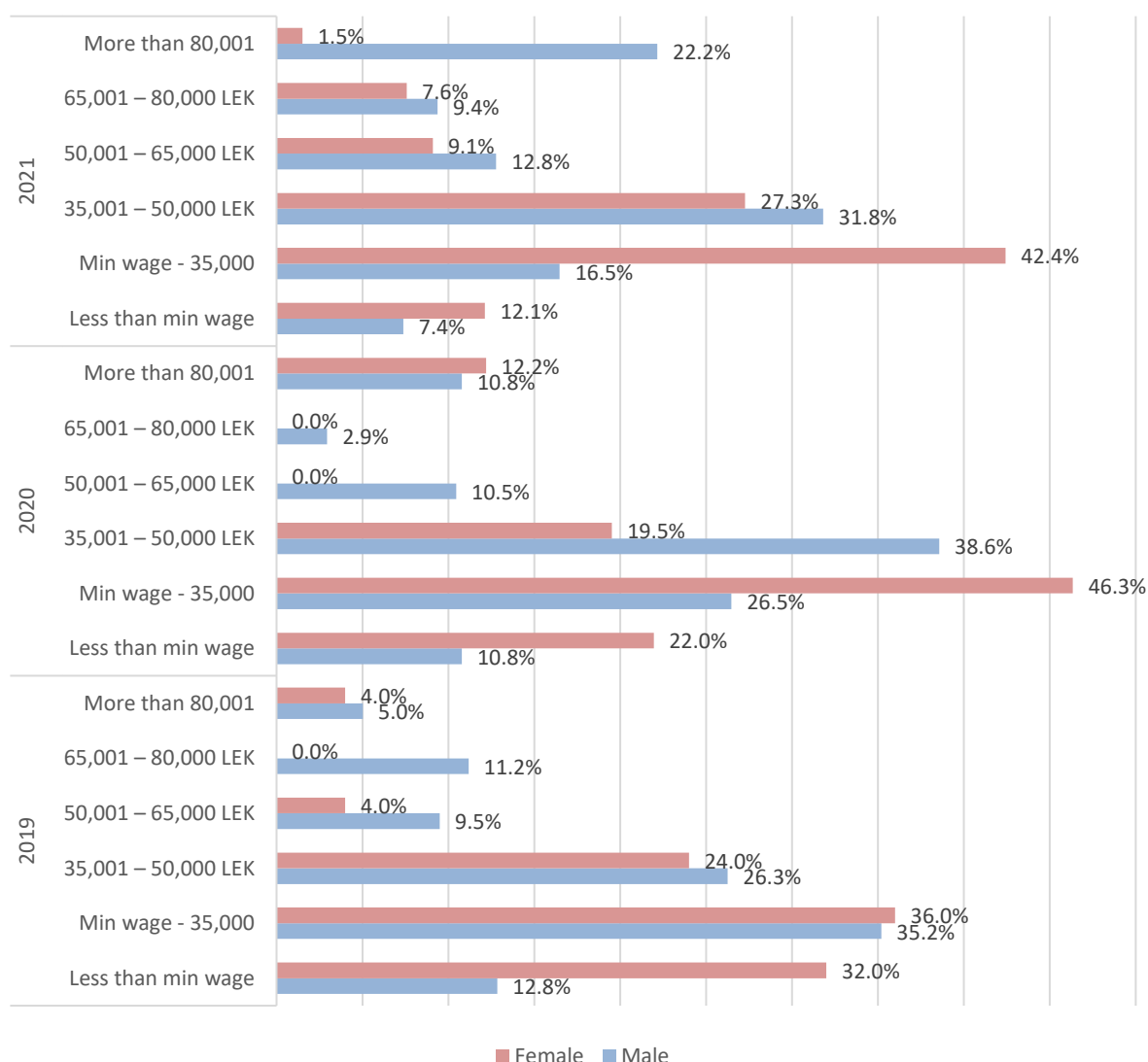
Figure 15 Net monthly income by direction (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.
N1=44, N2=171, N3=192, N4=204, N5=347, N6=588. Data include both employment and self-employment.

Similarly, to other cohorts, females have lower wages than males. This trend is also evident in 2021 where 54% of females are paid less than 35.000 Lek/month as opposed to 24% of males. In contrast to the graduates in 2020 where no females were receiving monthly salaries in the range 50,000 – 80,001, the current cohort reports that 9 % of the females receive a monthly net salary in the range 50,001 – 65,001 Lek and 8% in the range 65,001 – 80,000 Lek.

Figure 16 Net monthly income by gender

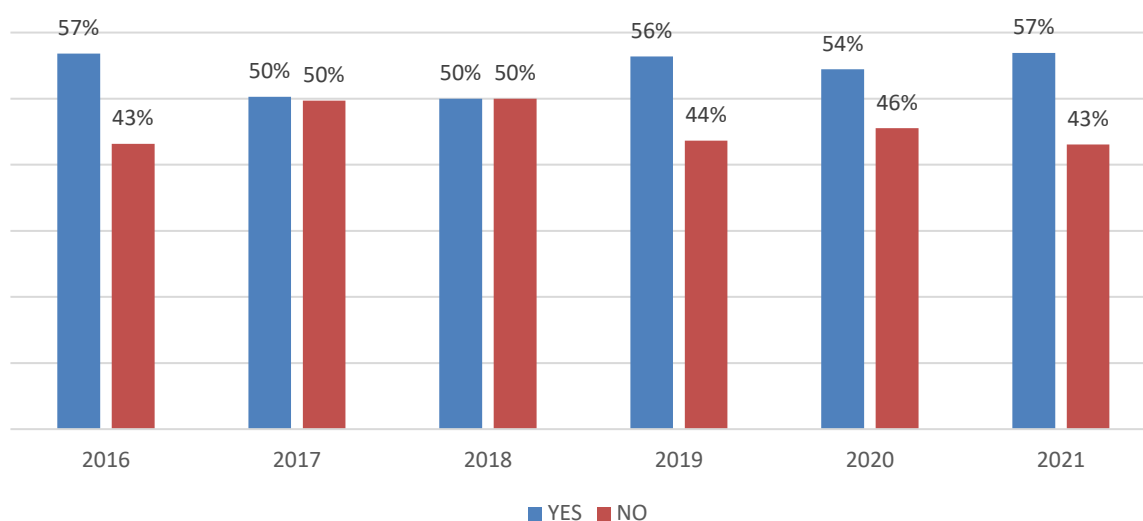


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

2.2.4 Matching level of study

The proportion of employed graduates that do not work in jobs related to their fields of study represents an indicator of the mismatch between labor market demand and supply. For the 2021 graduates, 57% of the employed graduates reported that their job was related with their field of study. This percentage is slightly higher compared to employed graduates in 2020, where 54% reported that their job is related with field of study.

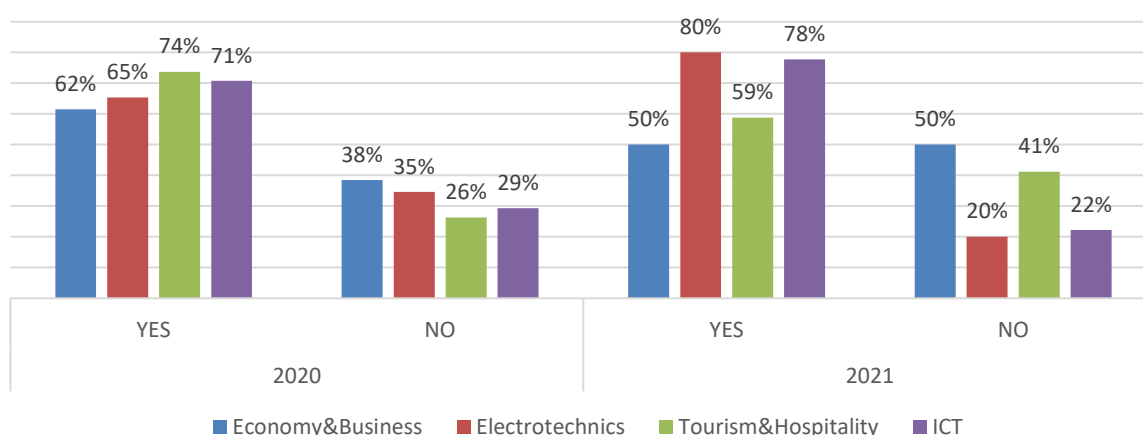
Figure 17: Job related to education (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. Data include both employment and self-employment.

To get more insight regarding the mismatch between labor market demand and supply, the proportion of employed graduates that do not work in jobs related to their fields of study has been also analyzed by directions. In this regard, for the current cohort, 80% of the graduates in electrotechnics direction have a job related their area of education, followed from graduates in ICT with 78%, tourism and hospitality with 59% and economy & business with 50%. Compared to graduates in 2020 there is an increase of the percentage in the direction of electrotechnics (from 74%/2020 to 80%/2021) and ICT (from 71%/2020 to 78%/2021).

Figure 18. Job related to education by direction (%)

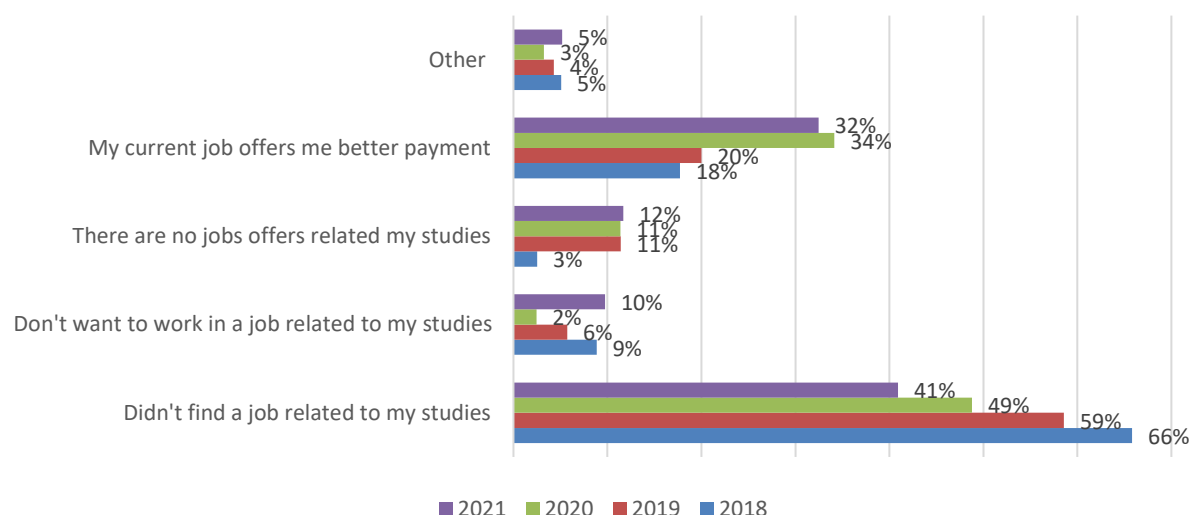


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

When asked on the reason behind the mismatch between their job and educational background, 41% of the 2021 graduates reported that did not find a job related to area of study, followed by 32% who reported that the current job offers a better payment, while 12% of the graduates claimed that there are no job offers related their study and 10% reported that they do not want to work in a job related to their study. Among all cohorts there is a decrease in the percentages of graduates that claimed to

not have been able to find a job related to their studies, respectively 66% in 2018 to 41% in 2021. Meanwhile, the percentage of graduates who claimed that their current jobs offer better payments was 34% and 32% for 2020 and 2021 graduates.

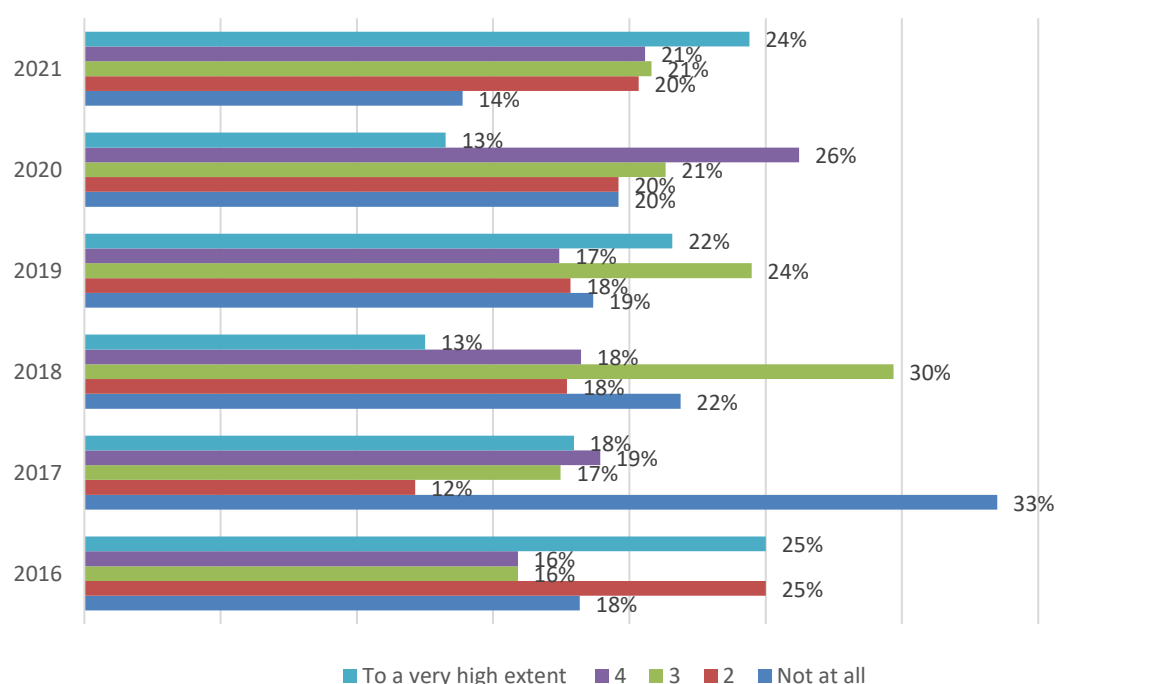
Figure 19 Perceived reasons behind the mismatch



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

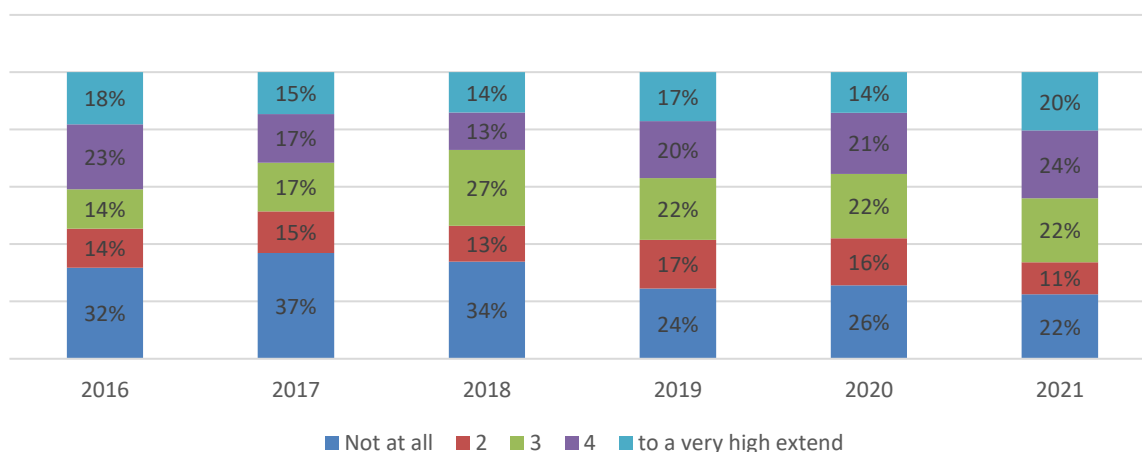
When asked on the extent to which graduates use the knowledge acquired during studies in their current work, 45% of the 2021 graduates reported to use school knowledge in their current job at a high to a very high level. This is also the highest percentage of graduates using school knowledge in their jobs among all cohorts. As for the percentage of graduates who used the knowledge gained in school “a little to somehow”, the proportions have remained at 42% from 2019-2021.

Figure 20 Extent of utilization of knowledge acquired during studies



Regarding the degree to which the actual job position is related to their field of studies, 33% of the graduates in 2021 reported that it is related to a “high” or “very high” extent. This percentage is lower compared to 2020 and 2019 cohorts in which 42% of graduates reported to have a job position related to their field of study. 46% of 2021 graduates report that their job position is a “little” to “somehow” related to their field of studies. The 2021 graduates have the lowest level of reporting that their actual job was not at all related to their field of study at 20%.

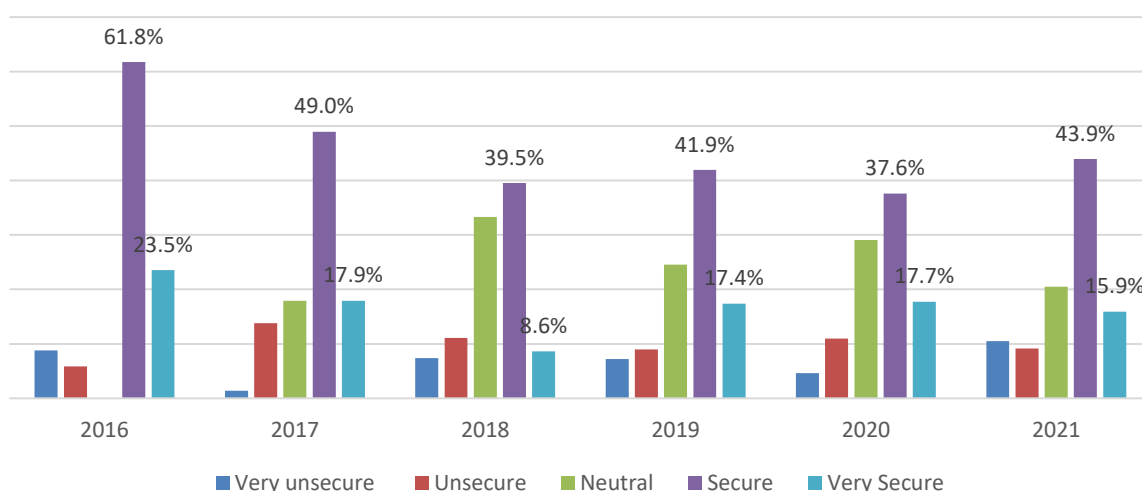
Figure 21 Extent of relatedness of job position and studies



2.2.5 Perceived job security/stability and satisfaction

Employed graduates were asked on their perceived level of security, stability, and satisfaction with regards to their current jobs. Data showed that for 2021, 60% of the employed graduates reported to feel secure to very secure in their current jobs. The 2021 cohort reports an increase with 6 p.p in job security compared to the 2020 cohort. Among all cohorts the most frequent proportion belongs to the category “feeling secure” from the current job.

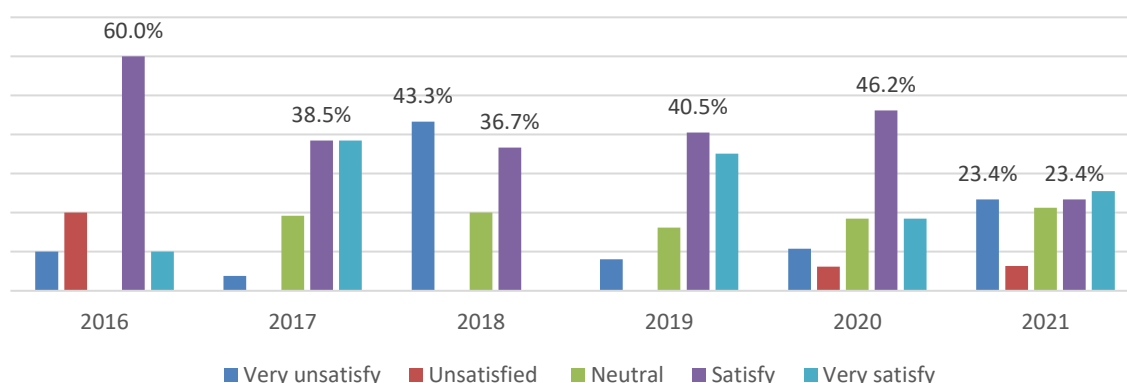
Figure 22 Perceived job security of the current job (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

In general, job security is a significant determinant of job satisfaction. Asked on perceived satisfaction levels with their current job, 65% of the 2021 graduates reported to be satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs; 17% reported to be unsatisfied or very unsatisfied and 18% report being neutral.

Figure 23 Satisfaction with current job (%)



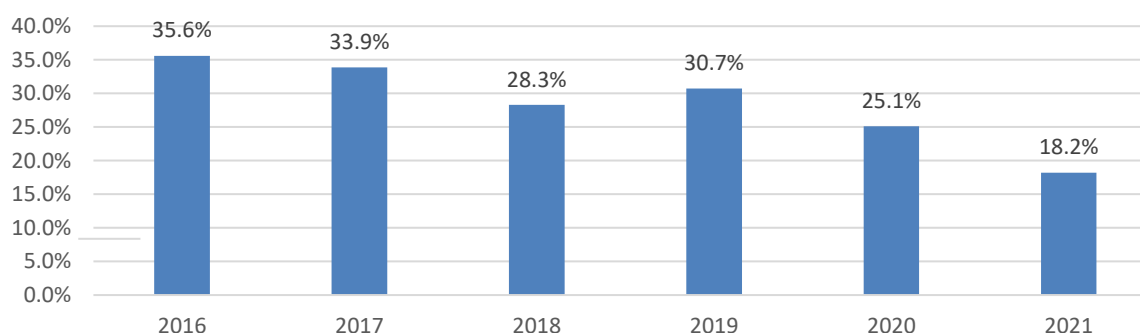
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

2.3 Status of unemployed graduates

The level of unemployed graduates one year after their graduation has decreased for the 2021 graduates compared to all other cohorts. The percentage of unemployed graduates for 2021 was 18% compared to an average of 30% unemployed graduates in the previous years.

From all the unemployed graduates 63% have never been employed and the rest of 37% have been employed before, while 58% have left the jobs for personal reasons (58%). Compared to the 2020 cohort there is a decrease of 9% in the percentage of graduates that are looking for a job, specifically from 25% in 2020 to 18% in 2021.

Figure 24 Unemployed graduates (%)



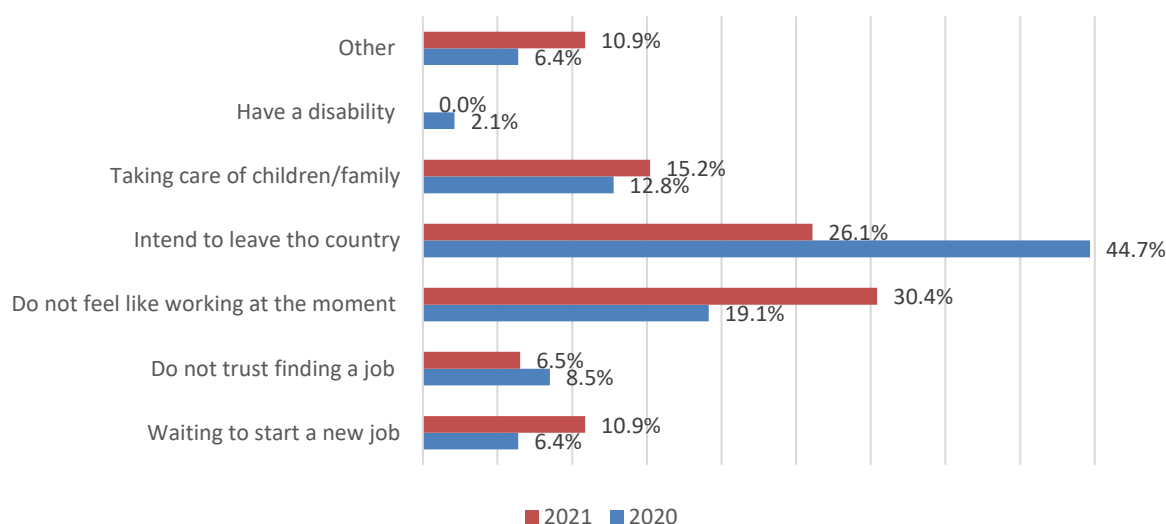
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=132, N2=363, N3=403, N4=407, N5=554, N6=588

The vast majority of graduates who are looking for a job use a wide range of channels to acquire a job such as: asking school teachers, contacting directly potential employees, registering at the employment office, looking at job advertisements, using personal connections etc.

The reasons that 2021 graduates are not looking for a job are related with lack of feeling to work for the moment (30%), intend to leave the country (26%), waiting to start a new job (11%) and taking care for children/family (15%). From 2020 to 2021 cohort there is a decrease of about 20 p.p in the percentage of graduates who are not searching for a job due to their intention to leave the country, respectively 45% in 2020 and 26% in 2021.

Figure 25 Reasons not looking for a job (%)



The 2021 graduates declared that the lack of job opportunities that matched their studies (20%) as well as their lack of experience (20%) were among the main barriers to entry in the labour market. These perceived barriers were followed by the lack of contacts in finding a job at 18% and the scarcity of jobs in the region at 10%. About 26% of the 2021 graduates think that there are others reasons that make up the barriers to entry in the labour market, besides those listed in the questionnaire, but these perceived barriers are very diverse and could not be grouped.

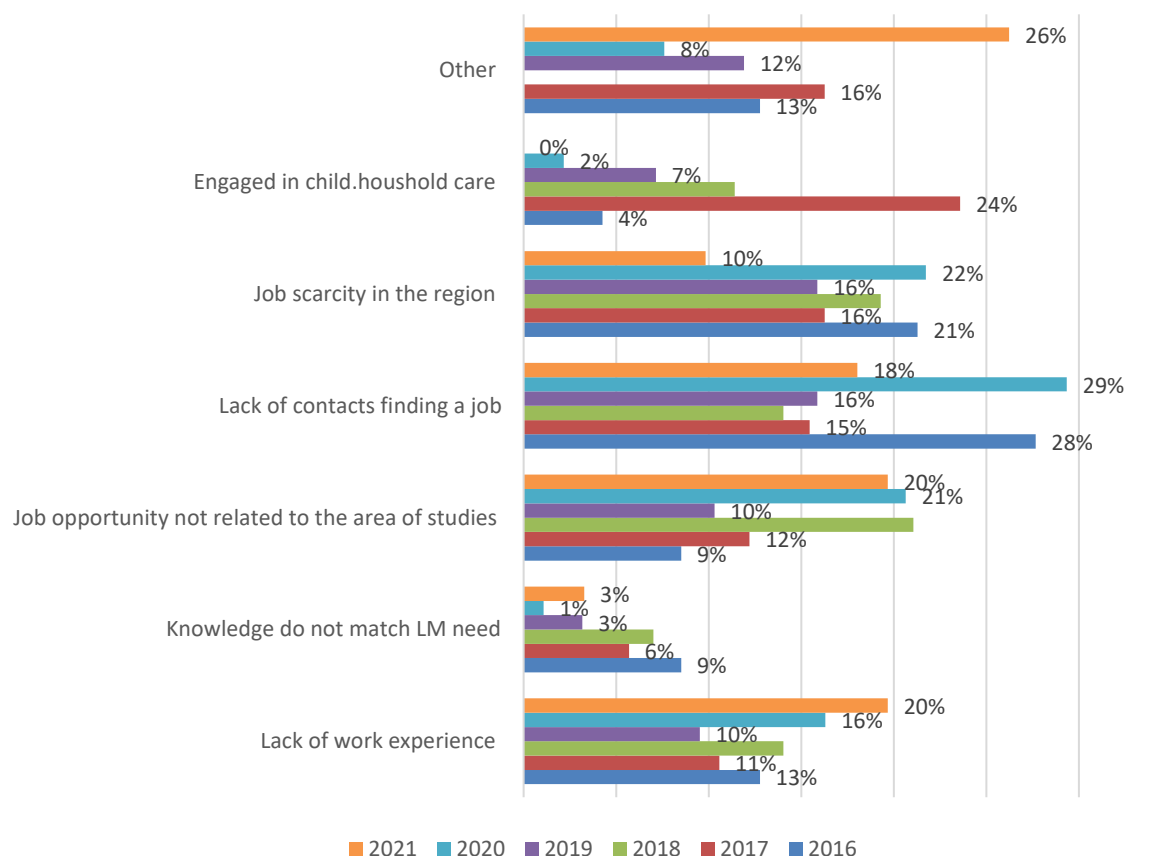
Most of the graduates in all cohorts think that the two main reasons behind their unemployment are the lack of contacts in finding a job and lack of job opportunities in their region. Around 30% in 2016 and 2020, and 20% in 2021 attributed their unemployment to the lack of contacts. On the other hand, 22% of graduates in 2020 and 20% in 2016 attributed unemployment to job scarcity. Nonetheless, job scarcity as one of the main reasons for unemployment seemed to have decreased in 2021 where only 10% listed it as a reason for their unemployment.

In the third place is that job offers are not in line with graduation, it is important to emphasize that the proportion of this reasons remain the same in 2020 (21%) and 2021 (20%). And in the fourth place remain the lack of work experience, this reasons appears to be slightly increase during the years (excluded 2019), specifically 13% in 2016, 14% in 2018, 16% in 2020 and 20% in 2021.

The third perceived barrier to entry in the labor market by graduates is that job opportunities are not related to their field of study. The percentages of students who believe this to be an important barrier

have remained the same for 2020 and 2021 graduates at 21% and 20% respectively. Lastly, in 2021 the percentage of graduates who see the lack of work experience as a barrier to finding a job has increased to 20% from 16% in 2020 and 14% in 2018.

Figure 26 Perceived main reasons behind unemployment (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

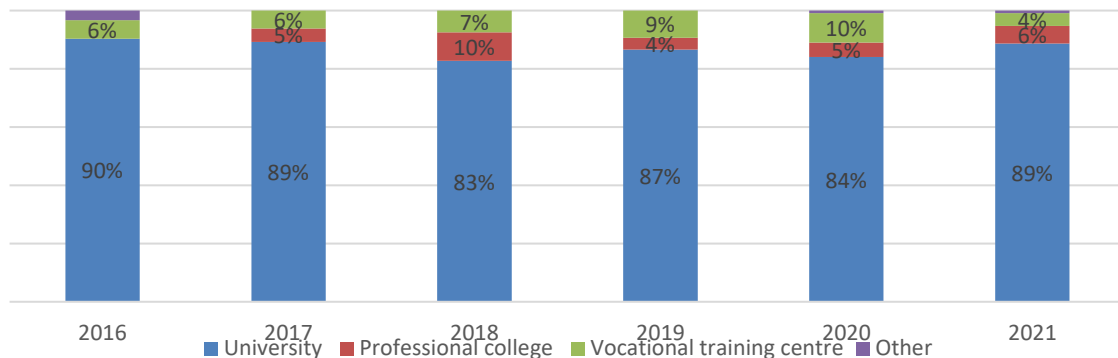
Base: N1=47, N2=123, N3=114, N4=126, N5=32, N6=61

2.4 Graduates pursuing further qualifications

From graduates who do not enter the labour market there is a high percentage that decides to pursue further studies and qualifications. From the 2021 graduates who decided to pursue further qualifications, 89% are attending university studies, 6% professional college and 4% vocational training centers. In comparison to 2019 and 2020 graduates, the 2021 graduated cohort reports a decrease of 6 p.p in the percentages of graduates pursuing further training and qualifications in vocational training centres. Meanwhile the percentage of those pursuing universities and professional colleges from 2021 cohort do not report significant differences to those from previous cohorts.

60% of the 2021 graduates that are continuing their education are studying in public universities and 40% in private universities. Compared to previous cohort there is a slight increase (4 p.p) of those pursuing public universities. 73% of the current graduates pursuing university studies are studying in the same area, compared to 68% in 2020 cohort.

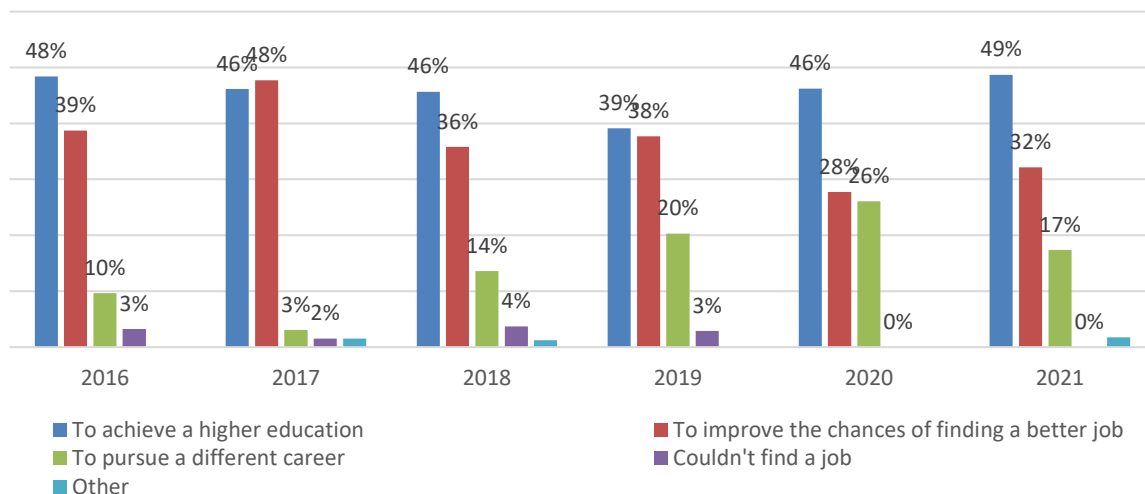
Figure 27 Type of qualification studying towards (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

The main reason that 2021 graduates are pursuing university studies is to achieve a higher qualification (49%), to increase the opportunities to find a better job (32%) and to pursue a different career (17%). Compared to previous cohorts the 2021 graduates do not report significant differences related to the rates of those who pursue university studies. The only difference is the decrease with 11 p.p from 2020 to 2021 with regards to the motivation of pursuing a different job, specifically from 26% in 2020 to 17% in 2021. 73% of the 2021 graduates report that their university study is related to their previous field of studies as opposed to 68% of graduates making the same claim in 2020.

Figure 28 Reasons behind pursuing further education (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

2.5 Retrospective evaluation of the provider

Since the first cohort the graduates were asked on how the school helped them to find the first job. About 40% of the 2021 cohort state that their school has provided guidance on career opportunities, 35% report they have been supported on how to search and apply for a job, about 23% reported they got support in the form of contacts with employers while 20% report that their school barely helped them find a job. The graph shows that among the cohorts the categories related with guidance on

career opportunities and support to search and apply for a job remain in higher proportion as compared to other categories.

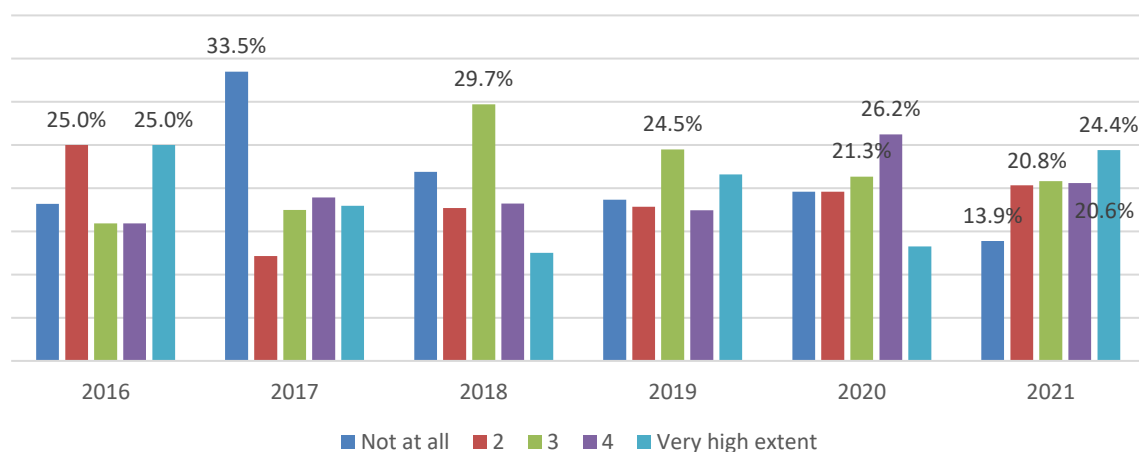
Figure 29 School support to find the first job



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Regarding the level of utilization of the knowledge acquired during studies, 45% of the 2021 cohort report that they have directly used the knowledge in the current job, in a high to a very high scale. At the same time, 35% of the 2021 graduates report that they use the knowledge acquired during studies either not at all or very little. Nonetheless, the 2021 cohort reports the highest percentage of graduates who use the knowledge gained in school in their current job. It is evident that in the last three cohorts, from 2019-2021, there is a slight increase in the proportion of the graduates who report a high to very high scale of the utilization of the knowledge in the current job.

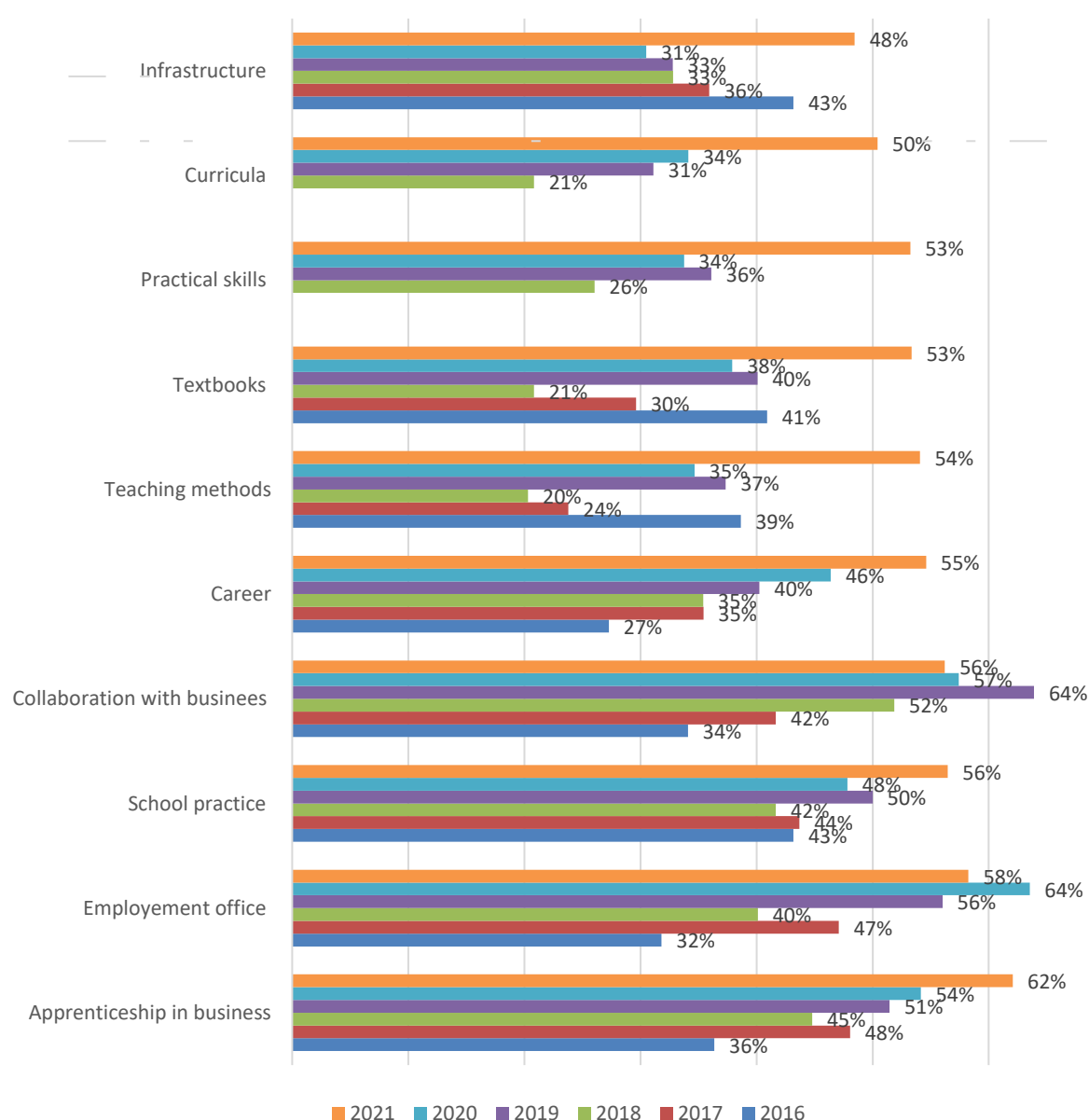
Figure 30 School knowledge utilization in the work (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

The respondents were asked for a Likert scale assessment of various aspects of schooling that need to be improved for a better integration in the labor market. For the 2021 graduates the top three areas for improvement are: apprenticeship in business with 62% in a scale “to high or very high”, followed by collaboration with employment office with 58% and professional school practice with 56%. From the graph it is evident that among all cohorts, the graduates of 2021 report the highest proportion of the need for improvement of apprenticeships in businesses and professional practices in schools.

Figure 31 Area needs improvement “to a high/very high extent” (%)

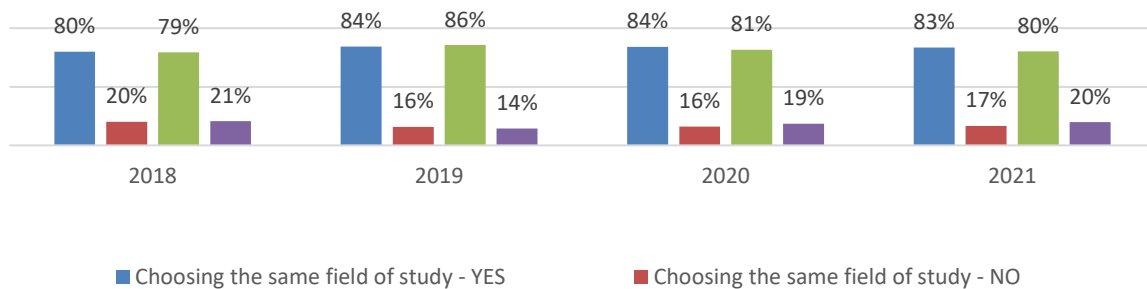


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

The vast majority of graduates over the past four cohorts would choose the same field of study and the same school if they had the chance exceeding 80%. The 2021 cohort shows the same pattern as in 2020 with 84% of the graduates that would choose the same field of study and 80% that would choose the same school. Among the cohorts there are no significant differences related the percentage of the graduates who would choose the same school or field of study. Regardless, the highest proportion

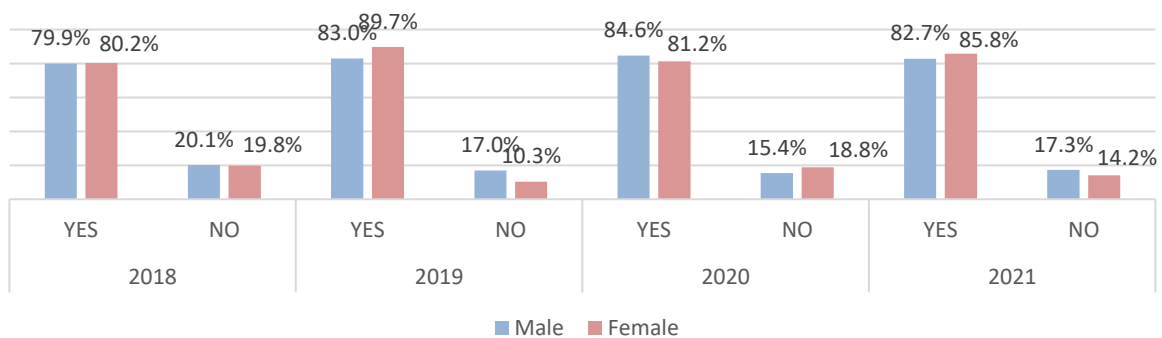
appears to be in 2019, specifically 85% for graduates who would choose the same school and 84% for those choosing the same field of study.

Figure 33 choosing the same field of study and school (%)



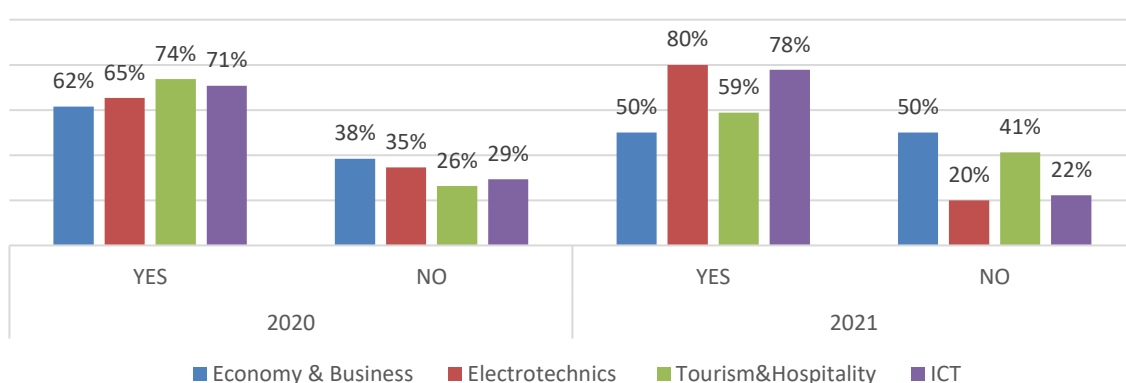
There are no significant differences among graduates who would choose the same field of study based on gender.

Figure 34 choosing the same field of study by gender (%)



For 2021 cohort, 80% of the graduated in Electrotechnics and 78% in ICT reported that they would choose the same field of study. This proportions are higher compared to the 2020 cohort which resulted with 65% for Electrotechnics and 71% for the ICT. The current graduates report a decreased ratio of those who would like to choose the same field for the directions of economy & business and tourism and hospitality, respectively from 62% in 2020 to 50% in 2021 for economy and business and from 74% in 2020 to 41% in 2021 for tourism and hospitality.

Figure 35 choosing the same field of study by direction (%)



Graduates were asked on their desired accomplishments within two years of graduation. 38% of the 2021 graduates want to start their own business followed by 31% who wish to be employed in the field of their studies and 26% who want to migrate abroad. From 2017, there is a growing percentage of students who want to be employed in their field of study at 30%-34%, followed by the ones who want to start their own businesses. The desire to migrate to another city ranks lowest in the list of desired accomplishments at a rate from 0.8% - 1.9%.

Table 3 Desired accomplishment within two years

Want to achieve within two years	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Employed irrespective of the field	33.3%	12.7%	26.8%	26.5%	19.1%	20.9%
Employed in the field of study	3.3%	31.1%	31.5%	33.7%	34.1%	31.0%
Start own business	16.4%	17.1%	20.8%	26.0%	30.9%	37.8%
To pursue further studies	13.9%	27.3%	25.0%	19.2%	19.0%	19.6%
To emigrate abroad	5.7%	24.8%	26.3%	25.3%	27.6%	25.5%
Migrate to another city	33.6%	0.8%	1.5%	1.2%	1.1%	1.9%
Other	29.5%	4.4%	6.3%	4.7%	3.2%	2.9%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

Base: N1=122, N2=363, N3 =400, N4 =407, N5 =554, N5 =588

Conclusions

The mismatch between labor market demand and supply represents one of the biggest challenges and constrains in terms of employability of VET graduates. Timely and labor market-oriented policy responses to this regard should not be constrained by the lack of empirical data and information on the productive employment of recent graduates. To this regard, tracing of graduates serves as a tool for ensuring the quality of education and relevance of skills to regional labor market demands. VE providers, though at different levels of development and use of provider – based tracer systems, should be encouraged to orient their annual VE offer decisions based on evidence – either from tracer results or from other complementary information. Furthermore, this information should also be insightful for employment services as intermediaries in the labor market between employers and jobseekers.

Appendix

Coverage of the provider-based tracer

Cohort	Region	Provider	Respondents /Graduates	Response rate	% of total
2015-2016	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	64/119	54%	49%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	40/49	82%	30%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	20/73	27%	15%
	Vlora	Tregtare	8/21	38%	6%
	SUBSAMPLE 1		132/263	50%	100%
2016-2017	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	66/80	83%	18%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	8/8	100%	2%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	59/98	60%	16%
	Vlora	Tregtare	19/19	100%	5%
	Tirana	Gjergj Canco	121/201	60%	33%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	91/102	89%	25%
	SUBSAMPLE 2		363/508	71%	100%
2017-2018	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	46/70	66%	11%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	70/72	97%	17%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	61/126	48%	15%
	Vlora	Tregtare	45/48	94%	11%
	Tirana	Gjergj Canco	121/201	60%	30%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	60/87	69%	15%
	SUBSAMPLE 3		403/604	67%	100%
2018-2019	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	55/62	80%	14%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	22/23	96%	5%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	55/95	58%	14%
	Vlora	Tregtare	43/46	93%	11%
	Tirana	Gjergj Canco	176/241	73%	43%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	56/70	80%	14%
	SUBSAMPLE 4		407/537	76%	100%
2019-2020	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	96/113	85%	17%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	39/40	98%	7%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	103/124	83%	19%
	Vlora	Tregtare	63/63	100%	11%
	Tirana	Gjergj Canco	165/208	79%	30%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	88/95	93%	16%
	SUBSAMPLE 5		554/643	86%	100%

2020- 2021	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	116/118	98%	20%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	38/38	100%	6%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	121/149	81%	21%
	Vlora	Tregtare	62/63	98%	11%
	Tirana	Gjergj Canco	158/187	84%	27%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	93/93	100%	16%
	SUBSAMPLE 6		588/648	92%	100%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.