

# **At what cost?**

## **Being an international student in Finland**

Research Foundation for Studies and Education Otus 2025



# At what cost? Being an international student in Finland

- Digital survey aimed at international undergraduate students in Finnish higher education institutes
- Purposed to find out students' experiences and opinions about studying and their future in Finland
- The data was collected in October 2024, in total 656 respondents
- Conducted by *Research Foundation for Studies and Education Otus sr* in collaboration with *National Union of University Students in Finland* and *National Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences – SAMOK*
- The data is weighted by study field

# Table 1: Field of study

Field of study	Target group (%)	Respondents (%)
Education	2,6	5,2
Arts and humanities	7,8	14,2
Social sciences, journalism and information	3,6	7,6
Business, administration and law	21,1	13,7
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	6,4	13,3
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	22,1	12,3
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	20,2	18,1
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1,2	4,3
Health and welfare	11,0	9,9
Services	4,1	1,4
Total	100,0	100,0
<i>N</i>	26 214	648

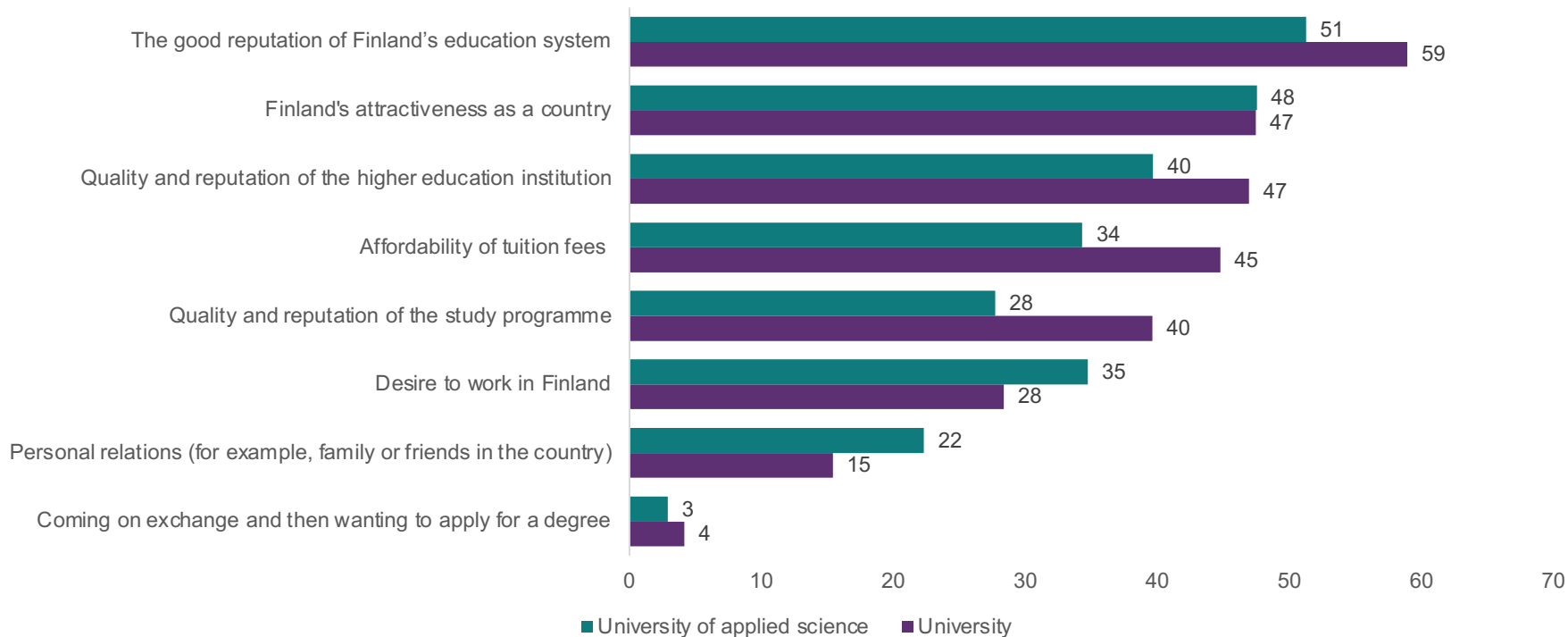
# Everyday life, guidance and integration



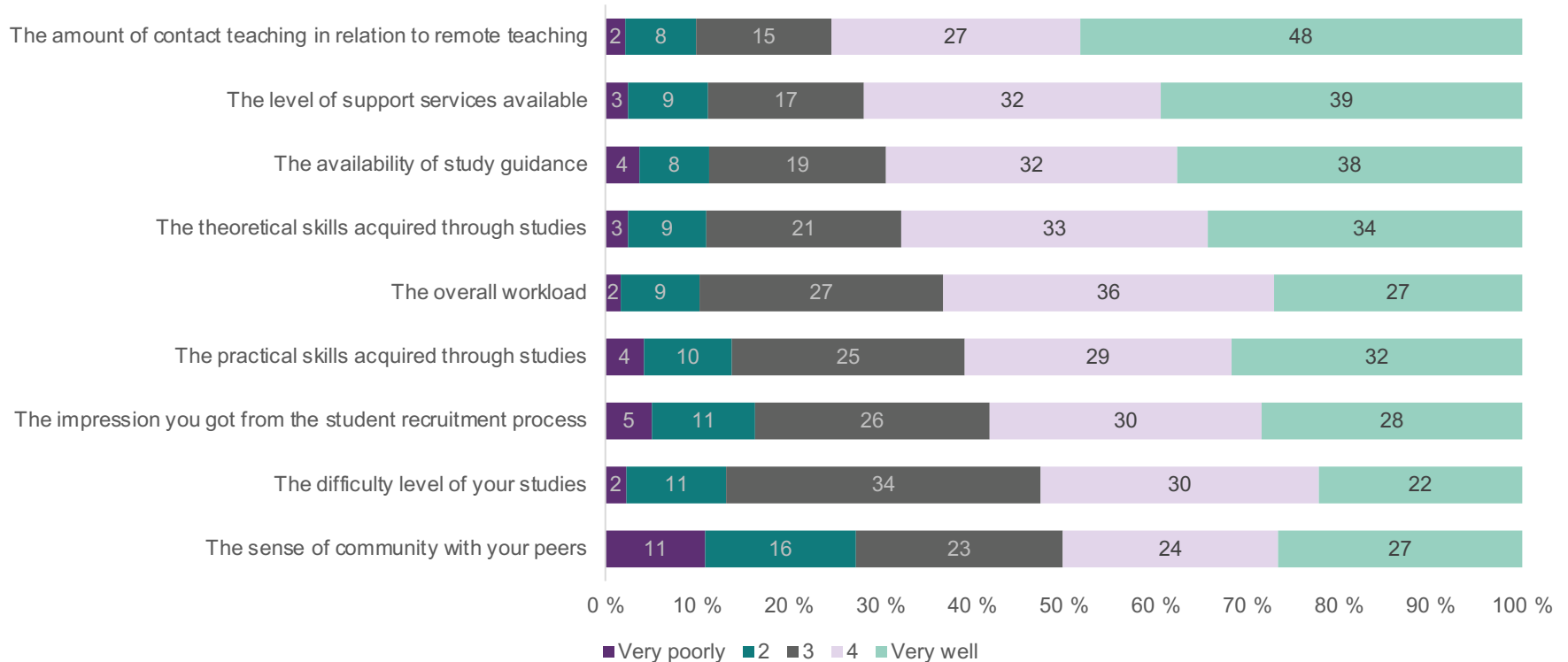
# Questions: Everyday life, guidance and integration

- Why did you choose Finland as your country of study?
- How well have your expectations been met in the following areas?
- Have any of the following hindered your studies?
- Have you considered dropping out?
- If yes, why?
- Have you had problems integrating into Finnish society?
- If yes, what kind?
- Have you felt welcome in Finland?

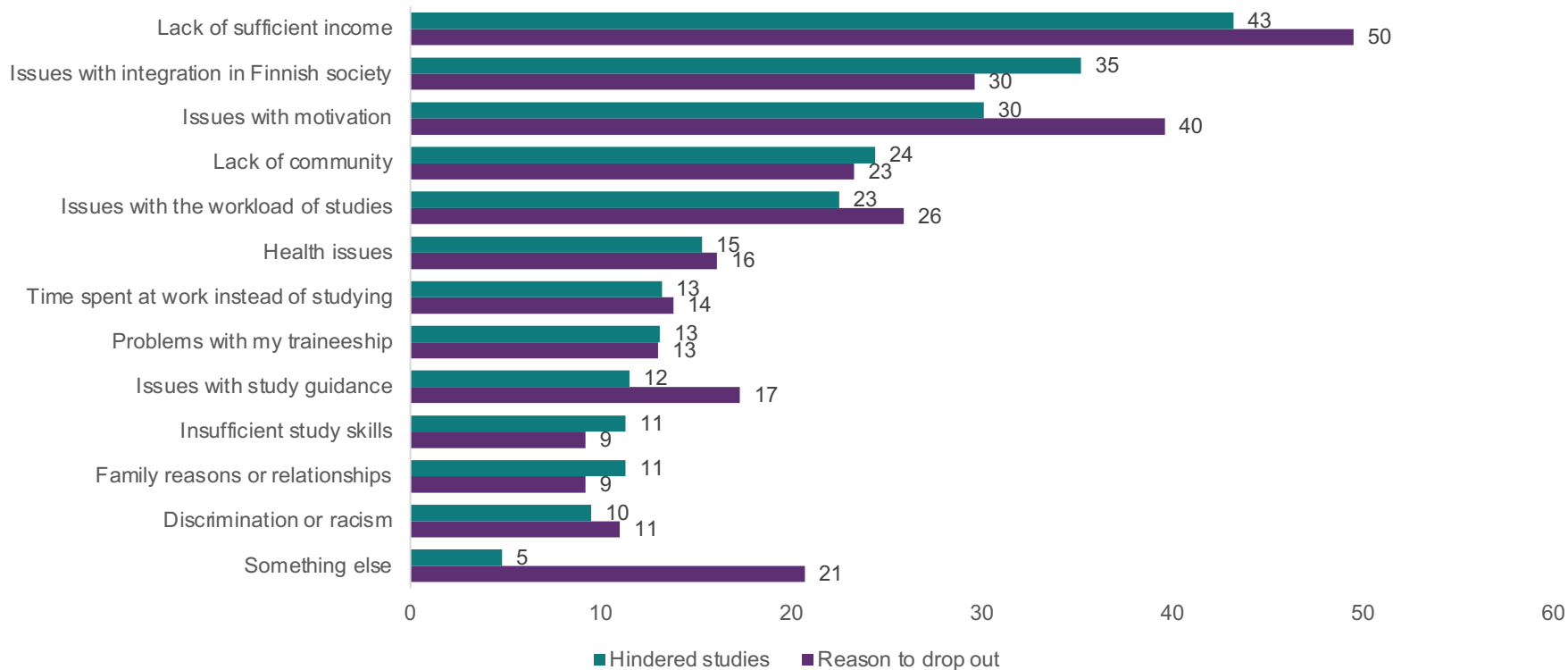
# Figure 1: Why did you choose Finland as your country of study? According to the study sector. Percentage. N = 651.



## Figure 2: How well have your expectations of your studies been met in the following areas? Percentage. N = 575. "I cannot say" = missing.



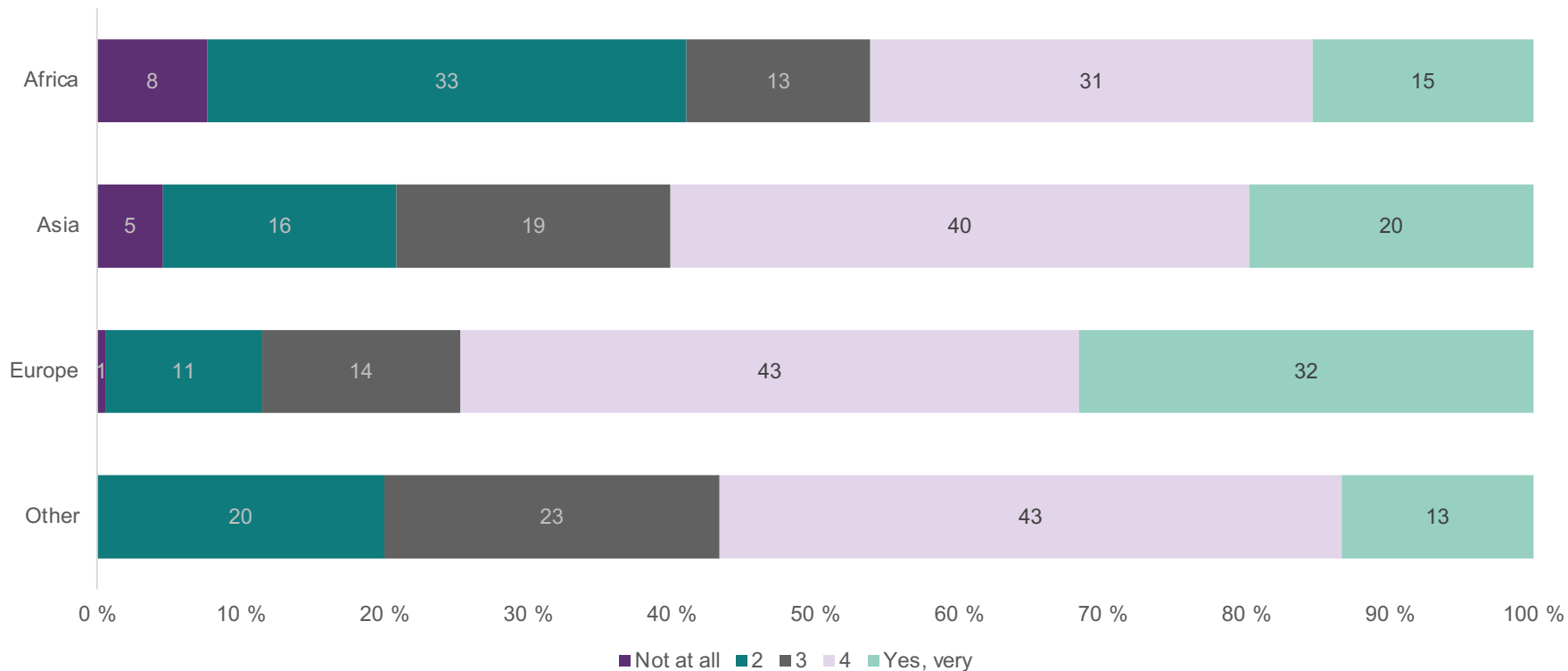
# Figure 3: Have any of the following hindered your studies?/Why have you considered dropping out? Percentage. N = 632/132.





# Figure 4: Have you felt welcome in Finland?

According to citizenship. Percentage. N = 635.



# Summary: Everyday life, guidance and integration

- The most common reasons for choosing Finland as a country of study were the good reputation of the Finland's education system, Finland's attractiveness as a country, and the quality and reputation of the higher education institution.
- Slightly less than a fifth of the respondents said that they had considered dropping out of their studies. The most common reasons for considering dropping out were lack of sufficient income and issues with motivation. Lack of sufficient income, issues with integration in Finnish society, and issues with motivation were also most often perceived as factors hindering studies.
- In general, a fifth of respondents felt that they were not welcome in Finland.
- Half of the respondents had experienced problems integrating into Finland.

# Financing and tuition fees

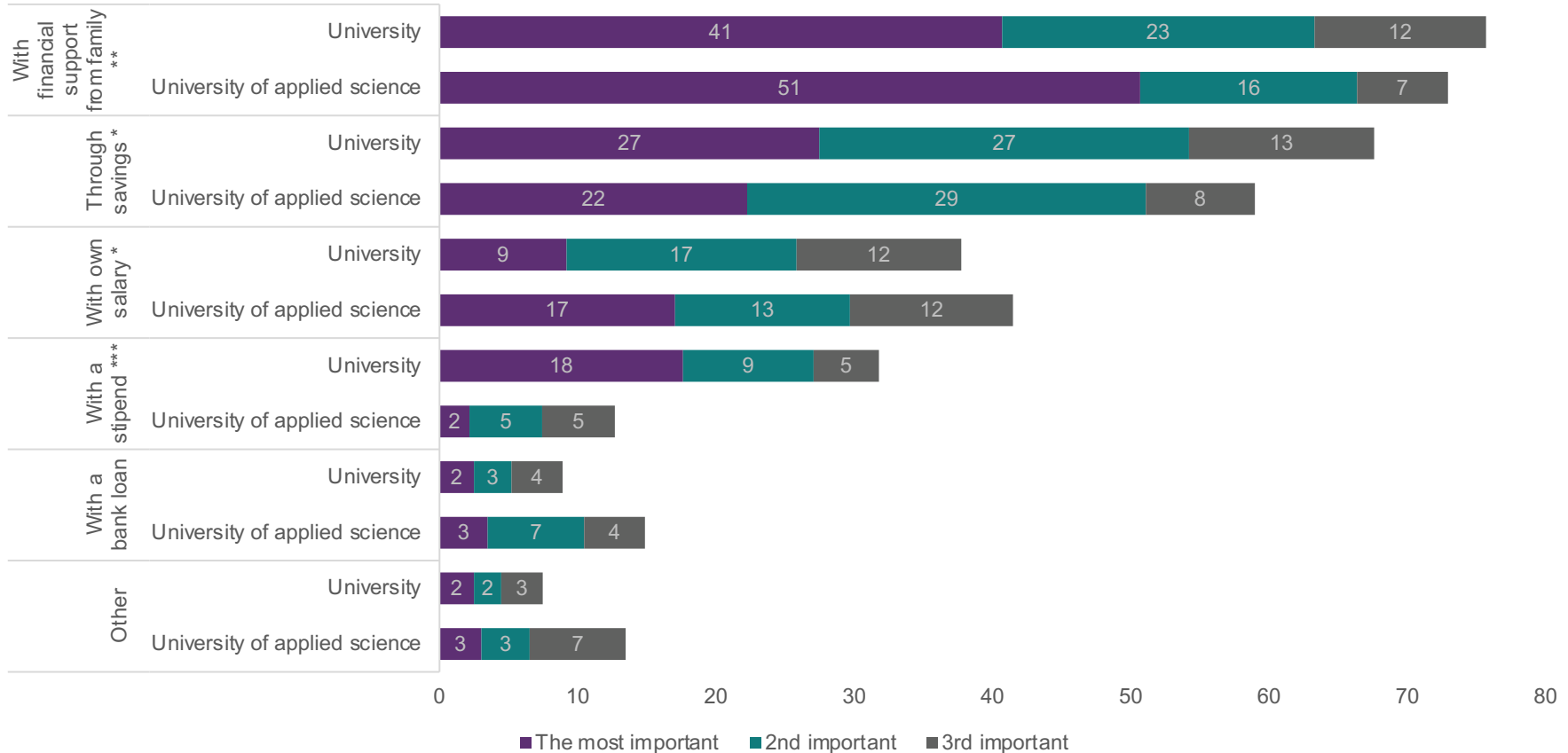


# Questions: Financing and tuition fees

- How do you primarily fund your studies?
- Are you paying tuition fees for your studies?
- Would you still be willing to study in your current programme if you were required to pay tuition fees?
- How much would you be willing to pay annually?
- How much are your tuition fees currently?
- Would you still be willing to study in your current programme if tuition fees were...
- Has paying tuition fees had a negative effect on the following?
- How would you rate the value of your studies in comparison to money spent?

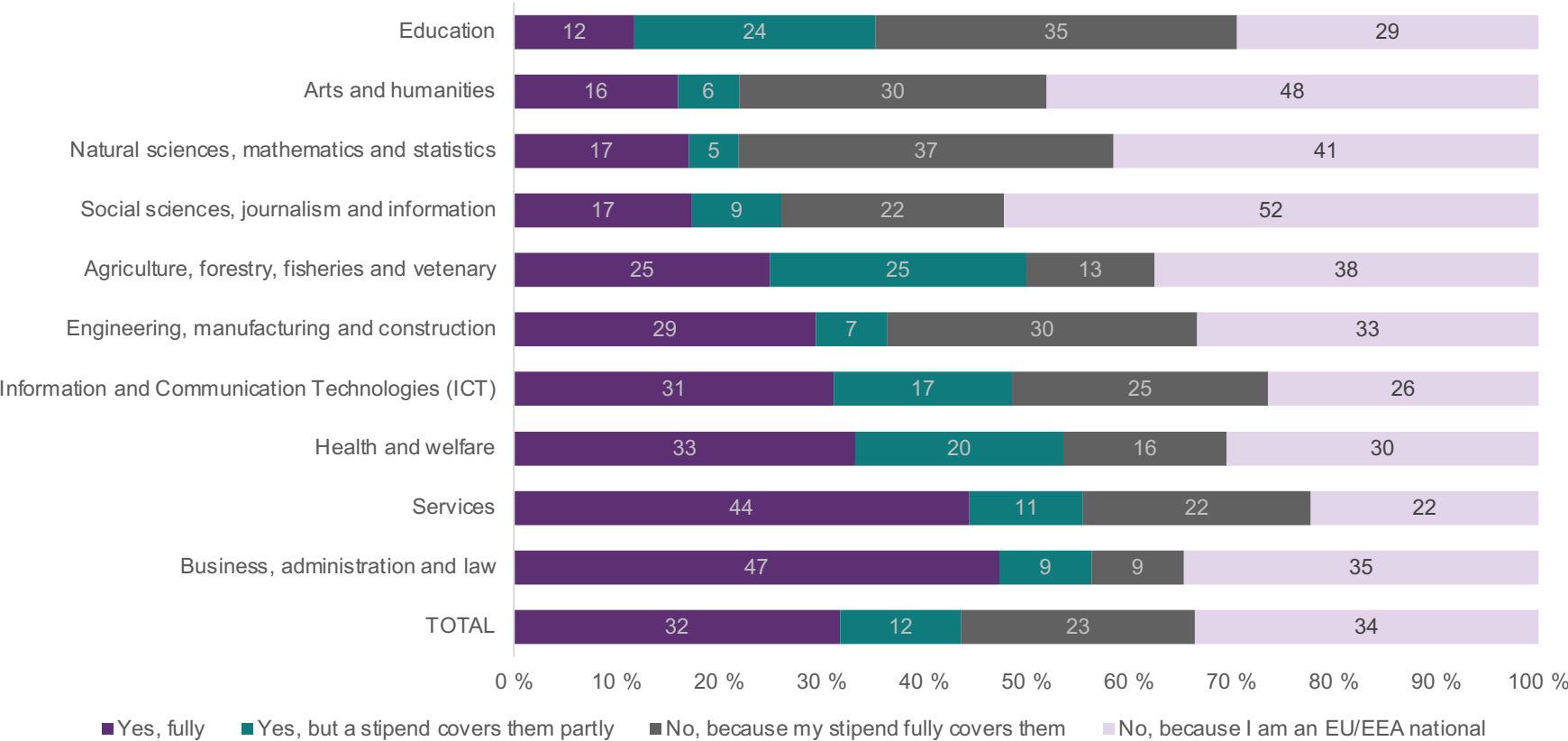
# Figure 5: How do you primarily fund your studies?

According to the institution of the higher education. Percentage. N = 633.

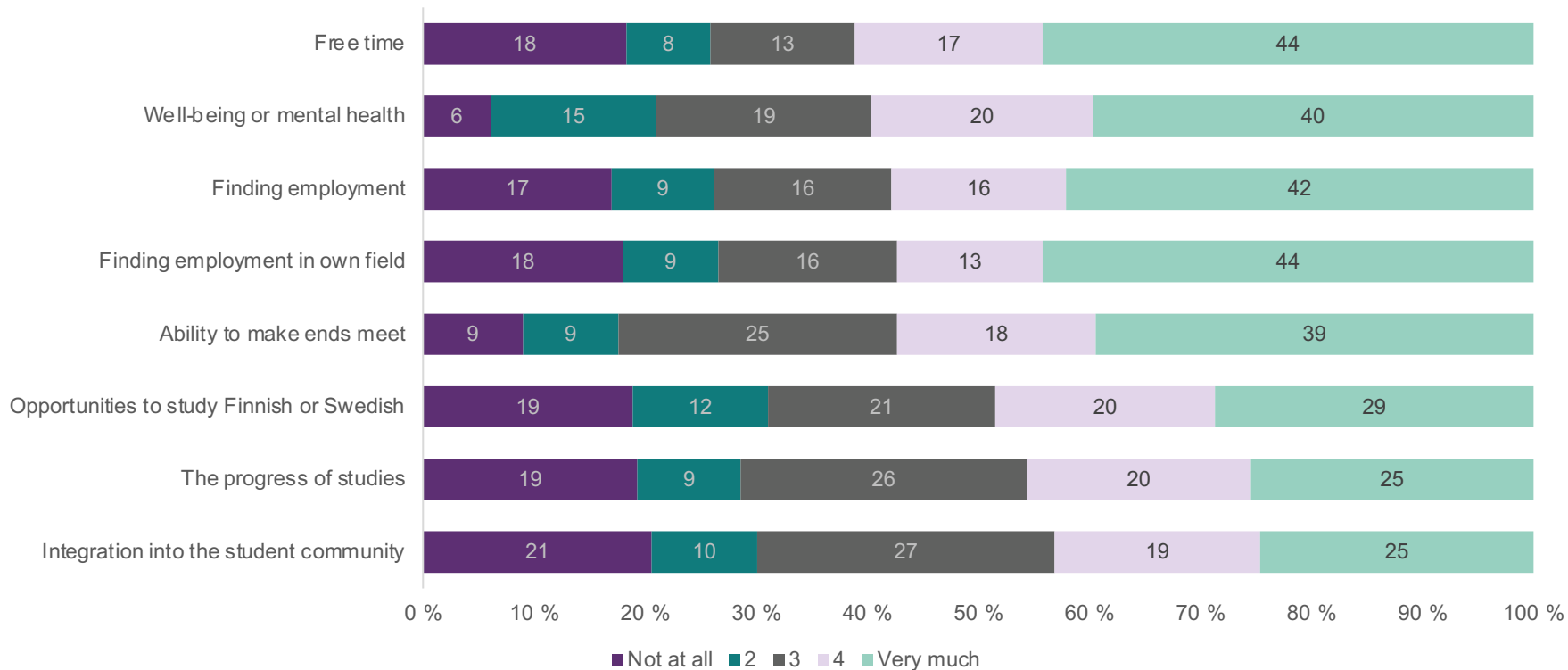


# Figure 6: Are you paying tuition fees for your studies?

According to the field of study. Percentage. N = 641.



# Figure 7: Has paying tuition fees had a negative effect on the following? Percentage. N = 244.



# Summary: Financing and tuition fees

- By far the most common way of financing their studies was financial support from their family. Savings and own salary were also important sources of funding.
- Stipends are clearly more important at universities than at universities of applied sciences, where they seem to be quite rare.
- Only one in ten respondents who do not currently pay tuition fees would be willing to pay for their studies.
- Four out of five of those who pay tuition fees stated that they would not be willing to pay higher tuition fees.
- However, almost two out of three felt that they had received value for their money.



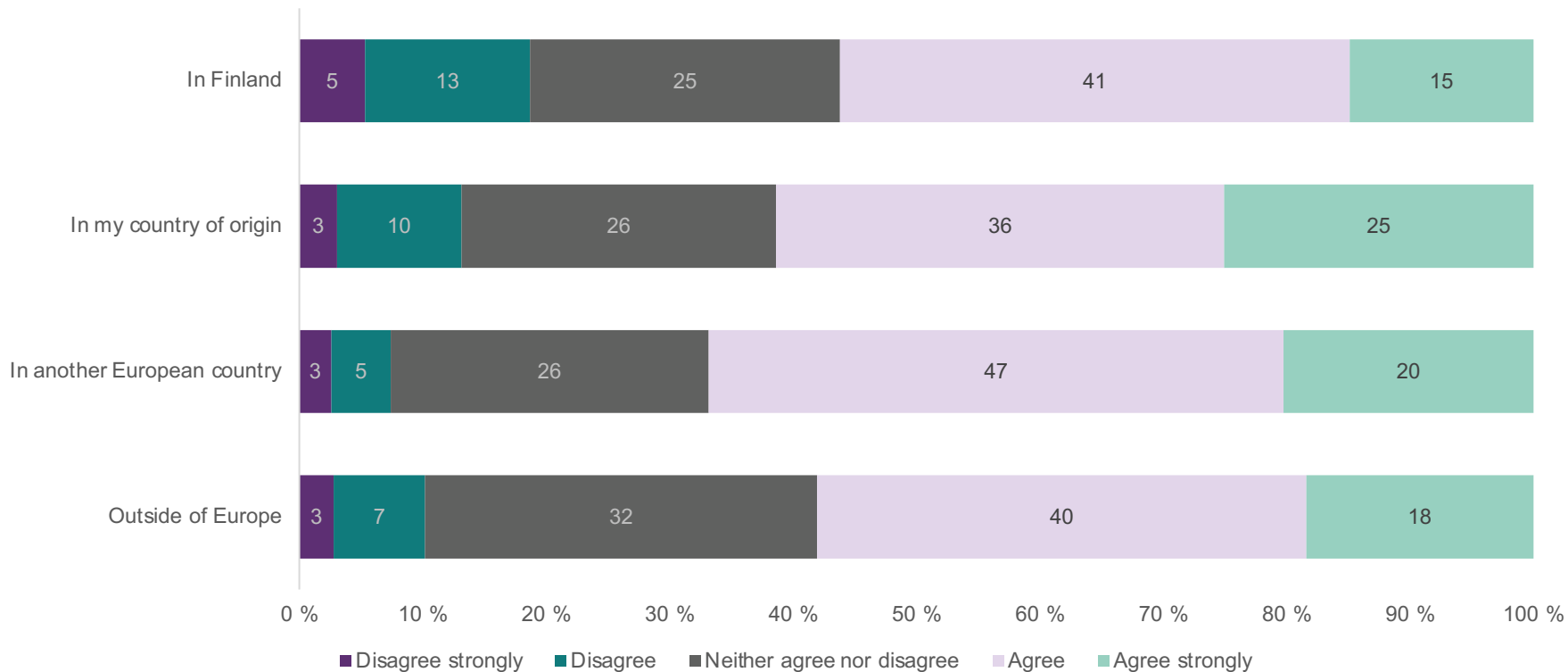
# Employment



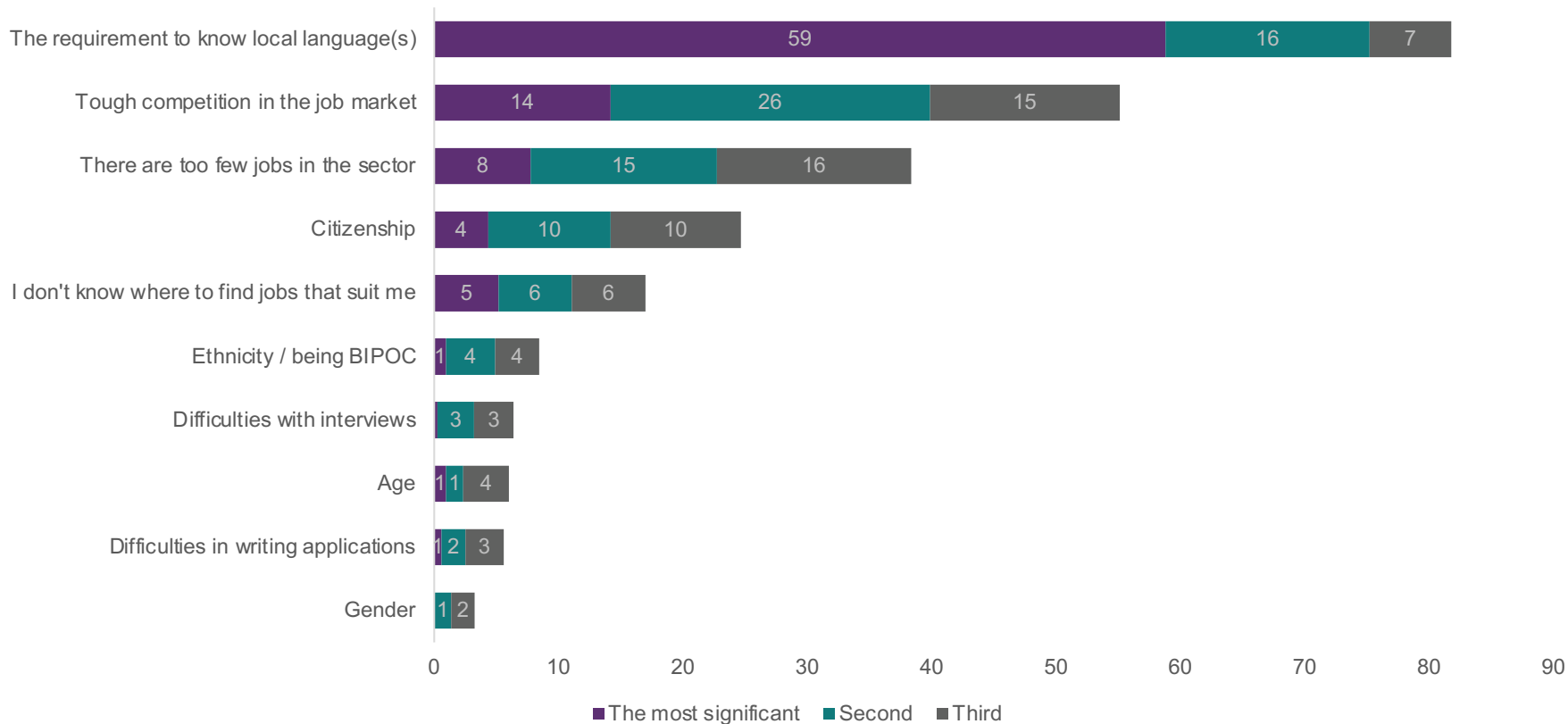
# Questions: Employment

- Do you think that your studies give you sufficient skills and qualifications to find employment...
- Have you found a job or a traineeship in Finland during your studies or after graduating with your first degree?
- Has it been in the field of your studies?
- Have you received a salary from your traineeship?
- What are the three most significant factors that have hindered you from finding a job or a traineeship in Finland?
- What are the three most significant factors that would benefit you in finding a job or a traineeship in Finland?

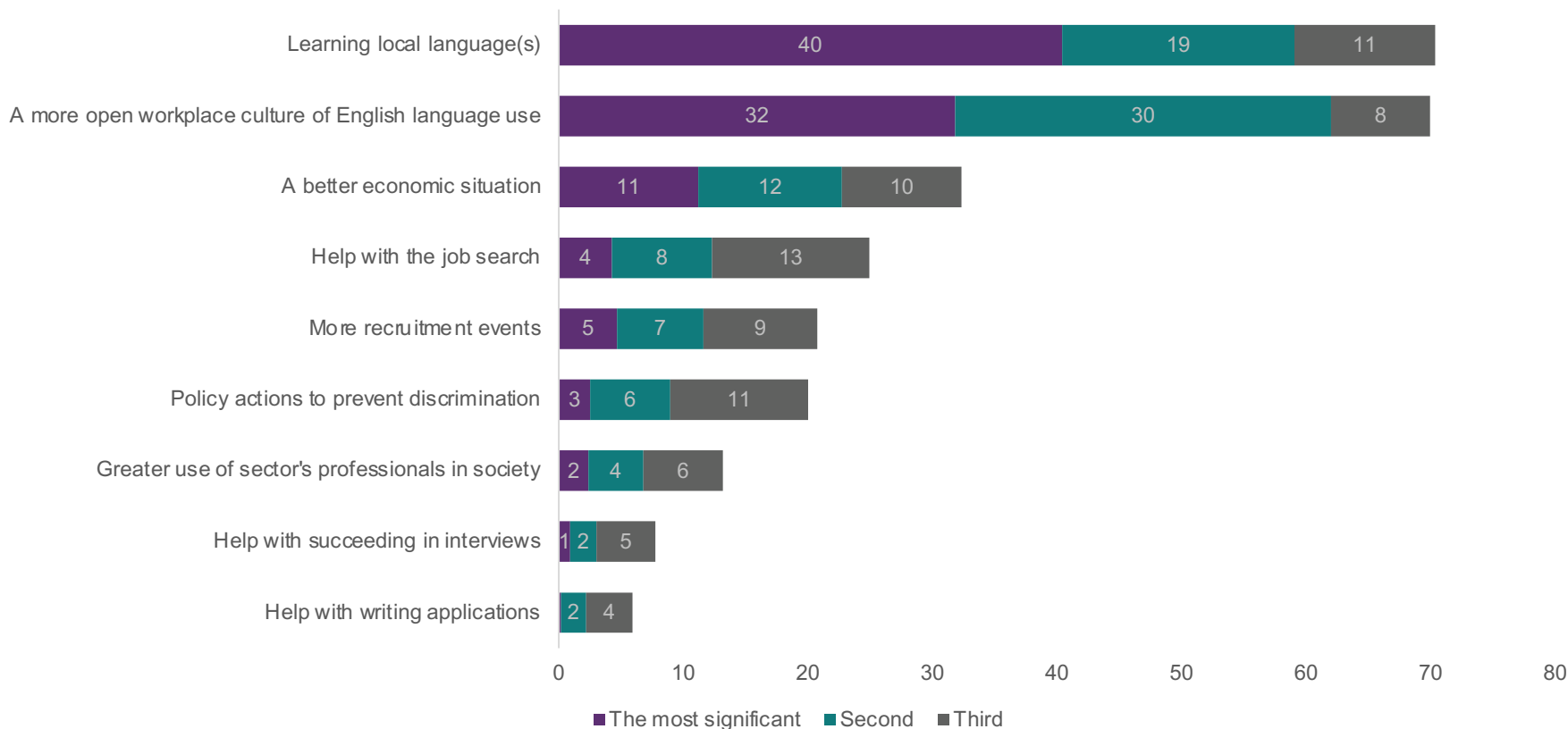
# Figure 8: Do you think that your studies give you sufficient skills and qualifications to find employment... Percentage. N = 641.



**Figure 9: What are the three most significant factors that have hindered you from finding a job or a traineeship in Finland? Percentage. N = 595.**



**Figure 10: What are the three most significant factors that would benefit you in finding a job or a traineeship in Finland? Percentage. N = 601.**



# Summary: Employment

- Only a relatively small proportion of respondents had obtained a job or traineeship in Finland.
- The most important obstacles to employment were perceived to be requirement to know local language(s), tough competition in the job market and a shortage of jobs in the sector.
- Similarly, learning Finnish or Swedish and a workplace culture that is more open to the use of English were considered the best ways to get a job or internship.

# Future in Finland

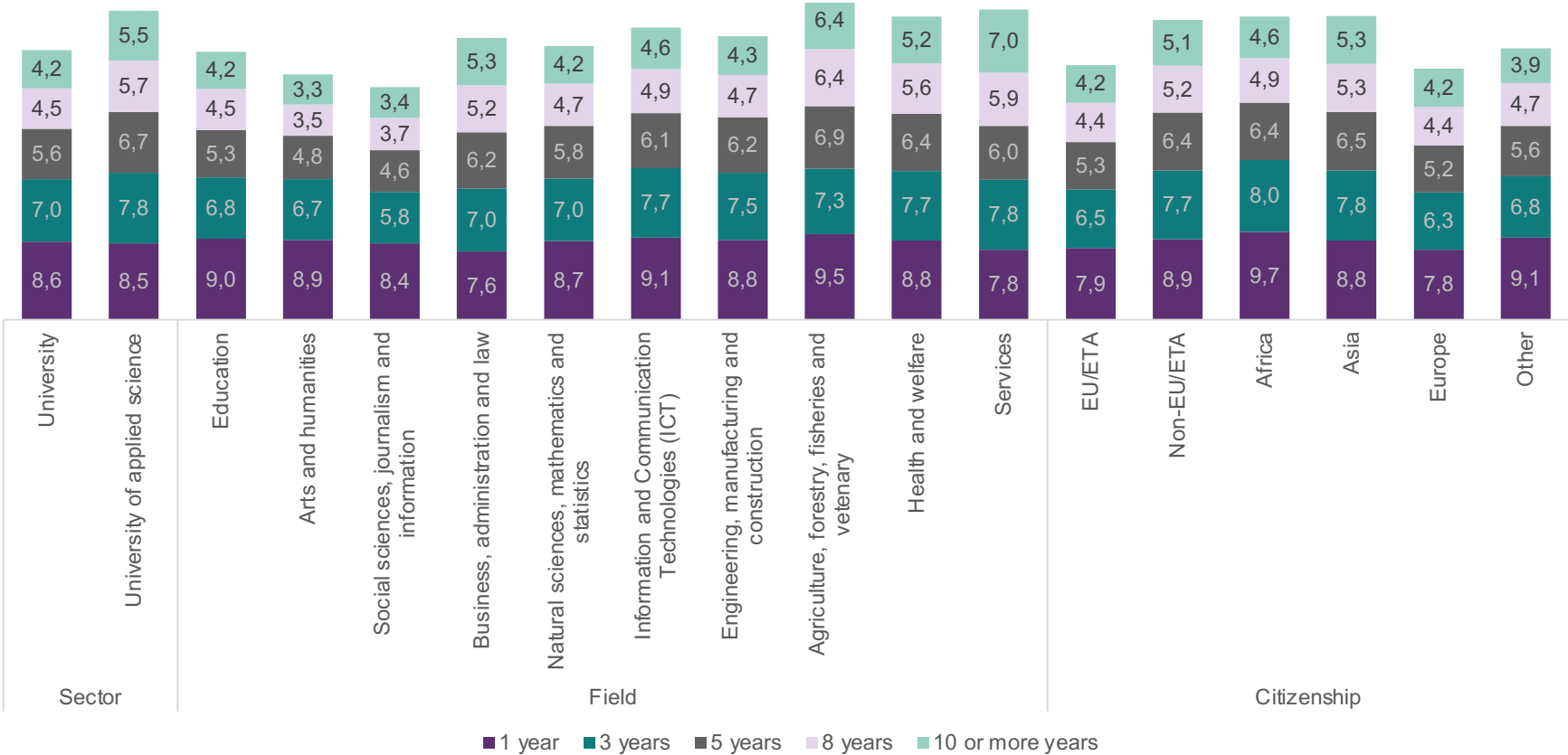


# Questions: Future in Finland

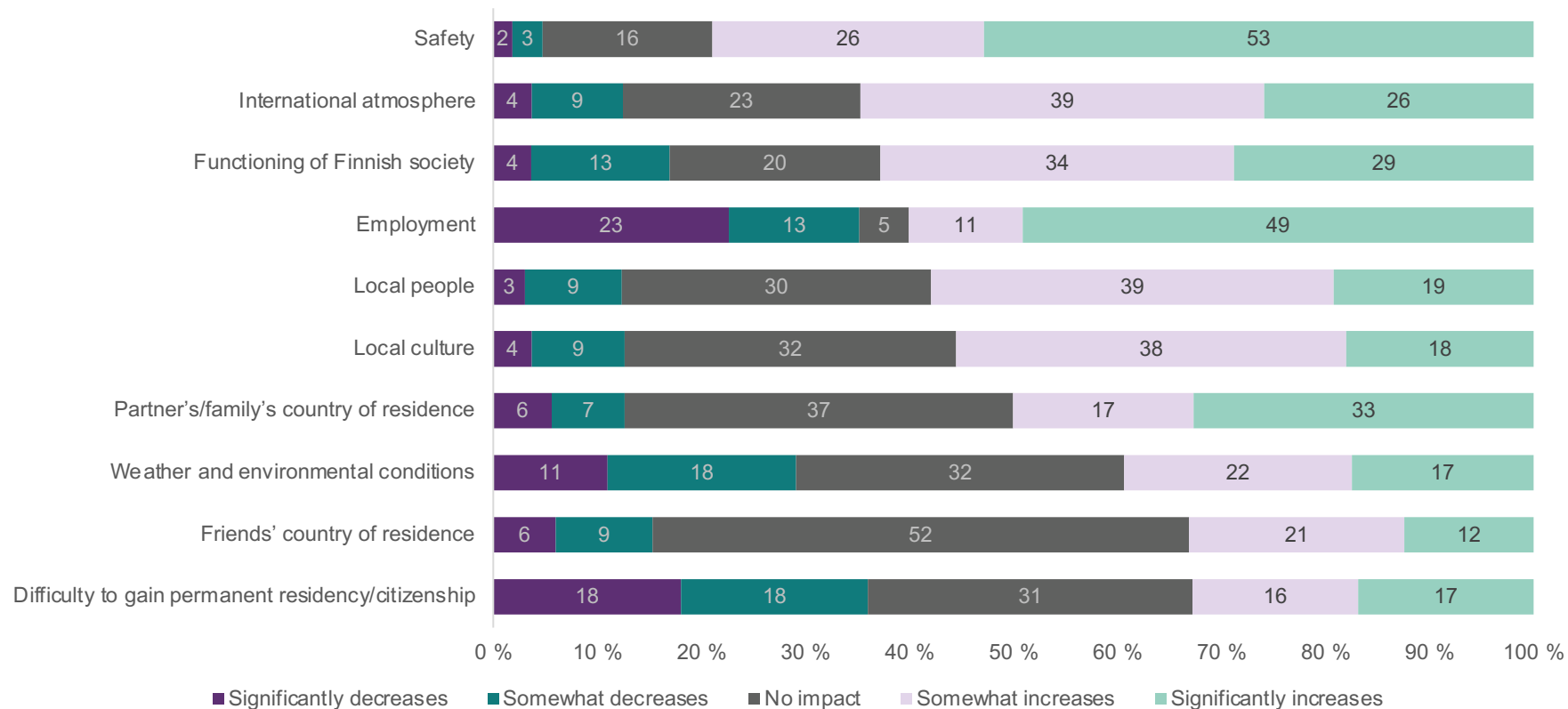
- What grade would you give for the overall experience of your studies?
- Would you recommend your study programme to an international applicant who is considering studying in Finland?
- Would you choose Finland as your country of study again if you were applying for a study place now?
- How likely do you consider that you will be living in Finland in the next 1/3/5/8/10 or more years?
- How do the following factors affect your decision to stay in Finland?



# Figure 11: How likely do you consider that you will be living in Finland in the next... 1 = Very unlikely 10 = Very likely. Means. N = 440.



## Figure 12: How do the following factors affect your decision to stay in Finland? Percentage. N = 543.



# Summary: Future in Finland

- The majority of respondents rated their experience of their studies as positive and almost as many would recommend their own study program to an international applicant.
- Clearly more than half of respondents would choose Finland as their country of study if they were applying for a study place now.
- Living in Finland was considered quite likely in five years, but staying in Finland for a longer period of time was on average unlikely.
- The most important factors in favour of staying in Finland were safety, the international atmosphere, the functioning of Finnish society and employment. The attractiveness of Finland was correspondingly reduced by the difficulties in obtaining a permanent residency or citizenship, employment, and weather and environmental conditions.

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