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# ANALYSIS OF SURVEY CONDUCTED IN LITHUANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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## **I. BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY**

***The purpose of the survey:*** To obtain the latest information about Lithuanian Higher Education institutions (HEIs) applied practice of recognition of foreign qualifications for refugees, and persons without appropriate (or only partial) educational documents. It also aimed to identify needs, which could help improve the processes of recognition of foreign qualifications in the institutions implementing them in Lithuania.

***Survey research method:*** **Cross-sectional online survey.** The survey includes 27 open-ended, closed, and closed-ended questions. This survey was conducted anonymously, meaning there is no possibility to link answers to HEIs. Data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire, a copy of which includes (as well as a summary of responses to each question) is provided in Appendix.

***Target audience:*** 36 Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions.

***Number of submitted answers:*** 32.

***Participation rate:*** The survey was addressed to 36 Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. 32 respondents took an opportunity to answer the questionnaire, which makes 89 percent participation rate.

The great majority of respondents (72 percent) said they belong to public Higher Education Institutions, while the remaining 28 percent represent private Higher Education Institutions (see question 1 in Appendix). It is important to stress that admission rules are established by Higher Education Institutions themselves in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports. As requirements for admission to Higher education studies are set centrally, Higher Education Institutions must comply with the requirements when setting the admission requirements. Therefore, admission is organized based on the same principles in both public and private Higher Education Institutions.

Lithuania has a decentralized system of academic recognition, in which academic recognition is carried out by Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC (SKVC) and HEIs that have received the permission of the Minister of Education, Science, and Sports. Important to emphasize that by the time survey was conducted (2023 June) 18 HEIs (out of 36) were appointed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to provide the academic recognition of foreign qualifications. That means that half of the HEIs do not provide the academic recognition of foreign qualifications and it's carried by the SKVC. This factor influenced part of the answers in the survey as is seen in the report.

The Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC monitors the academic recognition of Higher Education Institutions, so some of this survey results are supplemented with accumulated information about the practice of academic recognition in Higher Education Institutions.

## II. KEY FINDINGS

*Below are the summarised results of the survey and the most important findings. The responses received are divided into separate topics in order to better reveal the results.*

### **Students**

- ✓ *Higher Education Institutions host a significant number of students, ranging from 400 to over 23,000, depending on factors like size and geographical location (see question 2 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *Out of 32 respondents, 56 percent (18 respondents) reported hosting up to 100 international students, while 44% reported hosting numbers ranging from 150 to 2500 students annually. These figures include exchange programs and full degree programs (see question 4 in Appendix).*

*In summary, the findings indicate that Higher Education Institutions accommodate a significant number of local students and international students, with diverse capacities based on size and location, catering to exchange and full-degree programs.*

### **Studies offered**

- ✓ *Most of the Higher Educational Institutions (94 percent) offer courses in foreign languages, with English being the main language of instruction (see question 5 in Appendix). Some offer courses in both Russian and English, while a small percentage (6 percent) do not offer courses in foreign languages (see question 6 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *66 percent of Higher Education Institutions conduct annual student admissions, while 34 percent conduct them twice a year (see question 7 in Appendix).*

*Overall, the key findings highlight the prevalence of foreign language courses, the dominance of English in instruction, and the variation in student admission patterns among Higher Education Institutions.*

### **Employees in Higher Education Institutions**

*From the provided responses, we can identify several correlations and patterns among the data related to employee counts and their roles at Higher Education Institutions:*

- ✓ **Employee Counts and Institution Size:** *Higher Education Institutions' employee counts are correlated with their size, with larger universities having higher counts and smaller ones having fewer. The range of employee counts varies significantly, with 3000 being the most commonly mentioned (see question 3 in Appendix).*
- ✓ **Employees in Admissions:** *Higher Education Institutions have varying numbers of employees dedicated to admissions departments. A significant percentage (19 percent) have only 2 employees, while 16 percent have 4 or 5 employees. Smaller percentages have 1 or 3 employees, with the majority dedicated to admissions. This data suggests that admissions departments in Higher Education Institutions often have a moderate number of employees, but there are variations in the workforce size based on institutional needs (see question 8 in Appendix).*
- ✓ **Employees Handling Foreign Qualification Recognition:** *Higher Education Institutions typically appoint up to five employees for recognizing foreign qualifications, with 41 percent having only one employee and 38 percent having two employees. Not all institutions have this capability, and the majority allocate a moderate number of employees. (see question 9 in Appendix).*
- ✓ **Employees Handling Refugee Admissions:** *Most Higher Education Institutions have only one employee dedicated to refugee admissions, with 31 percent having 2-3 employees. A small percentage lacks a dedicated employee, and some rely on existing staff to address specific refugee admission cases (see question 1 in Appendix).*

*The survey analyses employee counts and responsibilities in Higher Education Institutions, but lacks a direct comparison between categories. A comparative analysis would reveal connections between various aspects and potential correlations. The data highlight correlations between employee counts and institution size, as well as patterns in responsibilities like admissions, foreign qualification recognition, and refugee admissions. However, Higher Education Institutions face risks related to staff shortages and loss of know-how due to one or two individuals managing foreign qualifications recognition. The limited workforce may hinder knowledge transfer and emphasize the importance of strategic workforce planning and resource allocation in these critical areas.*

### **Foreign applicants (top 5)**

*Higher Education Institutions mentioned that receive applications from a total of 34 different countries, indicated as top 5. The top five most popular countries from which they receive applications are as follows:*

- *Ukraine (mentioned 20 times);*
- *India (mentioned 18 times);*
- *Nigeria (mentioned 14 times);*
- *Pakistan (mentioned 10 times);*
- *Turkey (mentioned 8 times);*

*Overall, the data indicate that Higher Education Institutions receive a significant number of applications from Ukraine, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey, with a range of other countries also contributing to the applicant pool (see question 11 in Appendix).*

*In Lithuania, admission to higher education studies requires foreign qualification academic recognition, which is carried out both by SKVC or Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. In 2022, 17 Lithuanian institutions made 3,821 academic recognition decisions for qualifications obtained in 107 different countries, including international qualifications.*

### ***Institutional practice***

- ✓ *Most Higher Education Institutions (81 percent) have a database or archive of previously assessed qualifications, enabling them to streamline evaluation processes and ensure consistency (see question 12 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *Additionally, a majority of Higher Education Institutions (about 72 percent) have a databases containing relevant information on different countries or actively collecting examples of qualification documents. These databases likely include information about educational systems, grading scales, and other relevant details from various countries. Having such a database can assist institutions in evaluating foreign qualifications accurately and efficiently.*

*However, around 9 percent of Higher Education Institutions have no database for previously assessed qualifications or only maintain one for Erasmus students. Similarly, about 22 percent of institutions lack a database with information on different countries (see question 13 in Appendix).*

*In summary, having comprehensive databases for assessed qualifications and relevant information on different countries is beneficial for Higher Education Institutions, as it facilitates the admission process for international students and ensures fair and consistent evaluation of foreign qualifications.*

*Institutions without such databases (22 percent) might face more challenges in evaluating foreign qualifications effectively.*

### ***The Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII***

- ✓ *The majority of Higher Education Institutions (29 out of 32) are familiar with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Out of these respondents, 23 indicated a correct understanding of the essential provisions of this article, while 4 mentioned having limited knowledge of it.*
- ✓ *Respondents believe Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention ensures equitable access to education for refugees and displaced persons, ensuring fair recognition of qualifications. This involves transparent evaluation procedures, additional knowledge tests, and following guidelines from relevant authorities. Some respondents acknowledge difficulties in recognizing refugees' qualifications and suggest national projects or documents or guidelines provided by relevant authorities (such as SKVC) to facilitate the recognition process.*

*Overall, respondents emphasize Article VII's significance in supporting education and qualification recognition for refugees and displaced persons, committing to fair recognition in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (see question 14 in Appendix).*

### ***Admission practices***

- ✓ ***Guidelines for admission.*** *Guidelines for admission of foreign students are decided by various bodies or departments within the institutions. The key decision-makers include top management, academic councils, deputy directors for studies and quality, senates, rectors, university senates, international offices, and student admission teams. In some cases, national ENIC/NARIC offices, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania also play a role. The decision-making process involves collaboration between these entities to create fair and inclusive*

admission procedures that adhere to academic standards and institutional policies (see question 15 in Appendix).

- ✓ **Applications.** Most Higher Education Institutions (63 percent) have a digital portal for admission applications, with 25 percent using a combination of digital and physical application methods. A small percentage rely solely on physical applications, while some accept physical documents for urgent assistance to fresh arrivals without internet access (see question 16 in Appendix).
- ✓ **Original documents.** Around 59 percent of Higher Education Institutions require applicants to provide original physical copies of their educational background documentation. However, 19 percent of institutions do not request original documents, and 16 percent indicated that it depends on various factors, such as the applicant's country of origin, the quality of scanned documents, or the specific qualifications being sought (see question 17 in Appendix).
- ✓ **Language requirements.** All Higher Education Institutions (100 percent) have language requirements as part of their admission process. These requirements generally pertain to the language in which the studies are organized, and language proficiency levels, such as those defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Additionally, some institutions may require specific language proficiency certificates, particularly in English (see question 18 in Appendix).
- ✓ **Other specific requirements.** Over half of Higher Education Institutions (53 percent) have additional specific requirements for foreign applicants, including foreign country-specific documentation, motivational statements, academic recognition from SKVC, minimum selection requirement (e.g., cumulative scores, minimum marks, specific subjects), entrance tests, document translation requirements, and residence permit conditions (see question 19 in Appendix).

Overall, the responses emphasize a commitment to making the admission process accessible and transparent for foreign students, setting admission requirements in advance, and ensuring fair evaluations considering circumstances and qualifications. Study programs are limited mostly in English and little in Russian, so limiting opportunities for those without these languages.

### **Incomplete documentation**

- ✓ In response to the question about receiving applications with incomplete documentation (e.g., missing diploma or transcript), just over half of the respondents (56 percent) reported that they do receive such applications. On the other hand, the remaining half of the respondents (44 percent) stated that they do not receive applications with incomplete documentation (see question 20 in Appendix).
- ✓ 56 percent out of 32 respondents answered the number of incomplete applications received per year varies significantly among institutions, with some receiving only a few cases and others experiencing a higher volume. Reasons for incomplete applications may be specific to specific cases or time frames, and some institutions may not have a precise or formal system for tracking them. The variability in numbers, specific cases or time frames, frequency descriptions, high volume, and lack of formal tracking all contribute to the variability in the number of incomplete applications received (see question 20.1 in Appendix).
- ✓ Institutions receive applications with incomplete documentation from various foreign countries, including Nigeria, Cameroon, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Nepal, Belarus, Ghana, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Morocco, and Bangladesh. Document deficiencies can arise from African, Middle East, and South Asian countries. Some responses do not specify specific countries, suggesting that incomplete documentation issues are not limited to specific nations but may depend. Incomplete documentation is a widespread issue, affecting institutions from diverse regions worldwide (see question 20.2 in Appendix).
- ✓ Institutions face challenges in assessing cases with incomplete documentation, including difficulties in document validation, lack of assessment policies, handling external offices, time-consuming communication, slower acceptance procedures, verification challenges, assessing diverse fields, resource utilization, absence of official databases, withdrawal of applicants, and additional communication time. These challenges highlight the complexities involved in evaluating applicants without complete documentation and emphasize the need for streamlining processes and establishing clear assessment policies to effectively address these issues. The challenges include determining the authenticity of submitted documents, handling external offices, addressing time-consuming communication, assessing diverse fields, resource utilization, lack of official databases, withdrawal of applicants, and additional communication time (see question 20.3 in Appendix).

*A survey shows that 56 percent of respondents face challenges with incomplete documentation, while 44 percent do not. The number of incomplete applications received per year varies among institutions, with reasons for this varying. Incomplete documentation is a global issue, with deficiencies originating from African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian nations. Challenges include document validation, lack of comprehensive assessment policies, communication management, verification, evaluating applicants, resource utilization, and official databases.*

*The findings emphasize the need for streamlining processes and establishing clear assessment policies to effectively address these issues.*

#### ***Applications without any documentation***

- ✓ *According to the survey results, the majority of respondents (91 percent) indicated that they do not receive applications without any documentation. Only 9 percent of the respondents stated that they receive such applications (see question 11 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *Out of the 32 respondents who answered the question about the number of applications received without any documentation per year, it was found that, on average, they receive around 4 applications without any documentation (see question 21.1 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *3 out of 32 respondents answered and mentioned 11 countries, including Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Egypt, India, Morocco, Sudan, Turkey, and Ukraine (see question 21.2 in Appendix). Respondents stated, that mainly challenges are related to the time and to the need to make sure that the person does not really have the documents (see question 21.3 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *66% of higher education institutions have specific admission guidelines for foreign students without documentation of qualifications, while 34% lack such guidelines (see question 22 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *Based on the responses provided by 11 out of 32 respondents regarding specific guidelines for admitting foreign students without documentation of their foreign qualifications, is seen that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for admitting foreign students without documentation. Instead, institutions adopt various strategies, ranging from strict refusal to more accommodating measures, to ensure fair assessment and recognition of qualifications. The reliance on external recognition authorities and the implementation of special procedures also showcase the commitment of these institutions to maintain quality standards in their admissions process (see question 22.1 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *Respondents highlighted the importance of understanding the legal and regulatory landscape when considering alternative admission procedures for students without complete documentation of their prior qualifications. The varying levels of awareness among institutions indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to address the challenges and create inclusive admission policies that can adapt to different legal contexts (see question 23 in Appendix).*

*In conclusion, respondents highlight the prevalence of applications without documentation and the challenges institutions face in dealing with such cases. While some institutions have established specific guidelines and rely on external recognition authorities, there is no standardized approach. Understanding legal implications is crucial in formulating inclusive admission policies tailored to individual institution needs.*

#### ***An opinion on possible recognition solutions***

- ✓ *Interview-based recognition has already been tested in several European countries. There is significant interest (63 percent of answers) and positive reception (25 percent of answers) for interview-based recognition as an admission method in Lithuania (see question 24 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *There is a considerable level of support (47 percent of answers) and interest (44 percent of answers) in the potential utility of the background paper method for admission among the surveyed respondents (see question 25 in Appendix).*
- ✓ *The respondents identified various individuals and roles that need to be involved in establishing alternative admission procedures at an institution. These include administration, top management, Rector, Vice-Rector for Studies, Director, Academic Council, Study Department, Study program committees, Directors, Faculty, deans, Department of International Relations, Evaluator of foreign qualifications, and Admission Officers. The coordinated effort ensures effective and inclusive admission processes (see question 26 in Appendix).*

*The findings suggest a promising outlook for interview-based recognition and background paper methods, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among different stakeholders within Higher Education Institutions to achieve fair academic recognition practices for persons without documentation in Lithuania.*

### **Comments provided by respondents**

*A total of nine comments were submitted, representing 28 percent of respondents. Two respondents admitted to having limited experience in evaluating foreign qualifications without proper documentation, while two actively developed alternative evaluation and admission procedures for undocumented candidates. Three respondents addressed concerns related to existing procedures, such as grade conversion, realistic assessment of academic competencies, and active participation in the study process. One respondent hoped for flexible alternatives to the original document submission, and two respondents highlighted the importance of relevant training in this area.*

*Overall, the comments highlight the complexities of assessing foreign qualifications without proper documentation and highlight the continuous efforts of Higher Education Institutions to adapt and enhance their procedures.*

## **III. CONCLUSIONS**

*The survey provides valuable insights into the recognition practices in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions, emphasizing the need for continuous improvements to ensure fair and inclusive evaluation of foreign qualifications for individuals with foreign credentials when not all credential documentation is available. It underscores the importance of strong collaboration among different departments within the Higher Education Institution, as well as cooperation between various Higher Education Institutions, to achieve effective recognition practices. Below are the main findings of the survey:*

- *The survey aimed to gather information about recognition practices for foreign qualifications in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions, with a significant 89 percent participation rate from 32 institutions.*
- *Lithuanian HEIs accommodate a considerable number of international students, primarily offering courses in English, with some institutions having databases to streamline evaluation processes.*
- *Employee counts in HEIs are correlated with institution size, and most institutions allocate moderate numbers of employees for recognizing foreign qualifications and handling refugee admissions.*
- *The top five countries from which Higher Education Institutions receive applications are Ukraine, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.*
- *While most Higher Education Institutions are familiar with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, there is room for improvement in understanding its essential provisions.*
- *Admission practices for foreign students vary, with language requirements, specific documentation, and digital application portals being common.*
- *Higher Education Institutions face challenges with incomplete documentation, prompting the need for clear assessment policies and streamlining processes.*
- *A significant level of interest exists in interview-based recognition and background paper methods as alternative admission approaches.*
- *Comments from respondents highlight the ongoing efforts of institutions to adapt and enhance their recognition procedures for foreign qualifications with undocumented cases.*

*The following section presents recommendations based on this survey 's results.*



## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

*The survey provides valuable insights into the recognition practices in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions, emphasizing the need for continuous improvements to ensure fair and inclusive evaluation of foreign qualifications for individuals with foreign credentials when not all credential documentation is available. It underscores the importance of strong collaboration among different departments within the Higher Education Institution, as well as cooperation between various Higher Education Institutions, to achieve effective recognition practices.*

*Based on key findings and identified needs, here are some suggestions for improving the recognition practices of incomplete documentation qualifications in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions:*

- ✓ **Collaboration and training:** *Collaborate Higher Education Institutions with Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport to develop standardized guidelines for recognizing foreign qualifications. Training programs should be provided to ensure consistent evaluations. It is also important to strengthen Lithuania's ENIC/NARIC resources, capabilities, and practices, as not all Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions carry out academic recognition, and the support of Lithuania's ENIC is essential for them.*
- ✓ **Strategic Workforce Planning:** *Allocate an adequate number of employees and resources to handle foreign qualification academic recognition effectively to avoid staff shortages and loss of know-how due to a lack of experience in managing foreign qualifications recognition.*
- ✓ **Databases and development:** *Allocate Higher Education Institutions resources for further maintaining comprehensive databases of assessed qualifications and relevant information, streamlining evaluation processes and ensure consistency in recognizing foreign qualifications.*
- ✓ **Promotion of best practices and coordination:** *Foster knowledge exchange and Higher Education Institutions learning from one another's experiences. Also, it is important to promote further collaboration among different stakeholders within Higher Education Institutions, including administrators, faculty members, and admission officers, to establish effective and inclusive admission processes.*
- ✓ **Alternative recognition methods and inclusive admission policies:** *Explore alternative recognition strategies and adopt inclusive admissions policies to address challenges related to limited documentation and ensure strict academic recognition procedures. These approaches should be adaptable to different legal circumstances, enabling students without proper documentation to be fairly assessed and recognized for their abilities.*
- ✓ **Language support:** *Consider providing additional language support for students who may not be proficient in English as the dominance of English is the main language of instruction. This could include language courses or support services to help non-English-speaking students succeed in their studies.*
- ✓ **Procedures and monitoring:** *Establish clear policies for handling incomplete documentation, verifying qualifications, and evaluating qualifications to ensure fair treatment. Regularly assess recognition practices and admission policies to identify areas for improvement and progress towards more efficient processes.*

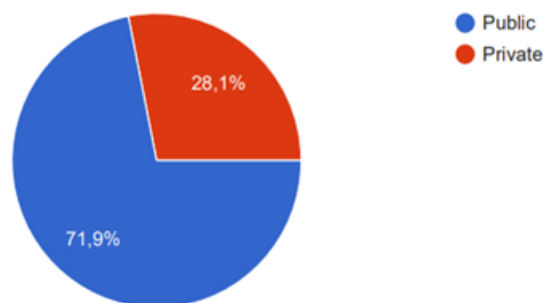
*By implementing these suggestions, Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions and Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC can improve their academic recognition practices for individuals with partial or no educational documentation. This improvement will enhance the overall experience for international students and refugees seeking higher education opportunities in Lithuania promoting more inclusive and equitable study opportunities.*



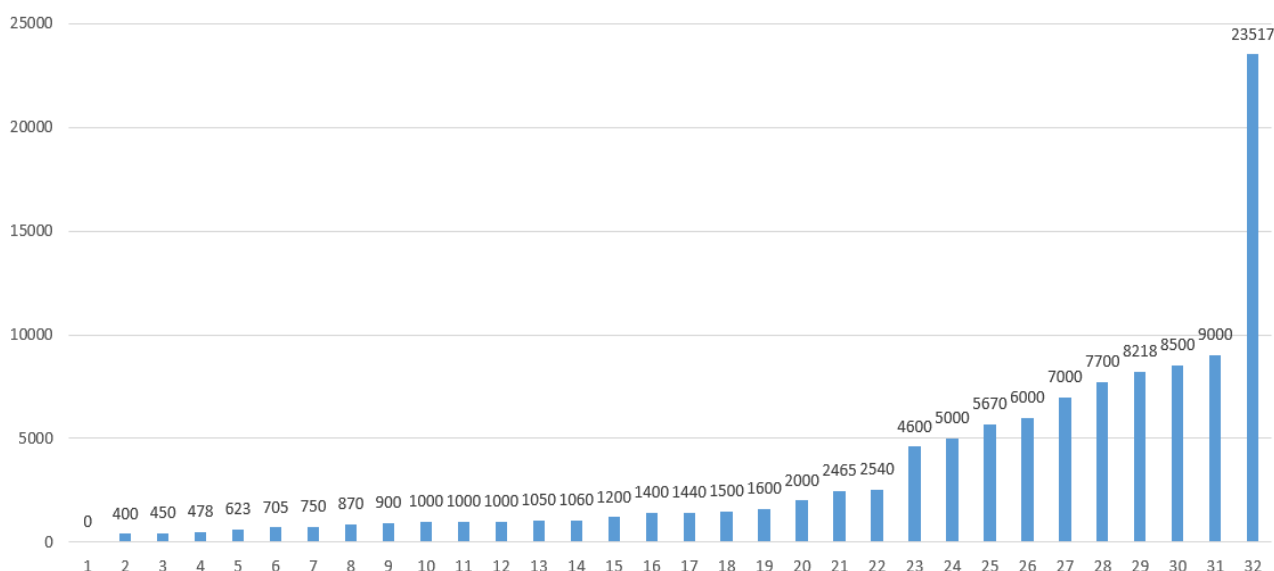
## Survey questions and the summary of responses to each question

**1. Is your institution public or private?**

The great majority of respondents — 72 percent — said they are from public Higher Education Institutions. Twenty eight percent said they are from private Higher Education Institutions.

**2. How many students study at your institution (approximately)?**

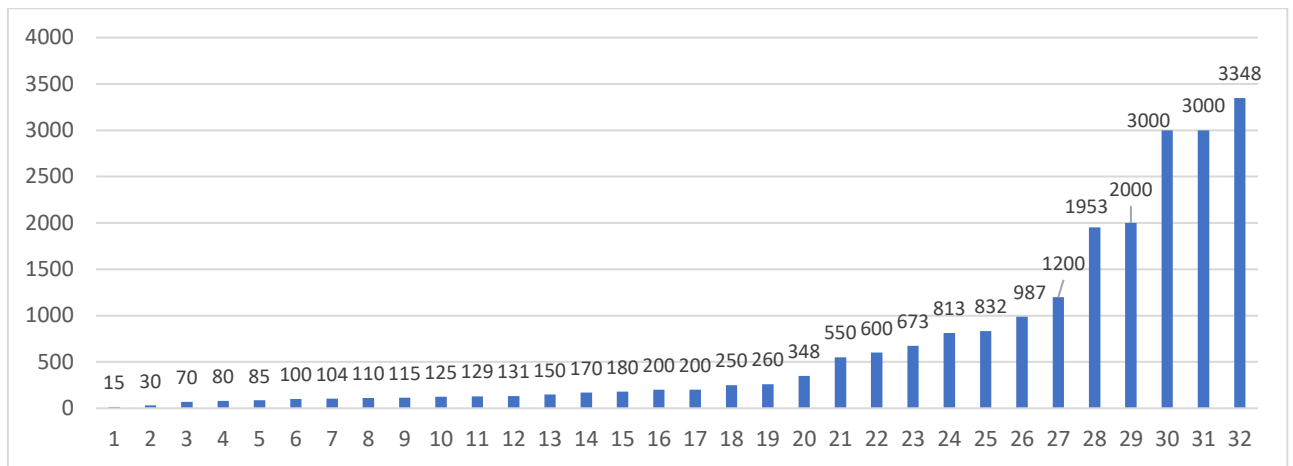
The number of students in Higher Education Institutions starts from 400 up to more than 23 000. Such difference depends on the size of the institutions, geographical location and etc.

**3. How many employees work at your institution (approximately)?**

There is a wide variation in the number of employees across different institutions, ranging from as low as 15 to as high as 3348. There seems to be a cluster of Higher Education Institutions with employee counts around 200, as this value appears twice in the responses. The most common employee count mentioned is 3000, which is repeated twice in the responses. Some institutions have relatively small employee counts (e.g., 15, 30, 70), indicating they might be smaller organizations or startups. On the other hand, there are Higher Education Institutions with significantly larger employee counts, such as 1200, 1953, and 3348, which could be indicative of larger Higher Education Institutions, mostly universities.

There is no clear pattern in the distribution of employee counts, suggesting that Higher Education institutions surveyed come from various sectors (both Colleges and Universities).

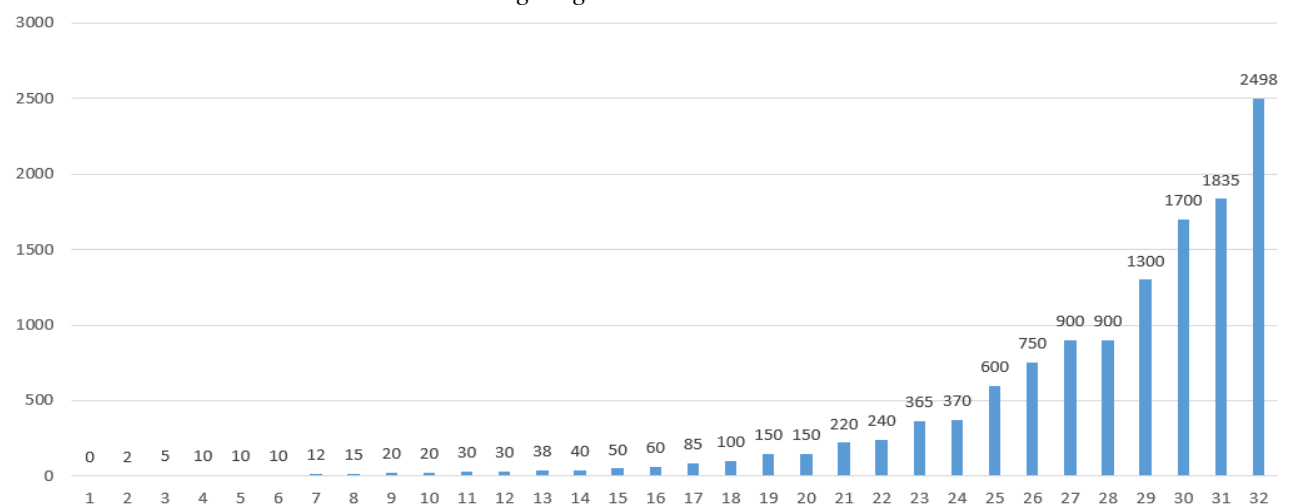
Overall, the range of employee counts provided in the responses demonstrates the diversity of Higher Education Institutions.



#### 4. How many international students do you normally host per year?

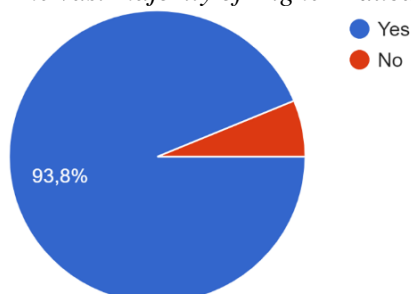
18 out of 32 respondents (56 percent) indicated numbers that are up to 100 per year, which includes institutions that host only 2-5 international students and others that host ~50 per year. The other half of respondents (14 out of 32 or 44 percent) indicated numbers that start from 150 up to ~2500. The numbers include students coming for exchange programs and full degree programs.

Overall, Higher Education Institutions host diverse international students, with some accommodating smaller numbers and others accommodating larger numbers.



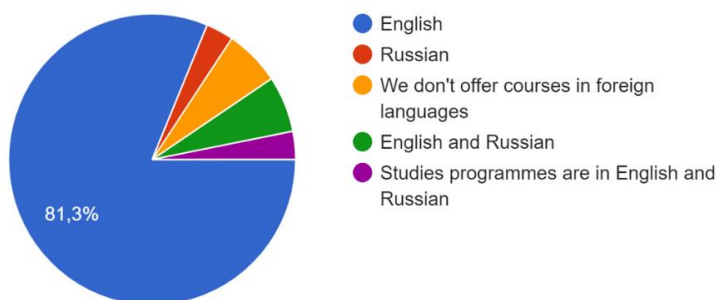
#### 5. Do you offer courses in foreign languages?

The vast majority of Higher Educational Institutions (94 percent) offer courses in foreign languages.



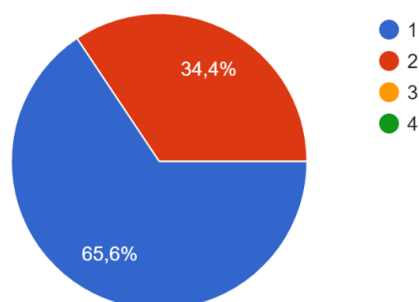
#### 6. If you offer courses in foreign languages, in which languages?

Mainly Higher Education Institutions offer courses in English (81 percent), also in Russian (3 percent) and both English and Russian (9 percent). Six percent responded that they do not offer courses in foreign languages.



## 7. How many times per year do you admit new students?

The admission mostly is conducted one time a year (66 percent). Only few (34 percent) Higher Education Institutions indicated that they conduct admission twice a year.

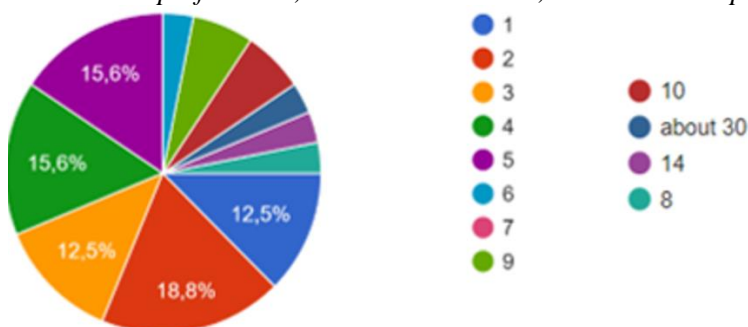


## 8. How many employees at your institution work with admission in total?

The majority of Higher Education Institutions (19 percent) indicated 2 employees, who work with admission in total; slightly fewer Higher Education Institutions (16 percent) indicated 4 employees, the other 16 percent – 5 employees.

The lowest number of employees (1 employee) indicated 3.1 percent of Higher Education Institutions; the largest number of employees (about 30 employees) also indicated 3.1 percent of Higher Education Institutions.

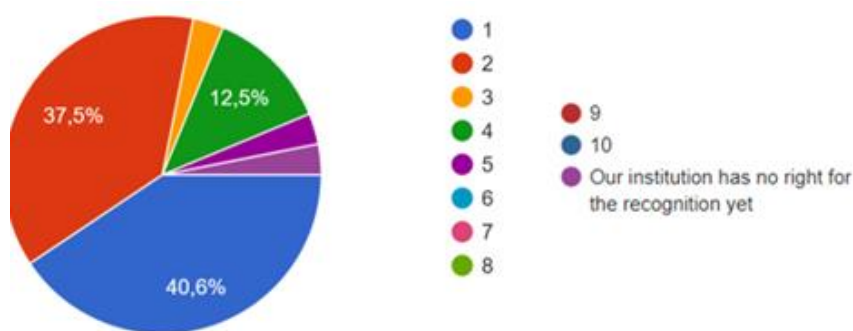
Overall data shows diversity in admission team sizes across Higher Education Institutions, influenced by institutional preferences, resource allocation, and admission process complexity.



## 9. How many employees at your institution work with the recognition of foreign qualifications?

The majority of respondents (40,6 percent) indicated only 1 employee, which works with the recognition of foreign qualifications; 37,5 percent of respondents indicated 2 employees. One respondent answered that the institution doesn't have the right yet for the recognition of foreign qualifications.. None of the left respondents indicated more than 5 employees.

Taken as a whole, all Higher Education Institutions, which were appointed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to provide the recognition of foreign qualifications (100 percent) have quite a small number of employees, who work with the recognition of foreign qualifications – no more than 5 (regardless of how large Higher Education Institutions are and how many students enrolls there).

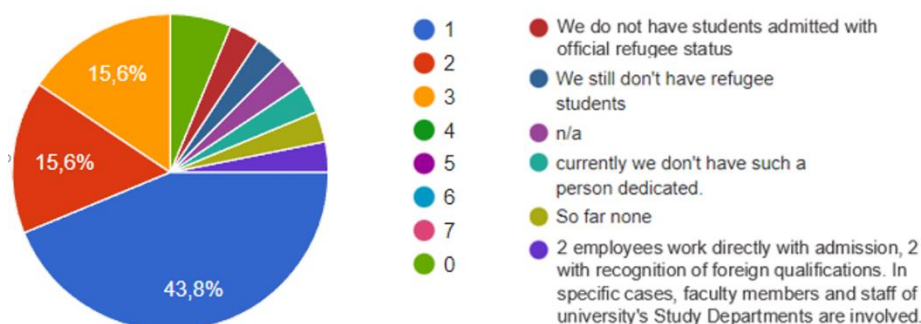


### 10. How many employees at your office work with admission of refugees?

Most of Higher Education Institutions (43,8 percent) have only 1 employee, which works with the admission of refugees; 31,2 percent of HEIs indicated that they have 2 or 3 employees. 6.3 percent of Higher Education Institutions indicated that they haven't an employee working with refugees at all.

One of the Higher Education Institution, which participated in the Survey, answered: "2 employees work directly with admission, 2 with recognition of foreign qualifications. In specific cases, faculty members and staff of the university's Study Departments are involved". Probably that in other HEIs more employees are involved in solving more complex cases working with the admission of refugees too.

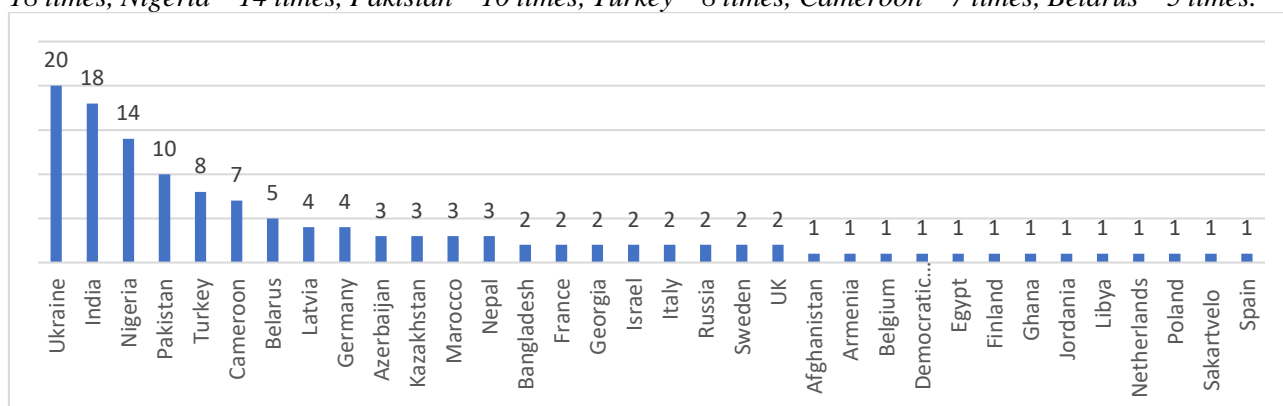
Data shows diverse resources and personnel in Higher Education Institutions for handling refugee admissions, with some adopting collaborative approaches to address complex cases.



### 11. From what foreign countries do you receive applications? Please list the top 5 (when 1 - most popular country, 5 - least popular country).

Two Higher Education Institutions did not give answers.

Other (30) Higher Education Institutions mentioned 34 different countries as the top 5. Most popular countries are Ukraine, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. Ukraine has been mentioned 20 times, India – 18 times, Nigeria – 14 times, Pakistan – 10 times, Turkey – 8 times, Cameroon – 7 times, Belarus – 5 times, Latvia – 4 times, Germany – 4 times, Azerbaijan – 3 times, Kazakhstan – 3 times, Morocco – 3 times, Nepal – 3 times, Bangladesh – 2 times, France – 2 times, Georgia – 2 times, Israel – 2 times, Italy – 2 times, Russia – 2 times, Sweden – 2 times, UK – 2 times, Afghanistan – 1 time, Armenia – 1 time, Belgium – 1 time, Democratic... – 1 time, Egypt – 1 time, Finland – 1 time, Ghana – 1 time, Jordan – 1 time, Libya – 1 time, Netherlands – 1 time, Poland – 1 time, Sakartvelo – 1 time, Spain – 1 time.



Ukraine is listed as the most popular country from 1 to 5 choice, Nigeria – from 1 to 4 choice, Pakistan – from 2 to 5 choice, Cameroon from 1 to 4 choice, Turkey – from 1 to 3 and as 5 choice, India from 3 to 5 and as 1 choice.

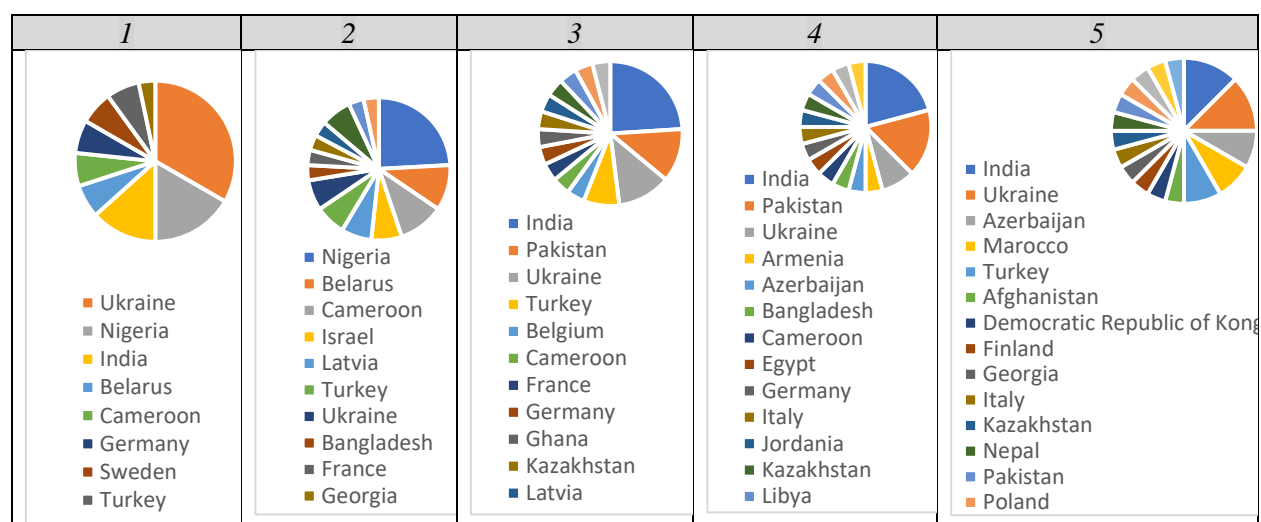
Nine countries are listed as the first choice: Ukraine (10 answers), Nigeria (5), India (4), Belarus (2), Cameroon (2), Germany (2), Sweden (2), Turkey (2), Latvia (1).

Fourteen countries are listed as the second choice: Nigeria (7), Belarus (3), Cameroon (3), Israel (2), Latvia (2), Turkey (2), Ukraine (2), Bangladesh (1), France (1), Georgia (1), Morocco (1), Pakistan (1), Russia (1), Spain (1).

Fifteen countries are listed as the third choice: India (6), Pakistan (3), Ukraine (3), Turkey (2), Belgium (1), Cameroon (2), France (1), Germany (1), Ghana (1), Kazakhstan (1), Latvia (1), Nepal (1), Nigeria (1), Sakarvelo (1), UK (1).

Sixteen countries are listed as the fourth choice: India (5), Pakistan (4), Ukraine (2), Armenia (1), Azerbaijan (1), Bangladesh (1), Cameroon (1), Egypt (1), Germany (1), Italy (1), Jordania (1), Kazakhstan (1), Libya (1), Nepal (1), the Netherlands (1), Nigeria (1).

Seventeen countries are listed as the fifth choice: India (3), Ukraine (3), Azerbaijan (2), Morocco (2), Turkey (2), Afghanistan (1), Democratic Republic of Kongo (1), Finland (1), Georgia (1), Italy (1), Kazakhstan (1), Nepal (1), Pakistan (1), Poland (1), Russia (1), Spain (1), UK (1).



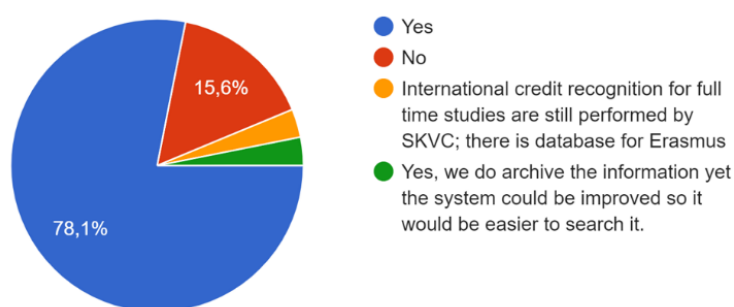
All answers are given below:

1	2	3	4	5
Ukraine	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Belarus	Russia	Ukraine	Kazakhstan	Georgia
Nigeria	Cameroon	India	Pakistan	Turkey
Germany	Nigeria	Ukraine	India	Finland
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ukraine	Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a
Turkey	Ukraine	India	n/a	n/a
Turkey	Latvia	Belgium	India	Ukraine
Ukraine	Latvia	Turkey	Jordania	Nepal
Ukraine	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ukraine	Pakistan	Nigeria	Nepal	India
Cameroon	Nigeria	India	Pakistan	Marocco
Belarus	France	Sakarvelo	Ukraine	Azerbaijan
Ukraine	Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cameroon	Nigeria	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ukraine	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Armenia	Afghanistan
India	Turkey	Pakistan	Libya	Kazakhstan
Latvia	Ukraine	UK	Netherlands	Russia
Ukraine	Belarus	Latvia	Nigeria	Pakistan
Nigeria	Cameroon	Ukraine	India	Turkey
Sweden	Israel	Germany	India	UK
India	Morocco	Nepal	Bangladesh	Ukraine

Germany	Spain	France	Italy	Poland
India	Nigeria	Turkey	Azerbaijan	Morocco (and Ukraine last year)
India	Nigeria	Pakistan	Egypt	Ukraine
Nigeria	Cameroon	Pakistan	India	Democratic Republic of Kongo
Nigeria	Pakistan	India	Ukraine	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan
Nigeria	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Italy, UK
Ukraine	Nigeria	Ghana	Cameroon	India
Sweden	Israel	India	Germany	Spain
Ukraine	Nigeria	Cameroon	Pakistan	India
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

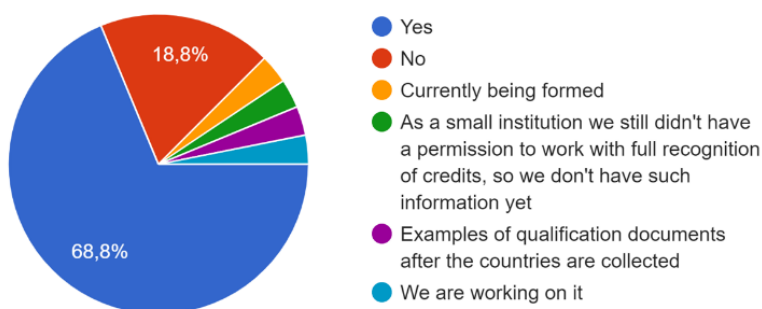
## 12. Does your institution have a database/archive of previously assessed qualifications?

A larger percentage of Higher Education Institutions indicated that they have a database or archive of previously assessed qualifications (81 percent). Other Higher Education Institutions indicated that they do not have a database or have a database only for the Erasmus students (9 percent).



## 13. Does your institution have a database with relevant information on different countries?

A larger percentage of Higher Education Institutions indicated that they have a database with relevant information on different countries or they are collecting examples of the qualification documents (72 percent). Several Higher Education Institutions indicated that they are working on it (6 percent). Other Higher Education Institutions answered that they do not have a database (22 percent).



## 14. Are you familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII?

29 out of 32 respondents answered the question. Two of them stated that they are not familiar with the Article VIII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Four of them indicated that they or their colleagues had limited knowledge of this Article VIII.

Thus, 27 respondents indicated that they know (23) or are partially familiar (4) with the mentioned Article. This survey data indicates that the majority of respondents are more or less familiar with Article VIII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

*If yes, please describe (what do you understand this article to entail?)*

23 out of 32 respondents commented on the answer what do they understand this article to entail. The answers demonstrate a more or less correct understanding of the essential provisions of this article of the Article VIII.

***What this article means in practice to your's recognition procedures?)***

6 out of 32 respondents commented on what this Article means in practice to their recognition procedures. 2 respondents mentioned do all possible actions to ensure that qualifications of refugees would be recognized fairly following the Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII.

3 respondents indicated that that means transparent procedures and fair evaluation process, also additional knowledge and ability tests, one of them mentioned directions from SKVC regarding it. Also, the difficulties and lack of practice in recognizing such qualifications are mentioned and the need for national projects or documents for the process were indicated.

Overall, almost all respondents agree that they know the Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and states that it is designed to ensure that refugees and displaced persons have equitable access to education and that their qualifications are fairly recognized, even if formal documentation is unavailable. It highlights the importance of flexibility and reasonable efforts to evaluate their educational backgrounds and support their educational aspirations.

All answers are below:

- Yes
- No
- Article VII of the Convention is about enabling refugees or displaced persons to access the higher education, even if the qualification cannot be proven through documentary evidence.
- In practice, we have not yet encountered the assessment of refugee qualifications, so we did not delve into it.
- We are familiar with the seventh point of the convention, but we have not yet had a case where we should apply it
- It is about providing the opportunity for refugees to have their qualification recognised
- Yes, the Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII helps to assess foreign qualifications separately
- When evaluating of a foreign qualification of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation, the authorized higher education institution has the right to apply to the holder of the foreign qualification a knowledge and ability test, organized according to the procedure established by higher education institutions.
- We are familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII. Working with the refugees we intend to carry out the academic recognition as much as possible to a certain extent, taking into account the documents handed while following the Lisbon Recognition Convention Article VII.
- Yes, we do all possible actions to ensure that qualifications of refugees would be recognized equally and fairly as others applicants.
- no
- Yes but not in detail
- It promotes fair recognition of academic qualifications
- Yes, we are familiar with the article. It means that each party is obligated to establish steps to asses prospect students, who are refugees or internally displaced people, to see if they fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education even if they do not have formal documentary evidence.
- yes, we are familiar, but still is very difficult to recognize of refugees' qualifications, because we are missing some national projects or documents for the process. Actually, there was no case at our university yet.
- Recognition of refugees' education must be considered even when documents are missing, but in accordance with all procedures
- Limited
- Alternative ways of recognition of qualifications can be applied for refugees. Other than proved by validated documents in case these can;t be presented due to good reasons.
- Yes, it's directed to refugees that may lack some qualification documents
- I am not familiar, but some of my colleagues might be
- Yes, it means that all candidates have the right to apply for academic recognition procedure and admission equally even if they according to their current vulnerable situation cannot provide full set of educational documents of their prior qualifications. Educational background should be restored based on the available information in official electronic databases, other informational sources, website of an institution etc. also based on the information that applicant is providing in an questionnaire about obtained qualification, institution that issued the qualification etc, interview or examination, if needed.
- The main objective of Article VII is to ensure that individuals who have been forced to leave their home countries, often as refugees, have access to fair and transparent recognition procedures for their qualifications. It acknowledges the importance of recognizing their educational achievements and facilitating their integration into the host countries' educational and professional systems.
- Yea
- The article commits the Parties to showing flexibility in the recognition of qualifications held by refugees with the limits of each Party's system and in conformity with each Party's constitutional, legal and regulatory provision.
- It describe the possibility how refugees without documents could still get recognition of their qualification
- Yes, it offers refugees previous education to be recognised even if the documents are missing



- It is about the obligation to take reasonable steps to develop procedures designed to assess whether refugees and displaced persons fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education
- Article VII of the LRC provides refugees or displaced persons with missing academic documents an opportunity to have their qualification recognised. The university is responsible to set transparent procedures and fair evaluation process.
- Yes, it refers to the recognition and acceptance of the refugees who are unable to provide physical documents. In this case we have to still try to collect as much as possible information from the refugee to recollect the data, fill it in the required form (we have received directions from SKVC regarding it) and try to cross-check or collect the details ourselves before taking the final decision if the given verbal information is true or not.

## **15. Who decides guidelines for admission of foreign students at your institution (please explain)?**

*The answers provided indicate that the guidelines for admission of foreign students at different institutions are decided by various bodies or departments. Here are the key decision-makers:*

1. Top management, Academic council of the institution, Deputy director for studies and quality, Senate, Rector, University Senate (8).
2. International office, International coordinators (6).
3. Student admission team (4).
4. Study Department, Study Process Management Committee (3)
5. Administration, Academic board (2).
6. National ENIC/NARIC office (1).
7. Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (1).

*The decision-making process involves collaborative efforts between various departments and bodies within the institution, and in some cases, the guidelines may also be influenced by national regulations and international standards. Overall, the goal is to create fair and inclusive admission procedures that consider the unique circumstances and qualifications of international students while adhering to academic standards and institutional policies.*

*All answers are below:*

- Academic council of institution. Guidelines are based on general requirements for entering HE and adopted for foreign students.
- We are a specific university operating in exile. In the context of the country, almost all of our students are foreigners, so we do not have separate admission conditions for foreigners. 98% of students' academic qualifications obtained abroad are also assessed during admission.
- Deputy director for studies and quality
- Top management of the University, University's Senate
- Rector
- Academic council
- Academic Council
- Administration (International Office under the confirmation of the Director)
- Procedure approved by the governing bodies
- Administration
- Institution creates the guidelines for the admission that are then approved by the academic council.
- International Relations and Development Department
- Admission officers
- Studies office together with the International Office
- Project Activities and International Studies Partnership Department
- We receive guidelines from national ENIC/NARIC office. Admissions Director makes sure that these guidelines are implemented.
- the committee for the admission together with Study Department. All guidelines and conditions should be approved by University Senates
- The admission regulations
- LMA has autonomy that is combined with accountability before the public, the founders and the members of the institution. LMA's collegial strategic management body is the Council (11 members), the collegial management body of academic affairs is the Academic Council (15 members), and the Director as a one-person management body. And in charge International Relations Department.
- Study Process Management Committee. They decide what minimal requirements to apply, which additional documents should the applicants provide and how the admissions office should review the applications.
- Procedure approved at the institution, adjusted with relevant departments and faculties.
- Admission coordinator with the support of Head of Studies and Applied Research Department and also Head of Unit for International Relations
- Academic council and/or director

- Regulations for the student admission (both for local and international students) are approved each year by the Senate of University. The centralised admission to state-funded positions of studies is conducted following the description of procedure for the formation of the competition queues of the applicants to the state-funded positions of the first cycle and integrated studies and applying for the scholarships for studies in the current academic year approved by the order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. The centralised admission is organised and conducted, the competition queue of the graduates of secondary education is formed by the LAMA BPO. The institutional admission to state non funded positions of studies is conducted according to the legislation of the Regulations for the student admission.
- Overall, the guidelines for the admission of foreign students at our institution are developed through a collaborative process involving the admissions office, academic departments, international student support services, and compliance with national regulations and international standards. The aim is to create a fair and inclusive admission process that considers the unique circumstances and qualifications of international students while upholding academic standards and institutional policies.
- International relations office
- Guidelines are prepared by university's International Cooperation Department in accordance with academic divisions. Guidelines are presented to Rector's Council and approved by Rector's order.
- International relations department (in charged of international students admission), Deputy director for studies and in some cases Study and Carer center
- Senate of the University (document provided by Vice Rector, reviewed by Head of the Department and Specialists working directly with the procedures.)
- International coordinators, Student admission officers and Rector with a final decision
- Guidelines for admission of international students prepared by Admission team and International office are approved by University Senate.
- Academic board who reviews the process every year and applies required changes based on the practical experience, changes in global local education systems, global situation or immigration rules.

## 16. How do applicants apply for admission? For instance: physically, through a digital portal or a combination of both?

The majority of respondents (62,5 percent) replied that applicants apply for admission through a digital portal; 25 percent replied that combination of both (through a digital portal and physically). There are still Higher Education Institutions (6,3 percent), where applicants apply for admission only physically.

One of Higher Education Institutions singled out the situation regarding the holders of Ukrainian qualifications and answered: "We usually use only digital portal, however when it comes to Ukrainian situation, we started accepting their documents physically too since some of them were fresh comers to Lithuania, who needed urgent assistance and did not have possibility to scan the documents, get to the internet or access computers".



## 17. Do applicants need to provide original (physical copies) documentation of educational background?

59 percent of respondents (19 out of 32) indicated that yes, applicants have to provide original documents of their educational background. Another 19 percent (6) stated that applicants do not need to provide original documents. 16 percent (5) responses mentioned that it depends on various factors, such as the country of origin, the quality of scanned documents, or the specific qualifications of the applicant.

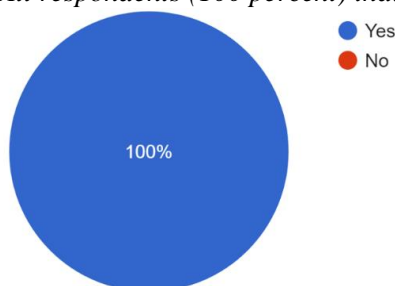
All answers are listed below:

Yes	14
No	6
Yes, when you first come to the university, the data of the documents submitted online are matched with the original documents	1

When we get permission for recognition for the recognition of the international credits, we would develop a system for the documentation.	1
If scanned documents are of bad quality or doubts occur	1
sometimes, it depends on the country	1
At the time of applications students are not required to present original documents. This could be required only for specific countries.	1
Yes, but when they arrive for studies. E-copies are submitted in the application portal.	1
It depends on the country that applicant is coming from	1
Ideally, the accepted student must bring all notary verified documents which were submitted during the application as well as their originals upon arrival.	1
High quality scanned copies of education documents must be provided through the digital portal. The Official Academic Transcripts should be sent directly by the school/higher education institution by mail or by post to Vytautas Magnus University for verification. Applicant are required to bring original documents within the arrival and registration to university.	1
Depends of their qualifications	1
For the beginning they provide scanned version of the documents. However, upon arrival or request they should provide physical copies.	1
Admitted students have to provide original documentation (physical copies)	1

## 18. Are there any language requirements in your admission process?

All respondents (100 percent) indicated that they have language requirements in their admission process.



### 18.1 Please describe language requirements in your admission process that you have.

Two respondents indicated the requirements for foreign-language documents to be submitted. One respondent indicated that studies are organized only in Lithuanian.

All other respondents (29) indicated the requirements for the language in which the studies are organized. Language proficiency requirements are indicated mainly at the language level (for example at the level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or IELTS or TOEFL, etc.), the requirements may vary depending on the level of study to which they are enrolled.

Three respondents indicated their requirement to have a certificate proving their proficiency in English. Language proficiency is crucial for admission in many Higher Education Institutions with English being the most popular language.

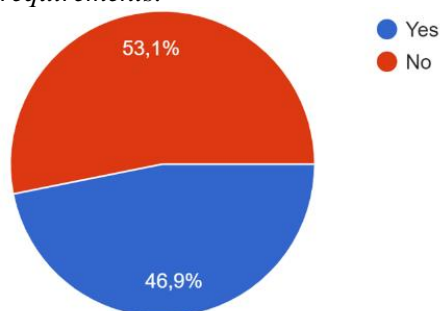
All answers are below:

- We ask for B level of the language.
- For BA - English level at least A2, for MA - English level at least B2. Main teaching language of university - russian and belarusian, but a lot of courses are delivered in English also. Few study programs are delivered in English also.
- The applicant has to have IELTS or TOEFL exam certificate.
- B2 level of English language proficiency
- Admission to studies is conducted in Lithuanian
- Knowledge of EN or RU
- B2 level certificates
- English language (at least B1 level)
- The applicant must provide a foreign (English and/or Russian) language/language proficiency level of at least B1/B2 supporting documents or international foreign language exam certificate a copy approved in the prescribed manner;
- English language requirements: CEFR B2 level IELTS overall score 5.5 TOEFL overall score 55
- When English is not our applicants' first language, they need to provide evidence of their ability to understand and express themselves in English for academic purposes. We require the following scores from international English examinations. Academic IELTS 4.0 overall Pearson Test of English (Academic) 38 TOEFL 42 CAE 142
- Applicants are required to have at least B1 level of the language of instruction. We do interviews with all applicants.
- English language

- B2
- B1/B2 level
- Documents are accepted only if they have translation to Lithuanian or English languages. If the original documents are issued in English, translations are not required.
- English language proficiency for degree students at the beginning of their studies should be B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent IELTS (5.0), or TOEFL (72).
- If we are unable to examine the educational documents in the original language, a translation into Lithuanian, English or Russian, officially certified by a translation agency, must be provided.
- Language proficiency – the level not lower than B1 (following the Common Framework of Reference for Language approved by the Council of Europe)
- Students must have a document (a language test such as IELTS, TOEFL, DuoLingo Test) proving that their English level is equal to or is above B2.
- English language competence equivalent to B2
- English language proficiency certificate (IELTS, TOEFL or equivalent) showing knowledge of English language. Requirement: IELTS  $\geq 5.5$ , TOEFL  $\geq 75$ , CEFR  $\geq B2$ . If previous studies were done in English the language proficiency certificate is not required. In such cases an official document proving studies completed in English language is needed from a previous education institution.
- all applicants must have at least B2 level of native language, foreign exchange students have different lecture dedicated only to them, as we are a small institution and don't provide full courses in English
- For Bachelor studies: IELTS  $\geq 5.5$ , TOEFL  $\geq 75$ , CEFR  $\geq B2$ , IESOL B2, Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), or another equivalent standardised admission test. For Master studies: IELTS  $\geq 6.0$ , TOEFL  $\geq 85$ , CEFR  $\geq C1$ , IESOL C1, GRE or equivalent. If previous studies have been fully in English and it is marked on the degree certificate or transcript, or noted in confirmation from the school that studies have been fully in English, an additional English test may not be required. If the candidate does not have any official test, an online examination may be organized by KTU free of charge. Also, English preparatory courses can be offered for those candidates that do not have proficiency in English.
- Typically, international applicants are required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency through recognized language tests. An upper-intermediate level (B2) is required. It's worth mentioning that in some cases, applicants may be exempted from providing English language test scores if they meet certain criteria. For example, if an applicant's previous education was conducted entirely in English or if they are a citizen of a country where English is recognized as an official language, they may not be required to submit language test scores.
- At least B1 level
- The applicant has to present official document proving B2 level if the applicant is not a native speaker and / or had not received education in English. The following certificates and scores are acceptable: TOEFL 87-109 iBT/ 534-633 PBT; IELTS 5.5-6.5; Cambridge English First (FCE) 161-180; BEC Vantage 161-180; Michigan ECCE (min. 650); PTE General Level 3; TOEIC Listening & Reading 785, TOEIC Speaking & Writing 310; Duolingo 100-125; English Score 400-499
- Minimum B1 in English
- It is required to provide certificate proving English language level. English level must be indicated by IELTS/TOEFL/Duolingo or any other test
- English language certificate
- Required level – B1. If candidate do not have a certificate, he/she takes the University Online English language level test.
- Applicants, applying for studies in English, must provide the proof of English exam passed during his matriculation exams. English is a part of our cumulative score when it comes to admission, therefore the results of exam is a must for us. We usually expect the student to have at least B2 level when it comes to English taught programmes. In case the applicants schooling was entirely in English and he does not have the grade of exam as such, we ask to complete our English test to get the score accordingly.

## 19. Are there any other specific requirements for foreign applicants?

Just over half of the respondents indicated that there are other specific requirements for foreign applicants (53 percent). The other half of the respondents (47 percent) indicated that there are no specific requirements.



### 19.1 Please describe the other specific requirements you have.

*Additional requirements are indicated as follows:*

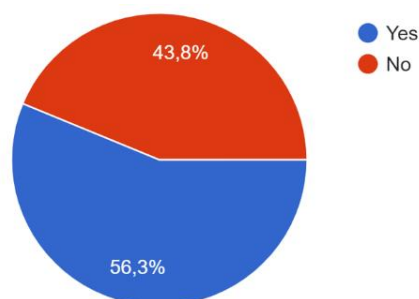
- *Foreign country specific requirements for the documentation (4);*
- *Motivation (3);*
- *Academic recognition (1) or academic recognition statement from SKVC (2);*
- *Minimum requirements for selection (cumulative score, minimum marks, specific subjects etc) (2);*
- *Language proficiency requirements (2);*
- *Entrance test (1);*
- *Document translation requirements (1);*
- *Residence permit (1).*

*All answers are listed below:*

- *Cumulative score, motivation letter*
- *depends on the country, different qualification documents, verification and etc.*
- *Applicants must have sufficient Lithuanian language skills for studying*
- *Residence permit in LT*
- *The applicant must submit the decision of the Study Quality Assessment Center regarding the academic recognition of the foreign qualification*
- *Country specific requirements for documentation*
- *All applicants are required to take English language proficiency test.*
- *Few study programs require entrance test. All applicants shall pass interview (online)*
- *All of the official documents have to be presented either in English or Lithuanian language. Verification from the Notary for English and Lithuanian translation of all written documents is required. The Application will not be considered if some of the required documents are missing.*
- *High school diplomas must be approved before the admission process can start by national institution.*
- *Same as stated in 18.1.*
- *Foreign students are required to write a motivation letter for the programme of their choice.*
- *Minimum marks, specific subjects etc*
- *According to guidelines provided by SKVC center we require for specific documents according to the country from which the applicant is applying.*
- *Depending on the applicant's country of qualifications, he must provide additional documents as stated by SKVC, for example, Nigerians are asked to provide the proof of additional one year studies post their school from accredited and recognized institution in their country or abroad, for example National Diploma, Bachelor's degree or so. They also need to provide pin number to verify their WAECO or NECO results online. When it comes to applicants from Azerbaijan for example, they might be asked to take additional entry test: this happens after receiving foreign qualification recognition decision from SKVC, which usually directs to check their knowledge in case they did not take required state exams. All foreign applicants must apply for the foreign qualification recognition from SKVC, which evaluates the qualification and issues decision, based on which we can further decide whether we accept the student or not. When it comes to Ukrainians, we perform recognition ourselves.*

## **20. Do you receive any applications with incomplete documentation? (e.g. missing diploma or transcript)**

*Just over half of the respondents indicated that they do receive applications with incomplete documentation (56 percent). The other half of the respondents (44 percent) indicated that they do not receive incomplete documentation.*



### **20.1 How many per year applications you receive with incomplete documentation?**

*18 (56 percent) out of 32 respondents answered this question.*

*Based on the answers provided, we can draw several conclusions about the number of incomplete applications received:*

- *The number of applications with incomplete documentation varies significantly among different respondents ranging from 1 to 100. Some receive very few cases with incomplete documentation, while others encounter it frequently.*
- *Some responses mention specific cases or time frames where incomplete applications were received, such as "Specific cases in March 2022 with several applicants citizens from Ukraine. Document were received later." This suggests that incomplete applications may sometimes be associated with specific events or circumstances in the country.*
- *There are a few responses that do not provide specific numbers but rather describe the frequency of incomplete applications, like "A lot of times. Most of the times applicant do not include one or another document." and "we haven't received any in the past three-four years."*
- *One response mention receiving "about 200-300" incomplete applications, which indicates a significant volume of incomplete submissions.*
- *There is also one response that states they "do not have such numbers," suggesting that the institution may not have a formal tracking system for incomplete applications.*

*In summary, the number of incomplete applications received varies among different institutions and situations. Some institutions report receiving only a few incomplete applications, while others receive a considerable number. Additionally, incomplete applications may be more common in specific cases or time frames. Additionally, some respondents' answers indicate that they may not have precise or reliable data on this matter.*

*All answers are listed below:*

- 1
- 1
- 1 in 15
- 5
- 6
- 10
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 50
- 70 percent
- *A lot of times. Most of the times applicant do not include one or another document.*
- *Specific cases in March 2022 with several applicants citizens from Ukraine. Document were received later.*
- *until 10*
- *about 200-300*
- *do not have such numbers*
- *we haven't received any in the past three-four years*
- *-100*

## **20.2 From which foreign countries do you receive applications with incomplete documentation? Please list the top 5 (when 1 - most popular country, 5 – least popular country).**

*18 (56 percent) out of 32 respondents answered this question.*

*From the answers provided, it can be observed that the institution receives applications with incomplete documentation from various foreign countries. Some answers mention specific countries, while others provide broader regions. Here are 16 different countries mentioned: Nigeria, Cameroon, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Nepal, Belarus, Ghana, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh. The answers indicate that document deficiencies can come from a wide range of countries, particularly from African countries, the Middle East, and South Asian countries. Some responses do not specify particular countries, suggesting that the issue of incomplete documentation is not limited to specific nations but depends on the attentiveness of individual applicants. Additionally, a few answers state "N/A" or "-" indicating a lack of specific information or no applications with incomplete documentation from foreign countries mentioned in those cases.*

*All answers are listed below:*

- *Such cases are rare. There is no specific country from which the most document deficiencies occur. it mostly depends on the attentiveness of the applicant.*
- *Nigeria, Cameroon, Turkey, India, Pakistan.*
- *N/A*
- *African countries 2. India etc. 3. Ukraine*



- Nepal, Belarus
- Nigeria, Nepal, India
- 1 - Cameroon, 2 - Nigeria, 3 - India.
- any
- Iraq, Syria, African countries
- 1 - Cameroon 2 - Ghana 3 - Nigeria 4 - Algeria 5 - Pakistan
- Africa, Middle East regions.
- Only Ukraine
- Syria
- Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria.
- 
- Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan, Bangladesh
- Ukraine
- Nigeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh

### **20.3 What challenges are you currently facing when assessing cases with incomplete documentation?**

*18 (56 percent) out of 32 respondents answered this question.*

*The challenges currently faced when assessing cases with incomplete documentation include:*

- *Difficulty in validating the authenticity of submitted documents, making it hard to determine if they are genuine or fake.*
- *Lack of an established assessment policy, leading to inefficiencies in the admissions process.*
- *Monitoring and handling admissions of students with incomplete documents by external offices (local ENIC/NARIC office).*
- *Time-consuming process of contacting individual applicants to address deficiencies and waiting for their responses.*
- *Slower acceptance procedures due to the need for double-checking and re-evaluation after resubmission of documents.*
- *Inability to confirm qualifications directly with issuing institutions, causing verification challenges.*
- *Challenges in assessing applicants from fields outside the university's expertise, like Humanities, and evaluating their acquired knowledge or conducting interviews.*
- *Time resources utilized for communication and dealing with incomplete applications.*
- *Lack of official electronic databases or working institutional websites to support the verification process.*
- *Instances where applicants withdraw during the evaluation procedure, resulting in wasted time and effort.*
- *Additional time required for sending emails and explaining the need for specific documents to be provided.*

*Overall, the institution faces several obstacles related to document authentication, communication, verification, and time management in assessing cases with incomplete documentation.*

*All answers are listed below:*

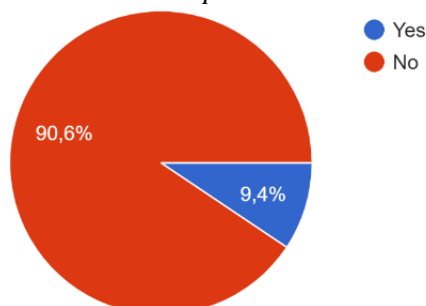
- *n/a*
- *We usually communicate with applicants and they submit the missing documents. Or we simply reject the application if you cannot provide the documents.*
- *It is hard to understand if the documents are real or fake.*
- *authentication of the documents.*
- *Assessing their veracity.*
- *We have trouble validating the authenticity of the documents.*
- *To make sure that the applicants obtained the qualification they say.*
- *making a decision and getting the required documents on time*
- *The institution does not have an established assessment policy. Also, admissions of students who have incomplete documents is monitored and conducted by the local ENIC/NARIC office.*
- *Having to contact each person individually and wait for their response, having to double check if everything is complete afterwards. This slows down the acceptance procedures.*
- *Time resources utilised for communication of notes on deficiencies of application, and re-evaluation after re-submission.*
- *No challenges.*
- *Lack of official electronic databases or working institutional websites.*
- *Regrettably, we are unable to confirm qualifications directly with the issuing institutions. Additionally, when considering applications from students in fields outside our university's expertise, such as Humanities, conducting interviews or assessing acquired knowledge becomes challenging.*
- *Time consuming.*



- We had one applicant. We started evaluation procedure, but candidate decided to withdraw.
- Extra time required to send emails and explain that the application is incomplete and specific documents needs to spend to us.

## 21. Do you receive applications without any documentation ?

The majority of respondents (91 percent) replied that they do not receive applications without any documentation. 9 percent indicated that they receive such applications.



### 21.1 How many per year applications you receive without any documentation?

3 out of 32 respondents answered the question. Two of them stated that they receive 5 applications without any documentation per year and one of them stated 3 applications.

### 21.2 From which foreign countries do you receive applications without any documentation? Please list top 5 (when 1 - most popular country, 5 - least popular country).

3 out of 32 respondents answered the question. 11 different countries were mentioned: Nigeria (3), Pakistan (2), Bangladesh (1), Belarus (1), Cameroon (1), Egypt (1), India (1), Morocco (1), Sudan (1), Turkey (1), Ukraine (1).

All answers are listed below:

1	2	3	4	5
Cameroon	Nigeria	Turkey	India	Pakistan
Nigeria	Pakistan	Ukraine	Belarus	n/a
Nigeria	Morocco	Egypt	Bangladesh	Sudan

### 21.3 What challenges are you currently facing when assessing cases without any documentation?

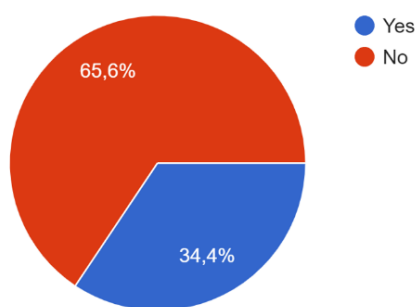
3 out of 32 respondents answered the question. Mainly challenges are related to the time and to the need to make sure that the person does not really have the documents.

All answers are listed below:

- It is hard to understand if the applicant has all the required documents.
- Clarification.
- Since we do not perform recognition of foreign qualifications except for Ukrainians, our only challenge is additional time to reach out to the applicants and inform about the required documents.

## 22. Do you have specific guidelines for admission of foreign students without documentation of their foreign qualifications?

A larger percentage of Higher Education Institutions indicated that they do not have specific guidelines for admission of foreign students without documentation of their foreign qualifications (66 percent). Other Higher Education Institutions indicated that they do have specific guidelines for admission (34 percent).



## 22.1 Please describe specific guidelines you have in your institution for admission of foreign students without documentation of their foreign qualifications.

11 out of 32 respondents answered the question.

Two respondents answered that they do not accept such students. Three respondents answered that if students do not have documentation then such students are directed to the local ENIC/NARIC office (SKVC) for assessment (2) or they would apply to the SKVC for some individual recommendations. Two respondents indicated additional tests or exams, organized according to the procedures of their institution. Two respondents indicated the specified required additional/alternative documents for such cases. And three respondents indicated that they have prepared special procedures for such cases. Overall, each institution has its approach tailored to its policies and the processes established by relevant recognition authorities.

All answers are listed below:

- We do not accept applications without documents
- We do not accept such students
- We apply to the holder of the foreign qualification a knowledge and ability test, organized according to the procedure established by our institution.
- The refugees who do not meet the requirements are offered to pass the preparatory exams for their study programs.
- If students do not have documentation and are residing in our country, then such students are directed to the local ENIC/NARIC office for assessment.
- The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is responsible for recognition of foreign qualifications giving access to higher education and higher education qualifications for the purposes of further study and/or employment in Lithuania. Applications are submitted online at <https://epe.skvc.lt/en/> General documentation requirements of Lithuanian Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education check CQAHE.
- They would be required to submit all the listed documents (there is a f.a.q form with a list and a notice)
- Alternative Documentation: If students are unable to provide official documentation of their foreign qualifications, we may consider alternative forms of documentation, such as academic transcripts, course descriptions, syllabus, or any other relevant materials that can help us evaluate their educational background. Interviews or Assessments: In cases where documentation is unavailable or insufficient, we may conduct interviews or assessments to evaluate the student's knowledge, skills, and potential for academic success. These interviews or assessments may be conducted in person or remotely, depending on the circumstances.
- Stages of the procedure shall be as follows: preparation of the restoration document, collection of additional information, interview of the candidate with a credential evaluator and/or specialist in the fields, and adoption of the recognition decision. Full description of the procedure here <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SEN-N-33.pdf>
- We incorporated and following the guidelines by SKVC in Lithuania
- First the applicants must fill a special form, according to which we would apply to SKVC center for some individual recommendation

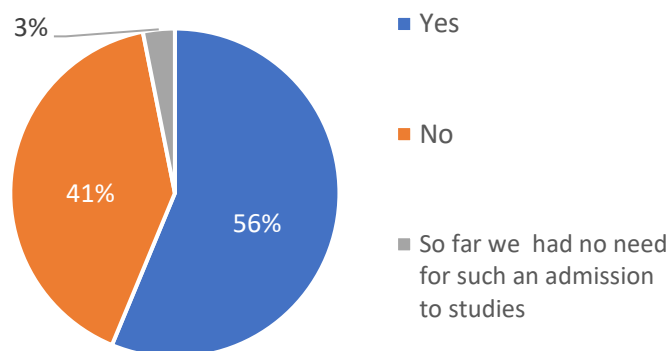
## 23. Are you aware of national/regional/institutional legislation that might hinder the implementation of alternative procedures for admission of students without fully documented prior qualifications?

The majority of respondents (18 out of 32) are aware of national/regional/institutional legislation that might hinder the implementation of alternative admission procedures. This indicates that there are legal or regulatory barriers in place that could potentially pose challenges to admitting students without complete documentation of their prior qualifications.

On the other hand, 13 respondents stated that they are not aware of any such legislation, suggesting that these institutions may not currently face legal hindrances in implementing alternative admission procedures.

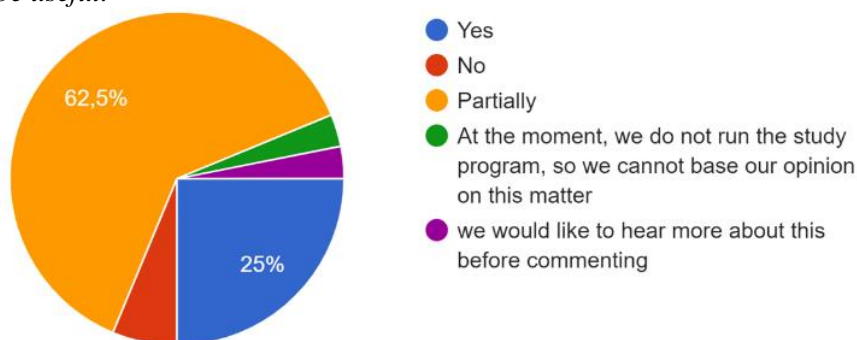
One respondent mentioned that they have not encountered a need for such admission to studies, which implies that their institution might not have encountered this particular issue or the need for alternative procedures yet.

Overall, the responses indicate that there is a split among the institutions, with some being aware of legislation that might hinder alternative admission procedures, while others do not currently perceive such barriers. The presence of legal constraints in some cases may affect the flexibility and inclusivity of admission processes for students without fully documented prior qualifications.



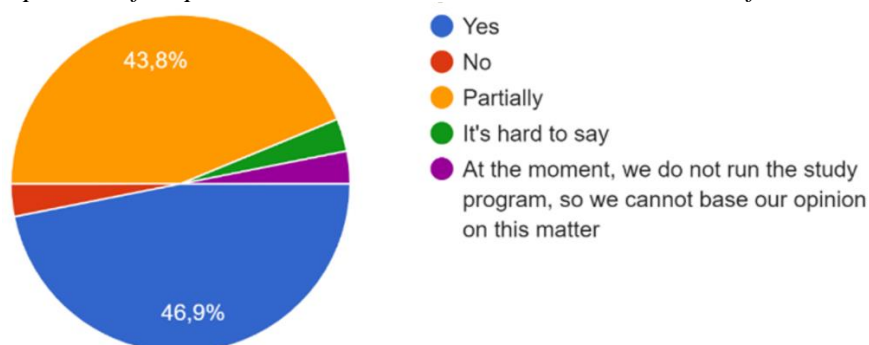
#### 24. Interview-based recognition has already been tested in several European countries. Do you think this method could be useful for admission purposes at your institution?

A larger percentage (63 percent) of Higher Education Institutions think interview-based recognition could be partially useful for admission purposes at their institution. Other respondents indicated that such method could be useful (25 percent). Only 6 percent of respondents stated that interview-based recognition will not be useful.



#### 25. Do you think the method of background paper could be useful for admission purposes at your institution?

Almost half of the respondents (47 percent) agree that the method of background paper could be useful for admission purposes at their institution. And almost half of respondents indicated that such method could be partially useful (44 percent). 6 percent of respondents indicated, that they do not have any opinion and 3 percent of respondents think that this method could not be useful.



## **26. Which individuals/roles at your institution need to be involved in establishing alternative admission procedures?**

*31 out of 32 respondents answered the question.*

*All respondents indicated the individuals and roles involved in establishing alternative admission procedures at the institution include:*

- Administration, top management, Rector, management for studies and quality, Vice-Rector for Studies, Director, Academic Council (9)
- Study Department, Study programme committees, Study programme directors (8)
- Faculties, deans (8)
- Department of international relations, International Student services (7)
- Evaluator of foreign qualifications (6).
- Admission officers (5)

*These roles collaborate to establish alternative admission procedures at the institution, indicating a coordinated effort involving various departments and authorities to ensure effective and inclusive admission processes.*

*All answers are listed below:*

- Department of international relations
- We would hardly find the financial and human resources for such additional activities within our small university. This activity requires at least 1 specially trained additional person.
- Deputy director of studies and quality
- Top management
- Rector
- ???
- Study programme committees, deans
- An additional employee to work with international admission procedures
- Employees of the International Relations Department
- Administration
- More events providing knowledge and practice for the academic recognition would be necessary in order to carry out the process successfully.
- Academic assessors.
- Heads of the departments
- more human resources
- more qualified staff
- Academic Council, Admissions Office, President's Cabinet.
- I think, that the specialists who are responsible for the recognition of the qualifications.
- Staff of the Study Department, Faculties
- Application for recognition of foreign qualifications at the institution directly
- International Relations Office
- Study Departments, Vice-Rector for Studies.
- Head of Studies and Applied Research Department and the Director
- admissions and administrative staff
- Study programme directors, faculty international coordinators
- Studies department, International Student services and faculties
- n/a
- Close collaboration of academic and non-academic divisions of the university: International Cooperation Department, Study Department, faculties
- More representatives from faculties who is in charged of concrete study programmes
- I guess most effective would be entry exam/exams
- Admission officers and faculty members
- Teaching staff.
- Since our admission procedures are mostly online, quite simple and guided, we believe it is already good. However, when it comes to establishing the procedure itself for alternative admission procedure, we would require individuals like Foreign Student Admission and Support Administrator, coordinator, head of International Relations and Projects Centre, Head of Quality Assurance, Academic Board and possibly people from other institutions like SKVC for certain good practice guidance involved.

## **27. Please include any other relevant information/comments you would like to address.**

*Nine comments were submitted (9 out of 32). Others (72 percent) did not comment.*

*Only one respondent indicated that the topic is not relevant, as they are a small institution and have lectures only in their native language.*

Another other eight responses show that the topic is important and relevant. Two respondents mentioned that they do not have much experience in this field. Another two respondents answer, that they are working on the alternative evaluation and admission procedures for undocumented candidates and this is an on-going process which requires constant learning and facing challenges. Three respondents mentioned about the actual procedures, such as grade conversion, ensurement of the truly realistic assessment of a person's academic competencies and experience, also the direct correlation between the quality of a person's application for admission and participation in the study process. One respondent expressed the hope not to submission of the original documents, as such a requirement reduces the number of applicants. Two respondents indicated that training is relevant, one of them mentioned training organized by SKVC. Overall, the comments highlight the complexities and ongoing efforts in addressing the issue of assessing foreign qualifications without documentation. Higher Education Institutions are open to learning and improving their procedures to better accept applicants with missing documents.

All answers are below:

- The procedures for assessing the academic qualifications of persons without documents should ensure a truly realistic assessment of a person's academic competences and experience. This is quite a difficult task.
- As it was mentioned before, the development of international admission system is at the initial stage because we still didn't get the permission to perform the credit evaluation by ourselves, and we are aware that in the case of refugees some documents are going to be missed etc.
- Thank you. This is an on-going process which requires constant learning and facing challenges.
- I think we should be stricter in regards of admissions, as most students who seem to be interested in applying for migration reasons more often than not do end up hanging on for a semester or two before dropping out or being expelled. In my short experience I have seen that the quality of one's application usually corelates to how this person actually ends up doing in the study process.
- As I have mentioned, we are a small institution and have lectures only in native language, so the topic is a little bit to far away from us.
- We do not have much experience in this field.
- Some online learnings organised by SKVC center would be useful.
- We are working on the alternative evaluation and admission procedures for undocumented candidates.
- We would like to have more extent description on how to review and convert the grades from more countries, for example the guide given by SKVC has only specific number of countries, however others are not included. It would be also great if all the countries had the same rule either to post physical documents to SKVC or not and it would clearly identified in the Country Specific Requirements section. The requirement to post original documents causes a lot of negative comments and drop out in student applications too, since it is really very risky to do so from such countries like Nepal. It needs to be understood that the posting condition in such countries are very bad: the service is unreliable, they do not handle it with care, many papers come torn after delivery or damaged in other way. Since original documents are very important, we believe this long and hectic process should be reconsidered. We would love to hear or have more trainings related to recognition of refugees and without documents (so far we have common one and related to Ukrainian situation only).