



CHAIN 5

12ª CONFERÊNCIA
ANUAL

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**Connecting
Knowledge**

**Elevating
Practice**

From EQF 5 to EQF 6: Pathways of Access, Continuation and Talent Development

IPMAIA Case Study in Portugal's Binary Higher Education System

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Why this matters?



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EU SKILLS CRISIS



One in five adults
struggle with reading



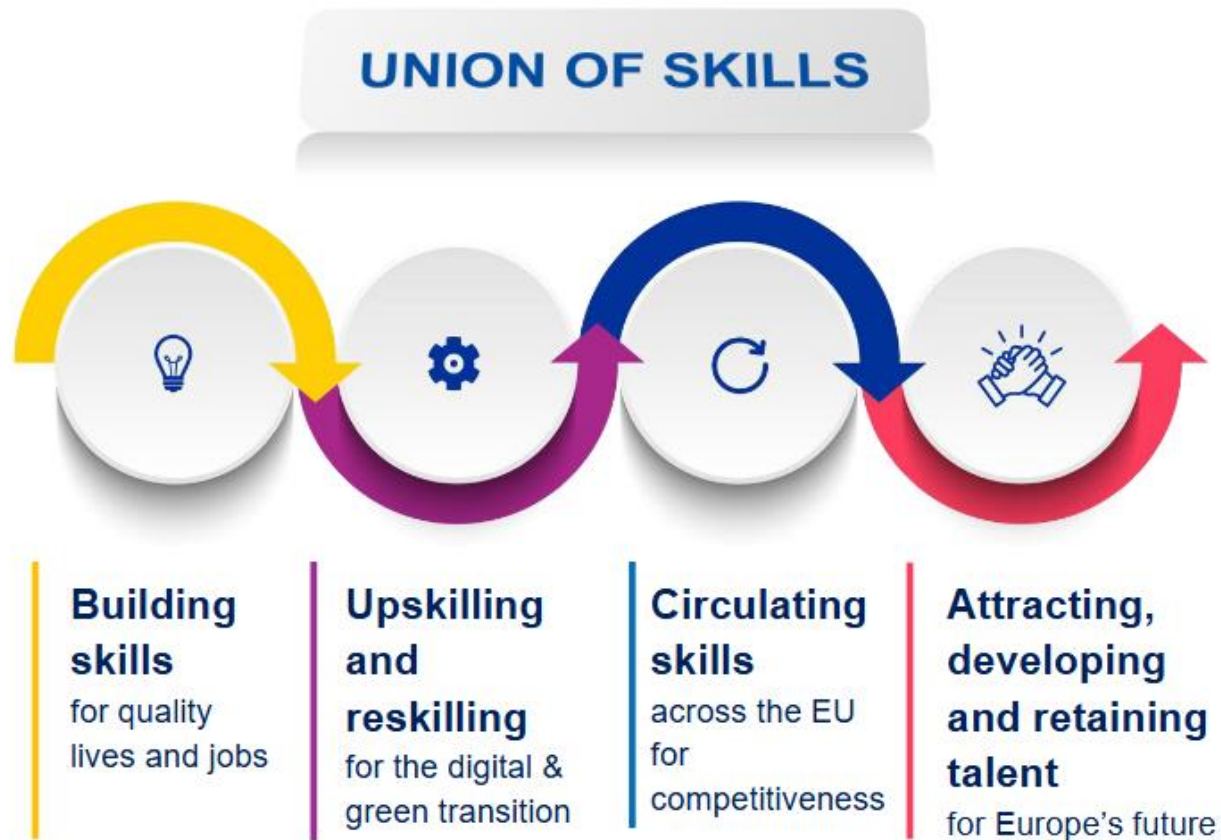
**One in four 15-
years-old**
falls short in reading,
maths and science



**Nearly four in five
SMEs**
cannot find the talent
they need

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Union of Skills: Key strands



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What matters for transition and permeability

Lifelong upskilling and reskilling

Integration between VET and HE

Equity and participation priorities

EU Vision for VET & HE Integration

- New EU VET Strategy aims at making VET more attractive, innovative and inclusive**
- Addressing skills shortages and mismatches**
- Strengthening basic skills (e.g., literacy; STEM) and skills for life (e.g., digital and financial literacy) to ensure that students are equipped for the future**

EU Vision for VET & HE Integration

- ✦ VET as a traditionally a path towards quality jobs and fulfilling careers in middle skilled occupations
- ✦ Vocational qualifications are in high demand, notably where acute labour shortages persist
- ✦ 2/3 of the most common shortage occupations in the EU are craft jobs, which usually require VET

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Based on a true story



Meet Rita



✦ Rita, 20, learnt programming skills in her VET studies

✦ She completed a **TeSP** program on *'Multimedia Production and Digital Gaming'*

✦ She learnt more than she had (secretly) expected, especially during the **750-hour internship** at SKETCHPIXEL, a digital studio

Meet Rita

After short-cycle completion, Rita has 3 options:

- 1. Take a SKETCHPIXEL job offer** (salary, status and autonomy)
- 2. Continue to EQF 6 programme** (delay job market entry but eventually augmenting career/salary prospects)
- 3. A combination of both** (requires extra effort, investment and time)

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Rita's trilemma reflects a systemic question

Path 1: Accepting a job offer now

Path 2: Pursue a bachelor's degree

Path 3: Combining both paths

**What stimulates or hinders
EQF 5 > EQF 6 transition?**

Portuguese Higher Education Landscape



PT Higher Education Binary Landscape

✦ **Higher education** (HE) is provided by **universities** and **polytechnics**.


✦ Universities and polytechnic schools offer first-cycle (EQF 6) and a second-cycle degrees (EQF 7)

✦ Universities (+ some Polytechnics) offer PhD degrees (EQF 8)

PT Higher Education Binary Landscape

Universities  Academic and research focus

Polytechnics  Applied and professional focus

Since 2014  Integration of short-cycle, aka **TeSP** (2-year programmes, ISCED 5, in **Polytechnics**, the Universities of Applied Sciences)

PT Higher Education: EQF Level 5

(Only) **polytechnics offer 2-year, short-cycle, 120 ECTS programmes** (including internship): **Higher Professional Technical Programmes (TeSP)**

TeSP graduates are granted a diploma of higher professional technician (**EQF 5**), not a post-secondary non-tertiary certificate, nor a HE degree

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State of the (TeSP) art in Portugal



Why TeSP works?

Designed to be aligned with...

- ✿ Regional economic needs (**Smart Specialization**)
- ✿ Needs of organisations (**Stakeholder Alignment**)
- ✿ Bachelor programmes (**Vertical Alignment**)

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Sense of possibilities

- ✖ Professional destination > immediate work entry (*plug-and-play*)
- ✖ Academic pathway > steppingstone to bachelor-level studies (*charge-and-play*)
- ✖ Balances employability and progression

Profiling candidates/graduates

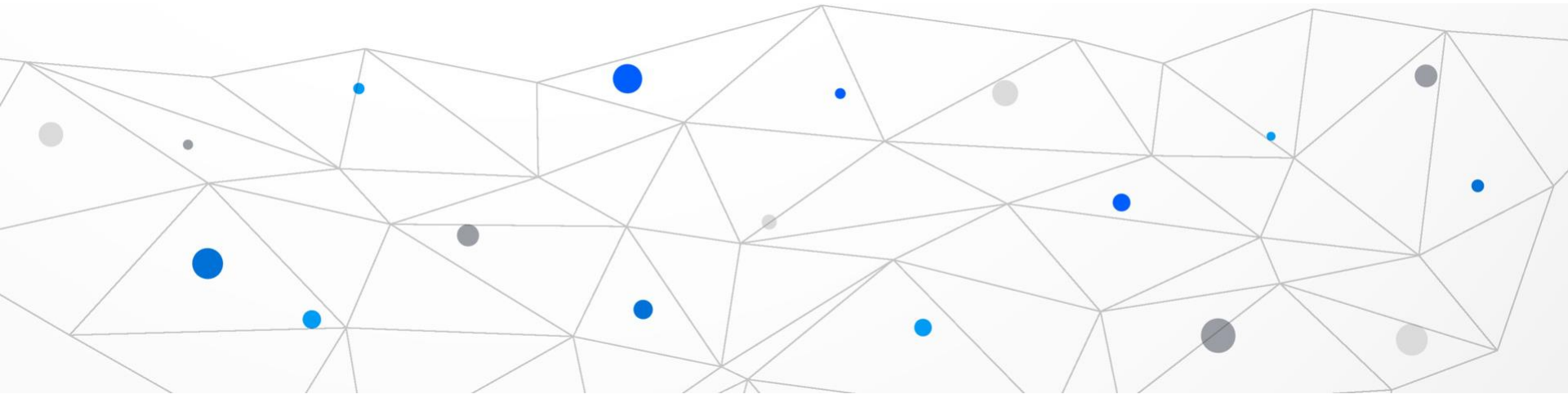
- ✦ 50% of EQF 4 VET graduates entering HEI choose TeSP
- ✦ 45% of TeSP graduates transition to bachelor degrees within 1 year after completion
- ✦ Majority of TeSP graduate remain in the same HEI for bachelor studies

Positive externalities

- ✦ **Accessible and less competitive entry criteria** (viz. students with VET and lower-income family background)
- ✦ **Student's self-confidence and insight in HE gained via academic achievements**
- ✦ **Local labour market relevance**

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The IPMAIA Case Study

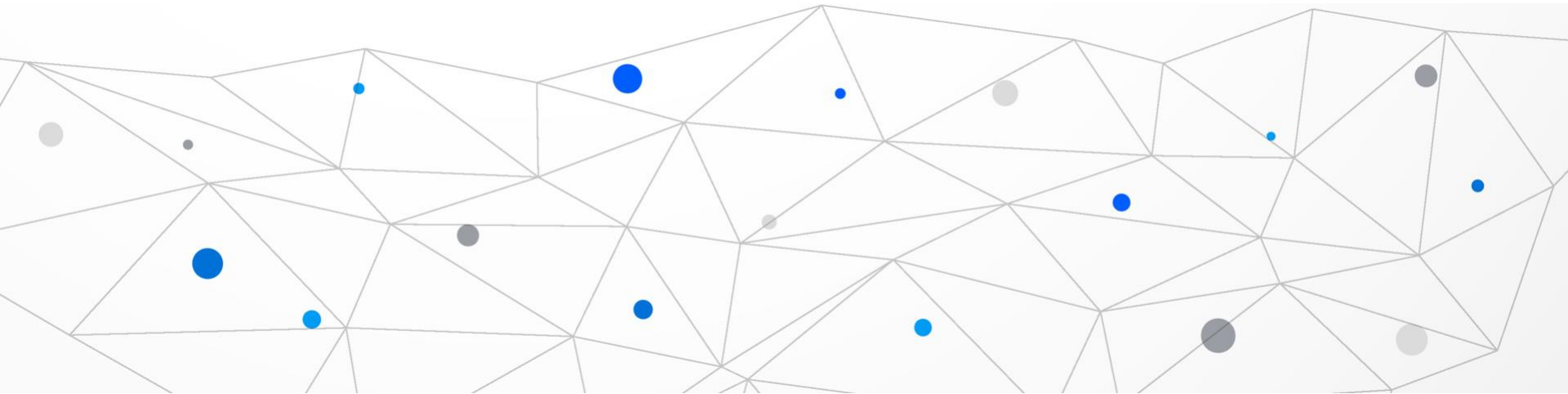


State of the (TeSP) art @ IPMAIA

- ✿ A Living Lab for Permeability
- ✿ Exemplifies OECD's integrated tertiary pathways vision (theory meets implementation)
- ✿ Clear and deliberate EQF 5 > EQF 6 articulation
- ✿ High-Concentration of TeSP students

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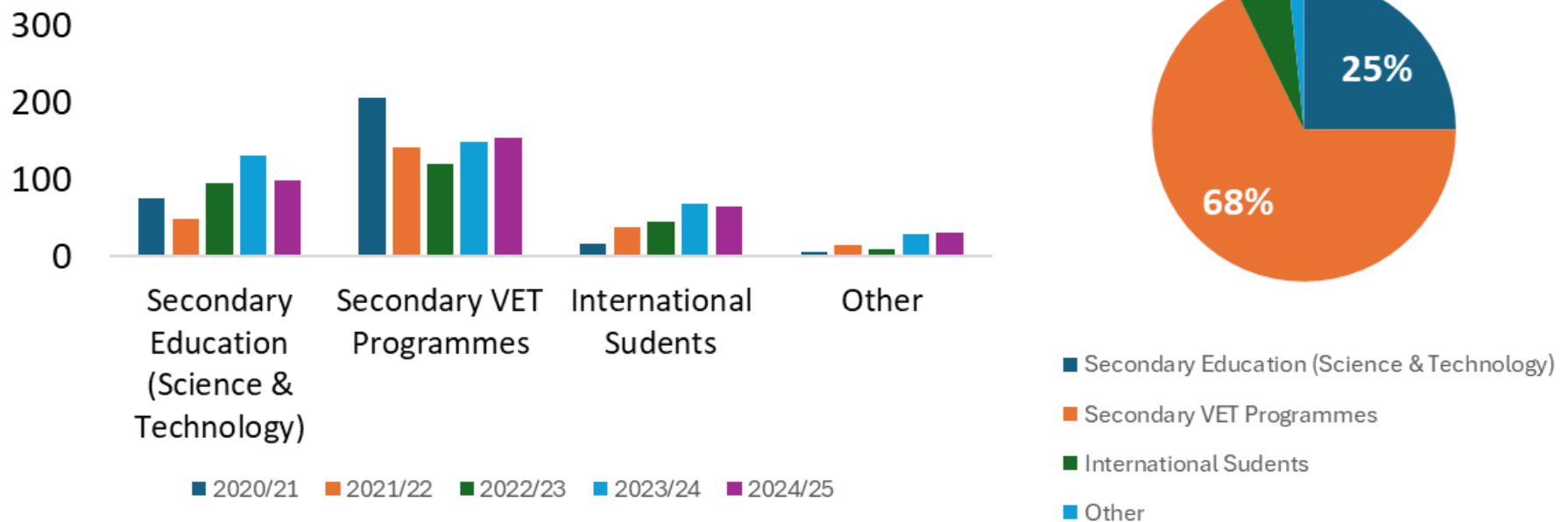
Let's look at some data



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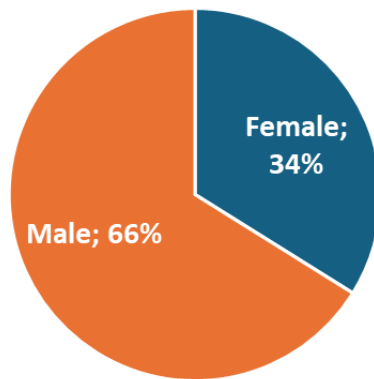
EQF 5 @ IPMAIA | Type of Access

New Students

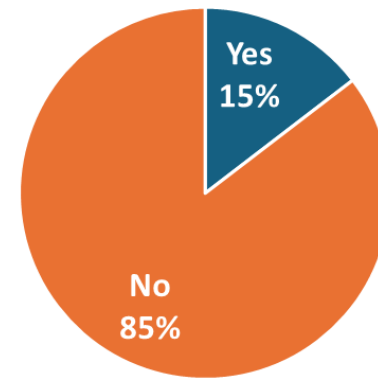
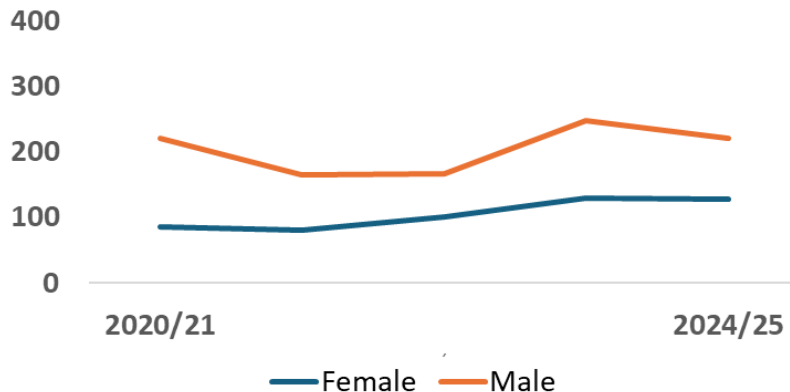


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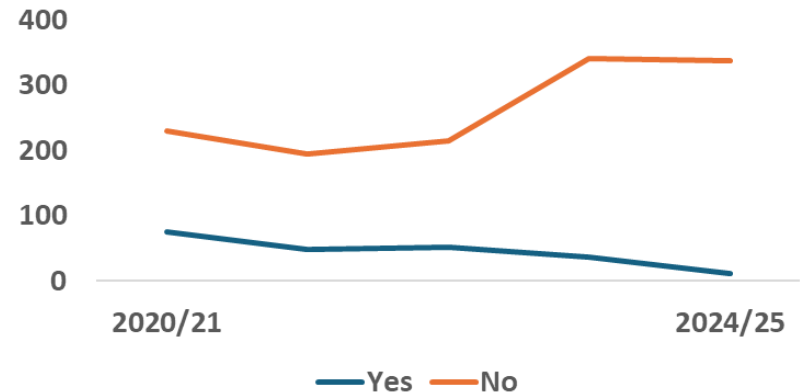
EQF 5 @ IPMAIA | Gender / Grant



Gender Distribution

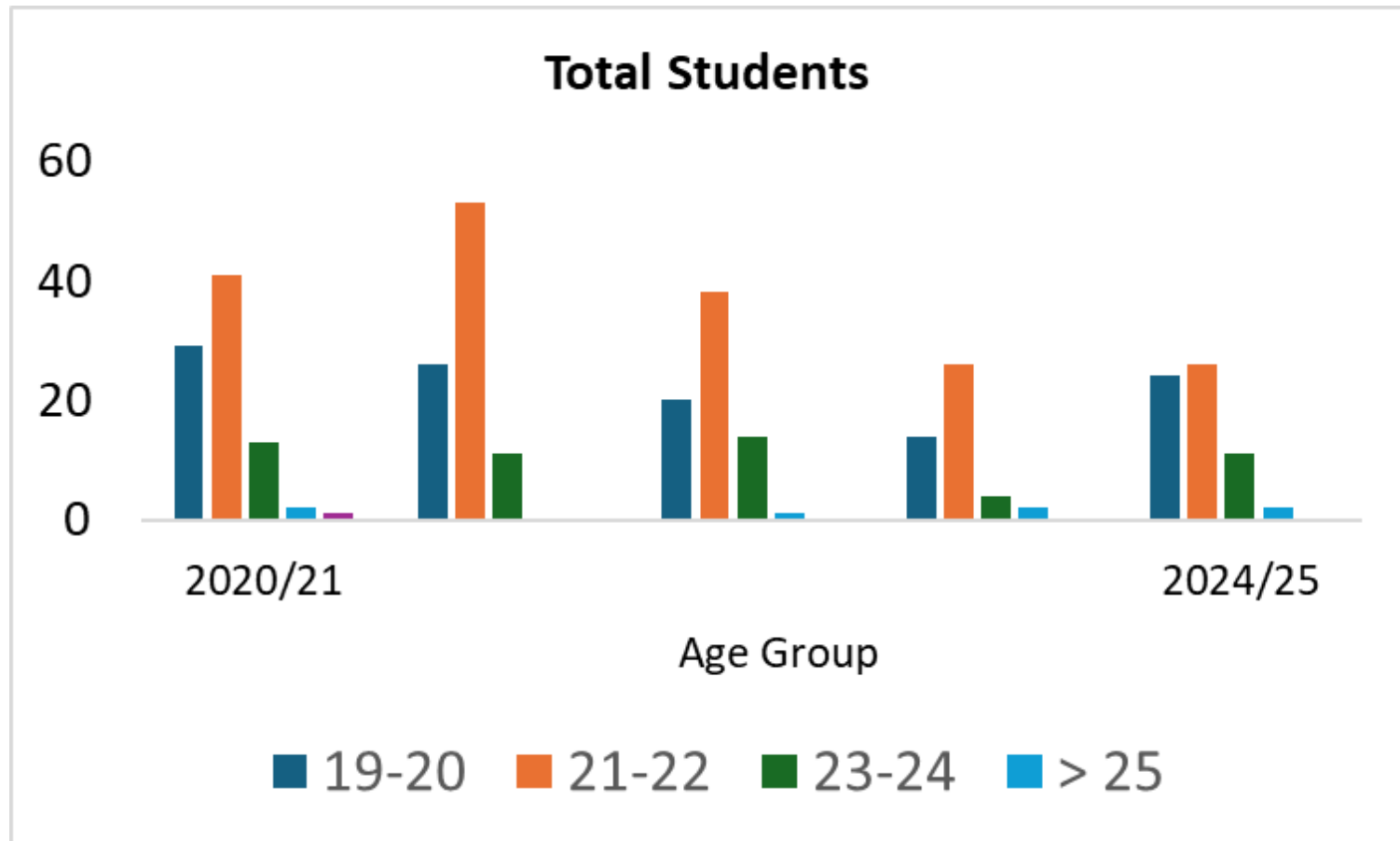


Grant



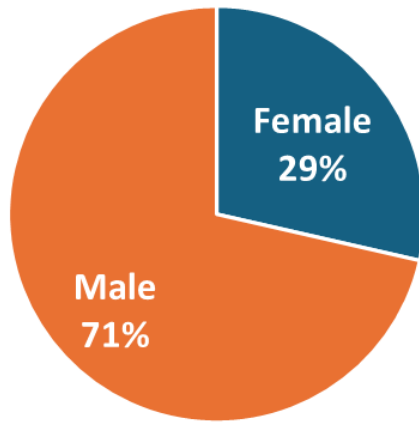
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EQF 5 > EQF 6 Transition | Age Group

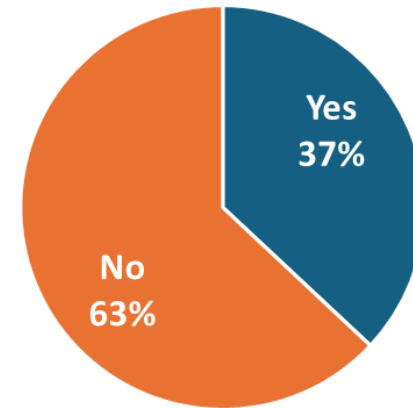
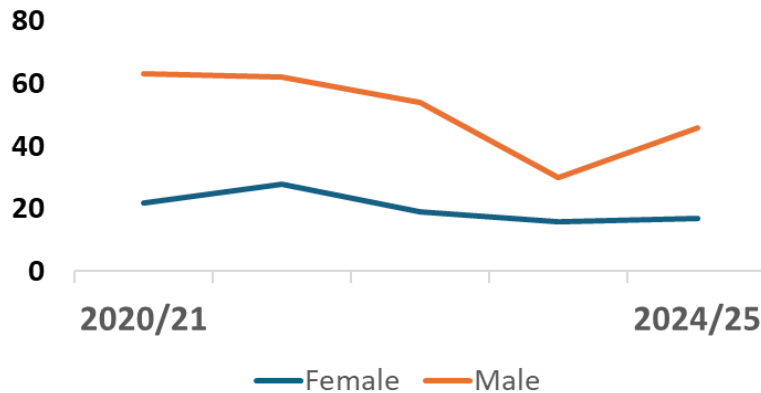


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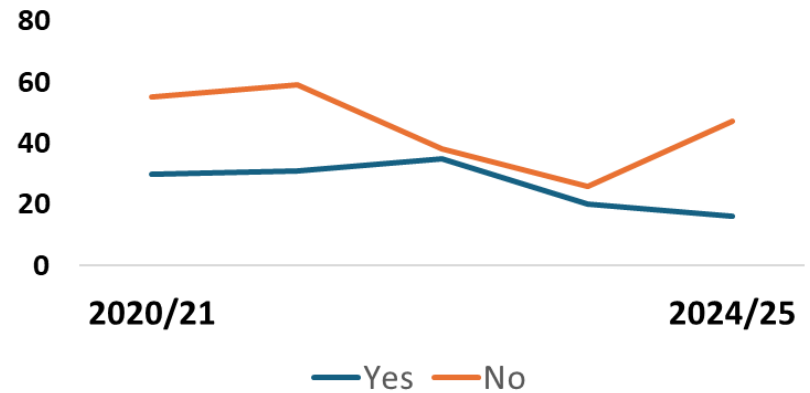
EQF 5 > EQF 6 Transition | Gender / Grant



Gender Distribution



Grant



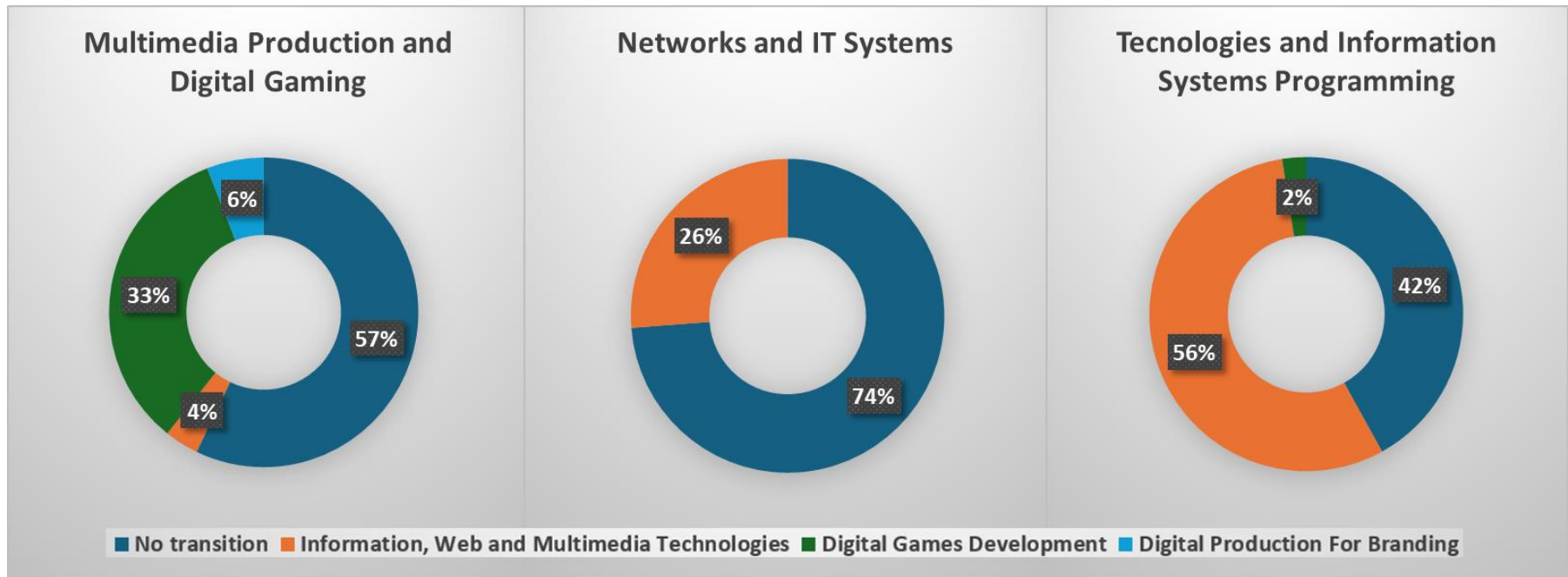
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EQF 5 > EQF 6 Transition | Business & MGMT



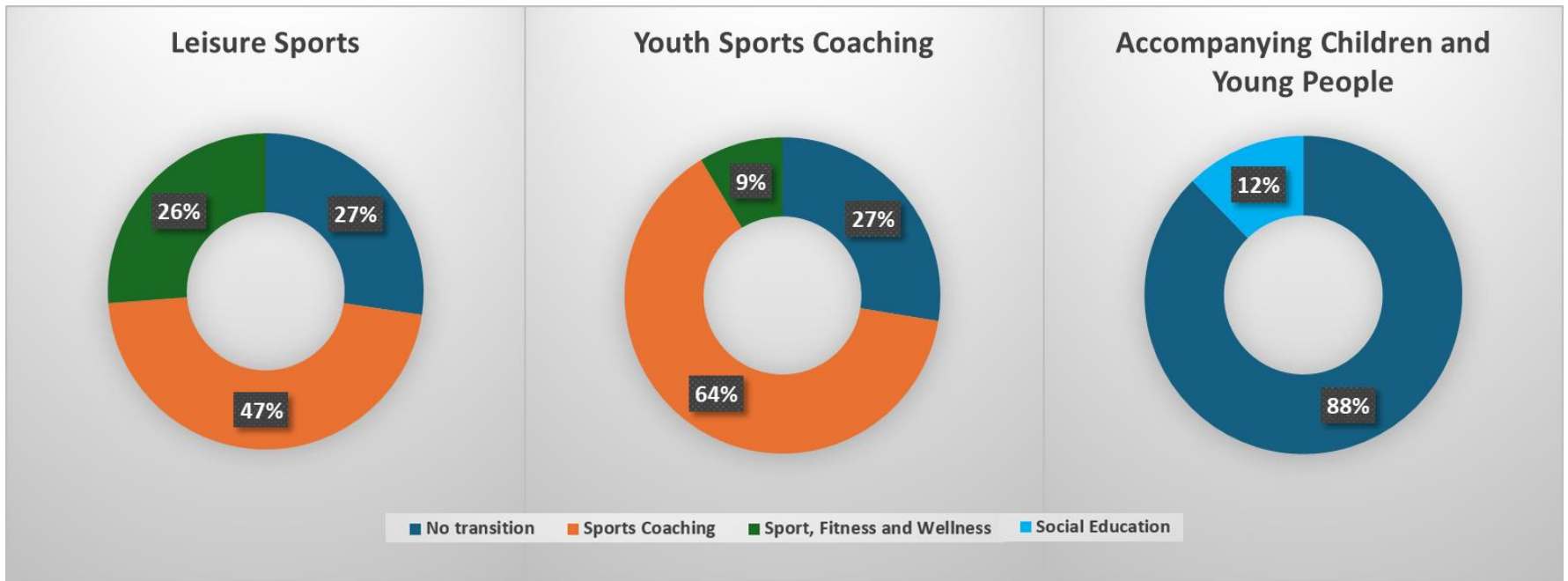
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EQF 5 > EQF 6 Transition | Info Technologies



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EQF 5 to EQF 6 Transition | Sports



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EQF 6 Transition shows that...

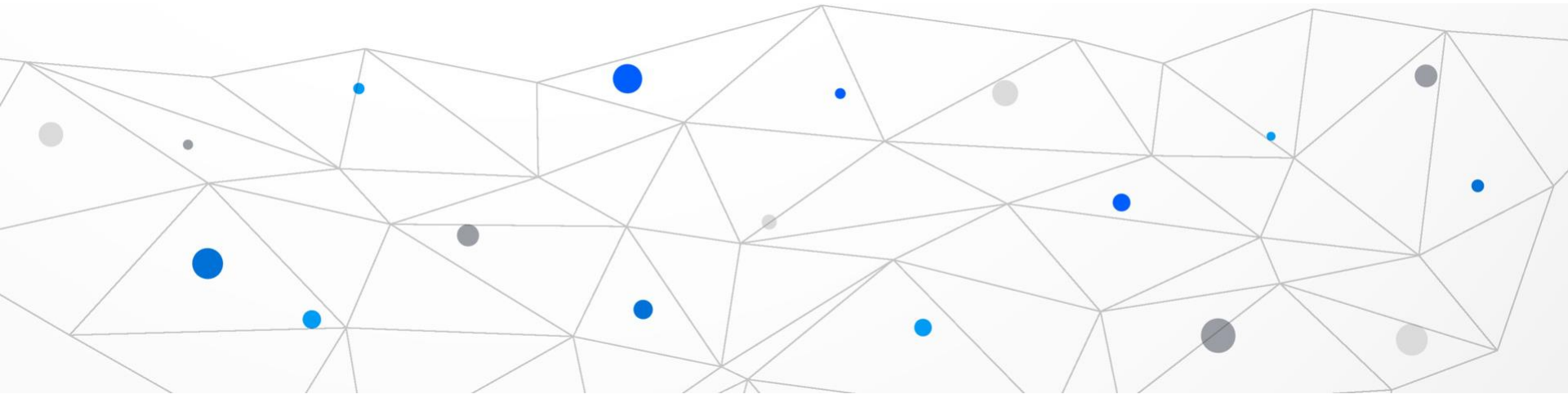
- ✖ It grows among male students (66% > 71%)
- ✖ Gender imbalance persists in some fields
- ✖ Local students transition rate lags behind national average (45%)

EQF 6 Transition shows that...

- ✖ Students with grants tend to transition more (15% > 37%)
- ✖ It varies significantly across different disciplinary domains (Min.= 26% ; Max.=73%)
- ✖ Students benefit from bachelor programme variety, so we seek to maximize options

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EQF 5 > EQF 6
Successful Enablers



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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | Successful enablers

✖ EQF 5 conceived as foundational short-cycles within broad disciplinary clusters

✖ Vertically aligned programmes ensure consistency in learning outcomes

✖ Curricular alignment reduces repetition, redundancy and workload

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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | **Successful enablers**

✖ Automatic credit recognition reduces cost, duration, apprehension and overwhelm

✖ Steadiness of learning environment induces psychological safety and confidence

✖ Student awareness campaigns promoted by staff and peers (EQF 5 > EQF 6 students)

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EQF 5 > EQF 6
Systemic Challenges



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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | Systemic Challenges

✖ Wage premium EQF 5 <> EQF 6 affects transition decisions (e.g., ROI)

✖ Expectations mismatch drives frustration, distrust and dropout

✖ Job-offers after internship / autonomy

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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | Systemic Challenges

✖ Jobs still focus on credentials, not (also) on *skills for life* (digital literacy, citizenship skills)

✖ Paradigmatic change, from *degree-centric* educational model to *skill-centric* educational model (as recommended by OECD)

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Closing Remarks



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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | Closing Remarks

One-million-dollar question:

- What could have been Rita's decision if she had attended CHAIN5 12th Conference in Maia?**

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EQF 5 > EQF 6 | Closing Remarks

✖ Short-cycle programs are both a final destination **AND** a pathway (not a dead-end)

✖ Transition strategies enforce equity, self-confidence, and self-efficacy

✖ EQF 5 > EQF 6 feeds into OECD recommendations for integrated pathways

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Hartelijk dank voor uw aandacht!
Tusen takk for oppmerksomheten!
Suur tänu teie tähelepanu eest!
Paldies par jūsu uzmanību!
Muchas gracias por vuestra atención!
Puno vam hvala na pažnji!
Dziękujemy za uwagę!
Tack så mycket för er uppmärksamhet!
Grazie mille per la vostra attenzione!
Villmools Merci fir Är Opmierksamkeet!
Muito obrigado pela vossa atenção!