

Cyprus

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Cyprus, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice Report on the national higher education system but complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2011-2020.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

According to Eurydice¹, the Cypriot higher education system comprises four types of HEIs:

- Public and private **Universities**
- Public and private **Non-university level institutions**.

Public universities are founded as public corporate bodies to be academically autonomous governed by their Council and Senate. They are funded by the government, but they can raise money from other sources as well. All public universities in Cyprus are dedicated to the excellence of teaching and research. The specific objectives and mission of each university are stated in its respective founding Law. They offer academic programs at Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral (Ph.D.) level. The Open university offers short professional courses in continuing education as well. The language of instruction is Greek and Turkish - the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus.

Private universities are founded as private law organizations of speculative or non-speculative character, registered with the Ministry of Education. As provided by Law 109(I)/2005 on Private Universities, the mission of each private university is the advancement of science, knowledge, learning, and education through teaching and research for the benefit of society as a whole; the cultivation, transmission, implementation, and exchange of knowledge through science; and, the provision of graduate and/or postgraduate education of a high standard that accepts international recognition. Private universities raise their funds from tuition fees.

Non-university level public institutions operate under other than the Ministry of Education and Culture ministries. There are currently five public institutions operating at the non-university level. Their aim is to offer high-level education and training and produce high-calibre professionals in each respective field, according to the needs of the labour market in Cyprus. The language of instruction is English or Greek.

Non-university level private institutions of higher education are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture, according to Law 67(I)/1996, which provides for their establishment, operation and control. They offer vocational and academic programs at various levels of study, such as the Certificate level (one-year

¹<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/cyprus/types-higher-education-institutions>

duration), the Diploma level (two-year duration), the Higher Diploma level (three-year duration), the Bachelor level (four-year duration) and the Master level (one-year or two-year duration).

Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Table 1 below provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics by HEI type. All three public Universities (Πανεπιστήμιο) and all but one private Universities award PhDs. While Universities are still the leading actor in the national higher education system, they account for less than a third of all Cypriot HEIs. Out of the 18, mostly private Non-university institutions of tertiary education (Μη-Πανεπιστημιακά Ιδρύματα Τριτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης) only two awards PhDs.

Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2020

Category		N	Public	Private	PhD awarding
Non-university institutions of tertiary education	Μη-Πανεπιστημιακά Ιδρύματα Τριτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης	18	2	16	2
University	Πανεπιστήμιο	8	3	5	7
Total		26	5	21	9

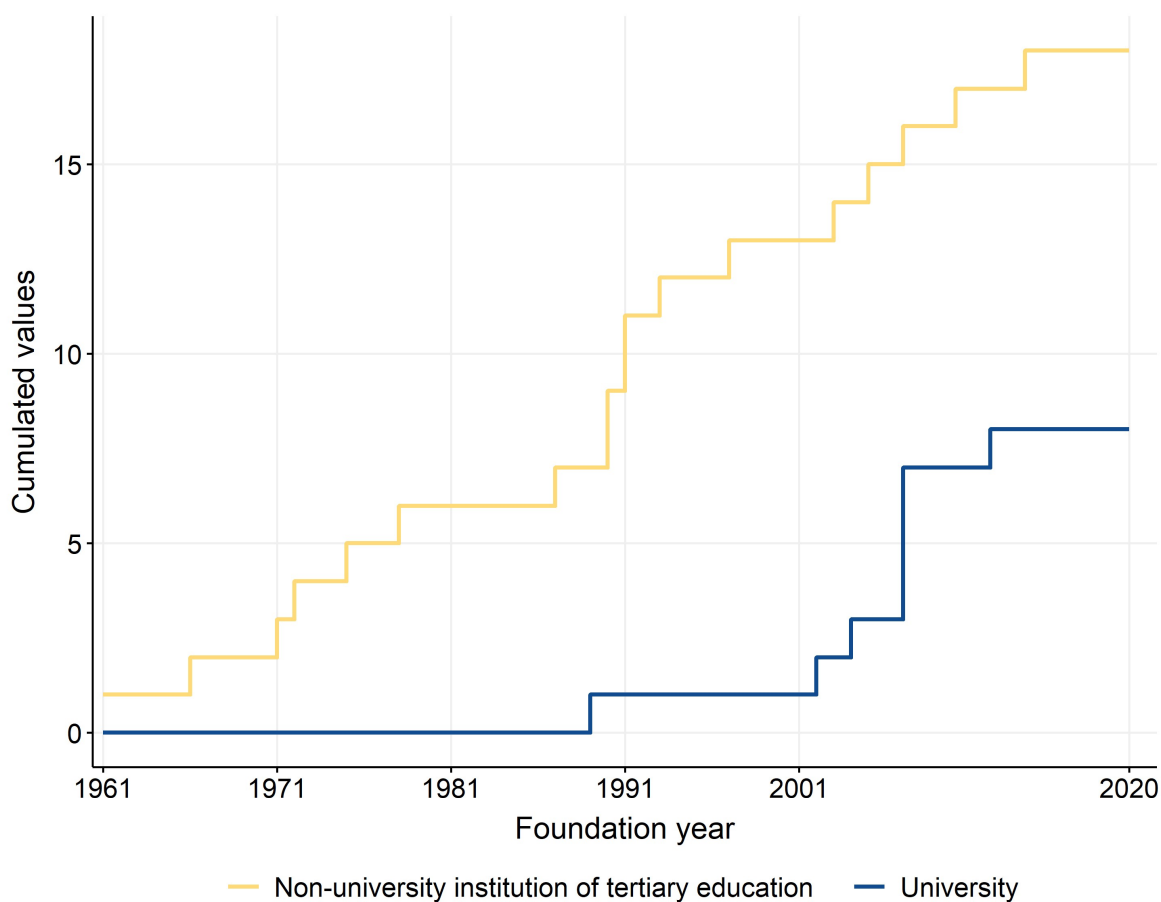
Note: Numbers reflect inclusion in ETER

Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of Cyprus' higher education and its evolution over time.

Figure 1 shows that the expansion of the system in terms of the number of HEIs is relatively recent. The Cyprus College, the oldest Cypriot HEI dates back to 1965 and only six HEIs were founded before 1980. The foundation of the first of today's Cypriot Universities was in 1989 with the University of Cyprus. The number of, mostly private, Non-university institutions of tertiary education has steadily increased since the 1990s. The most recent foundation was the City Unity College Nicosia in 2014. In contrast, six of the eight Universities were founded within a relative short period between 2002 and 2007. The most recent foundation of a University was the private University of Central Lancashire – Cyprus in 2012.

Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type

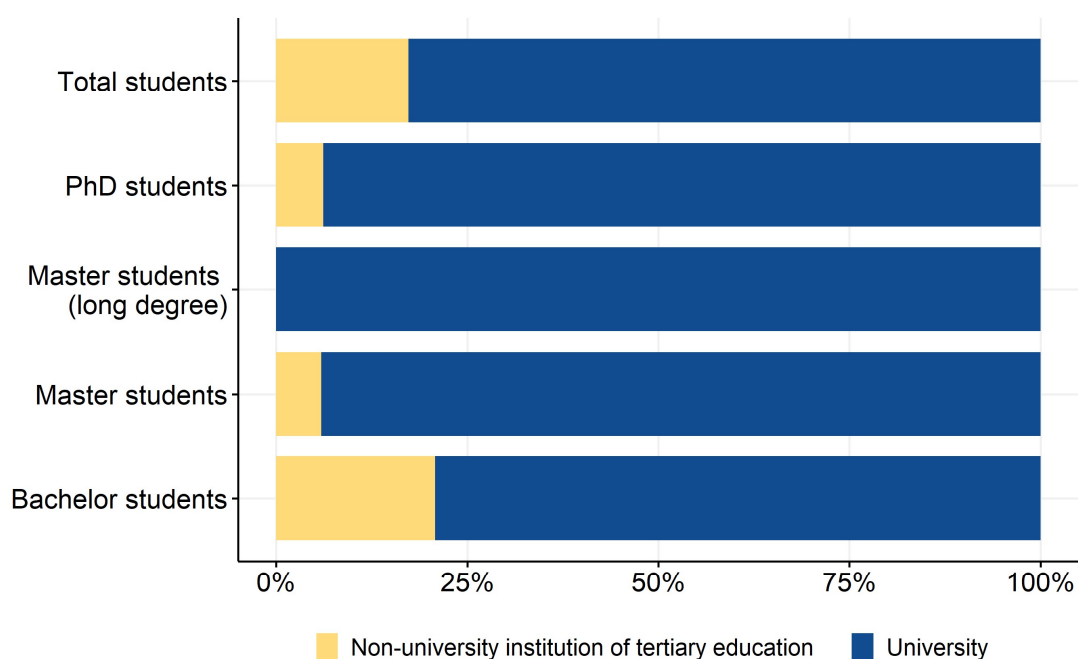


Students

In contrast to the number of institutions, in terms of the number of students enrolled, Universities still account for 77% of all students and Non-university Institutions of Tertiary Education for 23%. The five private Universities play a very important role accounting for 58% of total students.

According to different institutional mandates, we also observe systematic differences between educational levels: Non-university institutions of tertiary education account for 26% of the bachelor students, while doctorates and master's degrees enrolments are within the remit of Universities. While almost 80% of master students are enrolled in private Universities, public Universities account for 2/3 of all PhD students.

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2020



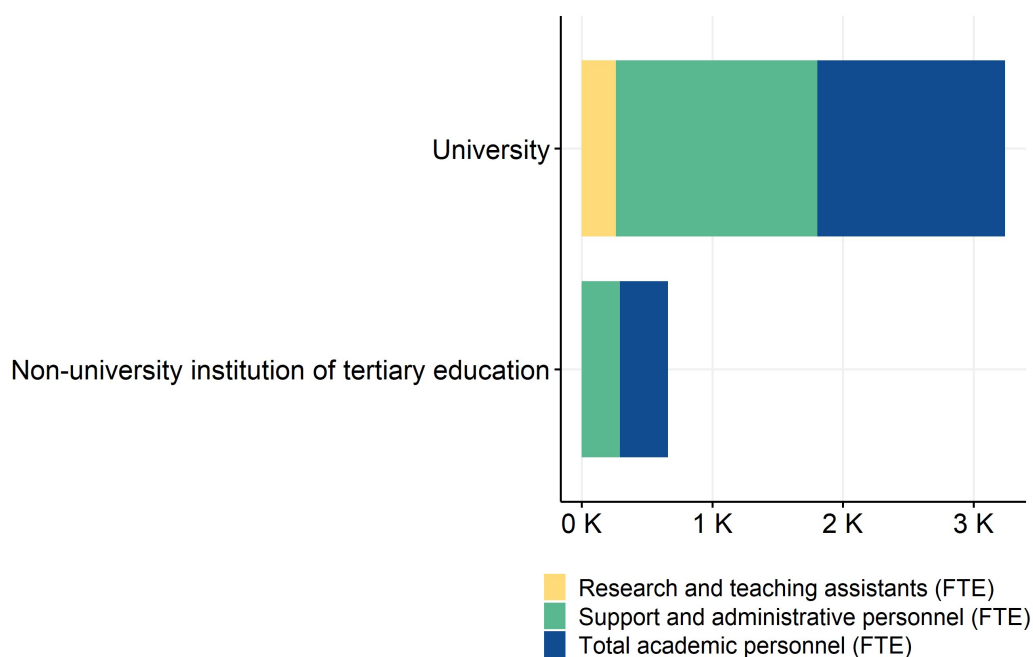
Note: Total students include ISCED 6-7

Personnel

People are a core resource for HEIs, as their competences are essential for teaching, undertaking research and producing scientific output. In that respect, ETER provides a rich set of data moving beyond the information available in EUROSTAT, which allows to analyse the composition of personnel by type of HEI and characteristics such as gender, nationality, educational field and, from 2020 onwards, levels of seniority.

As shown by Figure 3, there are major differences between HEIs in size, as measured by total personnel in full time equivalents (FTE), and in the personnel composition. With an average of about 400 FTEs, the eight Universities on average about ten times larger as the Non-university institutions of tertiary education. These differences reflect distinct levels of engagement in research and in education. As of the personnel composition, the share of administrative and technical personnel is similar by type of HEIs between 43% and 47%, while only universities employ research and teaching assistants (RTAs). This category is mostly composed by PhD and master students supporting research and teaching activities; RTAs comprise 8% of personnel in Universities, reflecting the different extent of research and the fact that most Non-university institutions cannot award PhDs.

Figure 3. Personnel (FTE) by category and type of HEI, 2020

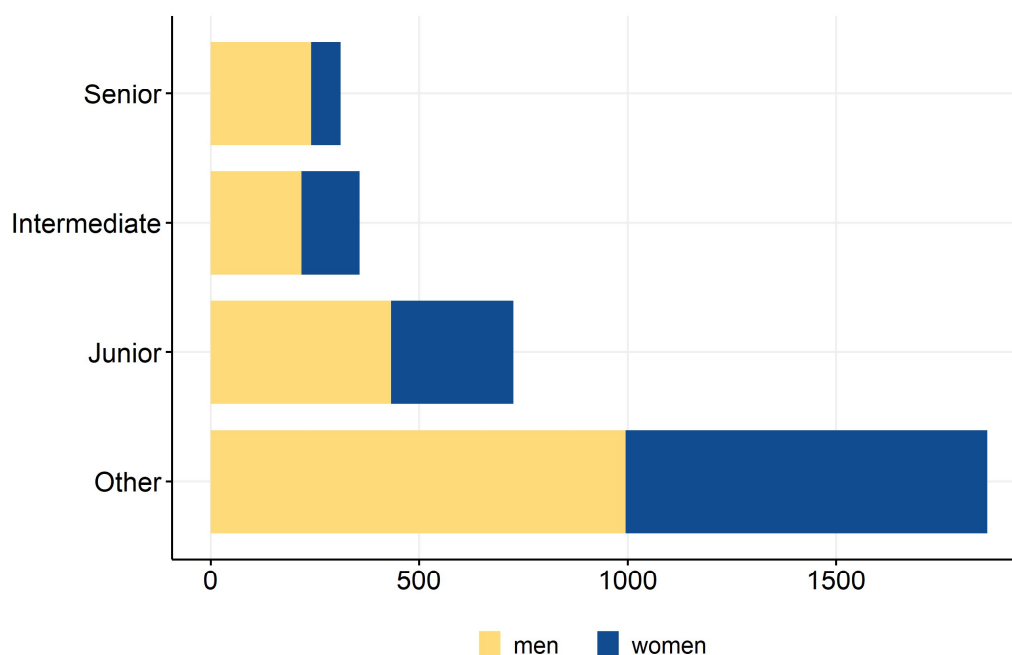


Since the data collection 2020, ETER also includes information on academic staff seniority level based on a classification jointly developed by OECD and EUROSTAT². Combined with information on gender, this information allows measuring two critical issues, i.e. career prospects of academic staff and the so-called leaky pipeline, i.e. the fact that the share of female academic staff decreases systematically with seniority levels.

As of Cyprus, data show a steep hierarchy, with only 10% of academic personnel at the senior level. A reasonable gender balance has been achieved for junior personnel, but only 23% of senior-level academic personnel are female (see Figure 4).

² OECD (2022), Education at a Glance, Paris, pp. 412-413.

Figure 4. Academic personnel by seniority level and gender (HC), 2020

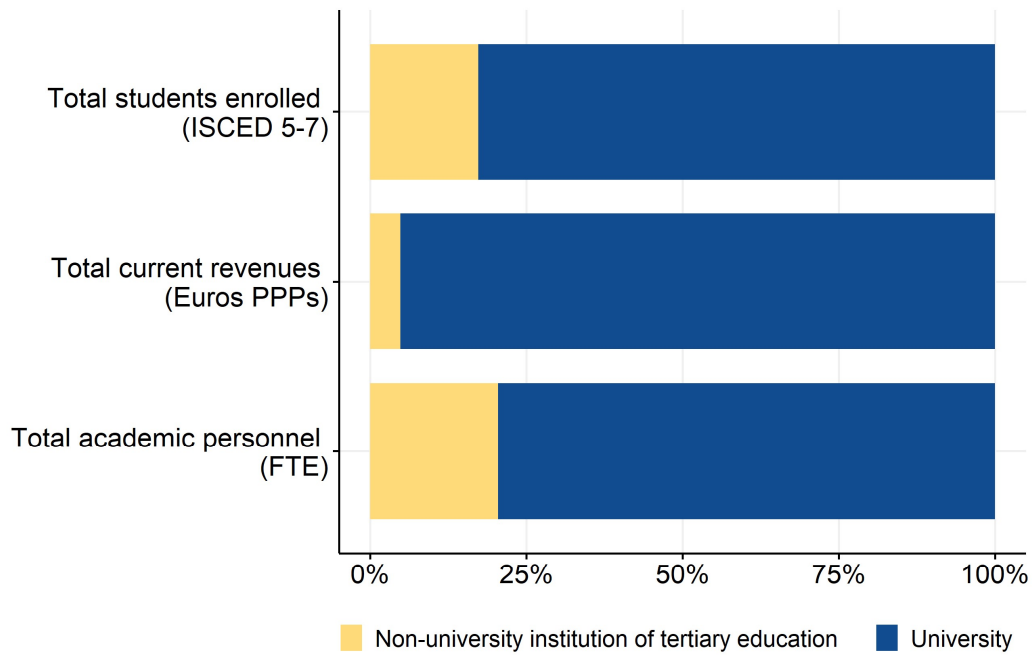


Financial resources

As illustrated in Figure 5, in the year 2020, Universities accounted for more than 80% of academic personnel of the whole HEI system, i.e., more than their share of students. This broadly corresponds to the fact that Universities also have an important research function.

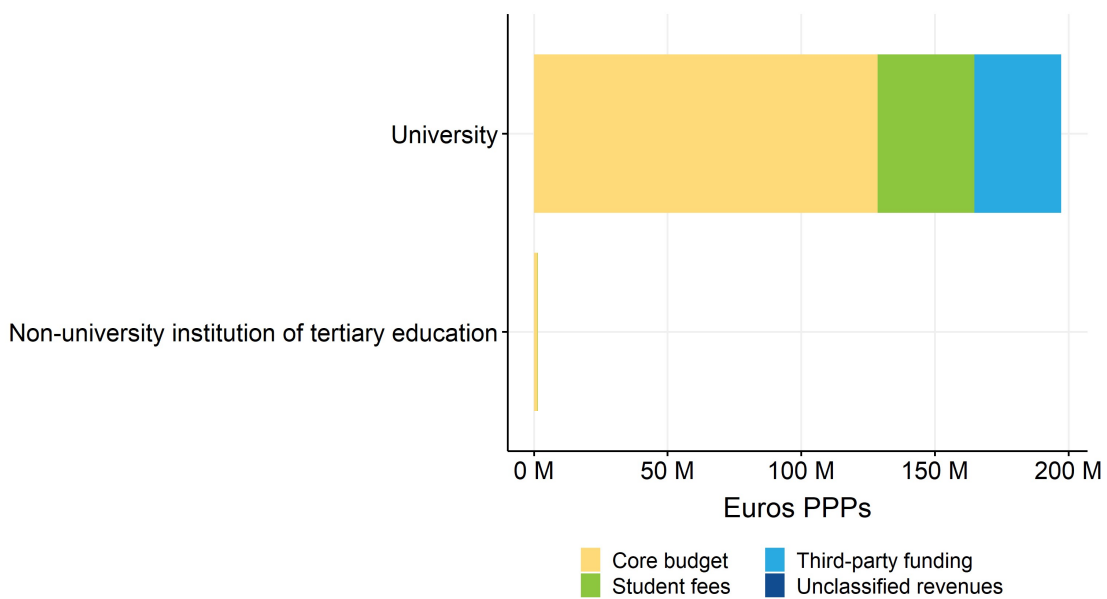
While data on revenues is only available for public institutions this research function of Universities is also reflected in the highest share in total revenues of Universities of all public HEI institutions and in the composition of revenues, where public Universities receive a larger proportion of revenues from (research-related) third-party funds compared to public Non-university type institutions of higher education. Overall, state allocation remains dominant for all public institution types in Cyprus. While student fees play an important role for private institutions, data is not available for these institutions.

Figure 5. Resources, academic personnel and total students enrolled by type of HEI, 2020



Note: Data for total current revenues is missing for the University of Nicosia and seven non-university institutions of tertiary education

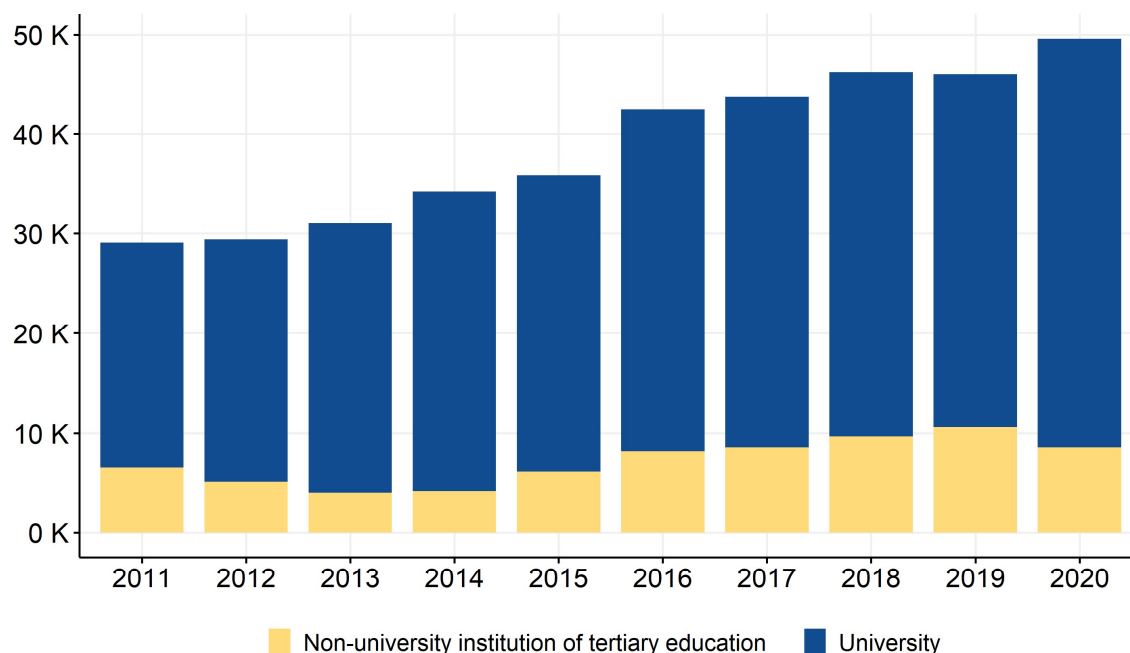
Figure 6. Composition of resources of public institutions by type of HEI, 2020



Changing roles over time

Overall, the number of enrolled students increased by about 70% from 2011 to 2020. This increase was with 81% for Universities higher as for Non-university institutions of tertiary education (+33%). While private Universities and Non-university institutions of tertiary education doubled their number of students in this time period, enrolment in public HEIs only slightly increased (not displayed). As a result, the share of private institutions on total enrolment increased from about 62% in 2011 to 74% in 2020.

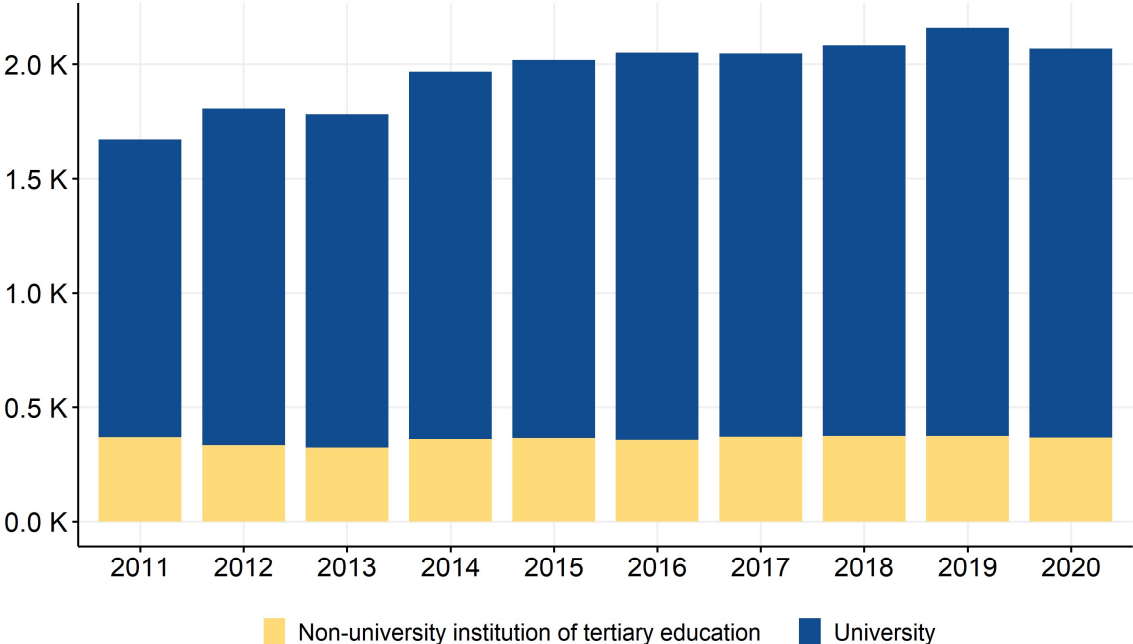
Figure 7. Share of students enrolled by HEI type, 2011-2020



Note: Data for the Open University of Cyprus is missing for 2019.

As shown by **Error! Reference source not found.**, with an increase of only 8% from 2011 to 2020, the number of academic personnel (FTE) in Cyprus HEIs did not keep pace with the increase in the number of students. The growing importance of private HEIs observed in term of student enrollment is not fully reflected in personnel data, in 2020 still 46% of academic personnel was employed by public Universities or public Non-university institutions of tertiary education (not displayed).

Figure 8. Academic personnel (FTE) by HEI type, 2011-2020



Note: To keep consistency, the figure includes teaching and research assistants since these were included in academic personnel until 2019.



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