



## Lithuania

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Lithuania, 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 Eurydice<sup>1</sup>, the Lithuanian higher education system comprises two types of higher education institutions: **universities** and **colleges** and these may be state or non-state institutions. A state institution of higher education is a public legal entity functioning as a public establishment, possessing autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, and the special status defined by this and other relevant laws of the Republic of Lithuania. A non-state higher education institution is a public legal entity functioning as a public establishment or a private legal entity.

**Universities** provide university-level study programmes, conduct scientific research, and pursue experimental (social, cultural) development and (or) high-level professional art. The name of a higher education institution engaged in those activities must contain the word 'university' or 'academy' or 'seminary'.

**Colleges** deliver college-level studies, conduct applied scientific research and/or develop professional art. The name of a higher education institution engaged in such activities must contain the word 'college' or 'higher education institution'.

---

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

## 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. Universities (*Universitetas*) are mostly public institutions and, with one exception, have the right to award PhDs. In total, almost half of all Lithuanian HEIs are universities and equivalent institutions. The remaining HEIs in Lithuania are colleges (*Kolegija*), which are also mostly public but do not award PhDs. Overall, 1/3 of the Lithuanian HEIs are private.

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

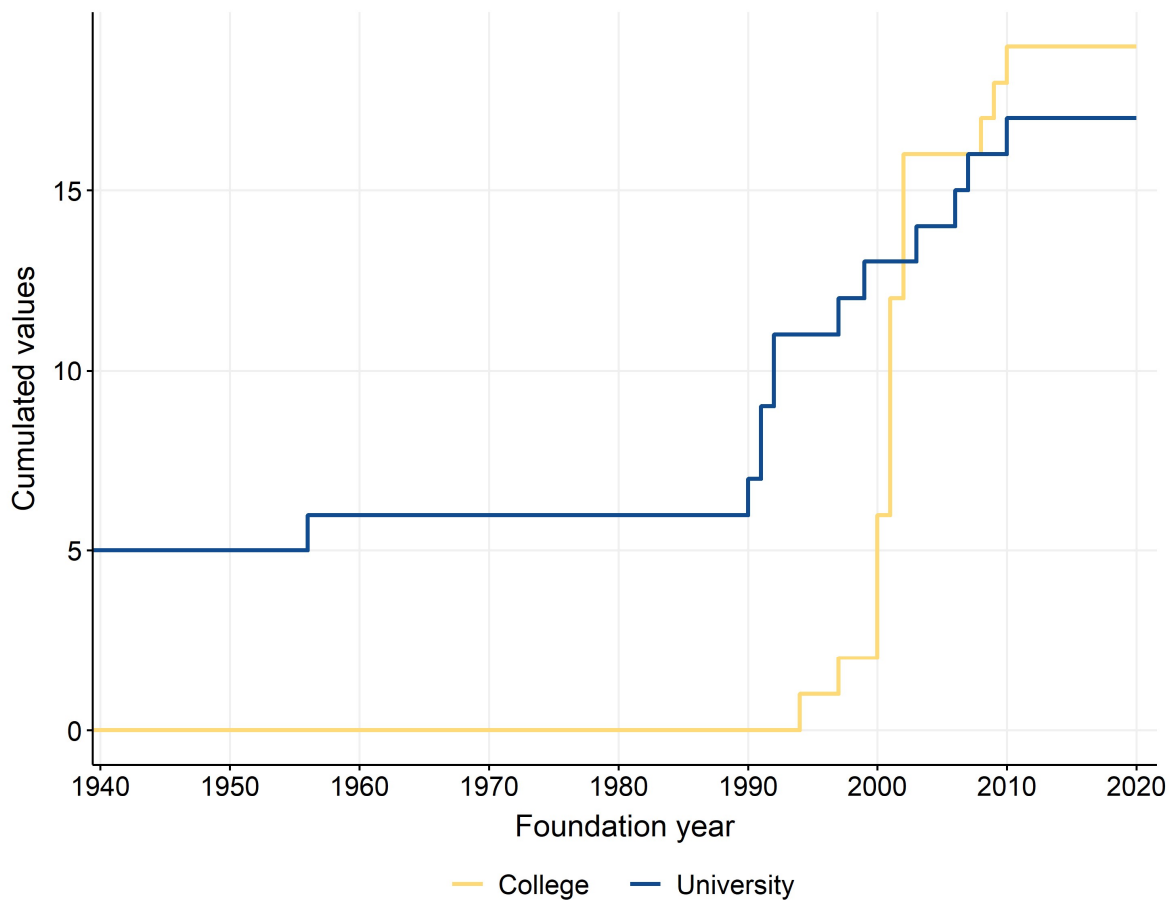
Category		N	Public	Private	PhD awarding
College	Kolegija	19	12	7	0
University	Universitetas	17	12	5	16
Total		36	24	12	16

## Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

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

Figure 1 below shows that, despite ancient historical roots, the expansion of the system in terms of the number of HEIs is relatively recent. While the Vilnius University, the oldest Lithuanian university, dates back to 1579 and the Vilnius Art Academy was founded in 1703, no other HEI was founded before the 20th century. Overall, however, Lithuanian HEIs are much younger; only three universities (1922 Kaunas University of Technology and Vytautas Magnus University, 1934 Lithuanian Sports University) were founded before World War II and only the Vilnius Gediminas Technical University was founded between World War II and 1956, followed by a long period without any foundation from the 1960s to the 1980s. The figure therefore shows a distinct, relative recent, pattern of expansion in terms of the number of HEIs. This expansion included the foundation of 10 out of the 17 universities between 1990 and 2010 and all the 19 colleges. This expansion stopped in 2010 with the last foundation of an HEI in Lithuania being in 2010 (Lithuanian University of Health Sciences).

Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type

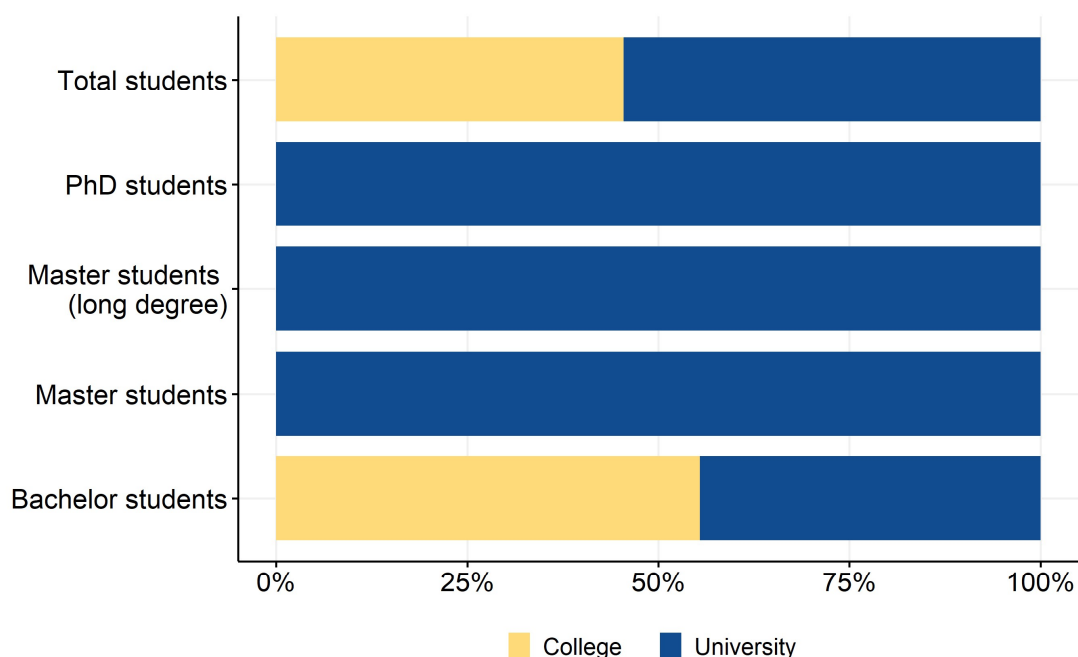


## Students

In contrast to the number of institutions, in terms of the number of students enrolled, universities still account for 55% of all students and colleges (*Kolegija*) for the remaining 45% (see Figure 2). While one out of three Lithuanian HEIs in ETER is private, these institutions enrol only about 16% of the students and, therefore, play a limited role in the national higher education system.

According to different institutional mandates, we also observe systematic differences between educational levels: Colleges account for about half of the bachelor students, while doctorates and master degrees' enrolments are within the remit of Universities

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



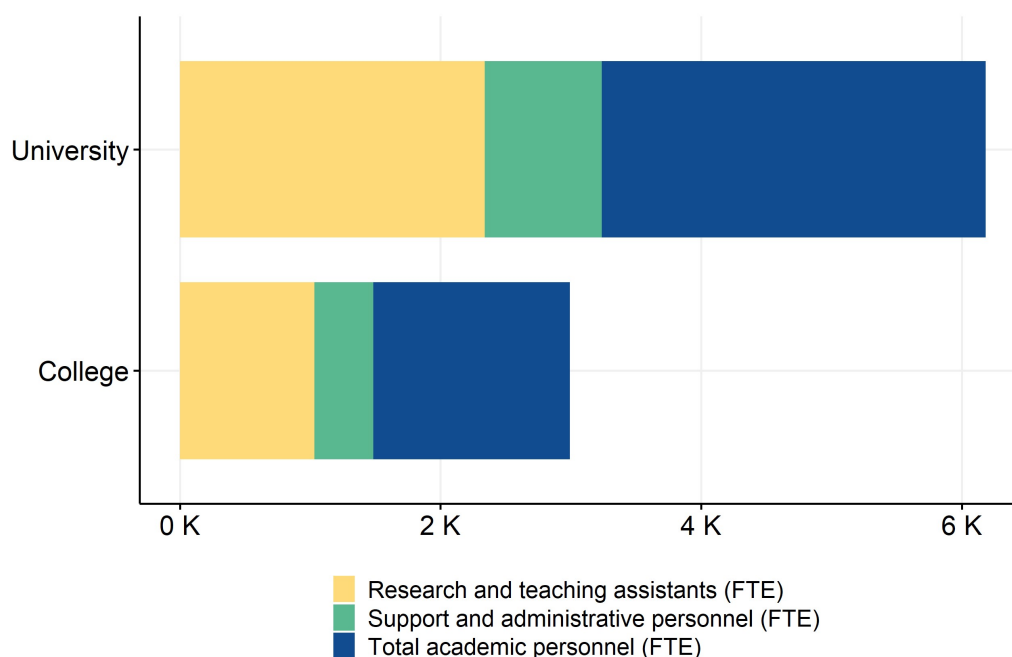
Note: Total students include ISCED 5-7. Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing

## 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 2, 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 700 FTEs Universities are significantly larger than Colleges (average 200 FTE). Universities therefore account for about 2/3 of HEI personnel in Lithuania. These differences reflect also different levels of engagement in research and in education. As of the personnel composition, the share of administrative and technical personnel is similar for Universities and Colleges with about 15%, while there are some variations in the share of research and teaching assistants (RTAs). This category is mostly composed by PhD and master students supporting research and teaching activities. RTAs comprise 38% of personnel in Universities and 35% in Colleges, reflecting the different extent of research and the fact that the latter institutions cannot award PhDs.

Figure 2. Personnel (FTE) by category and type of HEI, 2020



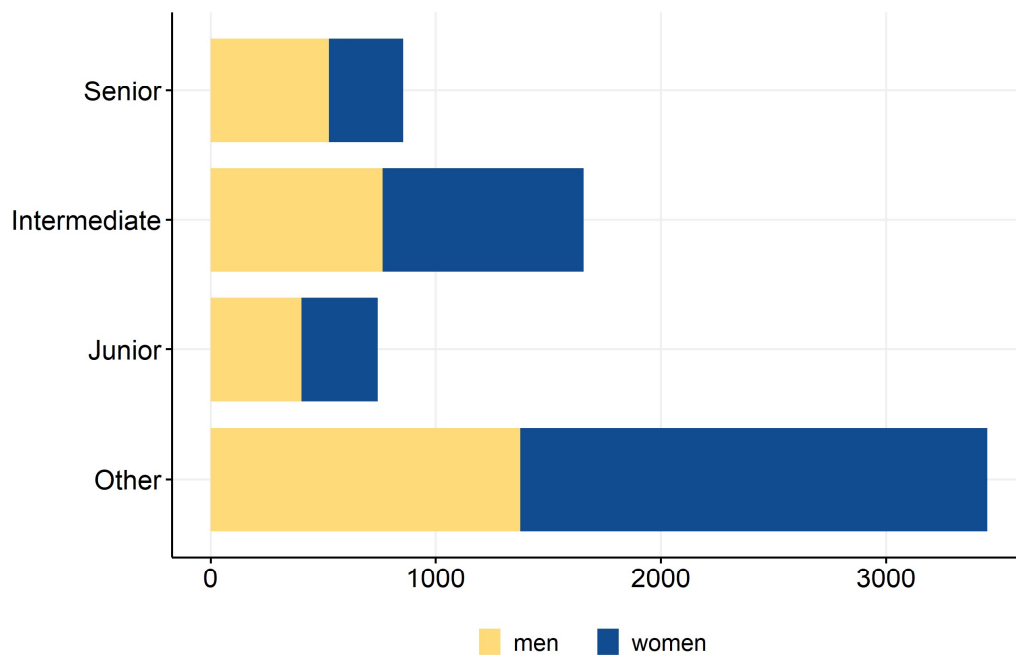
Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing

Since the data collection 2020, ETER also includes information on academic staff seniority level based on a classification jointly developed by OECD and EUROSTAT<sup>2</sup>. 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 Lithuania (see Figure 3) data show a moderately steep hierarchy, with a similar number of academic personnel at the junior level and at the senior level; a reasonable gender balance has been achieved for all seniority levels, ranging from a share of 39% female personnel at the senior level up to 54% at the intermediate level (see Figure 3).

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

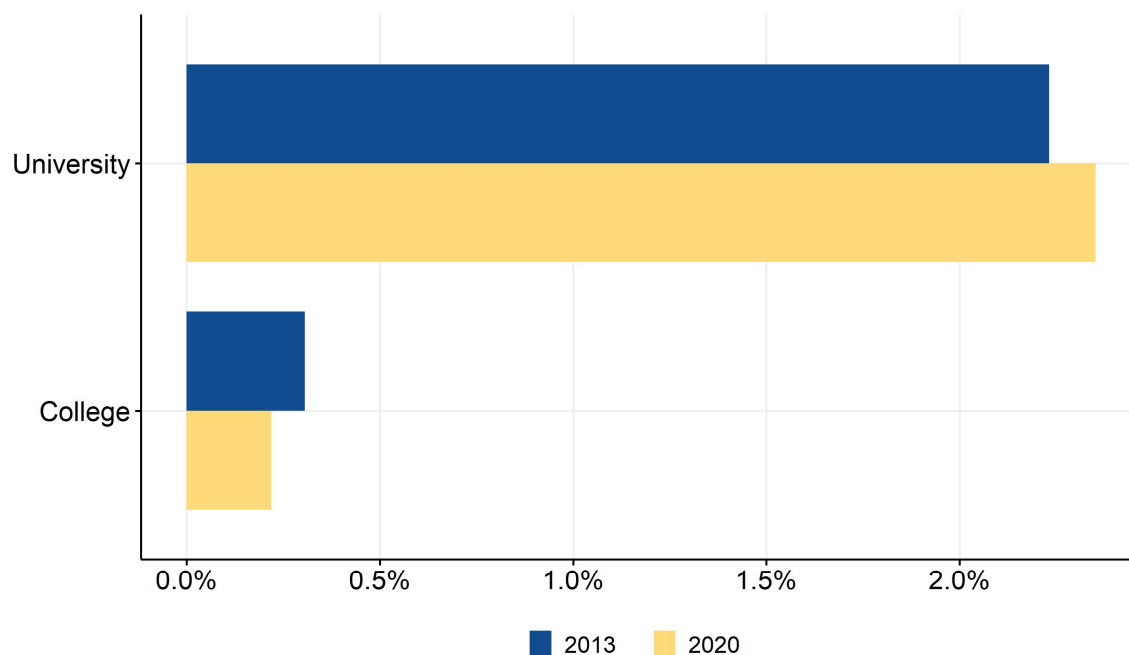
Figure 3. Academic personnel by seniority level and gender (HC), 2020



*Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing*

A final important dimension is internationality since it is generally considered as beneficial for the quality of research and education. In ETER, this is measured by the share of academic personnel not having the citizenship of the country ('foreigners'). As shown by Figure 4, the Lithuanian higher education is characterized by a very low level of internationality with less than 2% of foreign academic personnel. In Universities, just over 2% of academic personnel are foreign, while this share drops to below 1% in Colleges. This low level of internationalization did not change since 2013.

Figure 4. Share of foreign academic personnel (HC) by type of HEI, 2011 and 2020



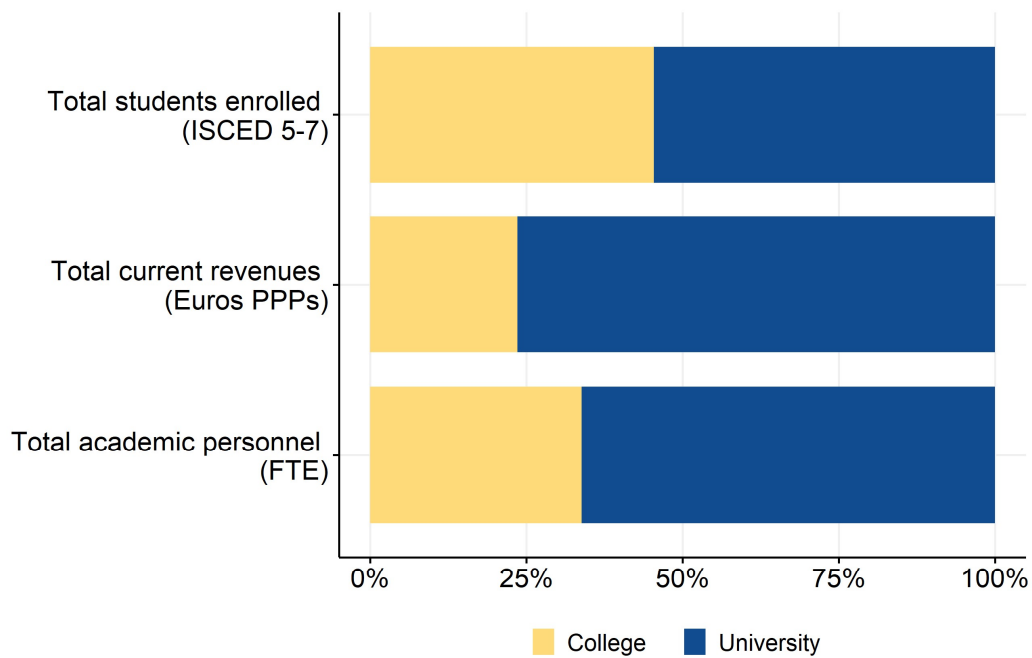
Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing

## Financial resources

As illustrated in Figure 6, in the year 2020, Universities account for more than 80% of financial revenues and more than 75% of academic personnel of the whole HEI system, i.e., substantially more than their share of students. This broadly corresponds to the fact that Universities also have an important research function. This difference is also reflected in the composition of revenues, where Universities receive a large proportion of revenues from (research-related) third-party funds, contributing over 40% to the total budget for these institutions. Student fees also play a role in Lithuania and are, with a share of 28% of the total budget, more relevant for Colleges than for Universities (16%).

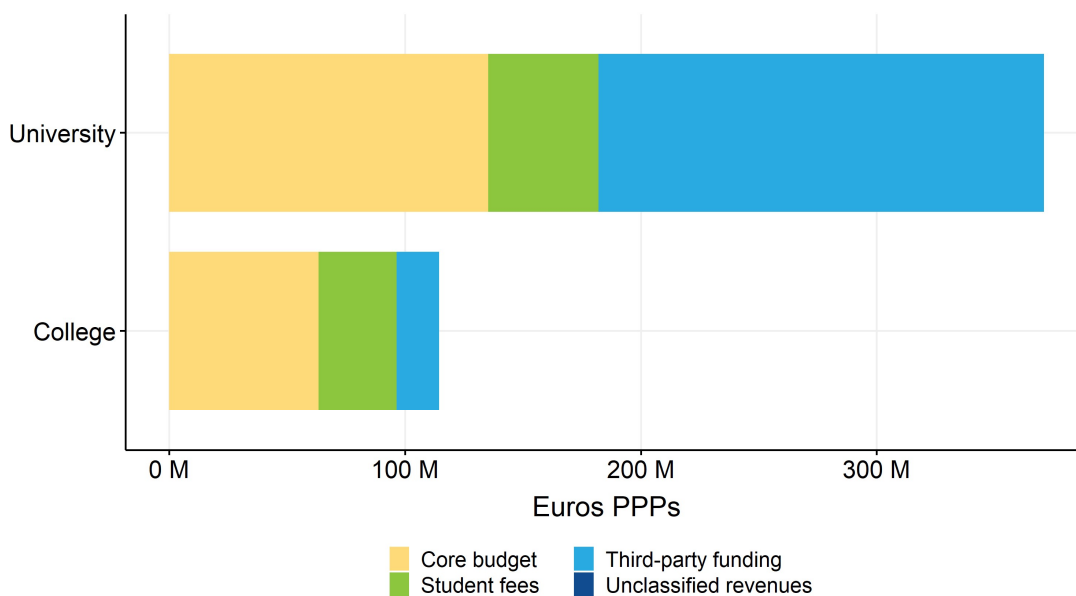


Figure 6. Resources, academic personnel, and total students enrolled by type of HEI, 2020



Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing

Figure 7. Composition of resources by type of HEI, 2020

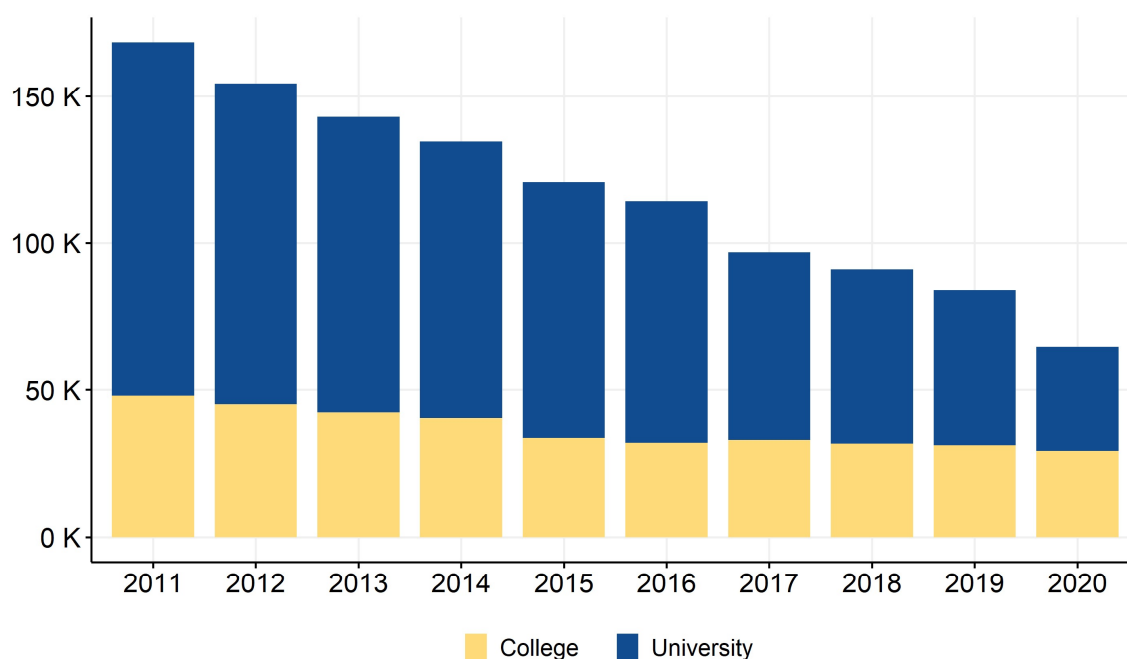


Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and some smaller HEIs missing

## Changing roles over time

When observed through the lens of the number of students, data show a decreasing pattern, with the number of enrolled students halving from 2011 to 2020. This decrease is mainly related to the Lithuanian demographic situation. However, while also for Colleges the absolute number of students declined by about one third between 2011 and 2015, the student numbers of Colleges recently stabilized and in turn the share of Colleges increased from 28% to 37% of the total students enrolled until 2019 (data for 2020 is missing for two Universities).

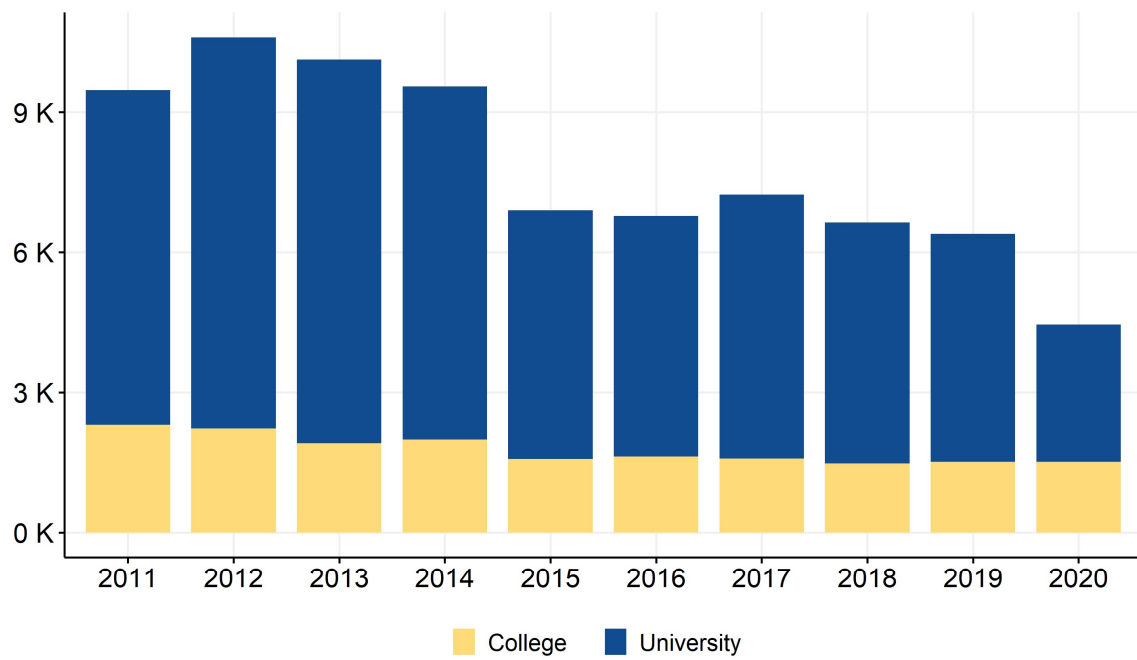
Figure 8. Students enrolled by type of HEI, 2011-2020



Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology and the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences missing in 2020

As shown by Figure 5, with a decrease of 33% from 2011 to 2019 (data for 2020 incomplete), the number of academic personnel (FTE) in Lithuania HEIs decreased less than the number of students. Like for students, the decrease of academic personnel stopped for Colleges in 2015 while the trend continued for Universities.

Figure 5. Academic personnel (FTE) by type of HEI, 2011-2020



Note: Data for Kaunas University of Technology and the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences missing in 2020



[twitter.com/eter\\_eu](https://twitter.com/eter_eu)



[www.eter-project.eu](http://www.eter-project.eu)



[eter@eter-project.eu](mailto:eter@eter-project.eu)



Università  
della  
Svizzera  
italiana

JOANNEUM  
RESEARCH  
POLICIES



AIT

AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY

NIFU

Nordisk institutt for studier av  
innovasjon, forskning og utdanning



SAPIENZA  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA