



Latvia

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Latvia, 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, in Latvia, tertiary education programmes are provided by:

- University type institutions of Higher education (*augstskola*),
- Non-university type institutions of *augstskola* (includes State institution of higher education and juridical persons established institution of higher education)
- *Koledža* (College)

The Law on Higher Education Institutions makes distinction between university-type and non-university-type institutions. While non-university-type institutions run professional programmes, universities often offer both academic and professional programmes. The law defines four determining criteria for a university status:

- implementation of bachelor, master and doctor study programmes; assertion of doctoral thesis occurs annually,
- at least half of persons elected in academic posts hold a doctor's degree,
- institution issues scientific publications and
- establishes scientific institutions or units in the main scientific disciplines corresponding to the implemented study programmes.

Koledža may function under higher educational institution and also as an independent institution. State Colleges provide first-level higher professional education considered as the first phase of the second-level professional higher education programmes offered by a higher education institution. There are public and private (i.e. established by legal persons as defined by the legislation) 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. State universities (*Valsts universitātes tipa augstskola*) are all public institutions and have the right to award PhDs. In total, about 15% of all Latvian HEIs are State Universities and equivalent institutions. State colleges (*Valsts koledža*) account for the majority of all HEIs in Latvia but do not award PhDs. While out of the ten Public non-

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

university type HEIs (*Valsts neuniversitates tipa augstskola*) eight are PhD-awarding, only seven of the ten Private non-university type HEIs (*Juridiskas personas dibinata neuniversitates tipa augstskola*) have the right to award PhDs. The four Private colleges (*Juridiskas personas dibinata koledža*) are all non PhD awarding.

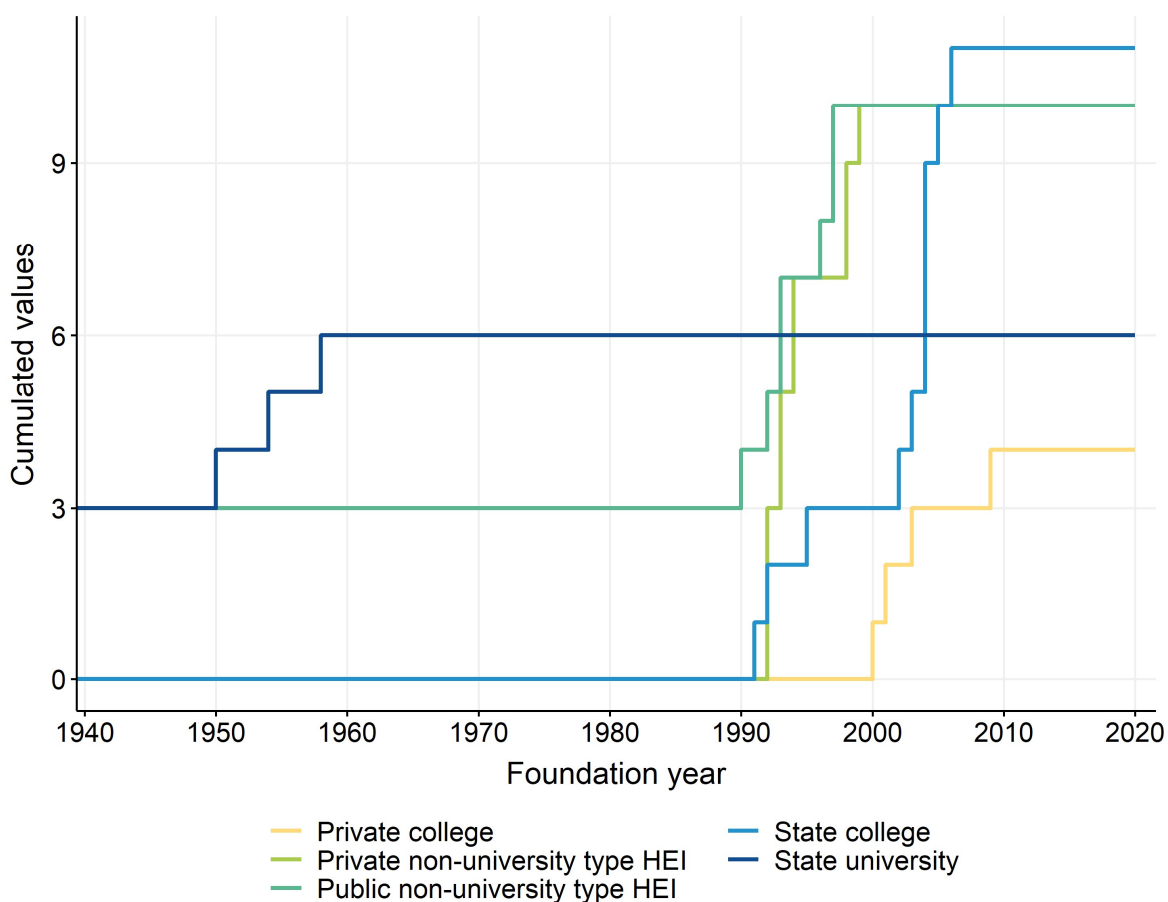
Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2020

Category		N	Public	Private	PhD awarding
State university	Valsts universitates tipa augstskola	6	6	0	6
State college	Valsts koledža	11	11	0	0
Private college	Juridiskas personas dibinata koledža	4	0	4	0
Private non-university type HEI	Juridiskas personas dibinata neuniversitates tipa augstskola	10	0	10	7
Public non-university type HEI	Valsts neuniversitates tipa augstskola	10	10	0	8
Total		41	27	14	21

Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of Latvia's higher education and its evolution over time. Figure 1 overleaf shows that the oldest Latvian HEIs were State universities and Public non-university type HEIs. In more detail, they date back to 1919 when the University of Latvia, the Art Academy of Latvia and the Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music were founded. In the 1940s there was an equal share of these two types of HEI. However, State universities experienced an increase from three to a total of six institutions in the 1950s. The number of Public non-university type HEIs only increased in the 1990s, when Latvia experienced a large period of expansion. In addition to State universities and Public non-university type HEIs, State colleges and Private non-university type HEIs were founded in that period of time. Moreover, Private colleges were established starting in 2000. Until 2010, the number of these newly founded HEIs increased steadily. Since then the number of HEIs in Latvia has been stable.

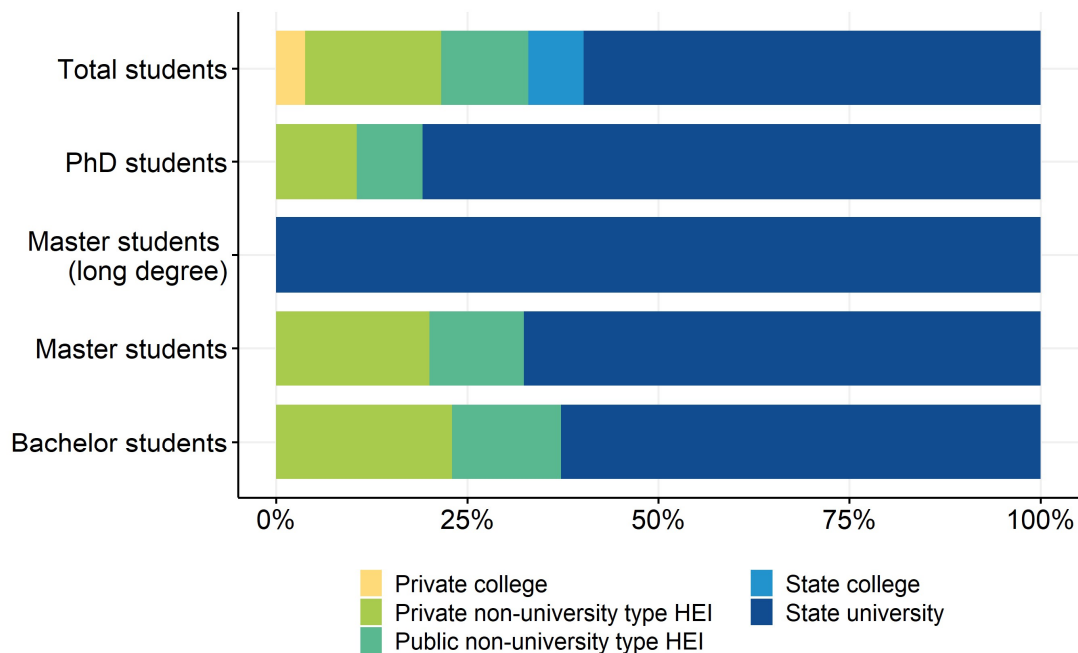
Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type



Students

In contrast to the number of institutions, State universities account with almost 60% for the majority of all students, followed by Private non-university type HEIs with a share of around 18% and Public non-university type HEIs with 11% (see Figure 2). The two remaining categories combined account for about 11% of total students. According to different institutional mandates, we also observe systematic differences between educational levels. Overall, State universities account for the majority of Bachelor, Master and PhD students. Furthermore, they are the only HEI offering long Master's degrees (without an intermediate Bachelor's degree). In general, the higher the degree, the more important State universities become. Private non-university type HEIs are the second most important institutions in terms of the number of Bachelor and Master students enrolled accounting for around 23% and 20% respectively. While around 14% of all Bachelor students are enrolled in Public non-university type HEIs, the number decreases to 12% for Master students attending this type of institution. While more than 80% of all PhD students attend State universities, the rest is distributed between Private and Public non-university type HEIs. Data by educational level for State and Private Colleges is missing.

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

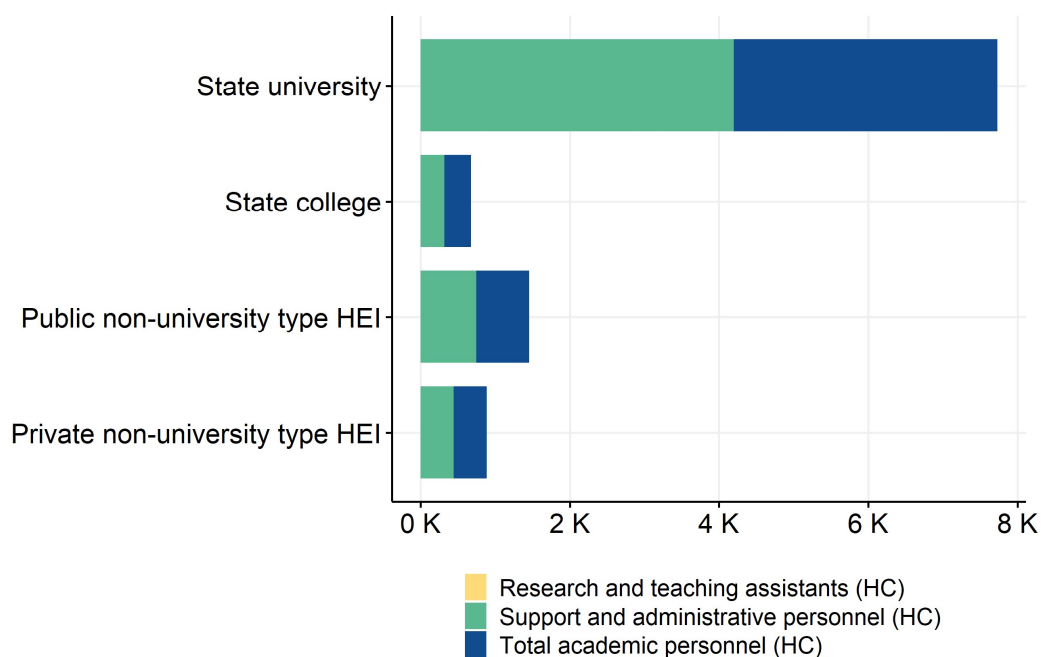


Note: Total students include ISCED 5-7, Data by educational level for Private and State colleges is missing

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 in Figure 3, State universities are by far the largest in size measured by total personnel in head counts (HC). They are followed by Public non-university type HEIs, Private non-university type HEIs and State colleges. Examining the personnel composition, while around half of total personnel are total academic personnel, the other half are support and administrative personnel. This holds true for all types of HEI. Interestingly, there are no research and teaching assistants in any HEI type.

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



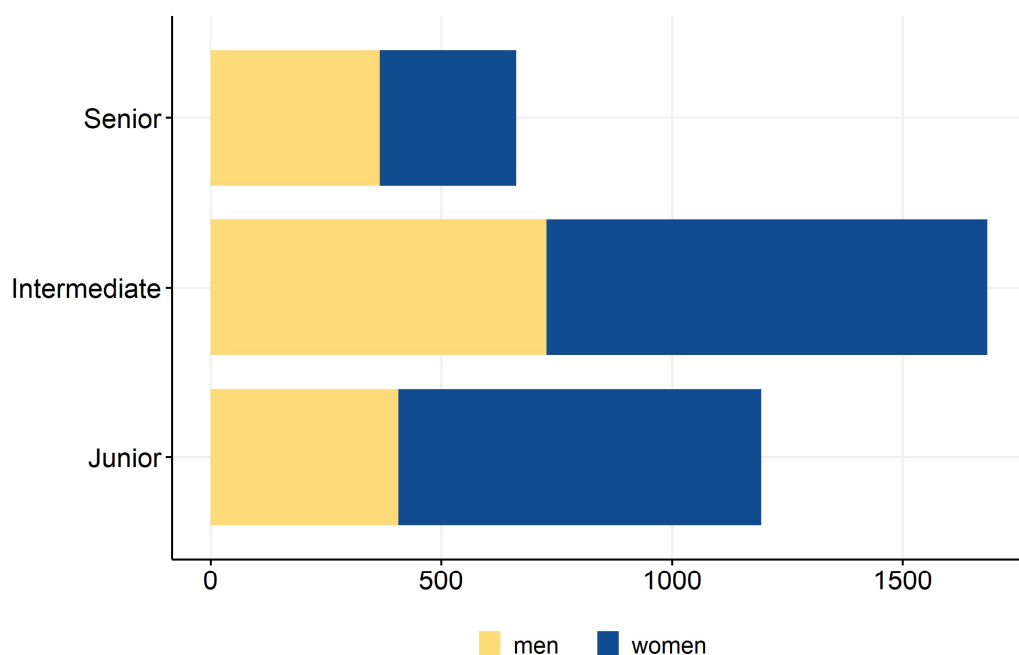
Note: No data on research and teaching assistants available for Latvia

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 Latvia most academic personnel is at the intermediate level (around 48%), followed by personnel at the junior level (around 34%). Only 18% of total personnel at the senior level. Figure 4 also shows some evidence for the leaky pipeline. Interestingly however, already around 45% of academic personnel at the senior level is female. For the intermediate and junior level there are even more women than men employed.

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

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

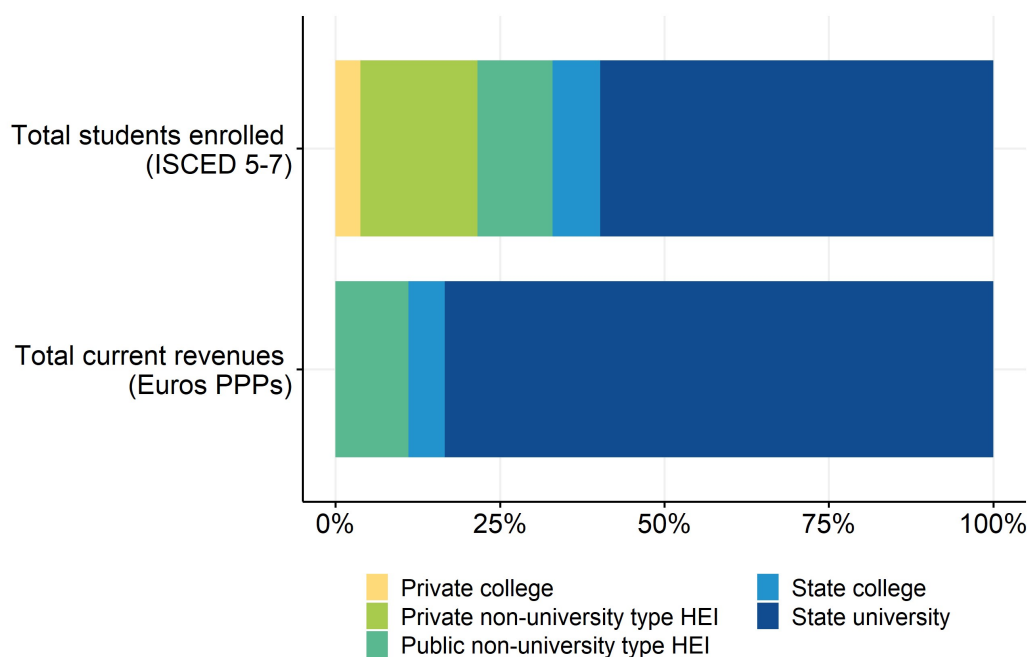


Note: Unclassified personnel is not included in figure

Financial resources

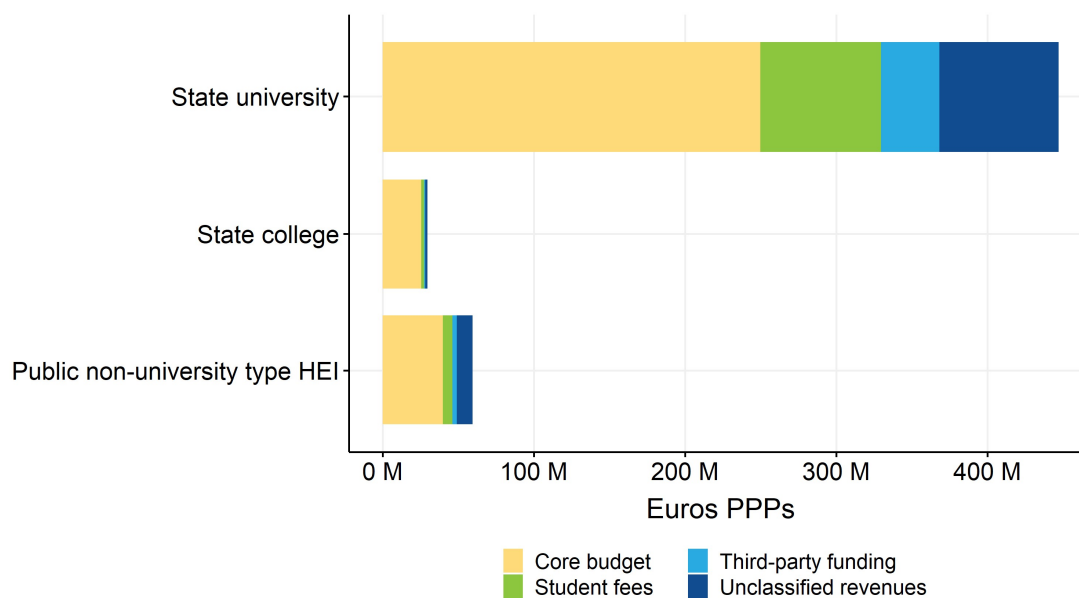
As illustrated by Figure 5, in the year 2019, State Universities account for more than 75% of financial revenues i.e., substantially more than their share of students. In contrast, the share of financial revenues for State colleges and Public non-university type HEI largely corresponds to their share of students enrolled. Figure 6 shows the composition of resources for State universities and Public non-university type HEIs. Overall, state allocation is dominant for these two institutional types in Latvia. While for State universities student fees play a more important role than third-party funding, Public non-university type HEIs do not receive any third-party funding and only a minor share is received from student fees.

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



Note: Data for private colleges and private non-university type HEI is missing

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

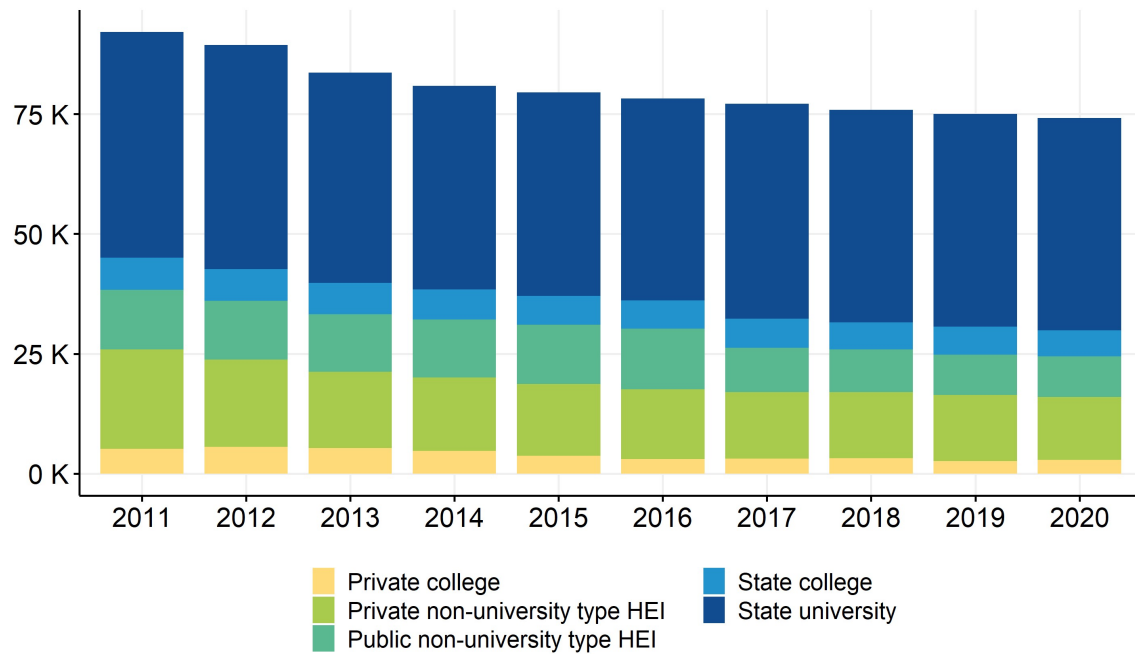


Changing roles over time

When observed through the lens of the number of students, data show a pattern of decrease with the number of enrolled students decreasing by around 16% from 2011 to 2020. This decline in the number of students was

largest for Private Colleges falling by almost 53% and smallest for State universities decreasing only by around 5%.

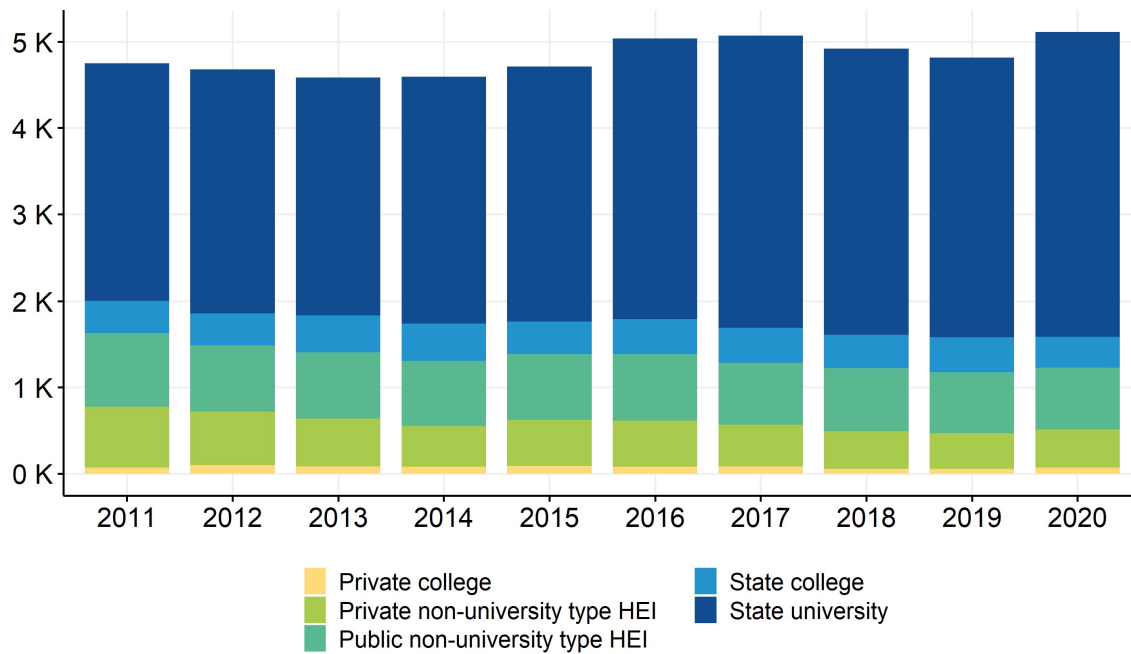
Figure 7. Students enrolled by type of HEI, 2011-2020



As shown in Figure 8, the number of total academic personnel measured in head counts (HC) increased between 2011 and 2020 from 4807 to 5111 employees. However, the growth is not continuous. Between 2011 and 2014 as well as between 2017 and 2019 we even see a slight decrease in the total number of academic personnel. Furthermore, there are quite some differences between the different types of HEI. While the number of academic personnel in State universities increased between 2011 and 2020, it even decreased for the other

four categories. Private non-university type HEIs show the largest drop in academic personnel from 719 to 448 employees.

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





twitter.com/eter_eu



www.eter-project.eu



eter@eter-project.eu



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SAPIENZA
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