



BRIEF MIGRATION PROFILE

# FOREIGN STUDENTS IN GEORGIA

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The content of the publication does not reflect the views of the European Union and the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<a href="#"><u>COVID-19</u></a>	Coronavirus disease - 19
<a href="#"><u>EMIS</u></a>	Education Management Information System
<a href="#"><u>Eurostudent Survey</u></a>	The main findings of the national survey – “Eurostudent VII (2019-2021)”
<a href="#"><u>GDP</u></a>	Gross Domestic Product
<a href="#"><u>HEI</u></a>	Higher Educational Institution
<a href="#"><u>LEPL</u></a>	Legal Entity of Public Law
<a href="#"><u>MES</u></a>	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
<a href="#"><u>PMC</u></a>	“PMC” Research Center
<a href="#"><u>PSDA</u></a>	Public Service Development Agency
<a href="#"><u>SCMI/Commission</u></a>	State Commission on Migration Issues
<a href="#"><u>UMAS</u></a>	Unified Migration Data Analytical System
<a href="#"><u>USA</u></a>	United States of America

## Introduction

Since 2015, the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI / Commission) has been producing so-called *Medium (MMP) and Brief Migration Profiles (BMP)*, with the main purpose to provide different types of readers with updated information on key migration trends in order to facilitate the work of researchers and academia interested in this field, as well as to use it for evidence-based migration policy planning and its implementation.

*The BMP* is a logical extension of the *MMP*. However, in contrast to the *Medium*, the *Brief Profile* focuses on only one aspect of migration processes and describes it through data visualization, which simplifies the reader's perception of the data and gives an opportunity for its better analysis and interpretation.

The present, i.e. fifth *BMP* is dedicated to the analysis of the impact of foreign students on the Georgian higher education system and economy. The *BMP* on the above-mentioned topic was prepared for the first time in 2017<sup>1</sup> and, due to the relevance of the topic, it was decided to produce/update the document again. Therefore, it builds on the preceding edition.

The growing number of foreign students has a significant impact on the internationalization of the higher education system and the development of the quality of education, as well as on the country's economy. Internationalization of higher education and ensuring access to quality higher education is one of the important directions of the *Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia*<sup>2</sup>. Besides, promotion of international mobility in the field of higher education and science is one of the priorities of the 2021-2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia<sup>3</sup>.

The *BMP* aims to analyze the statistical data on foreign students in Georgia for the 2017-2021 academic years<sup>4</sup> and to evaluate the role of foreign students as important actors in the country's economy and higher education system.

The document is mainly based on the statistical data of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA), the report of the Unified Migration Data Analytical System (UMAS), the findings of research of "PMC" Research Center (PMC) and the results of *Eurostudent* international research. Also, on various analytical reports.

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<sup>1</sup> BMP-2017, "Foreign Students in Georgia", [https://migration.commission.ge/files/migraciis\\_profil\\_i\\_a5\\_eng.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/migraciis_profil_i_a5_eng.pdf) (accessed: 30.9.22).

<sup>2</sup> <https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/2022/2022-2030%20Unified%20National%20Strategy%20of%20Education%20and%20Science.docx> (accessed: 30.9.22).

<sup>3</sup> 2021-2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia. [https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms\\_2021-2030\\_eng\\_08.02.21.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms_2021-2030_eng_08.02.21.pdf) (accessed: 30.9.22).

<sup>4</sup> The data for the academic year is given as of November 1 of the relevant year. e.g., 2017-2018 data is showing the number of foreign students as of November 1, 2017.

## Migration Profile Reader's Guide

*The Migration Profile of Georgia* is a complex document which comprises a considerable volume of statistical information collected/processed by various state entities and international organizations that is accompanied by relevant analysis.

The structure of the document is deliberately built on interrelated chapters allowing the reader to follow a continuum and construct a general picture. **Hence, when reading a separate chapter of the Profile it is necessary to reflect on the previous and/or the following chapter and make comprehensive conclusions.**

Furthermore, starting from 2015, the so-called *Medium* and *Brief Migration Profiles* have been designed in the way that enables the reader to trace the linkage between them and make a proper comparative analysis by years.

It is also noteworthy that working on the document is a labor-intensive process and its updating requires certain time resources. Therefore, when making reference to the Migration Profile, the reader should take note of the sources used in the document and the dates they were viewed. This is necessary due to the following:

- a) The data is collected and essentially, describes the situation of the years 2017-2021; respectively, those should not be identified with the present status quo;
- b) Certain data and sources used in the Profile are the subject to frequent update, hence, they might display different / updated information when viewed later.

**Accordingly, referring to the specific data given in the *Migration Profiles* separately/in an isolated manner might lead to wrong conclusion.**

Finally, despite the last years' well-acclaimed practice of visualizations of *Migration Profiles* aimed at simplifying the delivery of information and its comprehension, the reader should apply the same principle when referring to the document s/he uses while treating the narrative text-based Profiles, **i.e., in conjunction with the previous and/or the following chapter and constructing a whole picture.**

This approach will enable the reader make the best use of the information s/he needs and based on that, come to the accurate conclusions.

## Brief Summary / Main Trends

- In the academic years 2017-2021, the number of foreign students in Georgia features increasing dynamics;
- The dynamics of study residence permits issued to foreign citizens were increasing in 2017-2018. It should be noted that the share of study residence permits among the total number of residence permits issued in 2017-2020 was steadily growing and increased from 32% to 45%;
- In 2017-2020, the absolute majority of foreign students in Georgia (92%) study in HEIs of the capital city - Tbilisi. It should be noted that in the mentioned years, in the HEIs of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, the number of foreign students along with their share (from 3% to 5%) among the total number of foreign students increased;
- The majority of foreign students receive higher education in the field of healthcare;<sup>5</sup>;
- Citizens of India (40%) and Azerbaijan (11%) made about a half (51%) of foreign students enrolled in HEIs in 2017-2020;
- The main determining factors for foreign students' decision to study in Georgia are: country's safety, low tuition fee and living expenses;
- The average tuition fee for foreign language educational programs in GEL increases every year;
- The total expenses incurred by foreign students in Georgia (including by their foreign relatives and friends) in the 2020-2021 academic year amounted to 132.4 million USD (411.9 million GEL)<sup>6</sup>, which represented 0.8% of the 2020 gross domestic product (GDP) of Georgia;
- The majority of foreign students do not intend to work in Georgia after completing their studies. For those who want to stay, the language barrier remains the main obstacle to integrate in the labor market.

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<sup>5</sup> The learning fields/directions are defined in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, by the Order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports 10.4.19 69/N "On the approval of the National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier". <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1131547?publication=0> (accessed: 30.9.22).

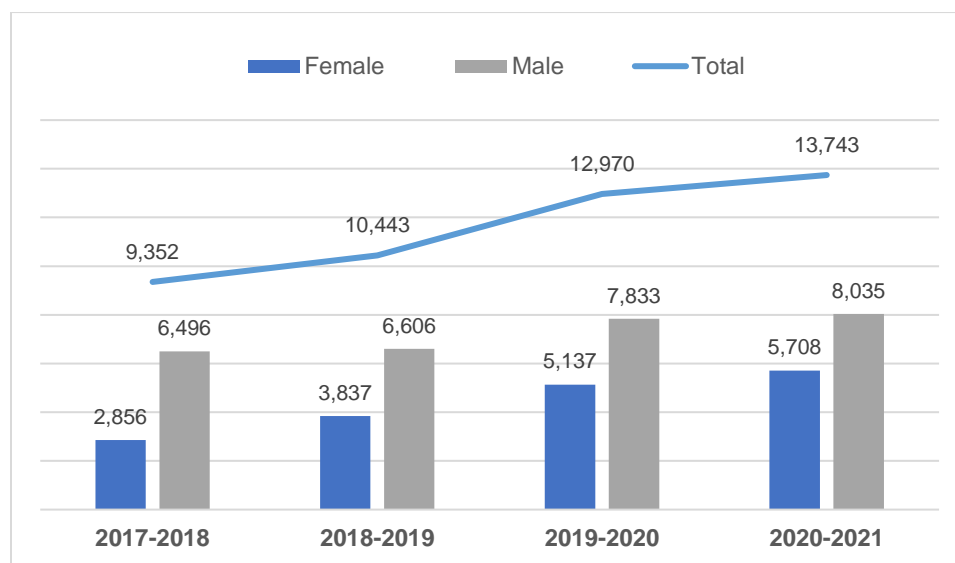
<sup>6</sup> The average exchange rate of 2020, \$1 = 3.1097 GEL, is used for all calculations in the research.

# The Impact of Foreign Students on the Education System of Georgia

## Dynamics of Foreign Students

In the academic years 2017-2021 the total number of foreign students in Georgia features increasing dynamics. The number was on rise even during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic: for the academic year 2020-2021 the total number of foreign students reached 13,743, which is approximately 1.5 times higher than the figure for the academic year 2017-2018.

**Chart N 1 - Total number of foreign students by gender and years**



Source: EMIS

As for the rate of annual enrollment of foreign citizens in HEIs of Georgia, the dynamics was growing until 2018. This was mainly due to the increase in the enrollment of foreign students in One Stage Medical Programs. In 2019-2020, the number of enrolled foreign students slightly decreased, mainly due to the lower enrollments in Bachelor's Degree Programs (compared to 2018, it decreased by almost 43% in 2019)<sup>7</sup>.

**TABLE N 1 - The number of foreign citizens enrolled in HEIs of Georgia by years and levels of education**

Level of Education	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
One Stage Medical Programs	3,968	3,710	3,331	3,256	<b>14,265</b>
Bachelor's Degree	1,243	1,281	735	791	<b>4,050</b>
Master's Degree	172	188	164	182	<b>706</b>
Ph.D.	20	5	6	9	<b>40</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,403</b>	<b>5,184</b>	<b>4,236</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>19,061</b>

Source: 2021 Migration Profile

<sup>7</sup> "2021 Migration Profile of Georgia", SCMI, 2021. [https://migration.commission.ge/files/mmp21\\_eng\\_web3c.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/mmp21_eng_web3c.pdf) (accessed: 30.9.22).



In terms of gender, the majority of foreign students in Georgia in the 2017-2021 academic years were male (see Chart N1). However, the share of male in the total number of foreign students decreases to 58% for the 2020-2021 academic year. By age group, 87% of foreign students fall under the 18-25 age category. This indicator is stable over the years.

In 2017-2018, the number of residence permits issued to foreign students was increasing. However, since 2019 the dynamic reversed and the number hit its lowest point in 2020. This most likely stemmed from the reduced international mobility due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, which resulted in switch to the distance learning model/forms of education.

In 2017-2021, the majority of study residence permits were issued to citizens of India, Iran and Nigeria.

**TABLE N 2** - Number of study residence permits issued to foreign students by citizenship and years

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
<b>India</b>	2,556	4,486	4,068	2,291	1,917	15,318
<b>Iran</b>	145	326	607	456	440	1,974
<b>Nigeria</b>	253	268	321	316	475	1,633
<b>Other</b>	1,183	971	1,036	1,080	2,079	6,349
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,137</b>	<b>6,051</b>	<b>6,032</b>	<b>4,143</b>	<b>4,911</b>	<b>25,274</b>

Source: PSDA

In 2017-2020, the share of study residence permits in the total number of issued residence permits has been steadily increasing: from 32% to 45%.

**TABLE N 3** - The number of study residence permits issued to foreign students and their share in the total number of issued residence permits

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Total number of residence permits issued</b>	19,331	22,583	20,794	13,714	16,985
<b>Study residence permits</b>	6,154	8,069	8,051	6,163	6,932
<b>Share</b>	32%	36%	39%	45%	41%

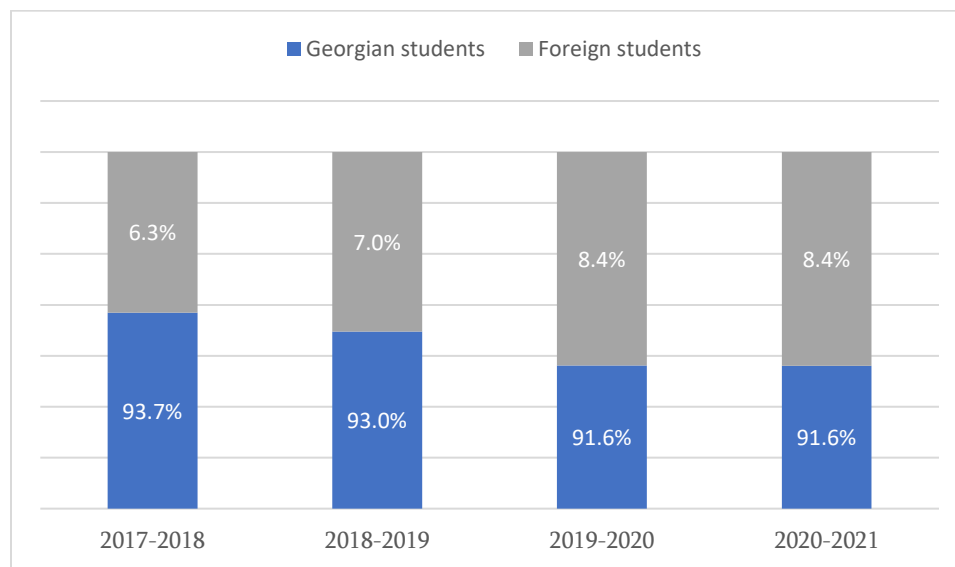
Source: PSDA

According to the data of the Ministry of Education, the majority (92%) of foreign students in Georgia in 2017-2020 studied in HEIs of capital city - Tbilisi. It should be noted that during the period, the number of foreign students, along with their share in total (from 3% to 5%) increased in the HEIs of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

## The share of Foreign Students among the Students Enrolled in Georgian HEIs

The share of foreign students enrolled in Georgian HEIs has steadily increased. In particular, from the 2017-2018 to the 2020-2021 academic year, the share of foreign students increased from 6.3% to 8.4%.

**Chart N 2** - The percentage of foreign and Georgian students enrolled in Georgian HEIs by academic years

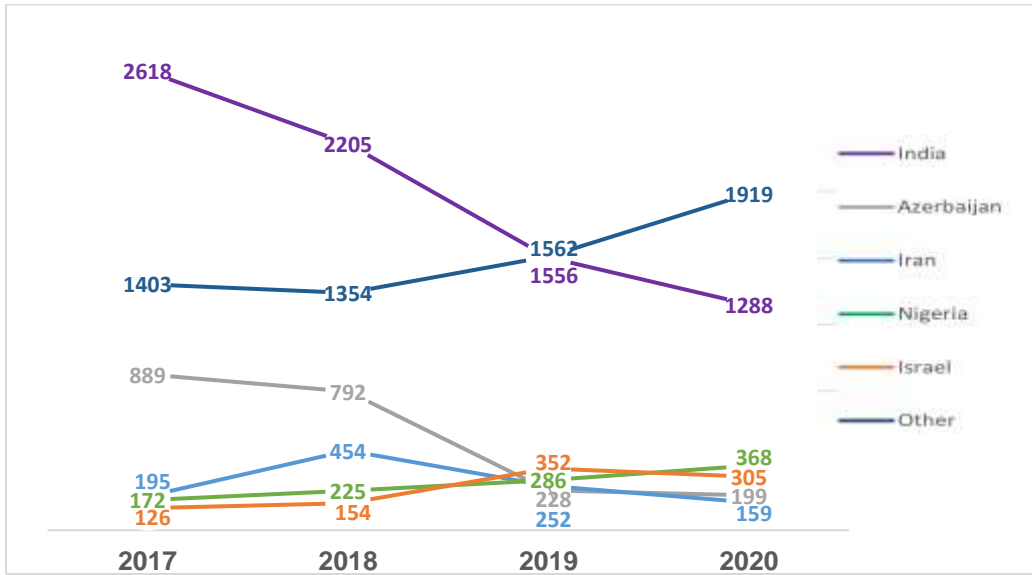


Source: EMIS

## Foreign Students by Citizenship

More than half (51%) of the foreign students enrolled in the academic years 2017-2020 are citizens of India (40%) and Azerbaijan (11%). Year-on-year, there is a noticeable decrease in the number of enrolled students from India and Azerbaijan: compared to 2017, in 2020 the number of enrolled Indian students has almost halved, and the number of enrolled Azerbaijani students has decreased by 3.5 times. Also, it is worth to noting that among the enrolled students, the number of Iranian citizens hiked by 2.5 times in 2018 compared to 2017, although the increase slowed down in subsequent years. An interesting trend can be observed, for example, in relation to United Kingdom: in 2019-2020, the rate of enrollment of students from the mentioned country increased significantly. In particular, compared to 2019, the number of foreign students has almost doubled in 2020.

**Chart N 3 - Foreign student enrollments by citizenship and years**



Source: EMIS

### Distribution of Foreign Students by HEIs

In 2017-2020, 42% of foreign students in Georgia are enrolled in three universities: Tbilisi State Medical University, New Vision University and University of Georgia. The trends are different by years and universities: compared to the 2017-2018 academic year, in 2020-2021, the number of foreign students at New Vision University has increased almost 2.5 times. According to the data, in the 2020-2021 academic year, the largest number of foreign students are enrolled in New Vision University, and their number exceeds the number of foreign students enrolled in Tbilisi State Medical University.

**TABLE N 4 - HEIs by total number of foreign students and years**

HEI	2020	2019	2018	2017
Tbilisi State Medical University	2,190	1,988	1,871	1,613
New Vision University	2,374	1,920	1,072	945
University of Georgia	1,686	1,621	1,251	916
European University	905	857	972	541
Caucasus's International University	934	760	614	533

Other	5,654	5,824	4,663	4,804
Total	13,743	12,970	10,443	9,352

Source: EMIS

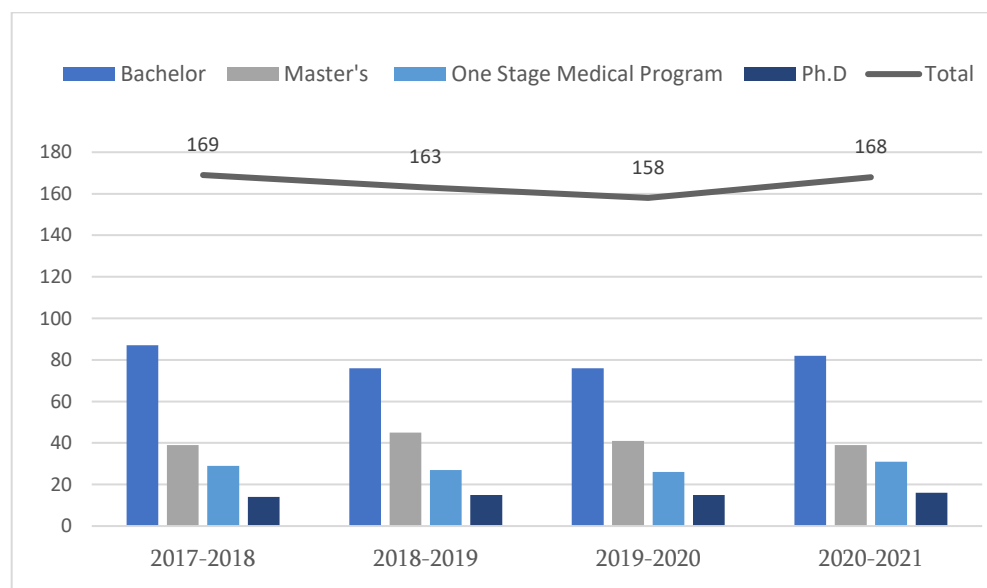
It is worth noting that some universities have a high share of foreign students in the total number of students. HEIs where more than half of the students are foreigners in the 2020-2021 academic year are: New Vision University, Tbilisi Humanitarian University, Batumi International University, European University, Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy, Geomedi University and Davit Tvildiani Medical University.

### Foreign Language Educational Programs in Georgia

In 2017-2020, the largest number of foreign language educational programs in Georgian HEIs was recorded in the 2017-2018 (169 educational programs) and 2020-2021 (168 programs) academic years. For the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 82 foreign-language bachelor's degree programs in Georgia, which is almost twice the number of foreign-language master's and One Stage Medical Program. As for the number of foreign language doctoral programs, there were 16 such programs in the 2020-2021 academic year.

In total, in 2017-2020, the most foreign language programs were the Bachelor's degree programs, and the least – Ph.D. programs.

**Chart N 4** - Number of foreign language programs by education levels and academic years



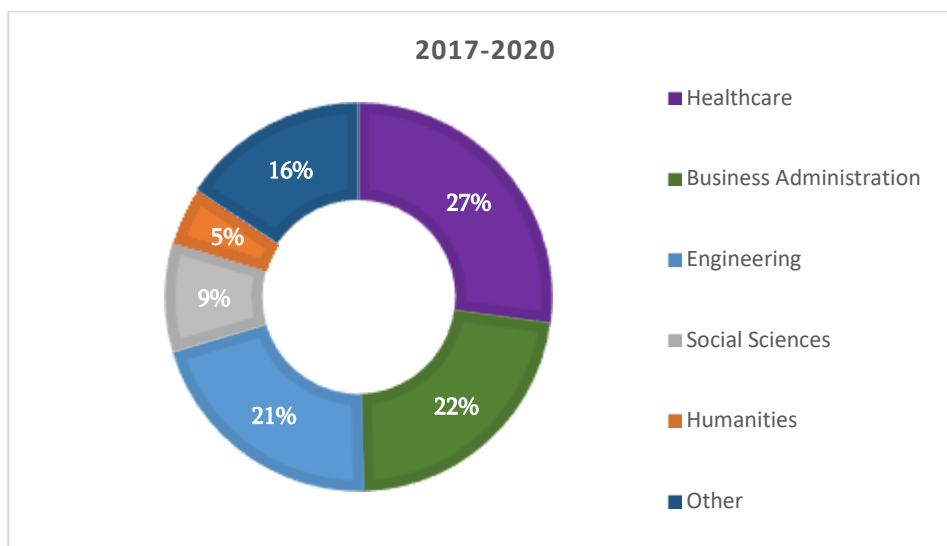
Source: EMIS

The language of instruction in foreign language programs of HEIs is mainly English. Compared to the 2017-2018 academic year, in the 2020-2021 academic year, the number of English-language study

programs increased from 126 to 145, while the number of Russian-language programs decreased from 39 to 21.

In 2017-2020, 27% of foreign language programs are implemented in the field<sup>8</sup> of healthcare, 22% - in business administration, 21% - in engineering, 9% - in social sciences, and 5% - in the field of humanities.

**Chart N 5** - The number of foreign language educational programs by fields of study in 2017-2020



Source: EMIS

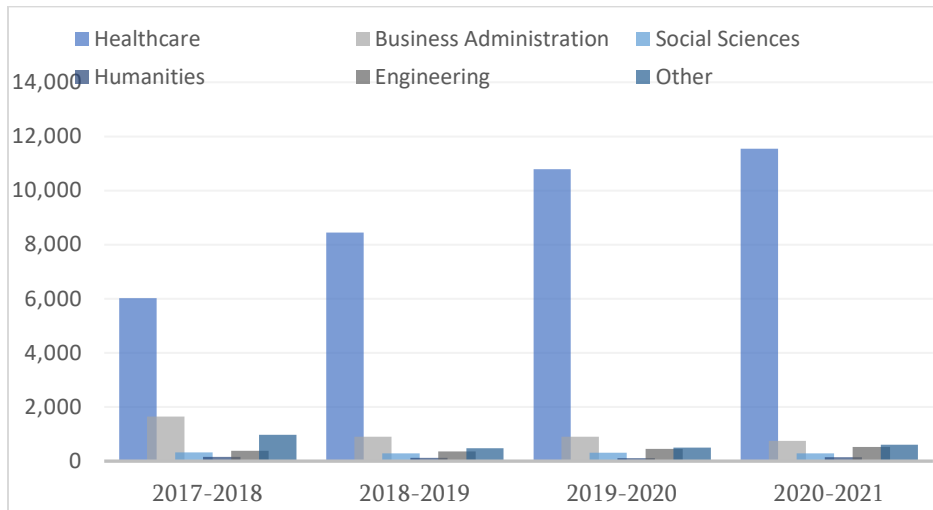
According to the 2017-2020 data, most foreign students (78%) studied healthcare. It should be noted that compared to the 2017-2018 academic year, the mentioned number has almost doubled in the 2020-2021 academic year. Also according to the national survey of Eurostudent VII (2019-2021), the majority of foreign students (70.3%) are healthcare students. The reason for such distribution of data may be that obtaining higher medical education in Georgia is financially more affordable compared to the countries from which foreign students come. For the foreigners the educational programs offered by the medical HEIs operating in Georgia seem to be satisfactory; Besides, the tuition fees are affordable for them.<sup>9</sup>

The second largest direction/field in terms of enrolled foreign students is business administration (9%). The number of foreign students in this field of study is decreasing from year to year, in particular, compared to the 2017-2018 academic year, a 55% decrease was observed in the 2020-2021 academic year. As for other fields of studies, the data are almost identical from year to year and do not undergo significant changes.

<sup>8</sup> The Order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports 10.4.19 69/N “On the approval of the National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier”. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1131547?publication=0> (accessed: 30.9.22).

<sup>9</sup> “Main findings of the Eurostudent VII (2019-2021) national survey”, Ministry of Education and Science, Institute of Social Research and Analysis. [https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1641899037\\_ევროსტუდენტია%20VII\\_კვლევის%20შედეგები.pdf](https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1641899037_ევროსტუდენტია%20VII_კვლევის%20შედეგები.pdf) (accessed: 30.9.22).

**Chart N 6 - Distribution of foreign students according to educational programs and academic years**

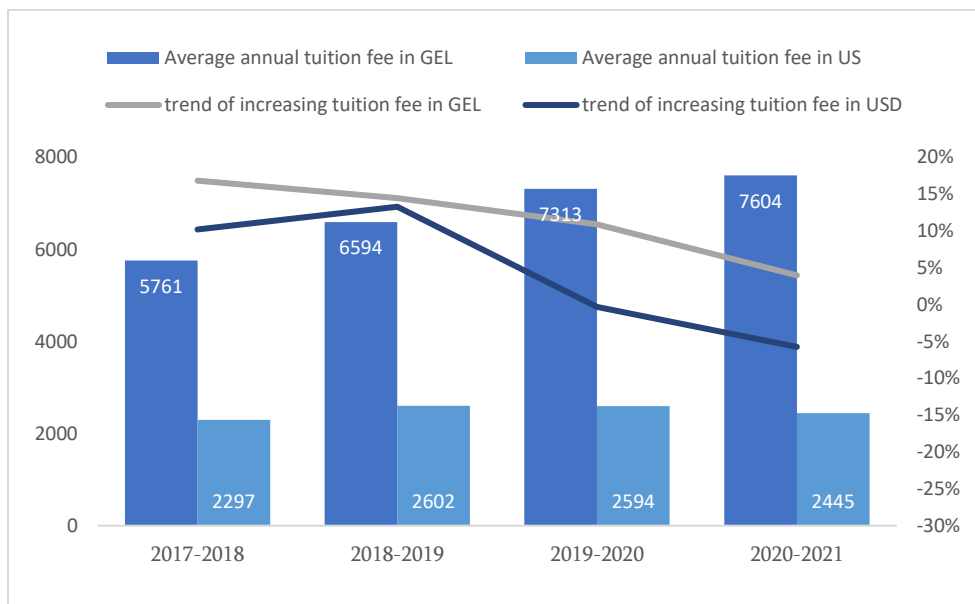


Source: EMIS

Tuition fees for foreign language programs in Georgian HEIs are steadily increasing in GEL for foreign students. For the 2020-2021 academic year, the average fee for foreign language educational programs, compared to the previous academic year (7,313 GEL), increased by 4% and amounted to 7,604 GEL.

If we consider the mentioned data in USD, in the analyzed period tuition fees for foreign language programs foreign students are studying at are decreasing from the 2018-2019 academic year. For the 2020-2021 academic year, the average tuition fee decreased from 2,602 USD to 2,445 USD. Therefore, the increase of the average annual tuition fee in GEL is attributed to its depreciation.

**Chart N 7 - Average annual fees for foreign language educational programs<sup>10</sup> in GEL and USD**



Source: EMIS

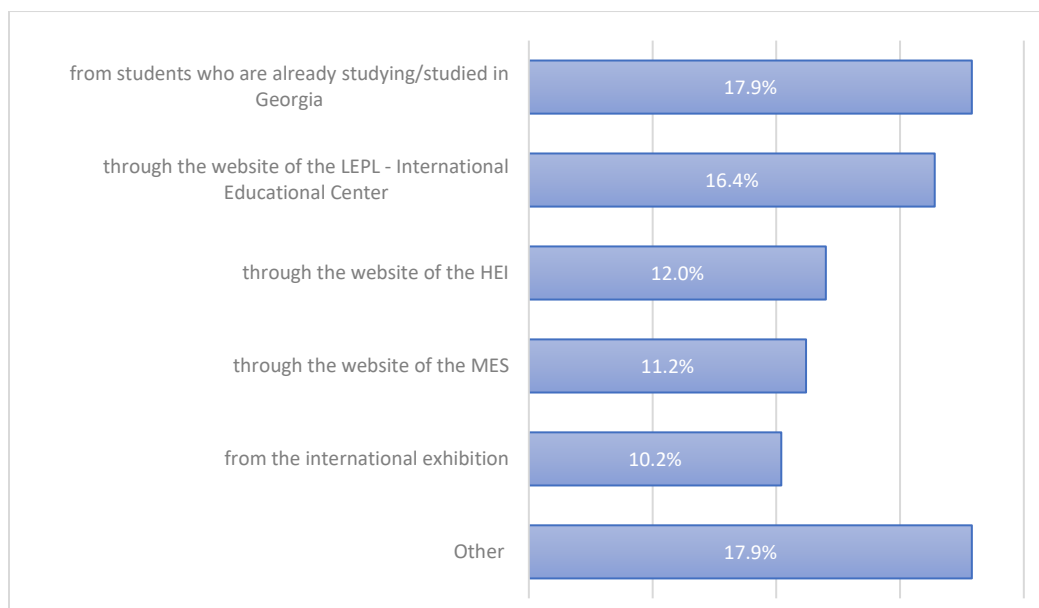
<sup>10</sup> For the objectives of the research, the average annual fees for foreign language educational programs foreign students are studying at have been calculated for academic years 2017-2021.

## Factors Determining Foreign Students' Decision-making about Studying in Georgia

In 2019-2021, the VII flow of the Eurostudent survey was conducted. 425 students, both Georgian and foreign citizens, who were studying in authorized HEIs in Georgia, participated in the survey<sup>11</sup>.

One of the important issues for the Eurostudent survey was to find out the sources from what foreign students got information about the study opportunities in Georgia. Almost every third of the surveyed foreign students (32.3%) said that they learned about it from students who are already studying / were studying in Georgia. 16.4% of the respondents got information via the website of the International Educational Center. Thus, the respondents name such sources as: international exhibitions, websites of HEIs and the Ministry of Education, although the number of such students for each case does not exceed 12%. 17.9% of respondents also indicate other sources of information<sup>12</sup>.

**Chart N 8** - Sources for foreign students to receive information



**Source:** Survey of Eurostudent VII

According to the Eurostudent survey, for 26.6% of foreign students, tuition fees were the main factor in deciding to study in Georgia, and for 17.5% - access to affordable living conditions. Only 14.1% of respondents named an opportunity of receiving high-quality education as the reason to study in Georgia. For a certain part of foreign students (7.7%), an important factor was friendliness of the population. The share of students who named other reasons is below 6.5%<sup>13</sup>.

The factors which reflected foreign students' decision to study in Georgia were also studied by the PMC in late 2021 and the role of foreign students as important actors in the country's economy and higher education system was assessed.

<sup>11</sup> "Main findings of the Eurostudent VII (2019-2021) national survey".

[https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1641899037\\_ევროსტუდენტო%20VII\\_კვლევის%20შედეგები.pdf](https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1641899037_ევროსტუდენტო%20VII_კვლევის%20შედეგები.pdf) (accessed: 30.9.22).

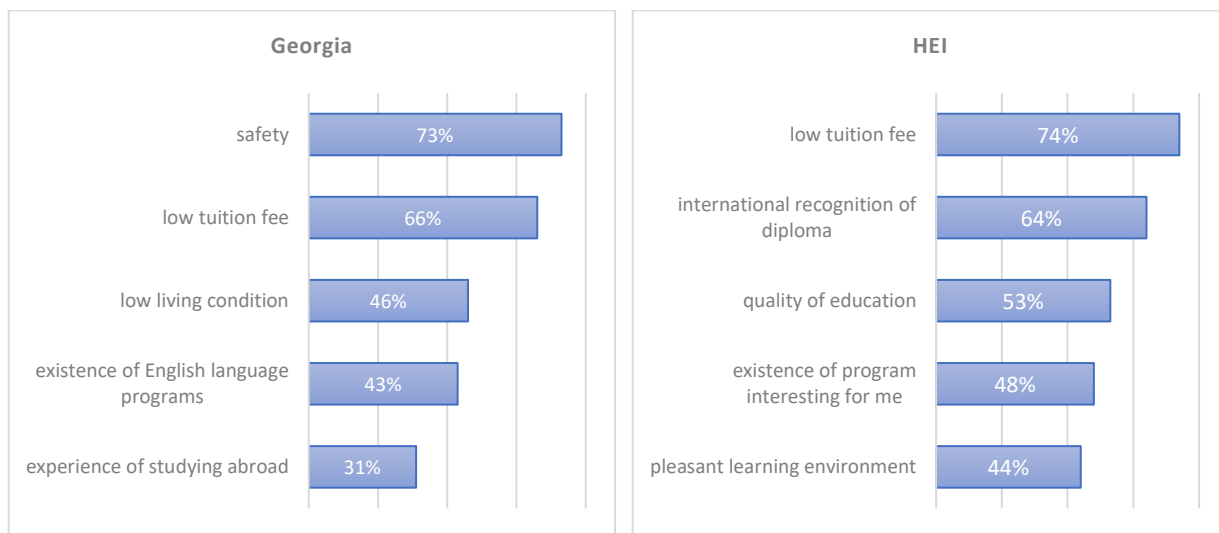
<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Main findings of the Eurostudent VII (2019-2021) national survey".

According to PMC, the most important factor for foreign students to decide to study in Georgia is the safety of the country (73%). Low tuition (66%) and living (46%) costs are determining factors that were also mentioned by foreign students in the Eurostudent survey.

While selecting the HEI, the majority of foreign students (74%) highlighted tuition fee as the key factor, followed by the international recognition of the degree (64%) and the quality of education (53%). Other factors<sup>14</sup> were also named, which had a certain influence on the decision-making process.

**Chart N 9 - The factors determining foreign students' decision-making on studying in Georgia**



Source: PMC

According to PMC, in order to attract foreign students, the majority of Georgian HEIs cooperate with so-called recruiting agency. The amount that intermediary companies in this service receive from HEIs for each attracted foreign student generally ranges from 5% to 15% of the first year's tuition fee. Some of the companies ask fixed fee for each attracted foreign student, which is around 800-1,000 USD. The survey showed that intermediary companies play an important role in the determining factors of choosing Georgia by foreign students. 22% of surveyed students noted that they took into account the agency's advice when selecting the HEI.

### Evaluation of the Education System in Georgia by Foreign Students

Analysis of the data within the framework of the Eurostudent survey showed that more than a quarter of respondents (27%) are very satisfied with studying in Georgia, and almost a third is more satisfied than dissatisfied (32.5%). 26.7% is the share of students who give a neutral assessment to the quality of education. The number of respondents who negatively evaluate studying in Georgia does not exceed 14.8%.

<sup>14</sup> e.g.: ease of admission, prestige of the university, recommendation of family members/friends, etc.



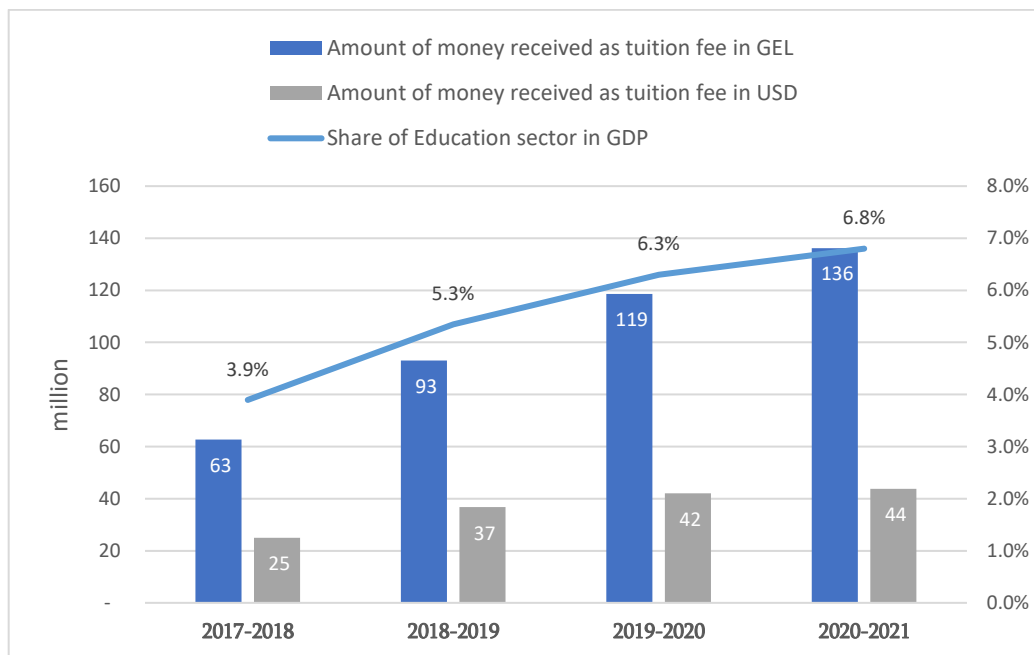
## The Impact of Foreign Students on the Economy of Georgia

### Total Expenditure on Education by Foreign Students

The total amount of tuition fees paid by foreign students and their share of the value added in the education sector has been steadily increasing since the 2017-2018 academic year. In the academic year 2017-2018, the amount paid for education by foreign students was 63 million GEL, and in the 2020-2021 academic year, compared to the 2017-2018 academic year, this figure has doubled and amounted to 136 million GEL<sup>15</sup>.

In the academic year 2017-2018, the share of tuition fees paid by foreign students in the added value created in the education sector was 3.9%, by the academic year 2020-2021, the figure reached 6.8%.

**Chart N 10** - Total amount of tuition fees paid by foreign students by academic year



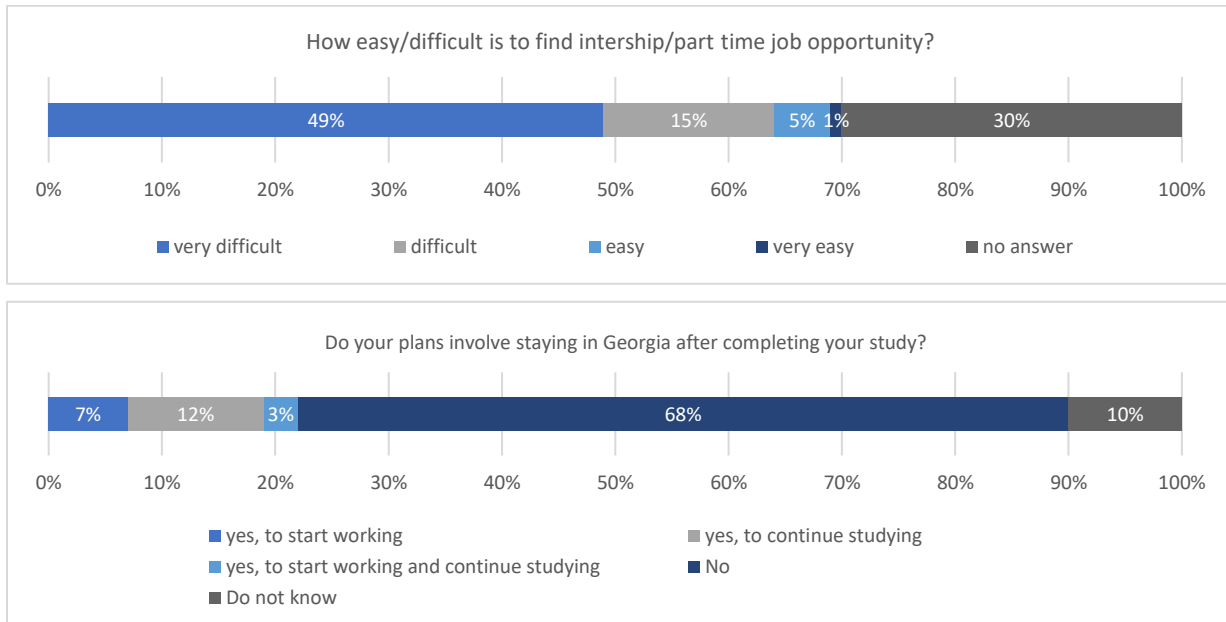
Source: PMC

### Foreign Students and Georgian Labor Market

According to the majority (64%) of foreign students interviewed by PMC, it is difficult for them to find internship or part-time job opportunities in Georgia. Fewer opportunities to gain practical experience during the course of study were identified as a challenge for students of the faculty of Medicine. At the same time, due to the language barrier, it is difficult for foreign students to work with Georgian patients and doctors during practice, etc.

<sup>15</sup> PMC.

**Chart N 11-** International students' internship and employment opportunities and plans after graduation



Source: PMC

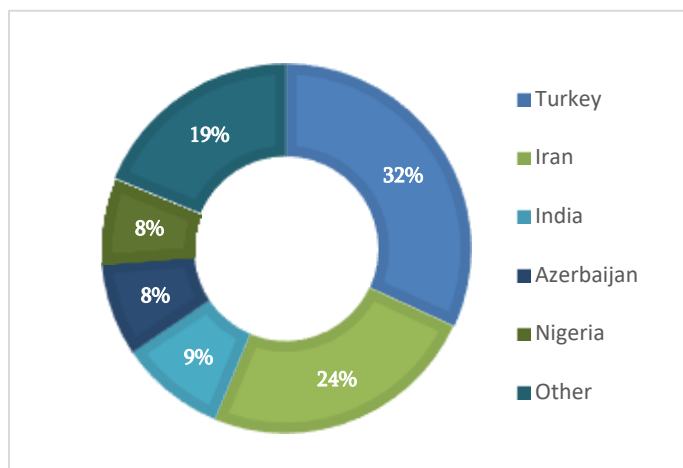
According to PMC, the majority (68%) of foreign students who came to study in Georgia do not plan to stay in the country and find employment here. Only 22% intend to stay in the country for a certain period of time for the purpose of employment, continuing education or at the same time, employment and education. Some of the foreign students said that the salary they will receive in case of employment in Georgia does not correspond to the costs foreign students pay for education in Georgia. However, at the same time, there is a barrier for the students of medical programs in Georgia to start working. According to the legislation of Georgia, in order for a graduate to receive the appropriate medical qualification and be granted the right to independent medical activity, it is necessary to pass a residency, the exams of which are held only in the Georgian language and studies are conducted in the Georgian language.

Due to the fact that only a small part of foreign students plans to stay and work in Georgia, their effect on the Georgian labor market is somewhat insignificant.

This is also confirmed by the UMAS report, according to which 160 (0.4%) out of the 42,359 foreign students enrolled in the 2012-2022 academic years in Georgia received work residence permits in 2014-2022.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Work residence permits in Georgia have been issued since 2014, though the presented data are as of June 1, 2022.

**Chart N 12** - The percentage of foreign students enrolled in the 2012-2022 academic years, by citizenship, who received work residence permits in 2014-2022<sup>17</sup>



Source: UMAS

### Expenses of Foreign Students in Georgia

PMC calculated the average expense incurred by one foreign student during the 2020-2021 academic year, which was equal to 9,131 USD (28,396 GEL)<sup>18</sup>.

First Chart shows the average amount of monthly expenses made by one foreign student in the 2020-2021 academic year<sup>19</sup> and the number of respondents who made the corresponding expenses, while second Chart shows similar figures for annual expenses.

**Chart N 5** - Average monthly expenses incurred by one foreign student (in USD) in the 2020-2021 academic year

Type of monthly expense	Average monthly expenses (USD)	Number of respondents who answered the corresponding question
Apartment rent	257	368
Books and study materials	9	89
Utility	47	333
Charges for mobile service and internet	19	353
Food/grocery	139	386
Transport	40	365
Leisure	66	341
Gym	46	142
Clothes, shoes, accessories	60	236

<sup>17</sup> The report was prepared as a result of connecting the data obtained from EMIS and PSDA through UMAS. It should be noted that the accuracy of the report results depends on the quality of the data in the sources. Therefore, there is a probability of some difference in respect of the current situation.

<sup>18</sup> This includes both monthly, recurring and annual, one-time expenses incurred by students.

<sup>19</sup> PMC.

Hygiene and self-care	40	301
Children	85	20

Source: PMC

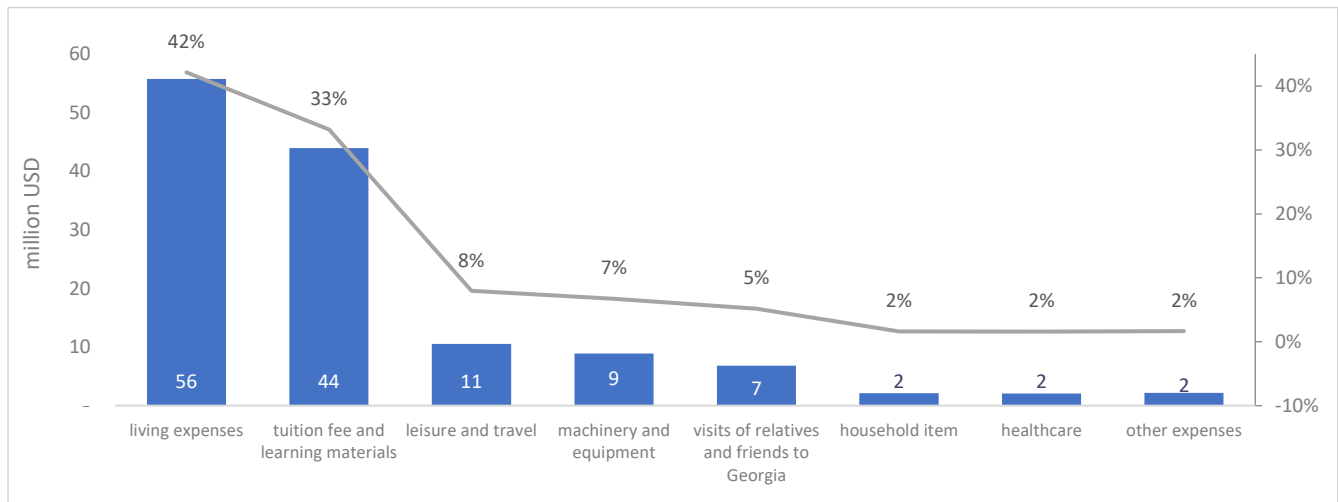
**Chart N 6** - Average annual expense incurred by one foreign student (in USD) for the 2020-2021 academic year

Type of annual expense	Average annual expenses (USD)	Number of respondents who answered the corresponding question
Tuition fee	3182	N/A <sup>20</sup>
Student travel expenses	298	323
Car purchase	5380	44
Purchase of equipment	392	171
Health care	226	316
Household items	231	310

Source: PMC

According to the categories, eight categories of expenses can be distinguished, according to which the total expenses is given in the Chart N13.

**Chart N 13** - 2020-2021 Total expenses incurred by foreign students in the 2020-2021 academic year by category and their share in total expenses



Source: PMC

According to PMC calculations, foreign students spent a total of USD 55.6 million (173 million GEL) on living expenses<sup>21</sup> in the 2020-2021 academic year, which is 42% of the total expenses incurred by foreign students in the 2020-2021 academic year. The main subcategory of living expenses is rent, which accounts for 45% of expenses in the same category. Also, a large share (25%) of living expenses

<sup>20</sup> Average tuition fee is calculated based on data provided by EMIS.

<sup>21</sup> Living expenses include rent, utility bills, cell phone and internet charges, transportation, clothing, shoes and accessories, hygiene and personal care.

is spent on food, while the share of other sub-categories (e.g.: transport costs, utility bills, etc.) is 30% in total.

The results of the study showed that in the academic year 2020-2021, in total, foreign students spent 44 million USD (137 million GEL) per year on matters related to their studies (tuition fees and expenses incurred on books and study material), which is 33% of the total expenses incurred by foreign students in the academic year 2020-2021.

As for the expenses on leisure and travel, which includes traveling in Georgia, visiting Horeca establishments and using the gym, in total, foreign students spent 10.5 million USD (32.7 million GEL) on these types of activities in the 2020-2021 academic year. The share of expenses on leisure in the 2020-2021 academic year constitutes 8% of the total annual expenses. In addition, it should be noted that 7% of the total expenses were spent on machinery and equipment.

In addition to the expenses directly incurred by foreign students, it is necessary to consider the expenses of their relatives and friends visiting Georgia<sup>22</sup>. In total, relatives and friends of foreign students spent 6.8 million USD (21.2 million GEL) on their visit to Georgia in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The total expenses incurred by foreign students, their foreign relatives and friends in Georgia in the 2020-2021 academic year amounts to 132.4 million USD (411.9 million GEL), which is 0.8% of the country's 2020 GDP.

According to the referred research, foreign students mainly receive income from family members living in their homeland. In particular, 80% of the surveyed students use only money sent by their families. 13% of surveyed students named personal savings as one of the sources of income. It should be noted that only 7% of surveyed students mention income from employment as one of the sources of income, and scholarship - only 2%.

### Financial Support Services for Foreign Students

In Georgia for foreign students, who enroll without the unified national or unified master's exams, there is no targeted financing scheme developed at the moment.

Foreigners who enroll in Georgian HEI on the basis of a unified national or unified master's exam, take part in a grant competition developed based on the results of the exams. However, in the 2020-2021 academic year, only 15 foreign students managed to receive a state grant. In the last decade, this indicator reached its maximum (53 students) in 2017-2018. Apart from this scheme, there is no other type of grant mechanism for foreign students in Georgia.

According to PMC, the opportunity to receive financial support is not a determining factor for foreign students' decision to study in Georgia. Only 2% of the respondents mentioned the availability of financial support as one of the factors in making the decision to enroll in the HEI of Georgia.

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<sup>22</sup> The expenses of foreign relatives and friends visiting Georgia are not taken into account in the calculation of the average annual expenses of students.