

Summary: UE Campaign Study

On behalf of the University of Applied Sciences Europe, a representative study about the German university market was carried out in April 2019 by an independent research institute. Over 1.000 parents and 1.000 students (or soon-to-be-students) were questioned about the same catalogue of questions. That's what makes this study unique in Germany.

The study looks at the relevancy of different factors when it comes to the choice of studies and the choice of which type of university to apply to. Parents were asked about identical issues, as they function as the most important advisors for soon-to-be-students in their phase of decision (for the sake of a better understanding, the two groups will be referred to as students and parents in the following.)

markengold PR summarized the most interesting findings.

Choice of studies - this is what students said:

By far the most important aspect when it comes to the choice of their course of studies are career orientation and the availability of practical semesters – this is what 42% of the questioned students said. On second place, with 26 per cent, students said it is important for them that sciences indeed get applied, the conveyance of soft skills and the preparation for the business world of tomorrow.

On the other hand, it seems unimportant to have the option to study in english - it's what most students (50%) deemed irrelevant.

Overall, the biggest share of students was happy with the amount of information that is available about the different types of study courses on the web: Over two thirds said, that they felt they had a sufficient overview. Just as many said, they know exactly where to find relevant information about course offerings.

BUT: 6 out of 10 students say, there isn't enough information about courses and universities at school. This explains, why more than half of the students said that they do not understand the meaning of many newly accredited courses.

Also of interest: Only a third of the questioned students took university rankings into account when choosing their course of study and only 3 out of 10 are getting professional assistance from agents or student counseling. Although there seems to be a tendency of 10 per cent towards more counseling when comparing already enlisted students and soon-to-be-students.

In comparison, it's exciting to look at what students from private universities have to say:

Only four out of ten private students thought that there wasn't enough information about study courses and universities at their school (versus 6 out of 10 overall). Also, less than half of them feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of study courses (versus 6 out of 10

overall). Furthermore, it seems that private students have a significantly better understanding of the meaning of newly accredited study courses: Only three out of ten said, they don't know the meaning.

Choice of studies - this is what parents said:

No change here: The most important aspect for parents when it comes to the choice of their children's course of studies are career orientation and the availability of practical semesters as well – this is what 44% of the questioned parents said. And they as well think, that studies in English are unimportant (29%). But other than their children, they deem the fostering of individual talents (37%) and the personal mentoring by the lecturers (36%) to be also very important.

Parents also feel that the internet is a sufficient source for information about study courses (70%). Nearly two thirds of the parents (65%) say, they do know exactly where to look for information about study courses. Interesting: parents seem to be more interested in university rankings than their children with 37 per cent saying it mattered when advising their kids on where to enlist. Overall, four out of ten parents see themselves as the first address for their offspring when it comes to advice about the choice where to pick up their studies.

BUT: About half of the questioned parents found themselves to be poorly informed about study courses at their kids' school. Respectively four out of ten do not understand the meaning of many newly accredited study courses and are overwhelmed by the amount of offerings.

For the sake of comparison, let's look at what parents of private students have to say:

Nearly 9 out of 10 parents of private students do not understand many of the newly accredited study courses (86%), compared to 43% overall. Also, only 38% of those parents said, that they know where to get information about study offerings and courses. They also seem to have the least interest in university rankings: Only one out of five said, this played into account when advising their children where to enlist.

Counseling - this is what students said:

In general, advice of their parents seems to be of utmost importance for students: Eight out of ten said, they deeply value their input when it comes to the choice of their course of study. Of those who decide to enroll to a private university, only two thirds are taking advice from their parents serious. Nonetheless, private students and those who plan to enroll in a private university get their parents involved in 96% of the cases, compared to 85% overall.

Alltogether, 85% of the questioned students said that their parents have had a positive influence on their choice of studies, nearly as many (84%) said, that their parents advised them to study something that meets their interest and that they'll enjoy doing.

Counseling - this is what parents said:

94% of the questioned parents were willing to support their children when it comes to their choice of studies, although only two thirds of them actually gave advice and only a third said, that they did serious research on their own. Nonetheless, 7 out of 10 are confident, that the course their kid chose is future-proof.

BUT: A quarter of the questioned parents advised their children to study something "profound" (like Business Administration, Information Technology or to become a teacher), as with many newly accreditet study courses it wouldn't be clear if the degree bears any professional benefit in the end. Seven per cent advised their kids against studying and rather wish for them to take on vocational training.

In comparison, let's look at what parents of private students have to say about counseling:

They show an 18 per cent higher engagement when it comes to doing research on study courses and universities on their own (67%). A full 100% of the parents of private students advised their offspring to pick a course of studies, that meets their interests and that they'll enjoy (compared to 89% overall). Also, only a fraction of those parents (5%) told their kids to study something "profound" as opposed to something they actually want.

Financing private studies - this is what students said:

50% of the questioned students said, that their parents are/were willing to pay for their studies at a private university. Only 15% said, their parents' willingness was swayed when they decided to study what they wanted. 85% of those, whose parents are not willing to pay for private tuition, say the main reason are the high costs.

Interesting: More than half of the questioned students said, that private universities are only for rich people. And one out of five thinks, that employers will think less of them with a private degree because there would always be the possibility that their grades were bought.

Financing private studies - this is what parents said:

More than a third is willing to pay in full for their kids to study private, and four out of ten are saying, that they'd be willing to finance it when their kid is chipping in with its own savings or income from a job. More than half of the questioned parents said, they would pay a portion if the other portion was payed by a scholarship or a student grant by the state (BaföG).

One out of five said, they wouldn't be willing to pay for it in any case. Of those, 88% saying it would be too costly, with half of them thinking the financial risk would be too high if

their kids didn't finish their studies for whatever reason. Clichés play into their decision as well: Three out of four said, private universities are only for rich people and everyone can study there regardless of their grades as long as they pay for it.

Public vs. Private universities – this is what students said:

German students think very positive of private universities, putting them in the lead in nearly every aspect. Private universities are associated with modern equipment (three out of four students associate this with private universities, less than half with state universities) and 86 per cent of students think that private universities offer a more individual tutoring (compared to 29%, who think this of public universities).

Seven out of ten think, that private universities have access to corporate contacts and realize cooperations with companies. Only 58 per cent think that this is the case with public universities. This goes hand in hand with the fact, that six out of ten students think that private studies lead to good job opportunities in the business world, and only 37% are thinking this about public studies. Further, more than two thirds think that private universities respect current trends and recent economic developments in their curriculum, only half of the questioned students said that about public universities. The same goes for the offering of innovative and future-oriented study courses.

Students also think, that private universities offer a higher amount of practice (57%, 4 out of ten also thought this about public universities) and that they are designing their curriculum around the needs of the market (54%, 43% said this about public universities as well).

Public vs. Private universities - this is what parents said:

German parents think very highly of private universities as well - regardless of where their kids are enrolled, again, putting them in the lead in nearly every aspect. Six out of ten parents think, that private universities are more flexible in offering and designing new study courses, not even half of the questioned parents thought this about public universities. Also, 55% think that private universities are very focused on practice, only 37% think this of public universities.

More than seven out of ten parents share the opinion, that private universities offer personal mentoring, but only 37% think this is the case with public universities. 54% feel, that private universities are reacting to the need of the market, only 36% feel this way about public universities. Further, more than two thirds think that private universities respect current trends and recent economic developments in their curriculum, only half of the questioned parents thought the same about public universities.

Novel study courses - this is what students said:

Male soon-to-be-students are saying more often, that they have an understanding of what newly accredited study courses stand for: When asked about the meaning of a select set of 10 novel courses, 48% knew all ten, female soon-to-be-students knew all ten in only

40% of the cases. If one looks closely at the numbers, it becomes obvious that students who attend a private university are generally more familiar with novel courses (48%, compared to 41% of those enrolled to a public university).

Comparing the perception of private and public students, it seems that students who attend or are planning to attend a private university are more open towards novel courses: 63% of private students said, novel courses are conveying much needed skills and competencies for the market of tomorrow – only 54% of public students are saying this about novel courses. Another 63% are agreeing with the statement that when studying a novel course, they have a chance to take on the role of a pioneer at their future place of work. In contrast, not even half of the questioned students who are attending or planning to attend a public university agreed with that statement.

A total of 74% of the partaking private students agreed with the statement, that novel courses are much needed to advance Germany as a place of innovation, while only 62% of public students said that was true.

Novel study courses - this is what parents said:

When asked about the meaning of the same select set of 10 novel courses, parents of private students said in 54% of the cases, that they have an idea of the courses content, parents of public students only said this in 44% of the cases. It seems, that parents of private students are just as open towards novel courses as their children: 62% said, novel courses are conveying much needed skills and competencies for the job market of the future, compared to 55% of parents, whose children are attending a public university.

Another 52% of parents, whose kids are enrolled or soon-to-be-enrolled at a private university, are saying that novel courses are offering better job chances than traditional courses. Overall, this opinion only amounts to 38%.