

First Generation students in Student Mobility

For the student survey, respondents were asked if their parents or guardians had attended a university or obtained higher education qualifications.

A child's chances of participating in tertiary education are twice as high if at least one of their parents has completed upper-secondary.

First generation students tend to enter higher education later, study in short or first programmes at non-universities, and rely on paid employment to a greater extent.

Key Findings

A large number (42%) of respondents belonged to this category – so they partially set the general trend for the overall research results.

53% of non-mobile respondents reported needing at least 75% of the mobility programme costs to be covered by funding if they were to go abroad, which is in line with the general trend; as well as the concerns related to prefinancing; as 82% of respondents mentioned up front financing as an issue.

For respondents who were first generation 4% went on exchange without a grant, compared to 10% of the others. Intersectionality between first generation students and students from low-income backgrounds seems to be key to keep in mind.

42% 5440 first generation student respondents



27% of universities recognise first generation students as students with fewer opportunities.

Impact of exchanges

The results of the first generation students followed the general trends of the research when it comes to support and funding. However; there was a significant increase when it came to the perceived impact of their exchanges.

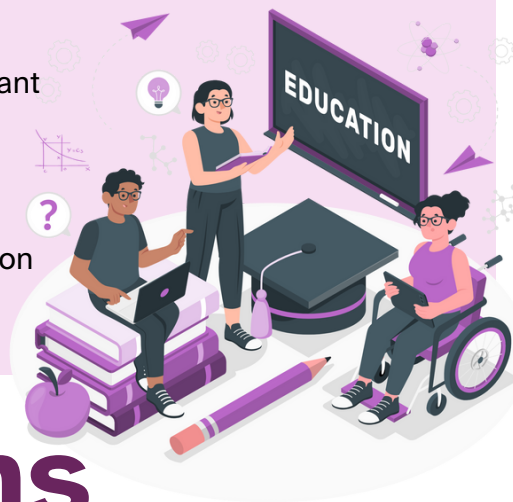
- 47% of first-generation respondents indicated that their grades increased following their mobility, compared to 43% of students whose families had undergone higher education.
- Impact on values and ethical position impacted to 65% of first-generation respondents, higher than students counter group.
- 92% more eager to learn about cultures different than their own. 90% more aware and accepting of cultural differences.

Reflections from the community

the personal environment of first generation students and the juxtaposition they might find themselves in; might bring pressure with being a first generation student that parents push their children to great performance. This might come with a lot of stress and anxiety that might not be well understood or received by fellow students and university staff, impacting the mental health of students. There might be situations where the student is frowned upon by family for having chosen a higher education path, making everything school related feel as a burden and something that takes away time and focus from family.

Although the students might be facing adversity, they have important aspirants in life. They want to focus on their academic responsibilities undisturbed and make parents and other family members proud at the end of the day.

Their perception of mobility opportunities might differ in connection to impact on their academic career.



Recommendations

For First Generation students; the perception of mobility and how it can impact their personal development, is a key reflection in the decision to go on exchange. It is therefore important to reflect on the impact of their personal background and family situation. Students would need:

- An encouraging environment and attitude from teachers and parents
- A contact person that can inform of the various opportunities and support available for their various needs,
- Role models who have gone through the experience themselves and who have understanding for the various difficulties that might come with being a first generation student.
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Family has a strong impact on this group, in addition professors they might have established a relation with or close friends that are seen as the main advisors. Friends or peers with mobility experience might have the opportunity to motivate and be role models to this group.

Universities can support these students with:

- practical information about specific opportunities and it's finances.
- Open access information shareable with people in their personal sphere; parents and friends.
- First-hand stories from previous students in an open way.
- Support from the university to ensure the positive impact on academic and professional careers.

The data extracted in this fact sheet comes from the Social Inclusion & Engagement in Mobility (SIEM) research project run by Erasmus Student Network (ESN) funded by the Erasmus+ programme. An extensive research report that gathers input of 12.000 students and 750 staff members across Europe and beyond on the inclusion in international student exchanges.