

Trend study 2021

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE LEARNING

Tomorrow's education.
E-Learning and distance learning worldwide.

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APPLIED SCIENCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-LEARNING IS IN DEMAND ACROSS THE GLOBE. AND MEGATRENDS SUCH AS INDIVIDUALISATION AND CONNECTIVITY ARE PLAYING A DECISIVE ROLE.

And people? Are eager to learn. Lifelong learning? Is one of the key drivers for distance learning – regardless of your circumstances or work situation. But how do you study in this day and age, in times of increasing digitalisation and globalisation? Preferably online. Prospective students can acquire important skills via e-learning – no matter where, no matter when. For targeted personal and professional development. Above all, there is a great desire for financial independence and better opportunities for advancement. No matter what country you live in.

When it comes to distance learning, the high degree of flexibility is a decisive advantage. Four out of five people prefer an entirely online-based course of study, without face-to-face tuition. Half of them would even prefer “on demand” tuition in order to have maximum flexibility when studying. **Despite all this digitality, students do not wish to be left to their own devices. Therefore, a functioning support system is also important when studying.** For those polled, this primarily includes good reachability via email or messenger services, but also an online forum for communicating with other students. But how do you choose the right provider for distance learning? In addition to high-quality content, which many prospective students consider extremely important, the cost is the most important criterion in the international rankings. Furthermore, the provider’s reputation and the attainment of an international degree play a decisive role. Distance learning is particularly suitable for those who already have their bachelor’s degree under their belt – and are now aiming for a master’s. At least that’s what more than half of the respondents say. And when it comes to the type of course, part-time studies are more in demand than full-time.

All things considered, e-learning courses have become an indispensable part of today’s world – especially on an international level. They can be adapted to suit your lifestyle, and can be individually and flexibly structured. And they offer enough freedom for a student to develop personally as well as professionally.

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E-LEARNING. A GLOBAL ISSUE.

“E-learning offers people freedom and flexibility, which, thanks to the increasing digital possibilities, can also open new doors for those interested in studying. Whether it is because of the lack of possibility to study in the provider’s country/city or the person just wishes to stay in their home vicinity. Thanks to the digital possibilities, studying can be increasingly adapted to life, and not the other way around.”

Prof. Dr. Florian Hummel, Prorector International & Diversity at the
IU International University of Applied Sciences

FOUR IMPORTANT RESULTS.

01

HIGH LEVEL STUDY.

A master's degree is in great demand. The majority of participants are interested in gaining this degree. The important elements for distance learning are recordings of online lectures as download (44.6%). **Almost half of all respondents would like to study without classroom sessions, but with online-learning on demand.** Only 15.5% want to study with obligatory classroom lectures at fixed times.

02

LEARNING FOR LIFE.

The urge to develop personally and learn for life is the biggest motivation for taking up online studies (41.2%). Participants who would like to change professionally will mainly do so for financial reasons – some want financial security (40.7%) and some more money to be able to afford more things (40.5%).

03

PRICE BEATS CONTENT.

A course of study? You have to be able to afford it. **The price of the course is very important for the participants (38.6 %).** Nevertheless for many of those surveyed, content plays a major role when choosing a study program (29.1%). As well as the flexibility of the course model (27.7%). An international degree (33.1%) and the university's reputation (30.8%) are equally important factors when deciding on a course provider.

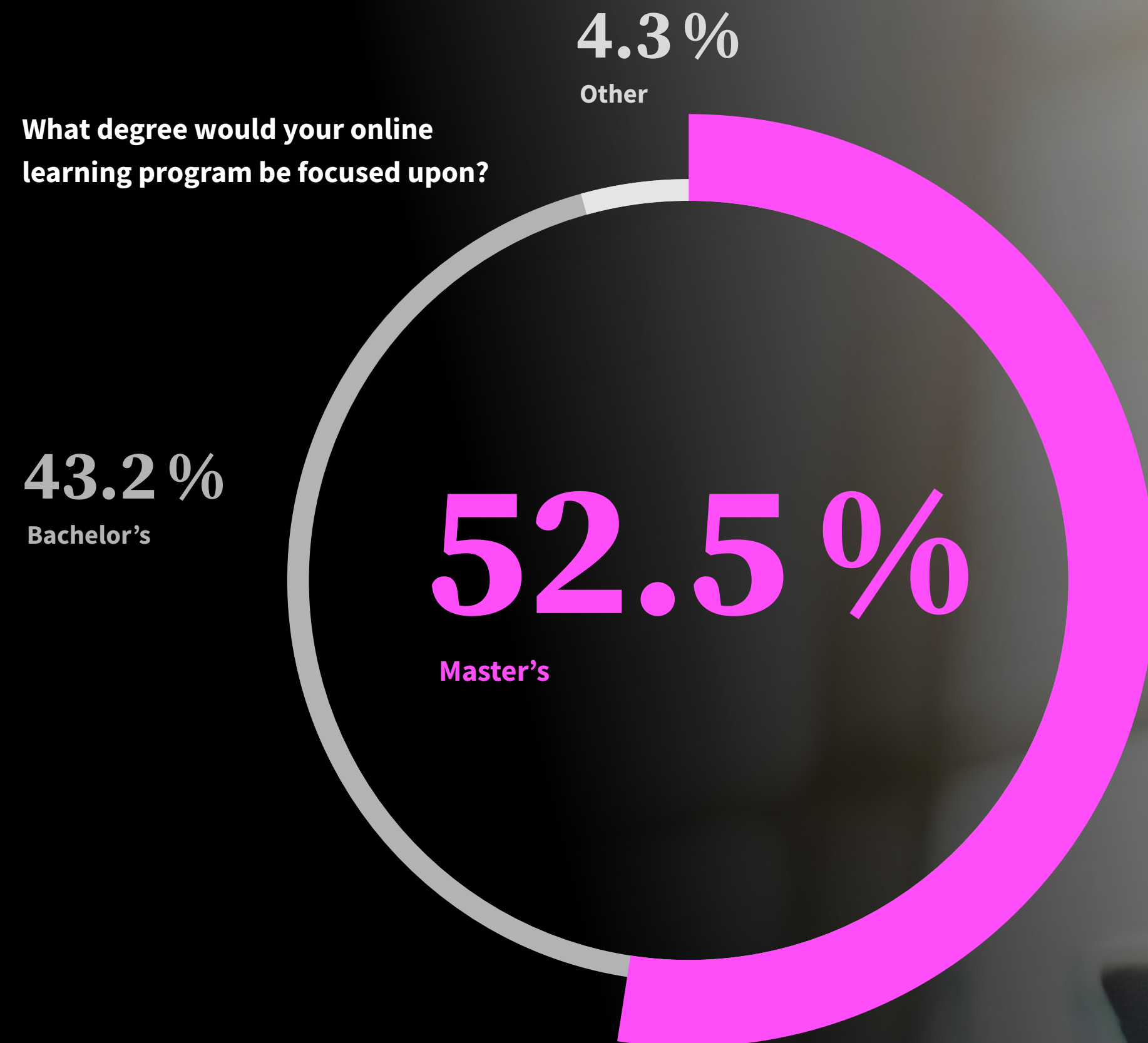
04

ALWAYS ONLINE.

Reachability via email or messenger plays a major role in distance learning. When it comes to having questions about their course content, the participants would like to be taken care of and supported preferably by video explanations on individual questions (43.1%) and email reachability (43%). They would prefer to communicate via messenger (41.2%) than be supported by intelligent chatbots (26%).

STUDY FORMATS & INFRASTRUCTURE

HIGH LEVEL STUDY.



A master's degrees are in great demand. The majority of participants are interested in gaining a master's degree (52.5%). A few less than half in a bachelor's degree (43.2%).

The benefits of a master's degree are manifold. For example: you will gain the specialised knowledge that will help you advance in your field. It will be easier for you to transition into more senior positions, such as management and leadership. And your income can increase significantly.



AND THE WINNER IS: ONLINE LEARNING ON DEMAND.

Which format do you prefer for your online learning?

Without classroom lectures; with online learning on demand

49.9%

Without classroom lectures; with online lectures at fixed times

34.3%

With obligatory classroom lectures at fixed times

15.5%

other
0.4%

PART-TIME IS PREFERRED OVER FULL-TIME.

Most participants would choose a part-time course of study with 15 to 30 hours per week (47.9%). A significant number of participants would even consider a full-time course of study with more than 30 hours a week (31.4%).

Which course model would you choose?

31.4%
FULL-TIME
(>30h/week)

68.6%

PART-TIME (<15h/week)
or (15-30h/week)

47.9%
PART-TIME
(15-30h/week)

20.7%
PART-TIME
(<15h/week)

A laptop/notebook is the most used technical equipment for learning. Smartphones have become a common technical device for learning, too.



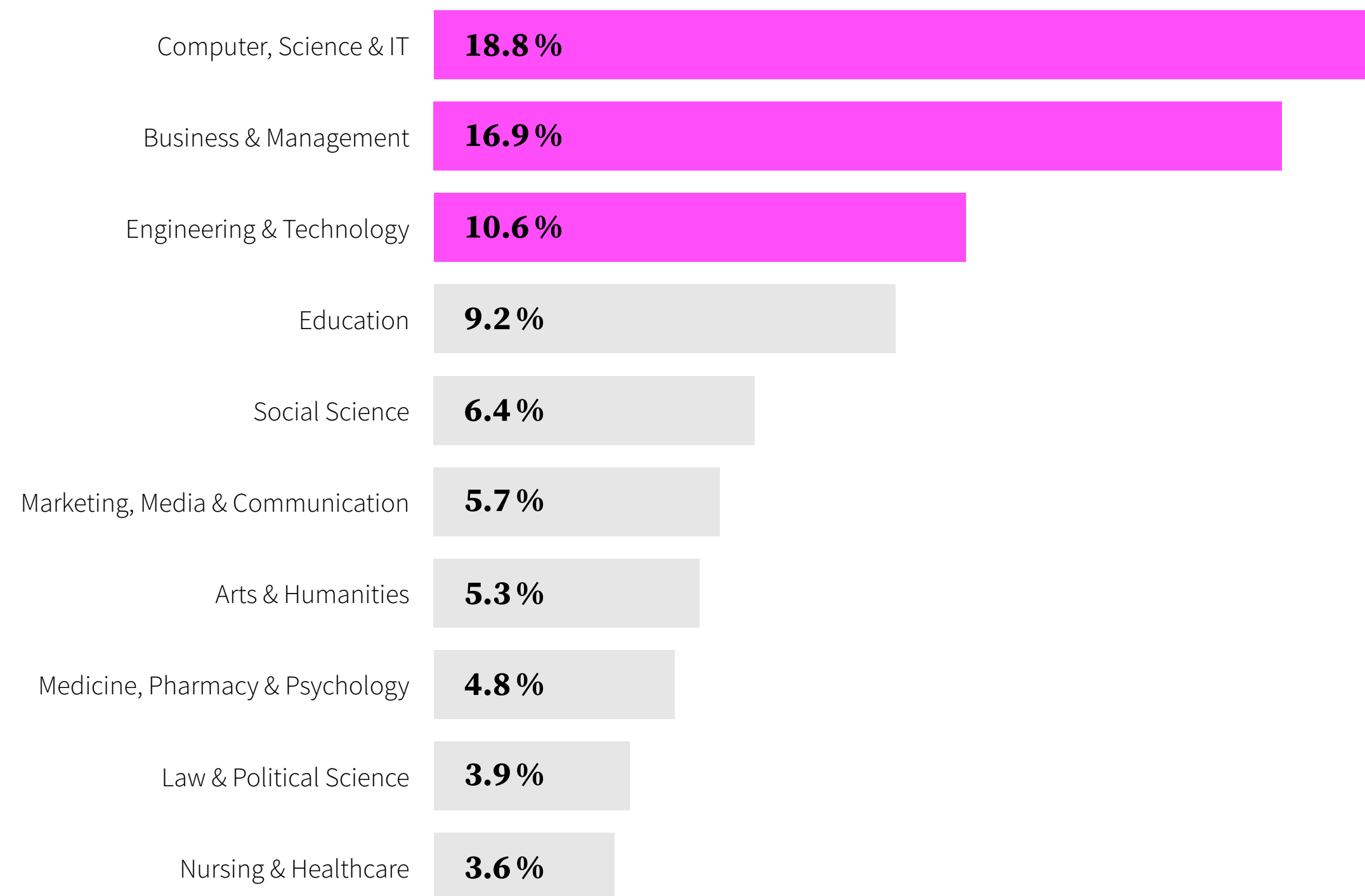
LAPTOP/
NOTEBOOK



SMARTPHONE

THE TOP 10 STUDY AREAS: IT, BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY FIRST.

The most popular areas of study are Computer, Science & IT (18.8%), Business & Management (16.9%), Engineering & Technology (10.6%).



In which area would you start your studies?



Prof. Dr. Ralf Kneuper
Head of the Computer Science
degree programme at the
IU International University
of Applied Sciences



Globally, business and private life are becoming more and more digitized, and the term ‘digital transformation’ has turned into a widely used buzzword. Hardly any company nowadays can survive without using IT on a large scale. The IT industry is providing the technical basis for this trend, and is therefore growing rapidly, providing fascinating jobs for the people working in it.”

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING.

Online lectures would be important for the majority – recordings of online lectures as download (44.6%) slightly more important than online lectures in real time (41.1%). Being able to pass tests online would also be very important (44.6%). On campus option (16.9%) as well as study letters (20.2%) are least important.

Which of the following elements would be important for your distance learning?

Online lectures /
video lectures as download

44.6%

Online tests
(e.g. as self-tests)

44.6%

Online lectures /
video lectures in real time

41.1%

Online library
for technical lecture

36.4%

REASONS & MOTIVATION FOR ONLINE STUDIES

LEARNING FOR LIFE.

The urge to develop personally and learn for life is the biggest motivation one in four people up online studies (41.2%). Almost one in every four is not happy with their current personal job position and would consider online studies in order to change professionally (24%). **Also interesting: one of the main reasons is the setting up of one's own business (25.3%).**

41.2 %

Develop myself personally/ earn for life

32.8 %

Advance professionally/ change my career

30.7 %

Deepen my expertise

25.3 %

Set up or grow my own business

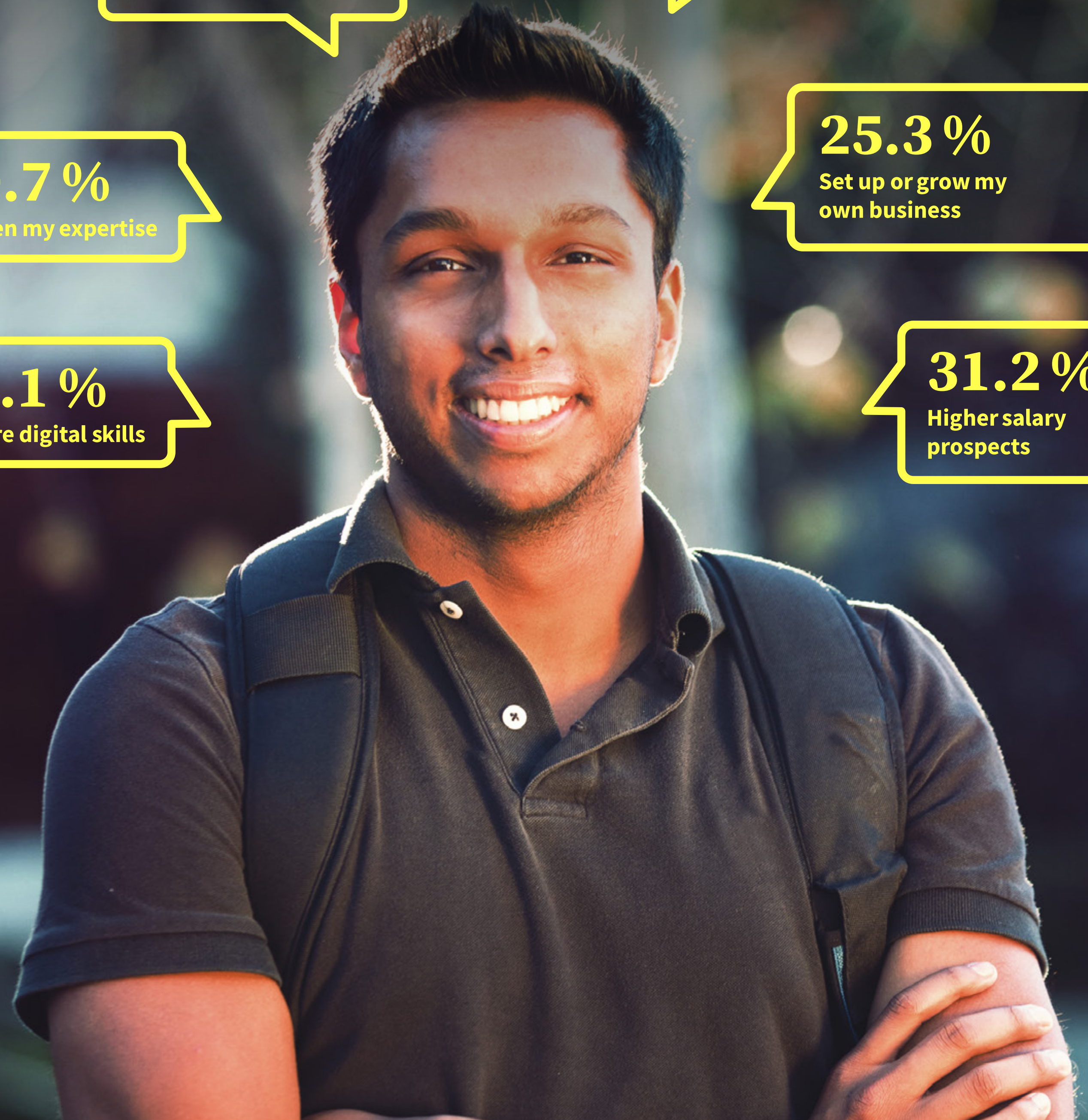
29.1 %

Acquire digital skills

31.2 %

Higher salary prospects

**! WHY WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE UP
● ONLINE STUDIES? TOP 5 REASONS**





A WORKING GENERATION GROWING UP.

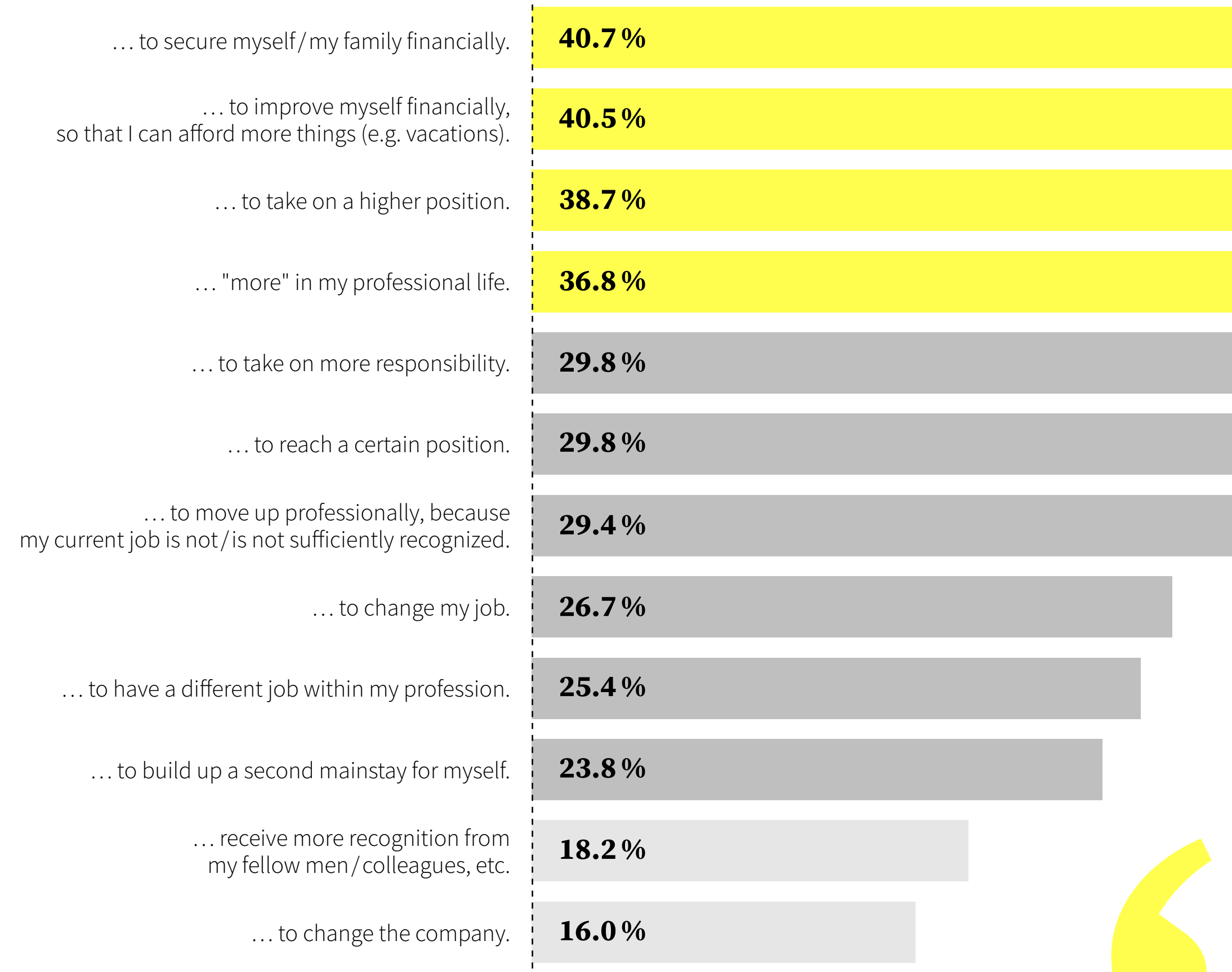
“The working world is changing faster than ever before, not only due to recent events and technology developments but mainly because of the changing expectation of the new generation of workers. In today’s modern working world, it’s no longer just about earning money. Self-fulfillment and professional satisfaction are becoming more and more important in people’s lives. Many employees are unhappy with their professional situation, e.g. their job position or lack of appreciation from their employer. Having your own business means significantly increasing both the risk and responsibilities, but also having unprecedented freedom in creating your own work universe.”

Dr. Nastja Pusic, Strategic Partnerships Manager at the
IU International University of Applied Sciences

THE FINANCE ASPECTS PREDOMINATE.

Participants who would like to change professionally would mainly do so for financial reasons – some want financial security (40.7 %) and some more money to be able to afford more things (40.5 %).

How exactly and why do you want to change professionally? I would like to...



The urge for financial security is a fundamental one – and this has not just developed recently. What is growing more and more, however, is the need to increase one's financial opportunities. This has already been observed in Generation Y and is continuing to grow in Generation Z. This can also be attributed to the aspiration for more individual flexibility and freedom."



Prof. Dr. Florian Hummel
Prorektor International
& Diversity at the
IU International University
of Applied Sciences



CHOOSING A COURSE PROGRAMME & PROVIDER

PRICE BEATS CONTENT.

The costs of the course (37.8%), the content of the course programme (29.1%) as well as the flexibility of the course model (27.7%) play a crucial role when choosing a course programme. Close proximity to studying centres is least important (8.7%).

Which of the following aspects would be important to you when choosing your course programme? TOP 6 ASPECTS:

Course costs

37.8%

Course content

29.1%

Course flexibility

27.7%

E-Learning offers

25.9%

Flexible examination forms

23.5%

Image/reputation of the institution

21.0%



**CHOOSING A COURSE PROVIDER.
THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA.**

Price (38.6%), international degree (33.1%) as well as reputation (30.8%) are the most important factors when deciding on a course provider. On-campus options are least important (10.1%).

What are the most important criteria for you when deciding on a study provider?

Price
38.6%

International degree
33.1%

Reputation
30.8%

Teaching materials/content
28.6%

Duration of study
26.4%

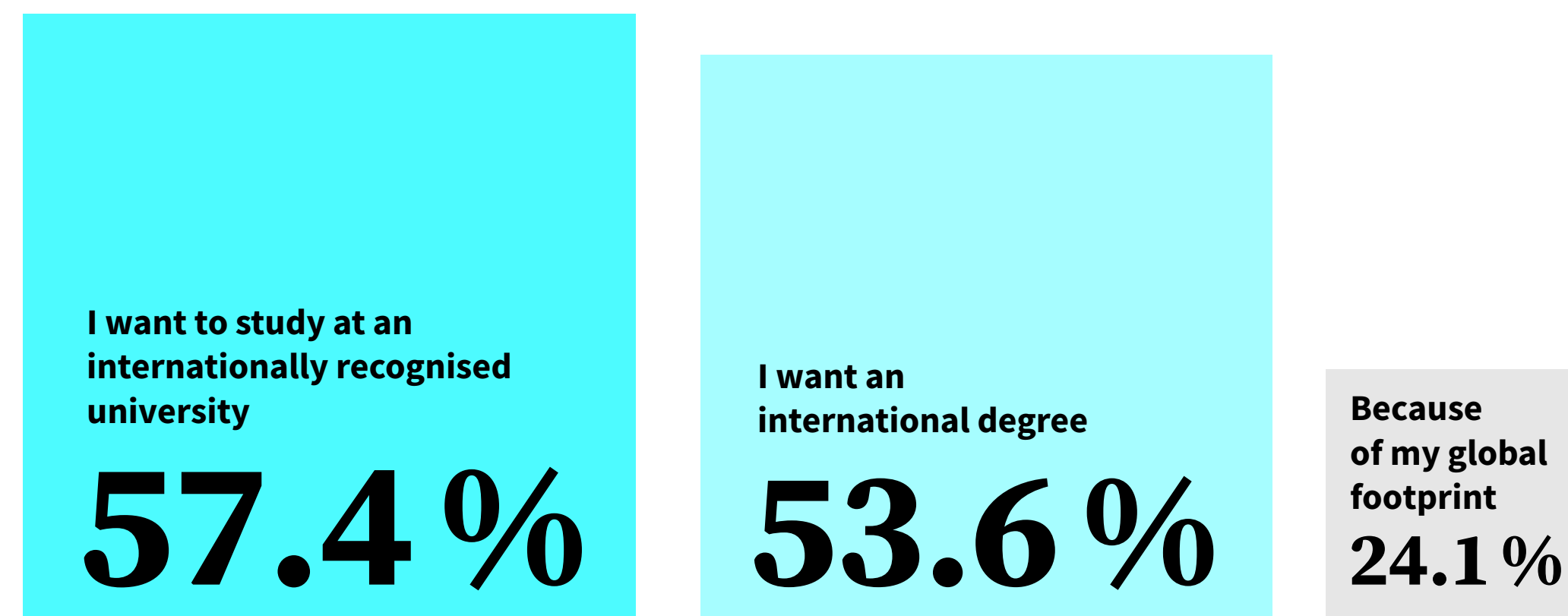


INTERNATIONAL COURSE PROVIDER. WHAT DO STUDENTS PREFER?

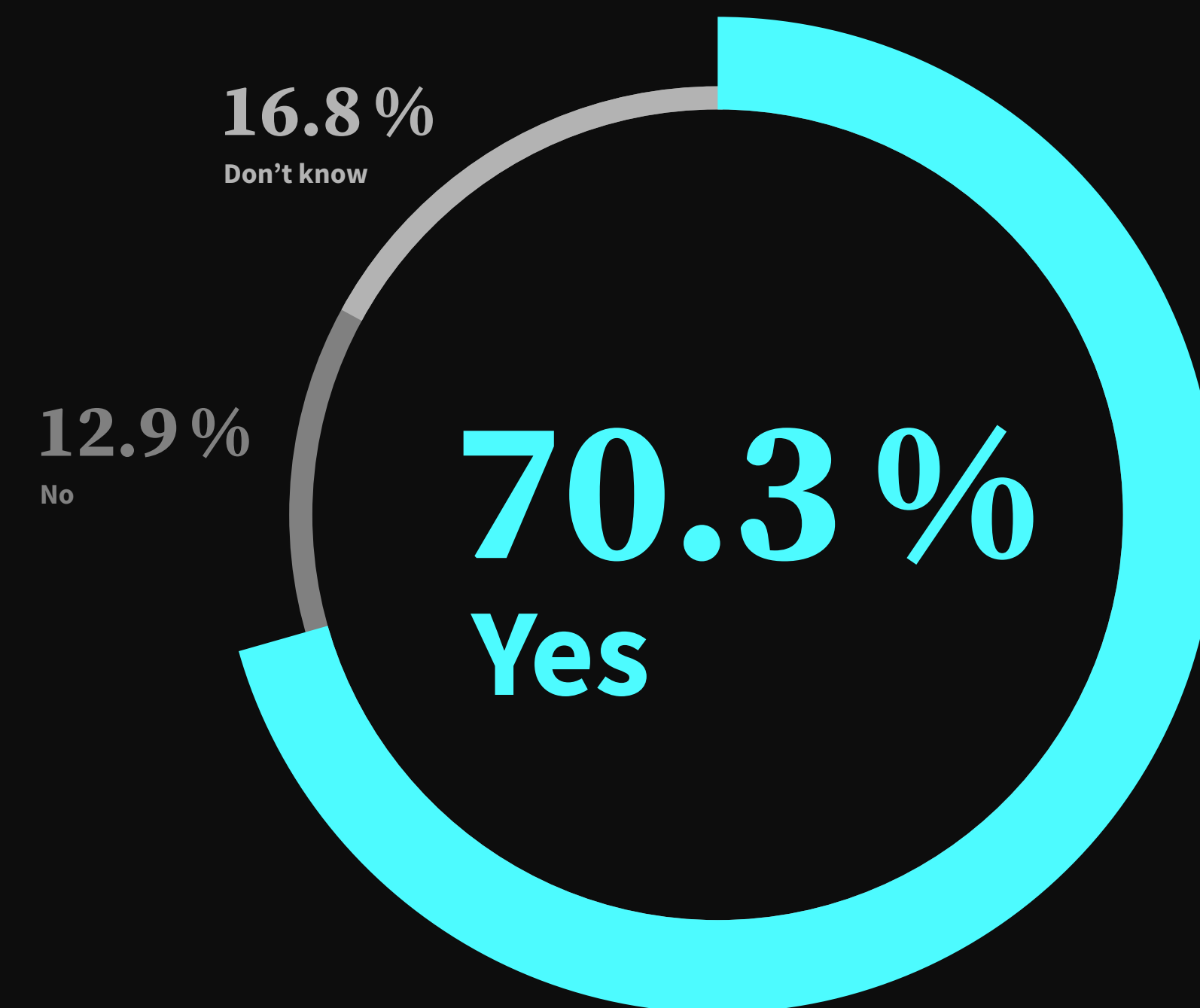
The USA is the most popular country as an online provider (40.7%), followed by the United Kingdom (27.5%). Germany (9%), Australia (8.1%), France (6.4%), Spain (5.2%) are the least popular countries.

The international recognition of a university (57.4%) and the possibility to achieve an international degree (53.6%) are the most important criteria for choosing an international online learning provider. Studying on-campus once for a period of up to 6 months would be preferred by the majority (70.3%).

Why would you choose an international online learning provider?



Would you consider using an additional on-campus option for a period of your online degree (e.g. 1–6 months)?



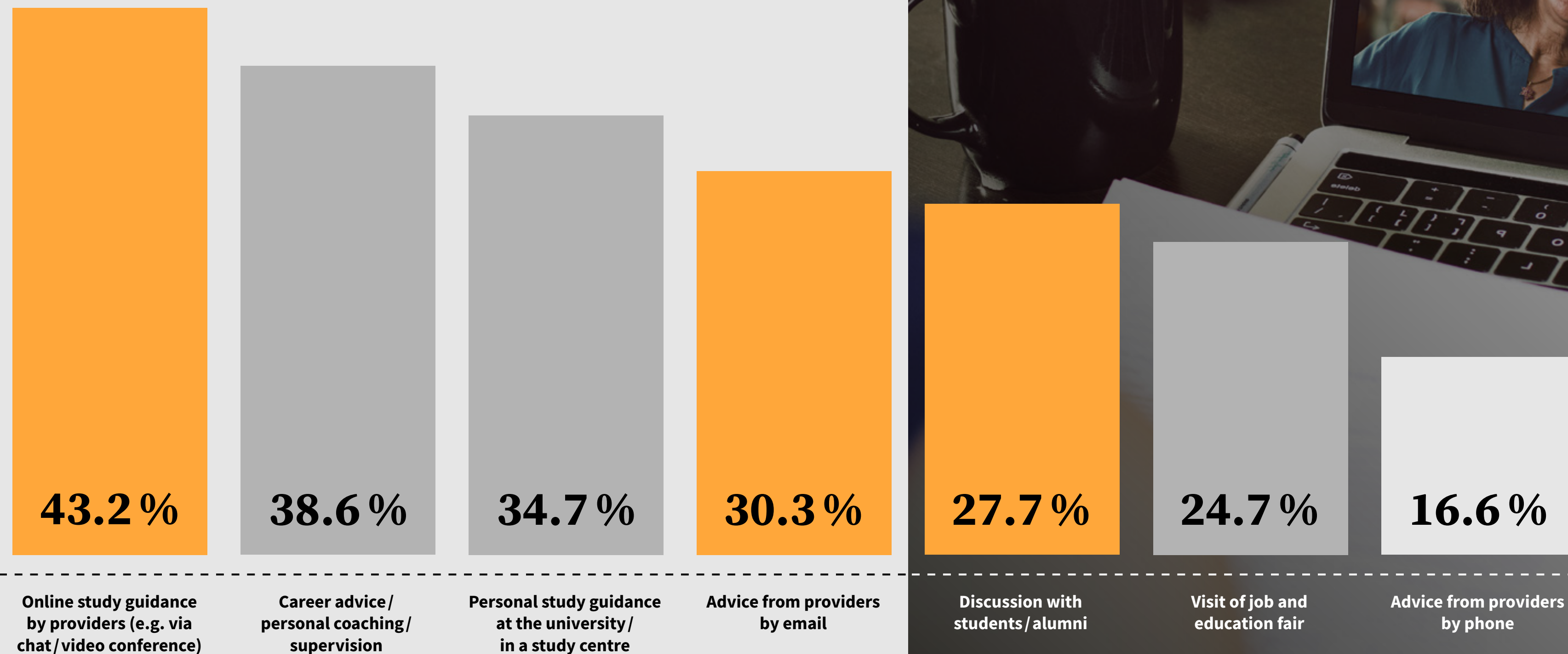
SUPPORT & SERVICE NEEDS

ALWAYS ONLINE

TOP COUNSELLING SERVICES AND INFORMATION SOURCES.

When it comes to the trustworthiness of an online learning provider, quality seals from governmental bodies and official rankings are the most important criteria. The majority of participants would like to apply directly (82 %) rather than through education agents (18 %). Before starting their studies, most participants would prefer online study guidance by providers via chat, video conference or hangout (43.2 %). Advice by telephone is the least preferred (16.6 %).

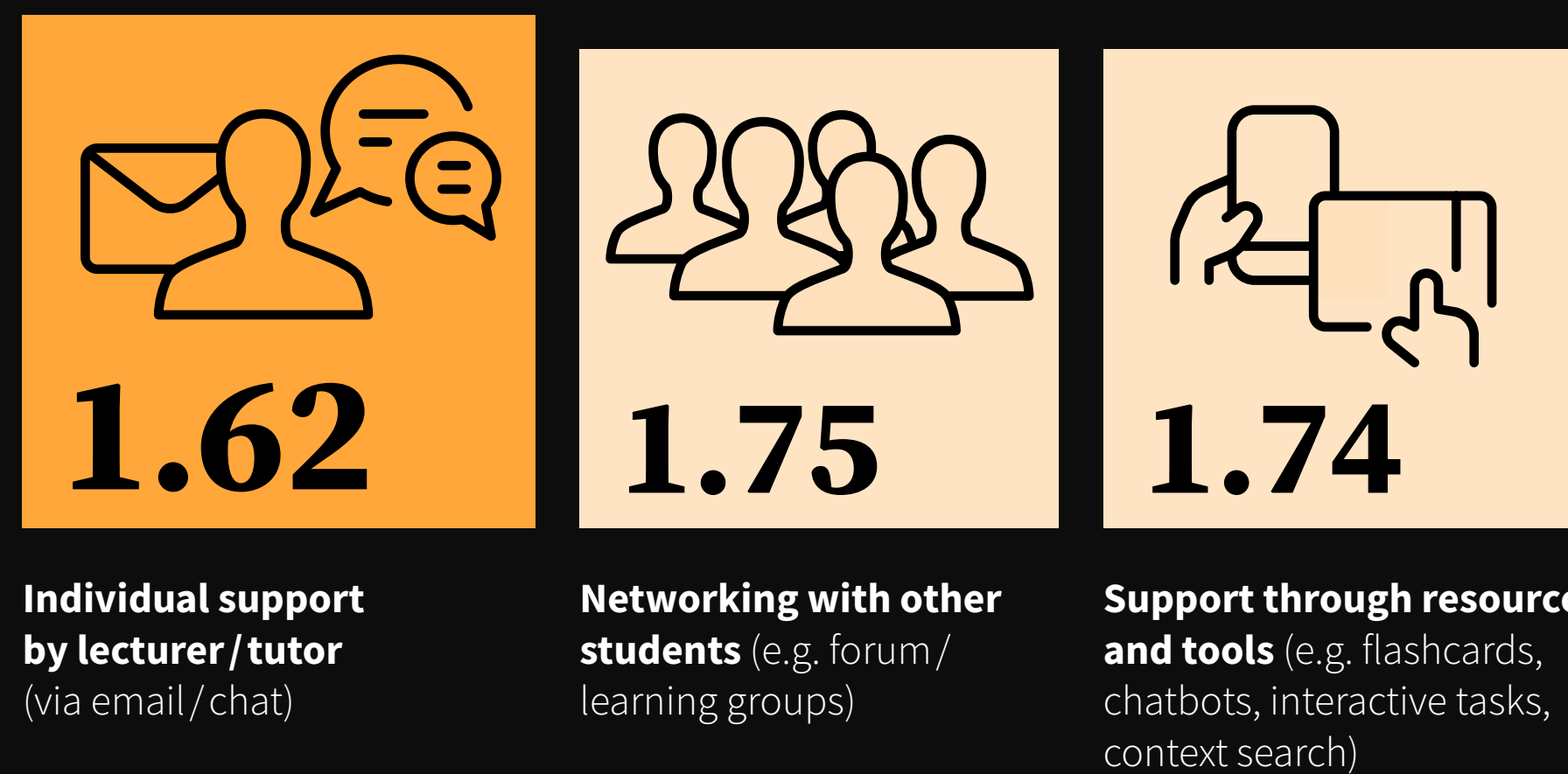
Which of the following counselling services would you use before beginning your studies?



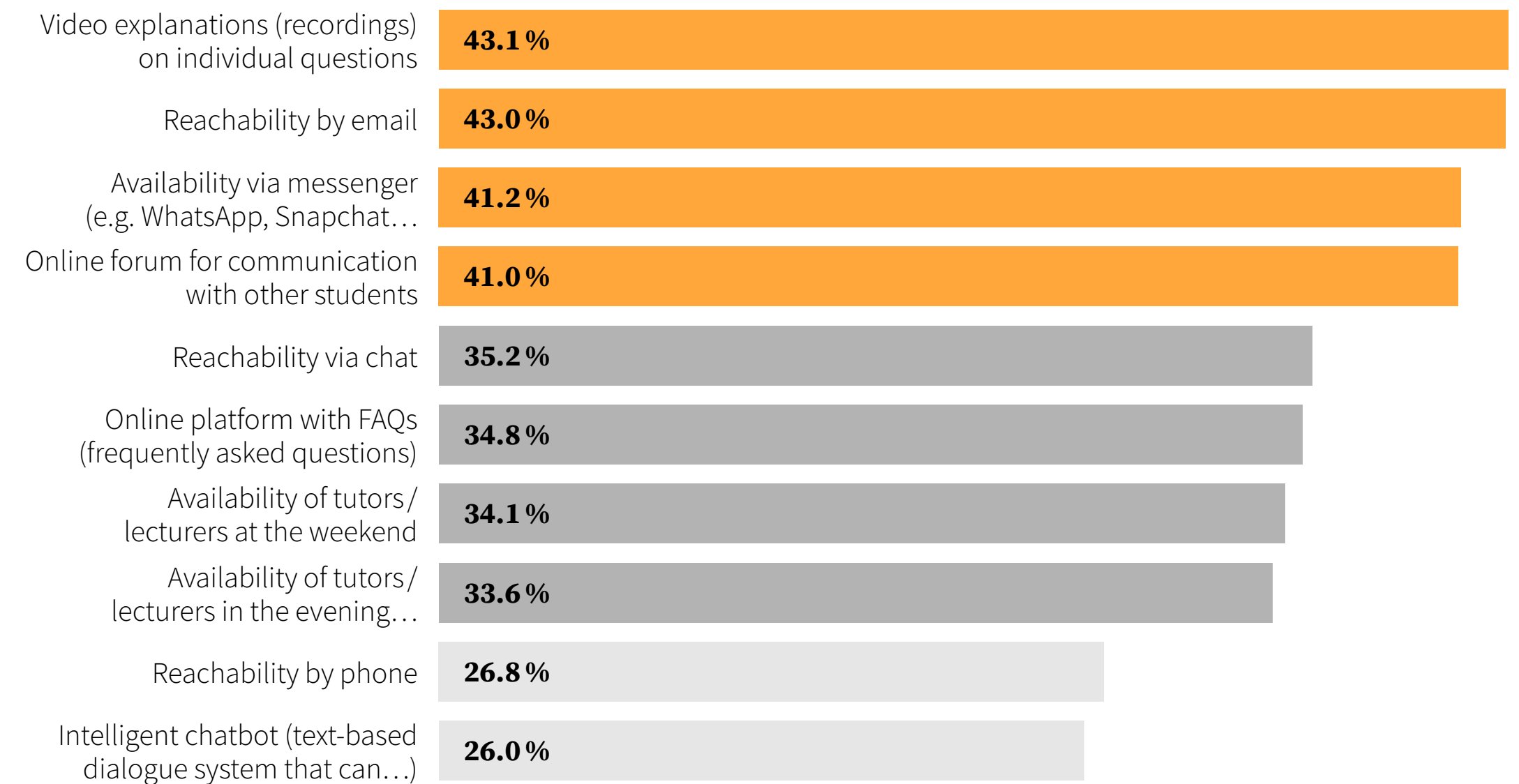
WHAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN ON YOUR COURSE?

When it comes to questions about their studies, participants would prefer to be supported by and taken care of via video explanations of individual questions (43.1%) and email reachability (43%). They would rather communicate via messenger (41.2%) than be supported by intelligent chatbots (26%). One out of ten would be willing to wait longer than 24 hours.

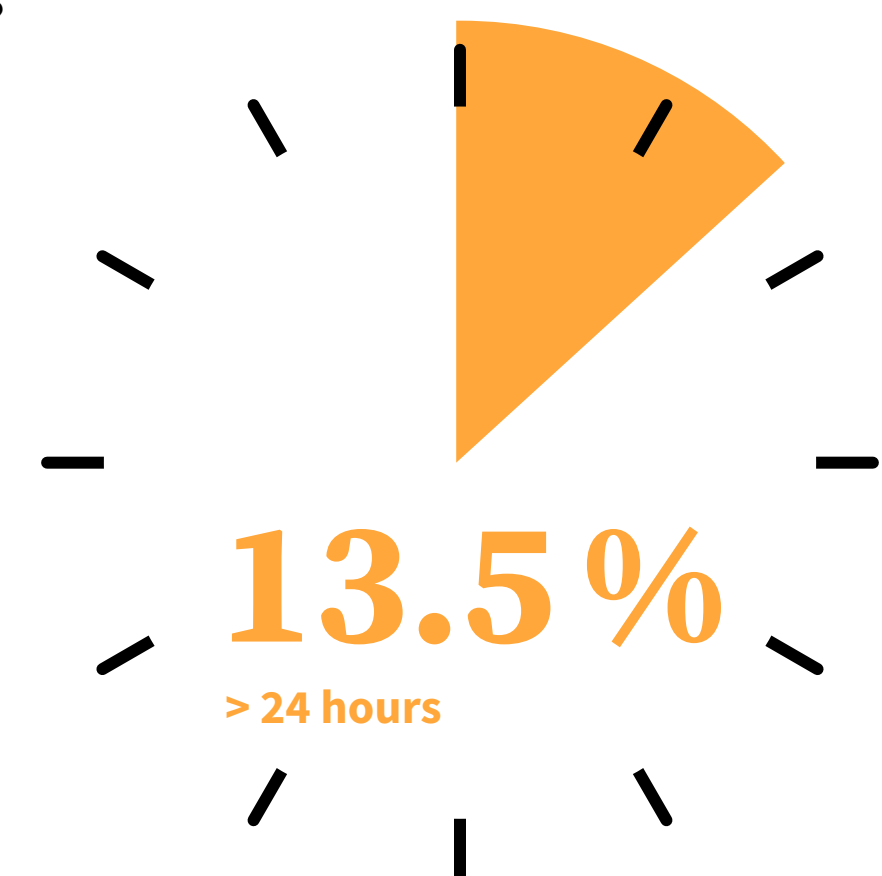
How important would the following channels be in supporting you during your course?
VERY IMPORTANT (= 1.0) | UNIMPORTANT (= 4.0)



Which of the following aspects would be important to you in a distance learning program?



What reaction time do you consider to be the maximum acceptable for answering professional questions?

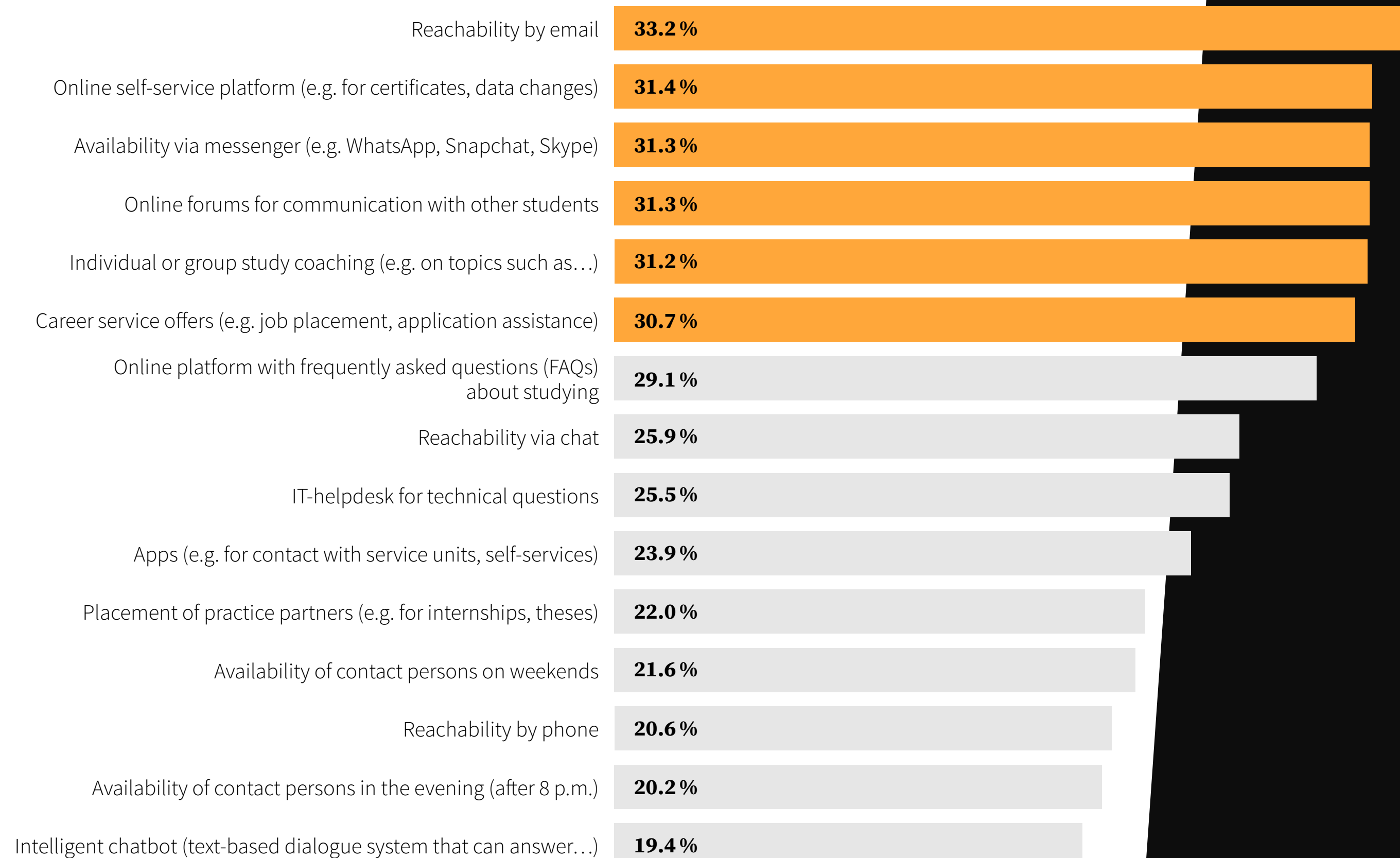


WHAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT?

Many various ways of organisational support are important to the participants.

They would like to be able to get information online, communicate with other students, get career service offers, receive individual support and reach out by email. One in four would be willing to wait longer than 24 hours to receive answers to organisational questions.

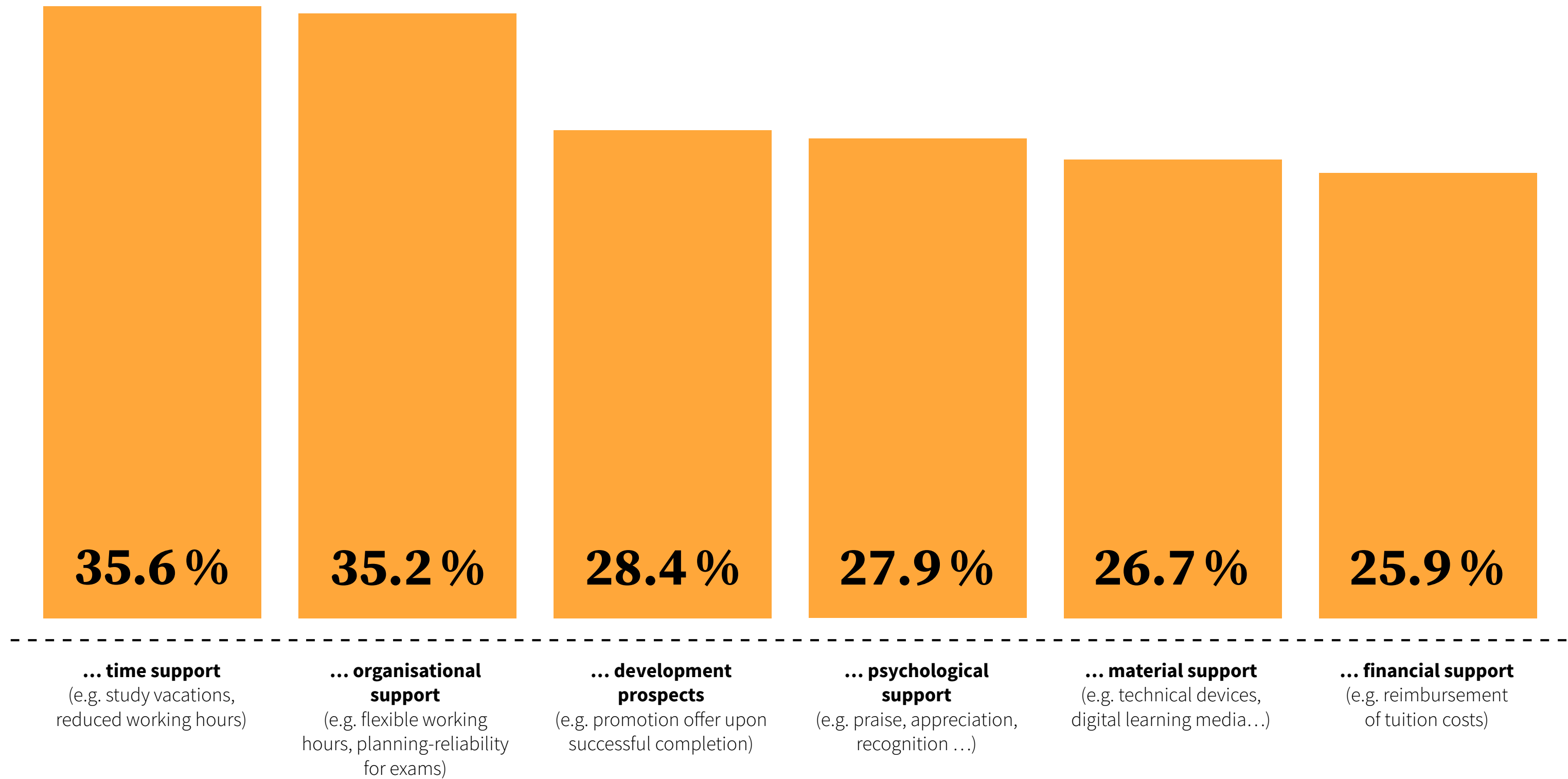
Which of the following aspects is important to you when it comes to the organisational support of your distant-learning course?



EMPLOYER SUPPORT FOR THE DUAL STUDY PROGRAM.

In general, most of the participants would prefer to be supported by their employer. Most participants would prefer to be supported in terms of time, e.g. through study vacations or reduced working hours (35.6%), or organisational support (35.2%). One quarter prefer to be supported financially (25.9%). **Only 8% would not wish to be supported by their employer at all.**

**Would your employer support you in your distance learning?
If yes, in which way?**



Dr. Nastja Pusic
Strategic Partnerships
Manager at the
IU International University
of Applied Sciences

“Online studying is without a doubt a win-win situation. Furthermore, companies can benefit from their employees developing their professional skills while working, making them even more valuable and up-to-date with the latest developments in the market and industry. As a result, the organisation becomes even more competitive and successful. Notwithstanding the support that the organisations could offer their employees in this process – whether in the form of reduced working hours, flexible working arrangements or financial support – whatever the case, it represents a profitable investment in an employee.

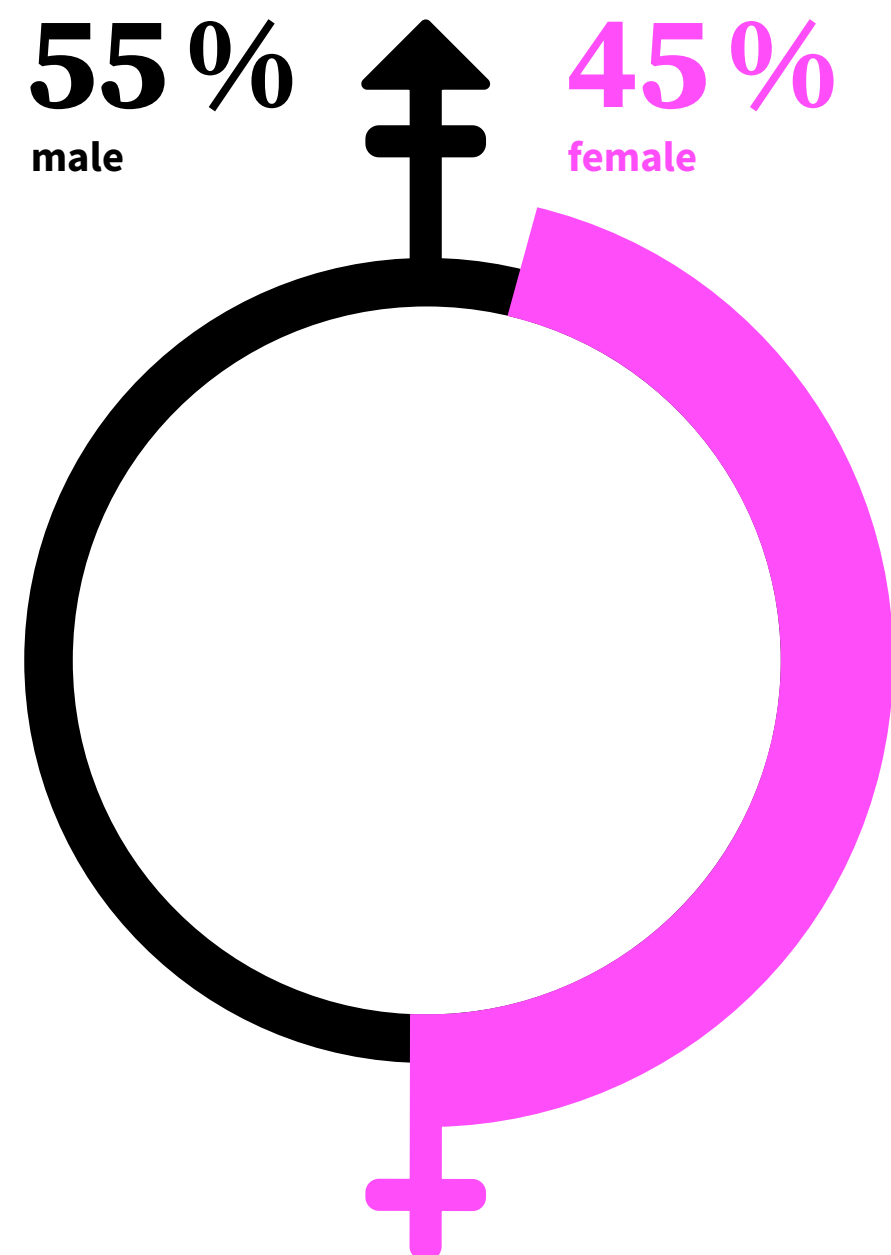
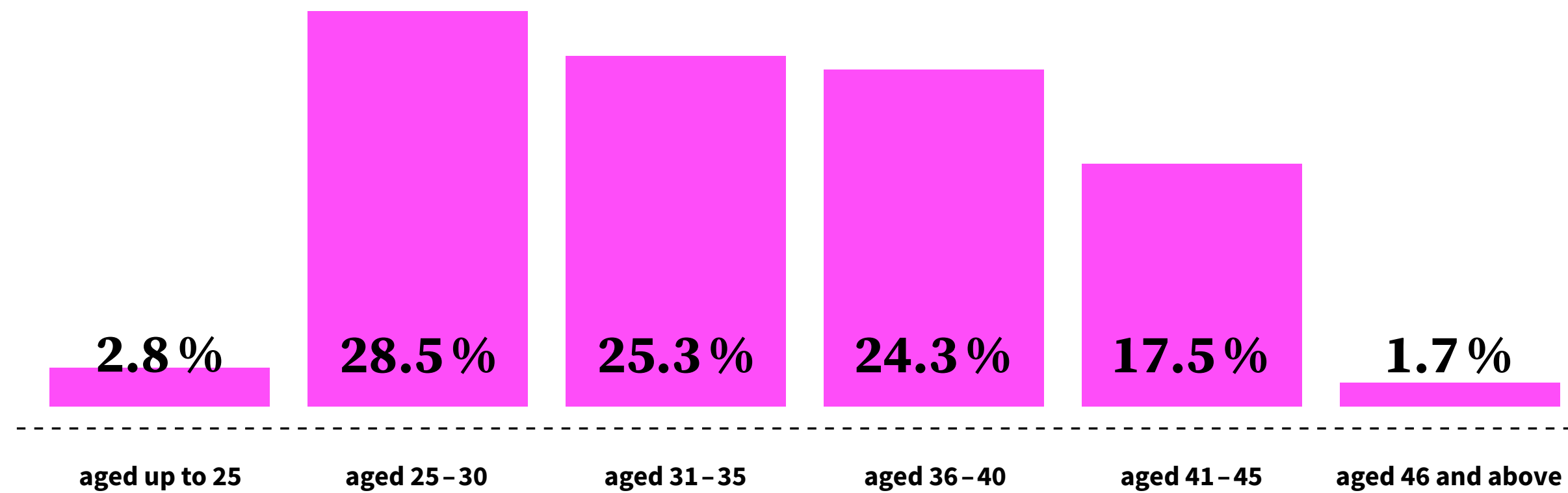


STUDY FACTS

Target group:
young professionals in 28 countries

Countries:
Algeria, Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria,
Ghana, India, Vietnam, Phillipines,
Egypt, Indonesia, South Africa,
Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Turkey,
Russia, Poland, Romania, Spain,
South Korea, Italy, Saudi Arabia,
France, United Kingdom, Sweden,
Netherlands, Canada, United States

! FOR DETAILED RESULTS PER COUNTRY,
TAKE A LOOK AT OUR FACTSHEETS.



200

Participants per country except
for Algeria (50 participants)



Contact us

If you have any questions or comments,
please contact us: research@iu.org

IMPRINT

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The Ministry of Economics, Science and Digital
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in matters relating to higher education law.

Contact us:



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