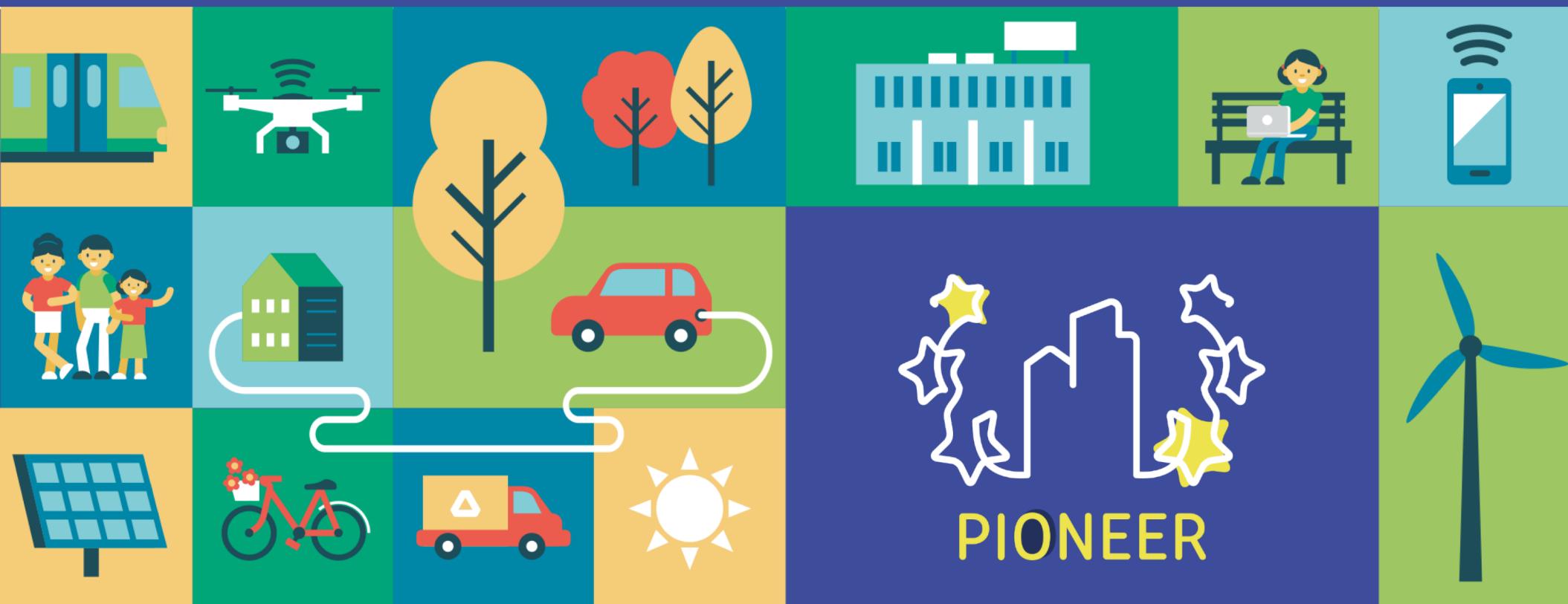


European University Alliance



Identification and mapping of the barriers and levers of PIONEER mobility

Milestone 7 – December 2025

PIONEER WP2 Lead Beneficiary – ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon

PIONEER WP2 Co-lead Beneficiary – UHU University of Huelva





Executive Summary



This presentation summarises the work carried out by PIONEER Work Package 2 – ***Mobility and Internationalisation for All*** – during 2025. It highlights **statistics** on PIONEER mobilities for the academic year 2023/24, i.e., before the PIONEER Alliance was awarded Erasmus+ European Universities Initiative (EUI) funding. It also presents the **state of play of relevant 2025 procedures** within the 10 PIONEER Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including: (a) guidelines for incoming mobility, (b) main challenges in implementing new mobility programs such as Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), (c) key reasons why students choose not to participate in regular semester mobility, and (d) priorities identified from mobility challenges and successes.

Additionally, this work includes insights from **18 stakeholder interviews** - 10 internals and 8 externals to PIONEER universities - identifying **levers and barriers to mobility**, a **SWOT analysis of mobility in the PIONEER Alliance**, and concluding recommendations.

Data was collected when available. It is recommended that **relevant data not currently recorded should be captured in the future, as well as data consistency verification steps.** 3



Presentation authorship



Authors of the presentation

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Erasmus+ EUI requirements on mobilities



Enhanced institutional cooperation within the European Universities alliances enables students, doctoral candidates, and staff to benefit from seamless mobility opportunities across European inter-university campuses

Participants can study, train, teach, conduct research, work, or share services at any partner institution, either physically, online, or through blended formats. The alliances aim to promote mobility at all levels – bachelor, master, and doctoral – with a target of at least 50% of students benefiting from physical, virtual, or blended mobility

Source: *The European Universities alliances in action*, 2025, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative/about>



Impacts of student mobility



- **Enhanced learning outcomes:** Exposure to diverse teaching methods and academic cultures improves adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills
- **Language proficiency:** Immersion in a different linguistic environment strengthens communication skills
- **Curriculum enrichment:** Access to courses and resources not available at the home institution broadens academic knowledge
- **Intercultural competence:** Develop cultural awareness, tolerance, and global perspectives
- **Soft skills:** Foster resilience, independence, adaptability, and teamwork
- **Confidence and autonomy:** Studying in an international environment builds self-reliance and decision-making skills
- **Employability:** Employers value international experience, global mindset, and ability to work in multicultural teams
- **Digital skills:** Virtual or blended mobility enhances proficiency with online collaboration tools
- **Exposure to innovation:** Participation in international projects fosters creativity and research skills

Source: European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, PPMI, Grumbinaitė, I., Colus, F. and Buitrago Carvajal, H., Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/32313>



Impacts of mobility of other target groups



- **Researcher staff capacity:** Building long-term collaborations with international peers, opening doors to joint projects and funding. Fostering international cross-disciplinary partnerships, leading to innovative solutions and broader research perspectives, access diverse resources, co-author publications, increasing visibility contributing to institutional and personal recognition in the global scientific landscape
- **Academic staff capacity:** Incorporating global perspectives into course design, strengthening professional development, building international partnerships for joint programs and grants, improving ability to teach and collaborate in multicultural environments
- **Non-academic staff capacity:** Enhancing ability to manage enlarged mobility programs and support global engagement, digital tools, and international regulations, exposure to streamlined mobility systems, enhance intercultural ability to interact with diverse stakeholders and provide inclusive services, broadening professional horizons and opportunities for advancement with internationalisation skills

Source: European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, PPMI, Grumbinaitė, I., Colus, F. and Buitrago Carvajal, H., Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/32313>



Methodologies and tools



Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied to have an overview of the mobility status quo, at the beginning of PIONEER Alliance funding

- **Structured questionnaires** for all PIONEER HEI
 - Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, e.g., outgoing and incoming numbers of students, academic and non-academic staff
 - Survey on procedures – Information about the HEI (calendars, practices, etc.), procedures on students, academic and non-academic staff mobility
- **Collection of examples** - such as specific projects, BIPs, etc. - illustrating challenges and successes in mobility for each PIONEER HEI
- **Stakeholders' semi-structure interviews**

Applied to internal and external stakeholders for collecting experiences, expectations, opportunities, and challenges related to mobility collaboration with the PIONEER Alliance ecosystem (internal stakeholders = 10 interviews + external stakeholders = 8 interviews)



What will you find in this presentation? (1/2)



A quantitative overview of the community in each PIONEER HEI and mobility data (outgoing and incoming, total and to/from PIONEER partners) for the 2023/24 academic year

A selected summary of information focused on existing welcome support for incoming participants, challenges faced, and the time required to participate in and organise BIPs, as well as the main reasons provided by HEI students for not participating in mobility programs

Examples of projects within the PIONEER Alliance where mobility has been particularly successful or challenging were collected, and the main recommendations are presented, along with the key levers and barriers to mobility identified in interviews with internal and external stakeholders



What will you find in this presentation? (2/2)



A SWOT analysis based on the collected data is presented to illustrate the state of mobility and the main challenges and opportunities for the HEI. The analysis is derived from the qualitative survey, stakeholder interviews, and examples from PIONEER HEIs of both successful and challenging mobility experiences

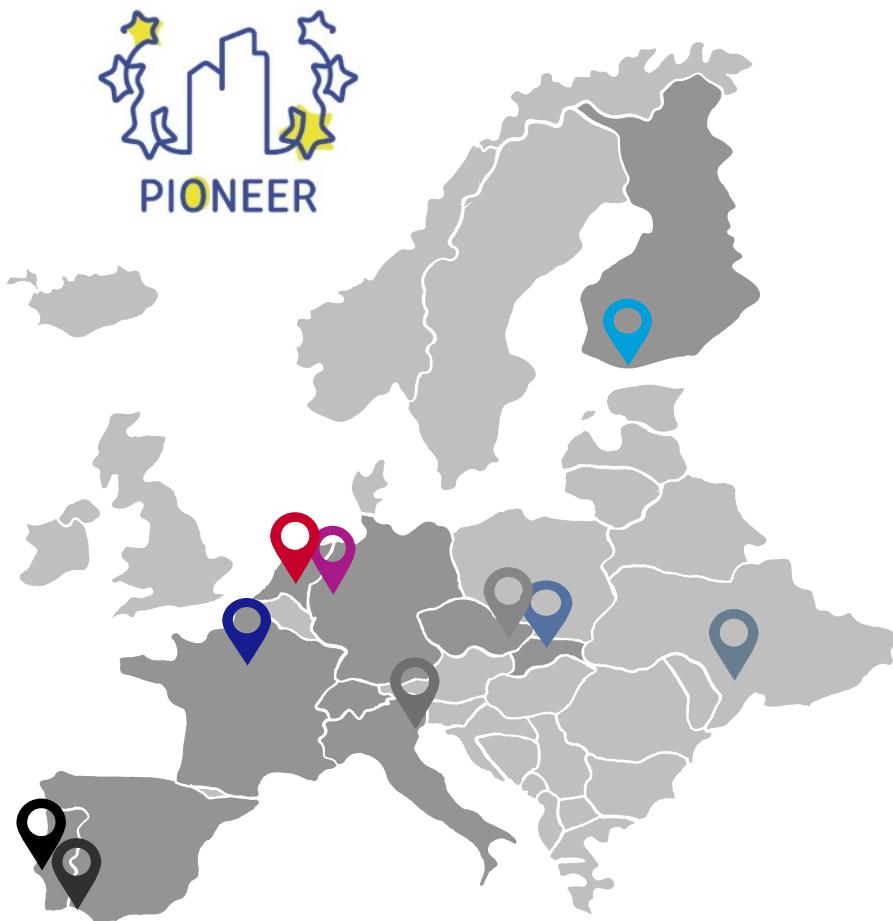
The recommendations are based on reflections drawn from all collected data (both qualitative and quantitative), the SWOT analysis, and the insights considered most important by WP2 delegates. They aim to guide future actions at HEIs to improve both the quantity and quality of mobility within the PIONEER Alliance

Definition of relevant mobility concepts





Outgoing and incoming mobility



Outgoing

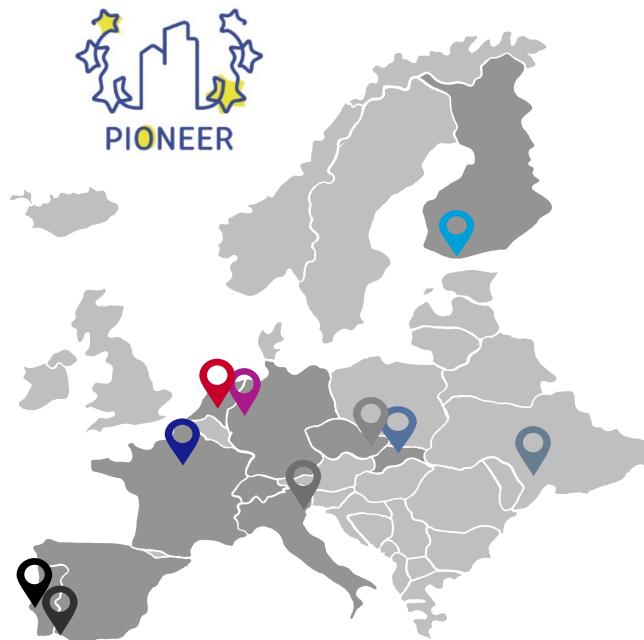
Refers to a person of a HEI who has an opportunity for mobility at a hosting organisation abroad, it means that the applicant organisation acts as a sending organisation, that selects participants and sends them to a hosting organisation abroad

Incoming

Refers to a person of an abroad HEI who is received at the host HEI



Student and staff mobility



Student mobility

Student mobility can take place in any study field and at any cycle (short cycle, bachelor, master, or doctoral). To ensure high-quality mobility activities with maximum impact, the activity must be compatible with the student's degree-related learning objectives and personal development needs

Staff mobility

Staff mobility can be undertaken by any type of HEI staff or by invited staff from outside the HEIs. To ensure high-quality mobility activities with maximum impact, the activity should be related to the staff's professional development and address their learning and personal development needs

PhD students can be mobile under the category *student* but also under the category *staff*

Source: *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*, Version 2, 20/01/2025



Mobility – various definitions



Governance meeting of the PIONEER Alliance, 21–22 October 2025,
Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Czechia

Mobility/Learning agreement

An agreement between the sending and receiving organisation and the participating individuals, defining the aims and content of the mobility period

Short-term mobility

A period of mobility up to 60 days

Long-term mobility

A period of mobility of 60+ days and less than a full year

Micro-credential

A recognised proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has achieved following a short learning experience, according to transparent standards and requirements and upon assessment. The proof is contained in a certified document that lists the name of the holder, the achieved learning outcomes, the assessment method, the awarding body and, where applicable, the qualifications framework level and the credits gained



Definition – Erasmus Without Paper



Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)

A digital solution that connects HEIs' Erasmus+ mobility management systems, enabling them to manage student mobility online. It replaces traditional email-based and paper processes with a secure, efficient online network for exchanging student data

Institutions can maintain their existing systems while linking to the EWP network through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces), which allow system-to-system communication. This ensures administrators can manage processes within their own systems while interacting with partners for approvals, confirmations, and signatures



Definition – Blended mobility and virtual learning



Blended mobility, e.g., BIP

- Blended mobility is a combination of physical mobility with a virtual component facilitating a collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork
- Any study period or traineeship abroad of any duration, including doctoral mobility, may be carried out as a blended mobility
- Any student can undertake blended mobility by participating in a blended intensive programme (BIP) according to the specific eligibility criteria for blended intensive programmes

Virtual/remote learning

Acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences through the use of information and communication technology tools that allow participants to have a meaningful transnational or international learning experience

Source: *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*, Version 2, 20/01/2025



Definition – COIL



Collaborative Online International Learning has no consensual definition

- COIL is an educational method to **internationalise curricula** and foster intercultural learning through collaboration between educators from different countries who co-design and co-facilitate online group assignments (Hackett et al., 2024)
- COIL connects accredited courses between institutions in different countries, creating **equitable, team-taught learning environments** where faculty co-design syllabi and students engage in collaborative, intercultural learning (SUNY COIL Centre)
- COIL is a **cost-effective approach** to international education that links students and faculty across borders for shared teaching and learning experiences using online communication tools (University of Alabama)
- COIL is a form of **virtual exchange** where faculty use online technology to facilitate sustained student collaboration, increasing intercultural competence and global exposure (University of Michigan–Dearborn)

Source: Hackett, S., Dawson, M., Janssen, J. et al. Defining Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Distinguishing it from Virtual Exchange.

TechTrends 68, 1078–1094 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-024-01000-w>

State University of New York's COIL Centre, <https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/>

UA Internationalisation, <https://international.ua.edu/internationalization/coil/>

UM-Dearborn COIL, <https://umdearborn.edu/global-engagement/collaborative-online-international-learning-coil>

PIONEER mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24

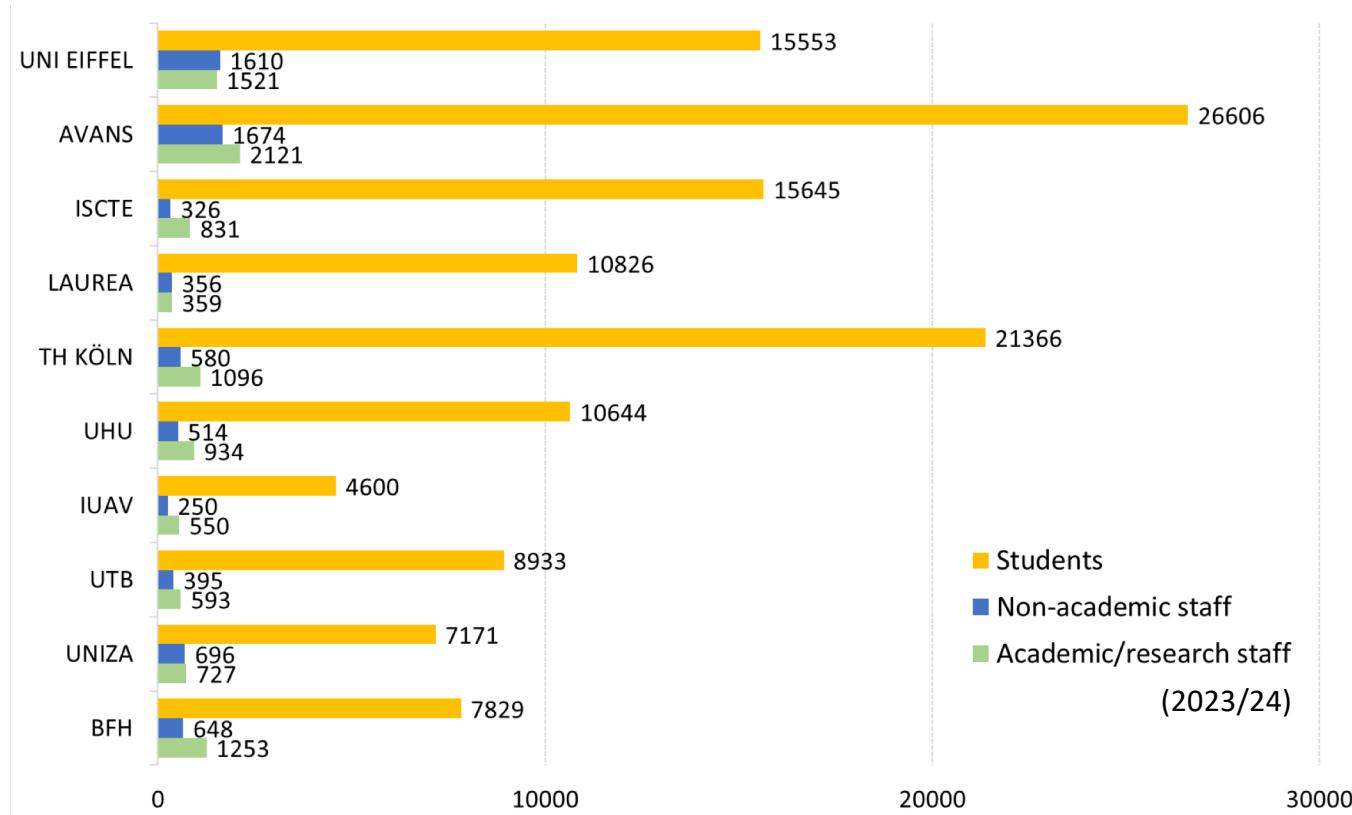




Total number of people in each PIONEER HEI



How many
are we?



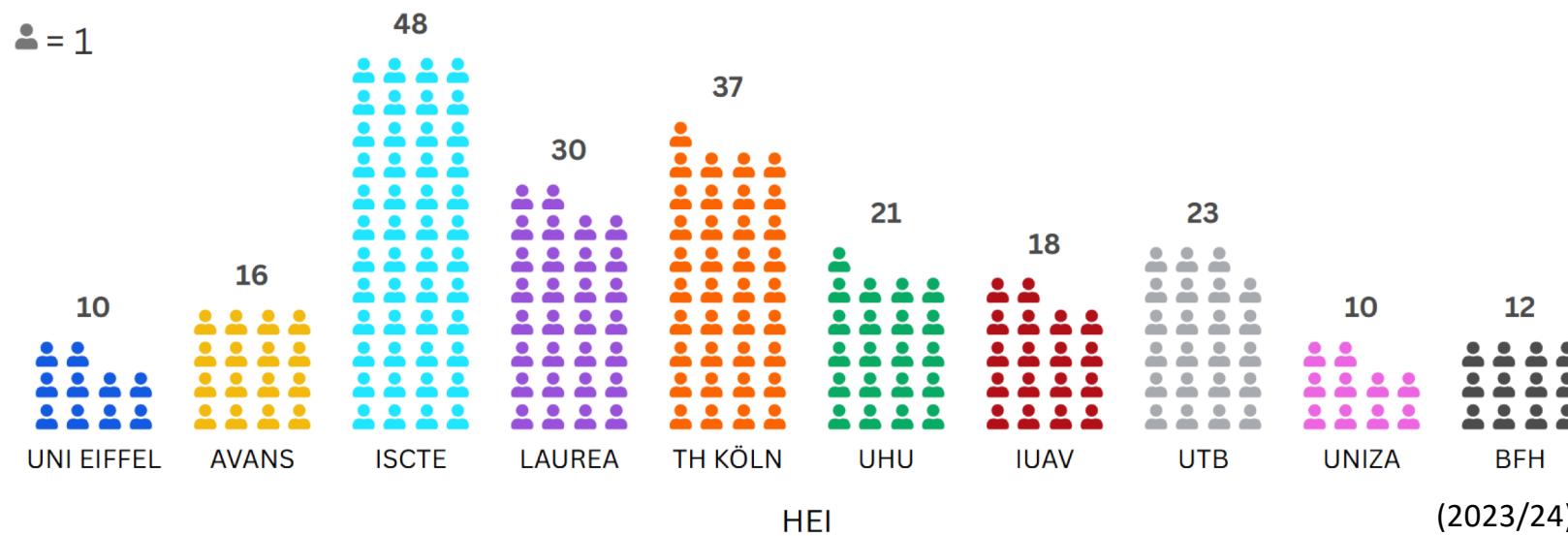
Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Ratio of students per non-academic staff in each HEI



The student-to-non-academic staff ratio is higher at ISCTE, TH KÖLN, and LAUREA, indicating a greater shortage of human resources to support administrative work



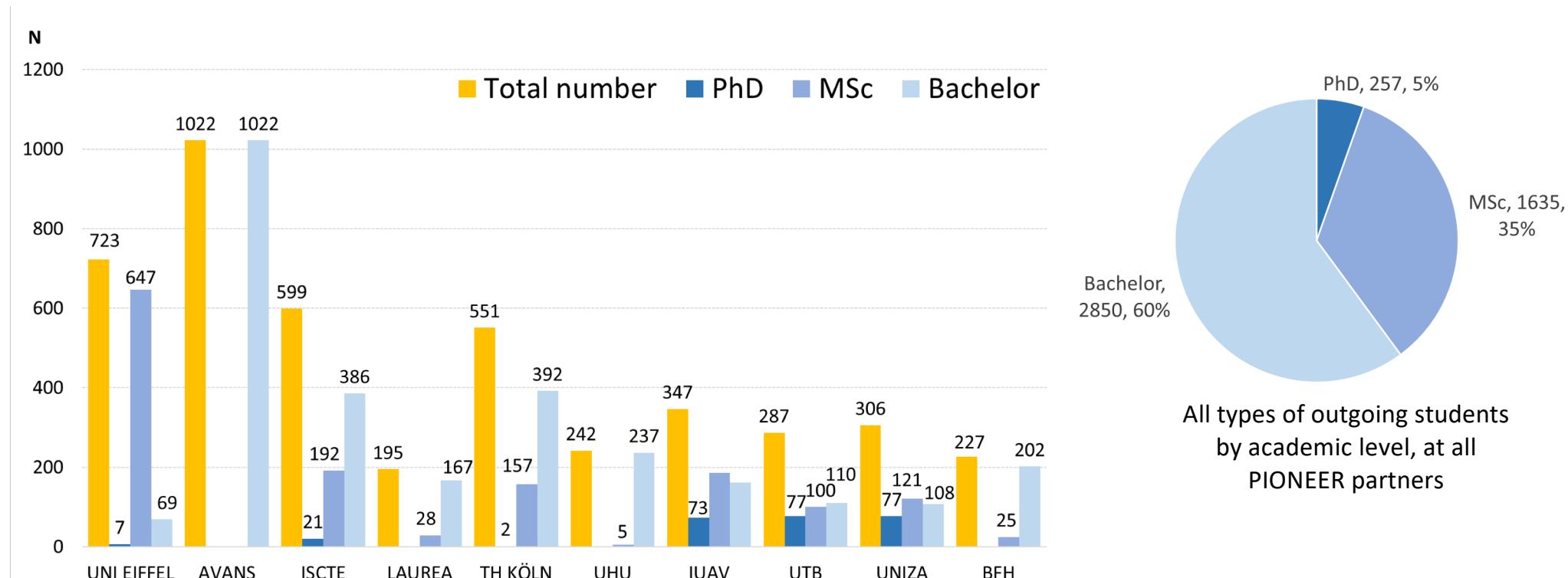
Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Number of all types of outgoing students by academic level



4742 of outgoing students, 60% are bachelor's degree students (2023/24)



Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025

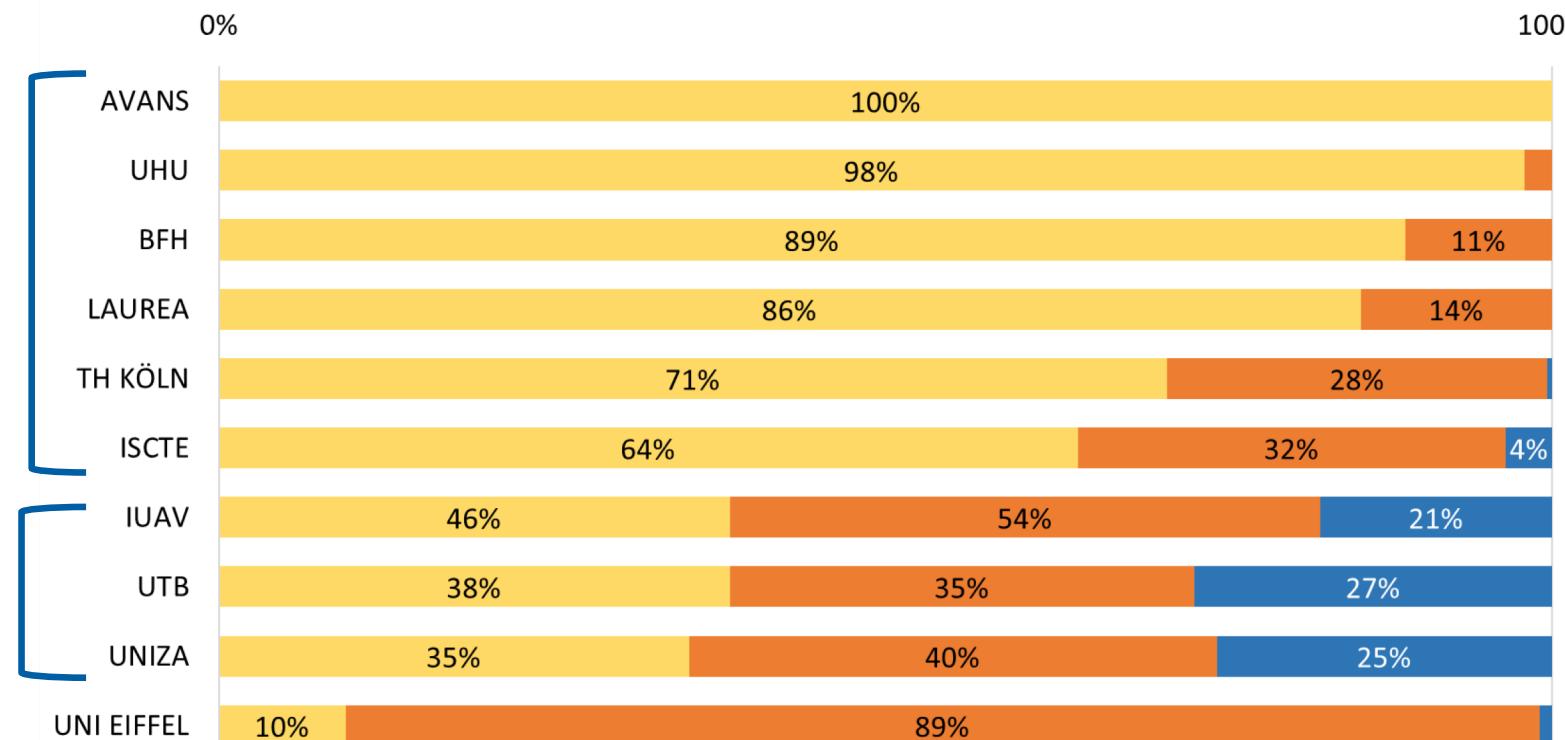


Total of all type of outgoing students by academic level (%)



Most mobility programmes involve undergraduate students

Notable outgoing doctoral students mobilities



■ Bachelor ■ MSc ■ PhD (2023/24)

Note: In Switzerland it is not possible to do a doctorate at universities of applied sciences

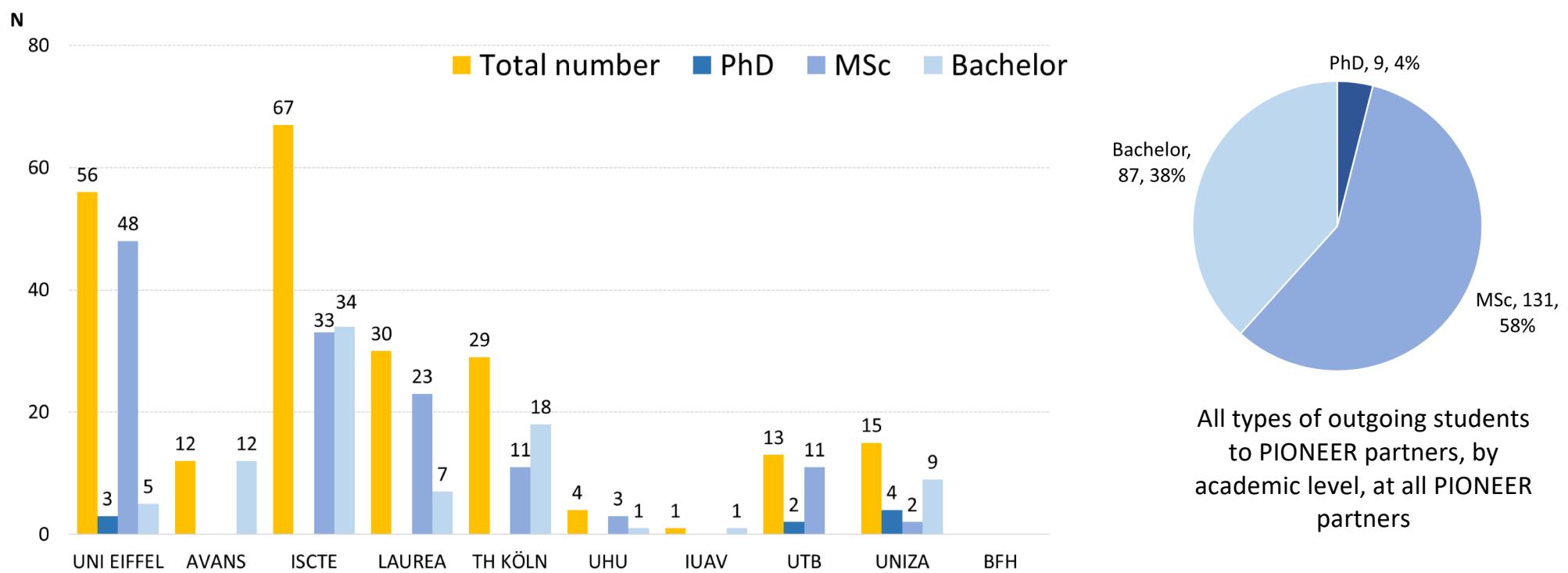
Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Number of all types of outgoing students to PIONEER partners by academic level



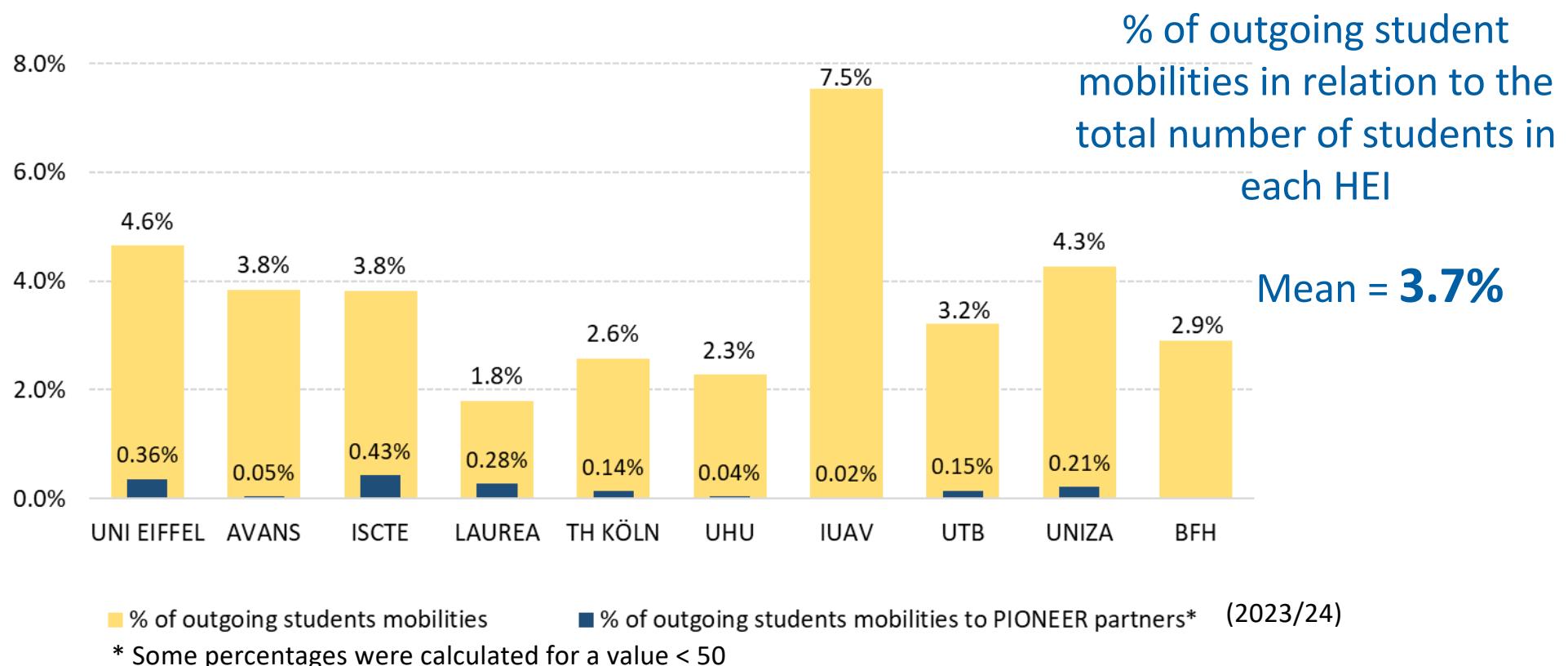
227 of outgoing students to PIONEER partners, 58% are Master's students (2023/24)



Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



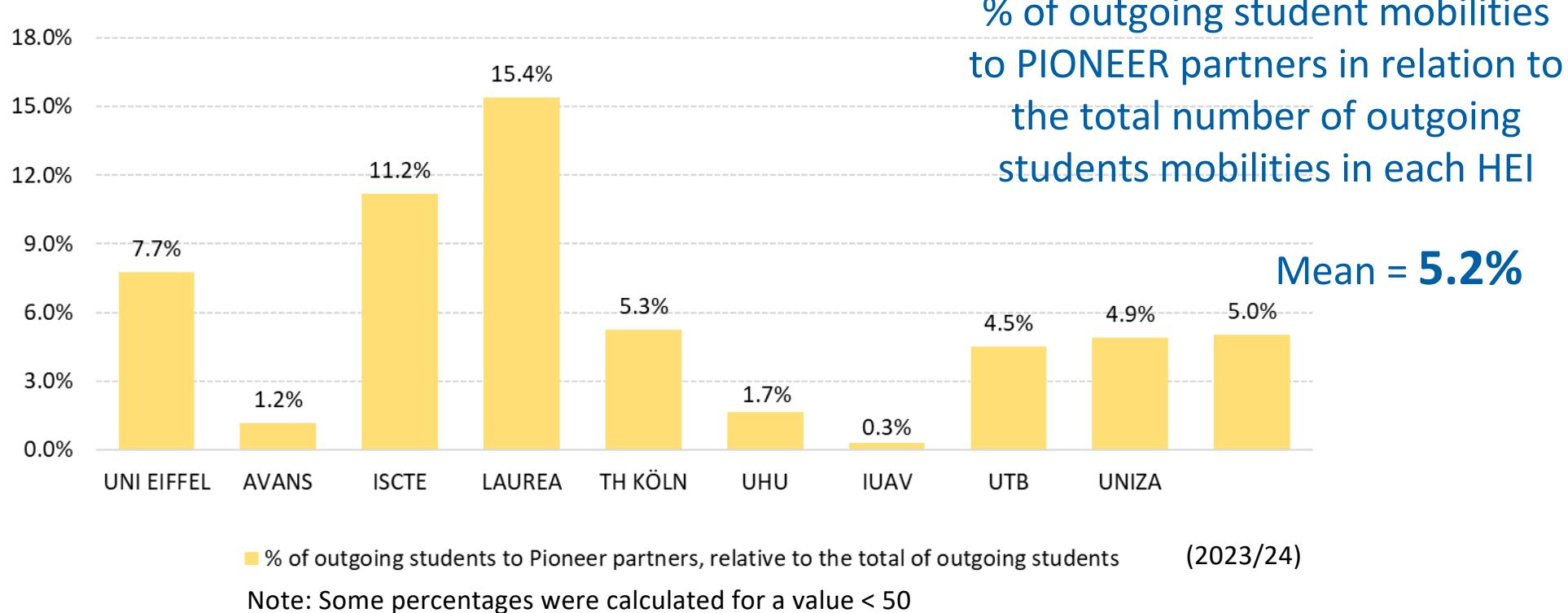
Outgoing student mobilities: total vs. to PIONEER partners (%)



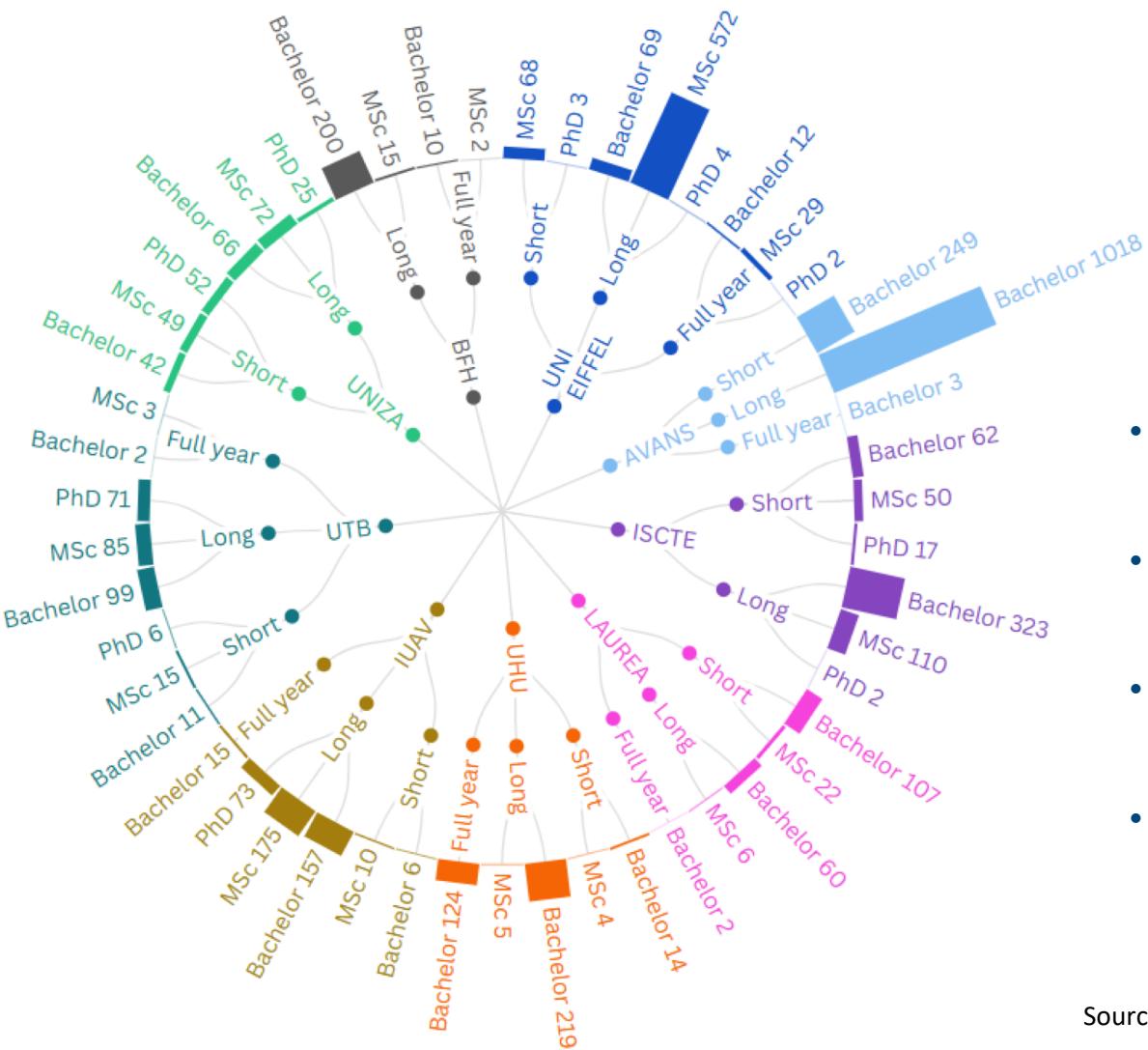
Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Outgoing students (all types) to PIONEER partners (%)



Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



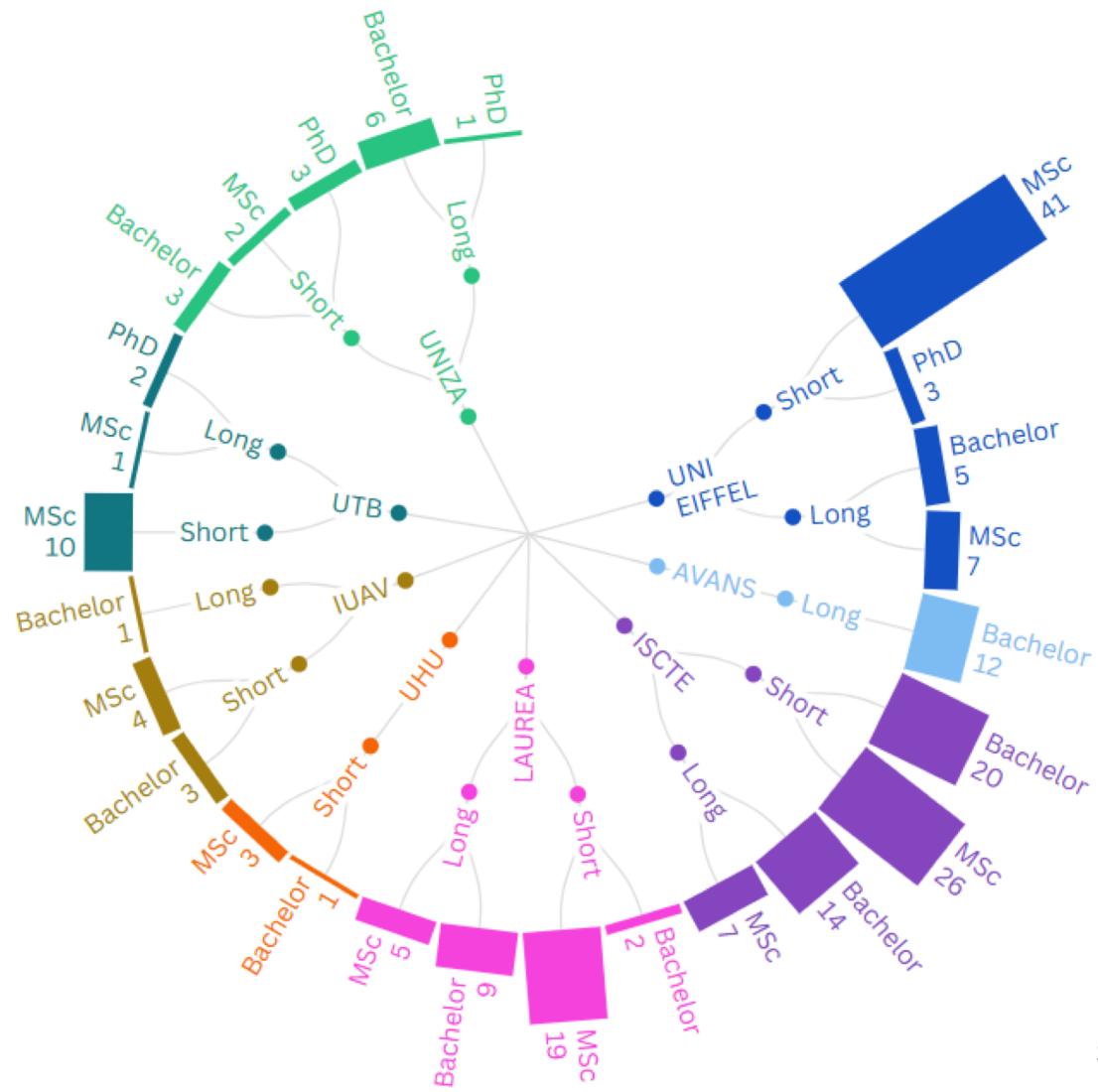
Total number of outgoing students by mobility duration and academic level (n)

- TH Köln did not capture the number of outgoing students by mobility duration
- BFH did not capture the number of outgoing students for short-term mobility
- AVANS only had outgoing Bachelor's degree students, mainly for long-term mobility
- LAUREA and BFH did not have outgoing PhD students



Total number of outgoing students to PIONEER partners, by mobility duration and academic level (n)

- In 2023/24, there were no full-year mobility to PIONEER partners
- TH Köln did not register the number of outgoing students by mobility duration
- The number of outgoing PhD students to PIONEER partners is very low

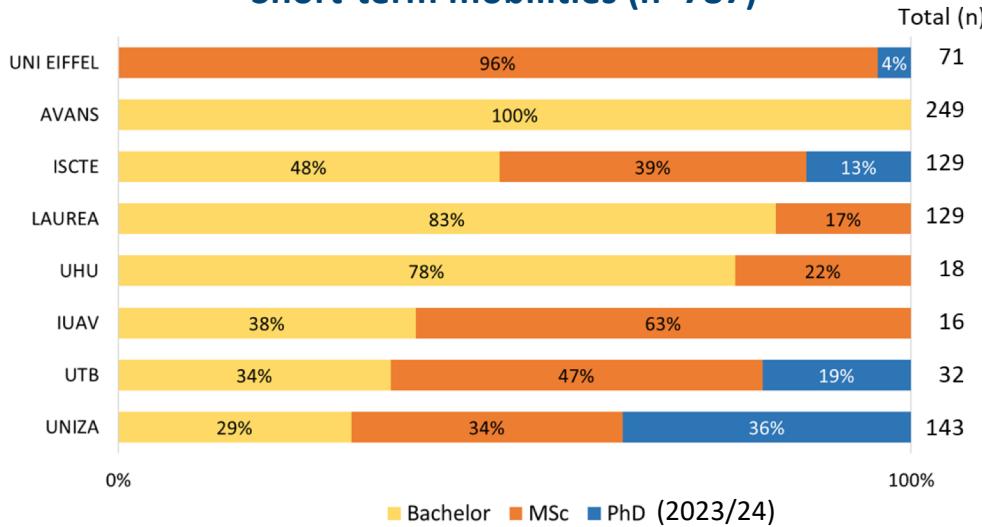


Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025

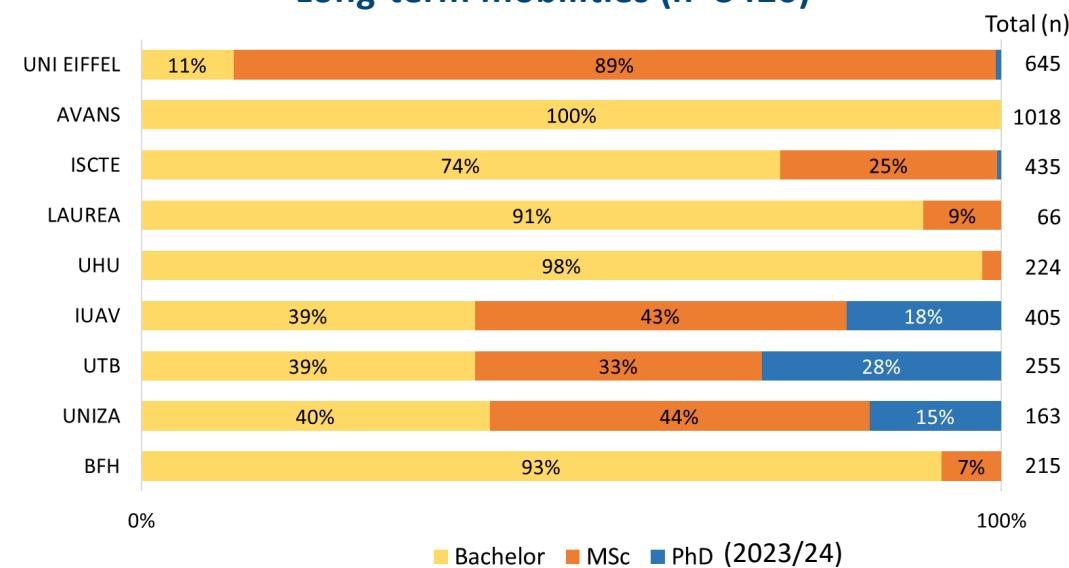
Outgoing students for short and long -term mobility by academic level (%)



Short-term mobilities (n=787)



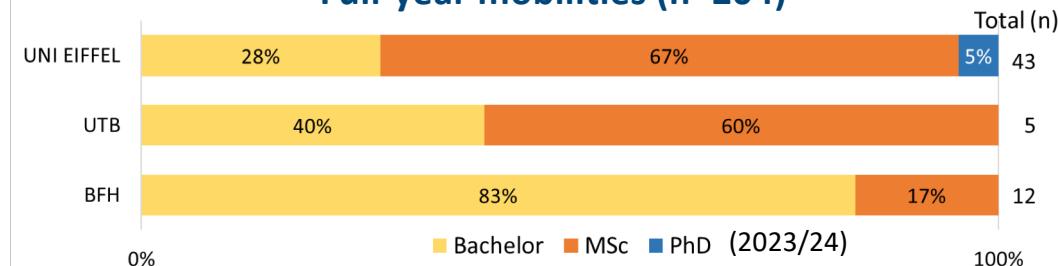
Long-term mobilities (n=3426)



- ISCTE, LAUREA and UHU present a higher proportion of bachelors' students in the long-term mobilities than in short-term period
- AVANS, LAUREA, UHU, and IUAV have 100% of outgoing bachelor's students for a full-year mobility

Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025

Full-year mobilities (n=204)

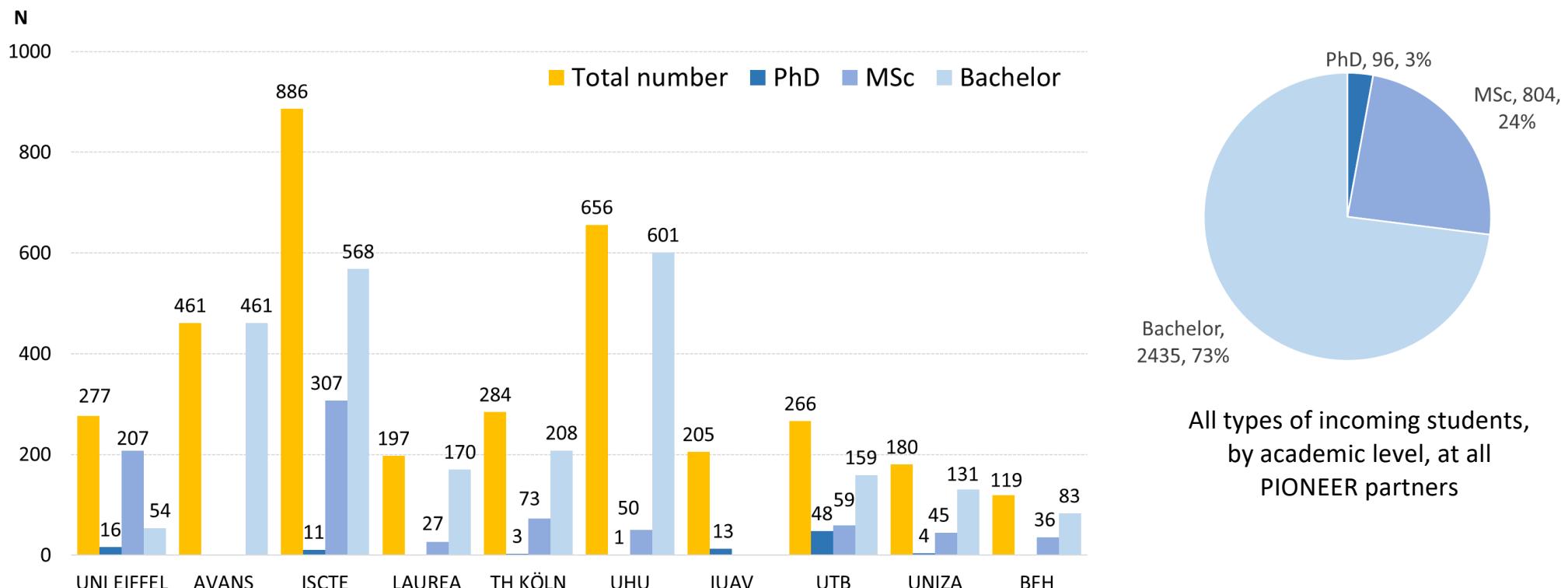




Total number of incoming students by academic level (all types)



3531 of incoming students, 73% are bachelor's degree students (2023/24)



Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025

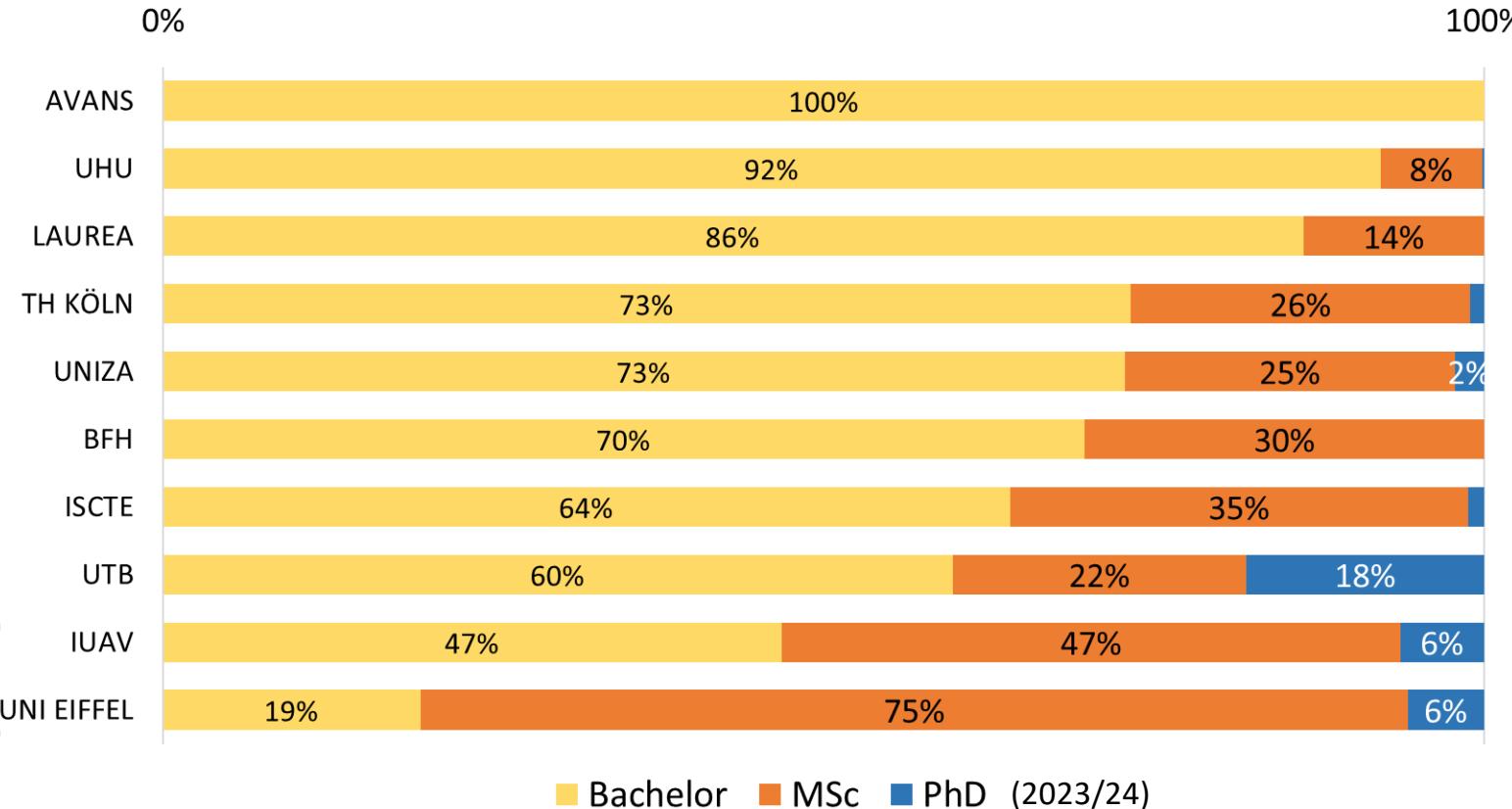


All types of incoming students by academic level (%)



Most incoming students at PIONEER HEI are undergraduate

The exceptions are IUAV and UNI EIFFEL that receive more Masters and PhD students



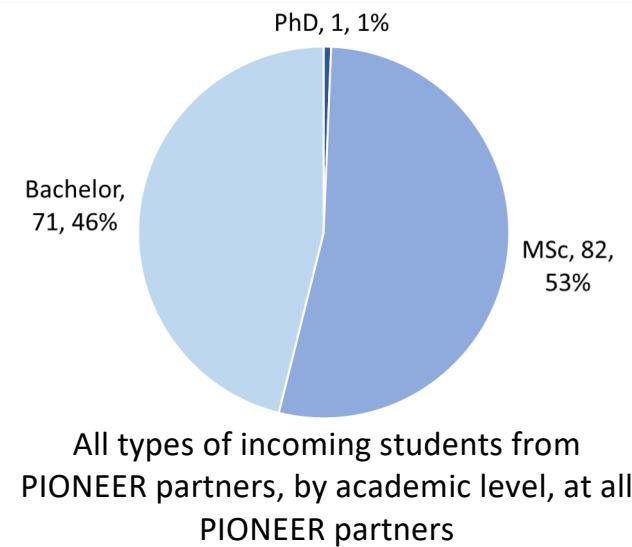
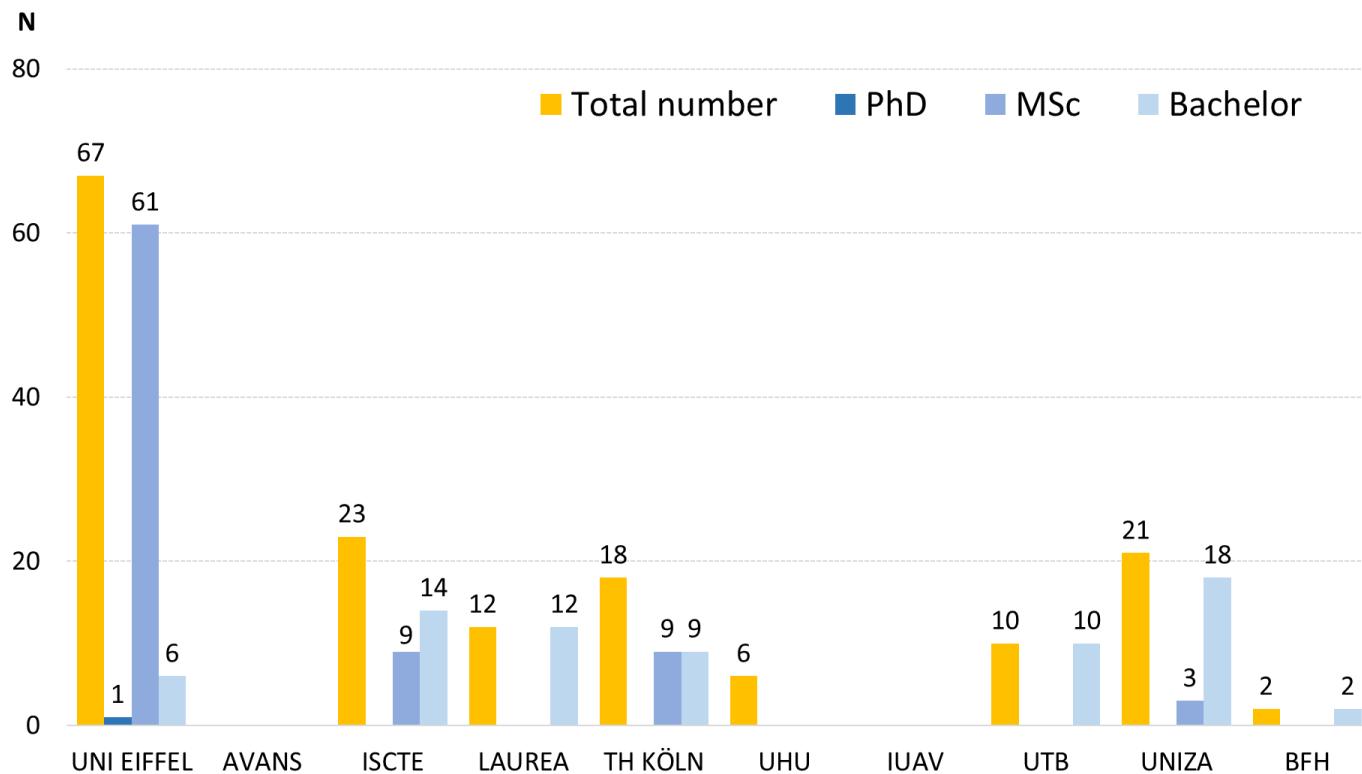
Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025



Incoming students from PIONEER partners by academic level (all types)



159 of incoming students from PIONEER partners, 53% are Master's students (2023/24)



There is a discrepancy of 68 additional records for outgoing student mobility to PIONEER HEIs compared to incoming mobility from PIONEER. This indicates the need for further verification to ensure record consistency

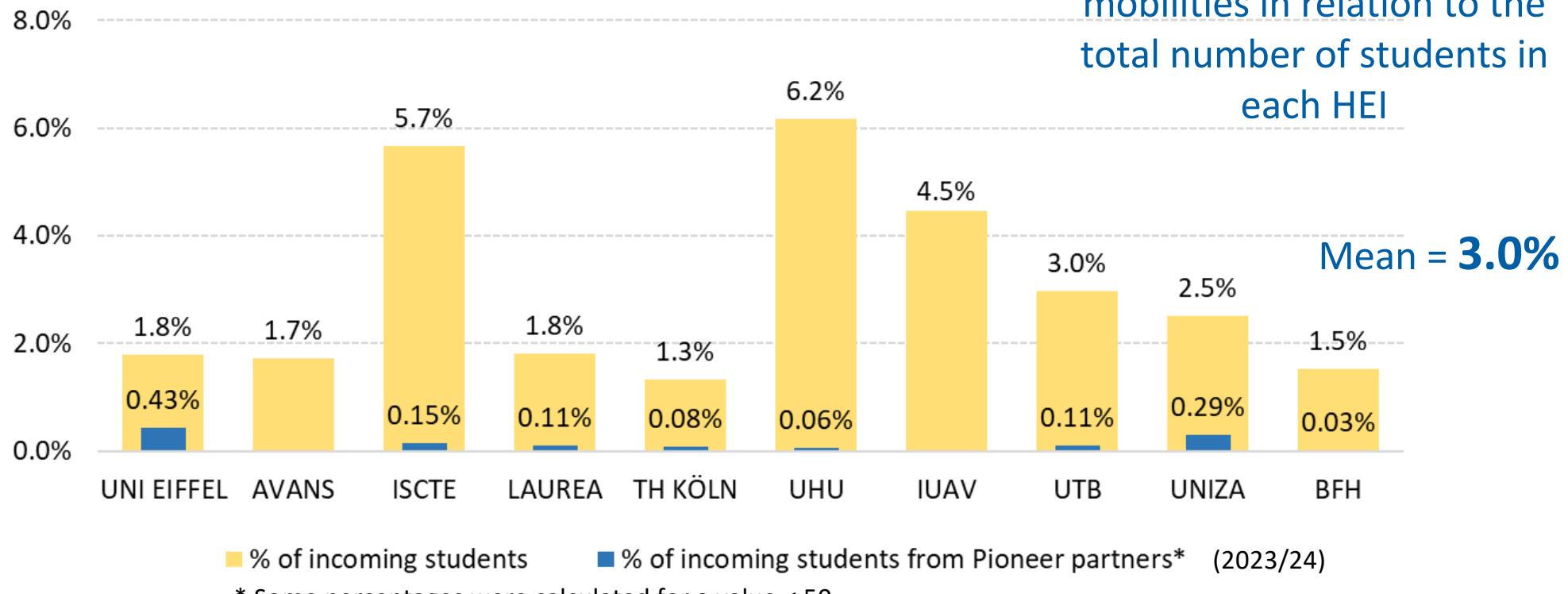
Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025



All types of incoming students: total vs. from PIONEER partners (%)



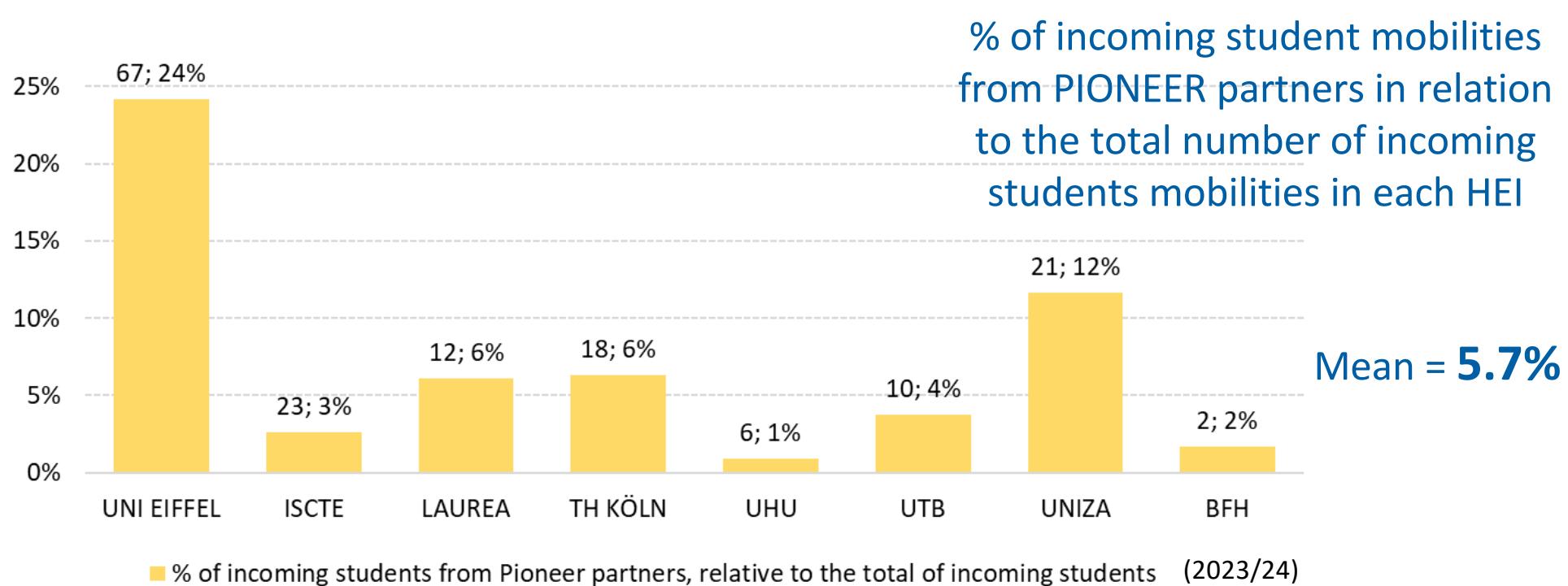
% of incoming student
mobilities in relation to the
total number of students in
each HEI



Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



All type of incoming students from PIONEER partners (%)



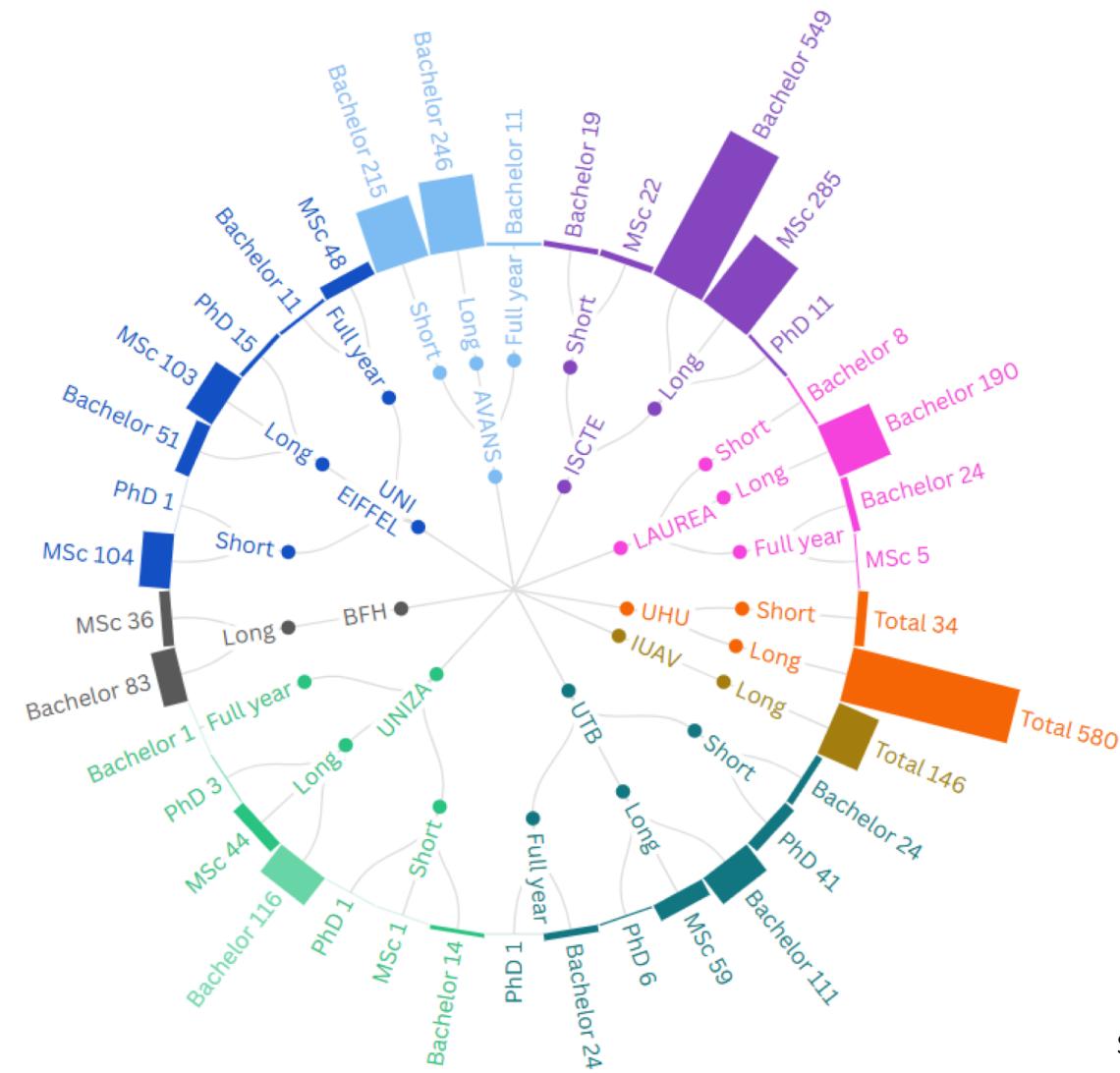
Note: Some percentages were calculated for a value < 50. The height of the bar represents the percentage, but as these mobility values are very small, the label shows the absolute value also

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Total of incoming students by mobility duration and academic level (n)

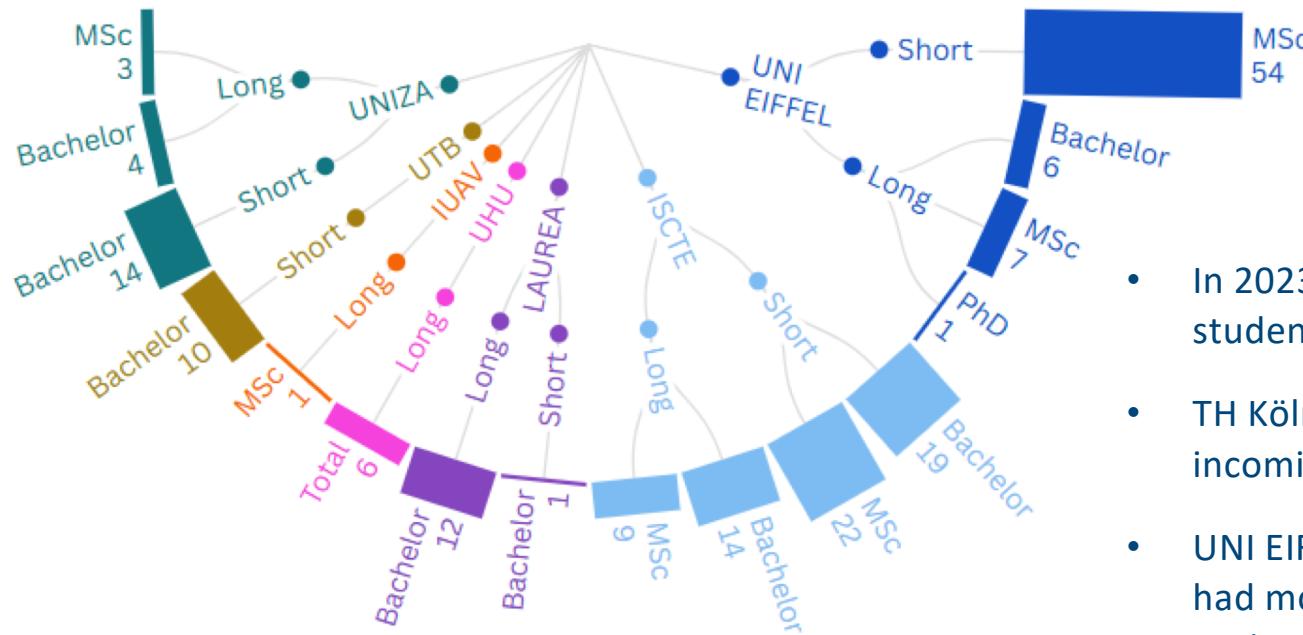
- TH Köln did not register the number of incoming students by mobility duration
- BFH only registered long-term incoming students
- AVANS only has incoming Bachelor's degree students
- 4 in 10 HEI registered incoming PhD students



Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Total of incoming students from PIONEER partners by mobility duration and academic level (n)



- In 2023/24, there were no full-year incoming students from PIONEER partners
- TH Köln did not register the number of incoming students by mobility duration
- UNI EIFFEL (68), ISCTE (23) and UNIZA (21) had more incoming students from PIONEER partners then others HEI of the consortium

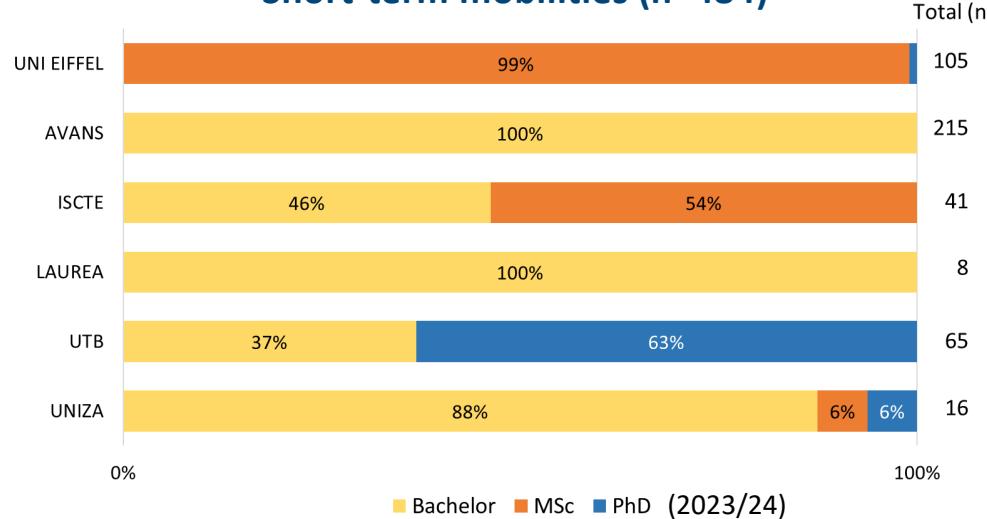
Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025



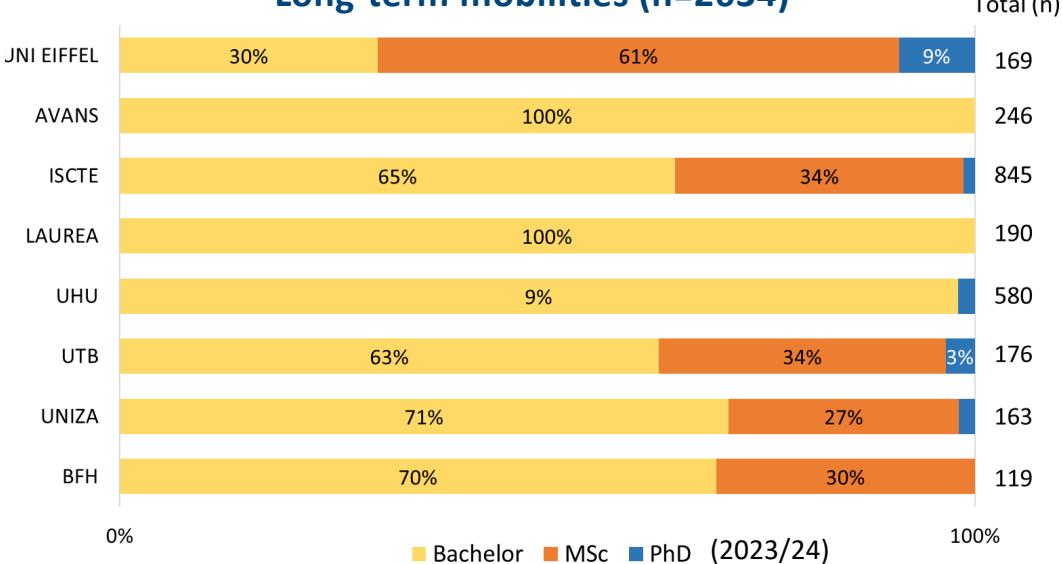
Incoming students for short and long -term mobility by academic level (%)



Short-term mobilities (n=484)



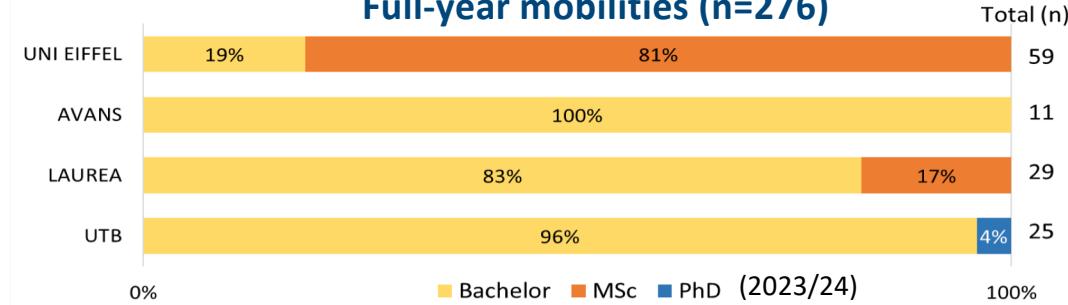
Long-term mobilities (n=2634)



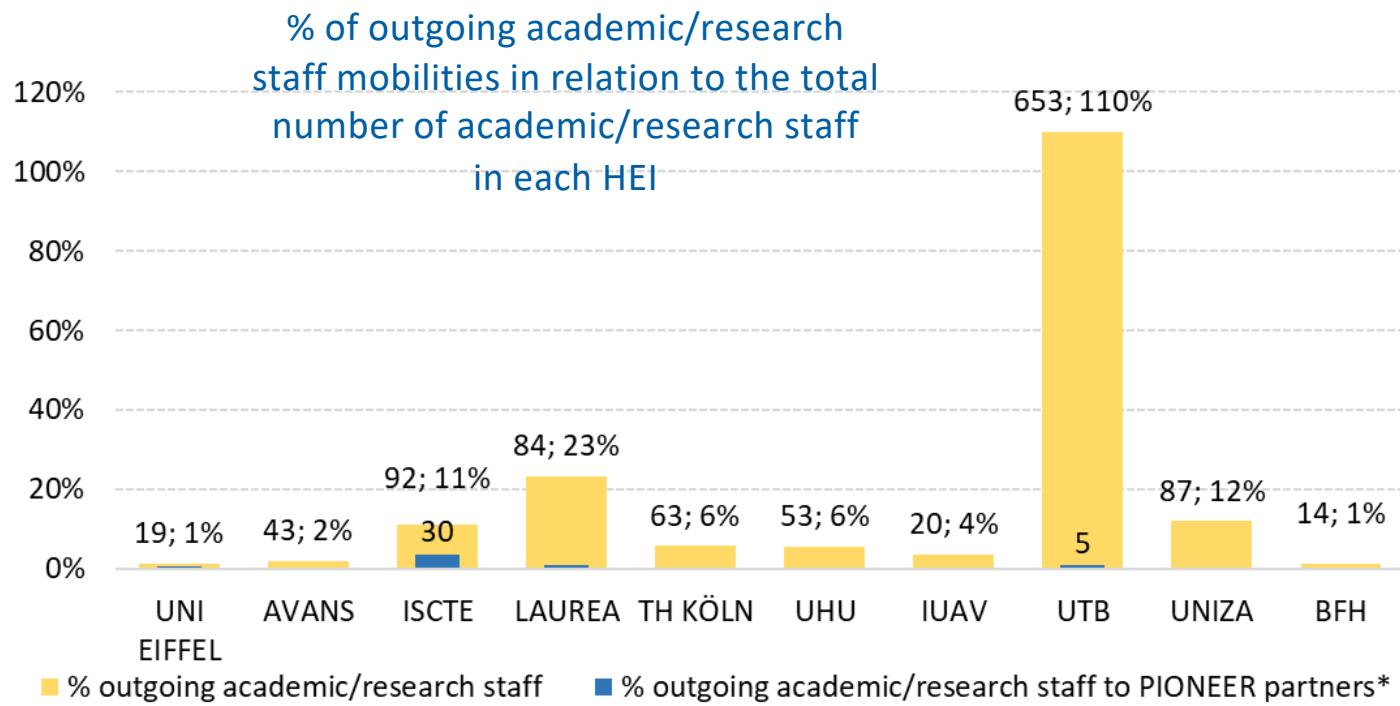
- UHU had 34 short-term, 580 long-term and 92 full-year incoming student mobilities
- IUAV had 146 long-term and 59 full-year incoming student mobilities
- These HEIs did not register incomings by academic level

Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025

Full-year mobilities (n=276)



Outgoing academic/research staff: total vs. to PIONEER partners (%)



* UTB academic/research staff have more than 1 mobility per person

Mostly short-term mobility, with ERASMUS+ funding

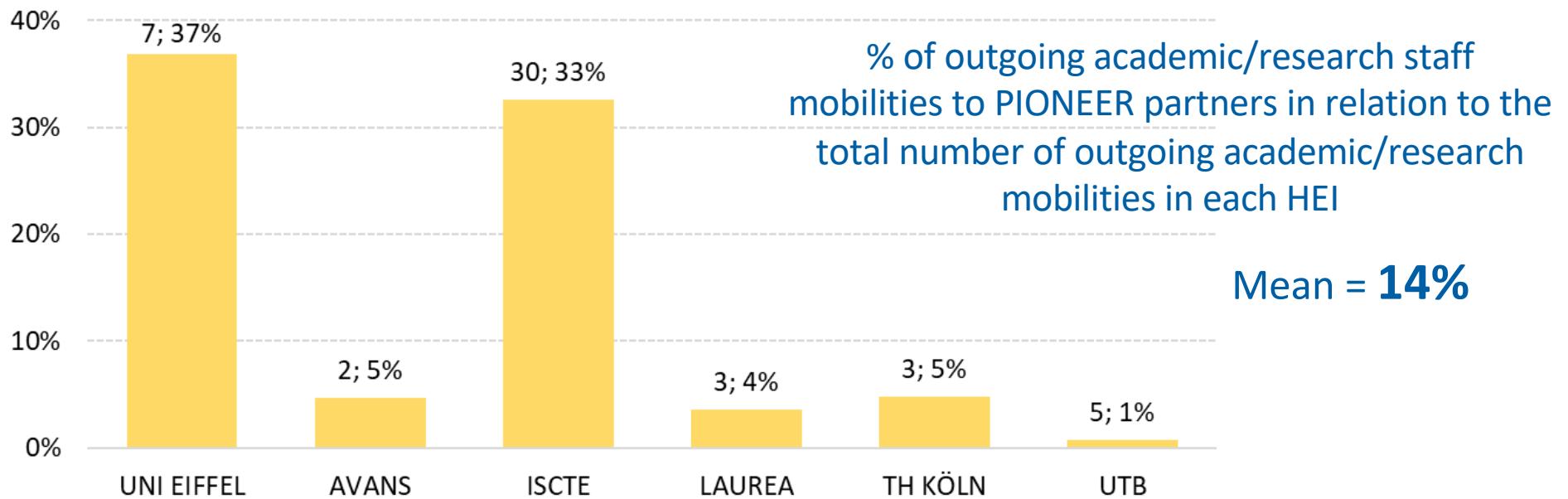
Exceptions:
IUAV, UTB, and BFH mostly with other type of grant

* Some percentages were calculated for a value < 50. The height of the bar represents the percentage, but as these mobility values are very small, the label shows the absolute value also

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Outgoing academic/research staff to PIONEER partners (%)



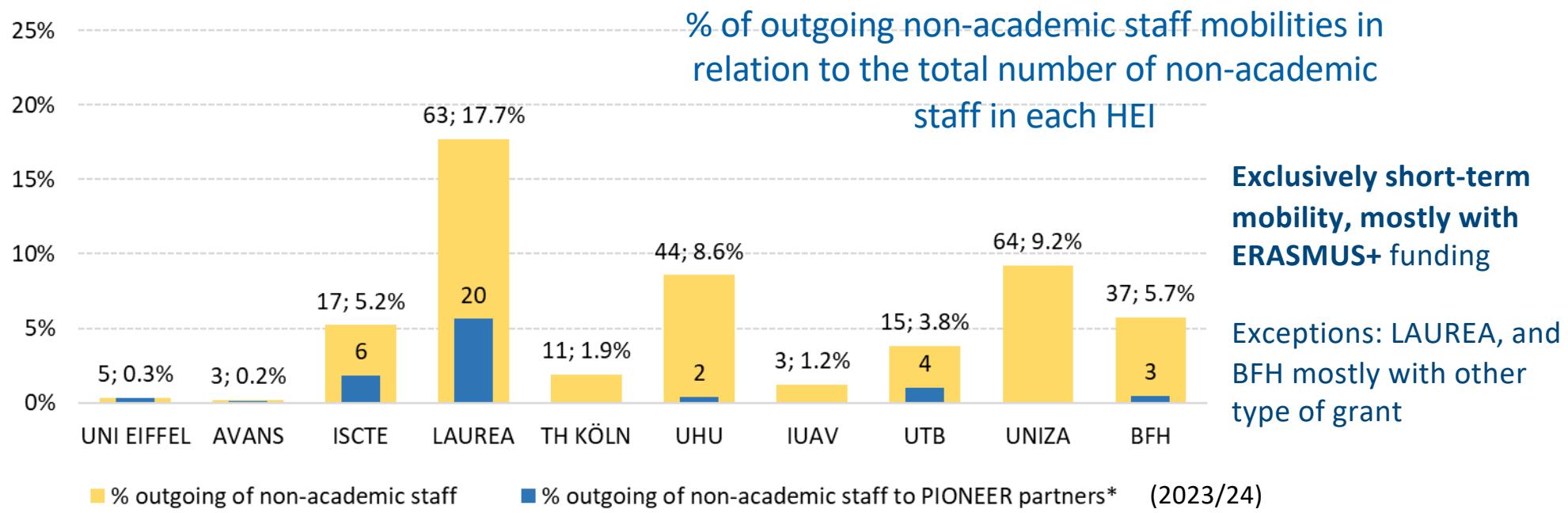
■ % of outgoing academic/research to Pioneer partners, relative to the total of outgoing academic/research staff (2023/24)

Note: The percentages were calculated for a value < 50. The height of the bar represents the percentage, but as these mobility values are very small, the label shows the absolute value also

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



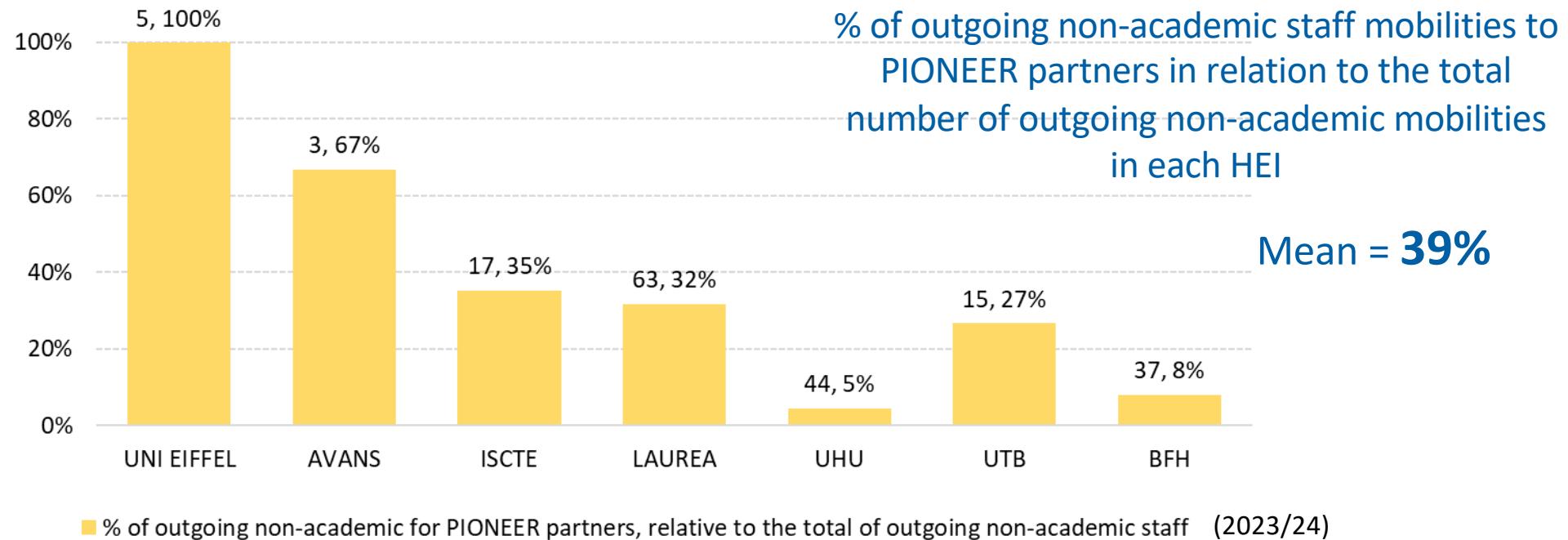
Outgoing non-academic staff: total vs. to PIONEER partners (%)



Source: Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025



Outgoing non-academic staff to PIONEER partners (%)

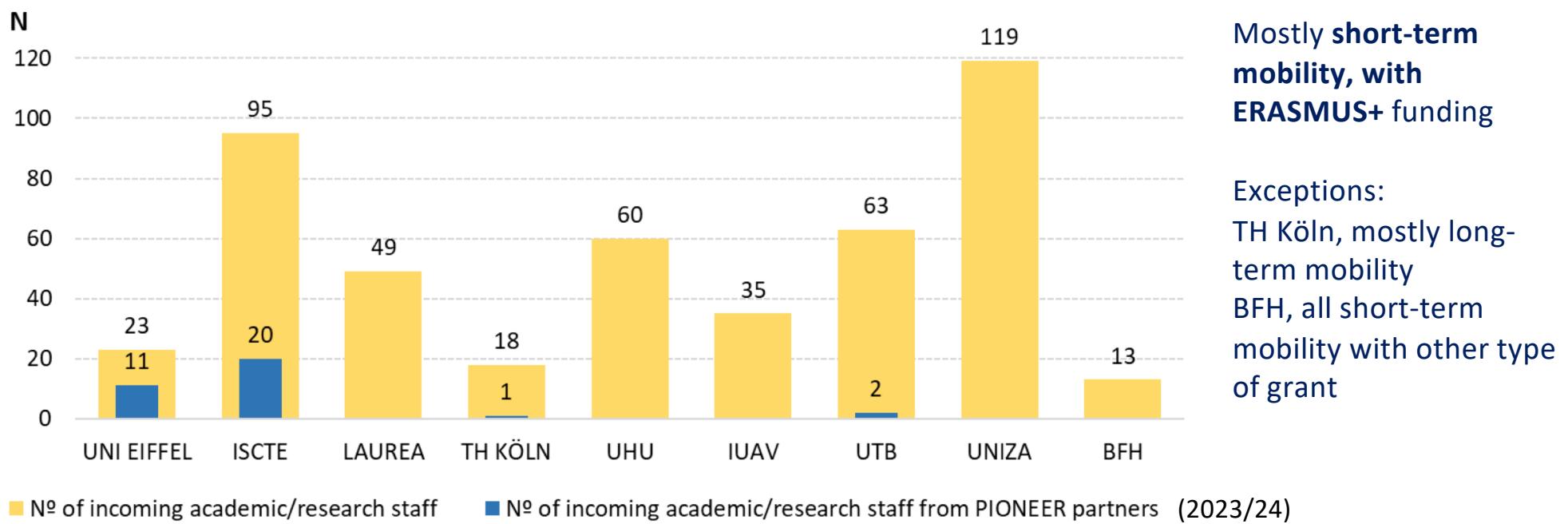


■ % of outgoing non-academic for PIONEER partners, relative to the total of outgoing non-academic staff (2023/24)

Note: The percentages were calculated for a value < 50. The height of the bar represents the percentage, but as these mobility values are very small, the label shows the absolute value also

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*

Incoming academic/research staff: total vs. from PIONEER partners



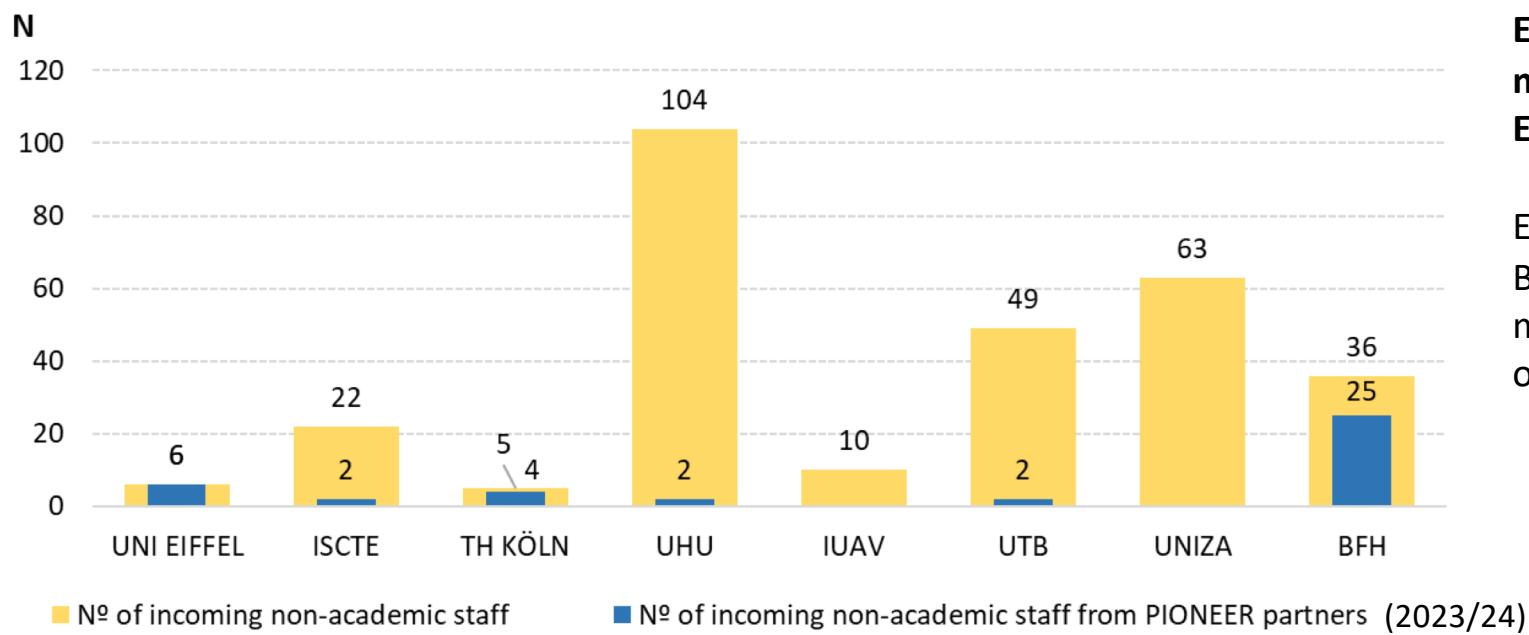
■ Nº of incoming academic/research staff ■ Nº of incoming academic/research staff from PIONEER partners (2023/24)

Note: Only absolute mobility values are presented, and not percentages, due to the small amount of cases

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Incoming non-academic staff: total vs. from PIONEER partners



Exclusively short-term mobility, with ERASMUS+ funding

Exceptions:
BFH, all short-term mobility with other type of grant

Note: Only absolute mobility values are presented, and not percentages, due to the small amount of cases

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*

Highlights on PIONEER HEIs mobility procedures





Availability of guidelines for incoming mobility participants



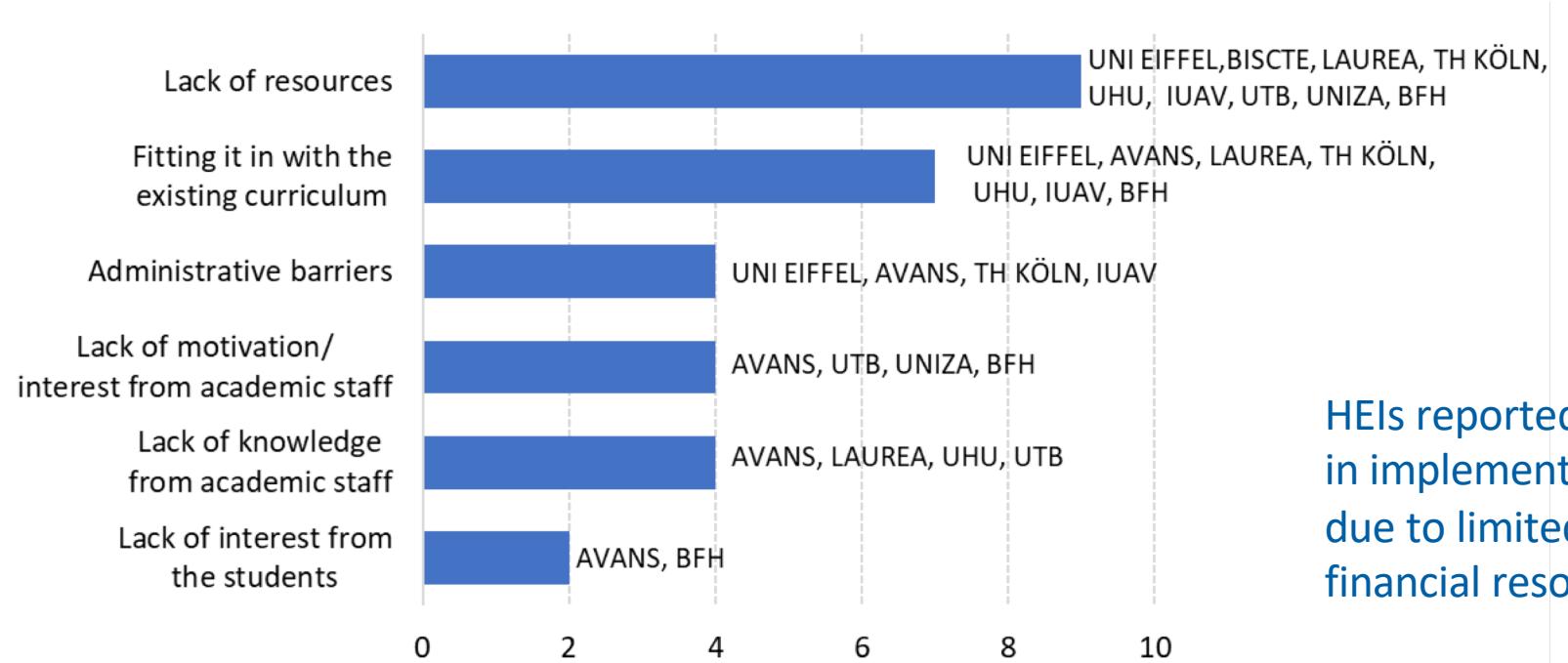
HEI	Students	Academic/ research staff	Non-academic staff
UNI EIFFEL	✓	✓	
AVANS	✓		
ISCTE	✓	✓	✓
LAUREA	✓	✓	✓
TH KÖLN	✓	✓	✓
UHU	✓	✓	✓
IUAV	✓		
UTB	✓	✓	✓
UNIZA	✓		
BFH	✓	✓	✓

All HEI provide physical and/or digital welcome and guidelines for students

The majority also has this for academics, researcher or non-academic staff



Main challenges to implement BIPs

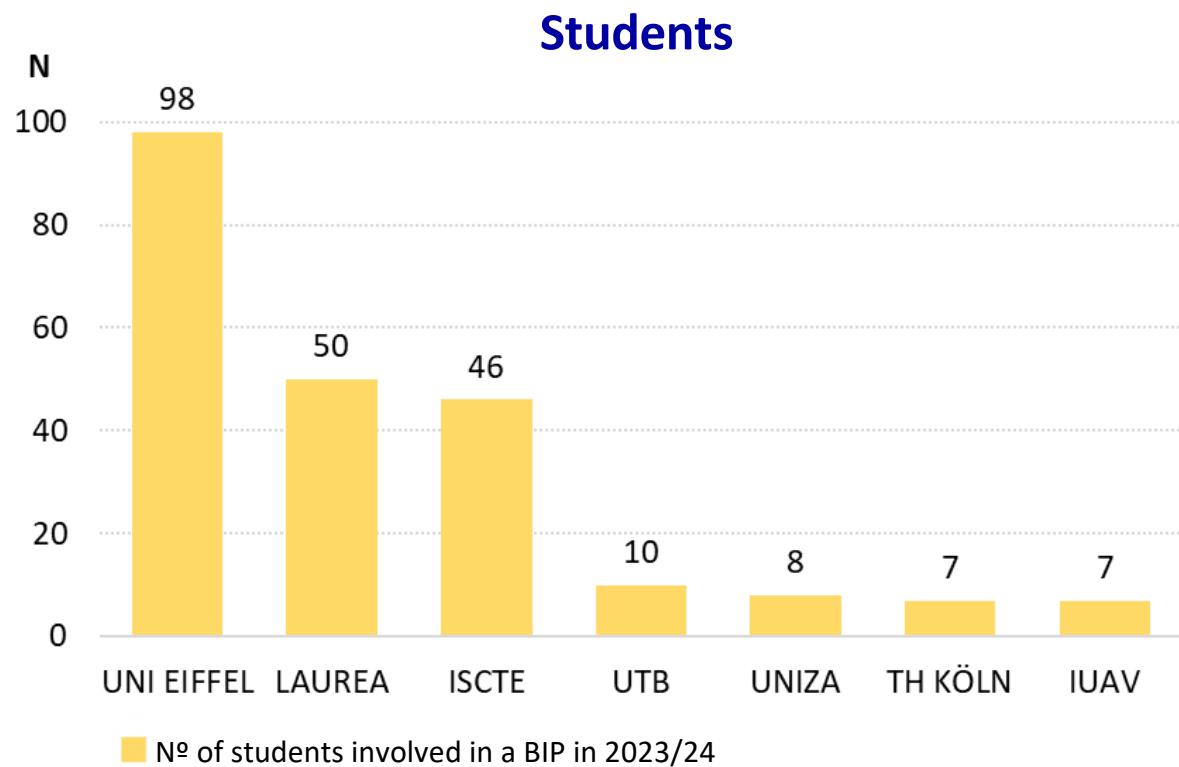


HEIs reported key challenges in implementing BIPs, mainly due to limited human and financial resources

Source: Survey on mobility procedures, 2025



People involved in a BIP blended mobility with another PIONEER member



UNI EIFFEL registered the highest number of students involved in a BIP with another PIONEER HEI, representing 0.6% of the total of students at this HEI

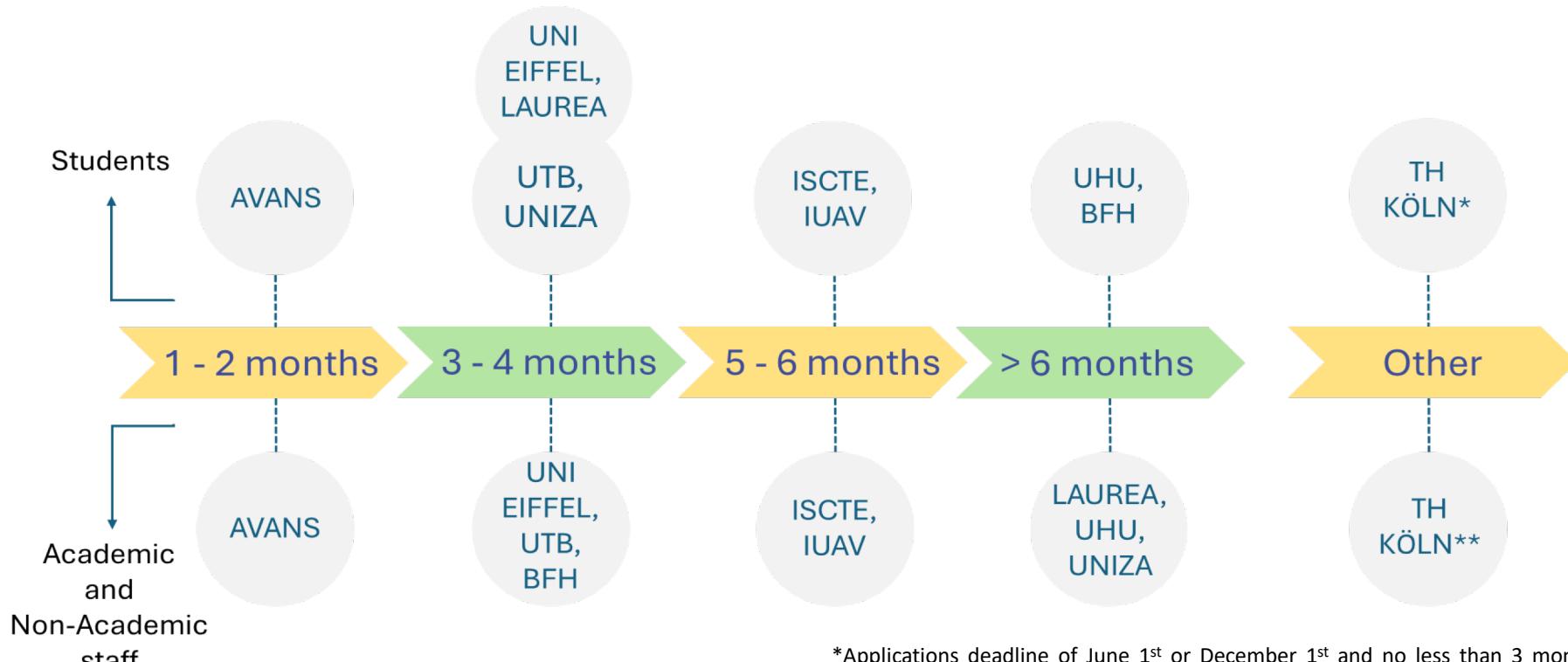
The number of academics/researchers participating in BIPs was lower, with 10 participants from ISCTE, 2 from TH Köln and 1 from AVANS

Only 1 non-academic, from UTB, was registered as participating in a BIP with another PIONEER HEI

Source: *Mobility statistics of academic year 2023/24, Survey 2025*



Time required to access BIP information for participation by students and staff



*Applications deadline of June 1st or December 1st and no less than 3 months before the planned BIP

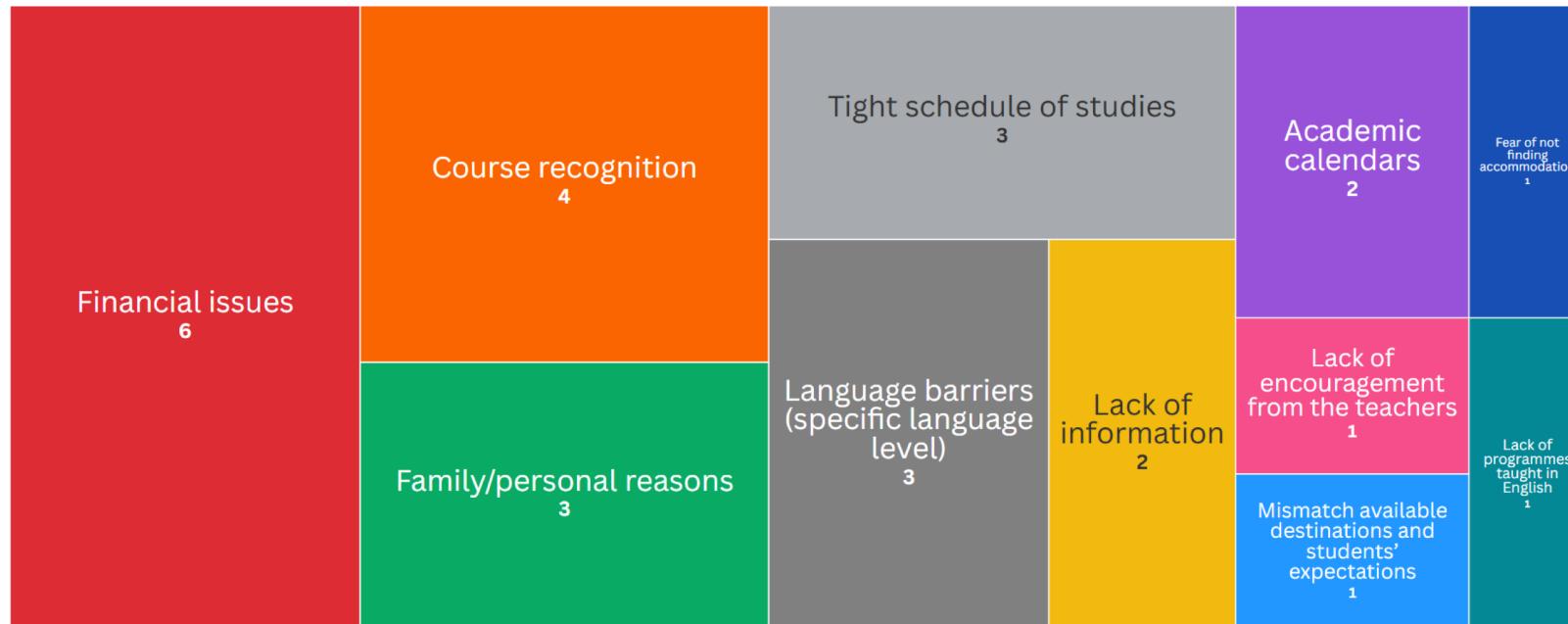
**3-8 months in advance. Two internal deadlines to allocate funds: Dec. 1st for activities between Mar. 1st – Aug. 31st and Jun. 1st for activities between Sep. 1st and Feb. 28th

Source: Survey on mobility procedures, 2025

To coordinate and organise a BIP, ISCTE and IUAV need more than 6 months. All other HEI needs a year in advance



Main reasons students give for not participating in regular semester mobility



HEIs ranked the three most frequently mentioned reasons students give for not participating in a regular semester mobility. The values indicate the number of HEIs reporting these reasons. Some reasons are personal, while others can be addressed by HEIs to reduce barriers

Source: Survey on mobility procedures, 2025

Interviews with stakeholders





Role of the interviewees



Internal interviewees

External interviewees

AVANS	Two interviewees: Coordinator of Internationalisation and lecturer at the School of Life Sciences and Technology Research support and responsible of AVANS coordination of student exchange at a Living Lab	AVANS	Team Education for Municipality Urban Policy
BFH	Head of the International Office	BFH	N/A
TBU	International Office Assistant	TBU	Registered Nurse, Regional Hospital
UGE	Senior Lecturer on Management Master Programme	UGE	Municipality Mayor, Urban Community Vice-President
ISCTE	ERASMUS+ mobilities coordinator, International Relations Office	ISCTE	Officer of Innovation and International Relations of CP - Portuguese railways
IUAV	Head of International Mobility Office	IUAV	Representative of Union of Chambers of Commerce of the Veneto Region
LAUREA	Mobilities and internationalisation of education, Erasmus+ mobility project management	LAUREA	Cargo operations and development manager at cruise company
THKöln	Erasmus+ institutional coordinator of student mobility within Europe, and Erasmus International	THKöln	Head of city department for Mobility and Climate Protection
UHU	International Relations office manager of partnerships and agreements, outgoing Erasmus+ traineeship, and annual International Week	UH	Representative of Zenobia-Juan Ramón Jiménez House Museum
UNIZA	Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Marketing	UNIZA	N/A



Internal stakeholders' expectations



Referring to collaboration conditions and support, there is the **need for clear identification of contact people** for the different areas related to mobility and internationalisation, as well as comprehensive **lists of the educational and internationalisation-related activities offered** at every partner institution, are identified as fundamental requirements

It is expected that PIONEER may bring **procedural harmonisation and the production of guidelines** and other reference material **for lecturers, administrative staff and students** to engage more efficiently in PIONEER initiatives, e.g., how to organise BIPs, COILs and summer schools for the PIONEER community, how to organise mobility funding calls with sufficient anticipation and flexibility, how to involve stakeholders in mobility activities, how to measure virtual mobility

It is expected a **mapping of current offers**, e.g., full academic offers in English available for international students



Internal stakeholders' interviews - levers and barriers to mobility



→ Levers

Respondents foresee **good opportunities for reinforced cooperation** that will likely increase mobility numbers among PIONEER partners in the next few years

→ Barriers

In some cases, there is a high degree of uncertainty when it comes to identifying who is the **responsible person at another partner university for a given mobility-related issue**

→ What to improve

Setting up **BIP organisational guidelines** might be useful for both academic and administrative staff involved to operate with more efficiency

Source: *Internal stakeholders' interviews, 2025*



External stakeholders' expectations



Emphasis on Real-World Impact: Stakeholders value mobility that connects students to real-world challenges, such as urban mobility, healthcare, logistics, or cultural preservation

Need for Structural Support: While enthusiasm is high, many stakeholders highlight the need for formal structures, including:

- a) **Clear documentation** of student competencies
- b) **Pre-arrival orientation** and safety protocols
- c) **Financial recognition** for mentors
- d) **Centralized coordination** and **contact points**
- e) **Legal and insurance clarity** for cross-border placements

Language and Cultural Integration: Language remains a barrier in several contexts, especially in sectors requiring direct interaction, e.g., healthcare, public services



External stakeholders' interviews - Levers and barriers to mobility



→ Levers

Effective person-to-person communication:

Several external stakeholders highlight that mobility works best when there is a **clear, personal contact point** between institutions

Openness to co-design: Most interviewees are willing to help shape future mobility programmes, offering **practical insights and thematic expertise**

→ Barriers

Language barriers: Especially in healthcare and municipal settings, limited English proficiency and the practice of using the local language as the standard can pose significant challenges

SWOT analysis of mobility in the PIONEER Alliance





SWOT analysis on the Alliance mobility environment Strengths



Widespread digitalisation of Inter Institutional Agreement/ Online Learning Agreement (IIA/OLA) via Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) and third-party tools (e.g., EWP Dashboard, Mobility Online, MoveON, SoleMove, IS/STAG, Esse3, Fenix+), enabling online signing and data exchange within institutional systems. Most partners operate EWP through Dashboard or commercial/in house systems; several issue or map the European Student Identifier (ESI) and use student cards compatible with ESCI, this shortens OLA/IIA cycles and enables future digital services

Incoming mobility guidance and support services are visible (e.g., welcome pages, language courses, buddy/ESN programmes, advisory services), which lowers uncertainty and eases onboarding. Most HEIs publish support services and, housing info for long term stays, and fee transparency (e.g., semester fee, student card, insurance); these help set realistic expectations for participants. Complete public course offers (ECTS + syllabi) across most of all ten HEIs, giving incoming students and coordinators predictable academic planning (web links are provided by all HEIs). Incoming guidelines for students/staff, and clear recognition/grade conversion practices

Operational experience with short term formats (BIPs, staff weeks): multiple partners already run structured calls for BIPs (others run ad hoc offers), and several list staff weeks, job shadowing and workshops. Capacity to design and run high quality short-term mobilities such as BIPs with challenge-based pedagogy, multi-disciplinary cohorts, and stakeholder co creation (e.g., UNI EIFFEL hackathons; AVANS BIP; ISCTE “Cities Futures” pilot). Interviews show strong motivation to scale BIPs/COILs and joint activities



SWOT analysis on the Alliance mobility environment

Weaknesses



Language of instruction and course availability gaps: English vs local language; “English taught” vs “English friendly”; Limited English taught classes can hamper student exchange and can cause study delays when courses are cancelled last minute (AVANS)

Fragmented tooling and bypass EWP usage: while all HEI report using EWP, each uses a third-party provider or Dashboard, signaling potential configuration/connector risks, or validation gaps that can lead to OLA/IIA delays; Digital/process fragmentation around EWP causes heterogeneous implementation among partners creates parallel workarounds and student confusion

Uneven maturity in short term mobility administration: several partners report ad hoc BIPs and limited options on short term housing, which increases administrative friction for sprint style deployments. Lead time variability for BIPs (ranges from >6 months to 1–2 months; specific internal funding gates at TH Köln), complicating Alliance wide synchronisation and budgeting. Short planning horizons and coordination gaps (late BIP calls/grants; unclear responsibilities; partner data/beneficiary module delays) increase admin load (LAUREA, ISCTE); rigid partner calendars/funding gates reduce agility for short term mobilities (e.g., UNIZA’s BIP participants blocked by sending institutions’ conditions)



SWOT analysis on the Alliance mobility environment Opportunities



Mobility terminology, attributes, and indicators: Agree on common mobility terminology, namely for new concepts not already defined on Erasmus+ Glossary of terms, e.g., leveraging on FOREU4ALL Alliance of EU Alliances. Agree on mobility indicators and attributes to be tracked by all PIONEER HEIs, e.g., some HEIs do not track student short-term mobilities by academic level or researchers' short-term mobilities

Codify Alliance short-term mobility guidelines, such as BIP and COIL “Playbooks”: Leverage structured practice at some HEIs (UHU, TH Köln, UTB, ISCTE) to standardise milestones, documentation, funding checks, info sets comms, lead times, and roles, drawing on structured practices and lessons learned (UHU’s new BIP participation rules; AVANS/UNI EIFFEL/ISCTE playbooks) then scale to ad hoc institutions

Scale blended/virtual formats and micro credentials like certifications to include part time students and widen access (BFH’s modular/remote ideas; UNI EIFFEL’s certification). Expand micro credentials from early adopters (LAUREA, IUAV) to badge BIPs/COIL outcomes, reinforcing recognition and employability. Expand virtual exchange programs (COIL, blended learning) to complement physical exchanges



SWOT analysis on the Alliance mobility environment

Threats



Financial and administrative pressures: insufficient funding, tight timelines, higher admin load) are repeatedly cited as core obstacles, especially for short term mobility (e.g., BIPs)

Rigid funding rules and timelines, and dependency on EU funding: e.g., Erasmus+ KA131/KA171 for students/staff and BIP coordination funds are allocated on fixed cycles with strict internal deadlines; when calls are late, budgets are tight or documentation is delayed, mobility cannot proceed or must shrink; Where non-EU complements exist (e.g., TH Köln uses PROMOS; UTB has internal funds; UNI EIFFEL taps Region/Ministry/university budgets; BFH leverages SEMP), programmes are more resilient

Accommodation and logistical barriers (limited capacity; unclear housing processes for traineeships) can derail short-term, fast-paced mobility formats; Student housing crunch across Europe: Europe faces a multi-million bed shortfall in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation; top cities are most constrained, and some markets show rapid loss of private student rooms. This directly affects incoming exchange cohorts and raises costs

Recommendations





Develop a structural/ minimal offer of English taught courses within all PIONEER institutions automatically accessible on the PIONEER website

Create a clear overview upfront of relevant contact persons per (sub)project and activity to be carried out

Extracted recommendations of the gathered challenges and successes of mobility

Use PIONEER network to improve Erasmus Without Papers (EWP) implementation

Develop a BIP framework with tips and considerations

Research possibilities for out-of-the-box mobility activities for part-time students



Final recommendations (1/2)



Align mobility procedures

- Agree on common mobility terminology, indicators, and attributes to be tracked by all PIONEER HEIs
- Codify short-term mobility guidelines for the PIONEER Alliance
- Scale up blended/virtual formats and micro-credentials
- Develop strategies to integrate new mobility programs (e.g., BIPs and COILs) into the existing curriculum and reduce uncertainty regarding course recognition for students
- Increase support to the HEIs' International Relations Offices to ensure maintaining quality mobility administration while increasing participation
- Resources necessary to scale up virtual exchange mobilities should be investigated further
- Identify ways to mitigate accommodation, financial, and logistical barriers to mobility
- Define standardised procedures to overcome administrative barriers (e.g., leverage the PIONEER network to improve EWP implementation)



Final recommendations (2/2)



Increase and promote shared offer

- Develop a structured and minimal offer of English-taught courses across all PIONEER institutions
- Create a comprehensive list of educational and internationalisation-related activities and communicate them through the PIONEER website, newsletter, and email
- Increase the availability of courses in different languages, particularly English, for the entire PIONEER HEI community to overcome language barriers and build confidence for mobility participation
- Encourage PIONEER community to participate in new mobility programs (e.g., BIPs and COILs)
- Develop a framework to engage external stakeholders in the co-creation of new mobility programs that incorporate real-life challenges

Annexes





Annex - Examples of questions on mobility procedures



- Provide the link to your university's official academic calendar, including start and end dates for each term and holidays
- Does the institution provide specific guidelines for incoming mobility participants (students, academic, or non-academic staff, researcher)?
- How does your university sign the Inter-institutional agreements (IIA)?
- What type of system and process are in place for the IIA? EWP? Other tools?
- Does your institution implement already the European Student Card or the European Student Identity?
- Does your Institution have micro-credentials system implemented?
- What are the challenges your institution is facing to implement BIPs?
- Are there any grants, stipends, or financial aid available for staff mobility participants (apart from Erasmus+)?
- Is mobility work (e.g., teaching, research, training) recognised at the partner institution or considered in the career evaluation or career progression?

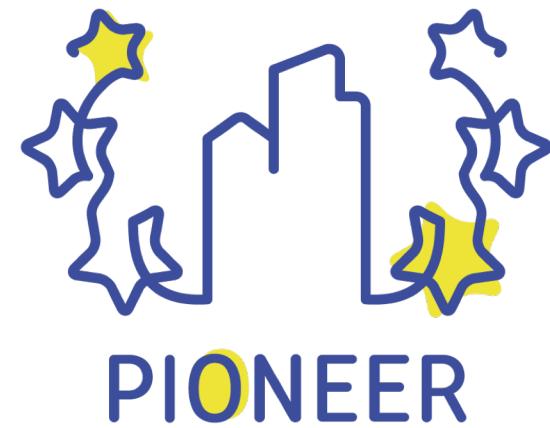


Annex – Extract of interview guidelines



Purpose: To gather insights from internal and external stakeholders on their experiences, expectations, opportunities, and challenges related to mobility collaboration with the PIONEER Alliance ecosystem

- Can you briefly describe your role within your HEI?
- How are you currently connected to the PIONEER Alliance?
- Have you engaged in any mobility-related collaborations with other universities (e.g., hosting interns, joint projects, staff exchange)? What did that collaboration involve?
- In what types of international mobility collaborations have you participated or collaborated in (e.g., internships, community-based projects, innovation partnerships)?
- What value did you derived from participating in such mobility activities?
- What factors have helped your ability to host or collaborate with participants in mobility programmes/activities?
- What factors have hindered your ability to host or collaborate with participants in mobility programmes/activities?



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