



THE SATISFACTION LEVELS OF **BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATES** FROM CATALAN UNIVERSITIES

2015-2023





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INTRODUCTION AND MAIN FINDINGS

Every year since 2015, the [satisfaction survey](#) of recent graduates from universities in the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC) has collected feedback from tens of thousands of students on various key aspects of their educational experience, such as the teaching and learning process, the support received during their studies, and the outcomes they achieved. The primary goal of this survey is twofold: first, to provide data that will guide the continuous improvement of existing degree programmes for current students; and second, to provide valuable information for prospective students when choosing a degree programme.

This document is the third public report compiled with the aggregate results of the last three waves of the bachelor's degree graduate satisfaction survey (2021-2023). With over 28,000 responses, a response rate of 27% was achieved with a sampling error of 0.5%, thus providing representative data. The robustness of the data also allowed for it to be disaggregated into disciplinary fields and degree groupings based on disciplinary similarity, in what we call expanded sub-fields.¹ This enables the identification of those degrees that stand out, both for their excellence and their room for improvement, in the satisfaction dimensions analysed.

Furthermore, the data for the three-year period is accompanied by evolutionary data for each annual edition of the survey, which allows us to assess how the satisfaction levels of students at Catalan universities have progressed as this study approaches its tenth anniversary. The study included in this document considers graduate satisfaction with the following aspects of the university experience:

¹ The expanded sub-fields group the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC) university degrees according to their disciplinary affinity. This classification, defined in the [AQU Catalunya degree catalogue](#), divides the degree programmes into seventeen groups, allowing for an improved analysis of the results and the detection of differences in graduate satisfaction between disciplines.

Figure 1. Dimensions and items included in the bachelor's degree graduate satisfaction survey. Each box represents a specific survey dimension and contains the corresponding items to be evaluated by the students²



The analysis reveals gradual but steady progress in graduate satisfaction levels over the last nine years. Even in those areas where students give more modest ratings, the **trend** is towards a **gradual improvement in students' perception of their time at Catalan universities.** Therefore, the findings presented below support the hypothesis that there has been a continuous improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning processes and, in general, in the university experience offered by the Catalan Higher Education System.

This report also presents the results of an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence **overall student satisfaction.** Specifically, it identifies that one-third of the satisfaction can be primarily be attributed to graduates' perceptions of their **professional development and of having followed a study programme that facilitates adequate learning progression.**

With regard to the specific dimensions of the satisfaction survey, the data from the last three waves show that:

- > The **teaching-learning** dimension has the most room for improvement, especially in terms of **tutoring and assessment.** Although no sub-field achieves a notable rating (7 out of 10), some degree programmes, such as **Economics and Business,** achieve higher ratings than other Catalan Higher Education System (SUC) degree programmes.
- > Graduate satisfaction with the items related to **student support** also shows room for improvement, particularly in relation to the **response to complaints** and **support services.**

² In this report, the survey items analysed are written in summary form for ease of reading. The full descriptor for each survey item can be found in the appendix.

The satisfaction levels of bachelor's degree graduates from Catalan universities (2015-2023)

Degrees in the fields of **Arts and Design and Architecture, Construction and Civil Engineering** show the greatest room for improvement in most items. By contrast, **ICT** degrees stand out for having significantly higher ratings than other Catalan Higher Education System (SUC) degrees.

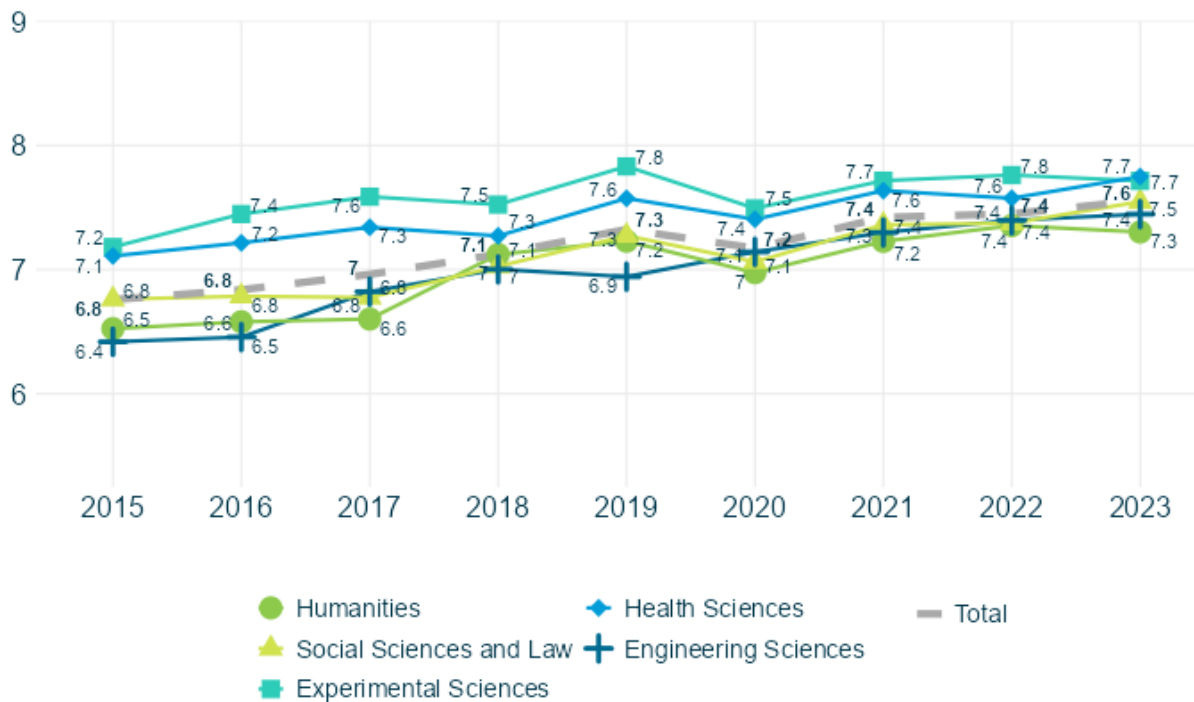
- > Catalan Higher Education System (SUC) students are most satisfied with the **overall outcome** of their degrees, giving a “notable” rating to all related items. However, students in some **Engineering** and **Science** programmes feel that their acquisition of **communication skills** could be improved, while graduates of **Education, Languages** and **Literature degrees** give this aspect a rating of almost 8 out of 10.
- > **ICT, Nursing, and Health** students are particularly satisfied with their **professional development** during their degree, while **Philosophy** and **History** graduates believe this area could be improved (an average of –1.3 compared to the SUC average).

It should be noted that the satisfaction survey goes far beyond the scope of this report. To help those responsible for degree programmes analyse the data and consider how to improve it, the results of this survey can be viewed in more detail in the data section of the [Estudis Universitaris de Catalunya \(EUC\)](#) portal.

Lastly, please bear in mind that this study only presents the **statistically significant results**. Throughout the report, you will find technical footnotes that explain the analysis carried out, with further technical information provided in the appendix.

NINE YEARS OF UNIVERSITY SATISFACTION: GRADUAL BUT REAL PROGRESS

Figure 2. Evolution of graduates’ overall satisfaction with their degrees, by degree field



→ The analysis reveals a gradual but sustained improvement in overall satisfaction: 0.1³ points for every graduate surveyed.

→ The fields with the lowest satisfaction levels in 2015—Humanities, Engineering, and Social Sciences—have since experienced the highest rates of satisfaction growth.






³ The results are statistically significant based on a linear regression model with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable and an interaction term between the year of the graduating class surveyed and the field of study. The R² for this model is 0.01. Although this model explains a very small proportion of the variance in satisfaction, it shows a statistically significant upward trend over time. However, the low explanatory power indicates that individual differences in satisfaction within each edition of the survey are predominantly due to other factors. You can find the full results of this model in the appendix.

→ In nine years, the satisfaction gap between fields has narrowed significantly,⁴ with all degrees converging towards a “notable+” level of satisfaction.

⁴ The reduction in the gap between degrees was analysed by investigating the evolution of the standard deviation for overall satisfaction between 2015 and 2023 and conducting a Levene's test for equality of variances between the survey editions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND A STUDY PROGRAMME THAT ALLOWS FOR ADEQUATE LEARNING PROGRESSION: THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR STUDENT SATISFACTION

Figure 3. Key factors explaining the overall satisfaction of graduates with their degree (2021-2023)⁵

		Increase in overall satisfaction with bachelor's degrees*	Importance of the factor (contribution to R ²)**
	Professional development	+0.23	15.1%
	Structure of the study programme	+0.23	14.3%
	Teaching staff	+0.16	10.7%
	Personal development	+0.1	9.4%
	Teaching methodology	+0.07	8.8%

* The figure represents the impact on **overall satisfaction** of each of these factors scoring **one point** higher. For example, if a graduate rates development one point higher (e.g, an 8 instead of a 7), overall satisfaction with the degree **rises, on average, by 0.23 points**.

** The percentage represents the factor's contribution to explaining individual differences in satisfaction with bachelor's degrees.

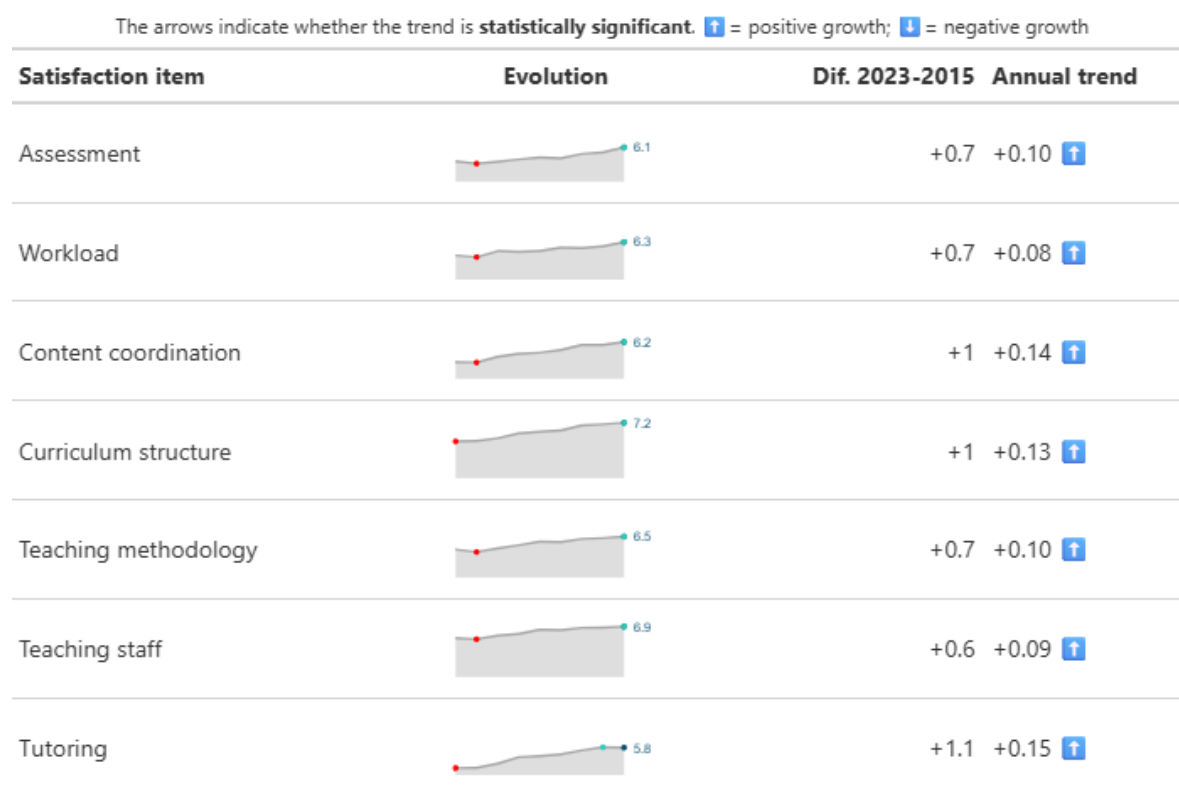
⁵ Result obtained from a linear regression model with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable and all the satisfaction items collected as independent variables. The full model explains 60% of the overall satisfaction of bachelor's graduates. The importance of each factor was analysed using the Linderman, Merenda and Gold method (1980), available in the R *relaimpo* (Grömping, 2006) package. The use of a mixed model with teaching as the grouping level was ruled out because it emerged that there were no significant differences in overall satisfaction between disciplines. Other explanatory variables, such as the student's biological sex or their reasons for choosing the degree programme, were also ruled out because they did not contribute to explaining the differences in overall satisfaction. You can find the full results of this model in the appendix.

- The students who rate their degree programme most highly in terms of developing professional competence and study programme structure are those who are most satisfied with the programme overall.
- There are no differences between degree programmes; these results can be generalised across the whole of the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC).
- The analysis shows that employability and quality standards related to the study programme and its implementation are a priority area for improving the satisfaction levels of SUC students.

GRADUATE SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES: AN AREA WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Evolution of the satisfaction of graduates with teaching and learning processes

Figure 4. Evolution and trend in the satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with teaching and learning processes (2015-2023)



Technical note: the results are deemed statistically significant based on a linear regression model with the item as the dependent variable and the year of the graduating class surveyed as the independent variable.

- Only one item achieved a “notable” grade in 2023: the structure of the study programme (7.2). This was followed by teaching staff, which scored 6.9. However, all the items show a positive annual trend.
- The items that have improved the most are tutoring, content coordination and study programme structure.

Which sub-fields excel and which show the most room for improvement?

Figure 5. Average satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with the teaching and learning items, by expanded sub-field (2021-2023)

Expanded subfield	Curriculum structure	Content coordination	Workload	Teaching staff	Teaching methodology	Tutoring	Assessment
Art and Design						6.4	
Economics, Business and Tourism		6.6	6.9				6.4
Communication and Documentation	6.6	5.5	6.7				
Education						6.5	
Social Intervention			6.7			6.5	
Biological and Earth Sciences						5.3	5.3
Experimental Sciences and Mathematics		6.8	5.6			5	5.3
Nursing and Healthcare						6.3	
Medicine and Biomedical Sciences		5.6	4.6			4.8	5.2
Architecture, Construction and Civil Engineering	6.3	5.4	4.1				5.1
Industrial Technologies			5.5	6	5.7	4.6	5.3
ICT		6.6					
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		5.5					5.1
Global SUC	7.1	6.1	6.2	6.9	6.4	5.8	5.9

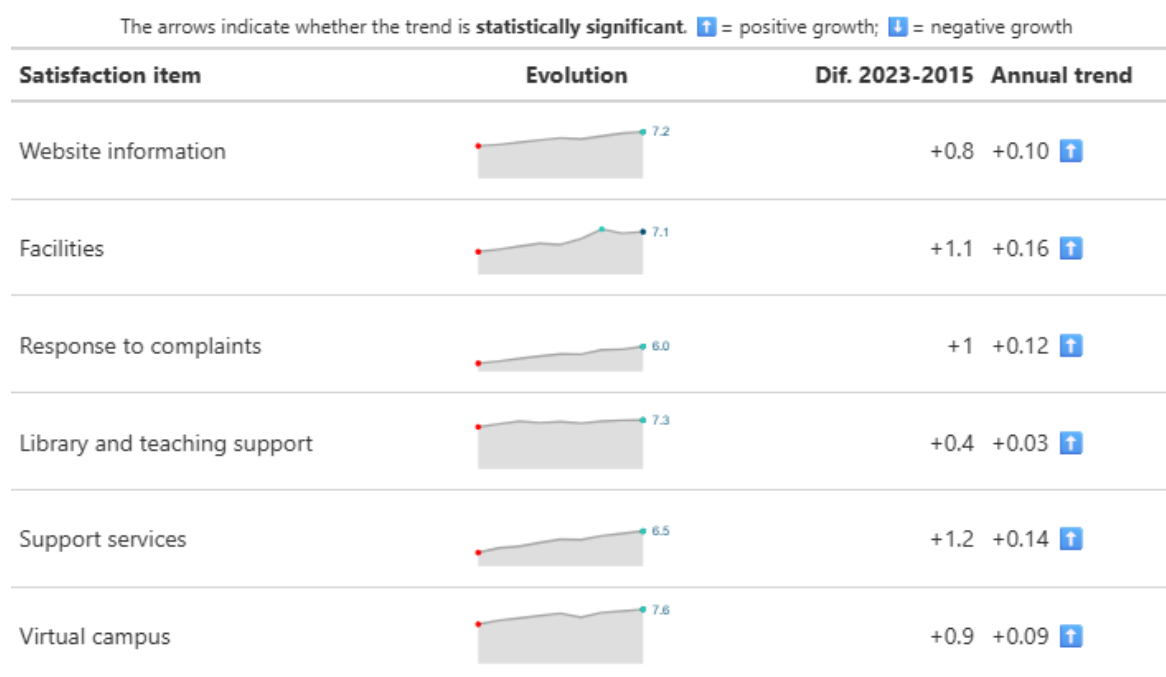
Technical note: expanded sub-fields whose score is lower than the other SUC sub-fields are shown in red. Those with a higher score are shown in green. Those sub-fields that do not show any significant difference have been excluded to make the table easier to read. The differences are reported as significant based on an analysis of 1,000 simulations using the bootstrapping random sampling technique with replacement within the infinite population scenario (Efron i Tibshirani, 1994).

- **Economics, Business and Tourism:** the sub-field with the highest satisfaction rating in the teaching-learning dimension. It scores particularly well in content coordination, workload and assessment.
- **Industrial Technologies, Architecture, Construction, and Civil Engineering,** as well as **Medicine and Biomedical Sciences,** are the sub-fields with the most room for improvement in this dimension. Low scores for workload and tutoring particularly stand out.
- In general, **Engineering, Sciences and Health** emerge as the sub-fields with the greatest room for improvement. Degrees in **Social Sciences** tend to have better satisfaction levels in the teaching-learning dimension.
- In the last three editions of the survey, **tutoring and assessment** were the items with the most room for improvement (5.8 and 5.9). The structure of the study programme and teaching staff receive the highest ratings (7.1 and 6.9).

STUDENTS FEEL THEY RECEIVE GOOD SUPPORT FROM UNIVERSITIES

Evolution of graduate satisfaction with student support

Figure 6. Evolution and trend in the satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with student support (2015-2023)



Technical note: the results are deemed statistically significant based on a linear regression model with the item as the dependent variable and the year of the graduating class surveyed as the independent variable.

→ The public information on the website, the library and the virtual campus were the items most highly rated by students in the latest satisfaction survey.

→ Response to complaints is the item with the most room for improvement. However, satisfaction with this item is one of the areas that has seen the greatest improvement.

→ The other items that have improved the most in terms of graduate satisfaction are facilities and support services.

Which sub-fields excel and which show the most room for improvement?

Figure 7. Average satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with the student support items, by expanded sub-field (2021-2023)

Expanded subfield	Facilities	Library and teaching support	Support services	Response to complaints	Website information	Virtual campus
Philosophy and History		8.2				
Languages and Literature		8.1	5.8			
Art and Design		6.6		5.3	6.4	6.1
Economics, Business and Tourism	7.6					
Communication and Documentation		6.8				6.9
Education	6.5					
Social Intervention	6.5					
Architecture, Construction and Civil Engineering	5.4		5.5	5.3	6.4	6.5
ICT	7.7		6.9	6.4		
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		7.9				
Global SUC	7.1	7.3	6.4	5.9	7.1	7.6

Technical note: expanded sub-fields whose score is lower than the other SUC sub-fields are shown in red. Those with a higher score are shown in green. Those sub-fields that do not show any significant difference have been excluded to make the table easier to read. The differences are reported as significant based on an analysis of 1,000 simulations using the bootstrapping random sampling technique with replacement within the infinite population scenario (Efron i Tibshirani, 1994).

→ ITC: the sub-field with the highest satisfaction rating in the student support dimension. It particularly excels in facilities, support services and response to complaints.

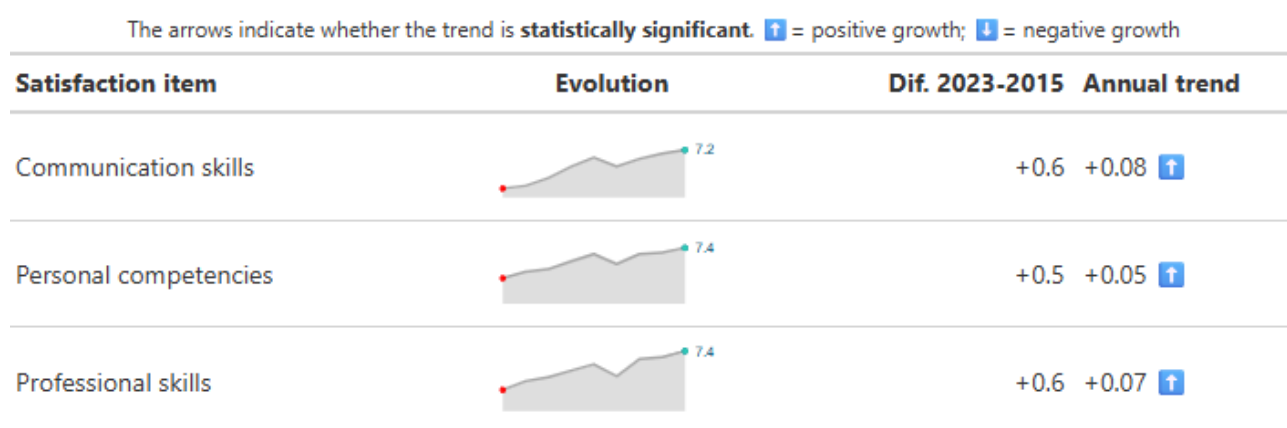
→ Humanities students (Philosophy and History, and Languages and Literature) rate their library resources and teaching support as excellent.

→ Architecture, Construction, and Civil Engineering students rate all the items significantly lower, with the exception of library services.

STUDENTS ARE VERY SATISFIED WITH THEIR DEGREE OUTCOMES

Evolution of graduates' satisfaction with their degree outcomes

Figure 8. Evolution and trend in the satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with their degree outcomes (2015-2023)



Technical note: the results are deemed statistically significant based on a linear regression model with the item as the dependent variable and the year of the graduating class surveyed as the independent variable.

→ The outcomes of the degree programme, understood as the acquisition of key competences and skills, are the highest-rated items in the satisfaction survey. All achieved a "very good" grade, as a minimum.

→ The ratings for all items improved significantly during the period analysed. Of note is the slight dip that coincided with the COVID-19 health crisis.

Which sub-fields excel and which show the most room for improvement?

Figure 9. Average satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with the degree outcomes items, by expanded sub-field (2021-2023)

Expanded subfield	Communication skills	Personal competencies	Professional skills
Philosophy and History			6.1
Languages and Literature	7.7		
Education	7.7		
Experimental Sciences and Mathematics	5.8		
Nursing and Healthcare			7.8
Architecture, Construction and Civil Engineering	6.5	6.6	
Industrial Technologies	6.3		
ICT			7.9
Global SUC	7.2	7.3	7.4

Technical note: expanded sub-fields whose score is lower than the other SUC sub-fields are shown in red. Those with a higher score are shown in green. Those sub-fields that do not show any significant difference have been excluded to make the table easier to read. The differences are reported as significant based on an analysis of 1,000 simulations using the bootstrapping random sampling technique with replacement within the infinite population scenario (Efron i Tibshirani, 1994).

→ Two groups of degrees perform particularly well: Humanities degrees excel in the acquisition of communication skills, and ICT and Nursing and Health degrees excel in their ability to equip students with the

→ Degrees in the Philosophy and History sub-field have a significantly lower satisfaction rating than other SUC degrees in terms of acquiring professional competence.




**necessary professional
competence.**

DEGREE DISSERTATIONS (TFG), MOBILITY EXPERIENCES AND EXTERNAL WORK PLACEMENTS

Evolution of graduates' satisfaction with their dissertation (TFG), mobility experiences and external work placements

Figure 10. Evolution and trend in the satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with their dissertation (TFG), mobility experiences and external work placements⁶ (2015-2023)

The arrows indicate whether the trend is **statistically significant**. ↑ = positive growth; ↓ = negative growth

Satisfaction item	Evolution	Dif. 2023-2015	Annual trend
Bachelor's thesis (TFG)		+0.7	+0.08 ↑
Mobility		+0.8	+0.07 ↑
Work placements		+0.8	+0.09 ↑

Technical note: the results are deemed statistically significant based on a linear regression model with the item as the dependent variable and the year of the graduating class surveyed as the independent variable.

→ All the items achieved a satisfaction rating approaching “very good” and are among the highest-rated aspects of the satisfaction survey.

⁶ Only those who participated in a mobility programme are asked about their experiences.

Which sub-fields excel and which show the most room for improvement?

Figure 11. Average satisfaction of bachelor's degree graduates with their dissertation (TFG), mobility experiences and external work placements (2021-2023)

Expanded subfield	Work placements	Mobility	Bachelor's thesis (TFG)
Philosophy and History	5.9	6.2	
Languages and Literature	6.3	7.4	
Art and Design	6.3	6.1	
Communication and Documentation	6.6		
Education	8.5		
Social Intervention			6.3
Biological and Earth Sciences			7.4
Experimental Sciences and Mathematics			7.7
Nursing and Healthcare	8		6.1
Architecture, Construction and Civil Engineering			6
Industrial Technologies	6.6		
ICT			7.8
Global SUC	7.2	6.9	6.9

Technical note: expanded sub-fields whose score is lower than the other SUC sub-fields are shown in red. Those with a higher score are shown in green. Those sub-fields that do not show any significant difference have been excluded to make the table easier to read. The differences are reported as significant based on an analysis of 1,000 simulations using the bootstrapping random sampling technique with replacement within the infinite population scenario (Efron i Tibshirani, 1994).

→ Humanities and Industrial Technology degrees are the sub-fields with the most room for improvement in terms of external work placements.

→ Students in the sub-fields of Education and Nursing and Health rate their practical experience as excellent.

→ With regard to the dissertation's ability to consolidate the degree's competencies, the sub-fields of Biological and Earth Sciences, Experimental Sciences and Mathematics, and ICT perform well.

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This document has incorporated the use of generative artificial intelligence tools in specific tasks, such as the generation and modification of the R code used for the figures. The final content has been fully reviewed, validated and endorsed by the authors, who assume full responsibility for it.

Contributor Roles⁷

José Luis Mateos: Conceptualization; data analysis; investigation; project administration; software; visualization; writing. Anna Prades: Conceptualization; investigation; supervision; writing.

⁷ NISO CRediT Working Group. ANSI/NISO Z39.104-2022, [CRediT, Contributor Roles Taxonomy](#), NISO. 14 January 2022.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Full descriptors of the items used in this report

To enhance the readability of this report, we used simplified descriptors of the analysed items from the AQU Catalunya satisfaction survey. The full descriptors of the items that students were asked to evaluate in the survey are shown below, along with their corresponding simplified descriptors, which were used in this report.

Table 1. Correspondence between the simplified names given to the satisfaction items used in this report and the full descriptors that students are asked to evaluate in the satisfaction survey

Name of the item	Full descriptor
Structure of the study programme	The structure of the study programme has allowed me to progress appropriately in my learning.
Content coordination	The subjects have been carefully coordinated to avoid any overlap in content.
Workload	The workload has been consistent with the credits awarded for the subjects.
Teaching staff	I am satisfied with the teaching staff.
Teaching methodology	The teaching methodology used by the teaching staff has facilitated my learning.
Tutoring	The tutoring has been useful and has contributed to improving my learning.
Assessment	The assessment systems have allowed me to reflect on my learning effectively.
Facilities	The facilities (classrooms, teaching spaces, auditoriums, etc.) have been sufficient for my learning needs.
Library and teaching support	The resources provided by the library and teaching support services have met my needs.
Support services	The student support services (information, registration, academic procedures, scholarships, guidance, etc.) have offered me good advice and support.
Response to complaints	I received an adequate response to my complaints and suggestions.
Information on the website	The information about the degree is accessible and I found it useful.
Virtual campus	The use of the virtual campus has facilitated my learning.
Communication skills	The education received has allowed me to improve my communication skills.
Personal skills	The education received has helped me improve my personal skills (confidence, leadership, independent learning, creativity, problem

The satisfaction levels of bachelor's degree graduates from Catalan universities (2015-2023)

	solving, critical analysis, teamwork, etc.).
Professional competence	The education received has helped me improve my professional competence.
External work placements	External work placements have allowed me to apply the knowledge acquired during the degree course.”
Mobility	The mobility experiences I have undertaken have been relevant to my learning.
Dissertation (TFG)	The bachelor's degree dissertation (TFG) helped me consolidate the competencies acquired during the degree programme.
Overall satisfaction	I am satisfied with the degree.

Appendix 2. Results of the model for the evolution of overall satisfaction among bachelor's degree graduates (2015-2023)

Term	Coefficient	Standard error
Intercept	6.55***	0.07
Graduating class surveyed	0.1***	0.01
<i>Reference category: Humanities</i>		
Social and Legal Sciences	0.14	0.08
Sciences	0.86***	0.10
Health	0.63***	0.09
Engineering	-0.01	0.08
Graduating class x Social and Legal Sciences	0	0.01
Graduating class x Sciences	-0.05**	0.02
Graduating class x Health	-0.03*	0.01
Graduating class x Engineering	0	0.01
Observations	69,655	
R ²	0.014	

Significance code: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01 & * p < 0.05.

Appendix 3. Results of the multivariate model with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable

Table 2. Coefficients, standard error and contribution to R^2 of each satisfaction item in a model with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable

Factor	Coefficient	Standard error	Contribution to R^2
Intercept	0.19***	0.05	
Professional competence	0.23***	0.01	15.1%
Structure of the study programme	0.23***	0.01	14.3%
Teaching staff	0.16***	0.01	10.7%
Professional competence	0.1***	0.01	9.4%
Teaching methodology	0.07***	0.01	8.8%
Content coordination	0.04***	0.00	4.4%
Dissertation (TFG)	0.04***	0.00	3%
Response to complaints	0.03***	0.00	4.1%
Information on the website	0.03***	0.01	4.2%
Communication skills	0.03***	0.01	6.7%
Virtual campus	0.03***	0.01	2.9%
Library and teaching support	0.03***	0.00	2.6%
Assessment	0.03***	0.00	5.3%
Support services	0	0.00	2.9%
Workload	0	0.00	2.3%
Tutoring	-0.01*	0.00	2.9%
Observations	22,273		
R^2	0.6		

Significance code: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$ & * $p < 0.05$.

Appendix 4. Data sheet for the satisfaction survey of graduates from universities in the Catalan Higher Education System

Table 3. Characteristics of the satisfaction survey of bachelor's degree graduates from the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC)

Survey of graduates from the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC)	
Population	Individuals who graduated between 2015 and 2023.
Survey period	Between the December and January after graduation.
Methodology	CAWI without stratified sampling.
Approximate time taken	Between 4 and 6 minutes.

Table 4. Population, sample, response rate and sampling error for the last three editions of the study (2021–2023)

Population	Sample	Response rate	Sampling error
105,748	28,154	26.6%	0.5%

Table 5. Population, sample, response rate, and sampling error by study edition (2015–2023)

Edition	Population	Sample	Response rate	Sampling error
2015	28,726	4,465	15.5%	1.4%
2016	30,711	6,156	20.0%	1.1%
2017	30,538	6,113	20.0%	1.1%
2018	31,518	6,900	21.9%	1.1%
2019	31,781	9,159	28.8%	0.9%
2020	33,593	9,309	27.7%	0.9%
2021	34,898	8,973	25.7%	0.9%
2022	35,240	9,680	27.5%	0.9%
2023	35,610	9,501	26.7%	0.9%

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