



Agència  
per a la Qualitat  
del Sistema Universitari  
de Catalunya

## **EMPLOYERS**

---

# **THE OPINION OF EMPLOYERS REGARDING THE EDUCATION RECEIVED BY GRADUATES IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES**







Agència  
per a la Qualitat  
del Sistema Universitari  
de **Catalunya**

## **EMPLOYERS**

---

# **THE OPINION OF EMPLOYERS REGARDING THE EDUCATION RECEIVED BY GRADUATES IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES**

AQU CATALUNYA, 2019

© Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema  
Universitari de Catalunya

C. dels Vergós, 36-42  
08017 Barcelona

First edition: May 2019

The contents of this document are covered by a Creative Commons Attribution–Non-commercial–No Derivative Works 3.0 license. Their reproduction, distribution and public communication are permitted provided that the name of the author is stated and that they are not used for commercial purposes.

For the full license, see:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/es/legalcode.es>



With the cooperation of



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION .....	7
INDICATORS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES .....	8
■ Basic data on the study programmes .....	8
■ Satisfaction of graduates with the university education received .....	10
■ Access to the labour market for graduates .....	12
The opinion of companies regarding the education received by graduates in the field of Humanities .....	15
■ Characteristics of the companies that have recruited individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities .....	15
■ Recruitment of individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities .....	17
■ Difficulties in recruitment.....	20
■ Skills.....	22
■ Cooperation from employers with universities.....	24
■ In-company training of graduates .....	25
■ Forecast.....	26
CONCLUSIONS .....	27
DATA SHEET .....	28
DRAFTING COMMITTEE.....	29
ANNEX. ASSOCIATED STUDY PROGRAMMES .....	30



## INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari (AQU Catalunya) is to **contribute to the improvement of university study programmes in the Catalan university system**. To achieve this, it is essential to benefit from evidence and data making it possible to assess the functioning of each study programme with the aim of making it easier for decisions to be made by the officials in charge of the universities and study programmes and by politicians responsible for universities.

**Evidence-based proposals for improving study programmes**

This report sets out evidence regarding the implementation and delivery of study programmes in the field of Humanities (specifically in Philosophy, History and Languages) gleaned from the results of the **2018 survey on employers**. The survey strives to gain an acquaintance of the opinion of employers<sup>1</sup> regarding the education received by the recently graduated individuals they have recruited in the field of Humanities, particularly with regard to cross-disciplinary and specific skills which bear substantial margin for improvement, among other issues.

In addition to these results, the report incorporates an initial section with **contextual information on the study programmes in Humanities**, setting out **basic data on the study programmes** and the main results of the **surveys on the satisfaction of individuals who have recently graduated from these study programmes**, as well as the results of the survey on their access to the labour market.

*Figure 1. Databases for improving study programmes*

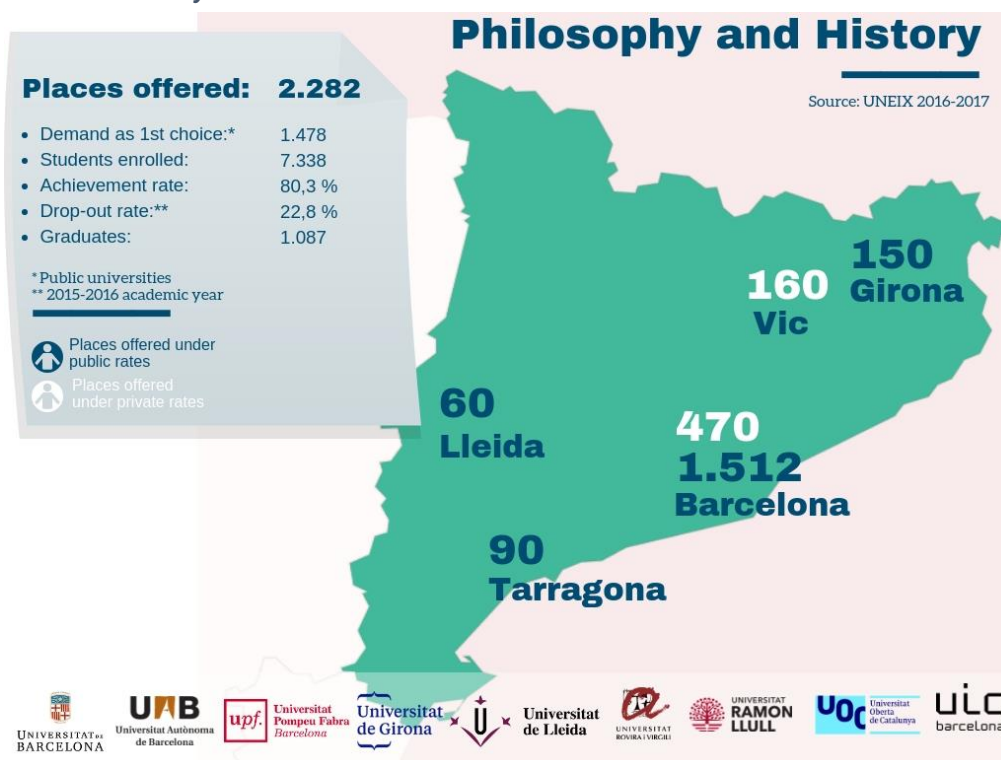


<sup>1</sup> Refers broadly to the host of organisations, administrations or companies employing individuals.

## INDICATORS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES

### ■ Basic data on the study programmes<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2. Indicators on the implementation and delivery of study programmes in the sub-fields of Philosophy and History. 2016-2017 academic year.



### The offer of public places in these sub-fields is adequate

Although overall in the study programmes offered by public universities there is excess demand for 1st choice compared to the number of places offered (at 115%), this is not true of the sub-fields of Philosophy and History (82% of public places are filled on a 1st choice basis) or Languages and Literature (at 85%).

<sup>2</sup> The basic data on the study programmes involves administrative data taken from the UNEIX information system.



Figure 3. Indicators on the implementation and delivery of study programmes in the sub-fields of Languages and Literature. 2016-2017 academic year

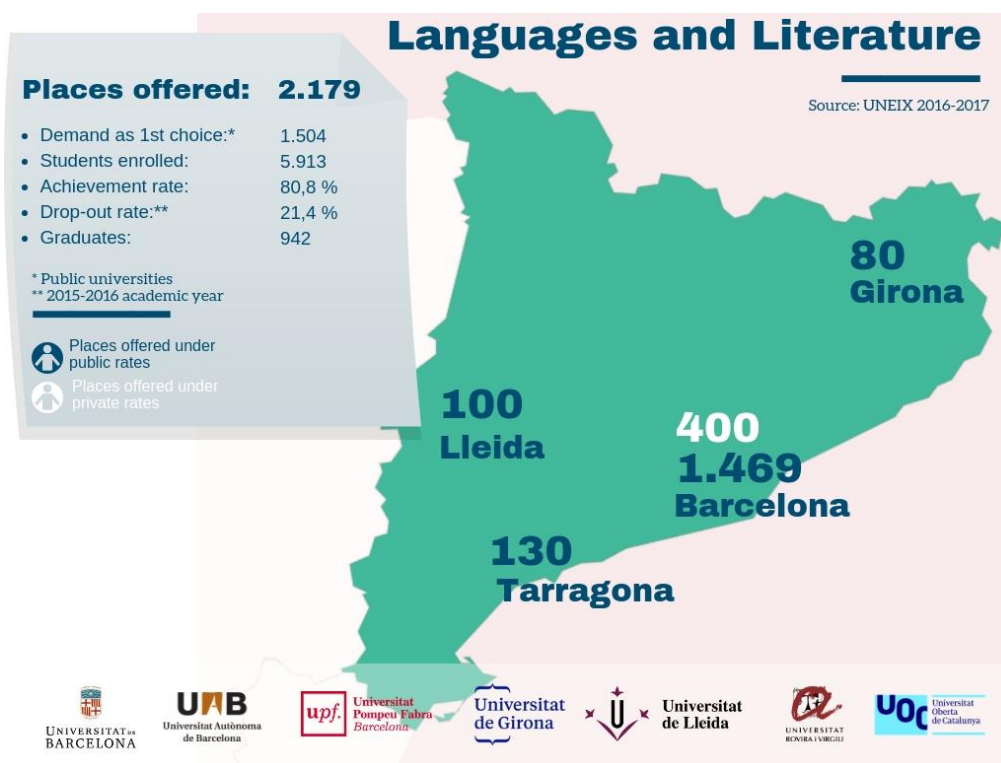
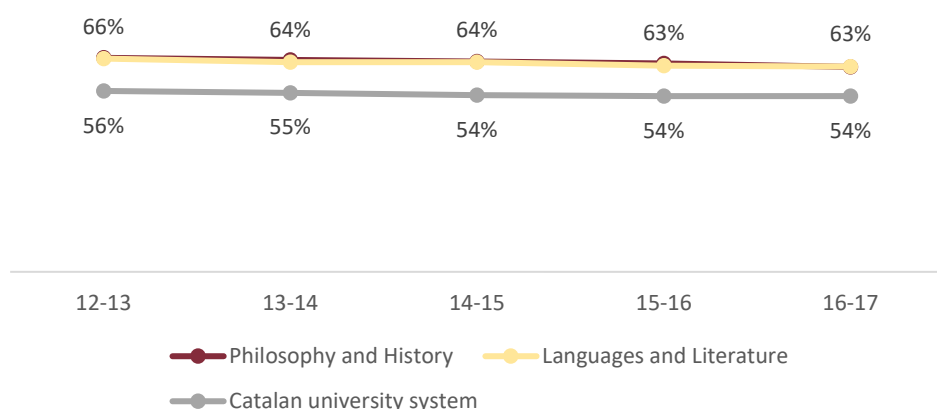


Figure 4. Trend in the percentage of women enrolling on study programmes in the field of Humanities (Philosophy, History and Languages) (%).

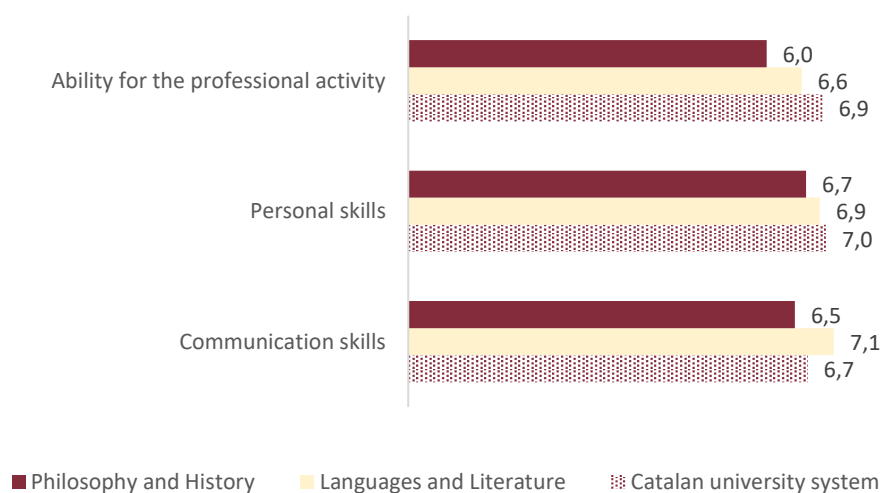


### The study programmes in these sub-fields are female-dominated

There are no significant differences and the percentage is falling only slightly.

## ■ Satisfaction of graduates with the university education received<sup>3</sup>

Figure 5. The extent to which the education delivered has improved in terms of the following factors (from 0 to 10)



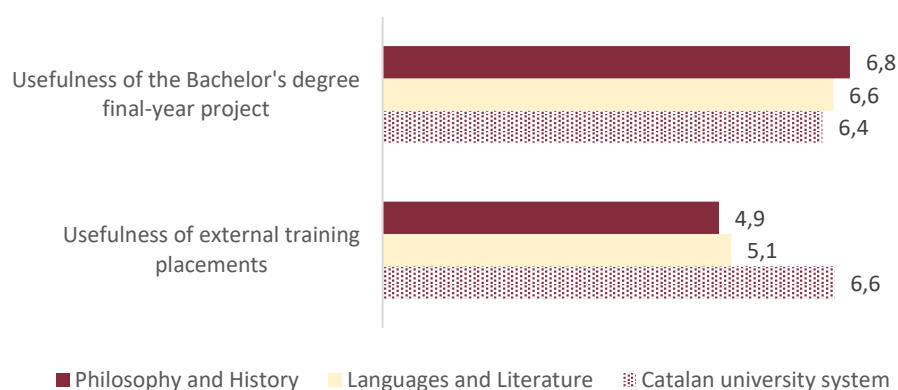
### The assessment of the results obtained is lower than the Catalan university system average, particularly in Philosophy and History

The ratings are clearly lower when it comes to ability for the professional activity, while there is virtually no difference for personal and communication skills.

For study programmes in the sub-field of Languages and Literature, the rating for communication skills is above the Catalan university system average.

<sup>3</sup> The data regarding satisfaction with the education received stems from the **satisfaction survey** drawn up by AQU Catalunya. It sets out information on graduates' satisfaction with various characteristics of the education delivered in the university study programme they followed. It is an online survey conducted yearly on all the individuals who graduated one year earlier. The results shown are the averages for 2015, 2016 and 2017 in the respective sub-fields and for the Catalan university system as a whole.

**Figure 6. Usefulness of external training placements and Bachelor's degree final-year projects (from 0 to 10)**



### **Students graduating in the Humanities are barely satisfied with external training placements**

There is a clear difference from the rest of the Catalan university system. Only 12% of Bachelor's degrees in Philosophy and Humanities, and 27% in Languages and Literature incorporate mandatory training placements (whereas the overall figure for the Catalan university system is 50% of Bachelor's degrees).

On the other hand, students qualifying in these sub-fields are fairly satisfied with the usefulness of the Bachelor's degree final-year project.

**Figure 7. Overall satisfaction with the study programme (from 0 to 10)**



### **No major differences are observed in overall satisfaction with the study programme**

Despite lower ratings for results and external training placements, the graduates of these sub-fields give their overall satisfaction a rating of almost good. Indeed, the values are similar to those of the Catalan university system as a whole.

## ■ Access to the labour market for graduates<sup>4</sup>

Figure 8. Trend in the employment rate of graduates (%)

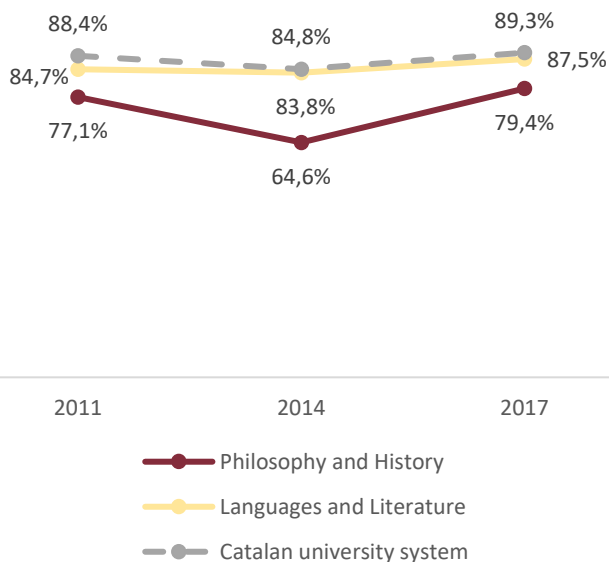


Figure 9. Trend in the percentage of graduates performing university-level functions at work (%)



**Students qualifying in Languages and Literature show no major differences compared to the Catalan university system average, while those qualifying in Philosophy and History show clearly lower employment indicators**

8 in every 10 are in work but only 52% of those who have worked performed university-level functions. Moreover, in recent years the extent of suitability of these functions has been in decline.

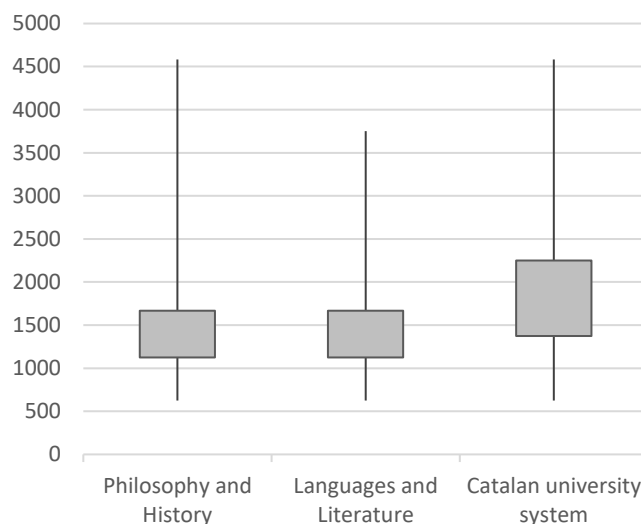
On the other hand, students qualifying in Languages and Literature obtain scores similar to the Catalan university system average, with suitability of functions being slightly lower.

<sup>4</sup> The survey on access to the labour market is conducted every three years with the aim of finding out what the experience of graduates is when it comes to access to the labour market three years after completing their university programmes. The results shown relate to the most recent survey from 2017 and are broken down according to university and study programme. In addition, the results for the Catalan university system show the average for all degree programmes taught in Catalonia at classroom-based universities. The results are weighted by a factor that corrects possible proportional variations in the sample.

Figure 10. Contract type in 2017 (%)

	Filosofia i Història	Llengües i Literatures	SUC
Fix	42,0%	35,3%	50,0%
Temporal	41,2%	47,9%	35,1%
Autònom	9,8%	11,1%	10,8%
Altres	6,9%	5,7%	1,0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 11. Gross monthly salaries in 2017 (€). Full-time employed only



## Job stability and income are both below the overall figures for the Catalan university system

Almost the same number of individuals are on a permanent contract and a temporary one 3 years after graduating. Contracts associated with scholarships also stand out (the category Others).

50% of graduates in these sub-fields are in full-time work and earn an average of between €1,100 and under €1,700 a month.

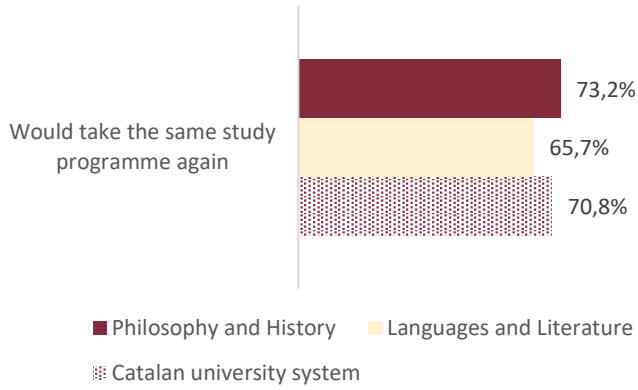
Figure 12. Level of education received according to skill in 2017 (out of 10)

	Creativity : Level	Critical thinking : Level	Decision making capacity: level	Documentation skills: level	Informatics : Level	Languages : Level	Leadership : level	Management : Level	Oral expression : Level	Practical skills: Level	Problem solving: Level	Team work: Level	Theoretical skills: Level	Written communication Level
Languages and Literature	5,7	7,1	5,5	6,8	4,4	7,5	4,0	4,9	6,6	4,9	5,4	5,8	7,2	6,1
Philosophy and History	5,5	7,7	5,2	6,8	3,1	3,6	3,8	4,6	5,9	3,9	5,0	5,3	7,1	7,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>6,5</b>	<b>5,8</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>5,0</b>	<b>3,7</b>	<b>4,9</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>5,6</b>	<b>6,1</b>	<b>6,8</b>	<b>6,8</b>	<b>6,3</b>

## Study programmes in these sub-fields stand out favourably for written expression and critical thought

Documentation, oral expression and theoretical training are also skills that are clearly rated above the overall figure for the Catalan university system.

**Figure 13. Percentage of graduates willing to take the same study programme 3 years later (%)**



**Satisfaction with the study programme is at a similar level to the Catalan university system**

Students qualifying in the sub-field of Languages and Literature are slightly less satisfied with their study programme.

# THE OPINION OF COMPANIES REGARDING THE EDUCATION RECEIVED BY GRADUATES IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES

## ■ Characteristics of the companies that have recruited individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities

Figure 14. Classification of companies according to the number of workers (%)

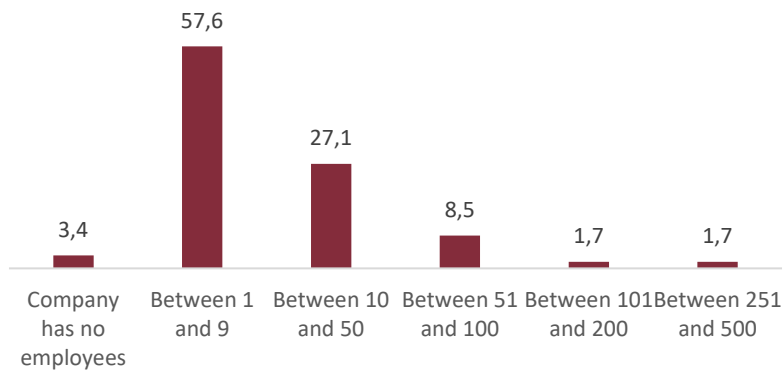


Figure 155. Classification of companies according to the percentage of workers with a university qualification (%)

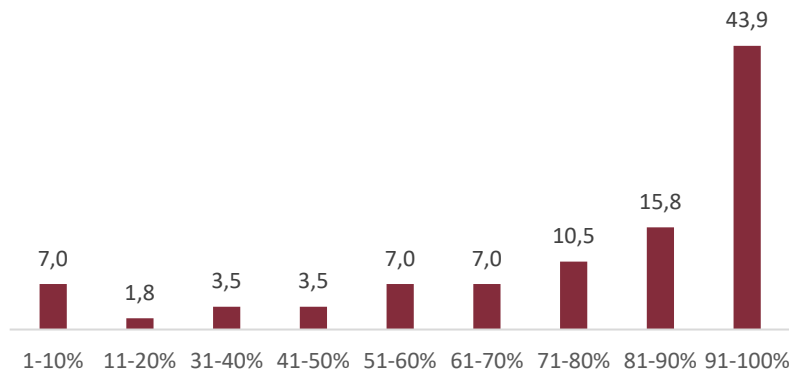
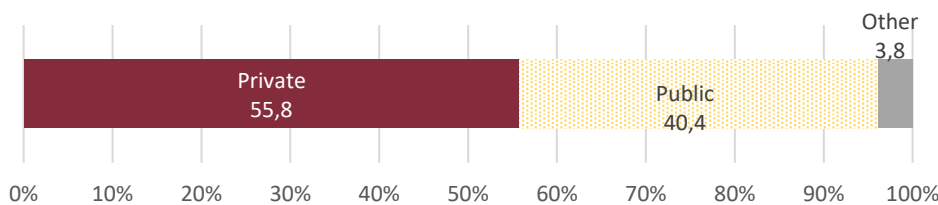


Figure 16. Companies according to ownership (%)

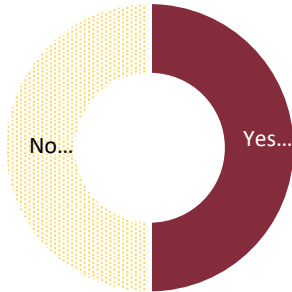


**Companies hiring individuals who recently graduated in Humanities are highly qualified, private SMEs**

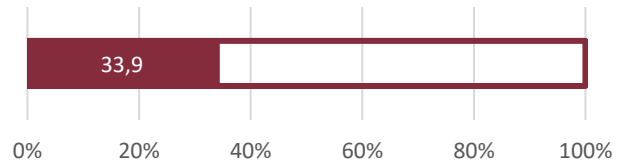
More than half of employing organisations are small (fewer than 10 employees) and a quarter are medium (between 10 and 50 employees).

Most workers employed by organisations are highly qualified (with a university education).

**Figure 17. Companies that have operated in the international sphere (%)**



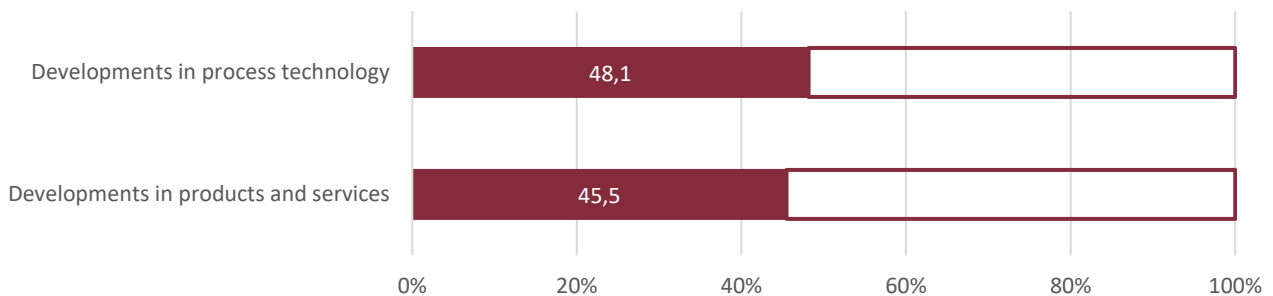
**Figure 18. Percentage of sales and services in the international sphere compared to the total**



## Half of companies that have recruited individuals who recently graduated in Humanities have ventured for internationalisation

Companies engaging in relations in the international sphere state that, on average, the international market accounts for 34% of their total sales and services.

**Figure 19. Companies that have introduced developments in process technology and/or in products or services (%)**



Note: “Developments in process technology” refer to major changes in process technology: new machinery or software, new forms of management (just-in-time production, quality and/or knowledge management). Also, “developments in products or services” refer to products or services that are completely new on the market or to the company (substantially enhanced products or services).

## Almost half of the employers surveyed have innovated

48% state that they have incorporated major changes in their process technology, i.e., new equipment or software and/or new forms of management.

Moreover, 46% have released new products or services onto the market or incorporated them into the company.



## ■ Recruitment of individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities

*Table 1. Number of companies that have recruited individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities (% of companies)*

Study programme	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Philosophy and History	33	55.0%
Languages and Literature	27	45.0%
Humanities total	60	100.0%

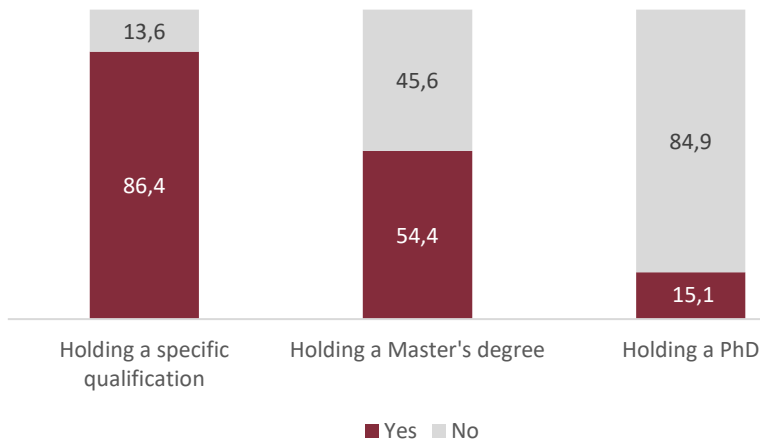
*Table 2. Business activity of the recruiting company (Catalan business activity classification 09) according to the type of degree programme followed by the individual recruited (%)*

	Philosophy and History	Languages and Literature	Total
I. Hospitality	3.0%	3.7%	3.3%
J. Information and communications	3.0%	11.1%	6.7%
M. Professional, scientific and technical activities	9.1%	29.6%	18.3%
O. Public Administration	3.0%		1.7%
P. Education	15.2%	40.7%	26.7%
R. Artistic, recreational and entertainment activities	60.6%	3.7%	35.0%
S, T, U. Others	6.1%	11.1%	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%

### Employers recruiting individuals who recently graduated in Humanities largely belong to the artistic, recreational and entertainment activity sector and the education sector

60% of employers who recruited individuals who recently graduated in Philosophy and History belong to the artistic, recreational and entertainment activity sector (including shows, literary creation, library activities, archives, museums and other cultural activities) and 15% belong to the education sector. Moreover, in the case of those employing graduates of Languages and Literature, 41% of companies belong to the education sector while 30% are from the professional, scientific and technical activity sector (including translation and interpreting activities).

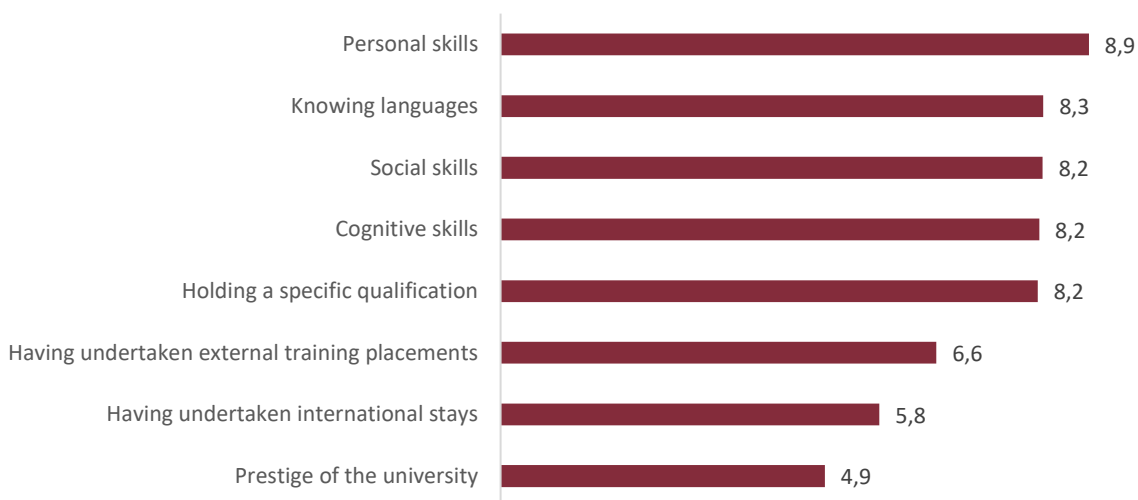
Figure 20. Relevance of higher education in the recruitment of individuals who recently graduated (%)



**Holding a Master's degree is relevant for more than half of employers while holding a PhD is important for 15%**

The importance of holding a Master's degree is above other sectors, such as Economics and Business or Tourism (38%).

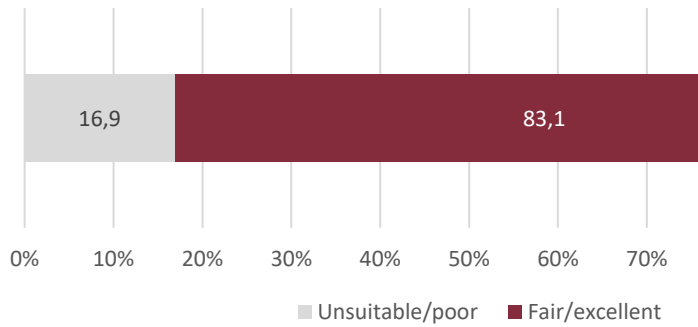
Figure 20. Relevance of certain factors in the recruitment of individuals who recently graduated (from 0 to 10)



**Personal, social and cognitive skills are the most highly valued factors when it comes to recruitment**

These skills are rated between 8.2 and 8.9. Nevertheless, knowing languages is the second most highly valued factor (8.3).

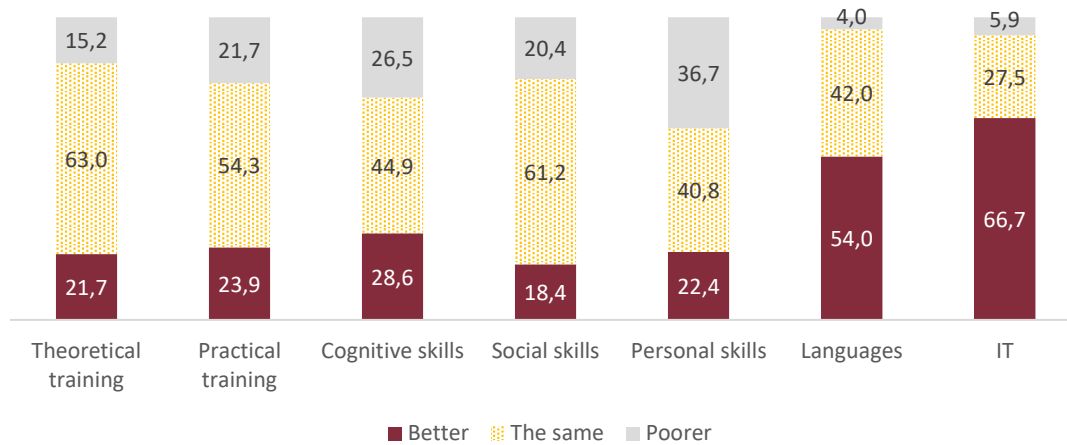
Figure 21. Suitability of individuals who recently graduated in Humanities to the needs of the workplace (%)



### Individuals who graduate in Humanities are suited to the workplace

8 in every 10 companies surveyed consider that the individuals graduating in Humanities they have recruited in recent years are suited to the needs of the workplace.

Figure 22. Trend in the current education received compared to that received 5 and 10 years ago (%)



### As with other study programmes, the education received in the Humanities field also shows an improvement in terms of languages and IT skills in recent years

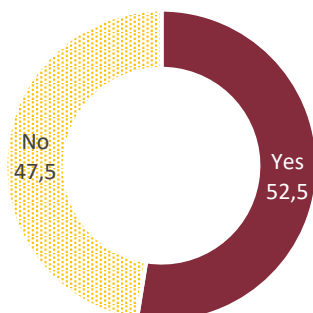
68% of companies consider that IT skills have improved while 54% consider this to be true of languages.

Furthermore, more than half of the companies surveyed feel that the education received by graduates of Humanities in terms of theoretical and practical training and cognitive skills (problem solving, critical thought, creativity, etc.), social skills (adapting to a working group, emotional intelligence, etc.) and personal skills (responsibility, initiative, autonomy, etc.) has remained constant.

It is also noteworthy that 1 in every 3 employers considers that the personal skills of individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities have fallen in recent years.

## ■ Difficulties in recruitment

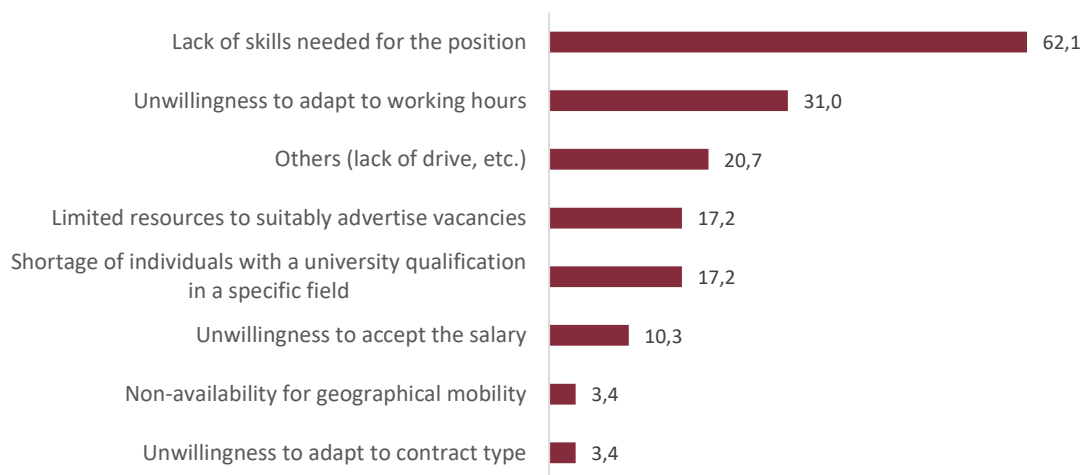
Figure 23. Employers that encountered difficulties in recruiting staff with suitable profiles (%)



### Half encountered difficulties in recruitment

This figure is 10 pp above the value obtained in the employers' study from 2014 for the production sector overall, which showed that 42% of employers encountered difficulties in recruitment.

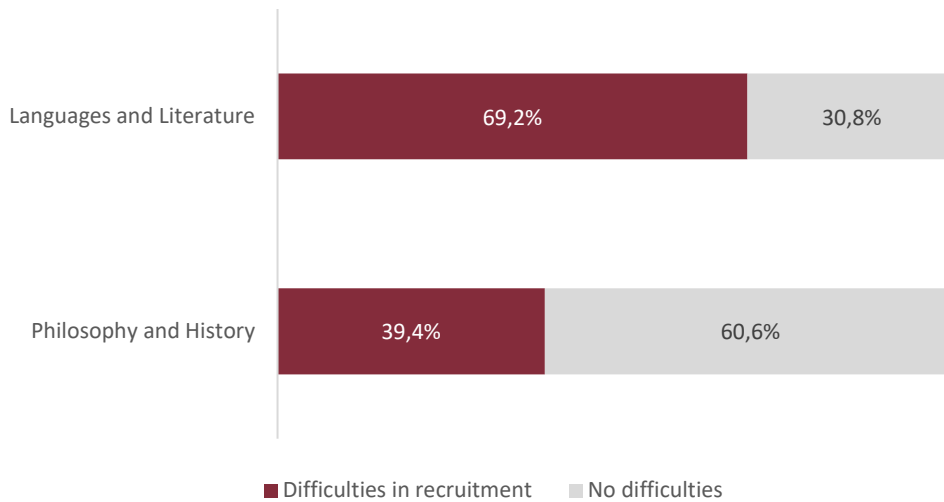
Figure 24. Reasons for difficulties in recruiting staff with suitable profiles (% of companies)



### Lack of skills needed for the position

More than half of companies that encountered difficulties in recruitment state that the candidates lacked the necessary skills for the position. This is above other sub-fields such as Economics and Business (60%) or Tourism (48%).

**Figure 25. Difficulties in recruiting staff with suitable profiles depending on the degree programme followed by the graduates they have hired (% of employers)**



**Employers encounter greater difficulty in recruiting staff with suitable profiles with graduates of the Languages and Literature degree programmes**

70% of those that recruited individuals who recently graduated in Languages and Literature have encountered difficulty in recruiting staff with suitable profiles. The percentage of employers citing difficulty when it comes to graduates of Philosophy and History is 39%.

## ■ Skills

**Table 3. Cross-disciplinary skills that should be improved in study programmes in the field of Humanities (% of companies)**

	Total % of companies	Philosophy and History	Languages and Literature
Documentation	3%	6%	
Leadership	7%	9%	4%
Numerical skills	12%	18%	4%
Theoretical training	13%	12%	15%
Negotiation skills	18%	24%	11%
Languages	18%	15%	22%
Oral expression	20%	18%	22%
Team work	22%	18%	26%
Use of most common IT tools	23%	27%	19%
Ability to offer new ideas and solutions	25%	24%	26%
Capacity for learning and self-learning	28%	24%	33%
Responsibility at work	30%	36%	22%
Autonomous work	35%	39%	30%
Written expression	38%	39%	37%
Practical training	50%	48%	52%
Problem solving and decision-making	52%	55%	48%

### **Problem solving and decision-making, as well as practical training, are competences that need to be improved in study programmes in Humanities**

52% of companies consider improvements to be necessary in problem solving and decision-making, while 51% state that this is true of practical training. It should be pointed out, however, that improvements tend to be reported as necessary with regard to these cross-disciplinary skills in most study programmes in Catalonia. Moreover, 1 in every 3 report shortcomings in written expression, autonomous work and responsibility at work. There do not appear to be major differences in the need for improvement in skills between study programmes in Philosophy and Humanities and in Languages and Literature.

**Figure 26. Satisfaction of employers with the skills of individuals who recently graduated in the field of Humanities (from 0 to 10)**



### **Satisfaction with the skills of individuals who recently graduated in Humanities**

Despite there being scope for improvement in the education received, companies are generally satisfied with the skills of graduates. Their overall degree of satisfaction stands at 7, and there is very little distinction to be made between study programmes. This value is in keeping with the overall satisfaction of employers observed in the 2014 survey.

## ■ Cooperation from employers with universities

Figure 27. Extent to which companies cooperate with universities according to the type of activity (%)

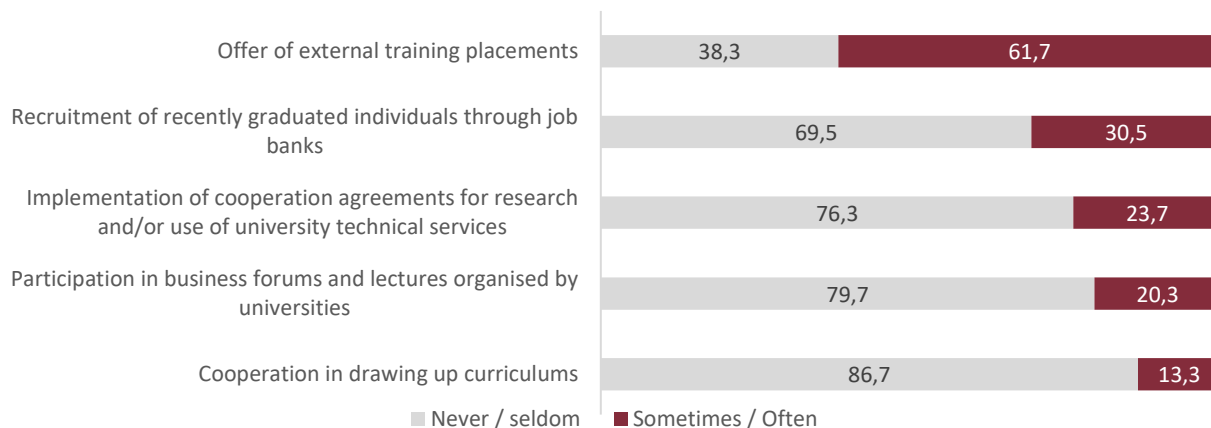


Figure 29. Areas for improvement in job banks or training placements organised by universities (% of companies)

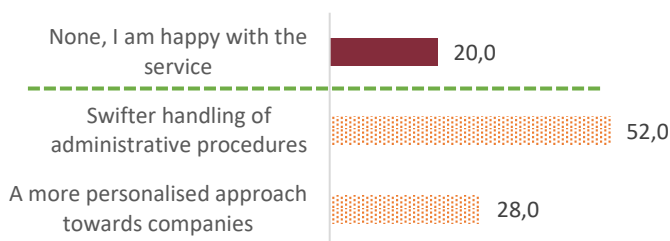


Figure 28. Satisfaction with job bank services or training placement services (on a scale of 0 to 10)



### The main area in which companies cooperate with universities relates to the offer of training placements

The activity in which companies and universities are most closely engaged relates to training placements during programmes: more than half have cooperated with universities on this activity. Moreover, around 30% have recruited individuals through the university job bank service.

### High degree of satisfaction with the job bank and training placement service

The level of satisfaction among those who used these services stands at 7; even so, they do believe there is scope for speeding up administrative procedures and for gaining a better acquaintance of companies' needs.



## ■ In-company training of graduates

Figure 29. Companies funding training for individuals who recently graduated (%)

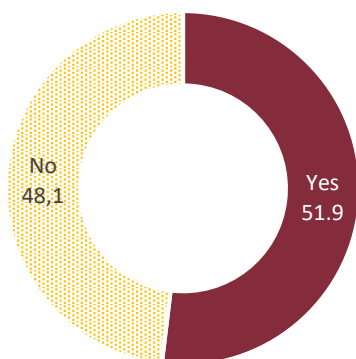


Table 4. Type of training funded by companies (%)

Type of training	%
On-the-job training	54,2
Training during working hours	66,7
Off-the-job training	29,2

Figure 32. Reasons for funding training (%)



### Almost half of companies fund training for the individuals they have recruited and who have recently graduated

54% of this training is on-the-job and 67% is during working hours. For most companies, the goal of this training is to improve individuals' specific knowledge of the sector and to better enable individuals to adapt to the characteristics and culture of their employer.

## Forecast

Figure 30. Trend in qualified employment in the sector (%)

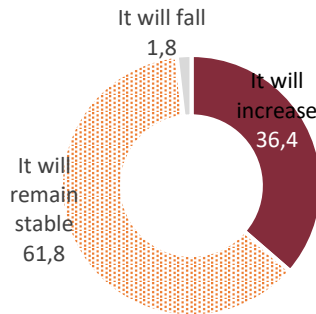


Figure 31. Skills that will gain importance in the field of Humanities\*

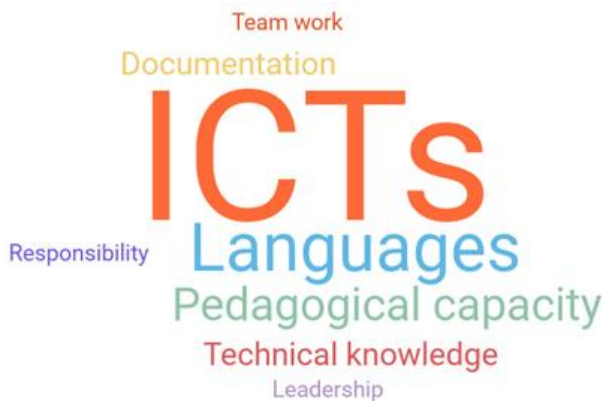


Figure 32. Most important areas of employment in the field of Humanities\*



Table 5. Reasons for the increase in employment (%)

Reasons	%
Organisational or technological changes	65,0
Company expansion	50,0
Staff rotation	5,0

Note: multiple response

### Demand on the part of companies for qualified employment in the field of Humanities is stable

It is one of the few sectors analysed where, by and large, it is believed that it will not increase.

The most sought-after skill relates to ICTs.

The most important areas of employment are linked to ICTs and archive or documentary management. The prevalence of jobs relating to administration is in decline.

Figure 33. Least important areas of employment in the field of Humanities\*



\*These are open questions. Responses with the same meaning have been grouped into categories. Categories referred to more than 2 times are shown.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Overall satisfaction among individuals who graduate in the field of Humanities is significant, and satisfaction with the Bachelor's degree final-year project is notably above the Catalan university system. Nevertheless, satisfaction with ability for the professional activity and with external training placements is clearly below the Catalan university system overall, particularly in the sub-field of Philosophy and History.
- Access to the labour market for individuals who graduate in the field of Humanities varies depending on the sub-field: for Languages and Literature it is on a par with the Catalan university system average in terms of employment and functions performed, while the results for Philosophy and History are clearly lower, so much so that only 5 in every 10 are performing university-level functions 3 years after qualifying. Individuals from both sub-fields commonly report a greater proportion of temporary contracts and lower salaries compared to the Catalan university system.

Employing organisations that recruit graduates in the field of Humanities have the following characteristics:

- Half operate in the international sphere and have incorporated innovations (both in terms of technology and with regard to their products and services).
- They belong to various sectors: artistic, recreational and entertainment activities, education and professional activities (translation and interpreting activities).
- When it comes to recruiting, they value the possession of a specific qualification and a Master's degree (welcomed by half of the employing organisations surveyed). Moreover, they also regard the personal, social and cognitive skills, and indeed the language skills of candidates to be of importance.
- 1 in every 2 employers have encountered difficulties in recruiting staff with suitable profiles, primarily on account of the fact that candidates lacked the necessary skills for the position.

With regard to university education:

- Despite the need for improvement, employers are satisfied with the skills of the recently graduated individuals they have recruited (at 7 out of 10).
- The improvement in education received by graduates of Humanities in recent years in terms of computer skills and languages stands out (as is the case with most study programmes).
- In terms of cross-disciplinary skills, practical training and problem solving coupled with decision-making show the greatest need for improvement (as is the case with other study programmes).
- 62% of employers have cooperated with universities by offering students the possibility of undertaking external training placements. Moreover, 1 in every 3 have hired graduates through job banks. Their degree of satisfaction with these services stands at 7 out of 10.

With regard to the forecast:

- Demand on the part of employers for qualified employment in the field of Humanities is expected to remain stable.
- Skills that will become more important in the field of Humanities are related to ICTs (e-documentation, new technologies and programmes), languages and pedagogical capacity.
- In terms of the trend in jobs, those related to ICTs and documentary management will increase in number while those relating to administration will decrease.

## DATA SHEET

### **Survey for employers**

Population	Organisations that may have potentially recruited individuals who recently graduated from universities in Catalonia in the past 3 years <sup>5</sup>
Survey period	Online survey: from 26/02/2018 to 16/03/2018 Telephone survey: from 27/06/2018 to 5/07/2018
Survey type	Online and over the telephone
Average time taken	Telephone survey: 14'59''

	Population	Sample
Organisations potentially from the Humanities sector	Unavailable	60
Total contactable organisations	30,018	

### **Survey on satisfaction (2017)**

Sub-fields (graduates from 2015-2016-2017)	Population	Sample	Response rate	Sample error
Philosophy and History	3,145	763	24.3 %	3.09 %
Languages and Literature	2,972	809	27.2 %	2.94 %

### **Survey on access to the labour market (2017)**

Sub-fields (graduates from 2013)	Population	Sample	Response rate	Sample error
Philosophy and History	1,027	555	54.0 %	2.82 %
Languages and Literature	1,150	595	51.7 %	2.79 %

<sup>5</sup>Most contacts with organisations stem from Catalan universities' job banks.

# DRAFTING COMMITTEE

## Editors

Sandra Nieto Viramontes	Project manager, Internationalisation and Knowledge Generation Department
Anna Prades Nebot	Project manager, Internationalisation and Knowledge Generation Department
Dani Torrents Vilà	Project manager, Internationalisation and Knowledge Generation Department

## Contributor

Martí Casadesús Fa	Director
--------------------	----------

## ANNEX. ASSOCIATED STUDY PROGRAMMES

### *Active Bachelor's degree programmes. 2018-2019 academic year*

	UB	UAB	UPF	UdG	UdL	URV	URL	UOC	UIC
<b>Philosophy and History</b>									
Archaeology	✓	✓							
Art History	✓	✓		✓					
East Asian Studies		✓							
History	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
History of Art and Artistic Heritage Management					✓				
Humanities		✓	✓					✓	
Humanities and Cultural Studies									✓
Musicology		✓							
Philosophy	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Studies in Antiquity		✓							
<b>Languages and Literature</b>									
Applied Languages			✓						
Arab and Hebrew Studies	✓								
Catalan Language and Literature		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Catalan Philology	✓								
Catalan Philology and Occitan Studies					✓				
Classical Philology	✓								
English						✓			
English Studies	✓	✓			✓				
French Studies		✓							
Hispanic Language and Literature						✓			
Hispanic Philology	✓								
Hispanic Studies					✓				
Linguistics	✓								
Literary Studies	✓								
Modern Language and Literature	✓								
Romance Languages and Literatures	✓								
Spanish Language and Literature		✓		✓					
Translation and Interpreting		✓							

Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya  
May 2019 · AQU-14-2019



Agència  
per a la Qualitat  
del Sistema Universitari  
de **Catalunya**

 [www.aqu.cat](http://www.aqu.cat)

 [@aqucatalunya](https://twitter.com/aqucatalunya)