

Vytautas Magnus University Graduating Students' Survey (EXIT) Results: Studies, Preparation and Defense of Final Theses

January and June 2022



VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
MCMXXII

Survey Purpose and Respondents

The survey of graduating students was conducted in January and June 2022.

The aim was to identify the graduating students' opinion about studies at Vytautas Magnus University (further – University, VMU) and to evaluate students' career plans.

Respondents: VMU students who had studied in bachelor, master, integrated and professional study programmes.

Answers of the respondents about their studies, completed internships, preparation and defense of the final thesis are presented below.

These questions were answered by 1405 students in the survey – 724 bachelor, 584 master, 31 integrated and 66 professional studies' students. 7.69% of respondents were international students.

Respondents in Faculties / Academies

Faculty / academy	Number of respondents	Number of graduates	Percentage of students surveyed, %
1. Faculty of Economics and Management	125	198	63.13
2. Faculty of Natural Sciences	102	132	77.27
3. Faculty of Humanities	171	211	81.04
4. Faculty of Informatics	43	53	81.13
5. Faculty of Catholic Theology	22	30	73.33
6. Faculty of Arts	43	83	51.81
7. Music Academy	53	90	58.89
8. Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy	131	192	68.23
9. Faculty of Social Sciences	135	179	75.42
10. Education Academy	256	550	46.55
11. Faculty of Law	56	79	70.89
12. Agriculture Academy	268	380	70.53
In total:	1405	2177	64.54

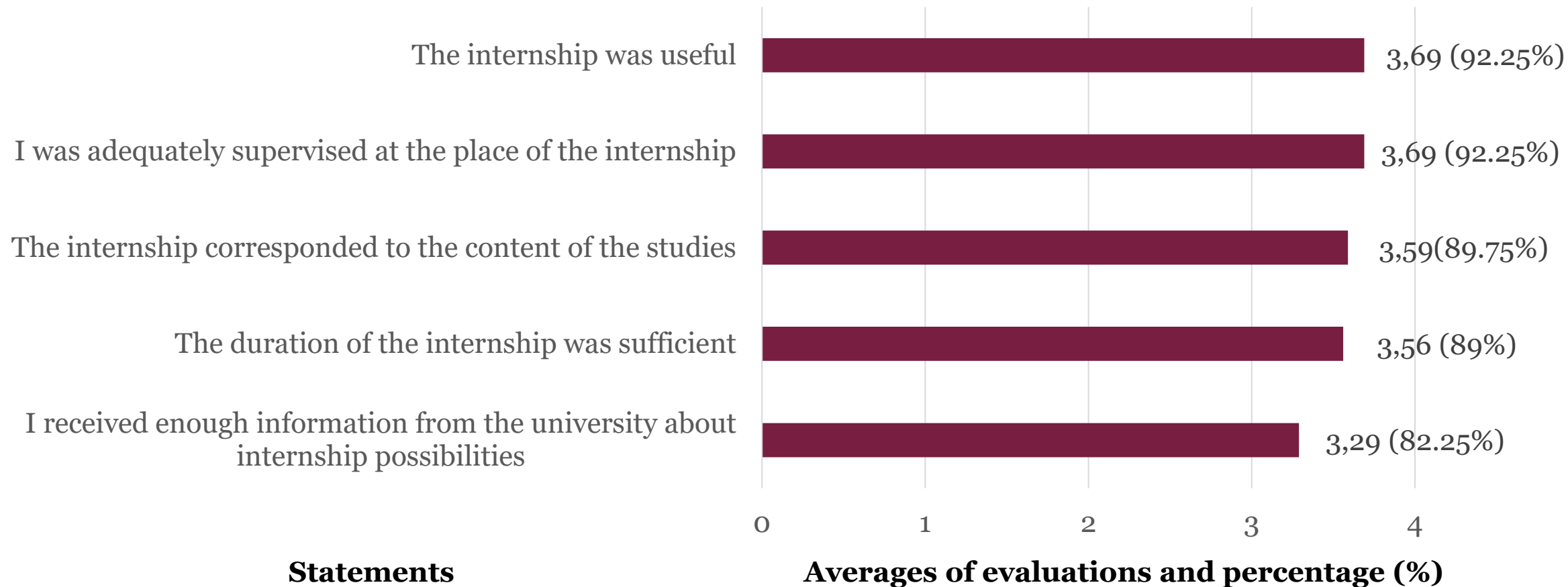
Evaluation of Studies

Question: evaluate the studies. 12 statements, answers from "agree" – 4 to "disagree" – 1; "I do not know, hard to say" (0) – eliminated.

No.	Statements	Averages of evaluations and percentage		
		All respondents	Lithuanian students	International students
1.	I completed all the study tasks	3.83 (95.75%)	3.82 (95.50%)	3.92 (98.00%)
2.	If necessary, I was able to consult with teachers	3.72 (93.00%)	3.72 (93.00%)	3.77 (94.25%)
3.	The administrative staff provided all necessary assistance	3.70 (92.50%)	3.70 (92.50%)	3.69 (92.25%)
4.	The university provided me with opportunities for mobility	3.66 (91.50%)	3.65 (91.25%)	3.82 (95.50%)
5.	There was a possibility to choose minor studies	3.63 (90.75%)	3.65 (91.25%)	3.44 (86.00%)
6.	Study material and literature sources were available in the library and / or in a virtual environment	3.60 (90.00%)	3.58 (89.50%)	3.74 (93.50%)
7.	Equipment, laboratories and other study rooms were appropriate	3.59 (89.75%)	3.58 (89.50%)	3.65 (91.25%)
8.	I dedicated enough time to my studies	3.59 (89.75%)	3.57 (89.25%)	3.83 (95.75%)
9.	Course content corresponded to the purpose of the programme	3.51 (87.75%)	3.49 (87.25%)	3.68 (92.00%)
10.	The workload of the studies was appropriate for me	3.46 (86.50%)	3.44 (86.00%)	3.71 (92.75%)
11.	Opportunities to learn various foreign languages were provided at the university	3.45 (86.25%)	3.43 (85.75%)	3.67 (91.75%)
12.	Classes (lectures, seminars, etc.) matched my study expectations	3.33 (83.25%)	3.31 (82.75%)	3.52 (88.00%)

Assessment of Study Internship

5 statements, answers from "agree" – 4 to "disagree" – 1; "I do not know, hard to say" (o) – eliminated. Replied those students, who had completed internship during their studies (N=943).



Summary of Respondents' Comments about Study Internship

Positive comments:

When looking for places of internship institutions, consultations and suggestions of teachers and internship coordinators are useful, as is the freedom to independently choose internships in organizations of interest.

Study internship provides an opportunity to better learn the theoretical knowledge acquired during lectures, it gives new experiences and skills and allows to try the chosen profession or discover new areas of professional activity.

The support, guidance, detailed feedback and sharing of experience provided by the supervisors of the internship institutions help to ensure the smooth performance of internship tasks and encourage improvement.

The knowledge and experience gained during the internship helps in the preparation of the final thesis and it is useful for future professional activities. The internship opens opportunities for the employment at the place of practice.

Summary of Respondents' Comments about Study Internship

Proposals for improvement:

Update the lists of internship institutions, provide more information on how to find an internship place; explain in more detail about the preparation of the internship documents and report; and introduce possibilities of crediting internship.

Study internship tasks should be more closely related to the knowledge and skills acquired during the studies of the particular study programme.

Improve the communication between the University, internship institutions supervisors and students performing the internship; provide more guidance and feedback when questions arise during the internship.

Extend the duration of the internship and simplify the task of preparing the internship report.

Participation in Study Exchanges and Internships Abroad

Replied those students, who indicated that they participated in study exchanges and / or did internships abroad.
Respondents were able to choose multiple answers.

Statements	Response number (N=123) and percentage
1. Studied under the Erasmus programme	89 (60.54%)
2. Did a traineeship under the Erasmus programme	24 (16.33)
3. Studied under the VMU bilateral exchange programme	19 (12.93%)
4. Other*	9 (6.12%)
5. Did a Litanistic traineeship in a Lithuanian community, school or centre abroad	5 (3.4%)
6. Did a traineeship under the VMU bilateral exchange program	1 (0.68%)

*By choosing *Other*, the respondents indicated participation in NordPlus and other projects during which they visited schools in Finland, Belgium and Lithuania; internships in the European Parliament.

Gained or Developed Skills while Studying at VMU

Respondents chose 1-3 skills.

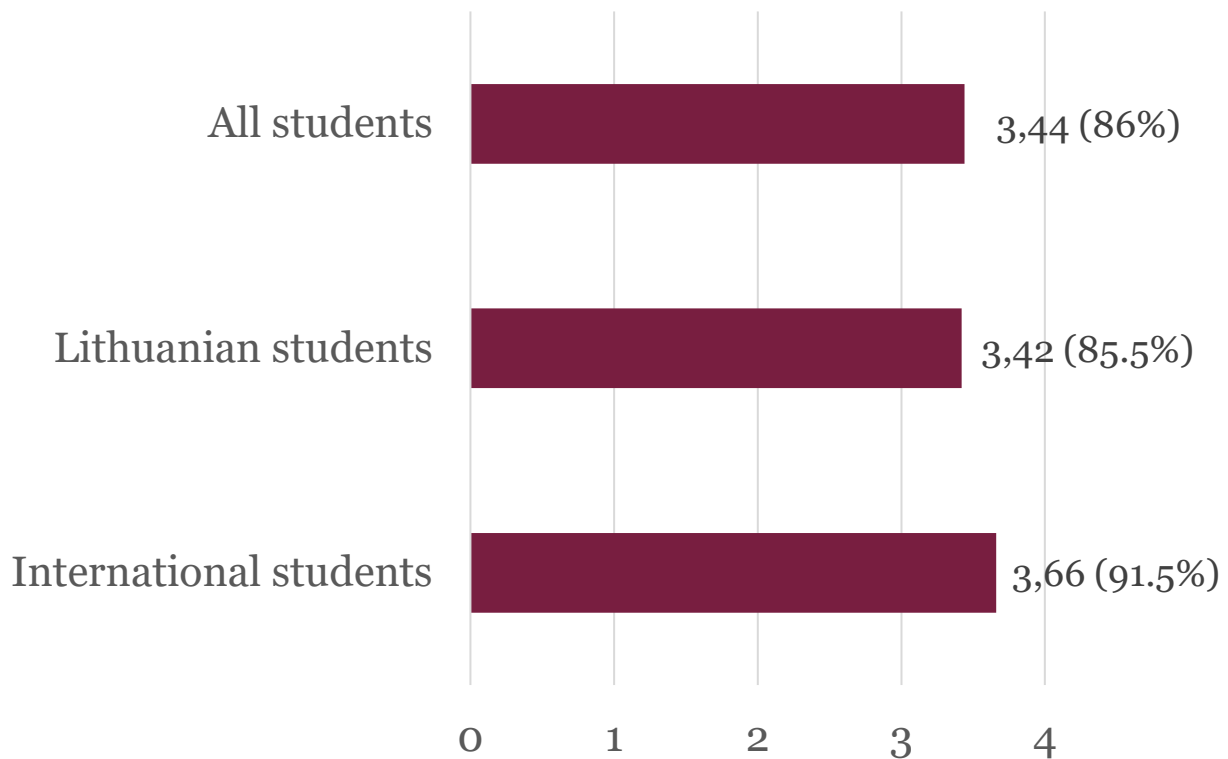
Gained or developed skills	Response number and percentage
1. Specialized knowledge and skills	978 (20.7%)
2. Communication and collaboration skills	817 (17.29%)
3. Problem solving skills	581 (12.3%)
4. Time planning skills	573 (12.13%)
5. Responsibility	510 (10.8%)
6. Creativity skills	462 (9.78%)
7. Information literacy	453 (9.59%)
8. Foreign language skills	303 (6.41%)
9. Other skills	47 (0.99%)

*By choosing *Other skills*, the respondents mentioned teamwork, planning and organizing various activities, critical thinking, self-analysis and reflection and other skills.

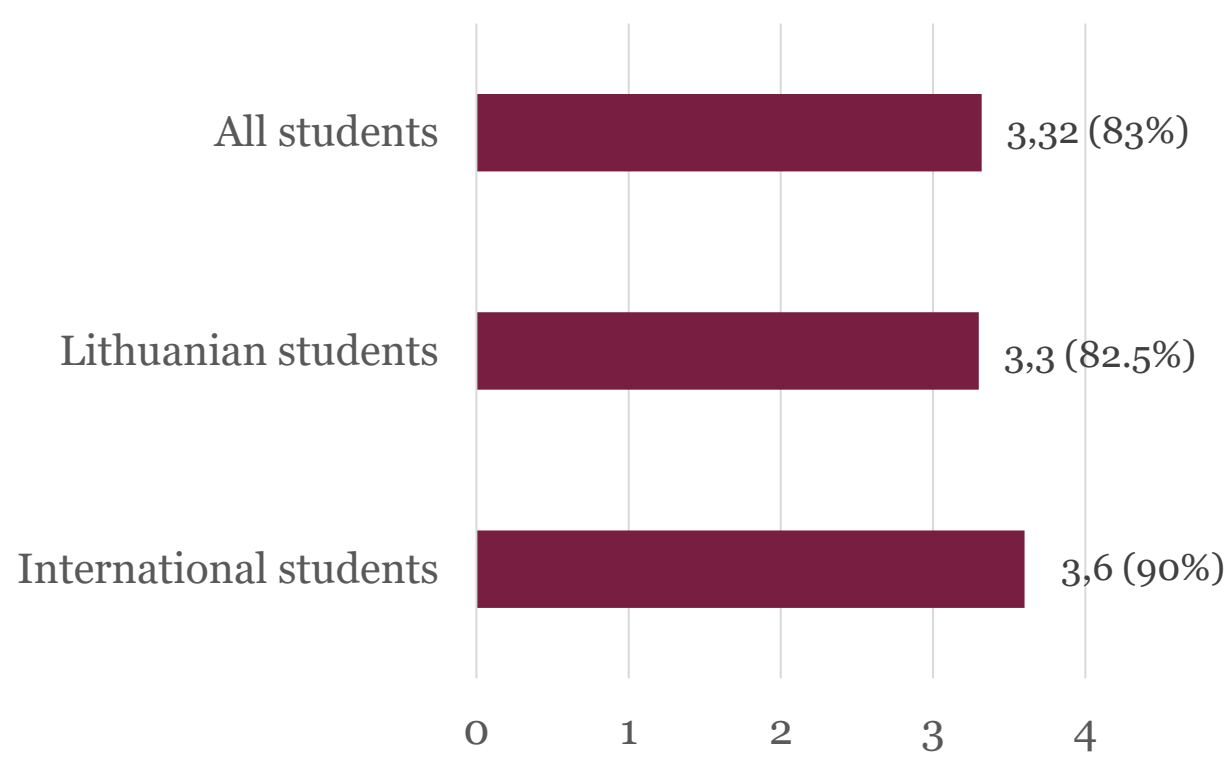
Summarised Evaluation of the Studied Programmes

2 statements, answers from "agree" – 4 to "disagree" – 1; "I do not know, hard to say" (0) – eliminated.

In general, the quality of the study programme is appropriate



I would recommend this study programme to others



Summary of Respondents' Comments about Studies

Positive comments:

VMU teachers are professionals of the highest level who present the study material in a clear, interesting and modern way, use engaging teaching methods, share their practical experience, provide relevant examples and useful assignments, in a respectful and collegial manner inspire and motivate students to study.

The administration has a high work culture and provides timely information on studies, responds promptly to students' queries and solves problems smoothly.

There are favourable conditions for studying subjects of interest, various foreign languages, for choosing minor or individual studies, for going on exchange programmes for partial studies to foreign universities or for gaining knowledge by listening to lectures given by foreign teachers, and for getting to know other cultures by interacting with students from different countries.

Optional attendance of lectures and the possibility to combine study and work are seen as an advantage of VMU.

The convenient location of the University buildings, the rich resources of the library, and the new Sports Centre are appreciated.

The University's active academic and student clubs, arts groups, volunteering initiatives and sporting activities help to spend free time in a meaningful way.

Summary of Respondents' Comments about Studies

Proposals for improvement:

More emphasis on practical exercises, real-life case studies, lectures by experts in a specific field, who can share their experience, discussions, more detailed presentation of the requirements of the assignments and more feedback on their performance, explanation of the assessment criteria.

More information about the study process, timetables, study exchanges and internships, dormitories, opportunities to get involved in research and attend conferences.

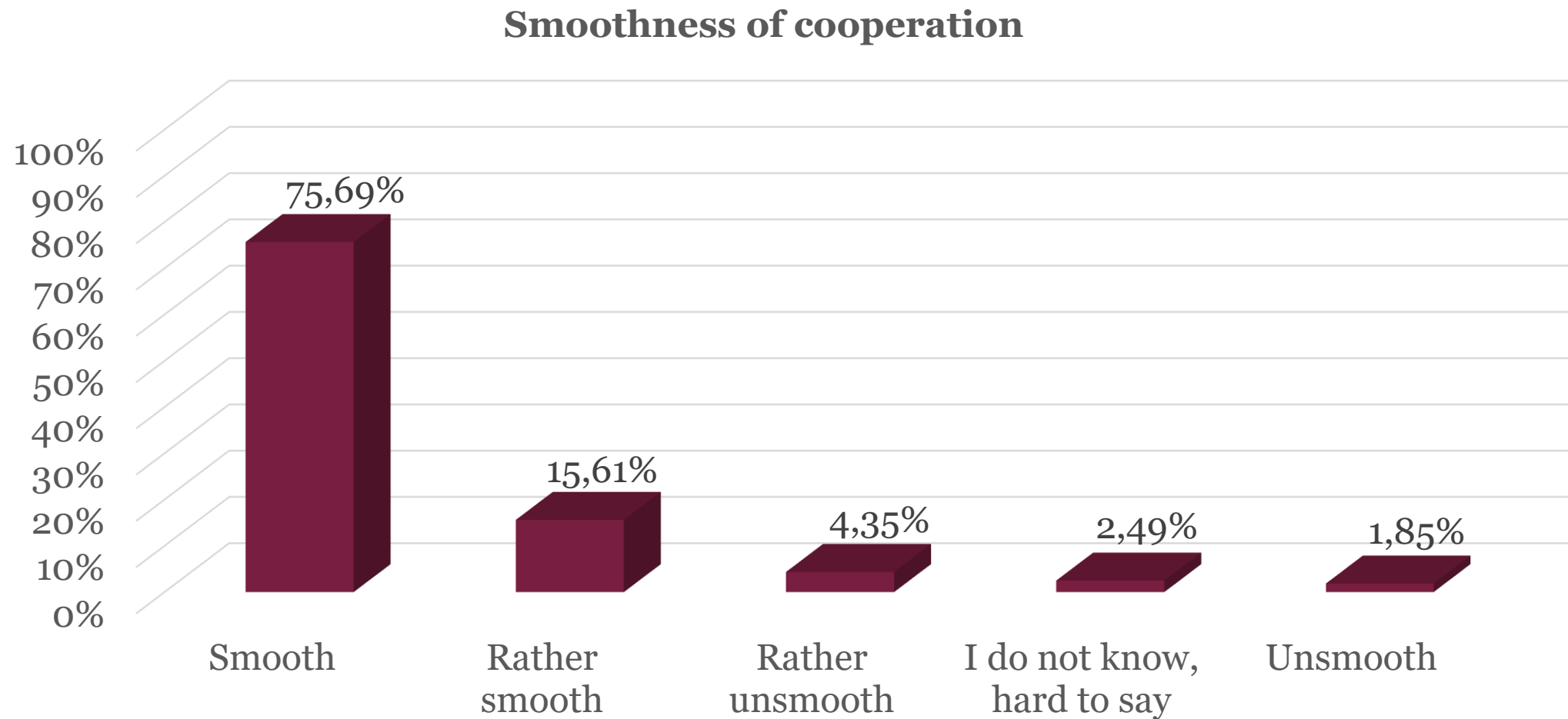
Revise the content of the subjects to avoid duplication of material; offer a greater variety of courses in Group C and allocate more credits to this group of courses.

Improve teachers' English language skills.

Some study programmes lack up-to-date laboratories, computer and software equipment; some buildings of the University could have more rest areas, catering facilities, mini-kitchens, food vending machines with healthy snacks.

Organise more events and celebrations for students, informal meetings with teachers.

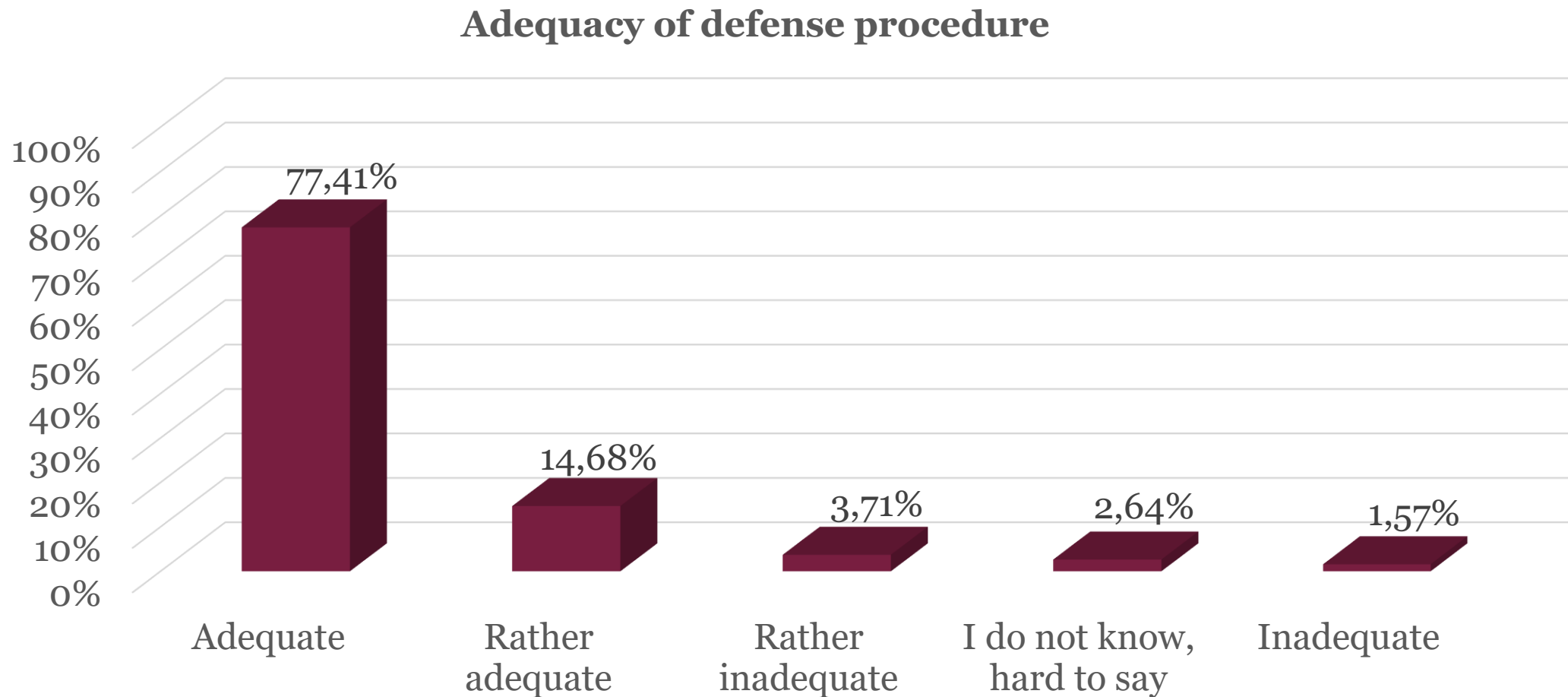
Smoothness of Cooperation with the Supervisor of the Final Work (Art Project)



Reasons of Smooth (Insufficiently Smooth) Cooperation with the Final Work (Art Project) Supervisor

Reasons of smooth cooperation	Response number (N=1281) and percentage	Reasons of insufficiently smooth cooperation	Response number (N=122) and percentage
1. The supervisor has made sufficient efforts to ensure smooth cooperation	1039 (51.01%)	1. The supervisor did not put in enough effort to make the cooperation smooth	54 (50.47%)
2. I have made sufficient efforts to make the cooperation smooth	914 (44.87%)	2. I did not put in enough effort to make the cooperation smooth	29 (27.1%)
3. Other (the importance of mutual cooperation, the supervisor's kind and empathetic communication, prompt communication, professionalism in providing clear and constructive criticism or advice on the preparation of the thesis)	84 (4.12%)	3. Other (the thesis supervisor's availability, lack of consultations or discussions, disagreement of opinions, lack of smooth communication, absence of a direct supervisor, when counseling is done by different teachers)	24 (22.43%)

Adequacy of the Final Work (Art Project) Defense Procedure



Reasons of Inadequate Defense Procedure

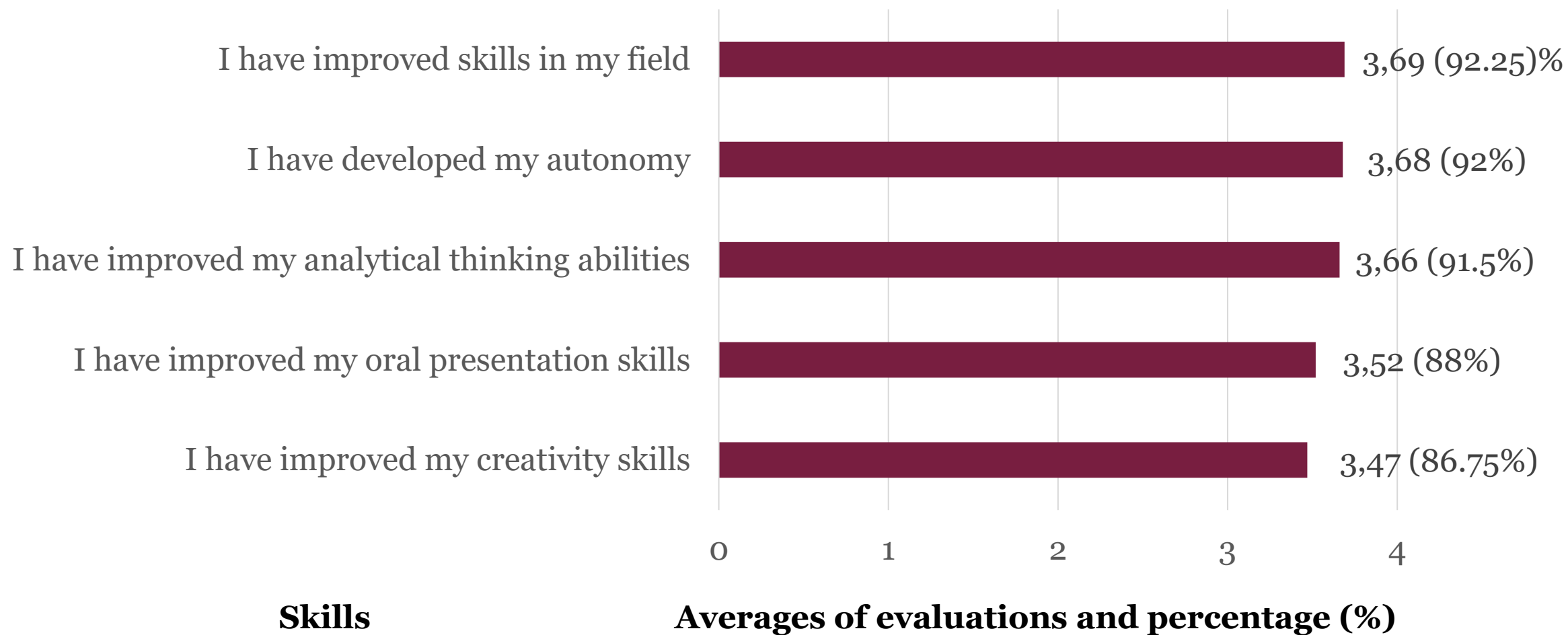
The question was given for those, who indicated the defense procedure was not sufficiently correct. Respondents were able to choose all matching reasons.

Reasons	Response number (N=74) and percentage
1. The defense committee applied unclear evaluation criteria	39 (29.77%)
2. The defense committee took an unethical approach during the defense (rude, disrespectful)	33 (25.19%)
3. Other*	28 (21.37%)
4. The work of the defense committee was unstructured and ill-planned	11 (8.4%)
5. The reviewer's feedback was unclear to me	8 (6.11%)
6. The reviewer's response was late	5 (3.82%)
7. I was not properly prepared for the defense procedure	4 (3.05%)
8. I behaved incorrectly during the defense procedure	3 (2.29%)

* By choosing *Other*, respondents mentioned the following reasons for the incorrect defense procedure: disrespectful and unethical behaviour of the defense committee members, unclear assessment criteria, unequal distribution of time for the presentation of the final work.

Usefulness of Thesis Preparation and Defense in Skills' Development

5 skills, answers from "agree" – 4 to "disagree" – 1; "I do not know, hard to say" (0) – eliminated.



**Proposals for
improvement of the
preparation and
defense of final
theses (art projects)
processes:**

Develop clear and uniform methodological requirements and assessment criteria for the final thesis and its presentation / defense.

Revise the procedures for the intermediate presentation and defense of theses and make students more aware of the deadlines for preparing the theses and of the defense procedure itself.

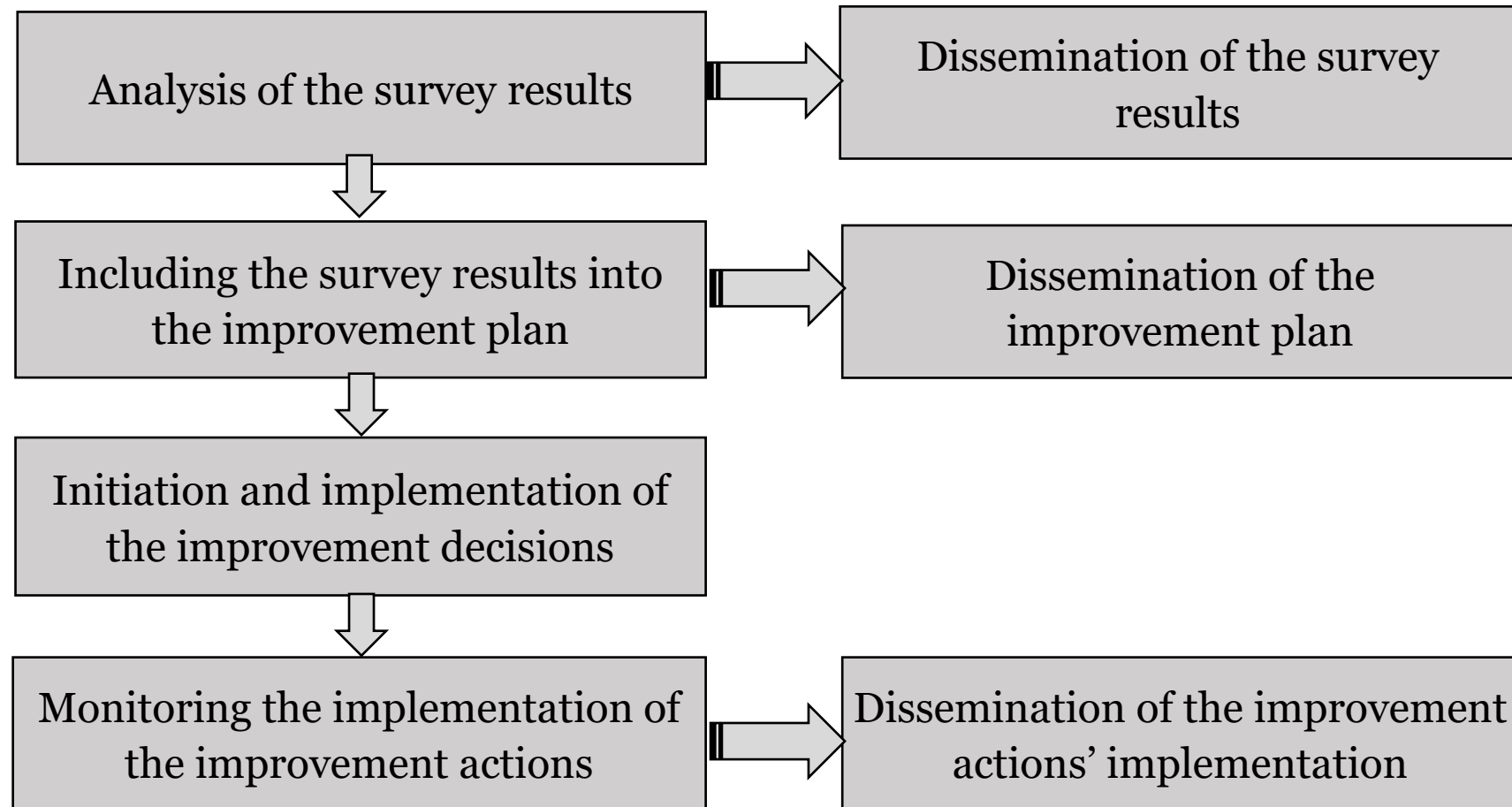
Organise departmental defense procedures to allow students to assess at an earlier stage whether all the mandatory requirements for the final thesis are being met properly.

Allow more time for consultations with the supervisor.

Allocate more time for thesis defense and stick more strictly to the set defense schedule.

Improve the quality of remote defense procedures by resolving technical problems in advance.

Using the Survey Results: The Role of the Study Programme Committee (Field Committee)



THANK YOU FOR COOPERATION

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