

2.

Tertiary admission systems

Where do the Nordic countries stand?



Chapter D6: What admission systems are used in tertiary education?

▪ Content

- ♦ Organisation of admission systems to first degree tertiary programmes
- ♦ Constraints on students entering tertiary programmes
- ♦ The use of examinations and tests to determine access to first degree programmes
- ♦ Applicants and applications to first degree tertiary programmes

▪ **Source:** NESLI survey on application and admission to first degree tertiary programmes administered in 2024, that captured

- ♦ Qualitative information on application and admission systems
- ♦ Quantitative data on the number of applicants and applications

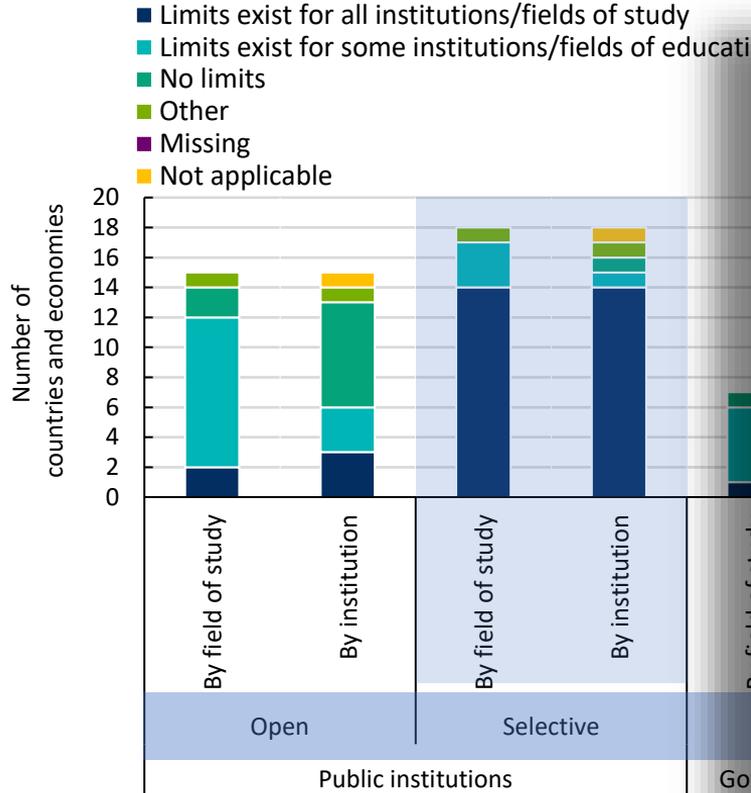
▪ **Participation:** 36 countries and economies including 4 Nordic countries:

- ♦ Denmark 
- ♦ Finland 
- ♦ Norway 
- ♦ Sweden 



Most countries impose limits on the number of places in some or all tertiary programmes

Limitations on the number of student places (2024)



Open admission:
all applicants with the required minimum attainment level can enrol in the programme, without the need to meet other criteria.

Selective admission:
Applicants selected based on certain set of criteria. In a selective system, there are a fixed, limited number of student places available (i.e. numerus clausus).

Open admission
for all
programmes

Open admission
for some
programmes

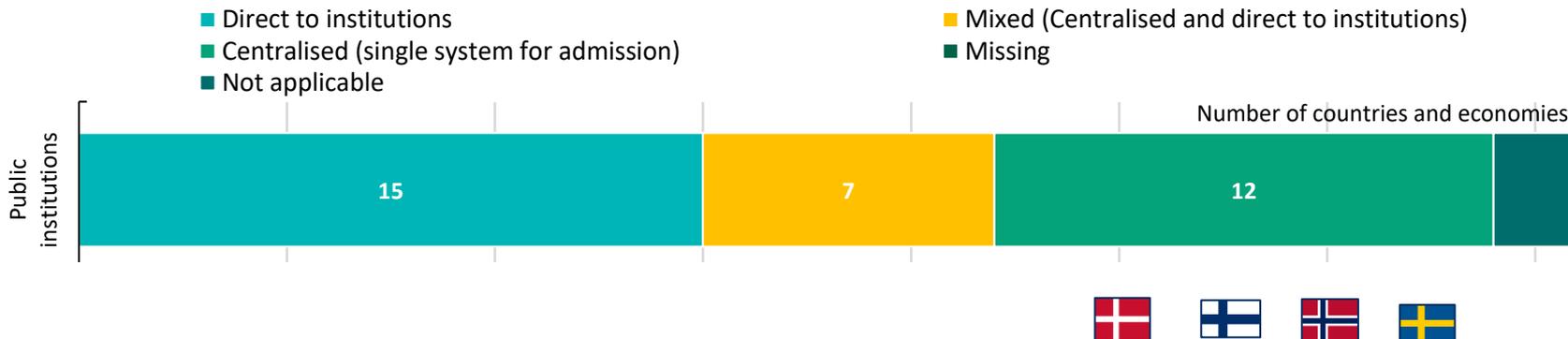
Selective admission
for all
programmes





Direct vs. centralised application processes

Application process for entry into first degree tertiary programmes (2024)

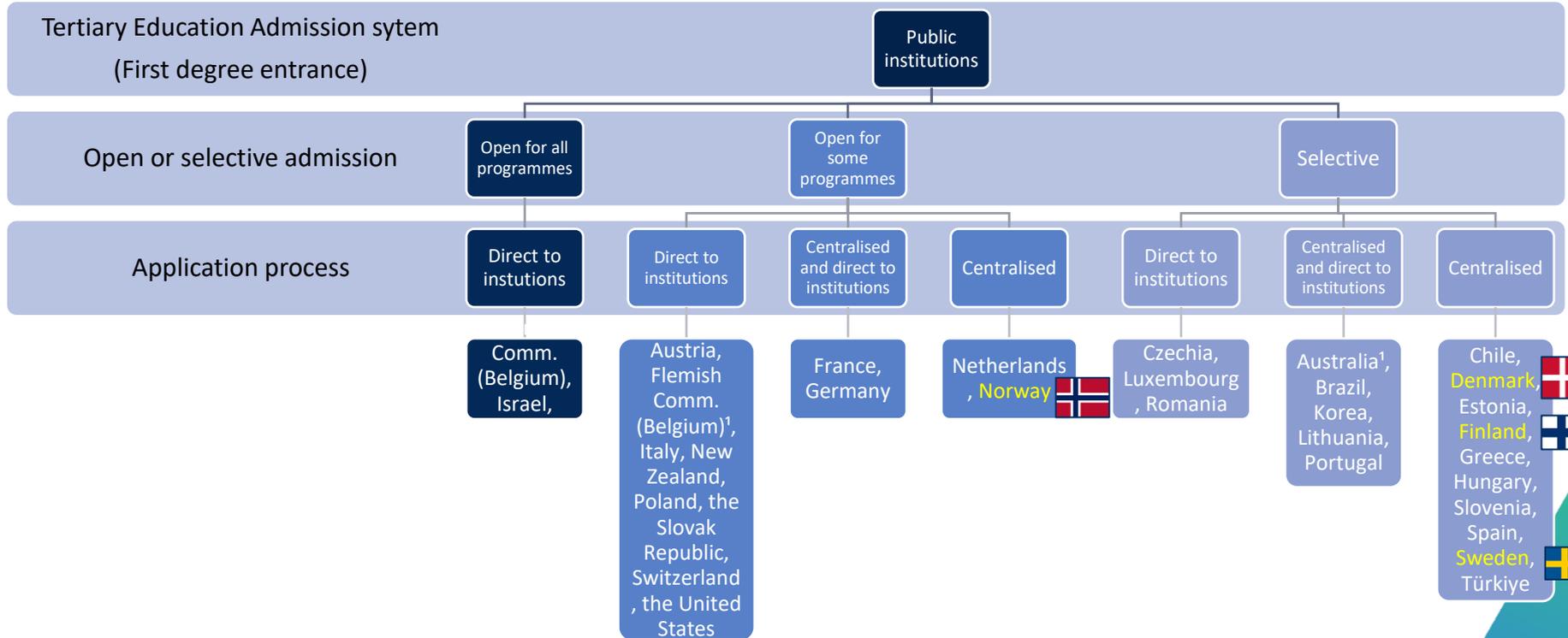


Maximum number of preferences an applicant can specify	8	6	10	12
Maximum number of offers an applicant can receive	1	6	1	Other*



Admission systems for tertiary programmes

Admission systems for first degree tertiary education in public institutions (2024)





Nordic countries use examinations to select students in competitive institutions

Type of examination	National examinations   *	First-degree entrance exams 	Non-standardised examinations 
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How are results considered in the selection?

Minimum performance requirements?	Yes, always  	No 	Only for some 
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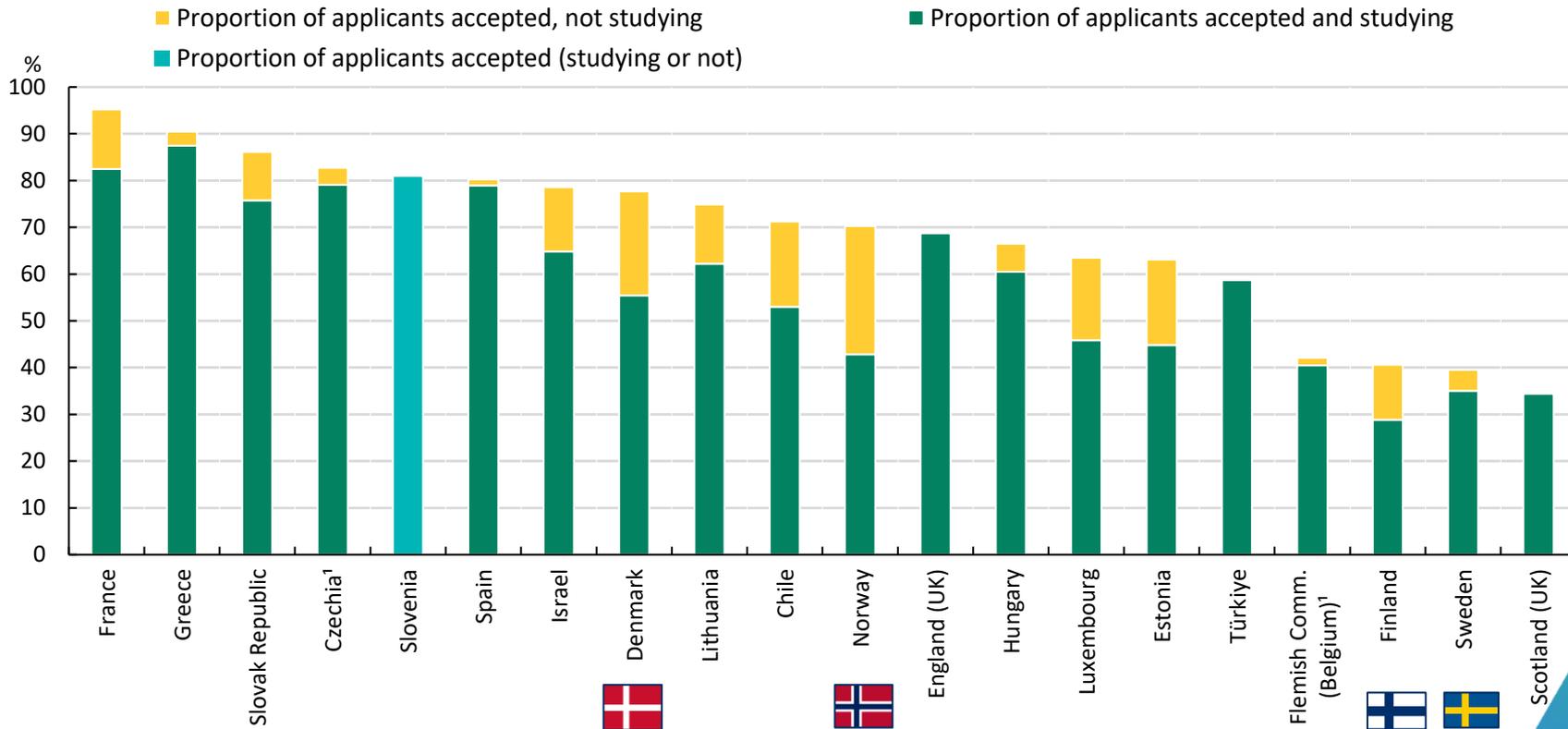
Instrument for selection?	Yes, always  	At institutional discretion (institutions decide on quotas)  
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* Examination is compulsory to gain access



Share of accepted applicants to tertiary programmes

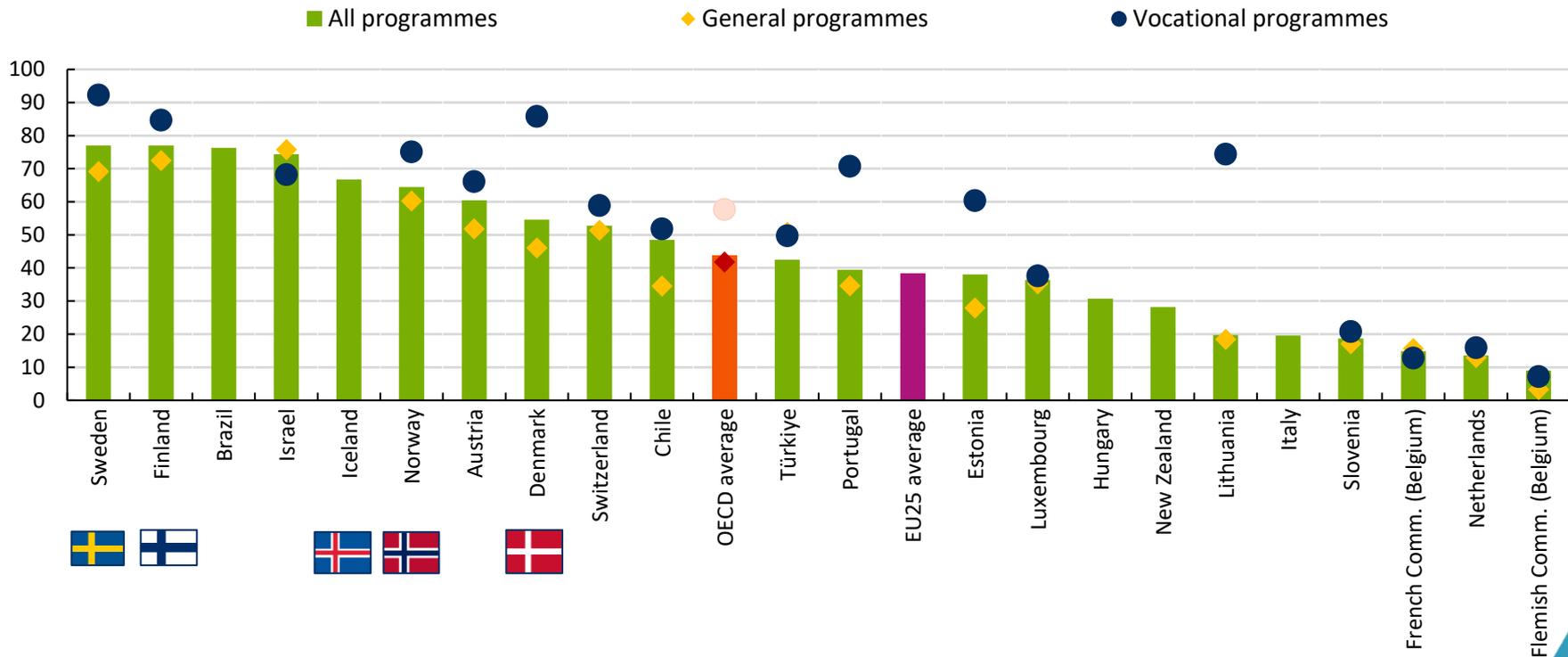
Share of applicants to first degree tertiary education who are accepted (2024)





Many students take one or more gap years before entering tertiary education

Share of tertiary new entrants into bachelor's programmes who took at least one gap year, by upper secondary programme orientation (2023)

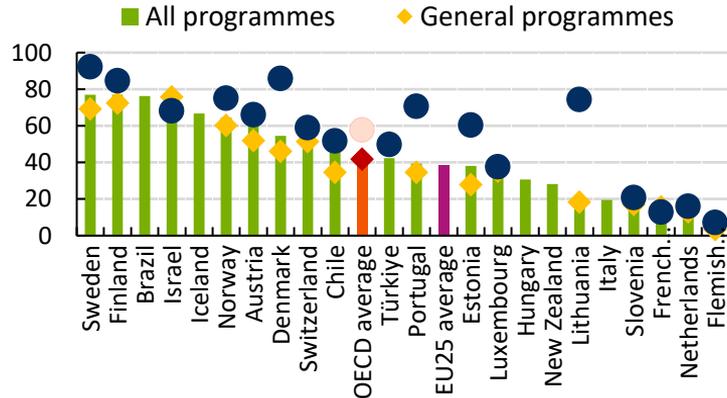




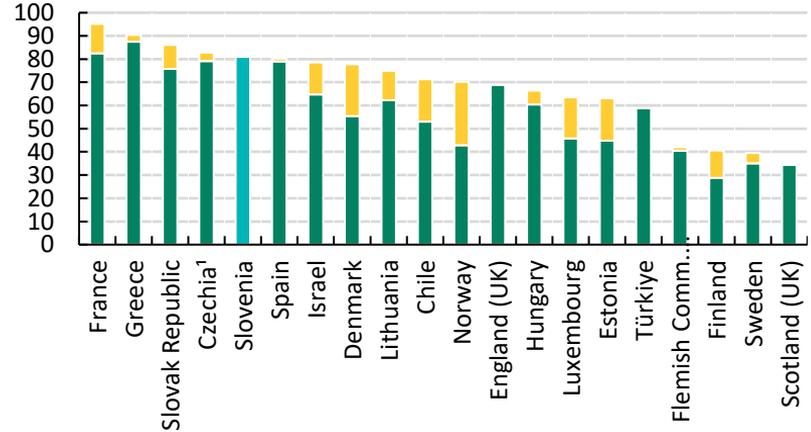
Questions

Why are the number of students places so limited (especially in Finland and Sweden)?

How to explain the proportion of applicants who are accepted but do not study (especially in Denmark, Norway and Finland)?



- Proportion of applicants accepted, not studying
- Proportion of applicants accepted and studying
- Proportion of applicants accepted (studying or not)



Is the extent of use of a gap year linked to low proportions of applicants accepted to enter tertiary programmes?

 EDUCATION
& SKILLS

Thank you

