



Higher Education Entrance Exam vs Secondary Education Final Exam

Current practice & perceptions of HEIs

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Research and Institutional Building

Background

- Study Commissioned to the Centre for Education Policy for the project “Support for quality assurance within the national primary and secondary education examination system“ and Conference of Universities in Serbia (KONUS)
- **Aims of the research:**
 - To provide an overview of the current HE entrance exam (EE) system
 - To analyse perceptions of HEIs to it and prospective final exam (FE) system (so-called “state matura”)



Overview of the prospective FE system

- The Law on Fundamentals of Education System (Article 171) prescribes introduction of general, vocational and art matura programmes until the end of 2013/14 school year
- For the development of the programmes and instruments (to be implemented in 2014/15 school year) it is necessary to develop the concept of final exams – wide consensus needed in order to secure sustainability of the education system.



Overview of the prospective FE system

Proposals

- 3 types of matura (general, vocational and art)
- 4 or 5 subjects (4 for the purpose of certification and/or selection, and 5th only for selection if needed).
- General subjects will be chosen from the list of subjects for which standards have already been developed .
- Serbian/mother tongue and mathematics will be obligatory subjects in all 3 matura types.
- A separate a test should be developed for each of the subjects.



Method & Sources

- **Qualitative study**
- **Respondents:** individuals appointed by selected faculties
- **Method of data collection:** closed interviews and document analysis
- **Research period:** May/June 2012

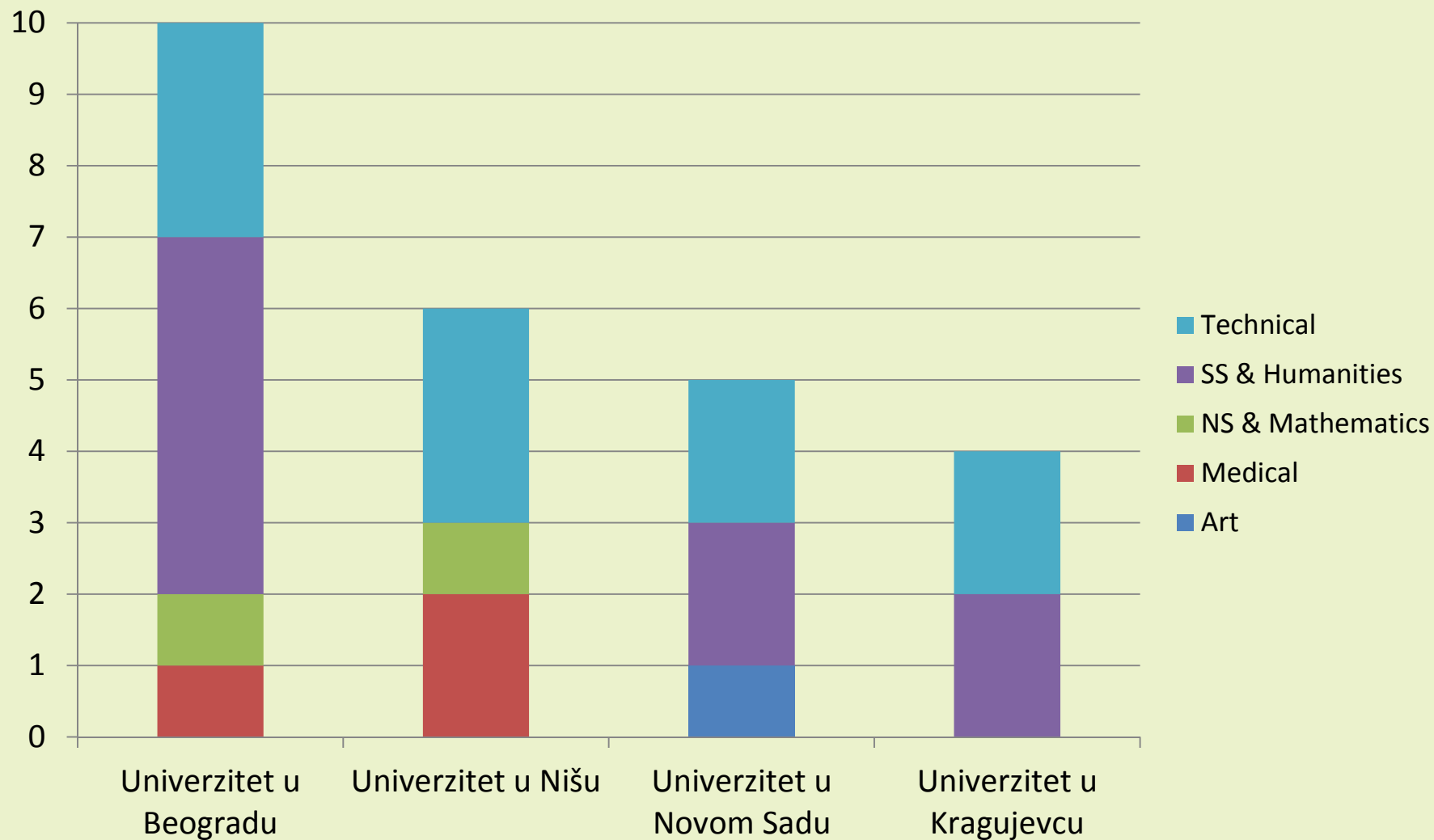


Sample

- 4 largest (state) universities
- 25 HEIs (university units - faculties) in total
- Varying in size (Small – Medium – Large)
- Varying in disciplinary fields
- 19 vice-deans, 3 enrolment committee members, 1 head of department, 1 head of student service office, 1 public relations officer



Distribution of faculties in the sample (size & disciplinary field)



Topics covered

1. The current EE system

- Preparation
- Candidates
- Organisation & financing

2. Perceptions

- Perceptions on the current EE system
- Perceptions on the prospective FE system



1. The current EE system

1a Preparation

- Responsibility of individual HEIs (mostly faculties)
- Some examples of cooperation
- Coordinated by vice-deans; special committees
- Closed test as the most used method of assessment
- Subjects – of relevance to the study programme candidate opts for
- Entrance exam carries 60% of score, high school grades 40% (80:20 in arts)



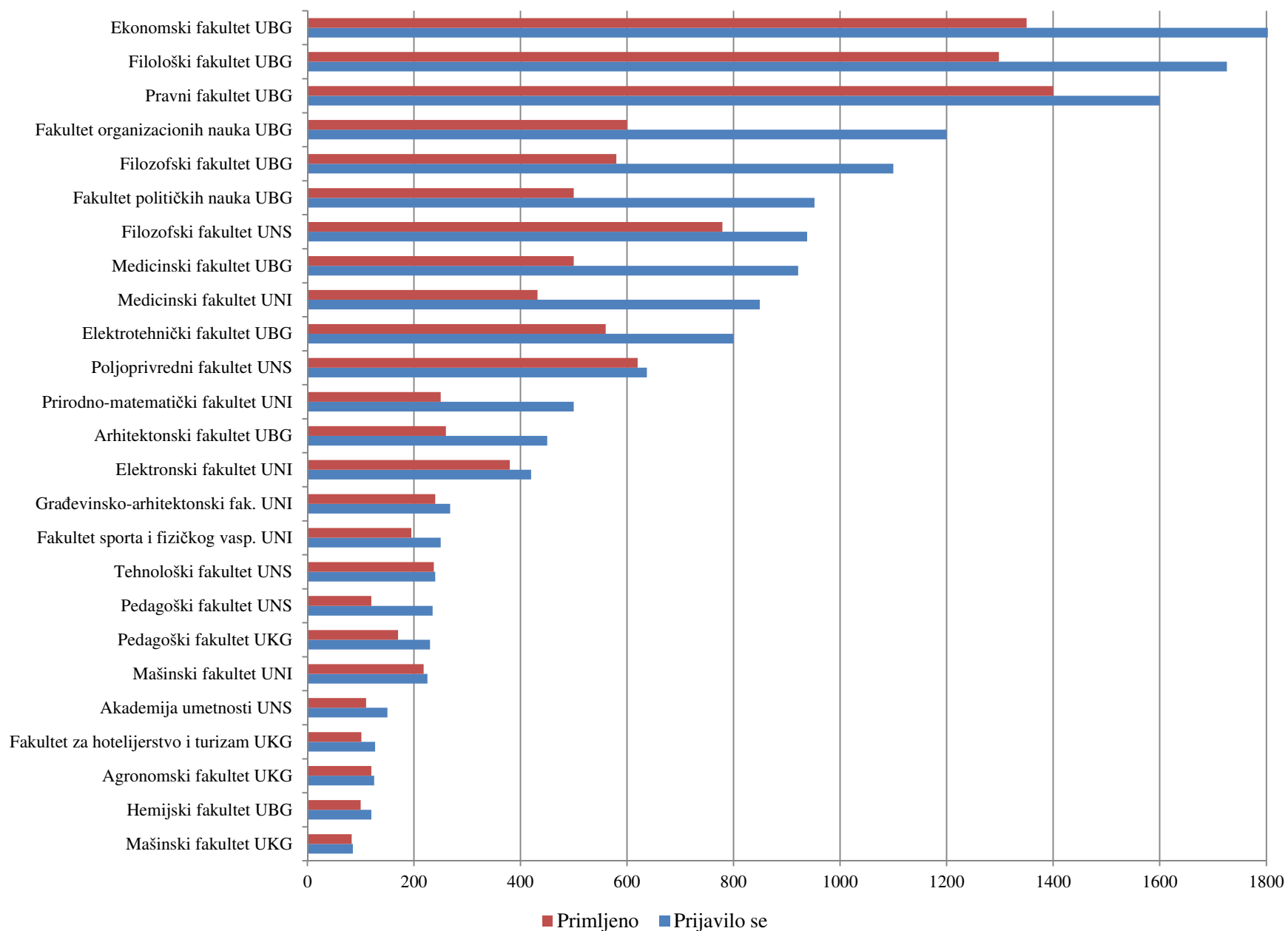
1. The current EE system (2)

1b Candidates

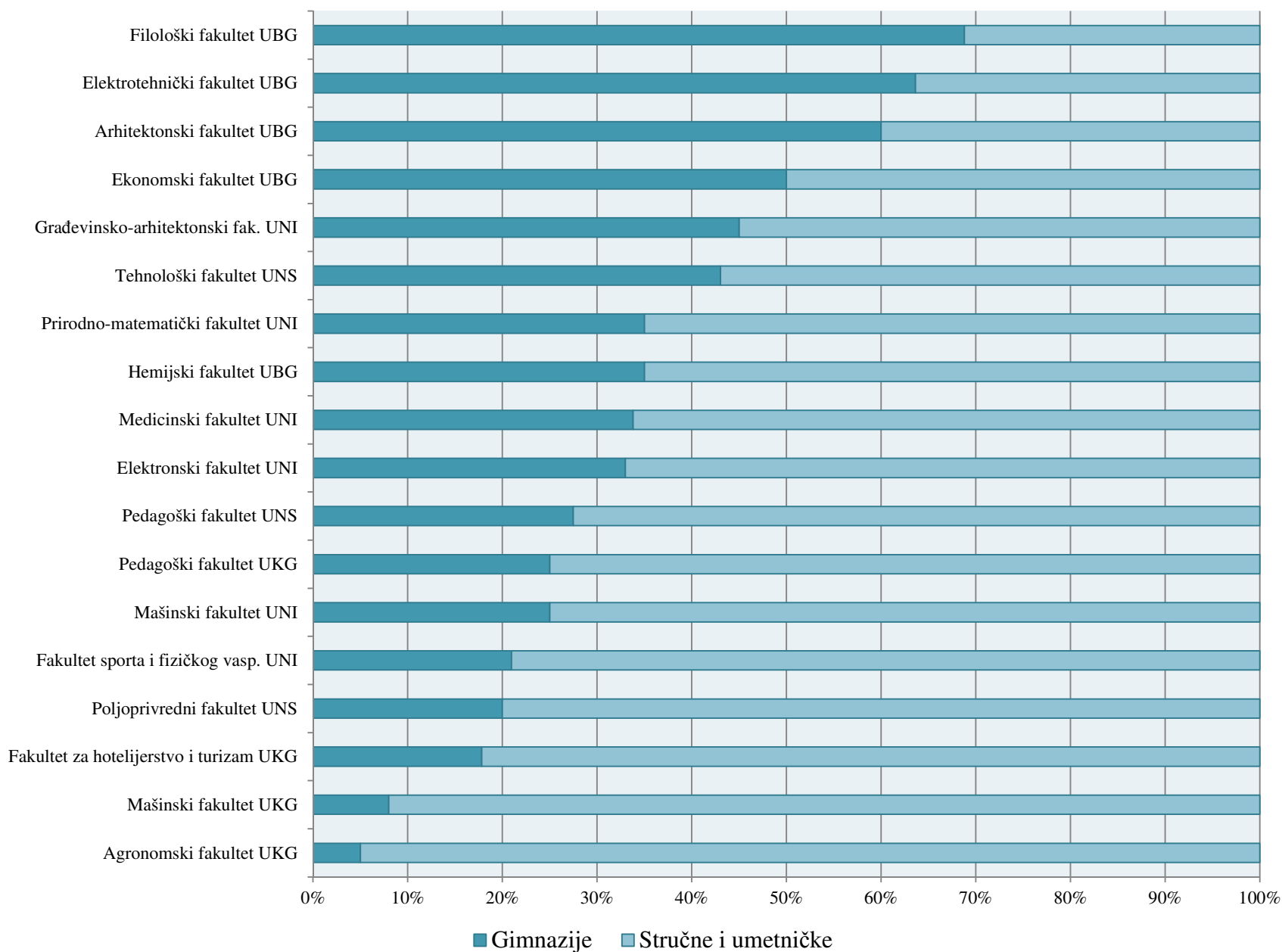
- Gymnasiums & secondary vocational & art schools (4 years schooling)
- Enrolment criteria & exams same for all (some exceptions)
- Yet, there are patterns



Number of students applied (prijavilo se) against the number of those enrolled (primljeno) in the academic 2011/2012.



Proportion of students enrolled from secondary general (gimnazije) and secondary vocational and art schools (stručne i umetničke)



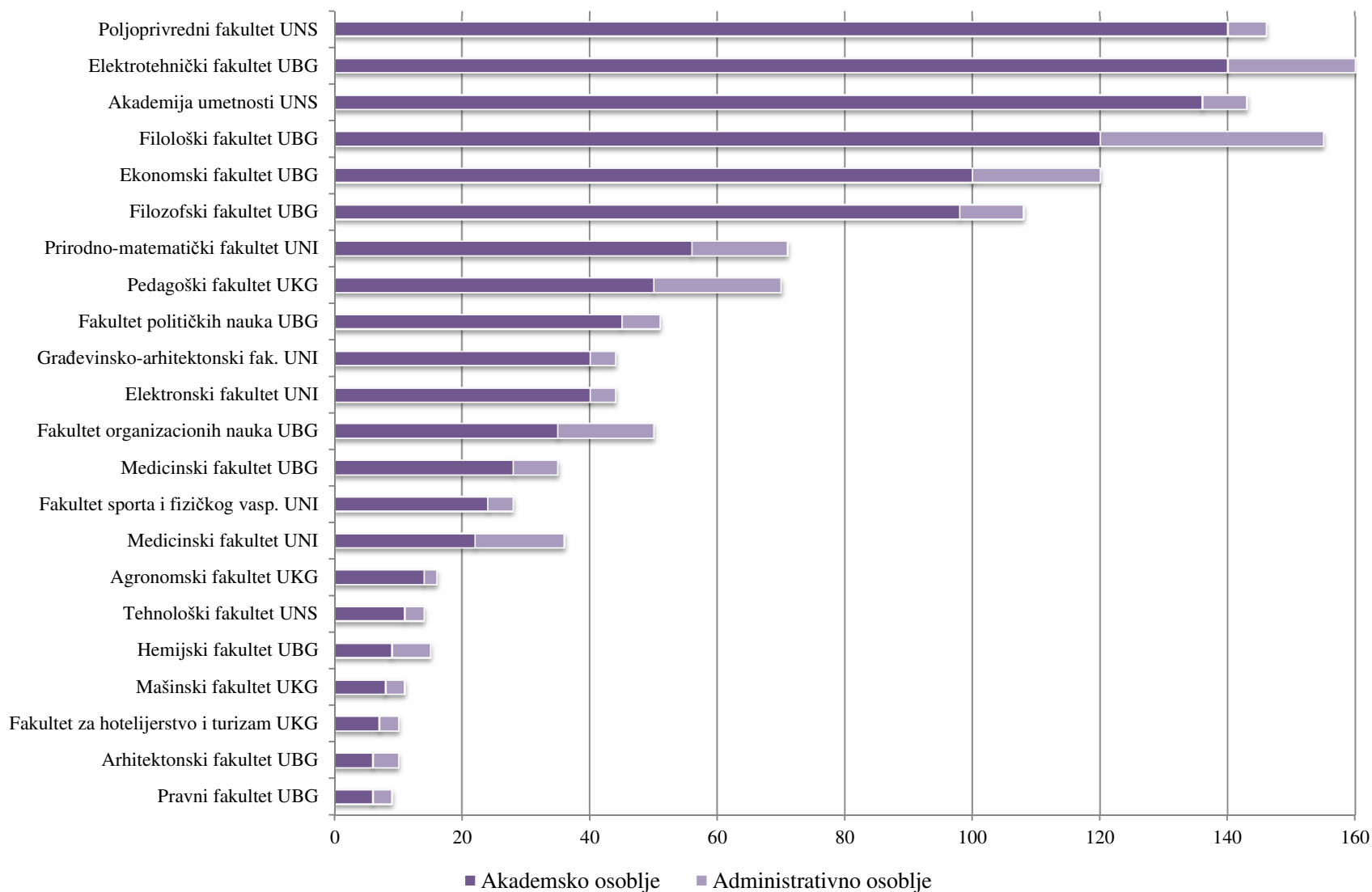
1. The current EE system (3)

1c Organisation and financing

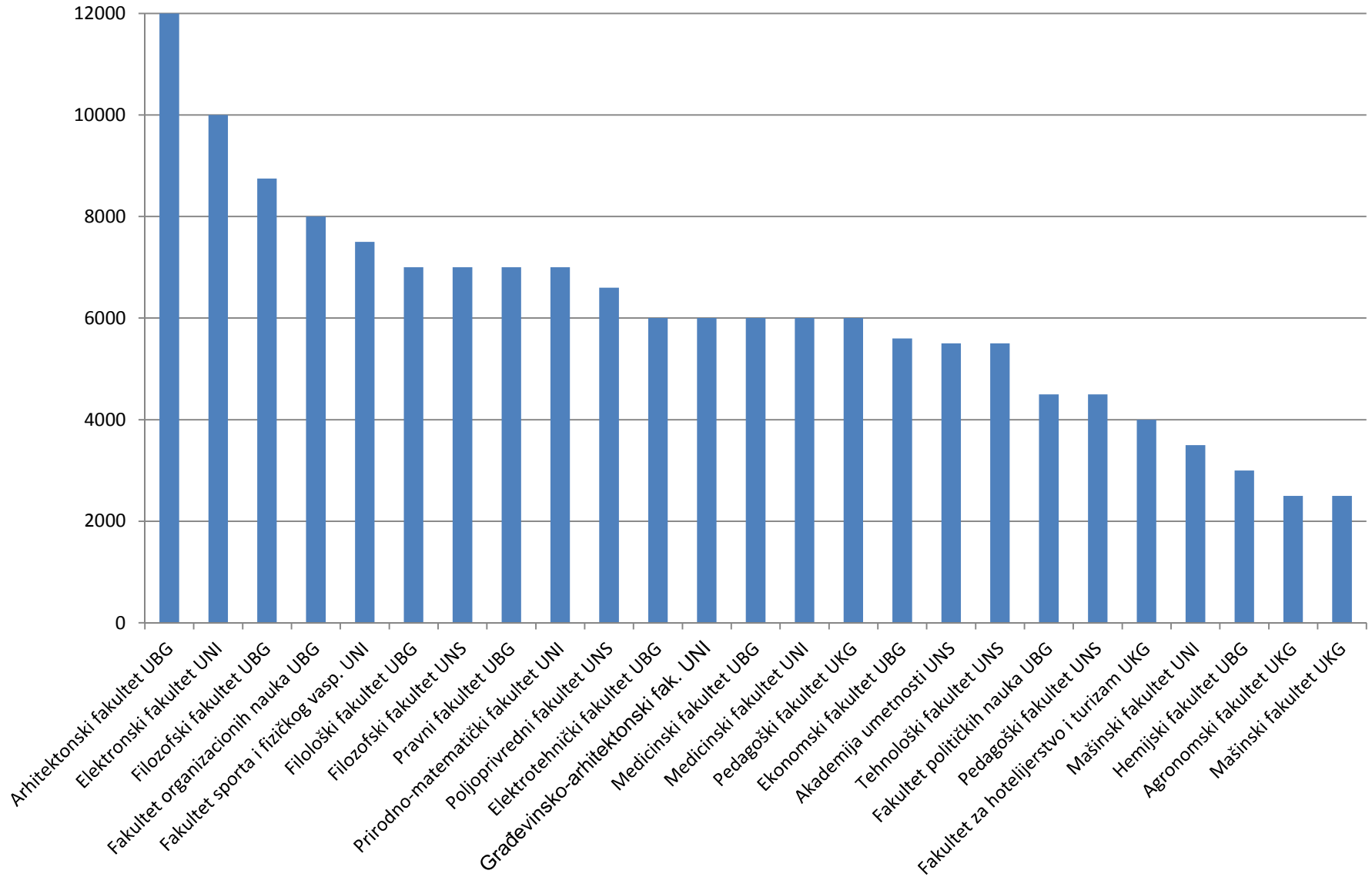
- Faculty level (rulebooks on EE)
- Similar at all institutions
- Entrance exam fee charged
- Cases of pre-selection
- Preparatory courses organised by HEIs



Number of teaching and administrative staff involved in the preparation and organisation of the entrance exams



Entrance exam fee in 2012 (RSD)



2. Perceptions

2a Perceptions on the current EE system

- Pros & cons
- Views on the point system (60:40)

2b Perception on the proposed FE system

- Pros & cons



2a Perceptions on the current EE system

Pros

- HEIs have complete control over the process
- Tailored to the needs of individual faculties and study programmes
- 60:40 largely perceived as the optimal ratio

Cons

- Organisational burden/workload for HEIs
- Stress for candidates



2b Perception on the proposed FE system

Pros

- Potential effects on the quality of secondary education
- Less workload for HEIs
- Uniformity of assessment (standardised, transparent)
- Shift of focus to more general competences (equal standards for all)



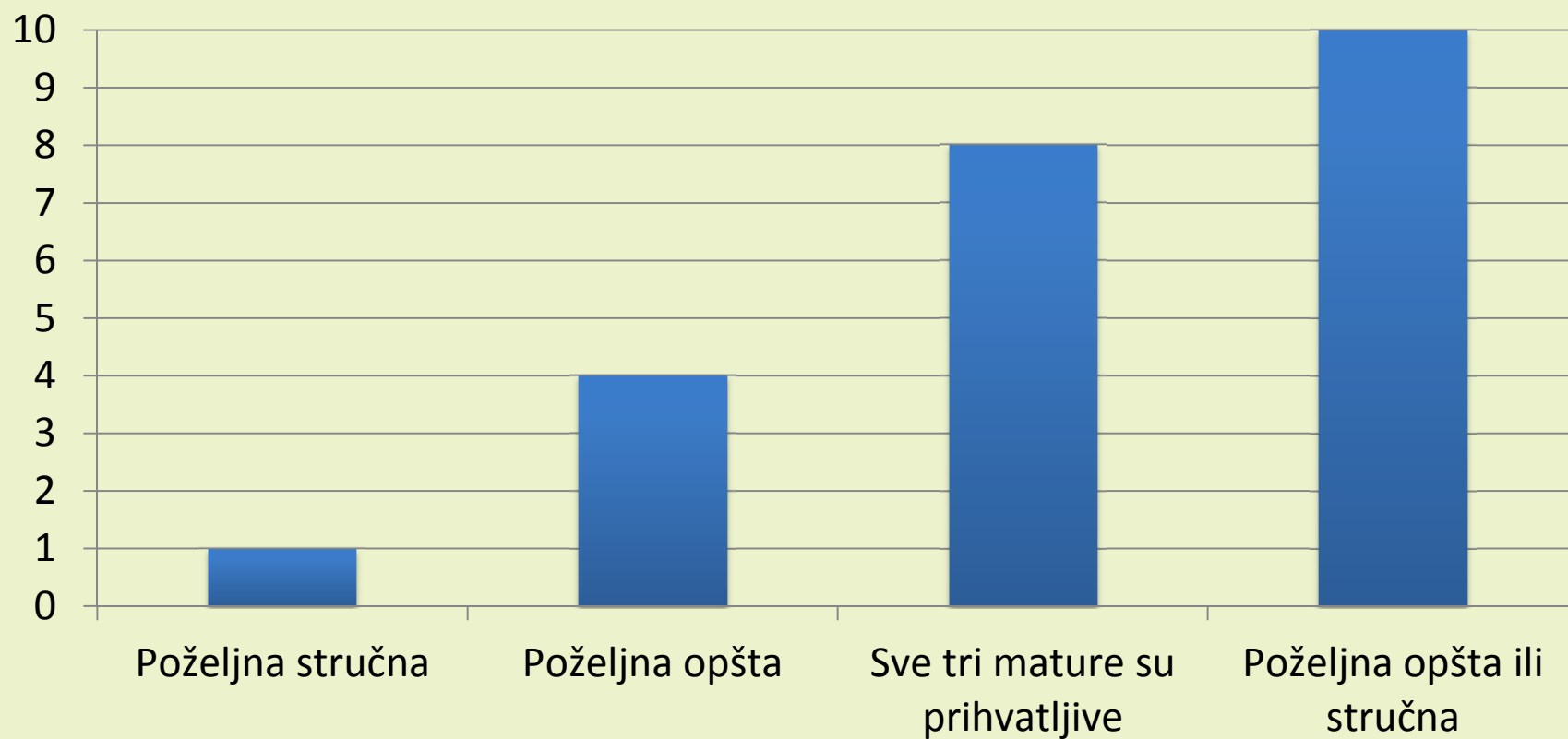
2b Perception on the proposed FE system

Cons:

- Uniformity of assessment (insensitive for individual HEIs needs)
- Shift of focus to more general competences
- No control over the process
- Possibly, the role of high schools in the process overemphasised
- FE could be too stressful for students



Faculties' preferences over type of FE



Conclusions on perceptions

- In general, when taken as a substitute for the current indicator of secondary education achievements, no objection to the system of FE
- BUT: much objection to dismantling the existing system of EE
- Lack of trust in the reliability of secondary education grading system
- Reluctance to give away control over the enrolment criteria and process



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