

Babeş-Bolyai University
Summary of the dynamics
of student numbers and
study dropout rates
2026

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I. Executive Summary

- In the context of demographic and social challenges, monitoring student dropout remains an institutional priority. **Data analysis indicates a stabilization of dropout rates and a slight improvement in student retention at both the bachelor's and master's levels.**
- **At master's level**, data indicates **a slight decrease in the dropout rate, from 11.4% to 10.5% for the 2024–2026 cohort**, confirming the trend toward stabilization and improved student retention. Most programs (approximately 150 out of 223) fall within favorable ranges, with dropout rates below 15%, while more than half of the programs have very low or even zero dropout rates, indicating a generally strong retention structure at this level of study. Programs with high dropout rates are typically those with small student cohorts (fewer than 10 students).
- **At bachelor's level**, although there is a slight increase in the first-year dropout rate in recent cohorts (from 16.0% to 17.4%), **the analysis across the entire course of study indicates a slight improvement in overall student retention. The dropout rate for the 2022–2025 cohort was 23.8%, down from 26.6% in the previous cohort. In recent years, the proportion of study programs with dropout rates below 30% has increased.** The first year of study remains the period with the highest risk of dropout, justifying the continued implementation and further development of institutional prevention and student support measures.
- **Comparability with national data is limited.** UBB calculates dropout rates based on student cohorts, a methodology that provides a more accurate picture of student retention. The Romanian Ministry of Education uses an annual indicator based on the difference between the number of students at the beginning and the end of the academic year, while the Higher Education Law (No. 199/2023) defines dropout in relation to failure to complete a program within two years after its standard duration. For this reason, the reported figures are not directly comparable.
- **UBB's results are favorable in the national and European context.** While national studies estimate bachelor's dropout rates of nearly 48% for certain cohorts (UEFISCDI), and Romania continues to record a high rate of early leaving from education (17.2%, compared with the EU average of 10.3%), UBB reports dropout rates of approximately 23–24% at the bachelor's level and 10–11% at the master's level, indicating a strong level of student retention.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen UBB's program for monitoring students at risk of dropout.
- Further develop and promote support services for students at risk of dropout.
- Monitor and analyze the status of students with extended enrollment and those who have been re-enrolled.
- Review and improve UBB's procedures for measuring dropout rates by analyzing outcomes at the individual student level, rather than solely at the cohort level. This approach would make it possible to identify cases in which dropping out of a particular study program does not mean dropping out of UBB, but rather reorienting to another study program.

This report analyzes changes in student enrollment at Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB) throughout the years of study, with the aim of presenting statistical data relevant to student dropout at the bachelor's and master's levels.

The number of students who have discontinued a bachelor's or master's degree program was estimated based on the difference between the number of students enrolled in a specific program in a given academic year and their number in the previous year. Since the Higher Education Law (LÎS) 199/2023 defines university dropout¹ but does not provide a clear operationalization or the necessary methodological norms for coherent measurement of dropout at the national level, this report presents UBB's conventional approach to estimating program dropout based on the dynamics of the number of students enrolled in that program. Therefore, the numbers presented in this report refer to dropout from bachelor's and master's degree programs, not to university dropout in general. At the bachelor's level, students who started their studies in 2022, 2023, and 2024 were taken into consideration (the year of enrollment will be used further to name the cohorts), and at the master's level, those who started their studies in 2024.

II. BACHELOR'S LEVEL

I.1. DROPOUT RATE THROUGHOUT THE STUDY PROGRAM.

2022 – 2025 (2026) COHORT

At bachelor's level, the data from the previous academic years shows that of the total number of dropouts, more than 75% left during their first year of study in the case of three-year programs, and over 60% in the case of four-year programs.

Figure 1 shows the number of students who have dropped out of a bachelor's degree program, broken down by cohort, year of study, and program duration (3 years or 4 years). The data indicate differences between the 2022 cohort and the previous ones, especially in the case of 4-year programs:

- ✓ The percentage of students who dropped out in the first year is higher (196 students, 62.4% of the total) compared to the 2021 cohort (179 students, 57.2% of the total) and the 2020 cohort (approximately 50% of the total);
- ✓ Significantly lower values are recorded from the second to the third year and from the third to the fourth year in terms of the number of students who dropped out: in the

¹ According to the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, the definition of study dropout is as follows: "University dropout at the level of a study cycle represents the proportion of students from a given cohort who did not manage to graduate within 2 years after the theoretical duration of the study program has ended."

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second year — 57 students (18.2% of the total), compared to 80 students (25.6% of the total), and in the third year — 61 students (19.4%), compared to 54 students (17.3%).

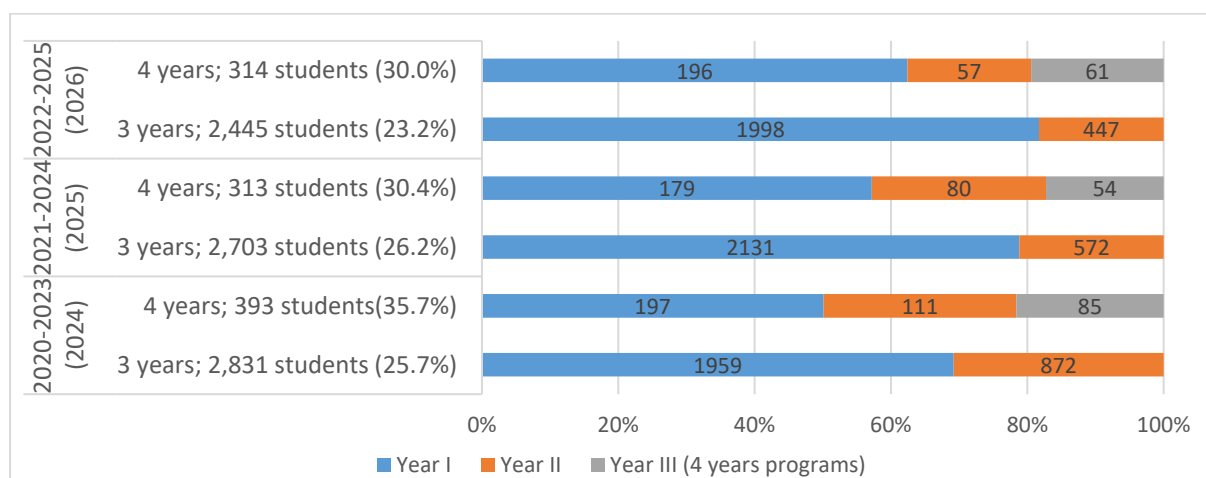


Figure 1. Estimated number of students who dropped out of bachelor's degree programs, cohorts 2020, 2021, 2022

In the case of bachelor's degree programs with a duration of 3 years (the majority of UBB programs), the corresponding numbers (see Figure 1) are as follows:

- The percentage of students who dropped out in the first year is higher (1,998 students, 81.7% of the total) compared to the 2021 cohort (2,131 students, 78.8% of the total) and the 2020 cohort (1,959 students, 69.2% of the total);
- Significantly lower values are recorded from the second to the third year in terms of the number of students who dropped out: in the second year — 447 students (18.3% of the total), compared to 572 students (21.2% of the total), and in the third year — 872 students (31.0% of the total).

Similarly to previous years, the dropout rate is (Figure 2):

- ✓ lower in three-year programs (23.2%) than in four-year programs (30.0%);
- ✓ lower in programs taught in German (14.5%), Hungarian (15.8%), English and French (15.6%), than in Romanian (26.2%);
- ✓ depending on the university extension where the teaching activity takes place, there are significant differences, with values ranging from 5.0% in Oradea to 34.9% in Bistrița (see Annex 1). The average value is 23.6%, which is close to the value recorded for the programs conducted in Cluj-Napoca, namely 23.9%.
- ✓ lower in full-time programs (22.6%) compared to distance and part-time learning programs (28.7%).

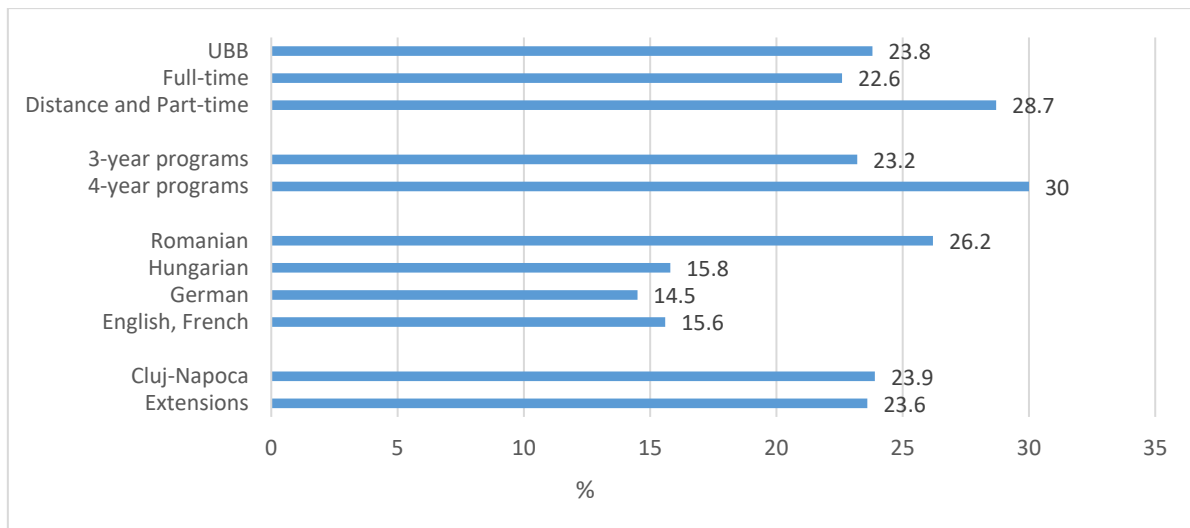


Figure 2. Dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs, throughout the entire academic years, cohort 2022

Unlike previous years, most bachelor's programs have dropout rates between 15% and 30% (35.4% of programs) or between 0% and 15% (29.2% of programs), while four programs report dropout rates above 75% (Figure 3). Dropout rates exceeding the 75% threshold require contextual interpretation, as they often represent exceptional situations (outlier cases) that deviate from the general trend observed both across UBB and within the respective faculty. These values are primarily associated with programs with very small student cohorts (approximately 3–10 students), where the withdrawal of one or two students can have a substantial impact on the indicator, resulting in seemingly very high dropout rates.

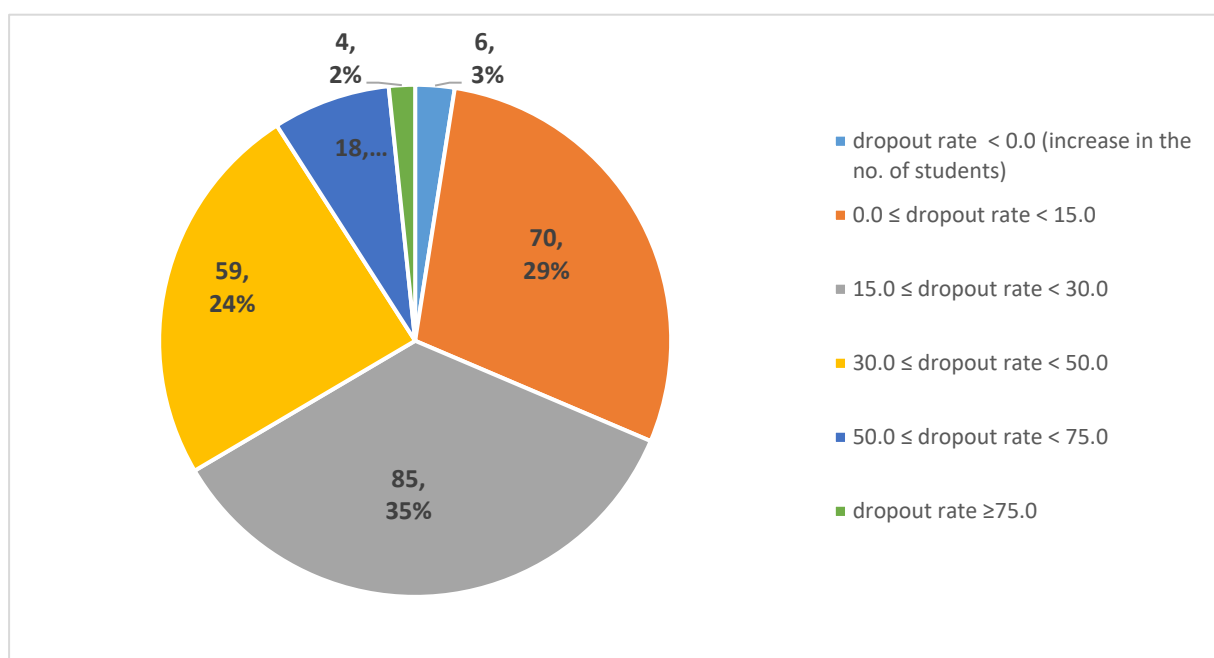


Figure 3. Distribution of bachelor's degree programs according to the dropout rate throughout the academic years, cohort 2022

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The quartile values at UBB level are: Q1 = 11.7%; Q2 = 21.5%; Q3 = 34.6%

	Q1 (%)	Q2 (%)	Q3 (%)
UBB	11.7	21.5	34.6
Three-year programs	11.7	21.4	32.9
Four-year programs	12.9	24.6	55.5
Full-time study programs	11.1	20.5	32.6
Distance and Part-time study programs	16.0	25.3	42.3
Romanian section	16.1	27.0	40.2
Hungarian section	5.7	14.3	25.0
German section	0.0	10.7	28.6
English/French-taught programs	8.0	16.7	23.0

Data on dropout rate by faculty are presented in Anex 2.

I.2. DROPOUT RATE IN THE FIRST YEAR OF STUDY

At the institutional level, the first-year dropout rate shows a slight decrease: from 20.4% for the 2021 cohort to 19.0% for the 2022 cohort, and 16% for the 2023 cohort (Figure 4). The most significant decreases are observed in 4-year programs, where the dropout rate fell from 17.4% to 13.7%. The charts illustrate this downward trend, showing decreases in the dropout rate for both full-time programs and distance/part-time learning programs (ID-IFR), across all lines of study, both at the Cluj-Napoca university center and at the university extensions, on average (Figure 4).

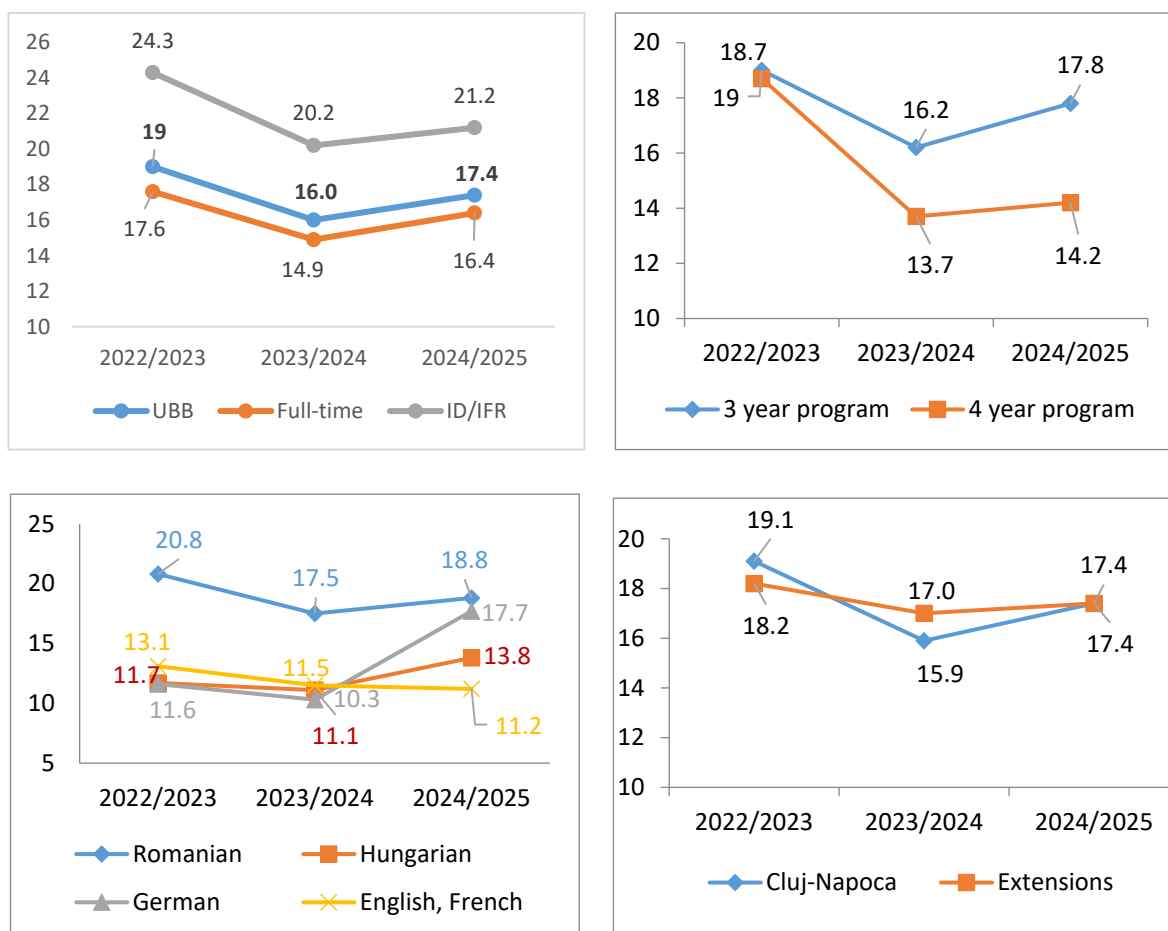


Figure 4. Dropout rates (%) of bachelor's degree programs in the first year, by type of program, cohorts 2022, 2023, 2024

For most programs, in the first year of study, the dropout rate falls between 0% and 15% (38.3% of programs), and between 15% and 30% (36.4% of programs), with only one program having a dropout rate higher than 75%, which, however, enrolls very few students.

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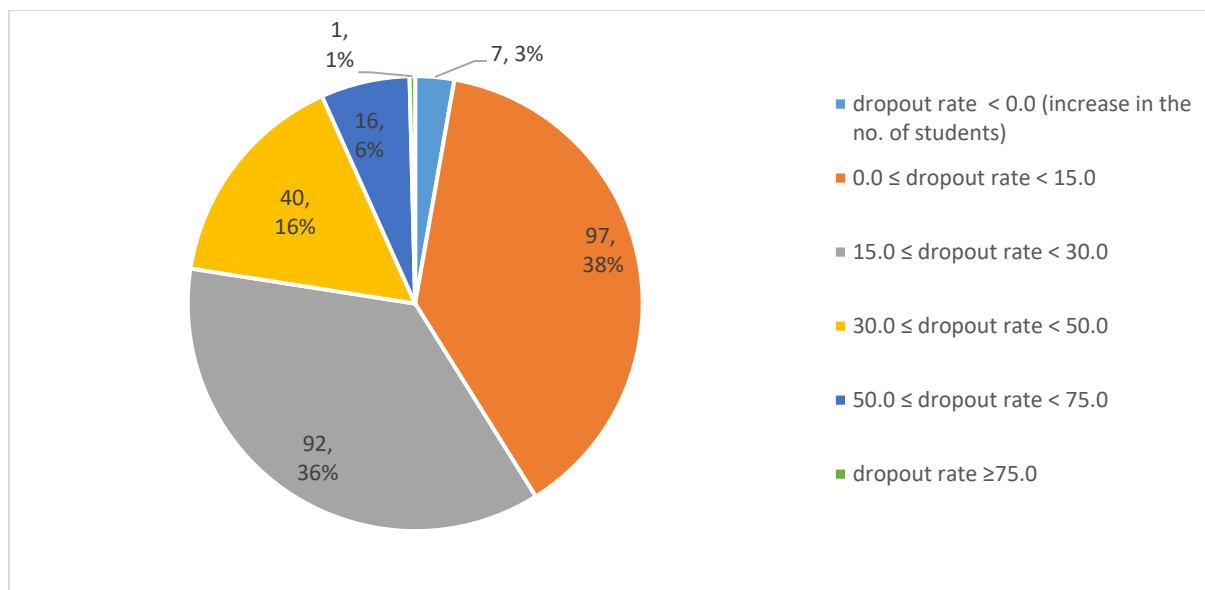


Figure 5. Distribution of bachelor's degree programs according to the dropout rate in the first year of study, cohort 2024

The quartile values are Q1 = 8.3%, Q2 = 18.8%, Q3 = 27.2%

	Q1 (%)	Q2 (%)	Q3 (%)
UBB	8.3	18.8	27.2
3-year programs	9.1	19.1	28.0
4-year programs	4.0	14.0	25.0
Full-time programs	8.3	16.8	25.6
Distance and part-time learning programs	14.0	23.0	34.1
Romanian line of study	11.5	20.9	31.3
Hungarian line of study	3.6	13.6	23.1
German line of study	10.0	23.1	27.1
English/French lines of study	4.1	12.1	22.2

The data on dropout rates at the level of each faculty are presented in Annex 3.

III. MASTER'S LEVEL

At UBB level, the dropout rate data for the cohort 2024-2026 shows the following (Figure 6):

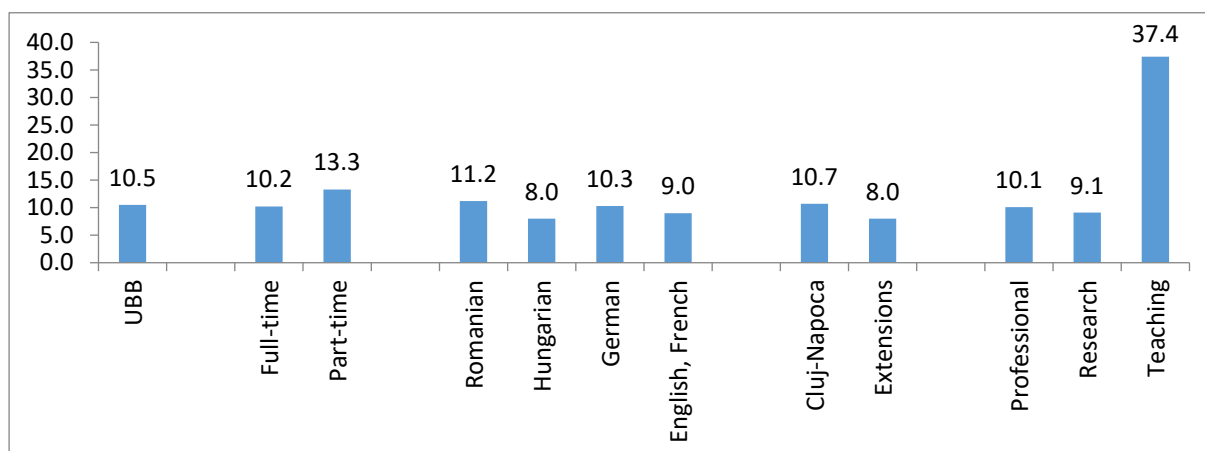


Figure 6. Dropout rates (%) of master's degree programs by type of program, cohort 2024

The data show the following (Annex 4):

- ✓ The dropout rate is 10.5%, representing a slight decrease compared with the previous cohort.
- ✓ The institutional average dropout rate for full-time programs is (10.2% - 459 fewer students enrolled in the second year), slightly lower than the rate for part-time programs, which is 13.3% (50 fewer students enrolled in the second year).
- ✓ By language of study, the lowest dropout rate is recorded for the Hungarian line of study (8.0%; 42 fewer students enrolled in the second year), while the highest is recorded for programs taught in Romanian (11.2%; 389 fewer students enrolled in the second year).
- ✓ By university extension, the dropout rate for programs offered at the Cluj-Napoca campus is 10.7% (479 fewer students enrolled in the second year). For master's programs offered at the university extensions, dropout rates range from 0.0% in Oradea, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Zalău, and Alba Iulia to 15.8% in Sfântu Gheorghe. The average dropout rate across all university extensions is 8.0% (30 fewer students enrolled in the second year).
- ✓ By type of master's program, the dropout rate is 10.1% for professional master's programs and 9.1% for research master's programs, while the teacher education master's program records the highest dropout rate, at 37.4%.

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Most programs (150) have a dropout rate below 15%. Only one program recorded a dropout rate higher than 75.0% (Figure 7).

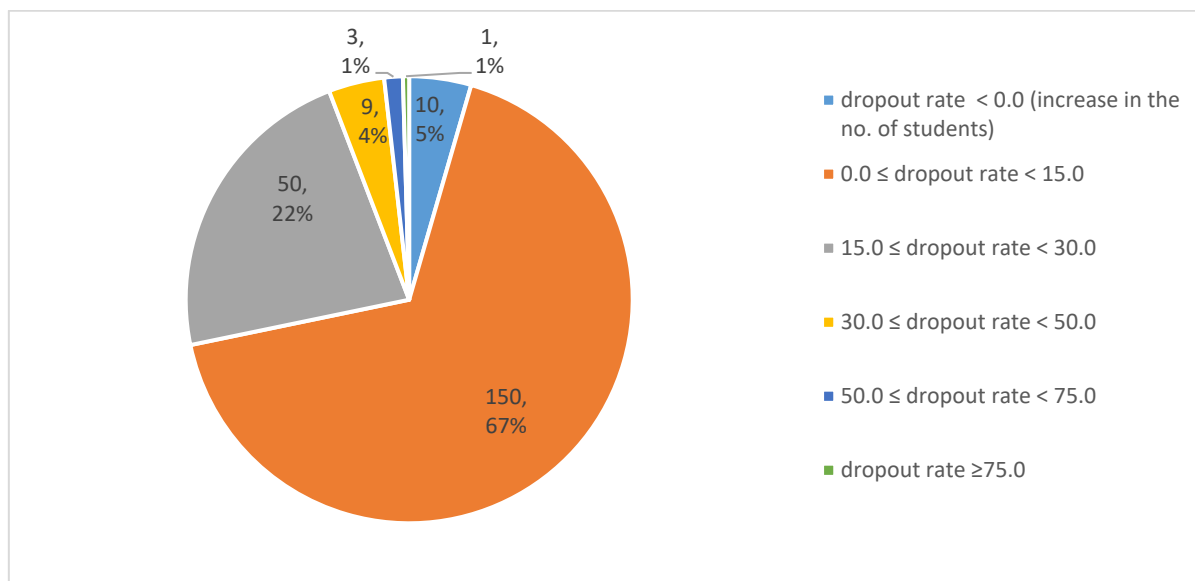


Figure 7. Distribution of master's degree programs according to the dropout rate, cohort 2024

Note: The estimated dropout rate can have negative values if there are more students enrolled in the second year than were enrolled in the previous academic year, in the first year. Due to the calculation method (comparing student numbers), it cannot be ruled out that dropout cases exist even for these programs.

The quartile values are Q1 = 0.0%, Q2 = 10.0% and Q3 = 16.7%.

	Q1 (%)	Q2 (%)	Q3 (%)
UBB	0,0	10,0	16,7
Professional Master's	0,0	10,0	17,4
Research Master's	0,0	8,3	14,4
Teaching Master's	13,8	25,8	45,1
Full-time programs	0,0	9,1	16,7
Part-time programs	5,2	12,7	35,7
Romanian study line	4,0	10,5	18,8
Hungarian study line	0,0	5,9	16,7
German study line	3,2	12,5	16,8
English/French study languages	0,0	7,7	12,9

Data on dropout rates by faculty are presented in Anex 5.

IV. EVOLUTION OF DATA AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

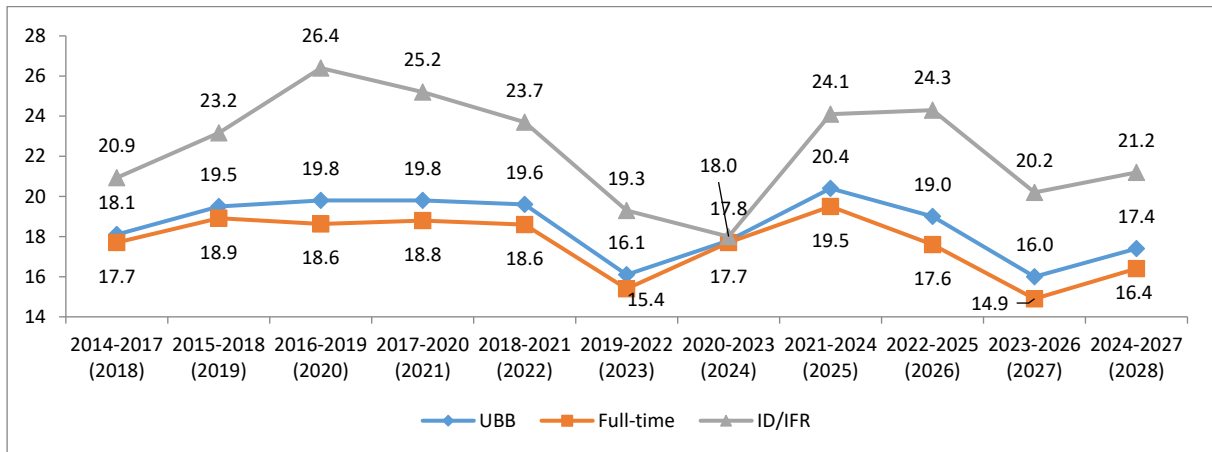


Figure 8. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs in the first year of study, by form of study

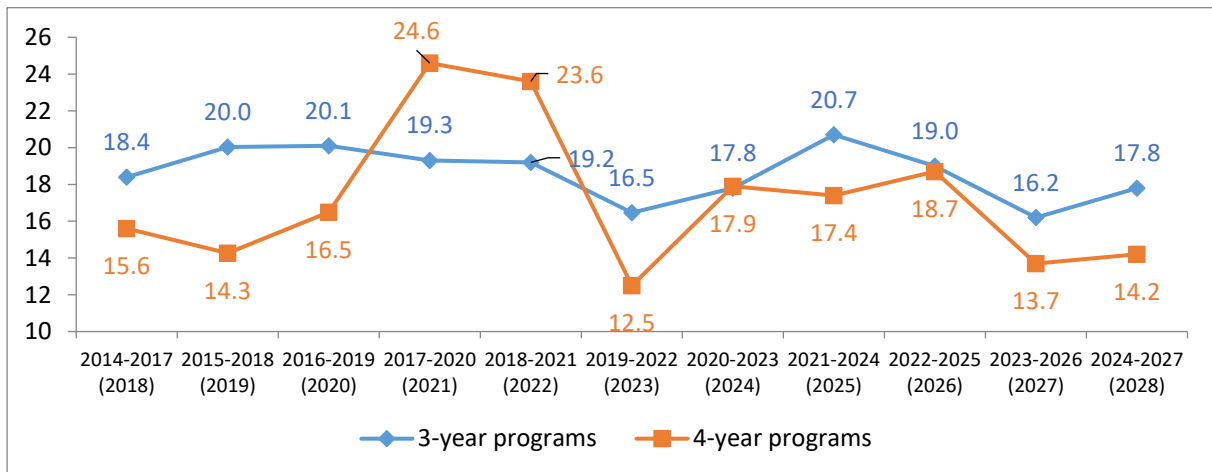


Figure 9. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs in the first year of studies

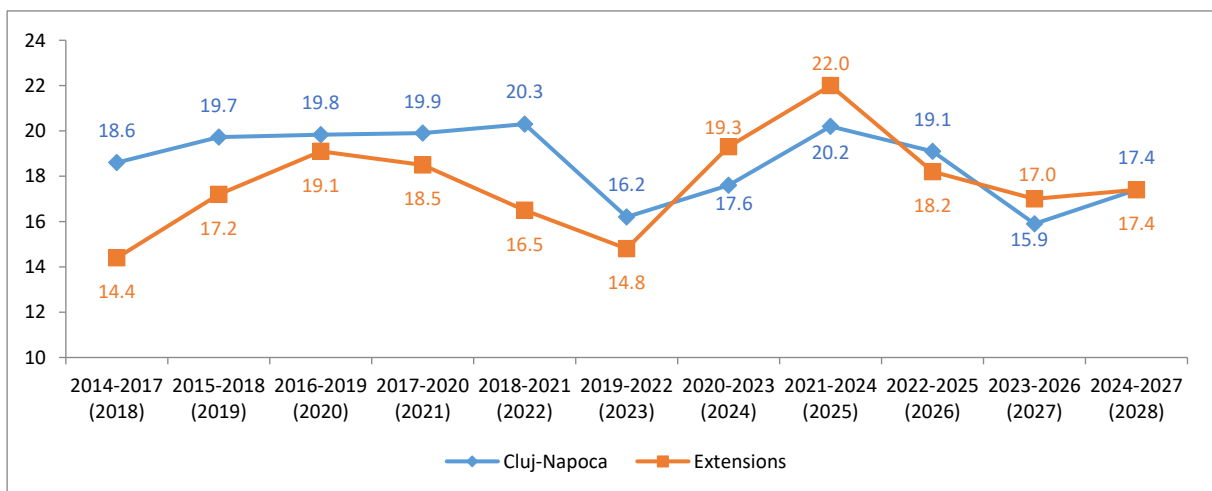


Figure 10. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs in the first year, by university extension

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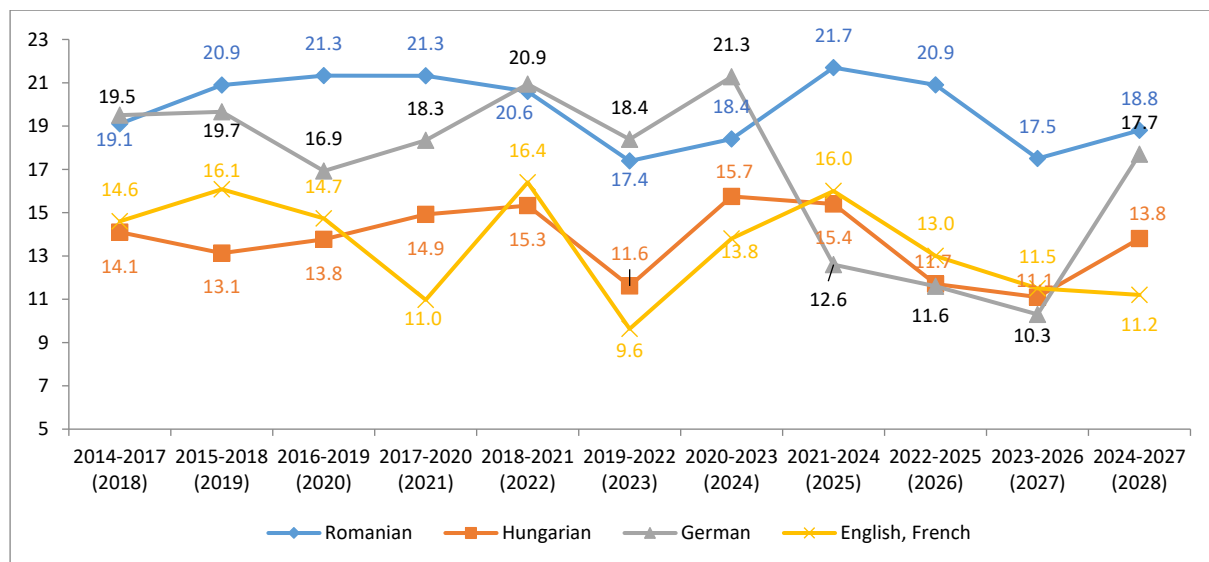


Figure 11. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs in the first year, by language of study

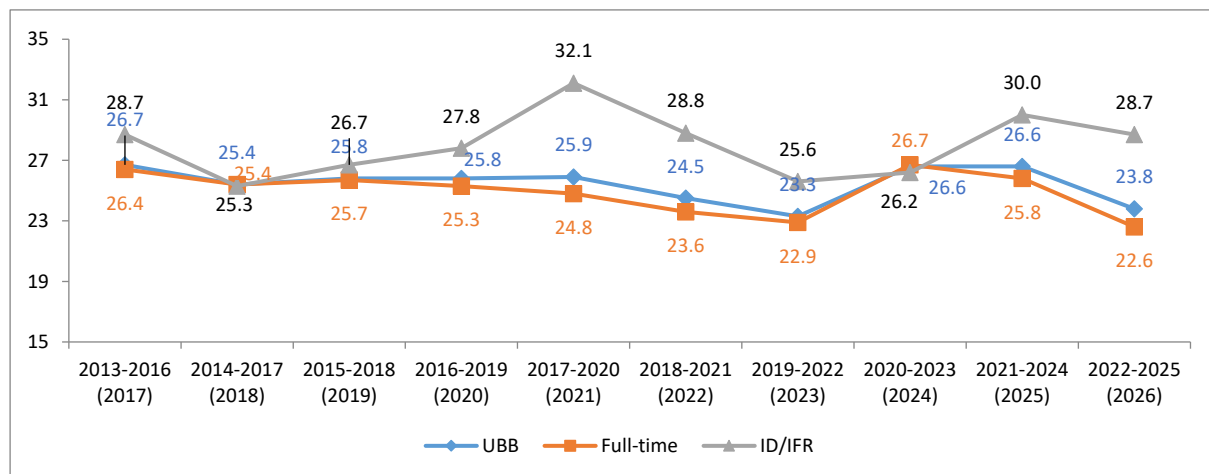


Figure 12. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs, throughout the entire academic years, by form of study

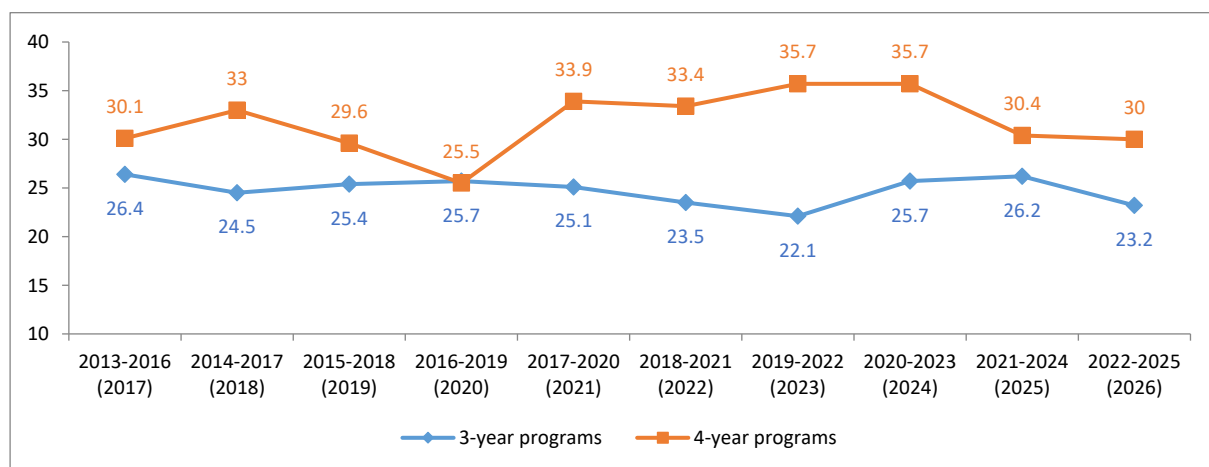


Figure 13. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs, throughout the entire academic years, by duration of studies

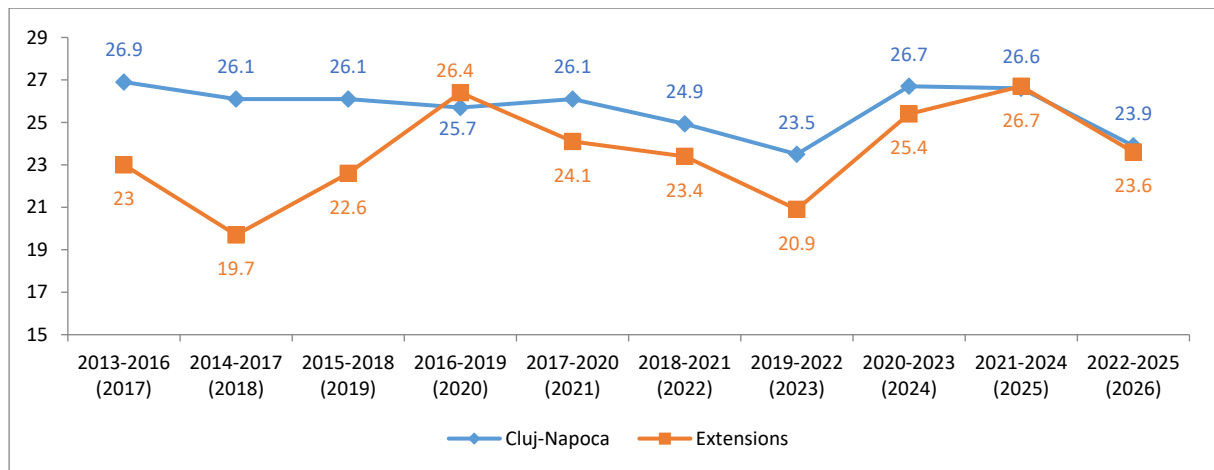


Figure 14. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs, throughout the entire academic years, by university extension

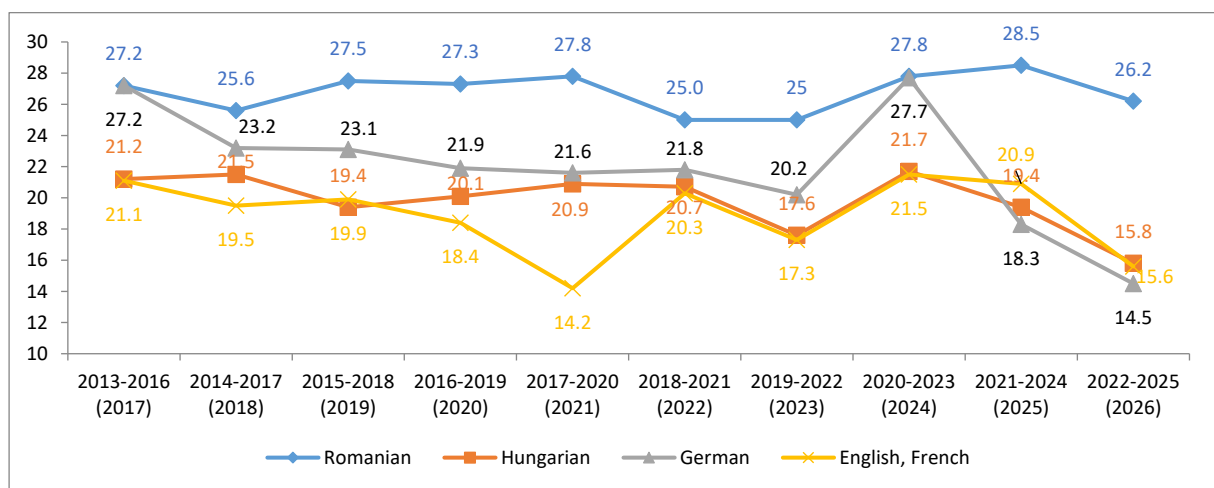


Figure 15. Evolution of the dropout rate of bachelor's degree programs, throughout the entire academic years, by language of study

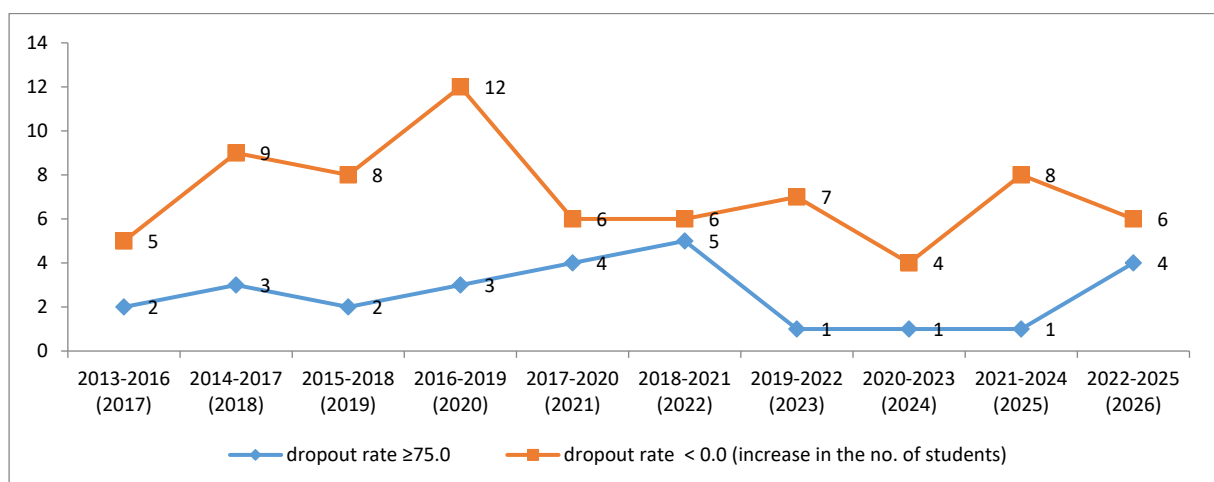


Figure 16. Evolution of the number of bachelor's degree programs with dropout rates over 75% throughout the entire academic years, and respectively, those with very low dropout rates

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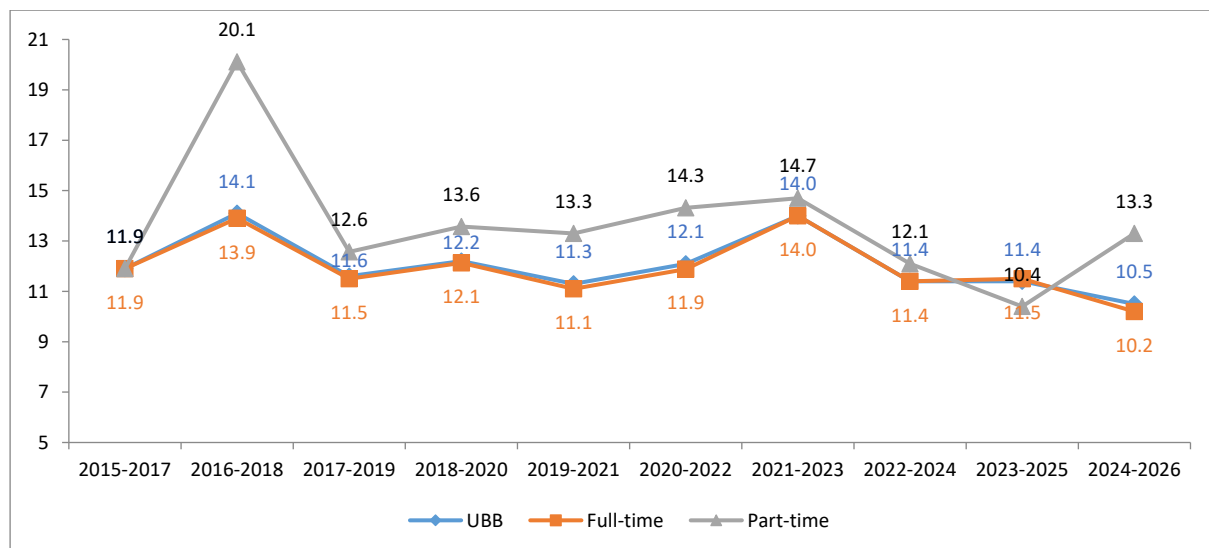


Figure 17. Evolution of the dropout rate of master's degree programs, by form of study

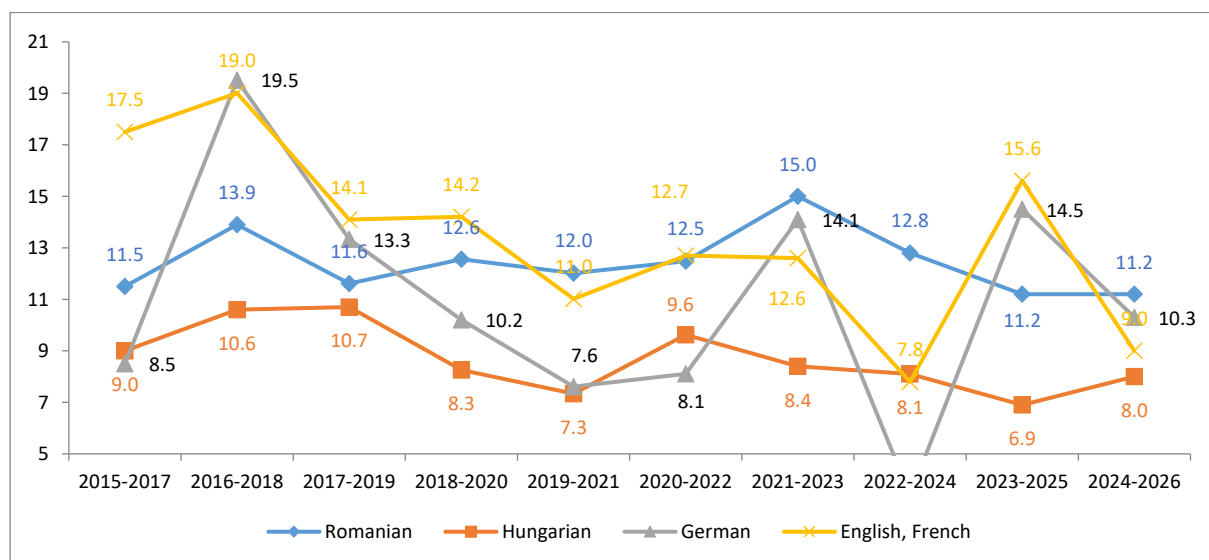


Figure 18. Evolution of the dropout rate of master's degree programs, by language of study

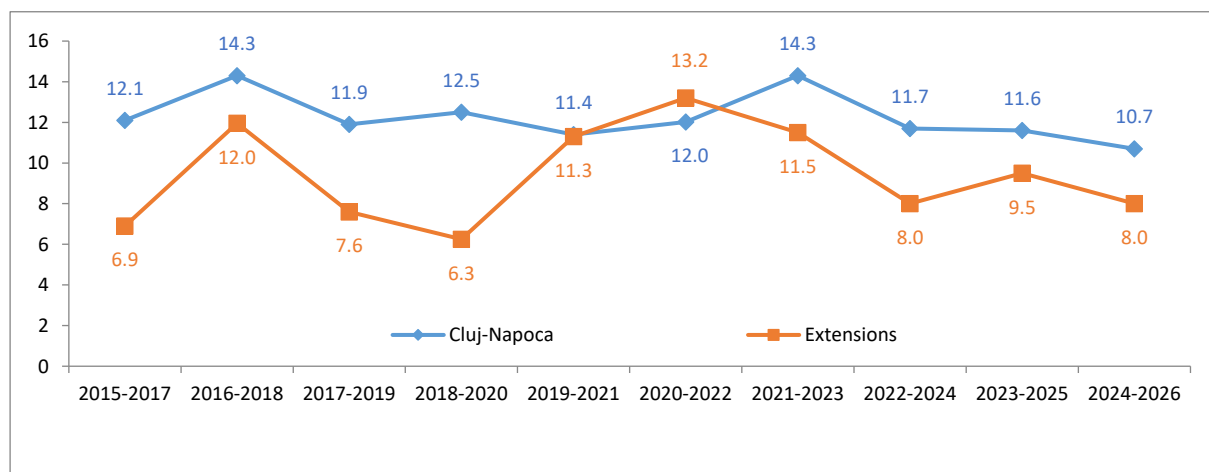


Figure 19. Evolution of the dropout rate of master's degree programs, by university extension

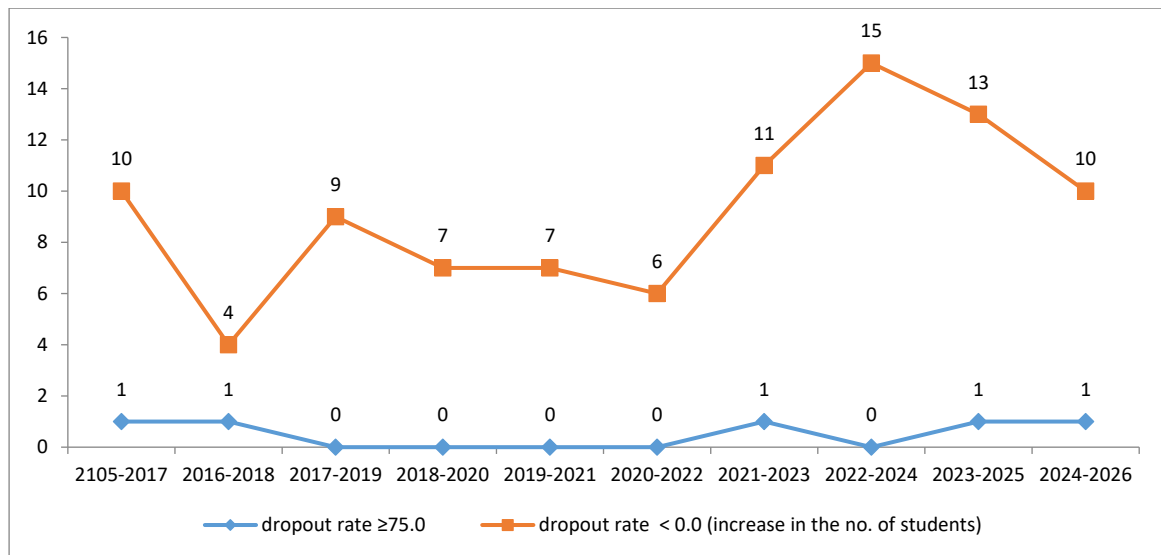


Figure 20. Evolution of the number of master's degree programs with dropout rates over 75%, and respectively, those with very low dropout rates

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Anex 1. General overview UBB, bachelor's level

	Dropout rate of the study program 2021-2024 (2025) cohort			Dropout rate in year 1/year 2	
	No. of students	%		2023/2024 – 2024/2025	
	No. of students	%		No. of students	%
TOTAL UBB	3016	26,6		1791	16,0
Three-year programs	2703	26,2		1654	16,2
Four-year programs	313	30,4		137	13,7
Full-time	2349	25,8		1306	14,9
ID-FR	667	30,0		485	20,2
Romanian	2538	28,5		1503	17,5
Hungarian	279	19,4		164	11,1
German	35	18,3		20	10,3
English, French	164	20,9		104	11,5
Cluj-Napoca	2659	26,6		1556	15,9
Extensions	357	26,7		235	17,0
- <i>Alba Iulia</i>	2	10,5		0	-
- <i>Bistrița</i>	79	37,8		56	28,3
- <i>Blaj</i>	1	5,9		0	-
- <i>Gheorgheni</i>	4	13,3		5	17,9
- <i>Năsăud</i>	34	26,2		16	12,7
- <i>Odorheiu Secuiesc</i>	13	19,1		5	5,7
- <i>Oradea</i>	1	4,0		0	0,0
- <i>Reșița</i>	113	34,1		90	21,8
- <i>Satu Mare</i>	11	21,6		16	22,2
- <i>Sfântu Gheorghe</i>	29	30,2		6	8,7
- <i>Sighetu Marmăției</i>	45	25,4		34	19,8
- <i>Târgu Mureș</i>	18	11,1		5	3,4
- <i>Zalău</i>	7	30,4		2	9,5

Anex 2. Dropout rate (%) of bachelor's degree programs throughout the entire academic years, at the faculty level, cohort 2021-2024 (2025)

Faculty of ...	Total	3-year programs	4-year programs	Full-time	ID-IFR	RO	MA	GE	EN/FR
Mathematics and Computer Science	17.7	17.7	-	17.7	-	19.3	32.4	6.3	11.9
Physics	10.0	6.1	19.0	10.0	-	6.7	30.0	-	-
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	18.8	26.5	16.5	18.8	-	20.2	12.0	-	-
Biology and Geology	28.3	30.0	19.0	28.3	-	29.6	23.1	-	-
Geography	25.7	25.7	-	27.7	0.0	29.3	11.3	-	-
Environmental Science	29.7	30.9	27.8	29.7	-	30.7	25.0	-	-
Law	37.8	-	37.8	31.1	70.8	37.8	-	-	-
Letters	32.5	32.5	-	32.5	-	35.6	22.2	23.3	26.0
History and Philosophy	30.0	30.0	-	29.3	32.2	29.6	29.3	-	40.0
Sociology and Social Work	31.0	31.0	-	27.6	41.3	32.5	17.0	-	-
Psychology and Educational Sciences	20.0	20.0	-	15.3	26.2	20.2	18.9	37.5	-
Economics and Business Administration	25.1	25.1	-	24.6	27.0	26.4	21.5	17.3	19.1
European Studies	30.4	30.4	-	30.3	30.6	31.1	-	44.4	24.7
Business	38.9	38.9	-	40.4	34.8	40.7	-	-	29.4
Political, Administrative and Communication	30.2	30.2	-	31.3	27.2	31.0	19.4	21.1	30.9
Physical Education and Sport	25.3	25.3	-	25.7	22.7	30.7	3.4	-	-
Orthodox Theology	20.2	33.3	12.3	20.2	-	20.2	-	-	-
Greek Catholic Theology	11.7	41.7	4.2	11.7	-	11.7	-	-	-
Reformed Theology and Music	33.3	33.3	-	33.3	-	-	33.3	-	-
Roman Catholic Theology	13.0	14.8	10.5	13.0	-	-	13.0	-	-
Theatre and Film	22.3	22.3	-	22.3	-	28.6	11.9	-	-
Faculty of Engineering	40.0	17.7	40.0	40.0	-	40.0	-	-	-

Note. The negative values denote the fact that the number of students enrolled in year 2 or the final year of study is higher than that of the first year (reenrollment from previous cohorts or recognition of previous learning).

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Anex 3. Dropout rate (%) of bachelor's degree programs in the first year of study, at the faculty level, cohort 2023-2024

Faculty of ...	Total	3-year programs	4-year programs	IF	ID-IFR	RO	MA	GE	EN/FR
Mathematics and Computer Science	10.0	9.9	11.8	10.0	-	11.1	14.9	6.2	7.8
Physics	14.3	25.0	-12.5	14.3	-	13.6	16.7	-	-
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	11.2	5.7	13.3	11.2	-	12.9	6.3	-	-
Biology and Geology	9.7	8.3	17.2	9.7	-	8.9	11.3	-	-
Geography	18.0	18.0	-	16.6	32.4	18.9	13.9	-	-
Environmental Science	16.9	20.5	11.5	16.9	-	17.9	11.1	-	-
Law	14.3		14.3	11.6	31.0	14.3	-	-	-
Letters	20.1	20.1	-	20.1	-	23.7	13.0	4.5	4.4
History and Philosophy	22.4	22.4	-	20.8	29.5	25.1	11.1	-	12.7
Sociology and Social Work	17.8	17.8	-	16.2	21.8	18.8	9.6	-	-
Psychology and Educational Sciences	11.1	11.1	-	9.0	13.9	12.1	8.1	18.2	8.5
Economics and Business Administration	16.9	16.9	-	15.4	21.8	17.9	10.4	15.4	20.1
European Studies	19.9	19.9	-	18.0	32.0	23.2	-	30.0	4.5
Business	20.6	20.6	-	17.7	26.7	22.6	-	-	11.4
Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences	18.9	18.9	-	18.8	19.1	19.6	10.0	5.3	21.6
Physical Education and Sport	16.2	16.2	-	15.1	22.7	17.3	10.8	-	-
Orthodox Theology	0.0	6.1	-3.3	0.0	-	0.0	-	-	-
Greek Catholic Theology	10.4	25.0	5.9	10.4	-	10.4	-	-	-
Reformed Theology and Music	22.2	22.2	-	22.2	-	-	22.2	-	-
Roman Catholic Theology	19.2	25.0	0.0	19.2	-	-	19.2	-	-
Theatre and Film	10.1	10.1	-	10.1	-	7.7	13.5	-	-
Engineering	39.7	-	39.7	39.7	-	39.7	-	-	-

Note. The negative values denote the fact that the number of students enrolled in year 2 or the final year of study is higher than that of the first year (reenrollment from previous cohorts or recognition of previous learning).

Anex 4. Dropout from master's degree programs, overall picture at UBB, cohort 2023–2025

	Number of students	%
Total	515	11,4
Full-time	481	11,5
Part-time	34	10,4
Romanian	359	11,2
Hungarian	37	6,9
German	10	14,5
English, French	109	15,6
Professional	382	10,7
Research	132	14,6
Teaching	1	2,3
Cluj-Napoca	480	11,6
Extensions	35	9,5
- Alba Iulia	0	0,0
- Bistrița	4	14,8
- Blaj	1	4,0
- Gheorgheni	1	6,7
- Odorheiu Secuiesc	0	0,0
- Oradea	0	0,0
- Reșița	21	12,0
- Sfântu Gheorghe	2	6,3
- Sighetu Marmăției	5	21,7
- Zalău	1	6,7

Note. The negative values denote that the number of students enrolled in year II is higher than that of the first year (reenrollment from previous cohorts or recognition of previous learning).

In the calculation of the values for the Faculty of Law (1-yearlong study program) the number of students enrolled and the number of graduates were considered.

Summary Report on University Dropout at BBU, 2022 - 2023

Anex 5. Dropout from master's degree programs at the faculty level, cohort 2023–2025

Faculty of ...	Total		Full-time study programs		ID-IFR		RO	HU	GE	EN/FR
	No. of students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%	%	%	%	%
Mathematics and Computer Science	63	15.2	63	15.2	-	-	10.4	5.9	5.3	20.4
Physics	3	9.4	3	9.4	-	-	4.5	-	-	20.0
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	12	10.9	12	10.9	-	-	13.0	7.1	-	10.7
Biology and Geology	7	4.0	6	3.9	1	4.3	3.2	2.8	-	13.3
Geography	28	12.1	28	12.1	-	-	14.8	2.0	-	
Environmental Science	12	20.0	12	20.0	-	-	13.6	-	-	37.5
Law	28	26.4	28	26.4	-	-	23.4	36.4	-	33.3
Letters	12	7.3	12	7.3	-	-	3.4	6.1	20.0	14.7
History and Philosophy	29	13.0	26	13.7	3	9.1	13.4	9.1	-	-
Sociology and Social Work	33	15.6	26	13.1	7	53.8	15.7	15.2	-	-
Psychology and Educational Sciences	47	6.6	45	7.3	2	1.9	6.2	6.4	30.0	-
Economics and Business Administration	91	10.0	85	10.0	6	9.2	9.8	6.1	5.0	17.3
European Studies	12	8.1	12	8.1	-	-	16.9	-	-	-5.1
Business	30	28.0	27	30.3	3	16.7	28.2	-	-	27.8
Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences	69	15.0	57	14.7	12	16.7	17.4	17.4	30.0	8.6
Physical Education and Sport	6	4.1	6	4.1	-	-	4.1	-	-	-
Orthodox Theology	9	13.2	9	13.2	-	-	13.2	-	-	-
Greek Catholic Theology	3	4.8	3	4.8	-	-	4.8	-	-	-
Reformed Theology and Music	2	4.9	2	4.9	-	-	-	4.9	-	-
Roman Catholic Theology	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-	-	0.0	-	-
Theatre and Film	9	15.5	9	15.5	-	-	33.3	0.0	-	12.5
Engineering	10	32.3	10	32.3	-	-	34.8	-	-	25.0

Note. The negative values denote that the number of students enrolled in year 2 is higher than that of the first year (due to reenrollment from previous cohorts or recognition of previous learning).

In the calculation of the values for the Faculty of Law (1-year study program) the number of students enrolled and the number of graduates were considered.