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**Abstract**

Even though female students now make up more than half of all higher education students in many countries, the distribution of women across fields of study is still very uneven. This study examines the gendered nature of recruitment and dropout in higher education. Our results show that students who made gender traditional choices more often had an early preference for the study programme they enrolled in. Moreover, female students reported more often than male students that they had been encouraged by their parents and friends. However, unlike what we expected, there are no differences between students in gender traditional and non-traditional programmes with regard to encouragement from parents and students' confidence that they had made the right choice. While male students' dropout is unrelated to the gender composition of educational programmes, women drop out of female-dominated programmes to a lesser extent. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Smeby, Jens Christian, E-Mail: Jens-Christian.Smeby@hio.no