

Low Socioeconomic Status Students in Higher Education: Entry, Academic Attainment and Earnings Expectations

Maria Eliophotou^{*,a} and Nicoletta Pashourtidou^b

^aDepartment of Education University of Cyprus and ^bEconomics Research Centre University of Cyprus

Abstract

The paper reports the findings of a study of low socioeconomic status students in higher education in relation to their participation, academic attainment, and earnings expectations after graduation. Data were collected from a sample of mainly third and fourth year students at the University of Cyprus. The findings point to significant differences between high and low socioeconomic status students in terms of preparation for higher education, academic attainment at university, and earnings expectations after graduation. In comparison to their high socioeconomic status peers, low socioeconomic status students were less likely to spend a large number of hours on preparatory private lessons and less likely to achieve a high grade at university. Moreover, students of lower socioeconomic status were found to expect lower employment earnings, although employment expectations (duration of unemployment and type of first job) were not significantly affected by parental socioeconomic status. The paper discusses the implications of the findings for educational policy and research.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status; Higher education; Access; Academic attainment; Expected earnings; Cyprus.

* Corresponding Author. Address: Department of Education, University of Cyprus, P.O. Box 20537, 1678 Nicosia, Cyprus. E-mail: melmel@ucy.ac.cy.