10.12 Arts, Sports & Tourism Occupations

Overall employment	107,200
Share of total workforce	4.0%
Main sectors of employment	63% - Other NACE activities 14% - ICT [8%] - Professional activities
Employment growth	+9,900 between 2019 and 2025 +1.6% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +5.6% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.3%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, access & analyse digital data, communication, use MS office, customer service, assume responsibility, tolerate stress, provide information

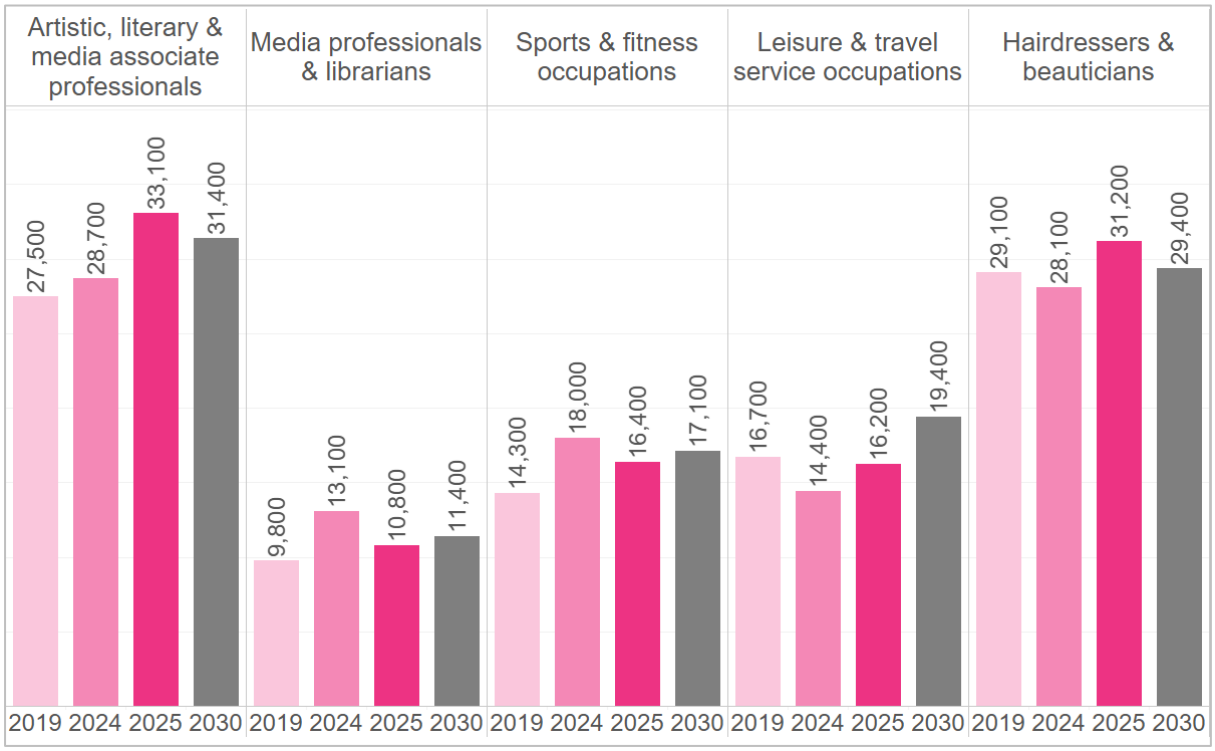
Overview: Overall employment growth for this occupational group has been modest in the six-year period since 2019, despite strong relative growth since 2024. Almost two-thirds were employed in the Other NACE activities sector which includes arts, entertainment and recreation services. The share working part-time for this group was above average which may have contributed to the relatively high volume of recent job hires and leavers in this occupational group in 2025 (accounting for 5% each of hires and leavers).

Opportunities & challenges: Over 20% of employment in this occupational group is considered either significantly or moderately exposed to GenAI;[1] ; the extent to which this represents opportunities or challenges (or both) is as yet unknown and likely to be occupation specific. Employment growth in these roles will be determined to some extent by the level of consumer spending in the economy; a constrained economy could impact growth, particularly for sports, fitness and tourism-related roles.

Outlook: The projected employment growth to 2030 is expected to be below the national average.

[1] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS: forthcoming).

Figure 10.12 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 10.12 Labour Market Profile of Arts, Sports and Tourism Occupations

	Annual average growth		Quarter 4 2025					2025	
	2019-2025	2025-2030f	% Female	% Full-time	% Age 55 yrs +	% Irish citizens	% Third level grads	No. of new emp. permits	RAS
Media professionals & librarians	1.6%	1.1%	..	[85%]	..	[94%]	[77%]	37	
Artistic, literary & media associate professionals	3.1%	-1.0%	42%	75%	[21%]	77%	80%	374	
Sports & fitness occupations	2.4%	0.8%	55%	61%	..	87%	63%	99	
Leisure & travel service occupations	-0.5%	3.7%	58%	[56%]	..	75%	[36%]	..	
Hairdressers & beauticians, etc.	1.2%	-1.2%	83%	57%	..	75%	[30%]	15	
Overall total	**1.6%**	**0.3%**	**60%**	**65%**	**17%**	**79%**	**56%**	**525**	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (..) denotes numbers too small to report

Media professionals & librarians

Numbers employed are too small for detailed analysis particularly given the recent fall in employment (2,300 fewer persons employed since 2024). A small number of employment permits were issued for roles including social media analyst.

Artistic, literary & media associate professionals (e.g. graphic designers, actors, authors/writers, photographers, artists and arts officers)

Numbers employed have fluctuated in this occupation in recent years, peaking at 36,000 in 2022, with declines in the subsequent two years before increasing in the year to 2025 by 4,400 persons. Over half (58%) employed were male, 25% worked part-time, and 23% were non-Irish citizens. Employment was spread across a number of sectors including ICT, professional activities and Other NACE sectors (which includes arts/entertainment). The large volume of recent job hires, above the increase in employment, suggests some level of job churn or short-term contracts. New employment permits were issued for a number of film/TV-related roles including producers, directors and actors. Exposure to GenAI varies significantly across job titles in this occupation, with authors/writers considered significantly exposed, graphic designers moderately exposed and actors, artists and photographers either minimally or not exposed.[2] Future demand is also likely to vary across these job roles.

Sports & fitness occupations (e.g. sports coaches, players, fitness instructors, leisure/sports managers)

Although employment fell in 2025 compared to the previous year, it remained above 2019 levels. Females accounted for the higher share (at 55%), 39% worked part-time and 63% held third level qualifications. The age profile was younger than average with 58% aged 25-54 years (compared to 68% nationally). Most (89%) working in this occupation were employed in Other NACE sectors. Employment permits related to various sports coaches. Increased take-up of gym memberships may lead to demand for fitness instructors and personal trainers.[3]

Leisure & travel service occupations (e.g. sports/leisure assistants, travel agents, air travel assistants)

Employment increased by 1,300 persons since 2024, but overall levels remained below that of 2019. A higher than average share worked part-time (44%) and were non-Irish citizens (25%) with 36% holding third level qualifications. Approximately two fifths were employed in the Other Nace sector with the remainder spread across sectors including administrative and support services and transport and storage. Future demand for these roles is likely to be impacted by trends in consumer spending and environmental targets (particularly relating to air travel).

Hairdressers & beauticians, etc.

Having been unchanged for the previous two years, employment levels saw an increase in 2025 (of 3,100 persons). Those employed were primarily female, with a high share working part-time (43%) and, at 25%, a higher than average share who were non-Irish citizens. Almost all (96%) were employed in Other NACE sectors. In 2025, there were 238 new registrations for the hairdressing apprenticeship (a decrease of 8.5% compared to 2024, at 260); there were a total of 1,700 awards at NFQ levels 1-5 in hair and beauty-related fields in 2024. Costs of doing business, tourism numbers and consumer spending levels can all potentially impact on future demand for these roles, with employment levels projected to decline slightly to 2030 based on a more constrained economy.

[2] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).
[3] Irish gyms make gains after pandemic hurt – The Irish Times