

Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply **2025**



Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply 2025

Trends in education and training awards

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List of Abbreviations


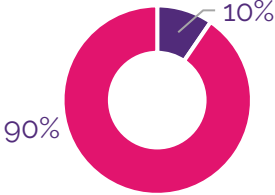

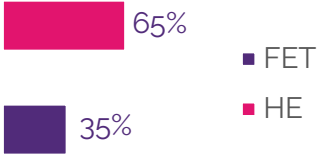



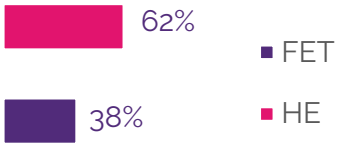

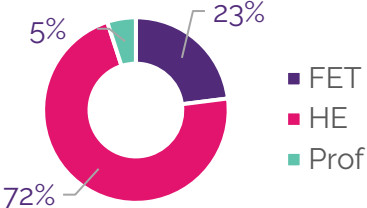
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IAASA	Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority
ICT	Information Communications Technology
n.e.c.	Not elsewhere classified
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NZEB	Nearly Zero Energy Building
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SSBL	Social Science, Business and Law
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing

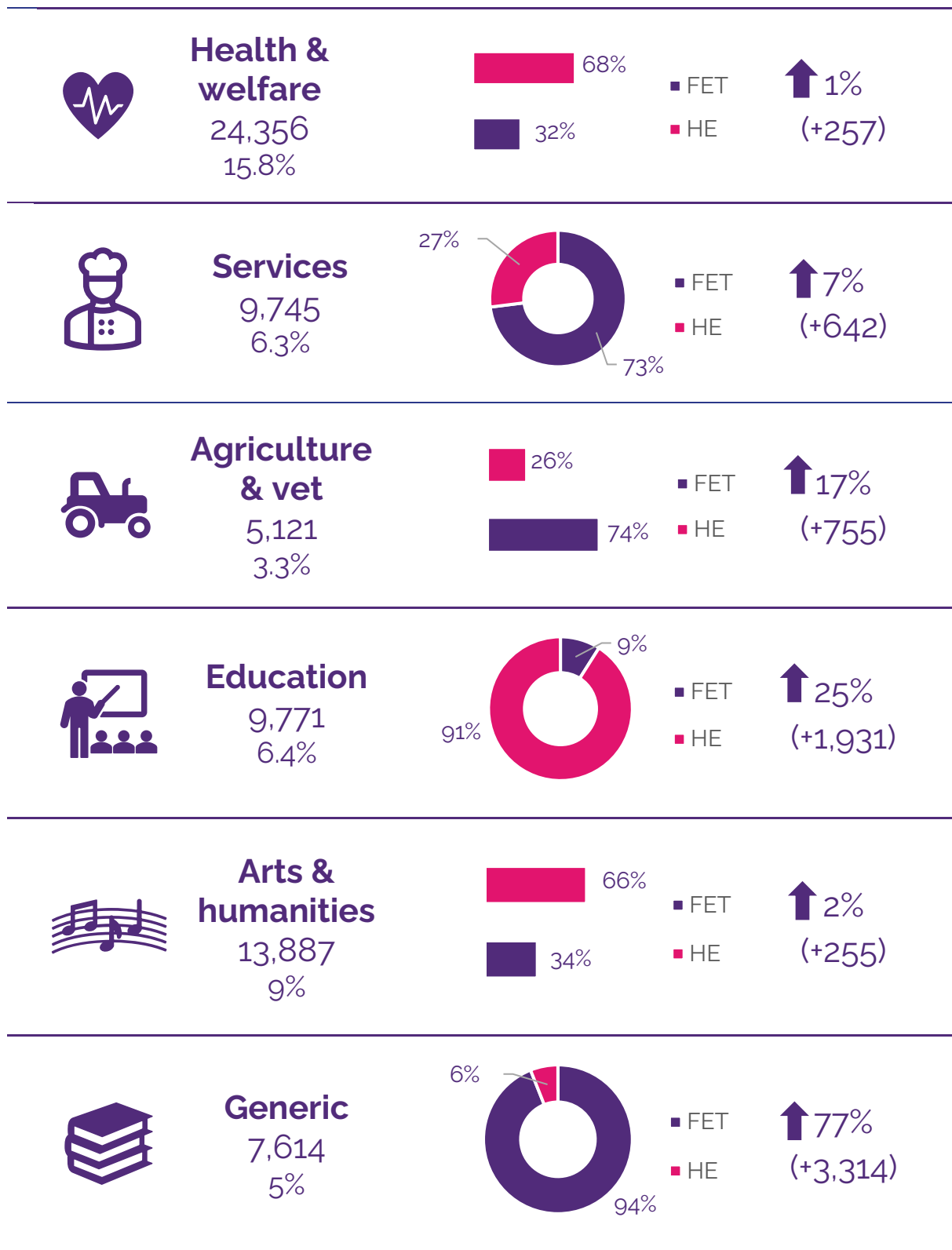
Summary

Potential supply of skills from further and higher education in Ireland

153,669
awards in **2024**

The number of awards made across the FET and higher education system in 2024 increased by 1% (2,028 additional awards) on the previous year and by 21% (26,508 additional awards) compared to 2019.

No. & % share of total awards in 2024	% FET & HE share in 2024	% change 2019-2024
 <p>Science 8,319 5.4%</p>	 <p>90% HE 10% FET</p>	<p>↑16% (+1,170)</p>
 <p>ICT 13,550 8.8%</p>	 <p>65% HE 35% FET</p>	<p>↑73% (+5,726)</p>
 <p>Engineering 13,968 9.1%</p>	 <p>54% HE 46% FET</p>	<p>↑47% (+4,475)</p>
 <p>Construction 4,318 2.8%</p>	 <p>62% HE 38% FET</p>	<p>↑47% (+1,382)</p>
 <p>SSBL 43,020 28%</p>	 <p>72% HE 23% FET 5% Prof</p>	<p>↑18% (+6,601)</p>



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA and Irish Tax Institute

1. Introduction

This report, *Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply 2025*, is the 19th in a series of annual reports produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU), which aims to monitor the potential supply of skills to the labour market from Ireland's education and training system. Not all education and training graduates will enter the labour market: some may remain in education for further studies, travel abroad, or not enter the labour market due to family commitments or other reasons. Others may already be in the workforce and therefore do not represent a new supply of skills. Bearing in mind these caveats, the analysis of the education/training outputs by level and field presented here is an overview of how Ireland's education and training system can contribute to meeting the skills needs of the economy. This report complements an earlier SLMRU publication which examines the educational profile of Ireland's adult population.¹

Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply serves as a companion publication for the National Skills Bulletin, where the focus is on the demand for skills in Ireland. When taken together, these two reports provide a comprehensive summary of the demand and supply of skills in Ireland.

This report examines the number of awards made to learners in Ireland's further and higher education and training system. Following a summary in the Awards overview section, awards are broken down by field of learning and NFQ level (where applicable).

Data used in this report

Further education and training (FET) data was obtained from two sources. QQI-FET data is from Quality and Qualifications Ireland's awards database. Only major awards are included as those in receipt of other award types may receive more than one award in any given year. While SOLAS/ETBs are the largest provider types, other providers include Teagasc, Accounting Technicians Ireland, among others. QQI-FET data is for 2019 and 2024.

Other FET data is from the SOLAS/ETBI Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS). This data refers to learners who completed a programme (full completers) in the calendar years 2019 and 2024. It excludes learners in receipt of QQI awards as these were already included in the QQI-FET data. The PLSS data is for 2019 and 2024.

While some of the awards included in the '**Other FET**' category have been placed on other countries' National Qualifications Frameworks (e.g. UK-based awards such as City & Guilds) and can, as a result, be referenced to the Irish NFQ, other FET awards in this category are not aligned to any European framework; these awards, in this report, are referred to as 'non-aligned FET'.

¹ In previous years, an analysis of the educational profile of adults in Ireland was included in the MISS report but comprises a separate publication this year. See <https://a.storyblok.com/f/70398/x/5ec607d4da/solas-education-profile.pdf>

Third level data was also obtained from two sources. **Third level (HEA)** data is from the Higher Education Authority's Student Record System. It includes awards made to learners at each of Ireland's universities (including the technical universities), institutes of technology, and colleges (e.g. RCSI, NCAD and St. Angela's). HEA data in this report is for the academic years 2018/2019 and 2023/2024.

QQI-HE data was obtained from Quality and Qualifications higher education awards data (excluding those made to learners at institutes of technology, which are already included in the HEA data). This data represents the major awards made to learners at private, independent colleges, including National College of Ireland (NCI),² Griffith College, Dublin Business School, Hibernia College amongst others. It should be noted that these colleges also make awards through other awarding bodies (e.g. UK awarding bodies) for which data is unavailable. All QQI-HE data is for 2019 and 2024.

This report also includes data in relation to persons obtaining qualifications from **professional bodies** including the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA) and the Irish Tax Institute.

The awards data in this report is based on the reference year 2024 for all data sources: HEA, QQI and PLSS/ETBI.

Graduate outcomes data is from two sources: the latest available data for FET outcomes is from 2021 and refers to QQI major awards holders only (excluding mature graduates (aged over 25 years at the time of graduation)). The data, compiled by the Central Statistics Office in 2025, uses administrative data to link individuals' records across various labour market and education databases.³ Secondly, outcomes data for higher education graduates is from the HEA's Graduate Outcomes Survey (2025)⁴ and refers to the status of graduates nine months after graduation. The latest data refers to learners graduating from HEA-aided institutions in 2024. Selected outcomes are presented including the share of graduates employed in high skilled occupations, which comprise managerial, professional and associate professional roles.

² Since 2023, NCI data has been included in the HEA's graduate data -see Revisions-Note-KFF-23_24.docx; however, as it still forms part of the QQI dataset for this report, it is not included in the HEA dataset to avoid double counting.

³ Further Education Outcomes - Graduation Year 2021 - Central Statistics Office

⁴ Key Findings (GO 2024) | Statistics | Higher Education Authority

Data Classifications

Education levels

The two main classifications used to analyse **education levels** in this report are Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and UNESCO's International System of Education Classification (ISCED) levels of education. The NFQ describes the level of the award obtained on successful completion of a relevant programme, while ISCED levels of education refers to the level of the programme. Table A1 in the Appendix details the award types at each NFQ level, as well as the programmes in the education system that typically prepare learners for such awards.

Fields of education and training

ISCED fields of learning classifications are also used in the analysis. For ease of reading, some field names have been shortened. In addition, in instances where numbers are too small to report, some fields have been grouped. Column 1 of Table 1.1 shows the broad fields of learning according to the ISCED classification, along with an example of specific subjects covered in these areas. Column 2 (Grouped/Abbreviated Fields) shows the fields of education and training that were grouped for the analysis (where relevant).

Table 1.1 ISCED fields of education and training

ISCED Field ⁵	Grouped/Abbreviated Fields
STEM subjects	
Science & mathematics e.g. biological & biomedical sciences	Science
ICT e.g. computer science	ICT
Engineering, manufacturing & construction e.g. civil engineering	Engineering, manufacturing and construction
Health, agriculture and vet subjects	
Health & welfare e.g. healthcare assistant	Health
Agriculture, forestry & veterinary e.g. agricultural science	Agriculture and vet
Other subjects	
Social sciences journalism & information e.g. economics, psychology	Social science, business and law (SSBL)
Business, administration & law e.g. accounting, sales	
Generic programmes & qualifications e.g. literacy training, Leaving certificate	Generic etc.
Interdisciplinary programmes (occurs in Labour Force Survey data only)	
Education e.g. primary teaching	Education
Arts & humanities e.g. graphic design, English	Arts, etc
Services e.g. professional cookery, culinary arts, hairdressing, security	Services

⁵ The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) was first developed in the mid-1970's and has since been revised, most recently in 2013. See <https://www.uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2025/04/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>

2. Awards overview

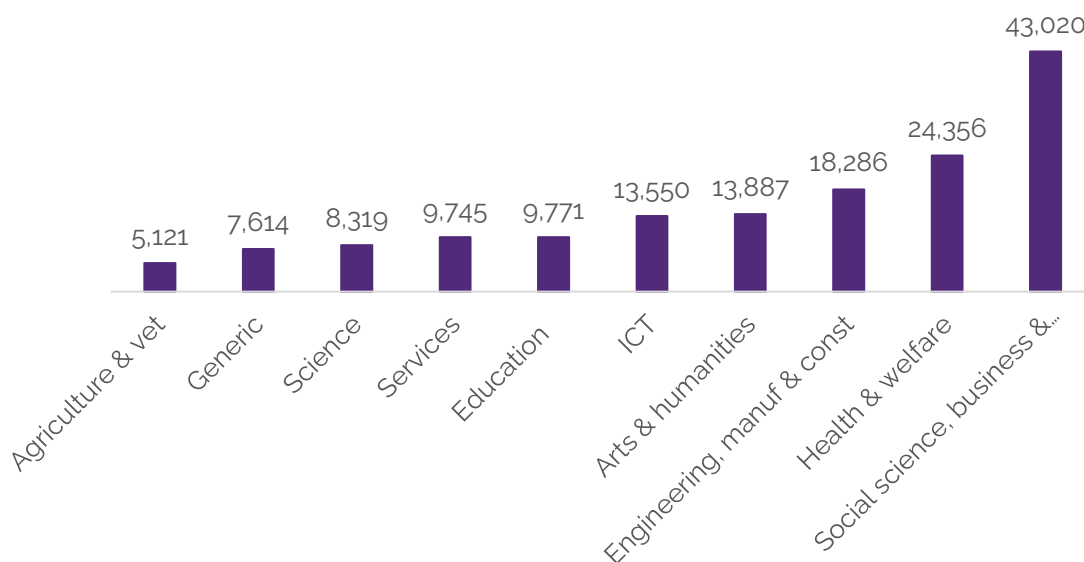
How many awards were made in 2024?

In 2024, 153,669 awards were made in Ireland's further and higher education and training systems. This number comprises learners gaining awards or qualifications in the FET sector (both QQI and non-QQI awarding bodies), the third level sector (both HEA-aided and non-HEA-aided institutes) and through selected professional bodies (e.g. accountancy).⁶

In what fields of learning were most awards made?

As in preceding years, the highest number of awards were made to learners who had studied programmes in the social science, business and law (SSBL) field, followed by the health and welfare field (Figure 2.1). Combined these two fields accounted for 67,376 awards, representing more than two fifths (44%) of all awards made in 2024. STEM subjects (i.e. science, ICT and engineering, etc.) made up nearly 40,155 awards (or 26% of the total).

Figure 2.1 Further and higher education awards and professional qualifications by field, 2024



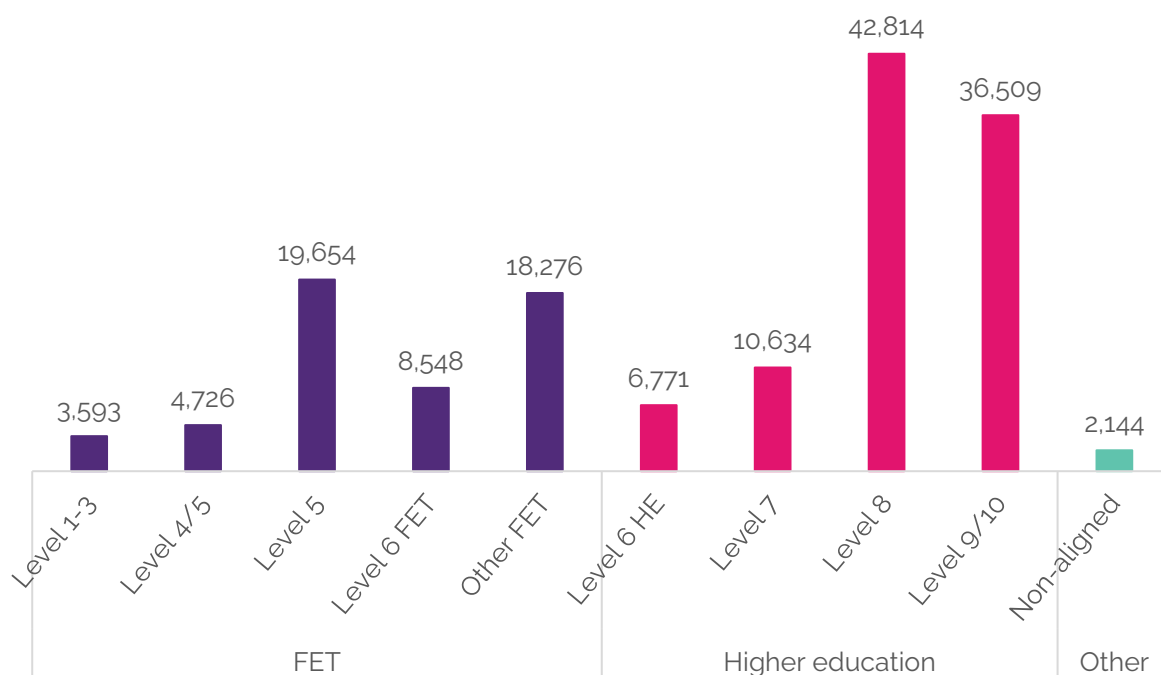
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA and Irish Tax Institute

⁶ These awards are typically for significant volumes of learning (e.g. mostly exclude minor awards etc).

At what levels were awards made in 2024?

Figure 2.2 shows the number of awards made by NFQ level in 2024. Third level awards at levels 6-8 on the NFQ accounted for 39% (60,219 awards), the vast majority of which (42,814) were at level 8, typically for honours bachelor degrees. Awards at levels 9 and 10 made up a further quarter (24%). FET awards, the majority of which were either on or aligned to the NFQ, made up just over a third (36%) representing 54,797 awards. Other non-NFQ-aligned qualifications (e.g. from professional bodies) made up 1%.

Figure 2.2 Awards by NFQ level and sector, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA, Irish Tax Institute

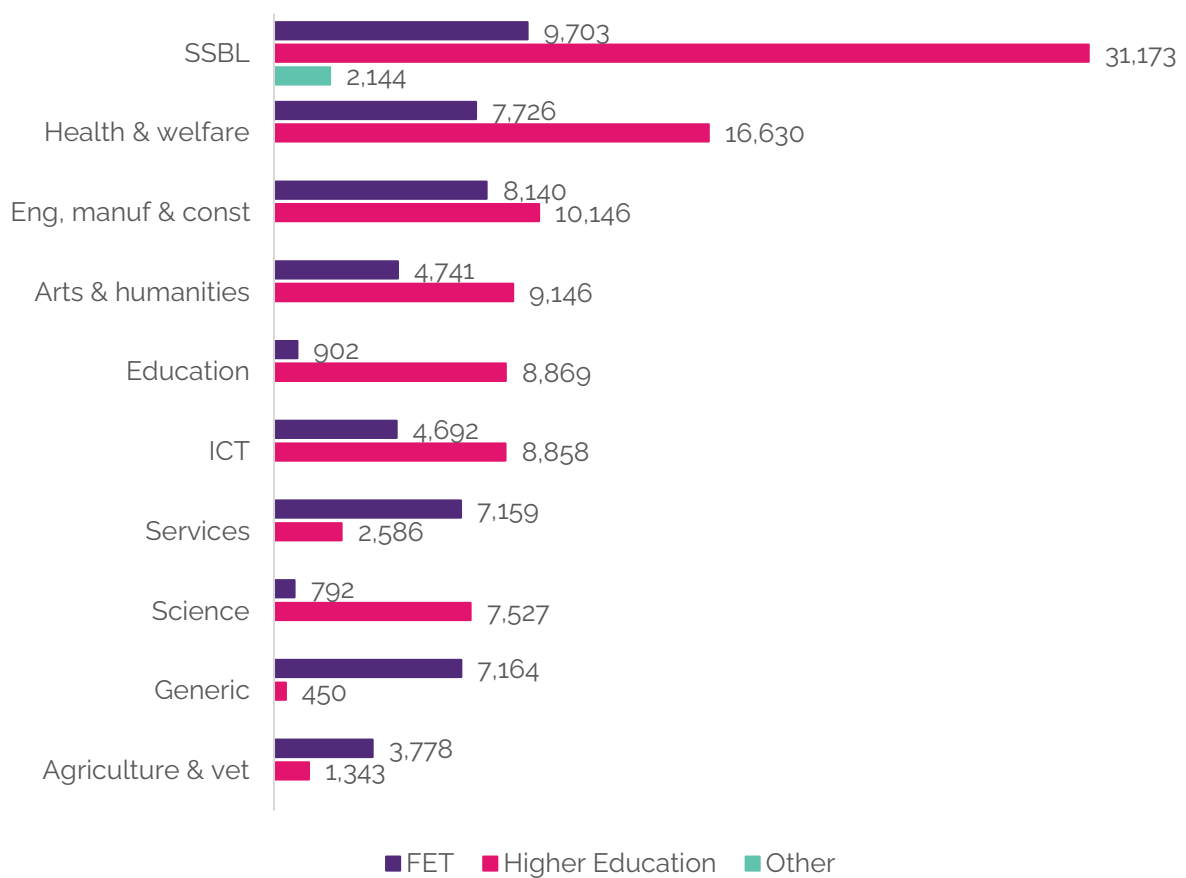
Awards by field and sector

Figure 2.3 shows the number of awards made by field and sector. At 9,703, the largest number of FET awards (NFQ and non-NFQ aligned awards (i.e. other FET)) was for social science, business and law (SSBL) programmes, followed by engineering, manufacturing and construction, with 8,140 awards. Health and welfare came next with 7,726 awards.

Similar to the FET sector, the largest number of higher education awards (NFQ 6-10), were made in social science, business and law (with 31,173 awards) and health and welfare (16,630 awards). This was followed by engineering, manufacturing and construction where there were 10,146 higher education awards, and arts and humanities (at 9,146 awards).

While for most fields of learning, higher education awards outnumbered FET awards, the number of FET awards was higher for three fields: generic programmes, agriculture and vet, and services, where FET sector awards accounted for 94%, 74% and 73% of all awards made in these fields, respectively. The other category refers to 2,144 professional awards, which relate to social science, business and law awards only (specifically in the areas of accountancy and tax).

Figure 2.3 Awards by field of learning and sector, 2024



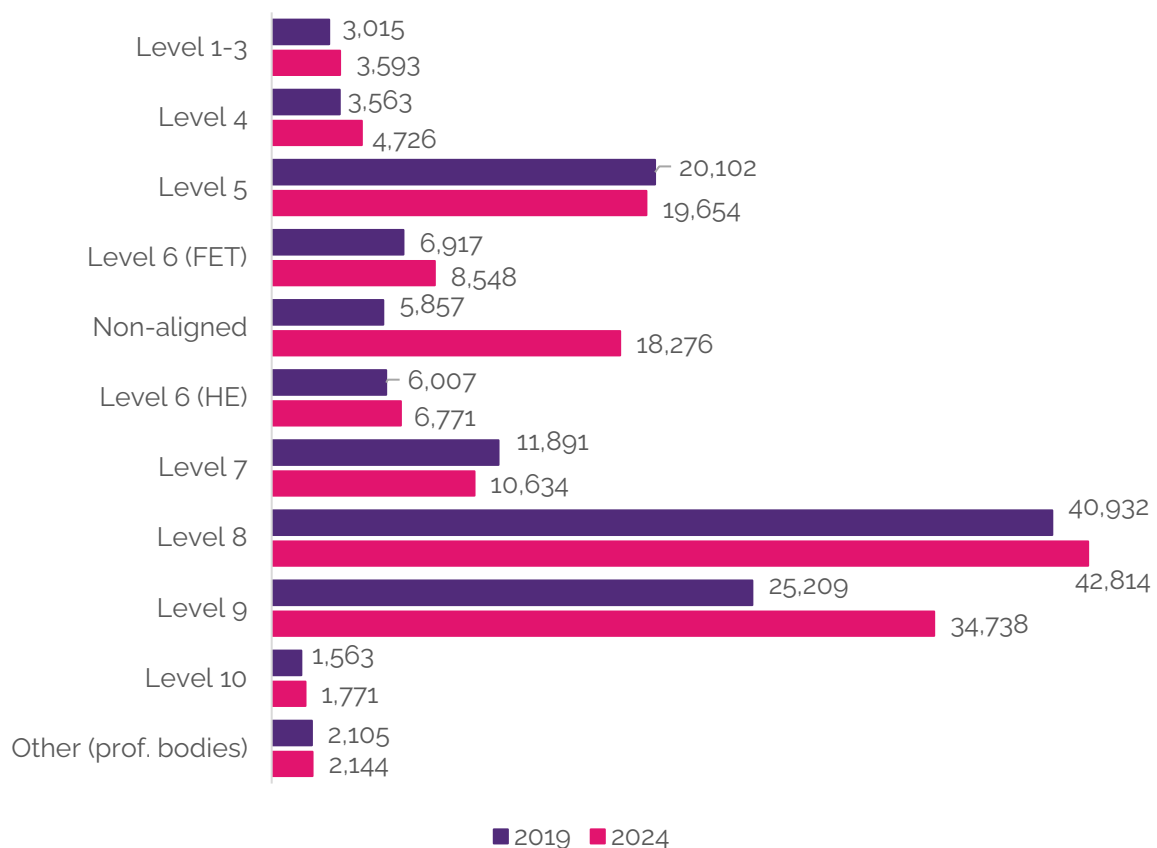
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA, Irish Tax Institute

What has changed in 2024 compared to 2019?

Changes by NFQ level

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards made across the FET, higher and professional education sectors went up by 21% or 26,508 awards,⁷ with increases at most NFQ levels, except level 5 and level 7 (Figure 2.4). The largest absolute increase was at level 9 (+9,529), and accounted for over a third (36%) of the total increase in awards over the 2019-2024 period.

Figure 2.4 Awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA, Irish Tax Institute

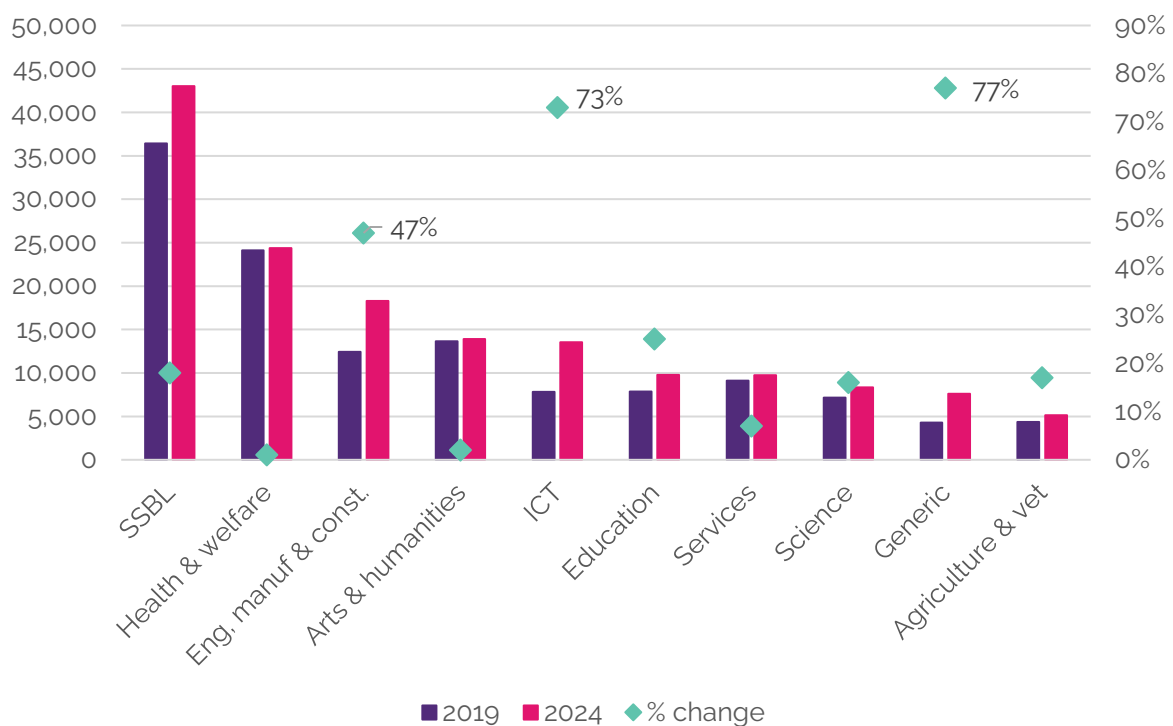
⁷ The total number of awards in 2019 was 127,161 compared to 153,669 in 2024.

Changes by field of learning

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards increased for all fields of learning (Figure 2.5). The fields with the largest absolute increases were SSBL (+6,601), engineering, manufacturing and construction (+5,857) and ICT (+5,726).

In relative terms, the ICT field had one of the largest increases, at 73%, (second only to the generic programmes field, at 77%), due mostly to increases in the non-aligned awards in the FET sector (+2,742 awards) and level 9 awards in higher education (+2,211 awards). The 77% increase in generic programmes was largely due to an additional 2,935 awards for Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) awareness.

Figure 2.5 Awards by field of learning, 2019 and 2024 and 5-year change (%)



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA, Irish Tax Institute

3. Science

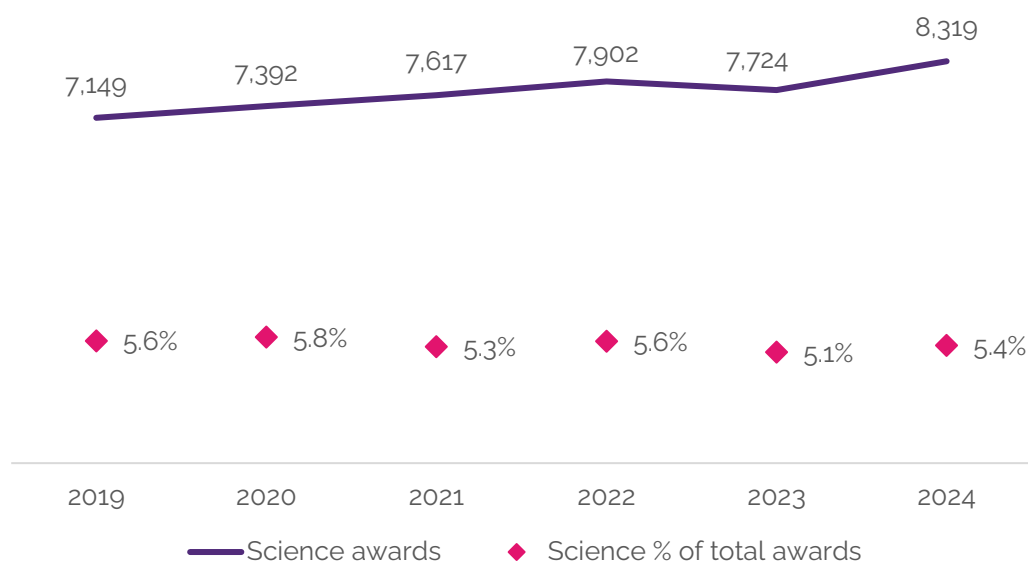
Key points

- In 2024, nearly half (47%) of science awards were at NFQ level 8 (3,927 awards).
- Over the five years 2019-2024, the highest absolute and relative growth was at NFQ level 9 (+467 awards or +35%).
- In 2024, over half (56%) of science awards were in the biological, environmental and related sciences detailed field (4,664).
- A regional profile shows that 38% of all awards were from educational institutions in Dublin followed by 19% in the South West region.
- At least seven out of ten science graduates (FET and HE) were employed shortly after graduation.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- There were 8,319 awards in science-related subjects in 2024, which accounted for 5.4% of all awards in the year (Figure 3.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of science awards increased by 16% (+1,170 awards), while the share of science awards out of total awards remained relatively stable at around 5%.

Figure 3.1 Science awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

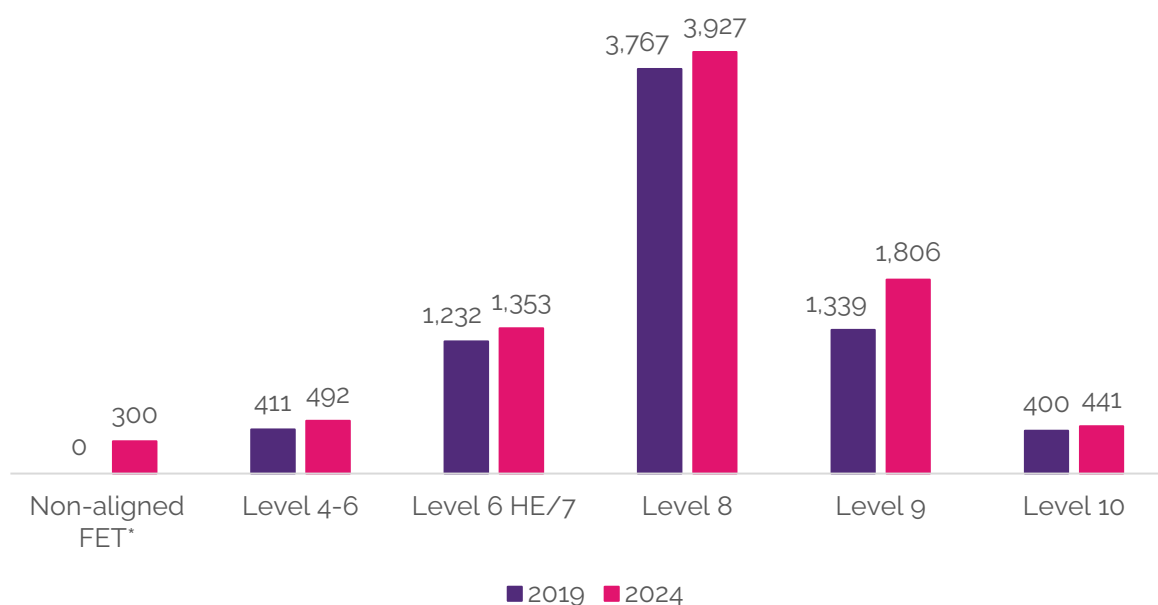


Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Science awards by NQF level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, nearly one half (47%) of science awards were at level 8 (3,927), followed by a further fifth (22%) at level 9 (1,806). This compares to 2019, when 53% were at level 8 and 19% were at level 9 (Figure 3.2).
- The total increase in science awards between 2019 and 2024 (+1,170 awards or +16%) was due to growth in both FET (e.g. data analytics) and higher education (especially at levels 7, 8 and 9); with the greatest relative increase at level 9 (+35% or +467 awards).
- In 2024, there were 441 awards at PhD level, which increased from 400 awards in 2019; science had the highest number of level 10 awards followed by social science, business and law (SSBL), which had 338 awards in 2024.

Figure 3.2 Number of science awards by NQF level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*The non-aligned FET awards comprised awards in areas such as Data Analytics or Power BI.

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

Biological, environmental & related sciences: with 4,664 awards in 2024, biological, environmental and related sciences accounted for more than a half (56%) of all science awards (Table 3.1), which rose by nearly 460 awards since 2023.

Pharmaceutical and medical related courses span several different science sub-fields. In 2024, medical and pharma-related courses totalled almost 1,795 awards, similar to that in the previous year.

Physical sciences: chemistry made up 60% of the 1,834 awards in the physical sciences (at 1,093). Physics courses led to nearly 350 awards (typically at level 8) and earth sciences (e.g. marine or geosciences) courses resulted in just over 250 awards. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of awards in physical sciences declined by more than 100 awards, which was largely accounted for by a fall in chemistry awards (nearly 120 fewer awards).

Maths and statistics: this included nearly 560 awards in data analytics related areas which increased from 300 in 2023, two-fifths (43%) of which were at level 9⁸; the number of maths and statistics awards increased from 1,062 in 2023 to 1,272 in 2024.

Table 3.1 Science awards by sector, NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET			Higher Education			Total
	NFQ 4/5	NFQ 6	Non-aligned	NFQ 6 (HE)/7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Biological, environmental & related, of which				943	2,415	1,306	4,664
<i>Biology</i>				72	637	170	879
<i>Biochemistry</i>				116	414	271	801
<i>Environment</i> ⁹				311	351	453	1,115
Physical sciences, of which				336	987	511	1,834
<i>Chemistry</i>				301	520	272	1,093
<i>Physics</i>				24	208	117	349
Maths and statistics & other science not further defined*	492	0	300	74	525	430	1,821
Total awards	482	0	300	1,353	3,927	2,247	8,319

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*The maths and statistics sub-field was combined with other science not further defined for confidentiality reasons.

⁸ This comprises the number of awards with 'data' in the course name for the Mathematics and Statistics detailed fields, e.g. data analytics, data analysis, big data etc. Further data analytics awards were made in the ICT field. See Section 4.

⁹ This is based on the number of awards under the three ISCED detailed fields Environmental sciences (0521), Natural environments and wildlife (0522) and Environment not further defined or elsewhere classified (0520).

Science awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 97% of science awards in 2024.¹⁰ Table 3.2 shows that the greatest number of higher education awards in science were in the Dublin region (2,901 awards or 39% share), while the Mid-East had the highest number of further education awards in this field, at 148 awards (or 28% share).

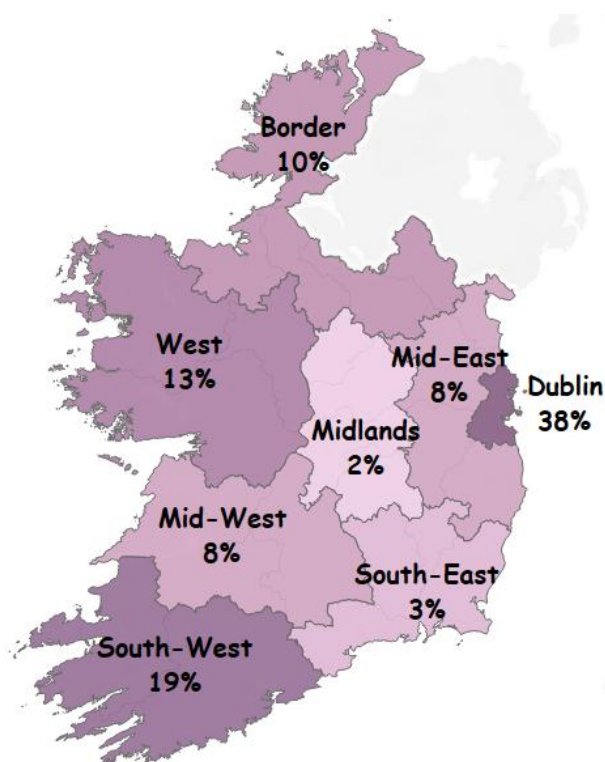
Table 3.2 Science awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	52	15	44	122	148	18	28	100	527
HE	736	117	988	2,901	512	599	248	1,426	7,527
Total	788	132	1,032	3,023	660	617	276	1,526	8,054

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 3.3 shows that of the total science awards in 2024 (excluding 265 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (38%) followed by the South West (19%).

Figure 3.3 Share of science awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

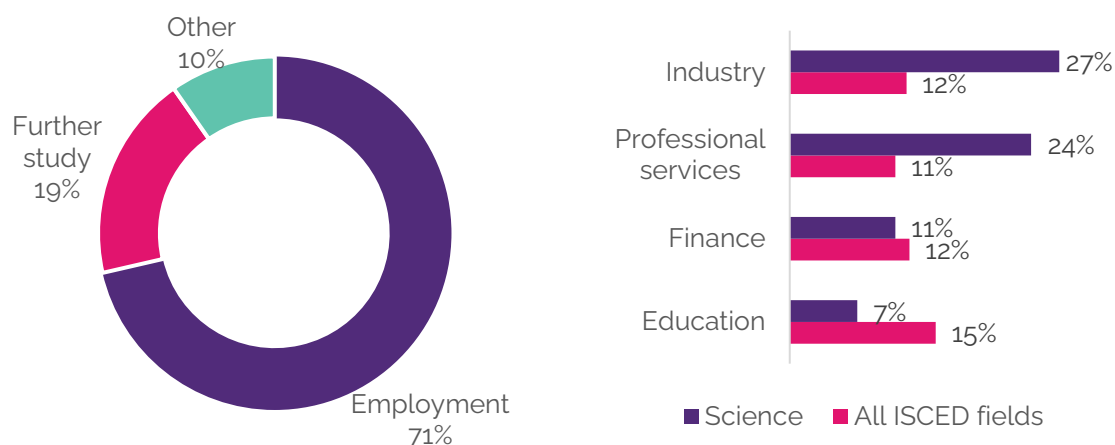
¹⁰ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Graduate outcomes for science

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of science graduates in **employment** nine months after graduation, at 71% is slightly lower than the average (80%), but the share in **further study**, at 19%, is the second highest (after arts/humanities at 22%) (Figure 3.4).
- At 69%, more than two thirds of science graduates work in one of four **sectors**: industry, professional services, finance, and education. This compares to less than half (48%) of all graduates working in these sectors.
- More than three quarters (77%) of science graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,¹¹ slightly more than the 73% observed across all fields of learning.

Figure 3.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for science graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Of the science graduates from FET programmes, 73% were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation, almost in line with the average observed across all ISCED fields of learning (74%) (Table 3.3).
- The share of FET science graduates who were **neither employed nor in education** (2.2%) was less than half that of the average across all ISCED fields (5.2%).

¹¹ High skilled occupations are made up of managers, professionals, and associate professionals.

Table 3.3 FET outcomes for science graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: science	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	11.8%	30.8%
Employment and education	61.4%	43.2%
Education only	21.5%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	2.2%	5.2%
Not captured	3%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

4. ICT

Key points

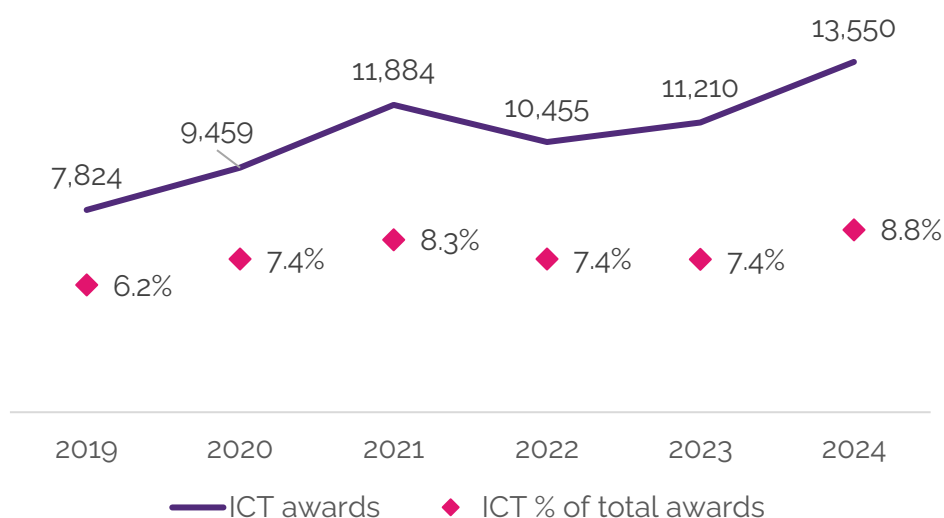
- In 2024, there were 13,550 ICT awards, which made up 8.8% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of ICT awards went up by 73% (+5,726).
- In 2024, almost two thirds (65%) of all ICT awards were from the higher education sector, especially at NFO level 9 (4,822).
- The detailed field with the highest number of ICT awards was software and applications development/analysis (at 5,236); with notable increases in the number of awards related to cybersecurity and artificial intelligence between 2023-2024.
- In 2024, 51% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 11% in the South West region.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

In order to avoid over-estimating the potential supply of skills to ICT occupations (as outlined in the National Skills Bulletin), some FET awards (e.g. ECDL and basic MS Office awards) were deemed to be more relevant to the social science, business and law field and are therefore excluded from the analysis of ICT awards data in this section.

- In 2024, there were 13,550 awards in ICT-related subjects, which made up 8.8% of all awards in the year (Figure 4.1).
- Between 2019 to 2024, the number of ICT awards rose by 73% (+5,726), while the share of ICT awards out of total awards went up from 6.2% to 8.8%.

Figure 4.1 ICT awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

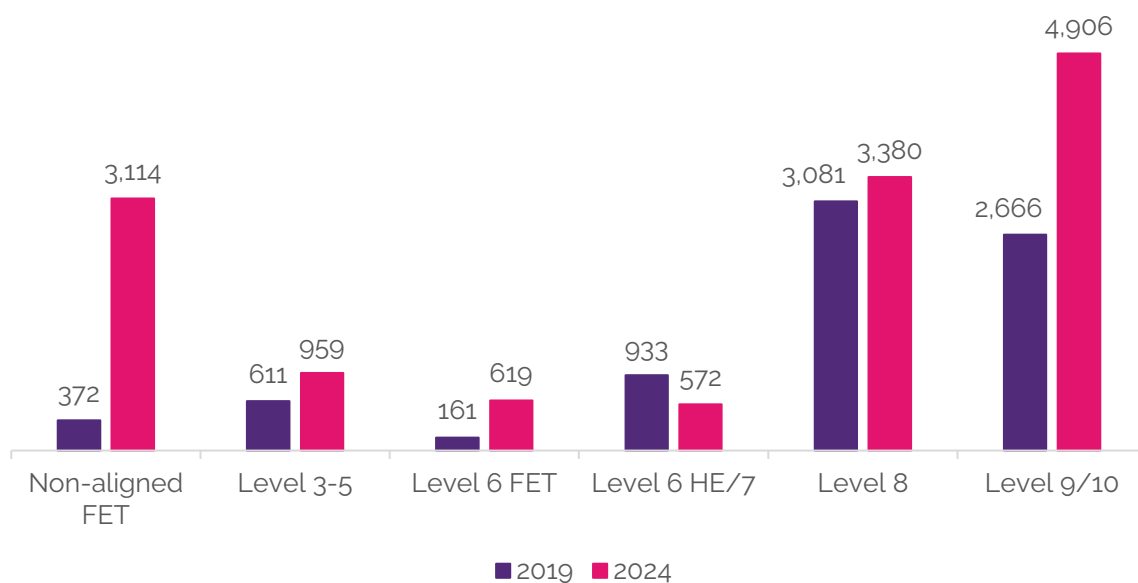


Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

ICT awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, almost two thirds (65%) of ICT awards were from the higher education sector; the highest number of awards were at NFQ level 9/10 (4,906) (mostly level 9 at 4,822), followed by level 8 (3,380) (Figure 4.2).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards went up at all NFQ levels (with the exception of level 6 HE/7 at 361 fewer awards); the largest increase was for non-aligned FET awards (+2,742) (nearly half of this rise was in the database and network design/administration detailed ISCED field with 1,357 more awards).¹²
- While the majority of ICT awards were from the higher education sector in 2024, the share of FET awards increased from 15% in 2019 (1,144) to 35% in 2024 (4,692).
- In 2024, nearly 2,950 ICT awards were QQI higher education major awards made to learners in colleges outside the HEA-aided sector, of which 2,124 awards were at level 9.
- Not included in these numbers were 303 special purpose and minor awards made to learners in private third level colleges by QQI.

Figure 4.2 Number of ICT awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA; QQI & SOLAS /ETBI

¹² The non-NFQ aligned FET category included industry awards from CompTIA, CISCO, Microsoft, among others.

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

At 5,236 awards in 2024, the highest number of ICT awards were for **software and applications development/analysis** with 59% at levels 8-10 (Table 4.1). Compared to 2023, there were more than 900 additional awards for **software development**, 211 of which were at levels 8-10,

Within ICT, a number of specific areas of direct relevance to the skills needs of the economy cannot be identified by ISCED sub-fields alone. The following subject areas were identified by course titles and may appear in the data in more than one detailed field.

- **Security:** there were almost 1,650 security related awards in 2024 (e.g. cyber security, cybercrime etc) in the further and higher education sector, an increase from 1,200 in the previous year.
- **Games:** there were 168 awards for games development, gaming/virtual reality and animation in higher education (compared to 147 in 2023); in addition, classified in the arts/humanities field, there were a further 128 non-QQI FET awards for animation.
- **Artificial intelligence:** there were 528 awards in higher education in 2024, an increase of 200 awards (+61%) compared to the previous year 2023.
- **Data analytics:** there were 1,287 awards for courses in data analytics (+187 compared to 2023) and over 500 awards in business analytics, with the vast majority of these awards (76%) made to learners at private independent third level colleges. Also, there were nearly 560 data analytics related awards in the mathematics and statistics detailed field under science examined in Section 3.¹³

Table 4.1 ICT awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education			Total
	NFQ 3-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6	Non-aligned	NFQ 6/7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Computer use	18	11	0	739	44	185	158	1,255
Database/network design & admin	0	267	65	1,383	59	250	309	2,333
Software development, etc	0	603	502	694	328	1,494	1,615	5,236
Other	60	0	52	298	141	1,351	2,824	4,726
Total awards	78	881	619	3,114	572	3,380	4,906	13,550

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

¹³ These comprise awards for courses with 'data analytics', 'data analysis', 'big data', 'data science' or 'data visualisation' in the title (with a check done to ensure that the award was only counted once if it contained more than one of these terms).

ICT awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 84% of all ICT awards in 2024.¹⁴ Table 4.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in ICT were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (5,084 or a 57% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards in this field at 694 (or a 27% share).

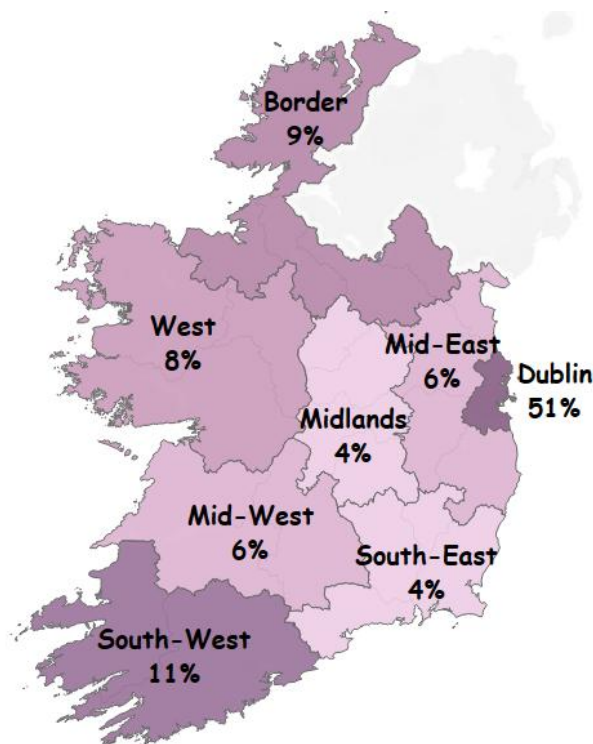
Table 4.2 ICT awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	501	133	346	694	192	170	109	386	2,531
HE	514	367	576	5,084	506	558	331	922	8,858
Total	1,015	500	922	5,778	698	728	440	1,308	11,389

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 4.3 shows that of the total ICT awards in 2024 (excluding 2,161 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (51%) followed by the South West (11%).

Figure 4.3 Share of ICT awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

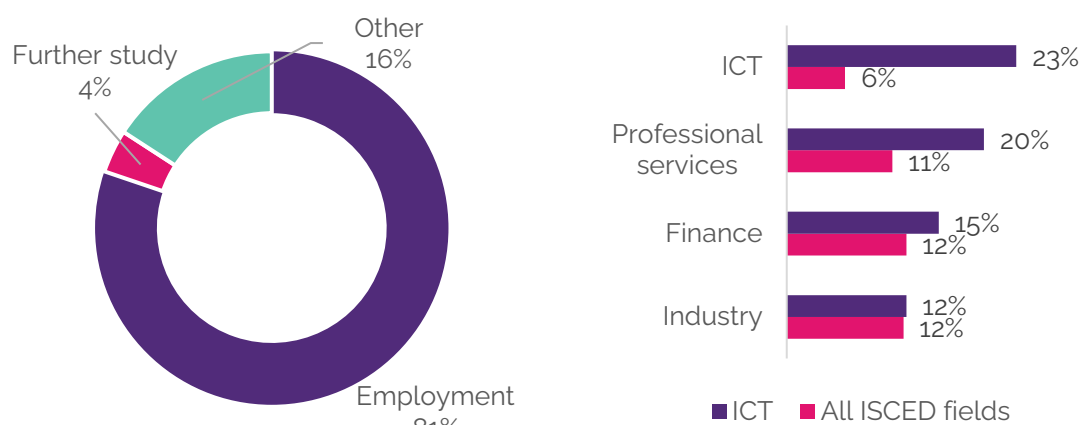
¹⁴ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Graduate outcomes for ICT

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of ICT graduates in **employment**, at 81%, was slightly higher than average across all ISCED fields (80%); however, the share in **further study** was considerably smaller at 4% (compared to the overall average of 11%), and the second lowest (after education graduates) (Figure 4.4).
- Of those in employment, 70% were in one of four **sectors**: ICT, professional services, finance or industry; this compares to just under 40% working in these sectors across all ISCED fields.
- Nearly 82% of employed ICT graduates were working in **high skilled occupations**,¹⁵ considerably higher than the 73% observed across all fields of learning.

Figure 4.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for ICT graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Of the ICT graduates from FET programmes, nearly 68% were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation, below the average observed across all ISCED fields of learning (74%) (Table 4.3).
- At 18.6%, the share of FET ICT graduates in **employment only** was considerably smaller than that across all ISCED fields (30.8%).
- The share who were **neither employed nor in education**, at just 1.5%, was considerably lower than the 5.2% observed across all ISCED fields.

¹⁵ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Table 4.3 FET outcomes for ICT graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: ICT	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	18.6%	30.8%
Employment and education	48.9%	43.2%
Education only	28.9%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	1.5%	5.2%
Not captured	2%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

5. Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction

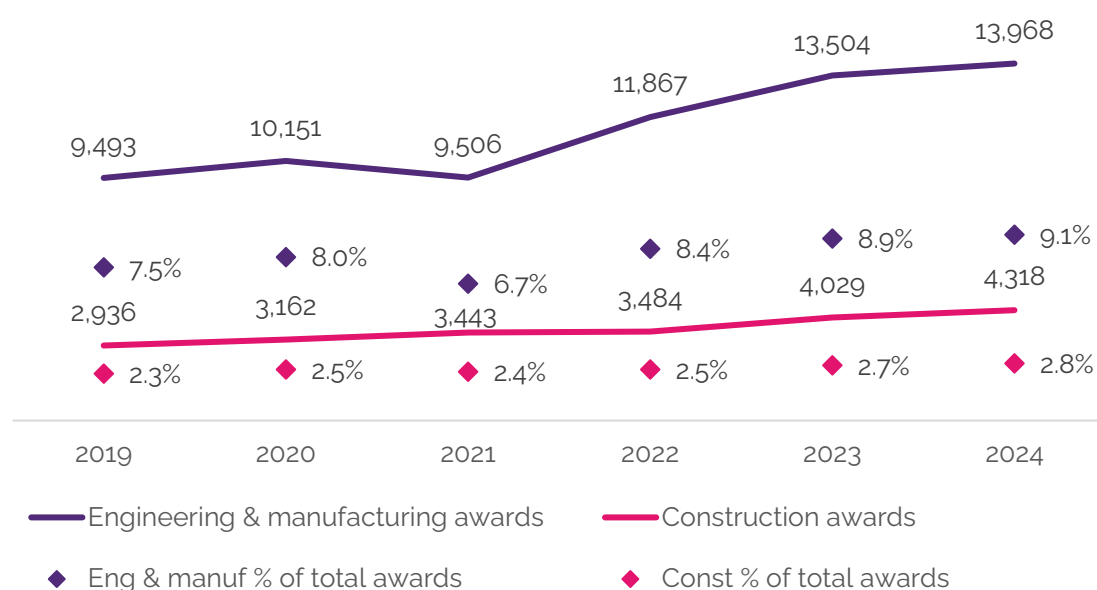
Key points

- Between 2019-2024, the number of engineering, manufacturing and construction awards increased by 47% (+5,857 awards), and accounted for 12% of all awards in 2024.
- In 2024, over half (55%) of all awards were in the higher education sector.
- This field had the largest number of level 6 FET awards at 3,639 awards in 2024.
- The detailed fields with the highest number of awards were electricity and energy (2,964) and civil and building engineering (3,109).
- In 2024, 25% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 17% in the Mid-West region.
- Over 8 out of 10 graduates in this field were employed shortly after graduation.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were nearly 18,300 awards in engineering, manufacturing and construction related fields, with almost 14,000 in engineering/manufacturing and approximately 4,300 awards in construction (Figure 5.1).
- With the exception of 2020-2021 (engineering only), there was a consistent increase in the number of awards in this field; engineering/manufacturing went up by 47% (+4,475), while there were an extra 1,382 construction awards (also +47%) over this time.
- In 2024, this field made up nearly 12% of the total awards across all fields of education, up from just under 10% in 2019.

Figure 5.1 Engineering, manufacturing & construction awards, 2019-2024

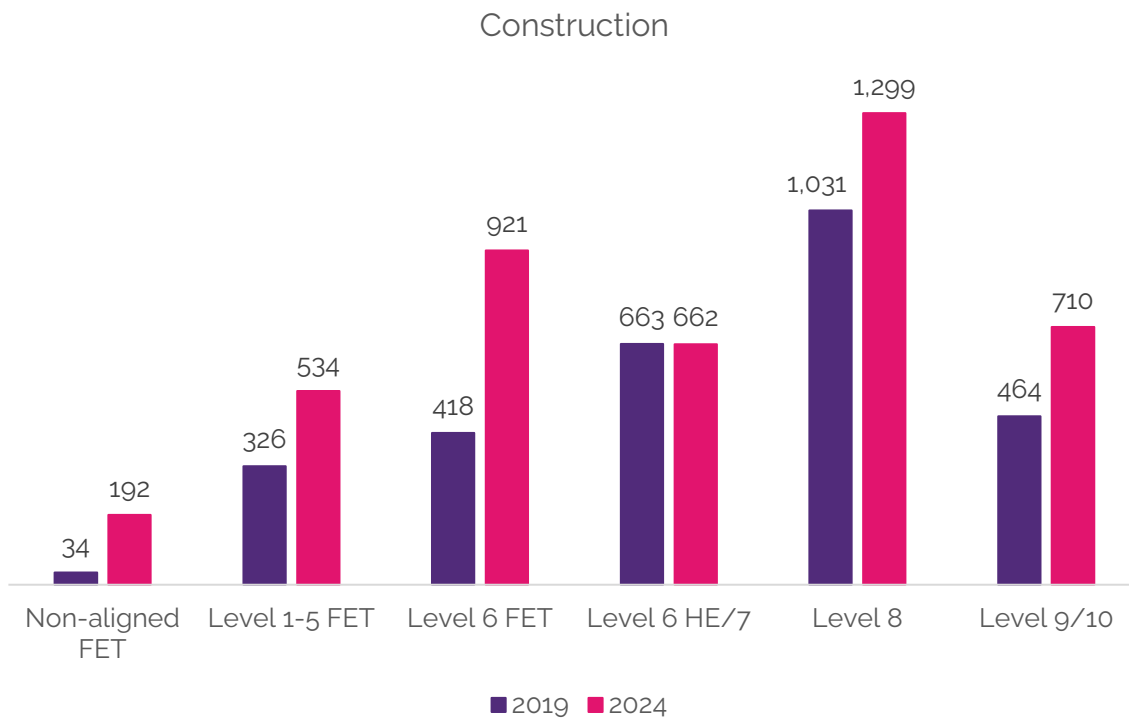
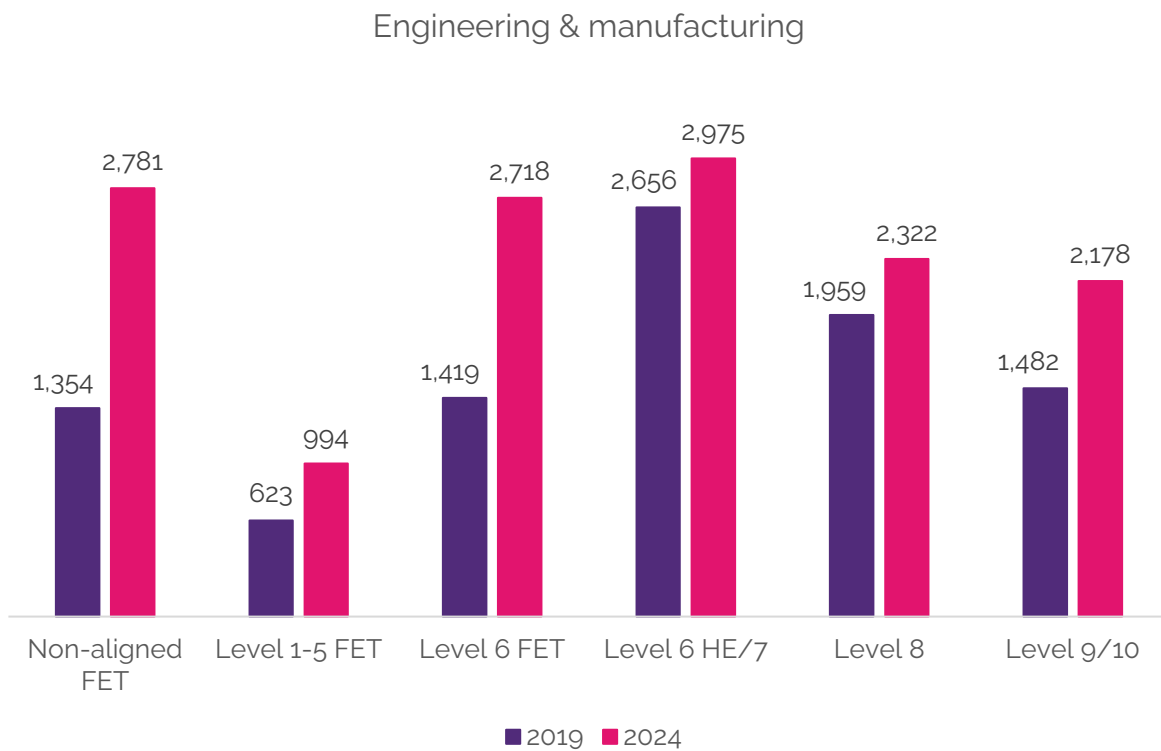


Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Engineering, manufacturing and construction awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of engineering, manufacturing and construction awards increased at all NFQ levels (Figure 5.2).
- In 2024, over half (55%) of all awards were in the higher education sector; unlike most other fields of learning, the number of awards at level 6/7 and at level 8 were broadly similar, each making up 20% of the total.
- A further 20% of the total engineering and construction awards were made at level 6 in the FET sector in 2024, the highest share observed across all fields of learning.
- Between 2019 and 2024, there has been a shift towards greater shares of awards in the FET sector, which grew from 34% to 45% over the period.
- Looking at **engineering/manufacturing** awards,
 - the biggest absolute increase between 2019 and 2024 was in the non-aligned FET category (+1,427 awards or +105%); this included 340 additional awards in welding/fabrication and nearly 270 more awards in Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB),
 - the second largest increase was at level 6 FET (+1,299 awards or +60%) which was largely due to craft electrical awards (+1,193 awards).
- Similarly, in **construction**, level 6 FET awards had the largest absolute increase over the five years (+503 awards or +120%), which was mostly attributed to more awards in plumbing (+279) and carpentry/joinery (+178).
- Construction had the largest number of level 6 FET awards at nearly 3,700 awards in 2024, representing 43% of total level 6 FET awards across all fields.

Figure 5.2 Number of engineering, manufacturing and construction awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

Engineering/manufacturing

- Table 5.1 shows that **electricity and energy** was the sub-field with the highest number of awards at 2,964 in 2024, closely followed by **mechanics and metal** (2,920 awards).
- Combined the **electrical and electronic** engineering sub-fields made up over one third of all engineering and manufacturing awards; in 2024, over half were for craft electrical awards (FET NFQ level 6); in contrast, electronic engineering awards were largely in the higher education sector at 1,776 awards.
- In addition, there were 385 awards related to **automation** and/or **robotics** in 2024 (a small increase from 371 awards in the previous year 2023), which were mostly at NFQ levels 7 and 8 (244 awards).

Construction

- **Civil and building engineering** made up 1,180 awards at levels 8-10 in 2024 (21 fewer awards than in 2023); 377 awards were made in higher education for **quantity surveying**, which increased from 346 in 2023.
- **Architecture and town planning**: there were over 880 architecture related awards in 2024; of these 180 awards were made to learners on RIAI accredited programmes¹⁶, which rose slightly from 175 in 2023, and was the highest level over the five-year timeframe (172 awards in 2019). In 2024, there were 92 town planning awards at levels 8 and 9 (of which 53 awards will qualify learners to be a town planner¹⁷), a decline from 76 in 2023.
- In addition to the construction awards in this field of learning were awards made in the generic programme field of learning to 3,350 learners on short NZEB courses (e.g. NZEB fundamental awareness), which increased from 2,270 learners in 2023 (to be discussed in Section 12).

¹⁶ <https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes>; Technological University Dublin, University College Dublin, University of Limerick, South East Technological University (Waterford), Munster Technological University/University College Cork and Atlantic Technological University (Sligo) (first graduates in 2024).

¹⁷ These awards at levels 8 and 9 are accredited by the Irish Planning Institute. See <https://ipi.ie/become-a-planner/accredited-courses/>

Table 5.1 Engineering, manufacturing and construction awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education*			Total
	NFQ 3&4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6	Non-aligned	NFQ 6&7*	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Engineering & manufacturing, inc	505	489	2,718	2,781	2,975	2,322	2,178	13,968
<i>Chemical</i>					204	94	338	636
<i>Electricity & energy</i>	198		1,829	408	155	188	186	2,964
<i>Electronic</i>	18		49	533	1,013	555	208	2,376
<i>Mechanics & metal</i>	157	63	214**	1,607	282	456	141	2,920
<i>Food processing</i>	44	30			90	165	94	423
Construction, inc	202	332	921	192	662	1,299	710	4,318
<i>Architecture etc</i>	40	123	16	48	32	432	193	884
<i>Civil & building eng.</i>	162	209	905	144	509	722	458	3,109
Total awards	707	821	3,639	2,973	3,637	3,621	2,888	18,286

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*Includes 95 higher education QQI (private) awards in Engineering at level 7

**There were an additional 598 level 6 craft awards coded under the 0716 motor vehicles, ships and aircraft sub-field in 2024, which appeared under the 0715 mechanics and metal trades sub-field in 2023. These related to the same programmes, e.g. craft motor mechanics, craft mechanical automation and maintenance fitting and advanced certificate in craft heavy vehicle mechanics. Therefore, the totals for these two detailed fields are not comparable with those in preceding issues of this report.

Engineering, manufacturing & construction awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 97% of all engineering, manufacturing and construction awards in 2024.¹⁸ Table 5.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in engineering, manufacturing and construction were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (2,993 or 30% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards in this field at 1,425 (or 19% share).

¹⁸ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

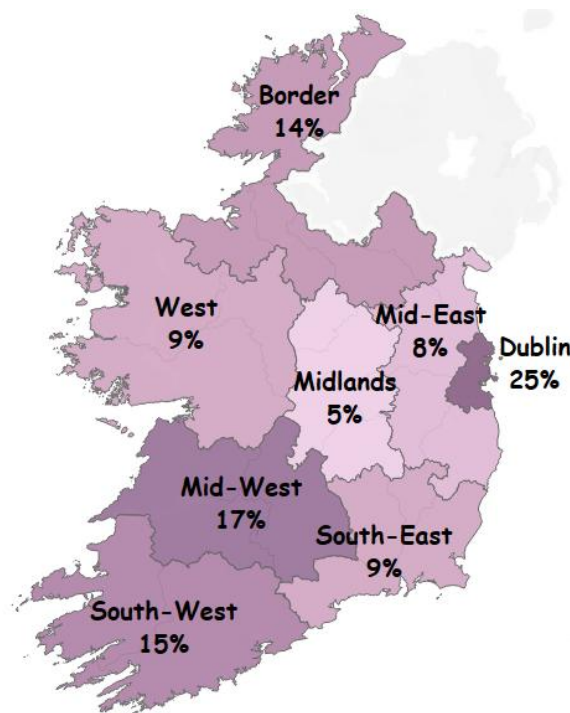
Table 5.2 Engineering, manufacturing & construction awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	1,066	546	464	1,425	836	1,283	944	1,022	7,586
HE	1,332	339	1,056	2,993	496	1,656	672	1,563	10,107
Total	2,398	885	1,520	4,418	1,332	2,939	1,616	2,585	17,693

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 5.3 shows that of the total engineering, manufacturing and construction awards in 2024 (excluding 593 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (25%) followed by the Mid-West region (17%).

Figure 5.3 Share of engineering, manufacturing & construction awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



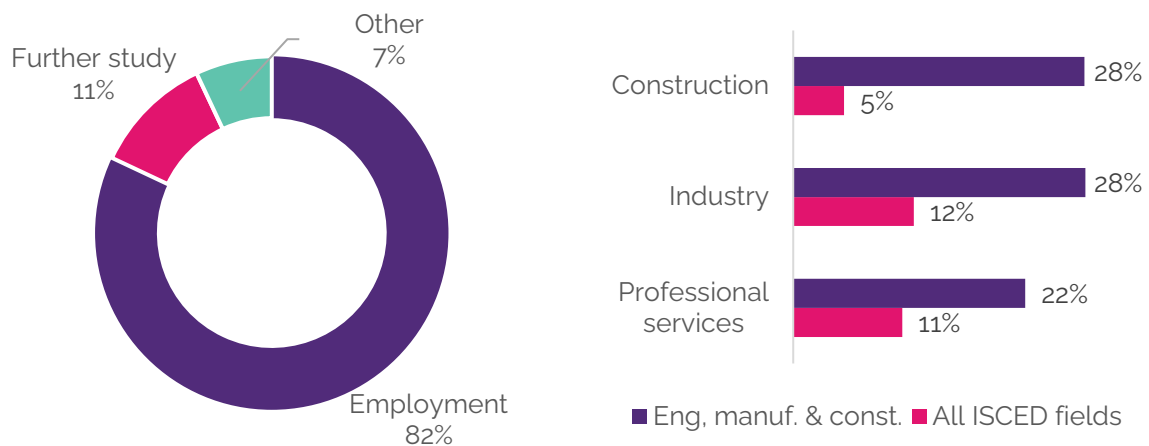
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Graduate outcomes for engineering, manufacturing & construction

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of engineering graduates in **employment**, at 82% was higher than the average (80%), while the share in **further study**, at 11%, was in line with the average across all fields of learning (Figure 5.4).
- At 78%, nearly four fifths of engineering related graduates work in one of three **sectors**: construction, industry, and professional services. This compares to just over a quarter (27%) for all graduates working in these sectors.
- More than four fifths (82%) of engineering related graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,¹⁹ the third highest share observed across all fields of learning (only health and education graduates had higher shares at 83% and 92% respectively).

Figure 5.4 Outcomes & sector of employment for engineering graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Over four fifths (81.5%) of FET engineering etc graduates were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation; this compares to the average observed across all ISCED fields of learning of 74% (Table 5.3).
- The share of FET engineering etc graduates in **employment only** was on a par with the overall average (30.8%).
- The shares of FET engineering graduates (at 3.3%) who were **neither employed nor in education** was lower than the overall average of 5.2%.

¹⁹ High skilled occupations refer to managers, professionals, and associate professionals.

Table 5.3 FET outcomes for engineering graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: engineering etc.	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	31.8%	30.8%
Employment and education	49.7%	43.2%
Education only	13.3%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	3.3%	5.2%
Not captured	1.9%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

6. Social Science, Business and Law

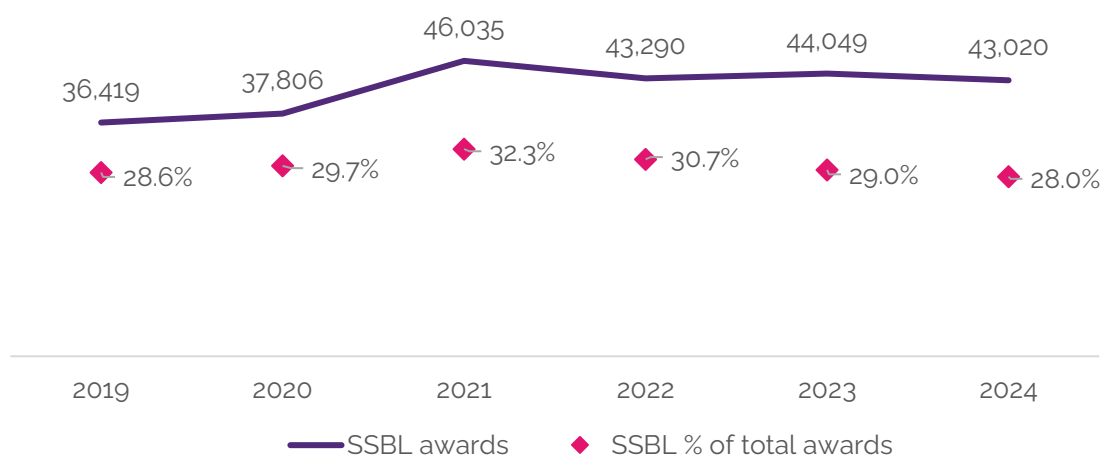
Key points

- This field had the highest number of awards in 2024, as in earlier years.
- In 2024, the majority of awards were in the higher education sector, with 61% at levels 8, 9 and 10.
- Management and administration was the detailed field with the largest number of awards at 9,375 awards in 2024.
- In 2024, nearly half (48%) of all awards in this field were made to learners in institutions in Dublin, followed by 12% in the South West region.
- Around three quarters of graduates were employed shortly after graduation.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 43,020 awards in social science, business and law (SSBL) related subjects (Figure 6.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards increased by 18% (+6,601), although there was a slight fall over the last year (1,029 fewer awards or -2%); most of the decline was in the higher education sector.
- With 5,463 QQI-HE awards in 2024, private, independent third level colleges made up almost 13% of all awards in this field.²⁰
- This field is the largest in terms of the number of awards made, making up 28% of all awards in 2024, the share of which fell from a peak of 32.3% in 2021.

Figure 6.1 SSBL awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA, Irish Tax Institute

²⁰ QQI-HE awards include only major awards made to learners at private, independent colleges and other non-HEA aided institutions.

SSBL awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, with 43,020 awards in this field, 61% of awards were made at level 8 or higher. This represents a slight decline on 2019, when the share was 63%, despite an increase in the number of awards made at levels 8, 9 and 10 (+3,425 awards combined) in 2024 (Figure 6.2).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the largest absolute increase was for non-aligned FET awards (nearly 3,200 additional awards), especially in digital literacy, e.g. Microsoft, ECDL and ICDL (+1,343), followed by level 9 awards (+2,721).
- SSBL had the highest number of learners achieving awards that were neither on nor aligned to the NFQ at 4,679, which represented 11% of all SSBL awards in 2024, an increase from 4% in 2019.
- Approximately 2,140 individuals obtained qualifications through professional bodies (i.e. accountancy and tax qualifications) in 2024, which was similar to the 2,105 awards in 2019.

Figure 6.2 Number of SSBL awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

- With 9,375 awards, **management and administration** was the largest detailed field, accounting for 22% of the total SSBL awards. Most were in the higher education sector (89%), particularly at postgraduate level (NFQ 9) (Table 6.1).

- **Secretarial and office work** awards made up 3,905 awards and were all made in the FET sector; nearly 975 of these awards were made in business or office administration (NFQ 5 and 6) (which went up by 140 awards compared to 2023), with most of the remainder being for **digital skills** (e.g. text processing) made in the non-aligned FET category.
- **Accounting/tax** related awards made up 3,436 awards, with a further 2,144 qualifiers through professional bodies, to give a total of 5,580 awards in 2024; in addition, there were more than 1,000 awards categorised within the broader business, administration and law field made to learners who had studied for honours bachelor degrees in commerce (e.g. BComm and BComm International qualifications), although not all BComm graduates go on to train as accountants.
- There were approximately 450 awards in **economics** (all from the higher education sector); however, as many learners opt to study economics as part of an arts degree (and therefore not captured in this field of learning), this number is likely to be the minimum number of awards for economics.

Table 6.1 SSBL awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education				Prof. bodies	Total
	NFQ 1-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6	Non-aligned	NFQ 6	NFQ 7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10		
Social sciences & journalism, inc		846	7		128	394	3,189	2,757		7,321
<i>Economics</i>						257		201		458
<i>Psychology</i>					20	82	1,096	995		2,193
Business, admin & law	405	2,432	1,334	4,679	1,433	2,792	10,197	10,283		33,555
<i>Accounting & tax</i>	25	43	538	961	85	105	990	689		3,436
<i>Finance</i>				143	21	1,120	433	790		2,507
<i>Management & admin</i>		218	477	303	573	915	1,948	4,941		9,375
<i>Marketing</i>		88		718	103	132	1,038	930		3,010
<i>Secretarial*</i>	307	995	71	2,532						3,905
<i>Sales</i>	73	14	121	22	51	33	49	87		450
<i>Law</i>		250			16	44	1,668	724		2,702
Professional (accounting & tax)									2,144	2,144
Total awards	405	3,278	1,334	4,679	1,561	3,186	13,386	13,040	2,144	43,020

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI, IAASA and Irish Tax Institute

*Includes 2,500 learners from the ICT field, which were re-categorised for the purposes of this report in the SSBL field (Secretarial and office work) to avoid overestimating the potential supply of skills to ICT occupations.

SSBL awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 84% of all SSBL awards in 2024.²¹ Table 6.2 shows that the greatest number of higher education awards were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (15,676 awards or 50% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards in this field, at 1,694 awards (or 34% share).

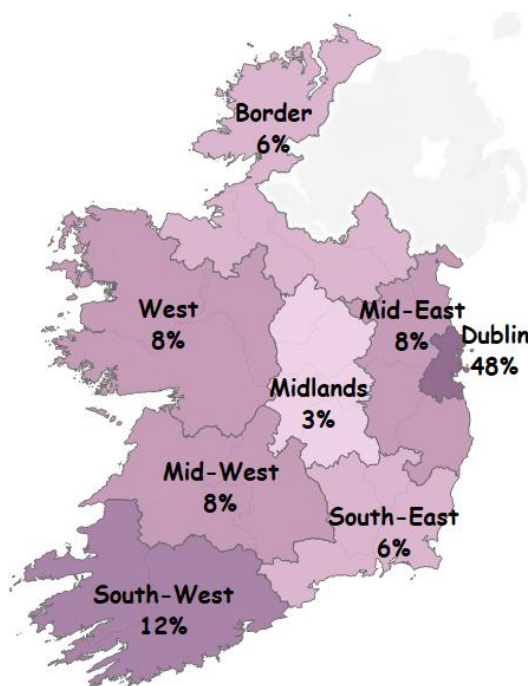
Table 6.2 SSBL awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	519	226	484	1,694	554	312	428	716	4,933
HE	1,775	1,002	2,544	15,676	2,216	2,573	1,724	3,587	31,097
Total	2,294	1,228	3,028	17,370	2,770	2,885	2,152	4,303	36,030

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 6.3 shows that of the total SSBL awards in 2024 (excluding 6,990 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (48%) followed by the South West (12%).

Figure 6.3 Share of SSBL awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

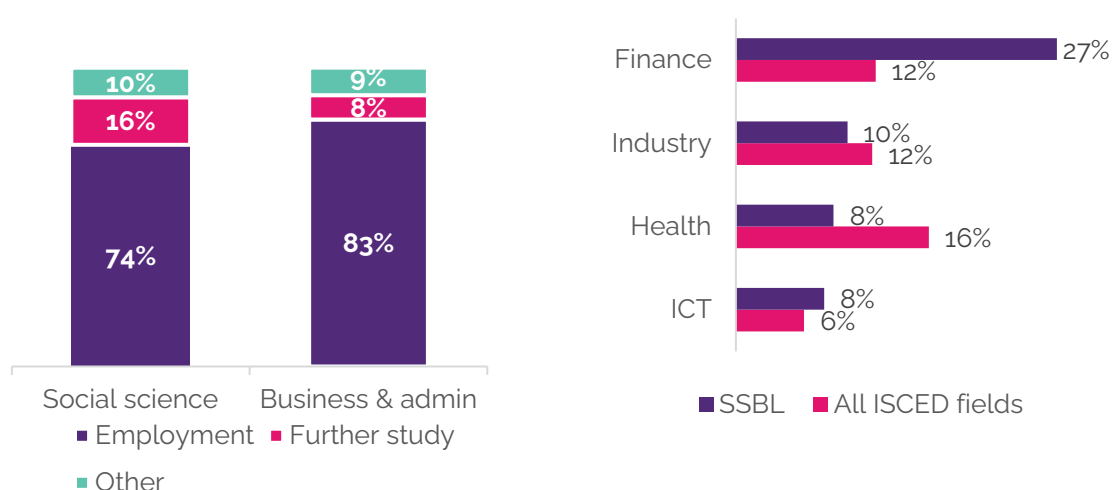
²¹ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region (including the 2,144 awards from professional bodies), which were excluded from this analysis.

Graduate outcomes for SSBL

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- Business and administration graduates were more likely than social science graduates to be in **employment** (at 83% and 74% respectively); this compares to the overall average across all fields of learning of 80% (Figure 6.4).
- More than one quarter (27%) of all SSBL graduates who were in employment were working in the **finance sector**, with a further 26% working in one of three sectors: industry, health or ICT.
- The share of employed SSBL graduates working in **high skilled occupations**,²² at 66.7%, was lower than that observed across all fields (73.5%), while the share in administrative occupations, at 12.3% was nearly twice the share observed across all fields of learning (6.6%).

Figure 6.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for SSBL graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Around three quarters of SSBL graduates were in either **employment only** or **employment and education** one year after graduation (74.4% for social science and 78.4% for business); these compare favourably to the average of 74% across all ISCED fields (Table 6.3),
- While the share of FET social science graduates in **employment only** was roughly half that across all fields of learning, the share for FET business & admin graduates, at 30.6%, was almost on a par with the overall average (30.8%).

²² High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

- The shares of FET social science (4.4%) and business & admin graduates (3.6%) who were **neither employed nor in education** were both lower than the average (5.2%).

Table 6.3 FET outcomes for SSBL graduates, 2021

	FET graduates; social science etc.	FET graduates business & admin	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	15.7%	30.6%	30.8%
Employment and education	58.7%	47.8%	43.2%
Education only	19.2%	15.4%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	4.4%	3.6%	5.2%
Not captured	2.1%	2.4%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

7. Health and Welfare

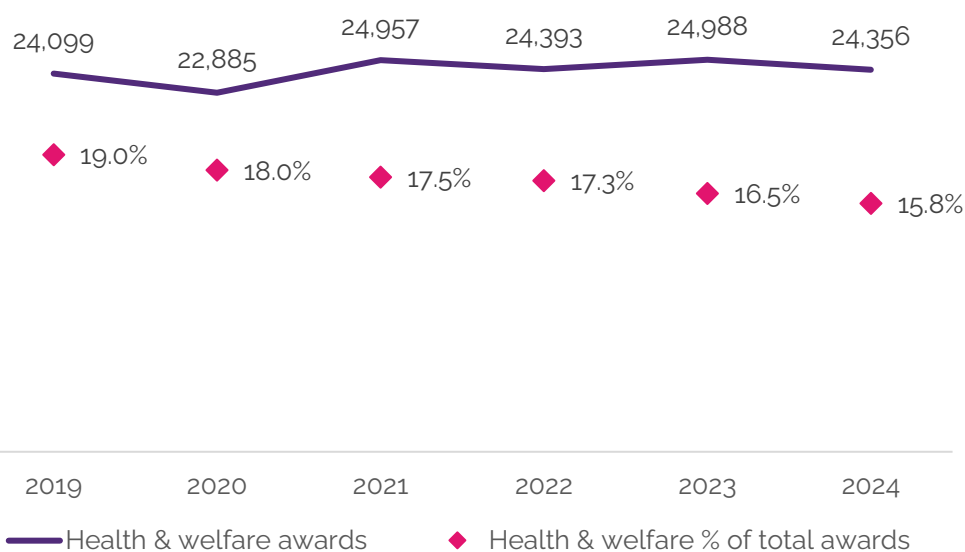
Key points

- In 2024, there were 24,356 awards in health and welfare, comprising 15.8% of total awards, the second largest after social science, business and law.
- Between 2019-2024, there was a small rise in the number of awards in this field (257 additional awards).
- In 2024, 68% of all awards in this field were from the higher education sector.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of higher education awards increased, while FET awards declined.
- In 2024, 38% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 16% in the South West region.
- Across all fields, health and welfare had the second highest share of graduates employed after graduating; 88% for HEA and 83.7% for FET graduates.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 24,356 awards in health and welfare subjects, a fall of 632 awards compared to the previous year 2023 (Figure 7.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the share of health and welfare awards out of total awards fell from 19.0% to 15.8%, despite a slight increase in the absolute number (+257 awards).

Figure 7.1 Health and welfare awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

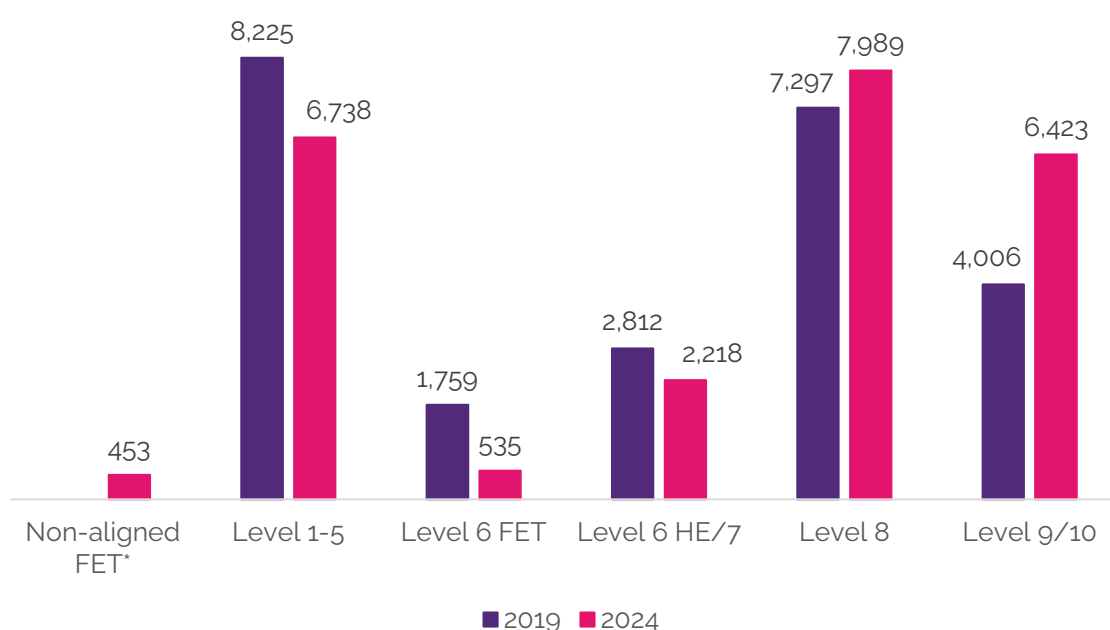


Source: HEA, QQI & SOLAS/ETBI

Health and welfare awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, over two thirds (68%) of health and welfare awards were from the higher education sector, with the largest number at level 8 (7,989 awards) (Figure 7.2).
- Between 2019-2024, the number of higher education awards in this field increased (except at NFQ level 7), with the largest rise at level 9/10 (+2,417 awards or +60%); of this increase, 869 were in nursing and midwifery.
- Of the postgraduate awards, 325 were for PhDs, an increase from 282 in 2019.
- Over the five-year period, 2019-2024, the number of FET awards fell (by 23%), with the largest absolute fall at level 5 (-1,665, or -20%), followed by level 6 (-1,224, or -70%). The declines appear to be related to childcare awards.²³

Figure 7.2 Health and welfare awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*There were no non-aligned FET awards in this field in the year 2019.

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

Nearly 6 out of 10 (59%) awards in this broad field were for health-related studies (e.g. medicine and nursing) and 41% for welfare-related subjects (e.g. social work, childcare etc); in 2024, the share of health awards increased from 53% in 2023, mostly due to a decline in welfare awards (1,888 fewer awards) (Table 7.1).

Nursing & caring: the majority of awards in nursing and caring (85%) were made in the higher education sector; typically at level 8 (2,487 awards), the minimum level requirement for entry to nursing occupations, closely followed by 2,301 awards at level

²³ The two main childcare related QQI awards (award codes 5M2009 and 6M2007) in this field of learning were deactivated in 2023 and replaced with the new Early Learning and Care awards, some of which were classified in the education field of learning and are examined later in this report in Section 10.

9/10 (+408 awards compared to 2023); a further 825 awards were made at level 5; captured in a separate detailed field of learning (welfare) were 2,922 level 5 awards in healthcare support (up from 2,334 awards in 2023).

Childcare and youth work: this detailed field includes awards made to those working (or intending to work) in early years education, among others; at levels 5 and 6, there were 1,060 awards in the FET sector and approximately 752 awards in the higher education sector, giving a total of **1,812** awards in 2024, a 59% decrease (2,621 fewer awards) compared to 2023.

Of note, under a separate field of learning (Education awards – examined in Section 10 of this report), there were a further **1,754** awards in early years education, comprising of:

- 712 level 5 and 6 awards in early learning and care
- 488 level 7 and 8 awards in early childhood care and education (including Montessori education)
- 554 level 6 awards (mostly for leadership/inclusion in early years settings).

This brings the total number of early childhood care and education related awards at levels 5-9 across the two broad fields of learning to 3,566 awards, which declined from 5,400 in 2023 (-34%).

Table 7.1 Health and welfare awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education				Total
	NFQ 1-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6	Non-aligned	NFQ 6	NFQ 7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Health, including	147	918	52	453	404	459	6,237	5,759	14,429
Medicine						108	1,555	942	2,605
Nursing & caring		825			32		2,487	2,301	5,645
Dental studies					84	77	105	33	299
Pharmacy		52			134	53	260	302	801
Welfare, including	60	5,613	483		694	661	1,752	664	9,927
Childcare & youth		900	241		437	242	690	79	2,589
Social work etc.					190	332	1,002	499	2,023
Total awards	207	6,531	535	453	1,098	1,120	7,989	6,423	24,356

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Health and welfare awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 93% of all health and welfare awards in 2024.²⁴ Table 7.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in this field were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (7,264 or a 44% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards in this field at 1,444 (or a 23% share).

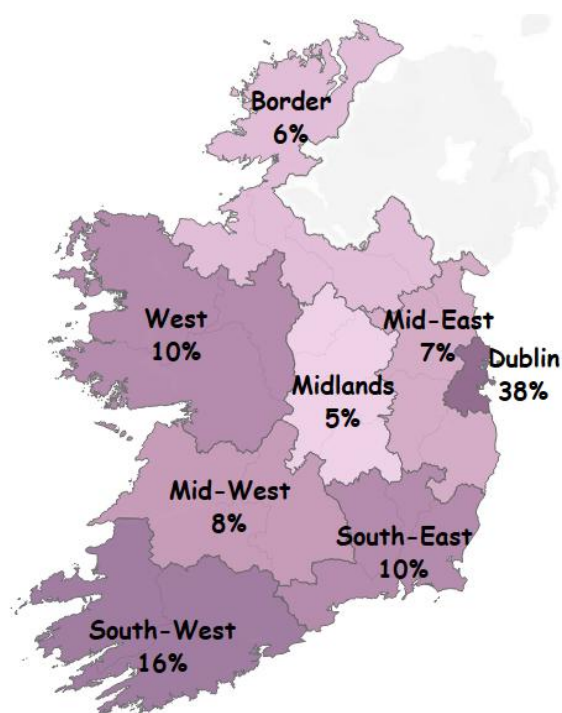
Table 7.2 Health and welfare awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	616	623	451	1,444	784	608	999	654	6,179
HE	688	406	1,738	7,264	902	1,165	1,306	2,975	16,444
Total	1,304	1,029	2,189	8,708	1,686	1,773	2,305	3,629	22,623

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 7.3 shows that of the total health and welfare awards in 2024 (excluding 1,733 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (38%) followed by the South West (16%).

Figure 7.3 Share of health and welfare awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

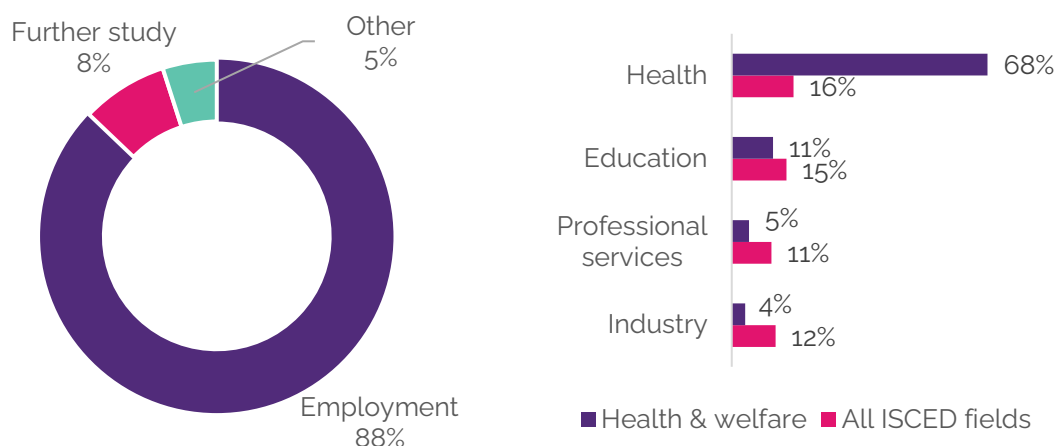
²⁴ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Graduate outcomes for health and welfare

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of health graduates in **employment**, at nearly 88%, was higher than the average (80%), and was the second highest (after education, at 92%) observed across all fields of learning; the share in **further study**, at 8%, was below the average across all fields of learning (11%) (Figure 7.4).
- More than two thirds of health graduates (68%) work in the **health sector**, with a further 11% in education.
- Nearly 83% of health graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,²⁵ the second highest share observed across all fields of learning, after education.

Figure 7.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for health and welfare graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Over four fifths (83.7%) of FET health graduates were in either **employment only** or **employment and education** one year after graduation, driven by a particularly high share in **employment only** (Table 7.3).
- The share in **education only** was less than half the average (8% compared to nearly 18% across all ISCED fields).
- At 4.8%, the share of FET health graduates who were **neither employed nor in education** was lower than the overall average of 5.2%.

²⁵ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Table 7.3 FET outcomes for health and welfare graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: health & welfare	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	42%	30.8%
Employment and education	41.7%	43.2%
Education only	8%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	4.8%	5.2%
Not captured	3.6%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

8. Services

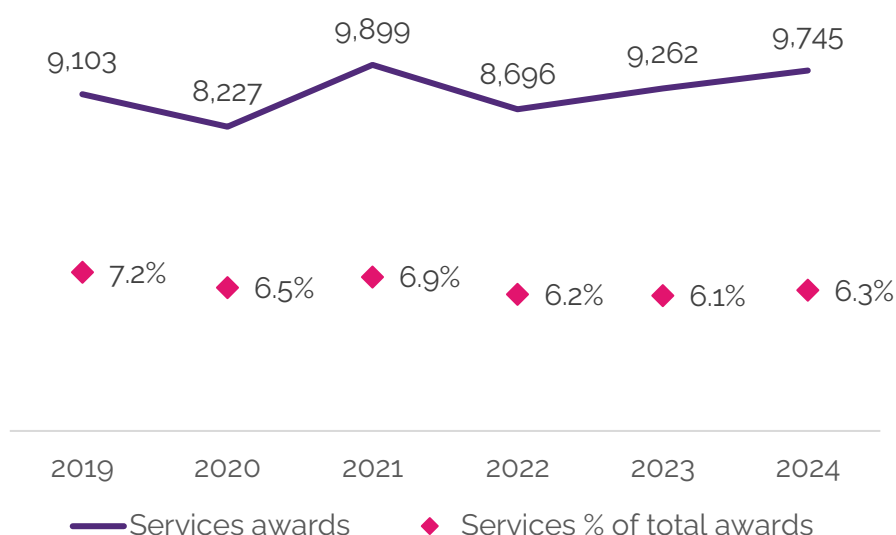
Key points

- In 2024, there were 9,745 services awards, which made up 6.3% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of services awards went up by 7% (+642).
- In 2024, almost three quarters (73%) of all services awards were from the FET sector, especially those not aligned to the NFQ (3,066).
- The detailed field with the highest number of services awards was transport services (at 2,153), with an increase of 114 awards for bus driving.
- In 2024, 22% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 18% in the South East region.
- Across all fields, services graduates had the third highest share of employment shortly after graduating; 86% for HEA and 81.9% for FET graduates.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 9,745 services awards, which made up 6.3% of the total awards during the year (Figure 8.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of services awards increased (+642 awards or +7%), although the share of total awards fell from 7.2% in 2019 to 6.3% in 2024.

Figure 8.1 Services awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

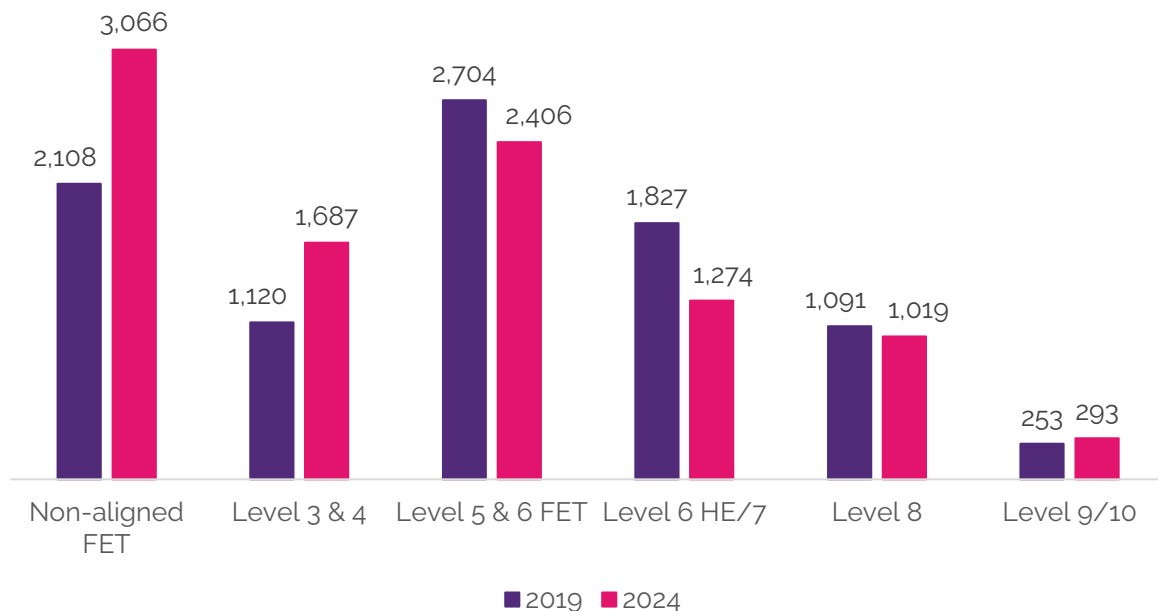


Source: HEA, QQI & SOLAS/ETBI

Services awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, nearly three quarters (73%) of all awards in this field were from the FET sector; at 3,066 awards, the highest number were not aligned to the NFQ, largely comprising of awards made by industry bodies (e.g. Road Transport Industry Training Board and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) (Figure 8.2).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the largest increase was for non-aligned FET awards, typically in transport services, with 958 additional awards (+45%).
- In addition, the number of level 5/6 FET and higher education awards (except for level 9/10) declined, where the largest fall was at level 6 HE/7 awards (-553) which was mostly attributed to fewer awards in customs clearance (which peaked at 667 in 2021, in the aftermath of Brexit, falling to 71 in 2024).

Figure 8.2 Services awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

In terms of detailed fields, transport services followed closely by hotel & catering, had the highest number of awards at approximately 2,153 and 2,050 respectively; combined these two detailed fields made up 43% of all services awards in 2024. In addition, sports was the third highest detailed field, at 1,736 awards (Table 8.1).

- **Transport services:** 91% of all transport awards were made in the FET sector; of the 1,905 non-NFQ aligned FET awards made in this detailed field, 782 awards were for driving skills (e.g. HGV, delivery driver) and a further 365 were for forklift operations. Also, between 2023 and 2024, the number of bus driving awards increased from 328 to 442 awards (114 additional awards).
- **Hotel & catering** awards were distributed between the FET (74%) and higher education (26%) sectors
 - within higher education over half (57%) of all hotel & catering awards were for culinary related programmes (a total of 301 awards)
 - in addition, there were 328 FET awards in culinary/professional cookery related areas²⁶
 - the majority of level 1-4 FET awards were at level 4 (1,076), largely for barista or bar service skills (951).
- More than one half of **sports** awards (57%) were made in the FET sector.
- **Occupational health and safety** awards in the FET sector related primarily to learners on First Aid Responder courses (687).
- **Security services:** the majority of awards in this field were from the higher education sector (86%); the number of level 6 higher education awards fell from 530 in 2022 to 111 in 2024, which was largely due to a decline of 386 awards for customs clearance in 2024.
- **Travel, tourism & leisure:** in 2024, the number of awards in this detailed field was at its lowest level of 412 awards over the five-year period, compared to a peak of 971 awards in 2020, with a year-on-year decline since 2021.

²⁶ This comprised of awards with the following words in the course title: culinary, cookery, catering, bakery/baking, patisserie and gastronomy.

Table 8.1 Services awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education				Total
	NFQ 1-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6 (FET)	Non-aligned	NFQ 6	NFQ 7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Personal services, inc	1,687	1,829	450	390	237	450	822	131	5,896
<i>Hair & beauty</i>	574	820	191	91	21				1,697
<i>Hotel, rest & catering</i>	1,081	175	91	178	175	193	127	30	2,050
<i>Sports</i>	32	688	159	110	18	179	464	86	1,736
<i>Travel, tourism, leisure</i>		146	9	11	44	75	113	14	412
Transport services		57	3	1,905	24	42	115	7	2,153
Security services		51	5		111	196	24	20	407
Occupational health & safety		11		771	49	165	158	135	1,289
Total awards	1,687	1,948	458	3,066	421	853	1,019	293	9,745

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Services awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 99% of all services awards in 2024.²⁷ Table 8.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in this field were made to learners at training providers in the South East region (596 or a 23% share), while Dublin had the highest number of further education awards at 1,559 (or a 22% share).

Table 8.2 Services awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

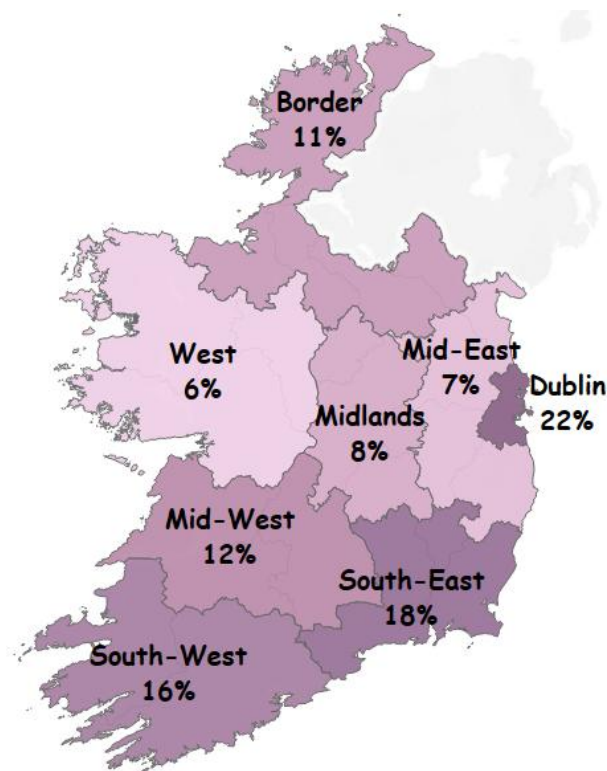
	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	689	686	408	1,559	575	891	1,127	1,137	7,072
HE	338	104	158	576	137	241	596	436	2,586
Total	1,027	790	566	2,135	712	1,132	1,723	1,573	9,658

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 8.3 shows that of the total services awards in 2024 (excluding 87 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (22%) followed by the South East (18%).

²⁷ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Figure 8.3 Share of services awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

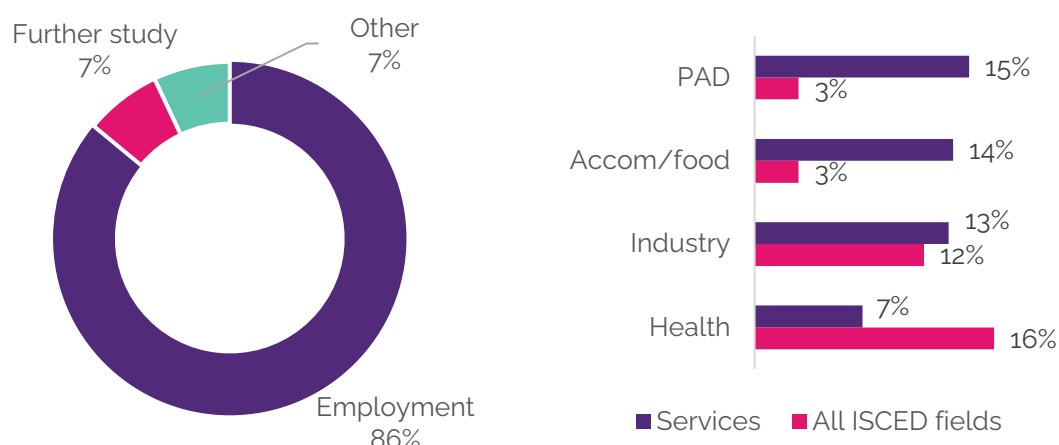
Graduate outcomes for services

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of services graduates in **employment**, at 86% was above average (80%); the share in **further study**, at 7%, was below the average (11%) observed across all fields of learning (Figure 8.4).
- Nearly one half of services graduates in employment worked in one of four **sectors**, with the highest share (15%) in public administration and defence (PAD), the second largest sector of employment was accommodation/food at nearly 14%.
- Nearly half (48%) of services graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,²⁸ the lowest share observed across all fields of learning and well below the overall average of 73.5%.

²⁸ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Figure 8.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for services graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Nearly 82% of FET services graduates were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation; this was the third highest share overall, after education (89.7%) and health (83.7%). This was driven by the higher-than-average share in employment only (42% compared to 30.8% overall) (Table 8.3).
- The share of FET services graduates (at 5.3%) who were **neither employed nor in education** was in line with the overall average of 5.2%.

Table 8.3 FET outcomes for services graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: services	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	42%	30.8%
Employment and education	39.9%	43.2%
Education only	10.4%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	5.3%	5.2%
Not captured	2.4%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

9. Agriculture and Veterinary

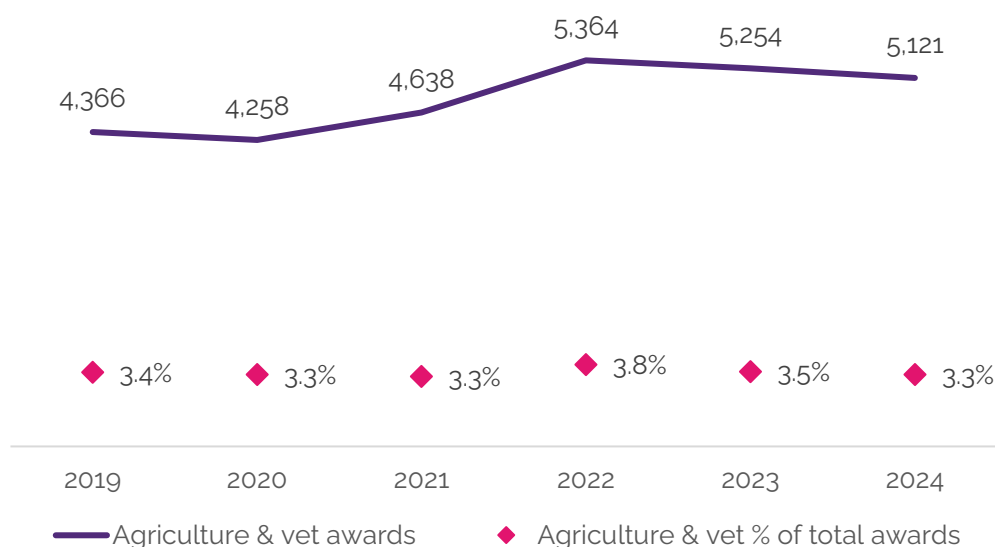
Key points

- In 2024, there were 5,121 agriculture awards, making up 3.3% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of agriculture awards increased by 17% (+755), although the figure declined more recently (from 2023 onwards).
- In 2024, 74% of agriculture awards were made in the further education sector, with the highest number at NQF level 5 (2,923).
- Nearly one quarter (24%) of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in the Mid-West region, followed by 16% in the South East in 2024.
- Agriculture graduates were more likely to be employed than average (all fields of learning); 85% of HEA graduates (2024) and 80.7% of FET graduates (2021).

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 5,121 agriculture awards, which represented 3.3% of total awards, making it the smallest field of learning in the year (Figure 9.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of agriculture awards increased by 17% (+755), although the figure declined more recently from 2023 onwards.

Figure 9.1 Agriculture & vet awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

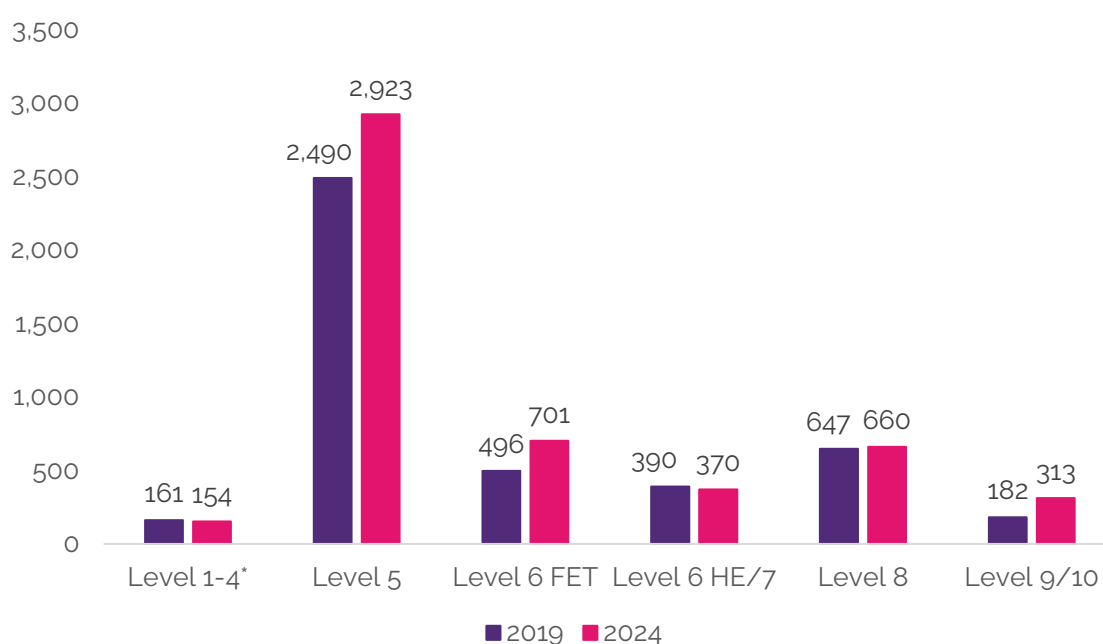


Source: HEA & QQI

Agriculture awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, nearly three quarters (74%) of agriculture awards were from the FET sector especially at level 5 (2,923), which was the second highest share across all fields of learning (after generic programmes at 94%) (Figure 9.2).
- Of the 3,778 FET awards, the highest number were awarded to learners who graduated from courses provided by their local education training board (ETB) (1,361) followed by Teagasc centres (1,255).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the biggest absolute increase was at NFQ level 5 (+433) followed by level 6 FET (+205), while level 9/10 awards also went up (+131).

Figure 9.2 Agriculture & vet awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA & QQI

*Excludes a small number (8) of Level 4 FET awards in the 'Other FET' category in 2024

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

Almost three quarters of all awards made in this field (71%) were for **agriculture** related studies (3,620); of these more than seven out of ten (75%) were made in the FET sector (Table 9.1). Many of these FET awards are likely to be related to the requirements for Government (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) payments.

Veterinary awards in the FET sector related mostly to animal care/horsemanship. In higher education, awards were mostly for veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing.

Compared to 2023, there were an additional 97 veterinary awards in 2024 (79 of which were at NFQ level 5).

Within the **horticulture and forestry** field, the vast majority of awards (432) were for horticulture related studies, 386 (89%) of which were made in the FET sector; forestry awards totalled 39 awards (FET & HE).

Table 9.1 Agriculture & vet awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET			Higher Education			Total
	NFQ 1-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6 (FET)	NFQ 6/7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Agriculture		2,169	558	238	421	234	3,620
Horticulture & forestry	149	164	88	40	30		471
Veterinary	5	590	55	92	212	76	1,030
Total awards	154	2,923	701	370	973		5,121

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Agriculture & vet awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 99% of all agriculture awards in 2024.²⁹ Table 9.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in this field were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (595 or a 44% share), while the Mid-West had the highest number of further education awards at 1,196 (or a 32% share).

Table 9.2 Agriculture & vet awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	542	62	577	193	223	1,196	580	353	3,726
HE	83	39	160	595	92	*	234	140	1,343
Total	625	101	737	788	315	1,196	814	493	5,069

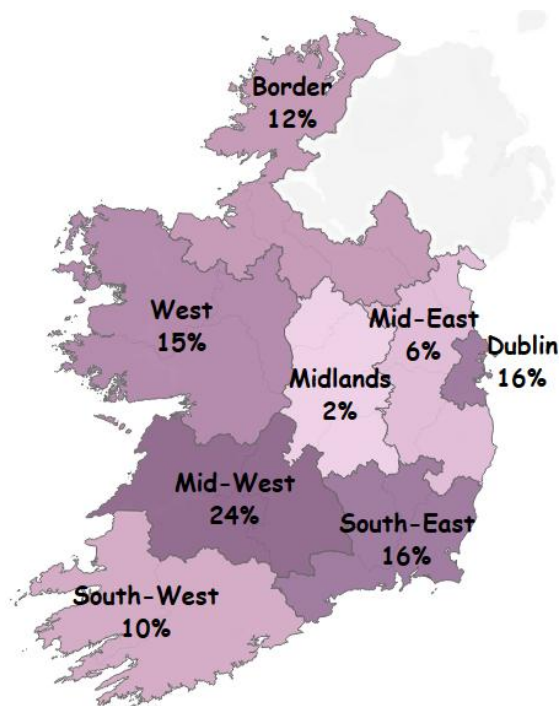
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*The number of awards were less than 5.

²⁹ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Figure 9.3 shows that of the total agriculture awards in 2024 (excluding 52 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in the Mid-West (24%) followed by the South East (16%) region.³⁰

Figure 9.3 Share of agriculture & vet awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Graduate outcomes for agriculture and vet

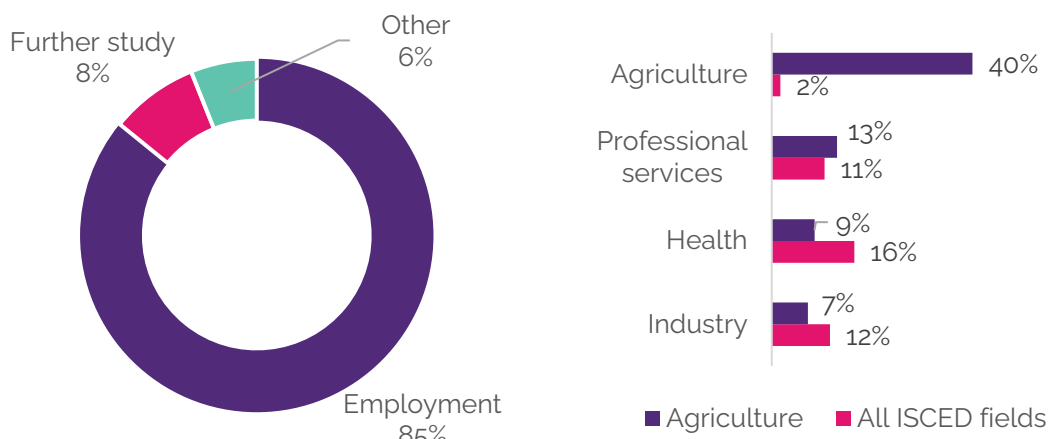
HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of agriculture graduates in **employment**, at 85%, was above average (80%); the share in **further study**, at 8%, was below the average (11%) (Figure 9.4).
- More than two thirds (69%) of agriculture graduates in employment worked in one of four **sectors**, with the largest share in agriculture (40%), followed by professional services (13%).

³⁰ Both the South East and Dublin regions had the same share of 16% in 2024 but the number of awards was higher in the South East (814) compared to Dublin (788).

- Approximately half of employed agriculture graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,³¹ well below the overall average of 73.5%. This is partly related to the fact that agriculture graduates have a higher than average share working in skilled trades occupations (e.g. farmers), at 13.7%, compared to 2.8% on average across all fields of learning.

Figure 9.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for agriculture graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Nearly 80.7% of FET agriculture graduates were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation, above the average of 74% (Table 9.3).
- The shares of FET agriculture graduates (at 5.2%) who were **neither employed nor in education** was in line with the overall average of 5.2%.

³¹ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Table 9.3 FET outcomes for agriculture graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: agriculture	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	34.7%	30.8%
Employment and education	46%	43.2%
Education only	10.3%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	5.2%	5.2%
Not captured	3.8%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

10. Education

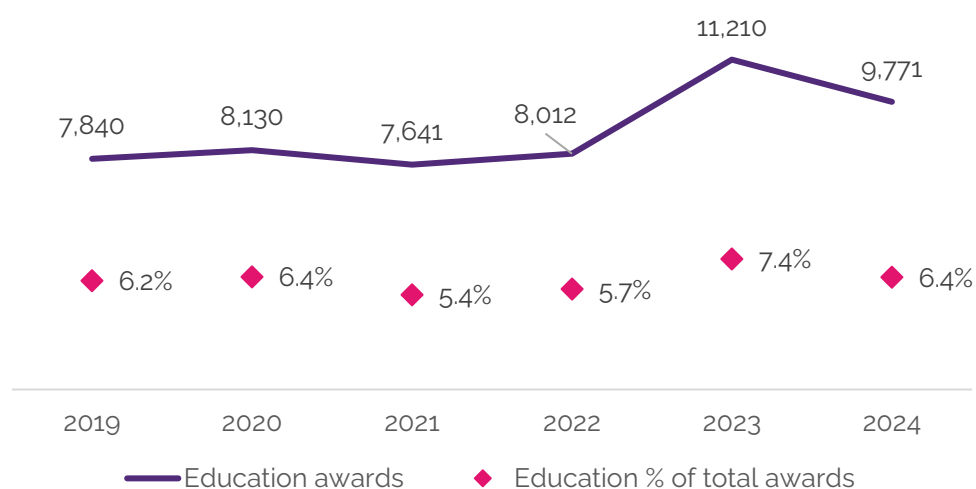
Key points

- In 2024, there were 9,771 education awards, making up 6.4% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of education awards increased by 25% (+1,931).
- In 2024, 91% of all education awards were made in the higher education sector.
- Awards made to learners at private, independent third level colleges accounted for 12% of all awards in this field.
- In 2024, 56% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 24% in the South West region.
- Nine out of ten education graduates were employed shortly after graduation, being the highest share across all fields of learning.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 9,771 education awards, which increased by 1,931 awards (+25%) compared to 2019 (7,840) (Figure 10.1).
- Over the five-year period, the number of education awards peaked at 11,210 in 2023,³² before falling to 9,771 awards in 2024; this one-year decline of 1,439 awards was the biggest absolute decrease across all fields of learning.
- Between 2019 and 2024, the share of education awards out of total awards remained stable at 6.4% in 2024 compared to 6.2% in 2019.

Figure 10.1 Education awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024



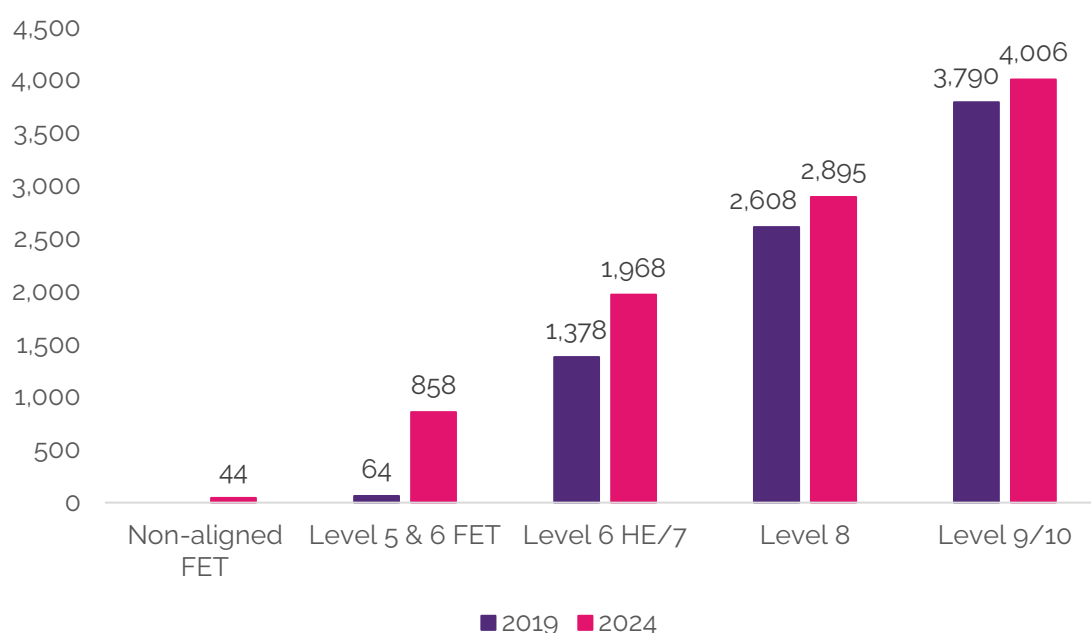
Source: HEA, QQI & SOLAS/ETBI

³² Two thirds (67%) of the total increase in education awards between 2022 and 2023 (+3,198) was due to 2,199 level 6 HEA awards for a Diploma in Continuing Education & Inclusive School Support, which comprised a training programme for Special Needs Assistants working in Irish schools. The number of awards for this programme fell to 835 in 2024.

Education awards by NFAQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, the majority of education awards (8,869) were made in the higher education sector (91%) (Figure 10.2).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards went up at all NFAQ levels, with the biggest absolute increase at level 5 & 6 FET (+794); this was largely due to the inclusion of 712 level 5 & 6 certificate awards in early learning and care.
- In 2024, more than two-fifths (41%) of all education-related awards were made at levels 9 or 10 (4,006), the highest share across all fields of learning. Of these, over 100 awards were level 10 awards,
- Learners at private, independent colleges accounted for nearly 12% of awards in this field (1,126), the vast majority at postgraduate level (88%).

Figure 10.2 Education awards by NFAQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI & SOLAS/ETBI

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

The highest number of awards in 2024 was for the **education not further defined or elsewhere classified** detailed field, which included courses in continuing education and inclusive school support, followed by the **teacher training with subject specialisation** field (Table 10.1).

Over half (56%) of the awards in the **training for pre-school teachers** sub-field (1,625) were made in the higher education sector (913) while a further 712 awards were in the

FET sector; these are in addition to the 1,812 early childhood care and education awards (FET and HE) which were captured earlier in this report in the health and welfare section.

The majority of the QQI-HE level 9/10 awards at private independent colleges were for Professional Master of Education in Primary Education (587) or Post-Primary Education (260), which had both decreased since the previous year by approximately 213 and 90 awards respectively.

Table 10.1 Education awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET		Higher Education				Total
	NFQ 5 & 6	Other FET	NFQ 6 (HE)	NFQ 7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Education n.e.c.	89	44	931	106	252	1,445	2,867
Education science	57		185		249	1,380	1,871
Training for pre-school teachers	712		554	96	263		1,625
Teacher training without subject specialization			44		1,103	300	1,447
Teacher training with subject specialization			52		1,028	881	1,961
Total awards	858	44	1,968		2,895	4,006	9,771

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Education awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 94% of all education awards in 2024.³³ Table 10.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in this field were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (4,836 or a 55% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards at 318 awards (or a 76% share).

³³ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Table 10.2 Education awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	30	*	*	318	18	*	21	33	420
HE	70	404**		4,836	596	2,234	203	492	8,835
Total	100	404		5,154	614	2,234	224	525	9,255

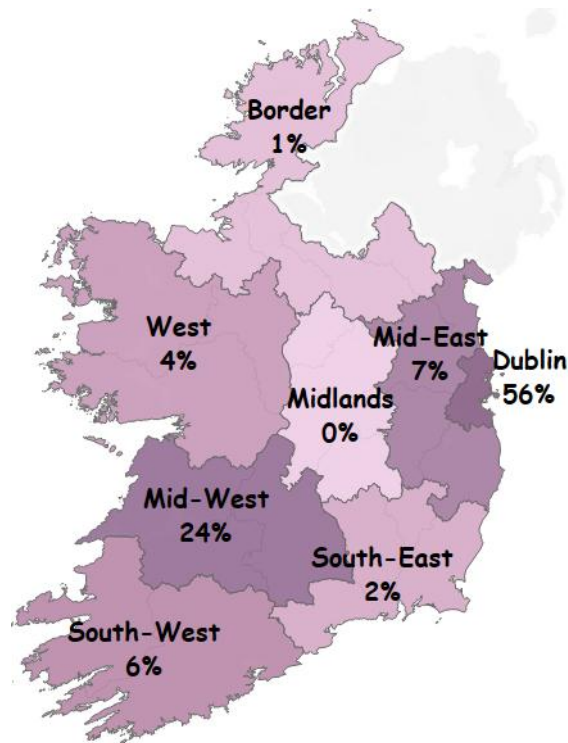
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*The number of awards were less than 5.

**The number of higher education awards in the Midlands and West were combined for confidentiality purposes.

Figure 10.3 shows that of the total education awards in 2024 (excluding 516 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (56%) followed by the Mid-West (24%).

Figure 10.3 Share of education awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



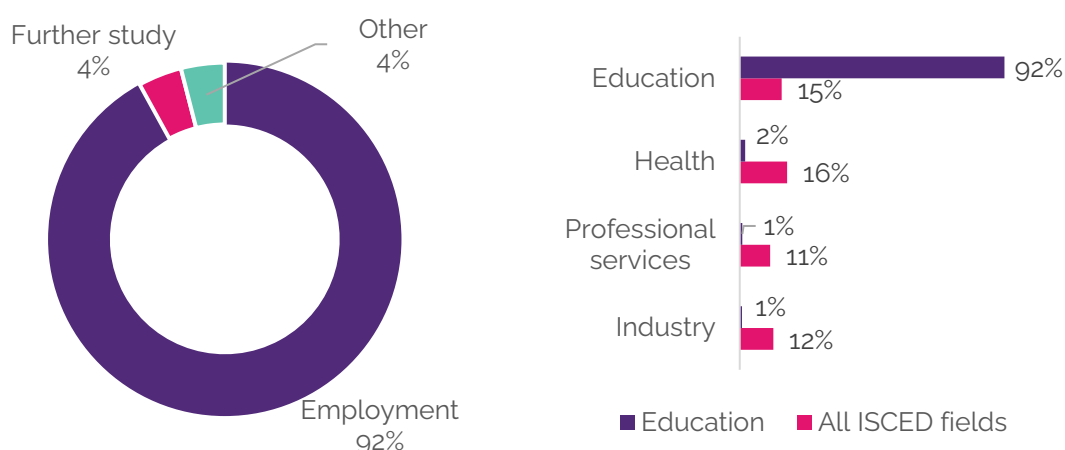
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Graduate outcomes for education

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of education graduates in **employment**, at 92% was higher than the average (80%), and was the highest observed across all fields of learning; the share in **further study**, at 4% was below average (11%) (Figure 10.4).
- The vast majority of education graduates (nearly 92%) in employment were working in the **education sector**. Combined, the next three largest sectors, health, professional services, and industry, made up less than 4%.
- Over 92% of education graduates worked in **high skilled occupations**,³⁴ the highest share observed across all fields of learning.

Figure 10.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for education graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Nearly 90% of FET education graduates were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation, the highest share across all fields; this was driven in part by a particularly high share (66.2%) engaged in both **employment and education**, rather than by those in **employment only** (which, at 23.5% for education graduates, was below the average of 30.8%) (Table 10.3).

³⁴ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

- The shares of FET education graduates (at 2.9%) who were **neither employed nor in education** was lower than the overall average of 5.2%.

Table 10.3 FET outcomes for education graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: education	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	23.5%	30.8%
Employment and education	66.2%	43.2%
Education only	7.4%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	2.9%	5.2%
Not captured	0%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

11. Arts and Humanities

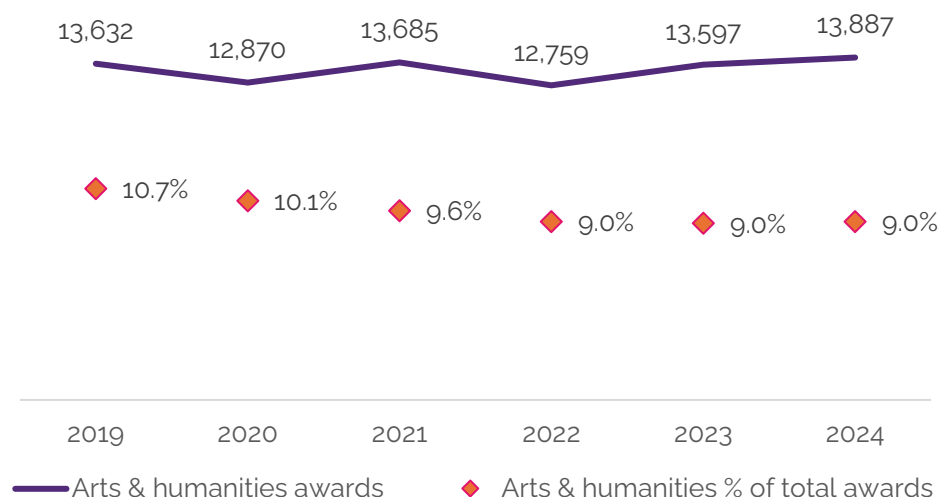
Key points

- In 2024, there were 13,887 arts and humanities awards, which made up 9.0% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of awards went up slightly by 2% in this field.
- In 2024, two thirds (66%) of all awards were from the higher education sector, although the share of FET awards increased from 31% in 2019 to 34% in 2024.
- In 2024, 41% of all awards in this field were made to learners in educational institutions in Dublin, followed by 16% in the South West region.
- Across all fields, arts and humanities graduates were least likely to be in employment but most likely to take up further study (both HEA and FET).

Number of awards, 2019-2024

- In 2024, there were 13,887 arts and humanities awards, which made up 9.0% of the total awards in the year (Figure 11.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of arts and humanities awards increased slightly (+255 awards or +2%), while the share of total awards fell from 10.7% in 2019 to 9.0% in 2024.

Figure 11.1 Arts & humanities awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

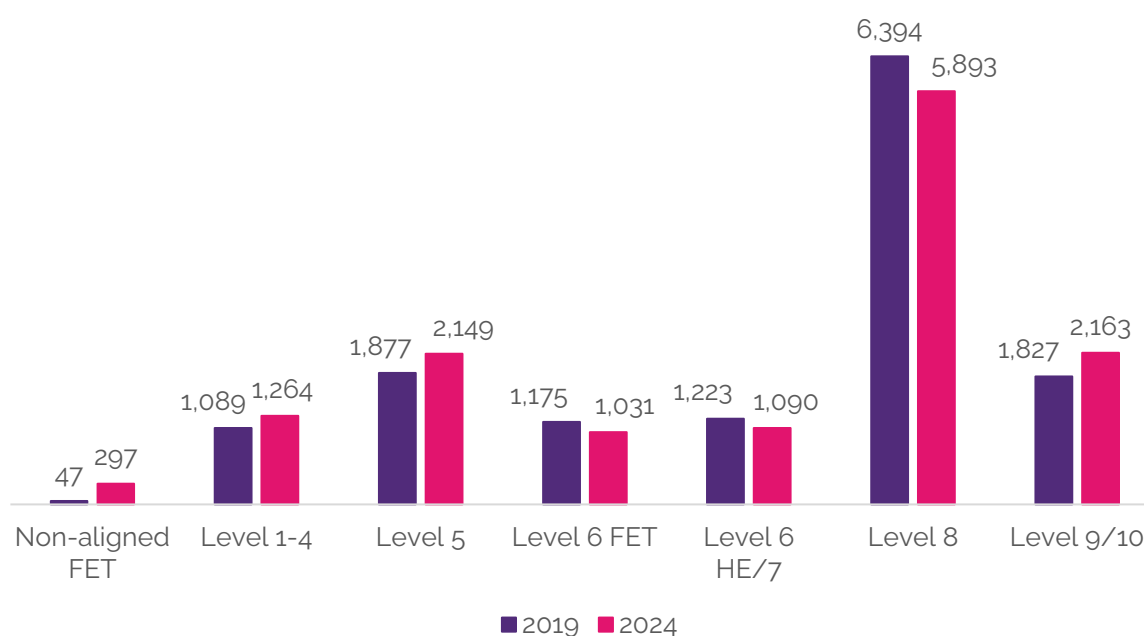


Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Arts and humanities awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, two thirds (66%) of all awards were from the higher education sector, with the highest number at NFQ level 8 (5,893) (Figure 11.2).
- Over the period 2019-2024, the largest absolute decline was for level 8 awards (-501); as a result, their share of total awards fell from 47% to 42%.
- The share of FET awards increased from 31% in 2019 to 34% in 2024.
- Unlike most other fields of learning, more than half of level 6 FET awards (52%) were made, not by QQI, but by other bodies (e.g. Pearson), whose awards are aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications, via their inclusion on the UK National Qualifications Framework.

Figure 11.2 Number of arts & humanities awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI & SOLAS/ETBI

How do the 2024 awards breakdown by detailed field?

- Almost one third of awards (4,350) were in the **arts and humanities not elsewhere classified** field, where the subject was not specified (e.g. Master of Arts or BA (Hons) degree) or may span both arts and humanities subjects (e.g. history and music) (Table 11.1). Most of these awards (3,079) were in the higher education sector, 84% of which were at level 8.
- **Audio-visual and media** awards were split more evenly between the FET (53%) and higher education (47%) sectors and included areas such as film studies, TV production, music technology, radio/sound production and digital media.

- There were 288 awards for courses with the word **animation** in the title. These awards were all under the audio-visual and media detailed field and included 94 non-QQI awards made to learners in the FET sector.
- There were 215 awards for studies in **graphic design** across the FET and higher education sectors. Also, there were 97 graphic design awards in the ICT field (detailed in Section 4) which were non-NFQ aligned FET awards.
- Over half (54%) of all awards under the **fine arts** detailed field (including music, performing arts and handicrafts) were made in the FET sector (1,576).
- Almost all awards in **humanities** related fields (i.e. history, philosophy and languages) were in the higher education sector, except for 297 non-aligned FET awards in languages, mostly for learners of English as a second language.

Table 11.1 Arts and humanities awards by NFQ level and detailed field, 2024

2024 awards	FET				Higher Education				Total
	NFQ 1-4	NFQ 5	NFQ 6 (FET)	Non-aligned	NFQ 6 (HE)	NFQ 7	NFQ 8	NFQ 9/10	
Arts & humanities n.e.c.	1,264	7			80	34	2,573	392	4,350
Audio-visual & media		1,020	466		60	176	886	190	2,798
Fashion, interior and industrial design		71	40		120		397	76	704
Fine arts, music & performing arts (inc. handicrafts)		1,051	525		10	135	902	294	2,917
History & archaeology					53	83	266	310	712
Philosophy & religion					89		101	115	305
Languages (inc acquisition, literature & linguistics)				297	75	175	768	786	2,101
Total awards	1,264	2,149	1,031	297	1,090		5,893	2,163	13,887

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Arts and humanities awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 99% of all arts and humanities awards in 2024.³⁵ Table 11.2 shows that the largest number of higher education awards were made to learners at training providers in the Dublin region (3,968 or a 44% share). Dublin also had the highest number of further education awards in this field at 1,609 (or a 35% share).

³⁵ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

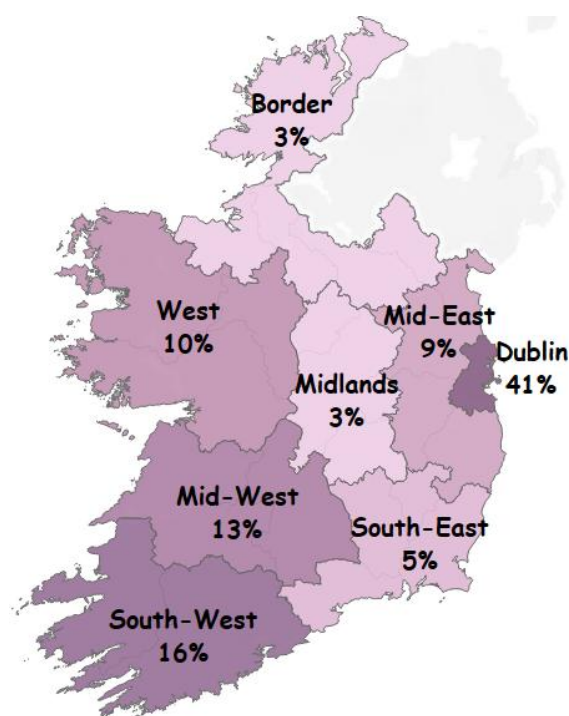
Table 11.2 Arts and humanities awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	229	360	252	1,609	551	429	417	769	4,616
HE	186	94	1,161	3,968	638	1,343	318	1,386	9,094
Total	415	454	1,413	5,577	1,189	1,772	735	2,155	13,710

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Figure 11.3 shows that of the total arts and humanities awards in 2024 (excluding 177 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in Dublin (41%) followed by the South West (16%).

Figure 11.3 Share of arts & humanities awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



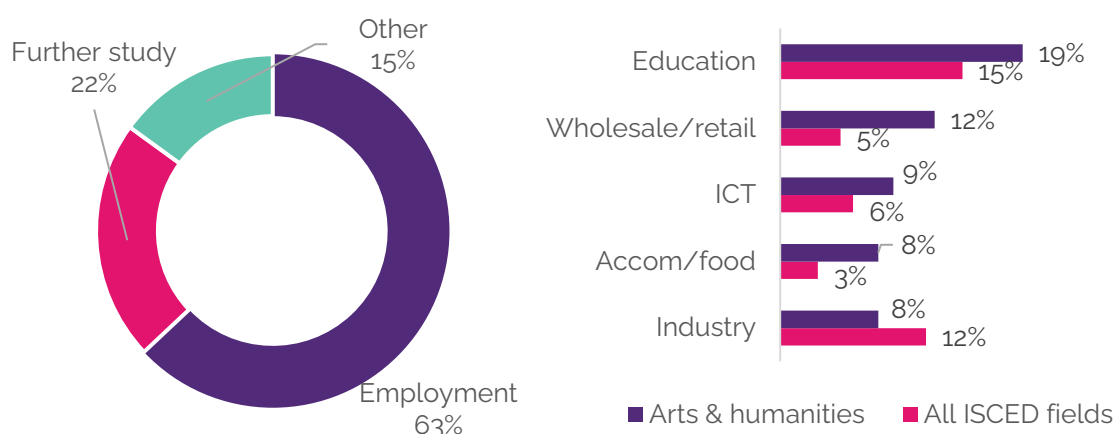
Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Graduate outcomes for arts and humanities

HEA outcomes – 2024 graduates

- The share of arts/humanities graduates in **employment**, at 63%, was well below the average (80%), and was the lowest observed across all fields of learning; in contrast the share in **further study**, at 22%, was double the average (11%), and the highest across all fields of learning (Figure 11.4).
- Arts/humanities graduates in employment were spread across a range of **sectors**, with the highest share in education (nearly a fifth).
- Nearly half (49.6%) of arts/humanities graduates who were in employment worked in **high skilled occupations**,³⁶ this is among the lowest shares observed across all fields of learning (only services had a lower share at 48%).

Figure 11.4 Outcomes and sector of employment for arts and humanities graduates, 2024



Source: HEA Graduate Outcome Survey 2024

FET outcomes - 2021 graduates

- Nearly 62% of FET arts/humanities graduates were in either **employment only or employment and education** one year after graduation, which was one of the lowest shares across all fields of learning (except generic) (Table 11.3).
- In contrast, FET arts/humanities graduates had one of the highest shares in **education only** at 28.4%; only generic programmes had a higher share (62.7%).
- The share of FET arts/humanities graduates (at 6.7%) who were **neither employed nor in education** was higher than the average of 5.2%, and again except for generic, was the highest for all fields of learning.

³⁶ High skilled occupations include managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Table 11.3 FET outcomes for arts and humanities graduates, 2021

	FET graduates: arts & humanities	FET graduates: all ISCED fields
Employment only	20.1%	30.8%
Employment and education	41.6%	43.2%
Education only	28.4%	17.8%
Neither employed nor in education	6.7%	5.2%
Not captured	3.2%	2.9%

Source: CSO (Table FEO02)

12. Generic Programmes

Key points

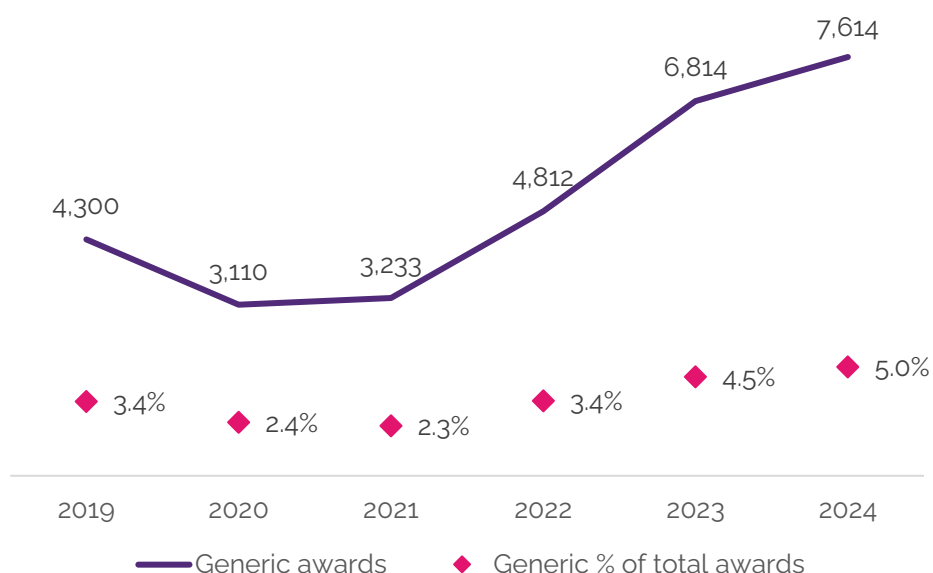
- In 2024, there were 7,614 generic awards, which made up 5% of total awards.
- Between 2019-2024, the number of generic awards increased by 77% (+3,314).
- In 2024, the majority (94%) of all generic awards were from the FET sector.
- Almost one fifth (19.2%) of all awards were made to learners in educational institutions in the South East region, closely followed by 18.9% in Dublin in 2024.

Number of awards, 2019-2024

The generic programmes field of learning is the second smallest field in the FET and higher education system (after agriculture), largely because most education/training programmes beyond the Leaving Certificate focus on a particular subject or group of subjects.

- In 2024, this field made up 5% of total awards, with 7,614 awards (Figure 12.1).
- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of awards made for generic programmes increased by 77% (+3,314), with most of the rise (60%) occurring between 2022 and 2023 (+2,002).

Figure 12.1 Generic programme awards and share of total awards, 2019-2024

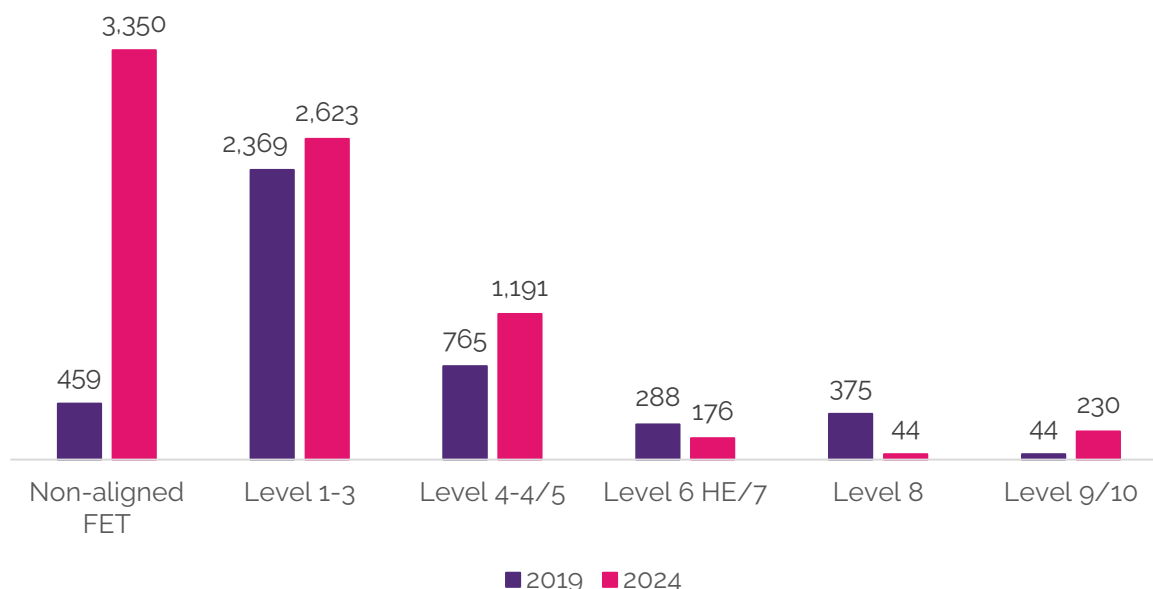


Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

Generic programme awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024

- In 2024, more than two fifths of all awards in this field were not aligned to the NFQ, and a further third (34%) were made at levels 1-3 (Figure 12.2).
- Between 2019 and 2024, most of the increase in generic awards was due to the FET sector, especially the growth in non-aligned FET awards (+2,891), which comprised of Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) awareness courses for which general assessment awards were made (rather than construction-related awards). In contrast the number of awards in the higher education sector declined over the five years, except at NFQ level 9, which went up by 186 awards.³⁷
- In 2024, QQI-FET awards made up over one third (36%) of all generic awards (similar to 37% in 2023) and were largely for general learning and employability skills.

Figure 12.2 Generic programme awards by NFQ level, 2019 and 2024



Source: HEA, QQI-FET & SOLAS/ETBI

³⁷ Level 9 awards in this field included courses on workplace wellness (64) and climate entrepreneurship (42); which may be due to some field classification issues where some awards captured under personal skills development could arguably be categorised elsewhere (e.g. business).

Generic programme awards by region, 2024

Regional data was available for 97% of all generic programme awards in 2024.³⁸ Table 12.1 shows that the largest number of higher education awards in this field were made to learners at training providers in Dublin (327 or a 73% share), while the South East had the highest number of further education awards at 1,350 (or a 20% share).

Table 12.1 Generic programme awards by sector and NUTS 3 region, 2024

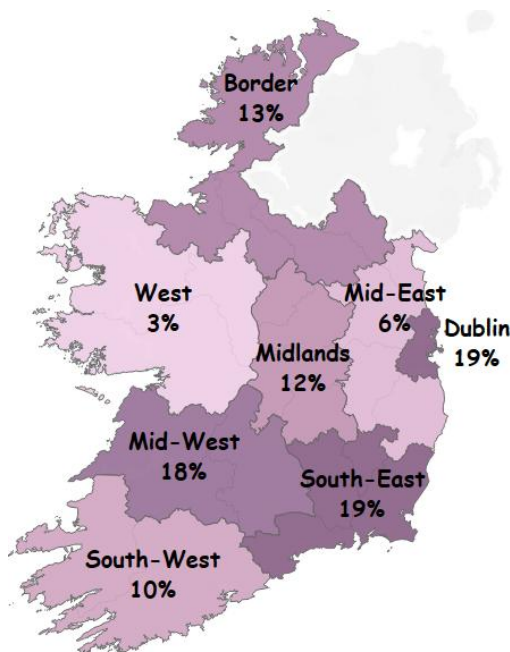
	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-East	Mid-West	South East	South West	Total
FET	969	892	201	1,062	424	1,253	1,350	748	6,899
HE	*	*	*	327	*	64	58	*	449
Total	969	892	201	1,389	424	1,317	1,408	748	7,348

Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

*The number of awards were less than 5.

Figure 12.3 shows that of the total generic awards in 2024 (excluding 265 where the region is not available), the highest share were for education institutions located in the South East (19.2%) closely followed by the Dublin (18.9%) region.

Figure 12.3 Share of generic awards by NUTS 3 region, 2024



Source: HEA, QQI, SOLAS/ETBI

³⁸ The regional breakdown is based on the location of the education provider by county using the NUTS 3 regional classification. It includes HEA, QQI-HE, QQI-FET and PLSS FET awards. A small number of awards were made to learners studying online or at centres with locations in more than one region, which were excluded from this analysis.

Appendix

ISCED levels of education and associated NFQ award levels

Table A1 shows the formal ISCED levels, the typical programmes in Ireland that correspond to these levels, the name of the award typically (but not exclusively) associated with completion of a programme, as well as the award's NFQ level. As can be seen, some award levels span more than one sector (e.g. awards at level 4 and 5 are available in both the secondary school system and the further education and training (FET) system). Similarly, awards at level 6 span the FET and higher education system. Where relevant, and where the data allows, in addition to presenting awards by NFQ level, we also provide an indication of the sector (e.g. level 6 (FET) or level 6 (higher education) qualifications).

Table A1 ISCED levels of education and associated awards and award levels

ISCED 2011 Level	Corresponds to:	Typical award	Award NFQ Level
0 Pre-primary education	Early Start and other pre-primary	QQI Certificate	Level 1/2
1 Primary education	Primary education		
2 Lower secondary	2nd level education – Junior Cycle	Junior Certificate	Level 3
3 Upper secondary	2nd level education – Senior Cycle	Leaving Certificate	Level 4
			Level 5
4 Post-secondary non-tertiary	Craft apprenticeship, PLC courses, other FET ³⁹	QQI Level 5 Cert	Level 6
		QQI Advanced Certificate	
5 Short-cycle tertiary education	Third level – higher cert./university diploma /new post 2016 apprenticeship	Higher Certificate	
6 Bachelors degree or equivalent	Third level – ordinary & honours bachelor degree Higher diploma New post-2016 apprenticeship	Ordinary Degree	Level 7
		Honours Degree	Level 8
		Higher Diploma	Level 8
7 Masters degree or equivalent	Third level – master's degree, postgrad. certs/diplomas new post -2016 apprenticeship	Postgraduate Diploma Master's degree	Level 9
8 Doctor or equivalent	PhD	PhD	Level 10

³⁹ Some FET programmes (e.g. some specific skills training) also lead to awards at level 3 or 4 on the NFQ.

Private independent colleges whose learners received QQI–HE awards in 2024

Dublin Business School

Griffith College

National College of Ireland

Hibernia College

CCT College Dublin

Dorset College

IICP Education and Training Limited

Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences Limited

Carlow College, St. Patrick's

Independent Colleges

Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

ICD Business School

The Open Training College

Children's Therapy Centre

Setanta College

Galway Business School

International College for Personal and Professional Development

The American College, Dublin

Gaelchultúr

Dublin Institute of Design

Clanwilliam Institute

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