

This is FET Facts and Figures 2024

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learning works



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

**Further
Education
& Training**

A Report by the
Data Analytics Unit
July 2025

Authors

Amelia Dulee-Kinsolving
Selen Guerin

All data is sourced from the Programme and Learner Support Systems (PLSS) database. PLSS collects and processes the personal data of the FET learners who are enrolled in SOLAS funded programmes. This report excludes apprenticeship and eCollege provision.

The Data Analytics Unit would like to acknowledge the assistance of the ETB staff involved in submitting data to SOLAS.

All FET Facts and Figures data can be downloaded in accessible formats, (csv, Json-stat, PX, and XLSX) on the CSO's PxStat Open Data Platform: <https://data.cso.ie/product/SOL>.

FET Statistics

Enrolments

230,007



Learner Completions

181,011



Learner Certified Completions

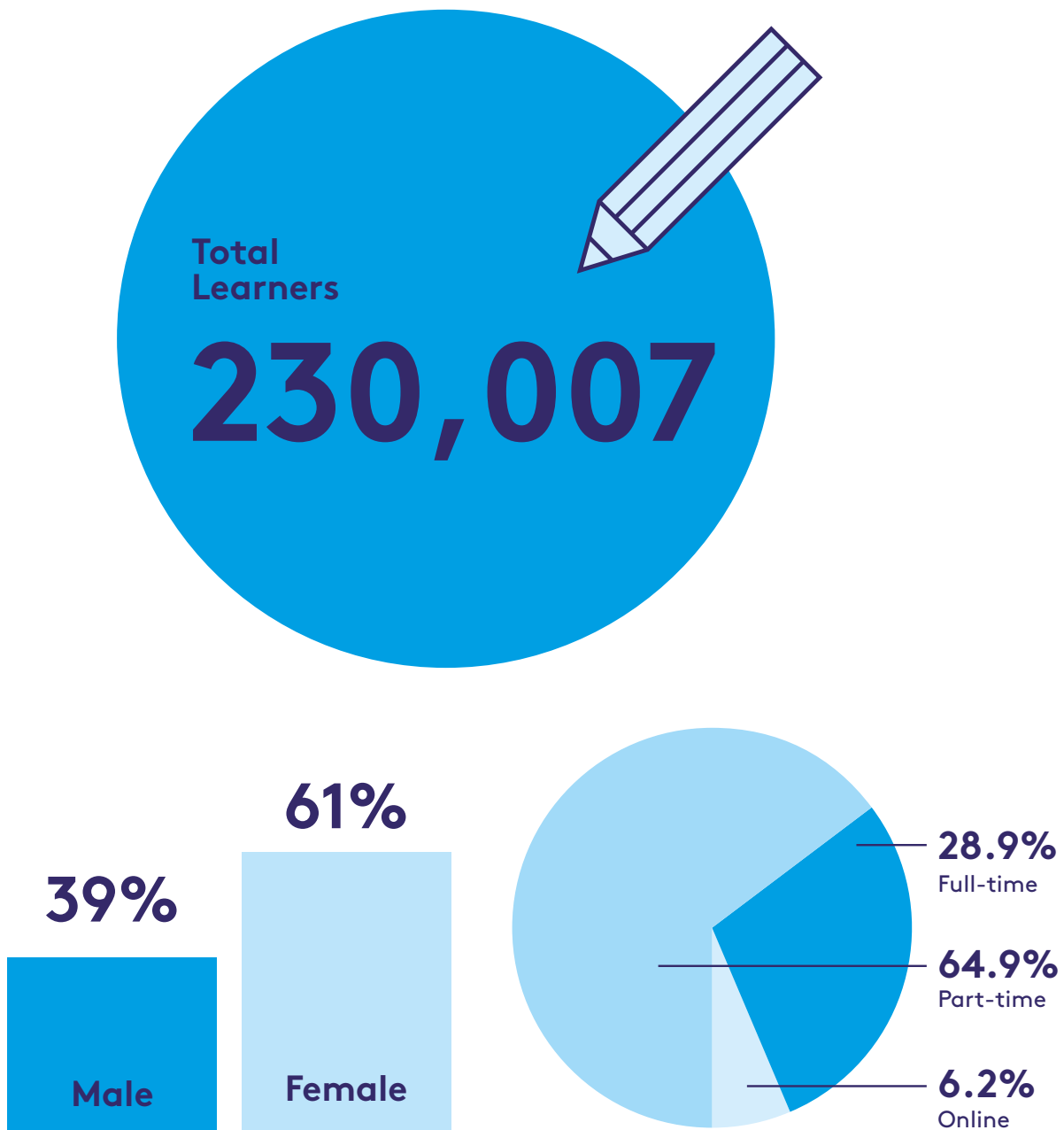
108,065

In 2024, 230,007 unique learners were enrolled in FET courses. Of these enrolments, 181,011 learners partially or fully completed their course(s). Of the 181,011 learner completions, 108,065 of these learner completions were certified.

Enrolments

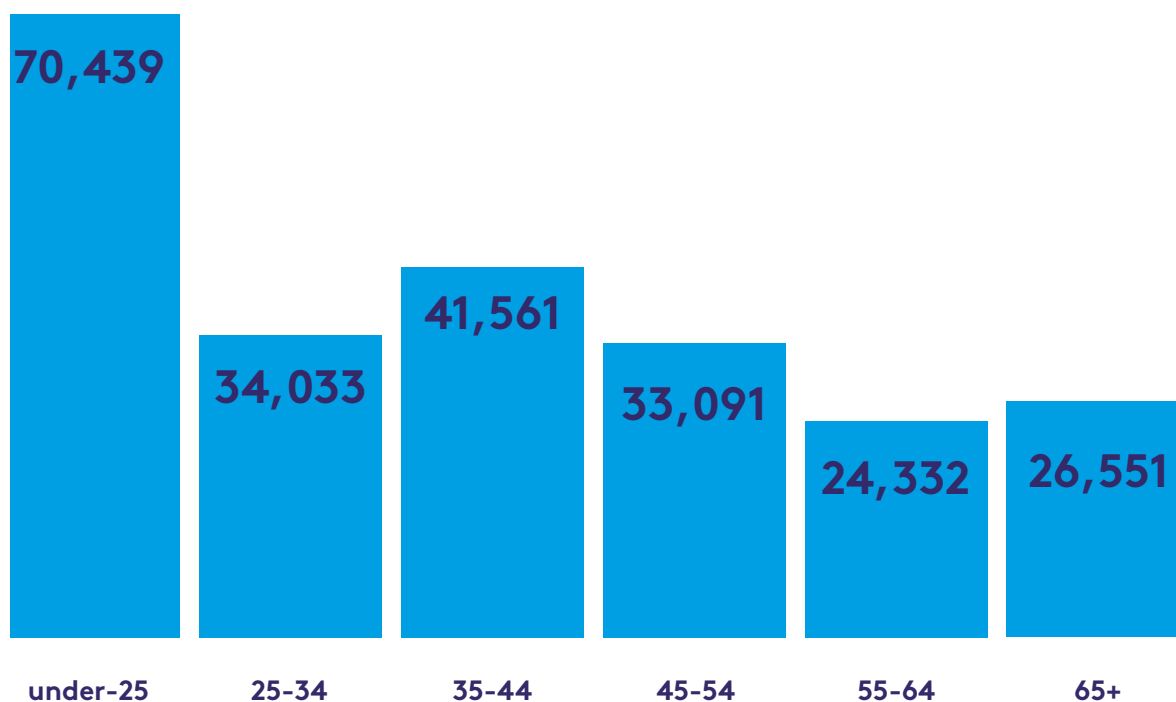


Enrolments



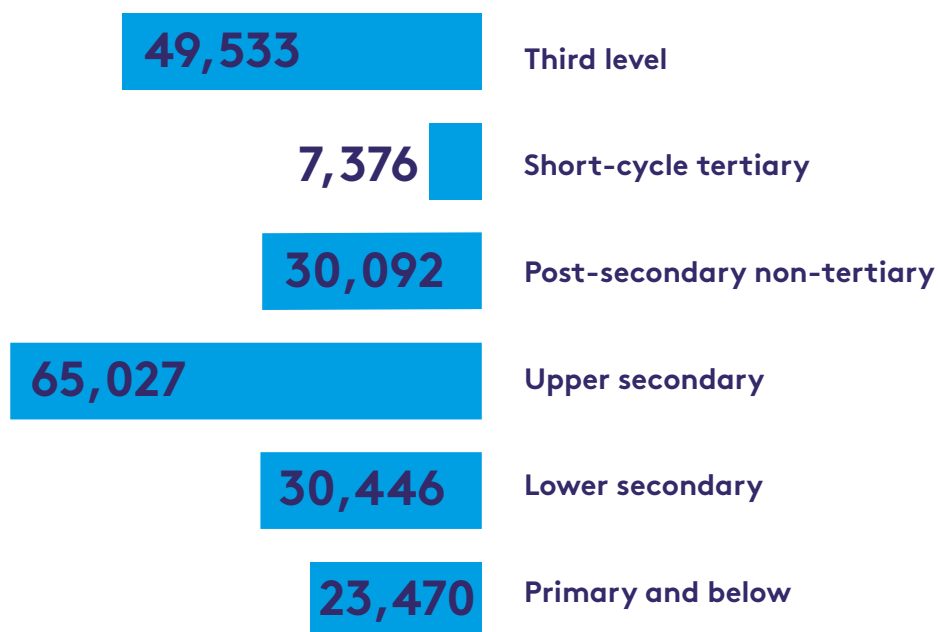
In 2024, there were 230,007 learner enrolments. Of these learner enrolments, 61% were female and 39% were male. The distribution of enrolments was higher among part-time courses (64.9%), than full-time courses (28.9%), with a small percentage (6.2%) also undertaking online courses.

Start Age



Enrolments were primarily concentrated among the under-25s, representing over one third of all enrolments in 2024.

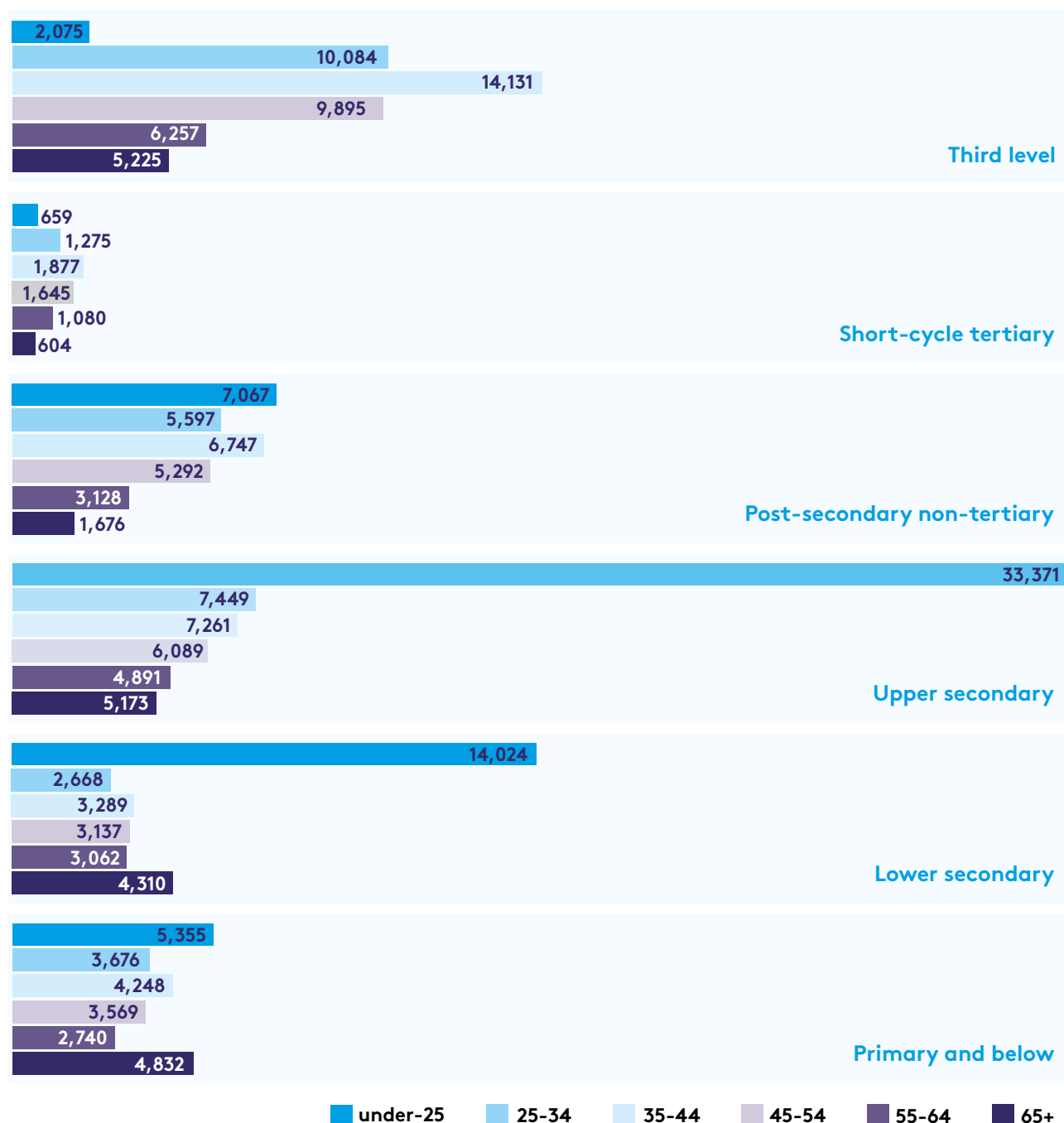
Highest Level of Formal Education¹



In 2024, 53,916 (26.3%) of learners had a lower secondary education or below when enrolling in an FET course, whereas 65,027 (31.6%) learners had an upper secondary education. The figure also shows that 30,092 (14.6%) of learners had a post-secondary non-tertiary education, an education group primarily comprised of individuals enrolled in FET level 4-6 courses (e.g. Post Leaving Certificate and Back to Education Initiative). In addition, the figure shows that 7,376 (3.6%) learners had a short-cycle tertiary education and 49,533 (24%) learners had a third level degree education.

¹ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous levels of education were captured.

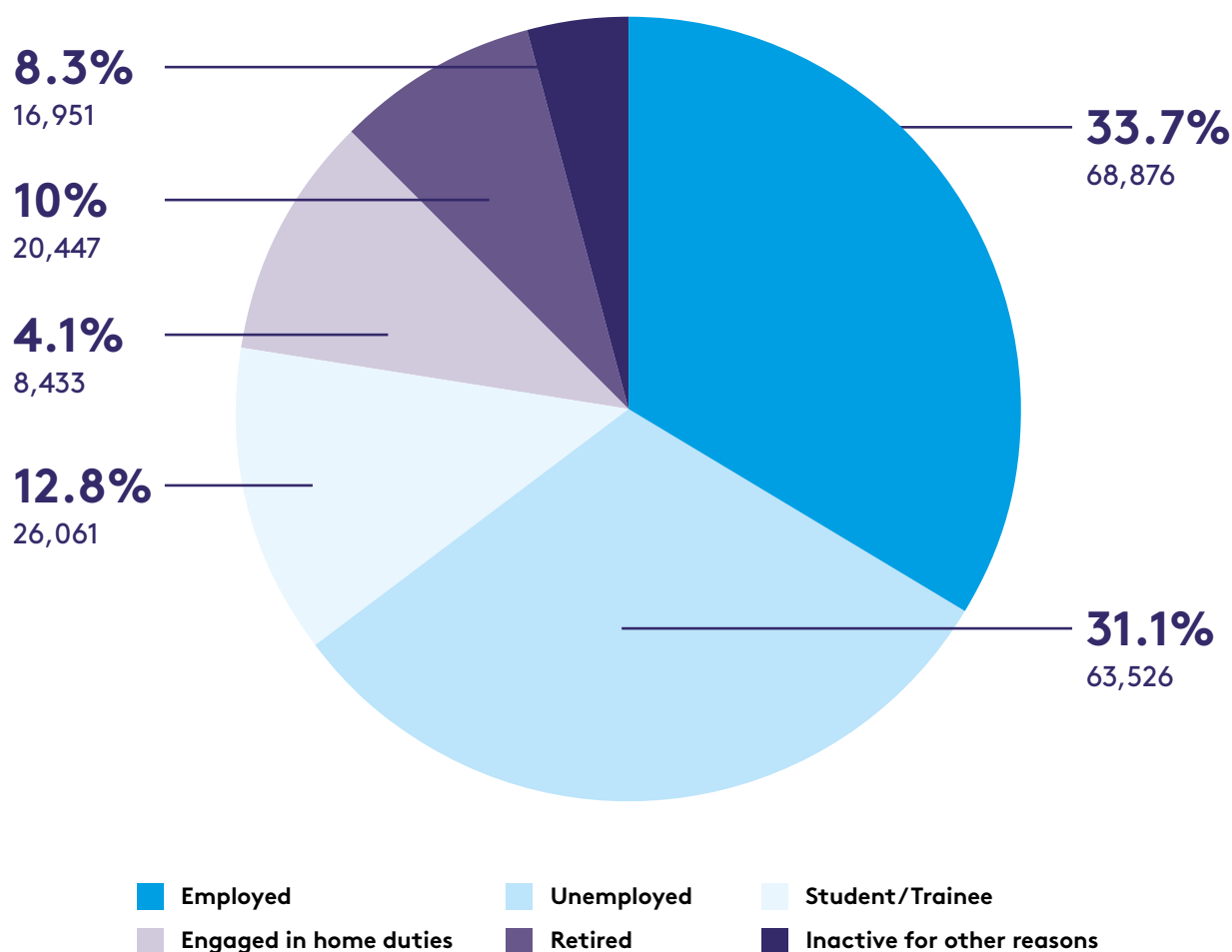
Highest Level of Formal Education by Start Age²



The under-25 age group had the highest concentration among upper secondary, lower secondary and primary and below levels of education prior to enrolment, whereas the 35-44 age group had the highest concentration among those learners with post-secondary non-tertiary and those learners with third level education. For short-cycle tertiary non-degree education, the age groups were distributed relatively evenly.

² It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous levels of education and age were captured.

Principal Economic Status³



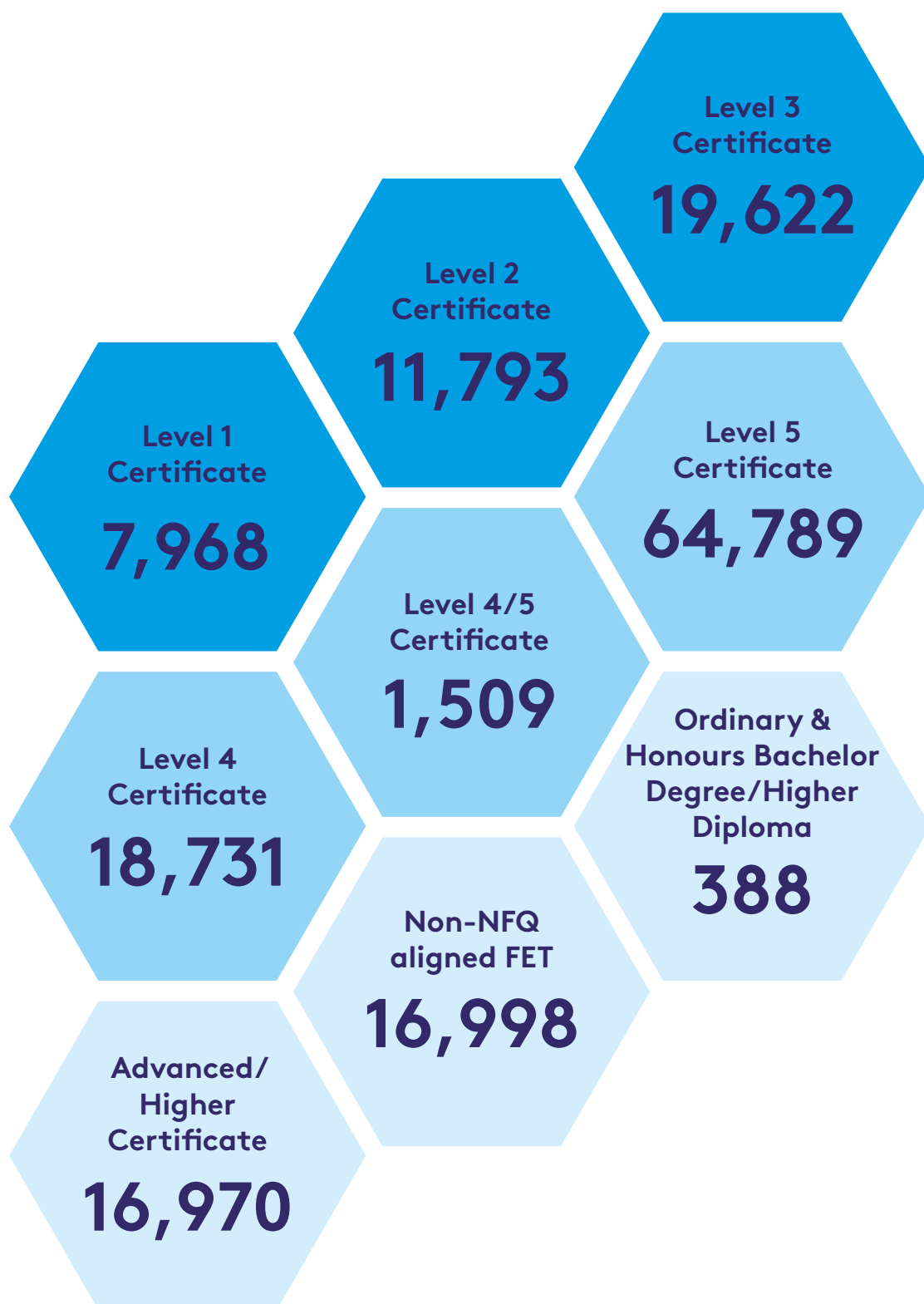
In 2024, 31.1% of learners were unemployed prior to enrolment, while 33.7% were employed. The remaining 35.2% of learners were inactive prior to enrolment.

Of those learners who were unemployed, 49.5% were long-term unemployed.⁴

³ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous principal economic status was captured. The principal economic status response rate for learner enrolments was 88.8%.

⁴ It should be noted that this only captures those cases where the previous start date of principal economic status was captured.

Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or Equivalent⁵



⁵ This excludes learners enrolled in courses that do not lead to an award through a recognised awarding body.

Programme Category

	Programme Category ⁶	Learners
Full-time	Blended Training	1,115
	Bridging and Foundation Training	754
	Community Training Centres	2,382
	Justice Workshop	161
	Local Training Initiatives	1,893
	PLC ⁷	47,479
	Specialist Training Providers	2,763
	Specific Skills Training	13,663
	Tertiary ⁸	375
	Traineeship Employed	844
	Traineeship Training	3,157
	VTOS Core ⁹	3,098
	Youthreach	4,870
Part-time	Adult Literacy Groups	34,153
	BTEI Groups	22,579
	Community Education	46,360
	ESOL	38,335
	Evening Training	9,991
	FET Cooperation Hours	2,193
	FET Pathways from School	5,584
	ITABE	509
	Libraries Training	8
	Other Funding	3,961
	Recognition of Prior Learning	207
	Refugee Resettlement	167
	Skills for Work	2,446
	Voluntary Literacy Tuition	157
Part-time & Full-time	Skills to Advance ¹⁰	17,288
Online	e-Learning	2,890
	eCollege ¹¹	2,838

Among full-time programmes, enrolments were concentrated among Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, Specific Skills Training and Youthreach programmes. For part-time programmes, enrolments were concentrated among Community Education, ESOL, and Adult Literacy Groups. In addition, there were 17,288 learners enrolled in the part-time and full-time programme Skills to Advance.

⁶ Learners here are unique within programmes, but not necessarily across programmes.

⁷ PLC courses run on an academic year, whereas this figure includes two groups of starters from two academic years. Therefore, this figure for PLC courses is higher than that of a normal academic year.

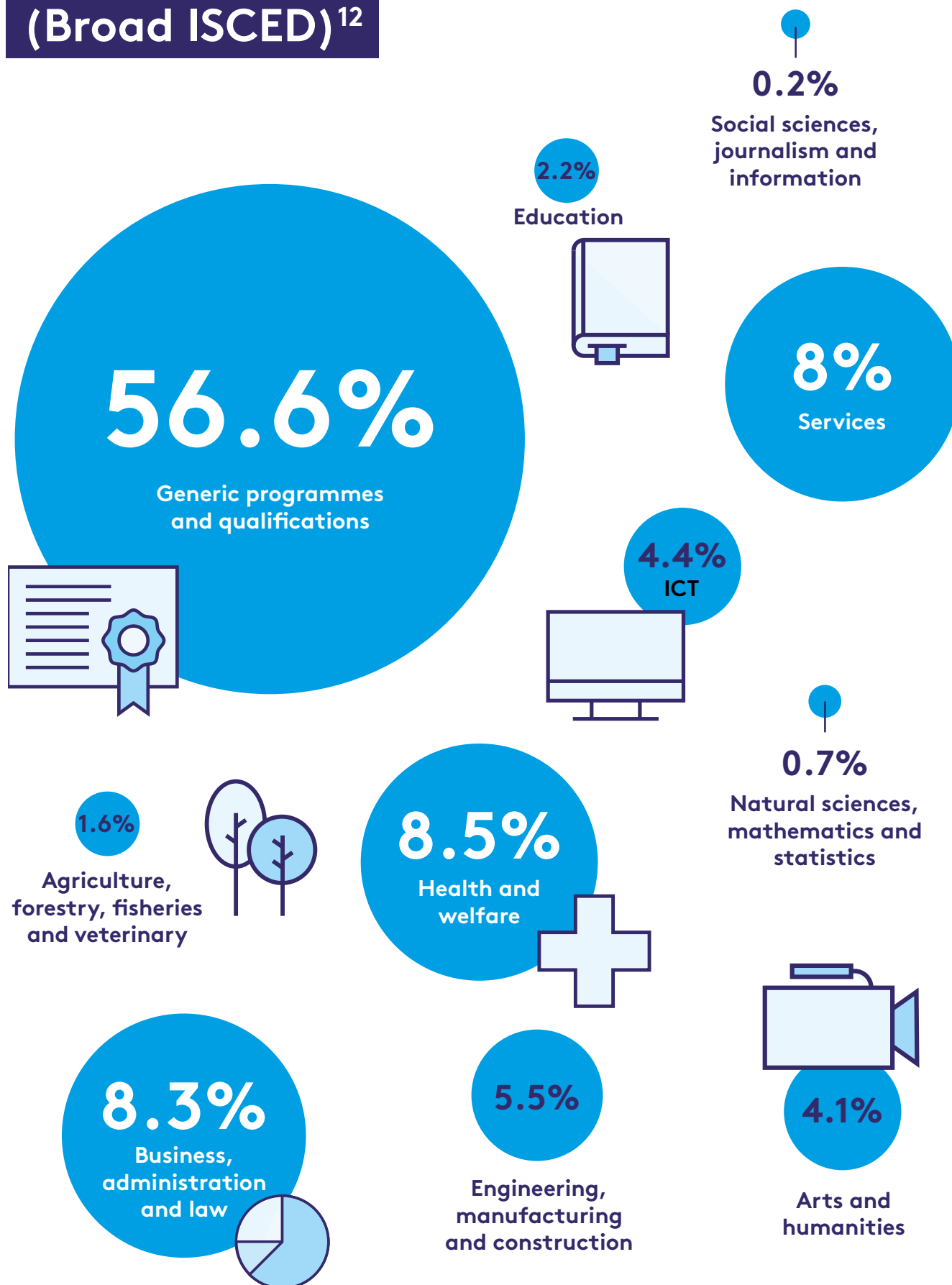
⁸ For further detail on tertiary degrees see: <https://nto.heai.ie/about/>, contact info@nto.ie.

⁹ This only includes learner enrolments in VTOS Core direct provision.

¹⁰ This only includes learner enrolments in Skills to Advance direct provision.

¹¹ Only includes learners who were referred to eCollege by an ETB.

Field of Study (Broad ISCED)¹²



¹² Field of study is defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

Field of study (Broad ISCED)	Examples of courses
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Animal care
	Horticulture
Arts and humanities	Art, craft and design
	Animation (creative media)
Business, administration and law	Business studies
	Business administration
Education	Early learning and care
	Special needs assisting
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Construction - NZEB/retrofit
	Environmental sustainability awareness
Generic programmes and qualifications	Yoga
	Art
	English language skills
	Cookery
ICT	Software development
	Computer science
Health and welfare	Applied social studies
	Nursing studies
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	Pre-University biomedical and pharmaceutical science
	Pre-University science
Services	Beauty therapy
	Barista skills
Social sciences, journalism and information	Cultural and heritage studies
	Journalism, digital relations, and public relations

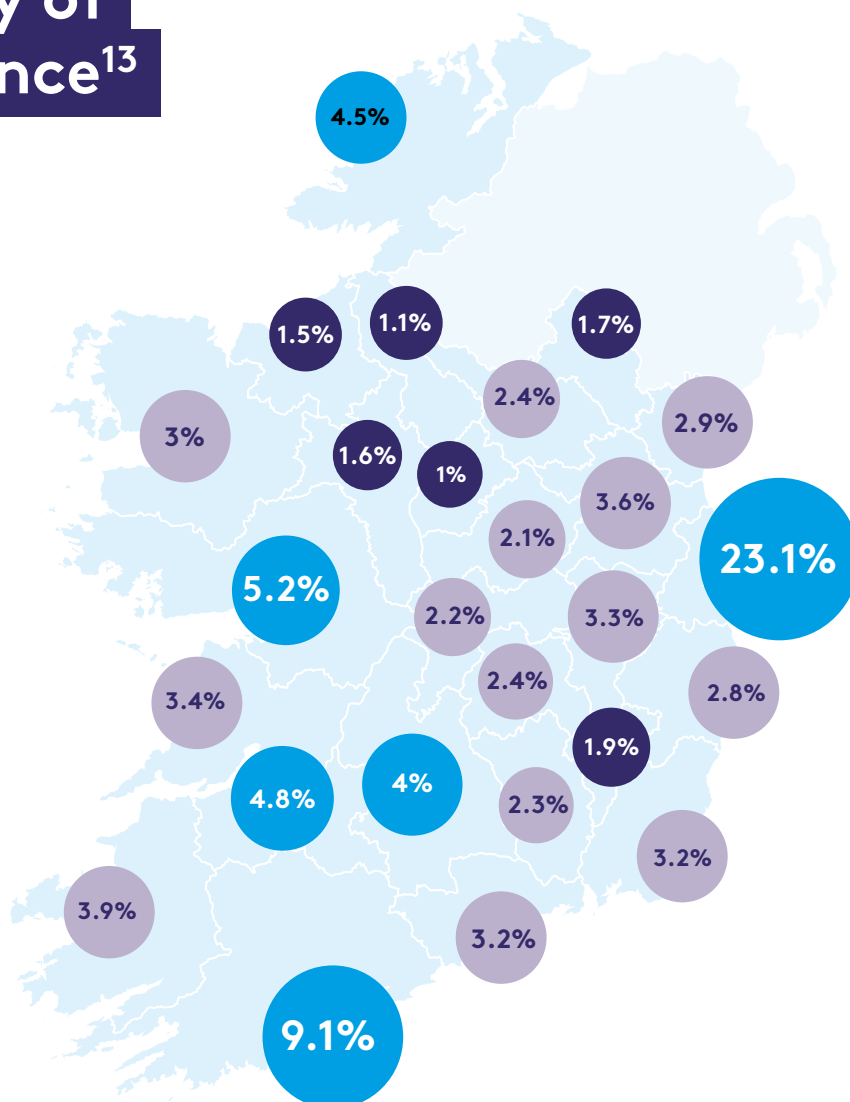
Field of Study (Broad ISCED) by Delivery Type

	Full-time	Part-time	Online	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	2,639	970	0	3,609
Arts and humanities	8,210	1,269	0	9,479
Business, administration and law	8,568	7,167	3,282	19,017
Education	2,372	2,179	518	5,069
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	5,975	5,916	652	12,543
Generic programmes and qualifications	11,863	113,406	2,548	127,817
Health and welfare	10,519	8,272	758	19,549
ICT	3,953	2,664	3,410	10,027
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	1,331	59	225	1,615
Services	10,680	7,395	2,792	20,867
Social sciences, journalism and information	376	39	0	415
Total	66,486	149,336	14,185	230,007

Overall, enrolments were primarily concentrated among the generic programmes and qualifications ISCED field of study, representing close to half (56.6%) of all enrolments in 2024. This was followed by health and welfare (8.5%), business, administration and law (8.3%) and services (8%).

For full-time learner enrolments, generic programmes and qualifications and services had the highest numbers of learners. In addition, services and health and welfare also had high numbers of full-time enrolments. For part-time learner enrolments, generic programmes and qualifications had the highest numbers of learners. This was followed by health and welfare and services. Among online learner enrolments, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) had the highest number of learners. This was followed by business, administration and law and services.

County of Residence¹³

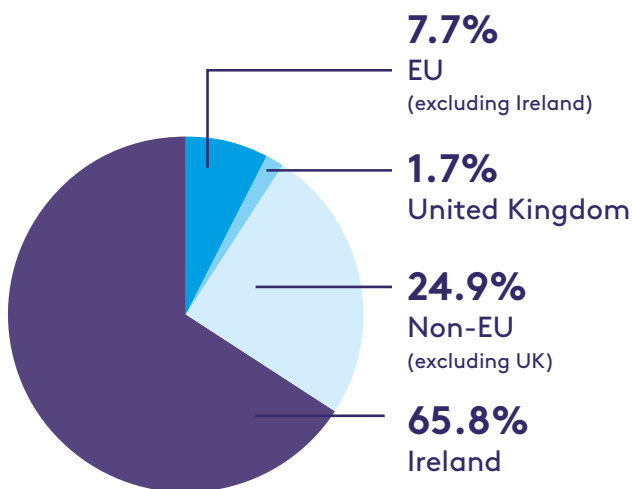
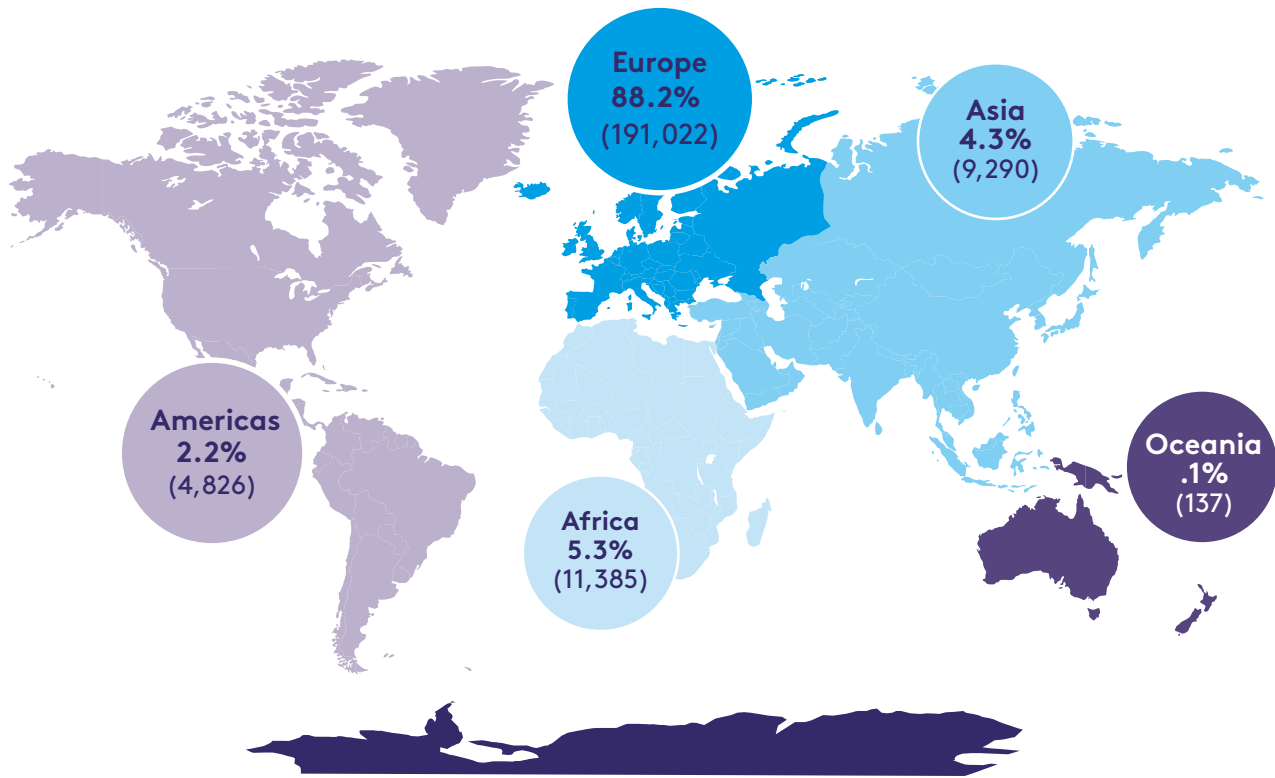


Carlow	4,405	1.9	Longford	2,139	0.9
Cavan	5,416	2.4	Louth	6,659	2.9
Clare	7,698	3.4	Mayo	6,944	3.0
Cork	20,856	9.1	Meath	8,331	3.6
Donegal	10,201	4.5	Monaghan	3,879	1.7
Dublin	52,946	23.1	Offaly	5,004	2.2
Galway	11,909	5.2	Roscommon	3,747	1.6
Kerry	9,025	3.9	Sligo	3,451	1.5
Kildare	7,449	3.3	Tipperary	9,049	4.0
Kilkenny	5,352	2.3	Waterford	7,430	3.2
Laois	5,562	2.4	Westmeath	4,728	2.1
Leitrim	2,416	1.1	Wexford	7,281	3.2
Limerick	10,960	4.8	Wicklow	6,301	2.8
Total				229,138	100

¹³ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and excludes non-responses, unknown responses and those learners with a county of residence in Northern Ireland.

Nationality¹⁴

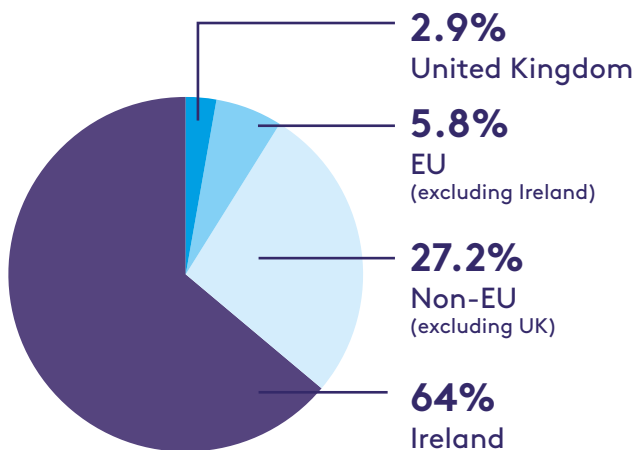
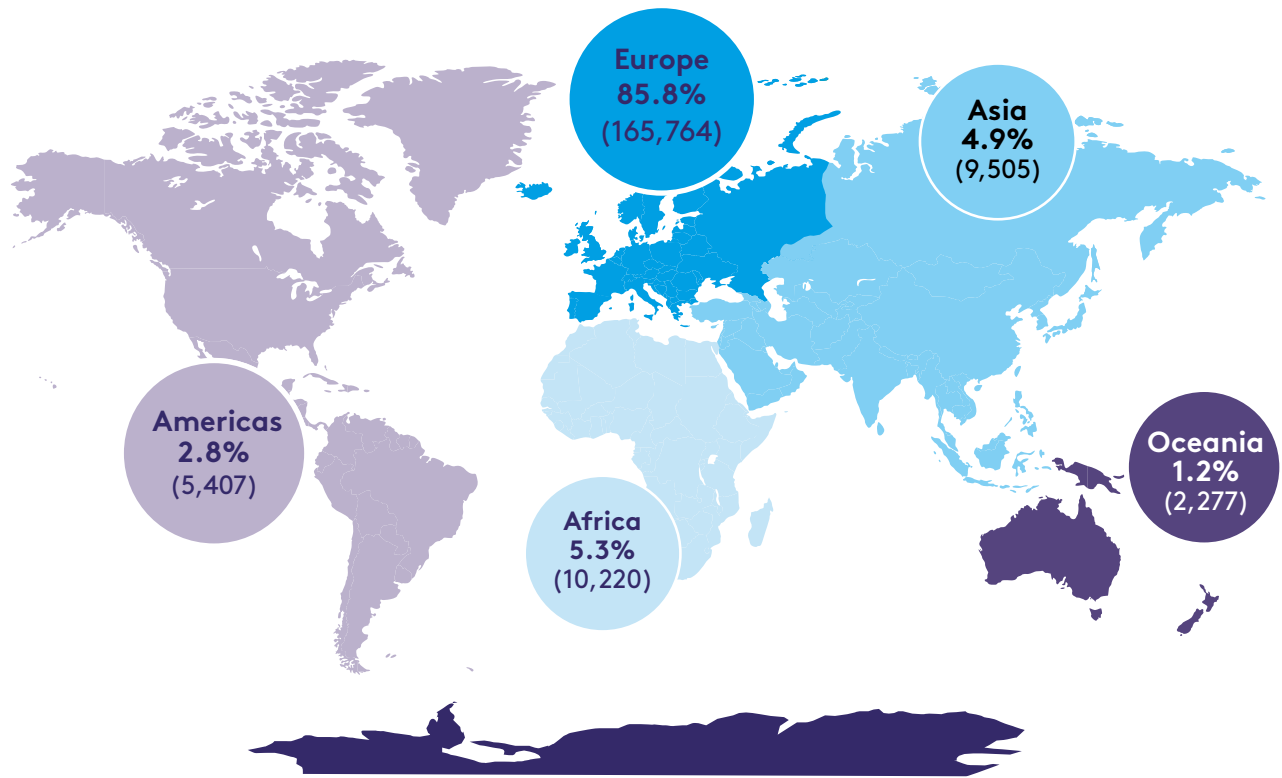
In 2024, there were **200 different** nationalities enrolled in FET.



The highest percentage of learner enrolments were nationals of Europe (88.2%). This was followed by Africa (5.3%), Asia (3.4%), the Americas (2.2%) and Oceania (.1%). The majority of unique learners were nationals of Ireland (65.8%), followed by the Non-EU (24.9%), the EU (7.7%) and the United Kingdom (1.7%).

¹⁴ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where nationality was captured.

Country of birth¹⁵



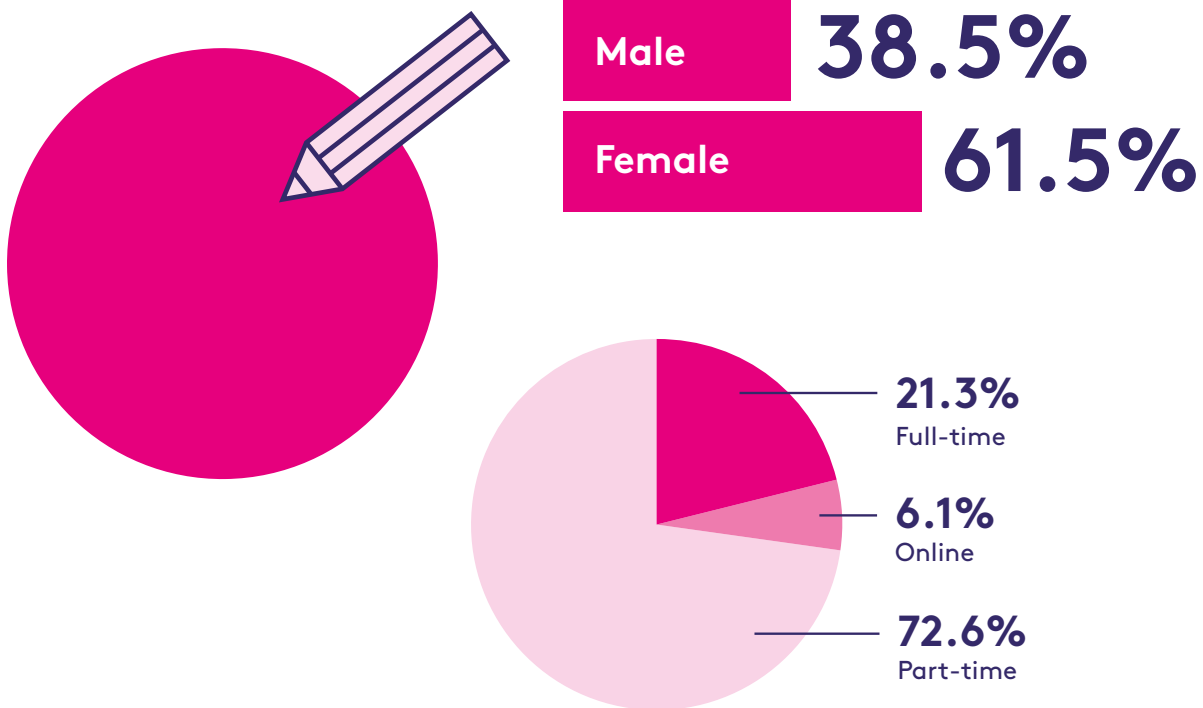
The highest percentage of unique learner enrolments were born in Europe (85.8%). This was followed by Africa (5.3%), Asia (4.9%), the Americas (2.8%), and Oceania (1.2%). The majority of learners were born in Ireland (64%), followed by Non-EU (27.2%), the EU (5.8%) and the United Kingdom (2.9%).

¹⁵ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where country of birth was captured.

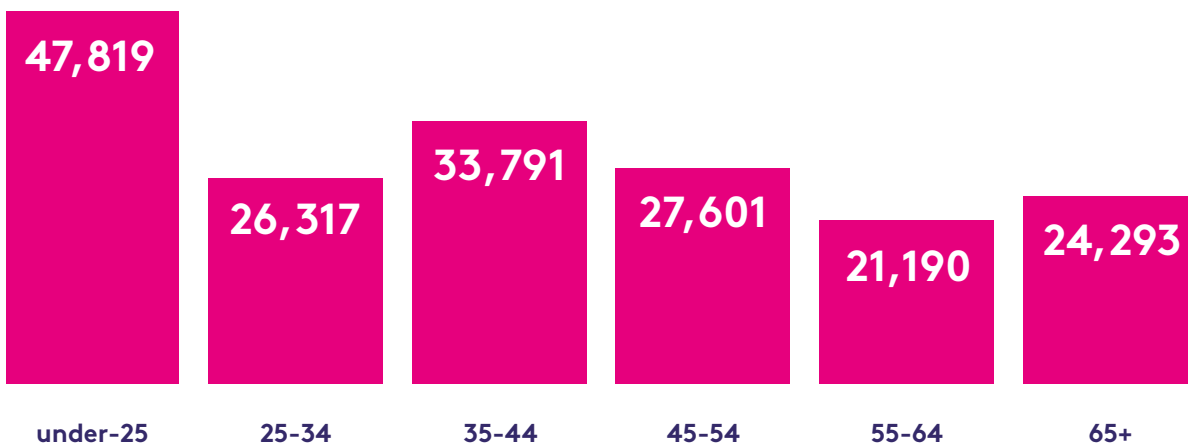
Completions



Completions

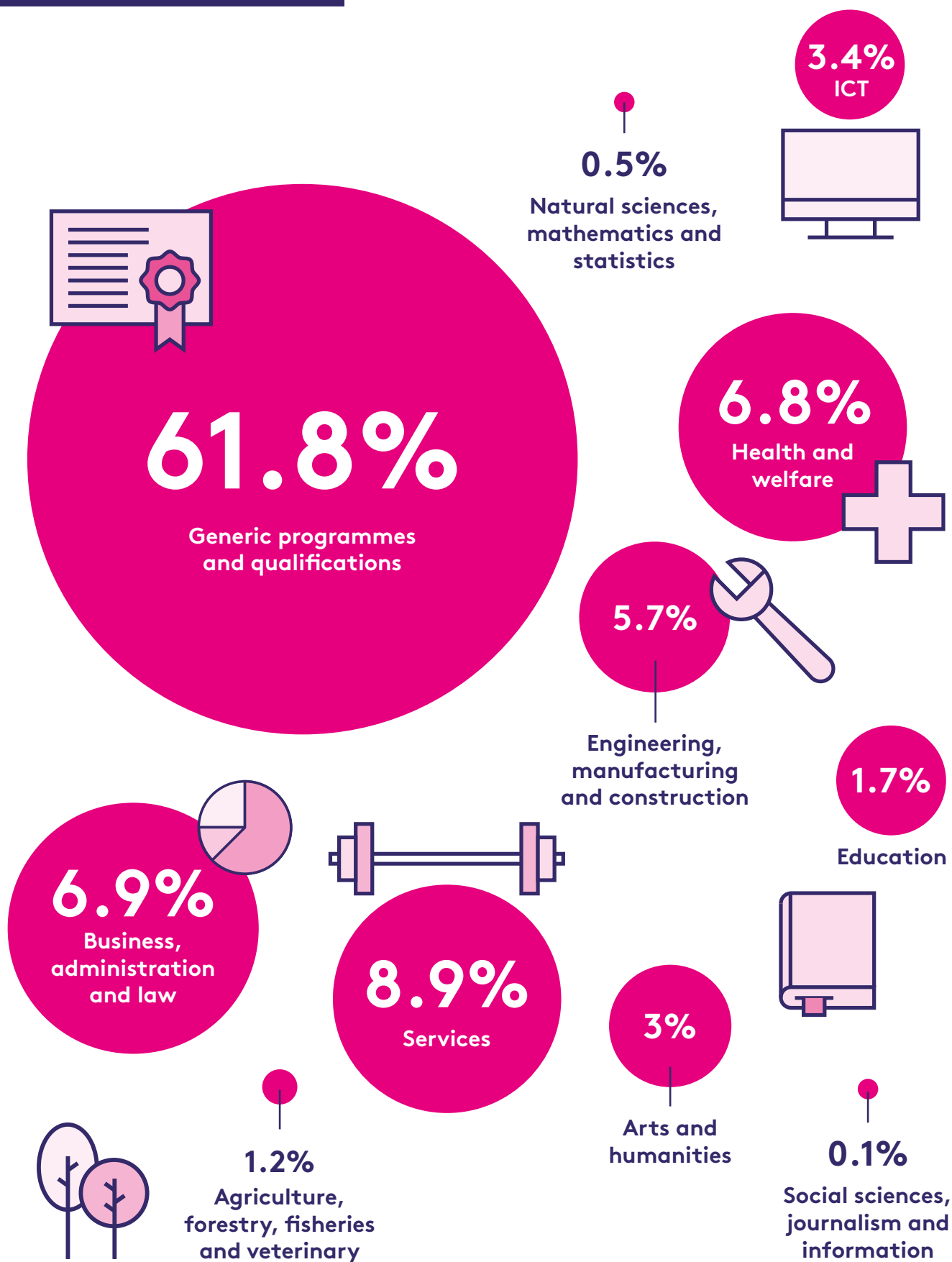


Start Age



In 2024, there were 181,011 learner completions. Of these learner completions, 61.5% were female and 38.5% were male. The distribution of completions was higher among part-time courses (72.6%), than full-time courses (21.3%), with a small percentage (6.1%) completing online courses.

Field of Study (Broad ISCED)



Field of Study (Broad ISCED)	Examples of courses
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Animal science Animal care
Arts and humanities	Art, craft and design Animation (creative media)
Business, administration and law	Business administration Business studies
Education	Early learning and care Special needs assisting
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Handling F-Gas mobile air conditioning systems in certain motor vehicles Construction - NZEB/Retrofit
Generic programmes and qualifications	Yoga Reading, writing, maths and computer skills Cookery Art
Health and welfare	Applied psychology (community health studies) Nursing studies
ICT	Software development Computer science
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	Introduction to validation for the pharmaceutical industry Pre-University science
Services	Barista skills Beauty therapy
Social sciences, journalism and information	Cultural and heritage studies Pre-University arts (cultural and heritage studies)

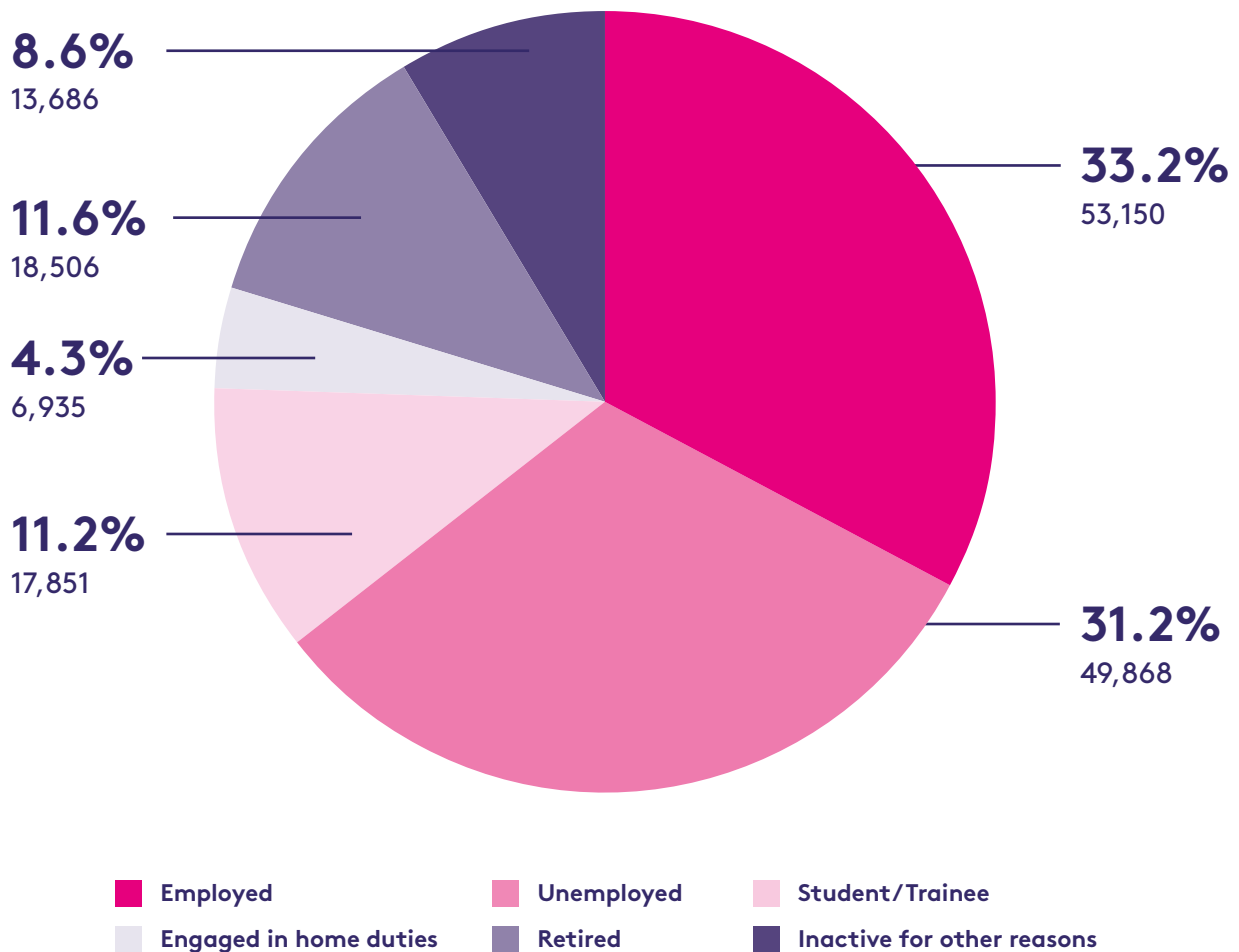
Field of Study(Broad ISCED) by Delivery Type

	Full-time	Part-time	Online	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1,408	718	0	2,126
Arts and humanities	4,463	961	0	5,424
Business, administration and law	4,391	5,574	2,587	12,552
Education	1,187	1,428	382	2,997
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	4,158	5,689	548	10,395
Generic programmes and qualifications	8,095	101,495	2,306	111,896
Health and welfare	5,029	6,604	677	12,310
ICT	2,358	2,086	1,636	6,080
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	634	47	163	844
Services	6,660	6,800	2,708	16,168
Social sciences, journalism and information	181	38	0	219
Total	38,564	131,440	11,007	181,011

Overall, generic programmes and qualifications had the highest numbers of learners, with 61.8% of learner completions in this field of study. This was followed by services (8.9%), business, administration and law (6.9%), and health and welfare (6.8%).

For full-time learner completions, generic programmes and qualifications and services had the highest numbers of learners. In addition, health and welfare, and arts and humanities also had high numbers of full-time completions. For part-time completions, generic programmes and qualifications accounted for 77.2% of all part-time completions. This was followed by services, health and welfare and engineering, manufacturing and construction. Among online completions, services had the highest number of completions. This was followed by business, administration and law and generic programmes and qualifications.

Principal Economic Status¹⁶



In 2024, 31.2% of learners were unemployed prior to completion, while 33.2% were employed. The remaining 35.6% of learners were inactive prior to completion.

¹⁶ It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous principal economic status was captured. The principal economic status response rate for learner completions was 88.4%.

Certified Completions

Certified Completions by Outcomes¹⁷

	Learners	Percent
Fully certified	67,978	62.9%
Partially certified	13,010	12%
No certification achieved	24,500	22.7%
Waiting for certification details	2,577	2.4%
Total	108,065	100%

In 2024, the certification rate (full + partially certified) was 74.9%. Of the remaining certified learner completions, 2.4% were waiting for certification details, and 22.7% did not achieve certification.

Certified Completions by Award Level

	Learners	Percent
Non-NFQ Aligned FET ¹⁸	11,222	13.9%
Level 1 Certificate	3,332	4.1%
Level 2 Certificate	5,965	7.4%
Level 3 Certificate	10,196	12.6%
Level 4 Certificate	10,049	12.4%
Level 4/5 Certificate	727	0.9%
Level 5 Certificate	31,263	38.6%
Advanced Certificate/Higher Certificate	8,099	10%
Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	135	0.2%
Total	80,988	100%

In 2024, 38.6% of certified completions were at level 5, whereas 10% were at an advanced or higher certificate level, 12.4% were at level 4 and 12.6% were at level 3. In addition, 13.9% of certified completions were non-NFQ aligned FET awards.

¹⁷ This excludes completions where the course did not have an award through a recognised awarding body.

¹⁸ This includes full and partial learner completions that gained an award through a recognised awarding body, but the awards were not aligned with the NFQ.

Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)¹⁹

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
Advanced Certificate/Higher Certificate			
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	298	66	364
Arts and humanities	900	217	1,117
Business and administration and law	2,274	350	2,624
Education	1,460	135	1,595
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1,096	26	1,122
Health and welfare	567	100	667
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	342	65	407
Services	692	202	894
Social sciences, journalism and information	29	*	32
Total	7,658	**	8,822
Level 1 Certificate			
Generic programmes and qualifications	4,040	332	4,372
Total	4,040	332	4,372
Level 2 Certificate			
Generic programmes and qualifications	6,729	1,477	8,206
Total	6,729	1,477	8,206
Level 3 Certificate			
Arts and humanities	13		13
Business and administration and law	6		6
Education	31		31
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	624	150	774
Generic programmes and qualifications	10,327	2,218	12,545
Health and welfare	95		95
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	16	10	26
Services	180	31	211
Total	11,292	2,409	13,701

¹⁹ Learner activity refers to the sum of instances of learner full and partial completions that gained an award through a recognised awarding body in 2024. For example, a learner may be enrolled and attain a certified completion in multiple courses (e.g. an ESOL course and an evening training course).

Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
Level 4 Certificate			
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	633	151	784
Business and administration and law	1,614	274	1,888
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1,406	230	1,636
Generic programmes and qualifications	4,370	1,419	5,789
Health and welfare	59	*	60
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	772	270	1,042
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	*	*	7
Services	1,753	188	1,941
Total	**	2,537	13,147

Level 4/5 Certificate			
Generic programmes and qualifications	528	248	776
Total	528	248	776

Level 5 Certificate			
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	936	275	1,211
Arts and humanities	2,553	949	3,502
Business and administration and law	6,617	1,061	7,678
Education	1,235	183	1,418
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	2,241	323	2,564
Generic programmes and qualifications	1,827	375	2,202
Health and welfare	11,351	2,091	13,442
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	996	382	1,378
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	466	130	596
Services	2,531	983	3,514
Social sciences, journalism and information	132	34	166
Total	30,885	6,786	37,671

Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
Non-NFQ Aligned FET			
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	*		*
Arts and humanities	373	5	378
Business and administration and law	1,570	49	1,619
Education	47		47
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	2,702	130	2,832
Generic programmes and qualifications	4,092		4,092
Health and welfare	199		199
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	1,926	336	2,262
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	12		12
Services	2,159	635	2,794
Total	**	1,155	**
Ordinary & Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma			
Arts and humanities	68	9	77
Business and administration and law	19	*	23
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	33	*	37
Total	120	17	137

* Please note that any learner activity count less than 5 is replaced by an asterisk in this table.

** Please note a double asterisk is used when a column/row total could reveal a low cell count in that column/row.

Certified Completions by Field of Study (Detailed ISCED) and Award Level (Learner Activity)

	Non-NFQ Aligned FET	Level 1 Certificate	Level 2 Certificate	Level 3 Certificate	Level 4 Certificate	Level 4/5 Certificate	Level 5 Certificate	Advanced /Higher Certificate	Ordinary & Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	Total
Accounting and taxation	1,181			6	20		38	439		1,684
Agriculture							123	55		178
Architecture and town planning	35			*	49		170	179		437
Arts							620			620
Audio-visual techniques and media production							1,357	504	77	1,938
Basic programmes and qualifications	4,092	4,244	8,185	8,926	4,505	776	2,173			32,901
Biological and related sciences							558			558
Building and civil engineering	163			24	616		593			1,396
Business and administration							2,175	526	7	2,708
Care of the elderly and of disabled adults					60					60
Child care and youth services							230			230
Community sanitation	18									18
Computer use	1,671			18	11		243	34		1,977
Crop and livestock production								15		15
Database and network design and administration	364						405	79		848
Education	47							812		859
Education and Training not elsewhere classified	8						161			169
Education science							20	399		419
Electricity and energy	420				199		303	551		1,473
Electronics and automation	166				38		12	363		579
Engineering and engineering trades	15			49	79		493			636
Engineering, manufacturing and construction				659						659
Environmental protection technology					352		163	6		521
Fashion, interior and industrial design							538	106		644
Finance, banking and insurance	180						*			**
Fine Arts							467	275		742
Food processing				15	24		71			110
Generic programmes and qualifications				9						9
Hair and beauty services	96			111	487		1,569	302		2,565
Handicrafts							168	6		174
Health	135			95			2,053	280		2,563
History and archaeology				6						6
Horticulture					747		214	59		1,020
Hotel, restaurants and catering	196			100	1,222		331	62		1,911
Humanities (except languages)							8			8
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	175				1,041			9	9	1,234
Journalism and reporting							46			46

Certified Completions by Field of Study (Detailed ISCED) and Award Level (Learner Activity)

	Non-NFQ Aligned FET	Level 1 Certificate	Level 2 Certificate	Level 3 Certificate	Level 4 Certificate	Level 4/5 Certificate	Level 5 Certificate	Advanced /Higher Certificate	Ordinary & Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	Total
Language acquisition	378									378
Law							351			351
Literacy and numeracy				819						819
Management and administration	228						2,974	1,318	16	4,536
Manufacturing and processing	36									36
Marketing and advertising	11						166	*		**
Materials (glass, paper, plastic and wood)							90	23		113
Mathematics	12									12
Mechanics and metal trades	1,949				164		65			2,178
Medical diagnostic and treatment technology	56									56
Motor vehicles, ships and aircraft	65			23	105		599			792
Music and performing arts				7			333	226		566
Natural environments and wildlife							38			38
Natural sciences,mathematics and statistics					7					7
Nursing and midwifery							6,954			6,954
Occupational health and safety	103						23			126
Personal skills and development		128	21	2,799	1,275					4,223
Pharmacy							59			59
Philosophy and ethics							11			11
Protection of persons and property					145		71	8		224
Secretarial and office work					1,649		1,832	285		3,766
Social and behavioural sciences								32		32
Social work and counselling							1,635	287		1,922
Sociology and cultural studies							120			120
Software and applications development and analysis	55						729	285	28	1,097
Sports	135				80		1,152	233		1,600
Teacher training without subject specialisation				31						31
Textiles (clothes, footwear and leather)							5			5
Therapy and rehabilitation							13	54		67
Training for pre-school teachers							1,281	393		1,674
Transport services	2,229						52			2,281
Travel, tourism and leisure					*		316	284		**
Veterinary	*				49		874	235		**
Welfare							2,483	51		2,534
Wholesale and retail sales	16				219		139			374
Work skills	43							43		43
Total	14,236	4,372	8,206	**	**	776	**	**	137	101,068

*Please note that any learner activity count less than 5 is replaced with an asterisk in this table.
 ** Please note a double asterisk is used when a column/row total could reveal a low cell count in that column/row.

Definition of Terms

Activity

The sum of learners multiplied by the number of courses which they have been enrolled in or completed within a programme or across different programmes, or providers during 2024.

Certified Completions

In the FET sector, not all learner completions lead to an award through a recognised awarding body in the FET sector. Therefore, certified completions refer only to the total number of certified completions in 2024.

Certification Rate

The proportion of full and partial learner completions who achieved certification to all learners who completed a certified course in 2024.

Completions

Completions include the total number of learners who fully or partially completed their course during 2024. Completions exclude those learners who may have left their course early (e.g. early leavers).

Enrolments

Enrolments are defined as learners who are on course or have completed a course during 2024.

Field of Study

This is defined and categorised by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Both broad (2-digit) and detailed (4-digit) fields of study are used for categorising Further Education and Training course fields of study.

Full Completions

Learners who have completed 90 per cent or more of the course and its requirements in 2024.

Inactive

This term is used according to the Eurostat and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition which defines inactive as individuals who are neither employed nor unemployed and are not working and not available or looking for work. Inactive in this report includes those learners engaged in home duties, retired, student/trainees, and those inactive for other reasons.

Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

This is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way. The many different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NFQ are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. In some cases, where awards have not been placed on the Irish NFQ, equivalent levels are assigned based on the document 'Qualifications can cross boundaries' and the level assigned to the award on the relevant country's framework (e.g. Cf. Ofqual, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, etc.).

Learner

A unique individual who has progressed onto a course in the application process. The total number of learners is the sum of all unique individuals in Further Education and Training in 2024.

Long-term Unemployed

This refers to any person who is unemployed for 12 months or more.

Non-NFQ Aligned courses

This includes completions with certification not aligned with the NFQ.

On Course

This refers to those learners who were still on course as of December 31st, 2024.

Partial Completions

Learners who have completed more than 25 percent but less than 90 percent of a course and its requirements in 2024.

Post-secondary Non-tertiary

This refers to Post Leaving Certificate NFQ Level 4 or 5, Advanced Certificate NFQ Level 6, other non-NFQ aligned FET, Certificate NFQ Level 4, or Certificate NFQ Level 5.

Short-cycle Tertiary

This refers to third level non-degree courses and includes higher certificate NFQ level 6 courses and diploma NFQ level 7 courses. These courses are usually of one year in duration and are often vocational in nature.

Third Level

This refers to Ordinary Bachelor degree, Honours Bachelor degree, Professional, Post-Graduate, Doctorate or Higher degree courses.



For further information, please contact:

The Data Analytics Unit
SOLAS
Block 1, Castleforbes House
Castleforbes Road, Dublin 1
solasdataanalytics@solas.ie

[SOLAS.ie](https://www.solas.ie)