Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2006

Results from the Quarterly National Household Survey 2006

Roger Fox
Planning & Research
FÁS
27-33 Upper Baggot Street
Dublin 4

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Executive Summary

There is a strong policy interest in up-skilling the Irish workforce. The recent Expert Group on Future Skills Needs report on the National Skills Strategy has set out very challenging objectives for up-skilling of the workforce over the next decade or so. The European Lisbon targets also include life-long learning and FÁS committed itself in its Statement of Strategy 2006-2009 to stronger measures to enhance the training of the employed. Statistics can help to provide the basis for appropriate policy-making and monitoring of progress in this area.

This report presents statistics from the second quarter of 2006 Quarterly National Household Survey conducted by the CSO on the extent to which employed persons received any education or training in the four weeks prior to the survey. The report updates previous reports by FÁS on the same subject.

Of the 1.98 million employed persons in 2006, 239,700 (12%) received some education/training in the four weeks prior to the survey. Considering only 'adults' (aged 25-64) at work (in line with EU definitions), 8.6% received some education/training. This represents an increase from 7.9% in 2005 and 7.3% in 2004.

Looking at the differences in the receipt of education/training between types of employees (aged 25 – 64) showed:

- Females (12%) were more likely to engage in education/training than men (7%).
- Younger employees took more education/training than older employees (11% of 25 – 34 year olds compared to 5% of 55 – 64 year olds).
- Better educated employees were much more likely to partake in education/training (15% of third-level graduates compared to 3% of those with a Junior Certificate).
- Employees in public services and financial services were more likely to participate than employees in agriculture and manufacturing.

- Professionals (16%) and associate professionals (15%) were much more likely to be in receipt of education/training than production operatives (3%) and craftspersons (4%).

Although the results show a small improvement in overall participation rates compared to 2004 and 2005, the overall disparities in participation between different types of employees are long-standing. Further increases will be required overall if Ireland is to achieve the levels of up-skilling needed for the future. There will be a particular need for further measures for poorly-educated, low-skilled employees as emphasised in the National Skills Strategy and the FÁS' Training Strategy. Concerted, strong, action will be required if the gap between the well- and poorly-educated is to be narrowed.

Participation of the Employed in Education/Training in 2006

Introduction

FÁS has regularly monitored the participation of employed persons in education/training. This reflects the policy interest in ensuring that employees update their skills on a regular basis, so ensuring their own job prospects as well as the competitive success of the companies in which they work. This report updates previous reports, prepared by FÁS, using data from the Quarterly National Household Surveys (QNHS).[1] This report refers to the situation in the second quarter of 2006 and is based on data kindly supplied by the CSO on special request.[2]

Methodology

The Quarterly National Household Survey is based on a random sample of households in Ireland conducted on a 'rolling' quarterly basis and forms part of the EU-wide Labour Force Survey. The main results presented in this report refer to the second quarter of 2006; results from earlier years are also given for comparison. However, it is important to note that exact comparisons over time are not possible as the questions used in the survey changed in 2003.[3] In previous years, a single main question had been asked: "Have you received any education or training in the previous four weeks?" In 2003, this was divided into two questions – "Have you been a student or an apprentice during the last four weeks?" and "Have you attended any courses, seminars, conferences or private lessons outside the regular education system during the past four weeks?" The results of both questions can be combined to provide one composite indicator of participation in education/training. In other words, if someone answered 'yes' to either of these questions, they are counted as having participated in education/training. This is the approach used in the statistics published by Eurostat and was the approach used in the reports published by FÁS since 2004.

All of the results in the reports are 'grossed-up' to give 'population' totals. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, because the results are based on a sample

[1] For example, *Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2005*, R. Sen, FÁS 2006.
[2] Thanks to Niamh Jones of the CSO for supplying the data.
[3] Also note that the results prior to 1998 use the annual Labour Force survey, the predecessor to the QNHS.

survey, there will be an element of possible sampling error in the results – in particular in relation to small numbers. The CSO does not provide the data in respect of very small numbers so parts of some of the tables presented in this report are left empty.

In considering the results of the survey, a distinction must be drawn between two definitions of employment. The ILO definition (which is increasingly the recognised definition) classifies someone as employed if they carry out work for payment or profit for one hour or more during the survey reference week. The Principal Economic Status (PES) classification is based on the respondent's personal assessment of their situation (e.g. working, student, unemployed). Thus, a student who works a little during the week would have an ILO status of employed but a PES status of student. This distinction impacts significantly on the statistics, with a greater proportion of (mainly young) ILO-employed receiving education/training than the PES-based figures would show. Because of the ILO definition's pre-eminence, and its use for international comparisons, we shall primarily present results on that basis for 25 – 64 year olds. This is in line with EU practice which uses the 25 – 64 age group as the reference group for measures of life-long learning. However, especially for the aggregate data, we shall also present PES data.

Results for 2006

A total of 178,300 persons whose Principal Economic Status was at work received education/training (ET) in the four weeks prior to the survey. This represented 9% of those in employment. If we use the ILO definition of employment, the number in education/training is 239,700 and this is 12% of all employed persons. Thus there were 61,400 persons who received education/training and were employed on the ILO definition but not on the PES definition. These were mainly students working part-time.

Table 1 is based on Principal Economic Status and provides data for the full age range from 15 to 64.

Table 1
Employed Persons (PES) receiving Education/Training
by Gender and Age Group

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
15 – 24	27,300	19	14,700	14	41,900	17
25 – 34	23,400	7	32,600	12	56,000	10
35 – 44	18,700	7	21,900	11	40,600	9
45 – 54	12,400	6	17,200	11	29,500	8
55 – 64	4,700	4	5,500	7	10,200	5
(25 – 64)	59,100	6	77,200	11	136,400	8
Total	86,400	8	91,900	12	178,300	9

The data are presented in ten-year age ranges and for men, women and in total. Two patterns are immediately evident from Table 1; males (PES at work) were less likely than females to receive education/training, and education/training participation rates declined significantly for older age groups. Thus 12% of females received education/training compared to 8% of males. The concentration of education/training among employees in the 15 – 24 year old age group is illustrated in the table. Nearly one-fifth (19%) of young males received some education/training. Male participation rates then fell sharply to 7% of 25 – 34 year olds, and then steadily to 4% of the oldest group (55 – 64 year olds). The differences in participation by age were less striking for females, dropping from 14% of 15-24 year olds to 12% of 25 – 34 year olds and then down to 7% of 55 – 64 year olds.

Table 2
Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25 – 64)
by Education Qualification and Gender

Education	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Primary	* **		***		4,000	2
Junior	4,800	3	4,300	5	9,100	3
Leaving	12,500	5	15,000	8	27,600	7
Post-Leaving	5,900	5	7,300	9	13,200	7
Third-Level	35,800	12	51,600	17	87,500	15
Other/Not Stated	***		***		2,900	6
Total	62,900	7	81,300	12	144,300	9

*** In this table, and others, the asterix indicates that the numbers are too small to report. However, they are included in the totals.

Table 2 and the remaining tables in this report relate to the 25 – 64 age group and ILO-employed status. Table 2 analyses participation in education/training according to the educational qualifications of the employee. An obvious feature in this table is that employees with the highest levels of qualifications received far more education/training than those with lower qualifications. Thus, 15% of third-level qualified employees received education/training compared to under half of that rate (7%) for Leaving Certificate employees and one fifth of that rate (3%) for Junior Certificate employees. This pattern is the consistent for both men and women.

Table 3
Education/Training of the Employed (ILO, 25 – 64)
by Sector and Gender

Sector	**Male**		**Female**		**Total**	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Agriculture	900	1	***		1,200	1
Manufacturing	9,500	6	4,600	7	14,000	6
Construction	6,900	4	***		8,000	4
Wholesale and Retail	4,000	4	6,100	6	10,000	5
Hotels and Restaurants	2,800	8	2,700	6	5,500	7
Transport, Storage & Communications	***		***		7,100	7
Financial Intermediation	***		7,300	17	11,900	16
Other Business Services	8,800	10	9,100	13	17,900	12
Public Admin. & Defence	***		***		***	
Education	***		14,000	16	19,000	15
Health & Social work	***		23,400	16	28,200	16
Other Community & Social Services	2,800	7	2,900	8	5,600	7
Total	62,900	7	81,300	12	144,300	9

Table 3 analyses the data on the basis of sector of industry. The rates of participation vary across sectors; however, employees in sectors which are predominantly publicly-run have higher levels of education/training than others. The highest rates of education/training are for employees in health/social work (16%), education (15%), and financial services (16%). The two sectors with the lowest rates of education/training were agriculture (1%) and construction (4%).

Table 4
Education/Training of the Employed (ILO, 25 – 64)
By Occupational Group and Gender

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Managers	11,300	6	9,700	11	21,100	8
Professionals	15,200	14	19,200	18	34,200	16
Assoc. Professionals	7,000	11	16,700	18	23,800	15
Clerical	4,600	9	15,900	10	20,600	10
Craft/Skilled	8,300	4	***		9,000	4
Personal Services	6,100	10	10,300	10	16,400	10
Sales	2,300	5	5,100	7	7,300	6
Operatives	***		***		4,800	3
Unskilled	4,400	4	2,800	5	7,000	4
Total	62,900	7	81,300	12	144,300	9

Table 4 displays the data according to occupational group. The highest participation rates in education/training were found for persons working in professional and associate professional occupations (16% and 15% respectively). The lowest rates of education/training were found among production operatives (3%), craftpersons (4%) and unskilled labourers (4%).

Overall, looking at each of the Tables 1 – 4, there was a very clear pattern of higher female participation rates in each of the comparisons: by age, educational qualifications, industrial sector and occupational groups.

Table 5 breaks down the education/training indicator into its two composite parts: "Have you been a student or an apprentice during the last four weeks?" and "Have you attended any courses, seminars, conferences or private lessons outside the regular education system during the past four weeks?" The results are presented for different age groups.

Table 5
Students/Apprentices, Other Courses of Employed (ILO, 25 – 64)

Age	Number of Students/Apprentices	Number on Other Courses	%Students/ Apprentices of Total
25 – 34	31,300	34,600	48
35 – 44	11,300	31,000	27
45 – 54	7,500	23,300	24
55 – 64	2,100	8,500	20
Total	52,200	97,400	35

A total of 52,200 employed adults (ILO-employed, 25 – 64 age group) stated that they were a student or apprentice during the previous four weeks. Far more than that number (97,400) undertook other courses outside the regular education system. The total of these two methods (149,600) exceeds the total number of persons taking any course (144,300) by 5,300. This latter number is composed of persons who participated in both forms of education/training during the period.

The changing balance of education/training type for different age groups is evident in Table 5. Whereas 48% of participation of the younger age group (25 – 34) was as students/apprentices, this percentage had fallen to 20% for the oldest age group (55 – 64).

Comparisons with Earlier Years

In this final section, some comparisons with earlier years are presented. However, caution must be exercised as definitions have changed. Table 6 presents results from 1991, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 in summary form. There had been a steady increase over the years until 2003. In 2004, there was a significant drop in the rate of participation from 10% to 7.3%. It is likely that this is due to the change of definition at the time. There was a slight increase in the participation rate to 7.9% in 2005 and a further increase in 2006 to 8.6%. These increases apply to all age groups.

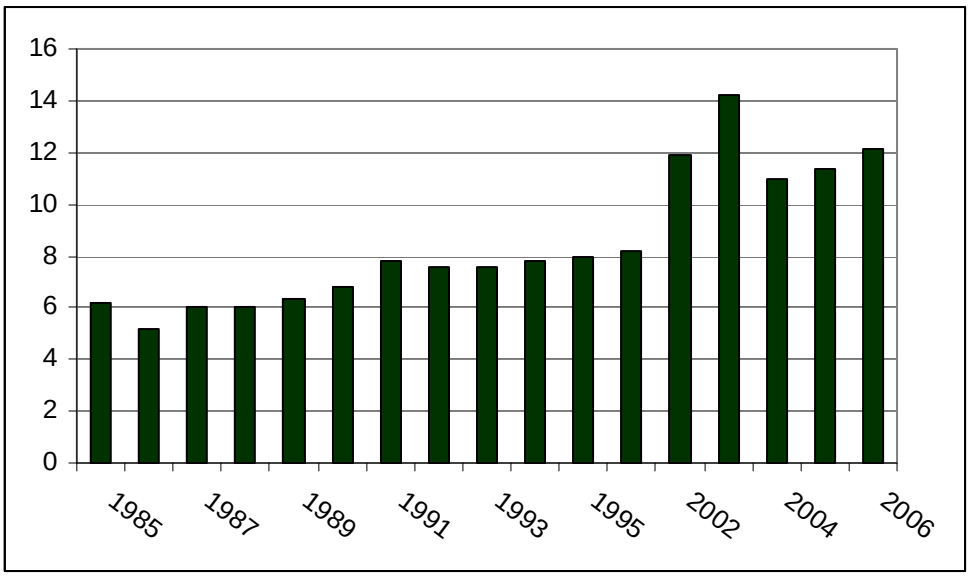
Table 6
Percentage of Employed (ILO, 25 – 64) Receiving Education/Training by Age Group

Age Group	1991	1996	2002	2003*	2004	2005	2006
25 – 34	6.5	8.4	10.1	11.7	9.1	9.6	10.6
35 – 44	4.7	6.5	8.9	10.2	7.4	8.2	8.7
45 – 54	3.0	3.9	7.0	9.1	6.3	6.7	7.8
55 – 64	1.5	1.7	4.1	6.8	4.1	5.1	4.8
Total	4.6	6.1	8.3	10.0	7.3	7.9	8.6

*change in definition in 2003

A longer-term comparison is given in Figure 1. This relates to employed persons of all ages (i.e. including 15-24 year olds) and thus shows higher percentages than in Table 6. The data shows increasing levels of participation in education/training in the last few years – following the dip after 2003.

Figure 1
Percentage Employed who Received Education/Training 1985 – 2006



Summary Conclusions

This report has provided data on the participation of employed persons in education and training during 2006. About 178,000 persons who stated that their principal status was 'at work' were in receipt of education/training during the four weeks prior to the survey. This represents 9% of the total such employed. Considering employed adults (i.e. aged 25 – 64) on an ILO basis the percentage was also 9%. Looking at differences in the receipt of education/training between types of employees (aged 25 – 64) showed:

- Females (12%) were more likely to receive education/training than men (7%).
- Younger employees received more education/training than older employees (11% of 25 – 34 year olds compared to 5% of 55 – 64 year olds).
- Better educated employees were much more likely to receive education/training (15% of third-level graduates compared to 3% of those with a Junior Certificate).
- Employees in public services and financial services were more likely to participate than employees in agriculture and manufacturing.

- Professionals (16%) and associate professionals (15%) were much more likely to be in receipt of education/training than production operatives (3%) and craftspersons (4%).

These differentials indicate very varied rates of access by different types of employees. To the extent that such variations are judged sub-optimal, public policy interventions may be needed to increase participation of currently low-participation groups.

Finally, the results showed an improvement in participation rates compared to 2005.