

Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2005 – Ireland

Main Results

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Summary

Three EU-wide surveys of continuing vocational training have been carried out to date; in 1993, 1999 and 2005. The results of the latest survey, carried out by the Central Statistics Office in Ireland, have been published. This report presents both the published results and further results provided to FÁS by the CSO. The survey, known as CVTS3, covered training by companies for all employees excluding apprentices and trainees. It covered companies employing 3 or more persons in all sectors except agriculture, forestry or fishing – a total of 58,700 companies.

Just over half (51%) of all companies (i.e. 30,000 companies) provided some continuing vocational training (CVT) for their employees in 2005. All large companies (250 employees or more), 89% of medium-sized companies (50 – 249) and 49% of small companies provided some training. About one-third of companies (21,000) provided training courses, while just under one-half (47%) provided other forms of training such as attendance at conferences and on-the-job training.

Twelve percent of companies had a training budget and 10% the use of a training centre. Again, medium and larger-sized companies were much more likely to have such features.

Overall, 711,000 employees attended a training course in 2005 – just under half of all employees. Employees in the public administration, education and financial services sectors were more likely to have attended a training course, while those in construction and hotels/restaurants were less likely to have done so. A greater proportion of females (51%) than males (45%) attended training courses.

Persons who attended training courses received 3.5 days of training on average. Seventy percent of the time on training courses was on ‘internal’ ones – i.e. courses designed and managed by the company itself.

One quarter of training course time related to health and safety. Five other subjects each comprised about a tenth of the time spent; sales/marketing, engineering/manufacturing/construction, management/administration, ICT and finance/office work.

Companies divided the time spent on training courses into three main purposes: preparation for the current job, preparation for a higher job, and compliance with statutory obligations.

The cost of training courses was calculated to include direct costs (fees, travel, equipment), the costs of internal staff involved with training and the wage costs of trainees while on training courses. On average, companies spent 2.6% of their labour costs on training courses. The largest percentage component (1.1%) was the labour costs of training staff. Trainees' wage costs were 0.8% of labour costs and direct costs made up 0.7%. The average direct cost of a training course day was €288. Total estimated expenditure on training courses in 2005 was €1,556 million.

The 49% of companies that did no training in 2005 were asked why. The predominant reason, cited by 83% of such companies, was that the existing skills of their staff met their needs. Related to this was a reason given by about a quarter of companies: they aimed to recruit staff with the required skills. Other reasons, such as time and cost, were given by small percentages of non-training companies.

Some comparisons with other EU countries are also presented in the report. These show that in terms of the provision of CVT overall, and training courses in particular, Ireland ranks in the top half of EU countries. However, in terms of the percentage of labour costs spent on training courses, Ireland ranks first.

Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2005

Introduction

The CSO has carried out a survey of continuing vocational training in companies in respect of 2005. The main results were published by the CSO in December 2007¹ and a summary report prepared in January 2008 by FÁS.² FÁS subsequently asked the CSO for additional analyses of the results and these have been received.³ This report now presents a more detailed analysis of the results of the survey.

The survey, known as CVTS3, is the third survey of continuing vocational training carried out across the EU. The previous two surveys, CVTS1 in 1993 and CVTS2 in 1999, were managed by FÁS. The latest survey was conducted by the CSO and relates to companies' activities in 2005. The Irish survey relates to companies employing 3 or more persons across all sectors, both public and private, of the economy excluding agriculture, forestry and fishing.⁴ There were 58,730 companies in this 'population' and they employed nearly 1.5 million persons at the end of 2005. As with previous surveys, initial vocational training for apprentices and similar trainees is not included as part of continuing vocational training.

The survey covered the extent to which companies carried out continuing vocational training (CVT), the characteristics of such companies, training courses and other forms of training, the number of persons attending training courses and the duration of training course attendance, companies' expenditure, the types of training courses, reasons for training and not training, and future intentions re training courses. It is also possible to make some comparisons of the results with the previous Irish results and the EU findings for 2005.

¹ *Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2005*, Statistical Release, 20th December 2007, CSO.

² *Company Training in Ireland: Summary*, Roger Fox, FÁS, January 2008.

³ Thanks to Paul M. Crowley of the CSO for providing the additional data.

⁴ The previous surveys related only to private sector companies employing 10 or more persons. Many EU countries continued to use this more restrictive coverage in CVTS3.

Training Companies

Table 1 shows the percentage of companies that engaged in various forms of CVT in 2005. The results are presented broken down according to a number of different sectors and size groups. Overall, half (51%) of companies (i.e. 30,000 companies) provided some form of CVT for their employees during 2005. There were significant differences on a sectoral basis with 97% of public administration and defence organisations providing training compared to 40-41% of construction and hotel/restaurant companies. Size of companies was a major factor in explaining these differences. Whereas 100% of the 630 firms employing 250+, and 89% of the 2,600 50-249 firms, provided CVT, the number was 49% of the 55,500 small companies. The fact that the average percentage of all firms was 51%, and that the percentage for small firms was 49%, shows the predominance of small firms in the country (and hence this survey).

Table 1
Training Companies by type of training

	Training Courses	Planned on-the-job training	Planned training by self-directed learning	Attendances at conferences, workshops, trade fairs, lectures etc	All non-training course forms of training	Any form of training activity
Economic Sector	%	%	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing, Utilities, mining	45	43	21	36	56	61
Construction	27	18	12	17	34	40
Wholesale and retail trade	31	26	12	25	40	45
Hotels and restaurants	22	27	8	14	39	41
Transport, communications	34	28	10	23	37	45
Financial services	67	62	45	67	78	82
Business services	51	35	23	47	63	68
Public administration and defence	95	74	82	88	93	97
Education	62	37	37	57	71	77
Health	50	37	27	54	64	67
Other Services	34	26	11	29	45	48
Total	36	29	15	30	47	51
Size class (by number of employees)						
3 to 49 employees	33	26	13	27	44	49
50 to 249 employees	81	73	49	67	83	89
250+ employees	100	93	88	92	99	100
Total	36	29	15	30	47	51

Looking across Table 1 it can be seen that 36% of companies (i.e. 21,000) had training courses for some of their staff, 29% had planned on-the-job training, 15% had self-directed learning and 30% used attendance at conferences, trade fairs, lectures etc. Two other methods, not shown in Table 1, were used by a small proportion of companies: job rotation, exchanges, study visits (9%) and learning, quality circles (11%). In total 47% used non-course methods compared to 36% that used training courses. Clearly, many companies used a number of methods.

Thirty-six percent of companies used training courses as one of their methods of CVT. The pattern of use was broadly similar to that for all types of training, with hotels/restaurants and construction being the lowest users. In most sectors, usage of on-the-job training was less than usage of training courses, but for hotels/restaurants on-the-job training was greater. In the education and health sector, training courses were used by a higher percent of companies than on-the-job training, whereas in financial services and manufacturing/industry the percentage of companies using both methods was about equal.

Table 2
Training Organisation in Companies

Sector	% Training Budget	% Training Centre	% Full-Time Training Staff	Average No. Training Staff
Manufacturing, Utilities, Mining	22	14	12	0.5
Construction	5	10	5	0.1
Wholesale, Retail	9	8	4	0.2
Hotels, Restaurants	5	5	7	0.3
Transport, Communications	14	11	6	0.4
Financial Services	29	16	15	0.7
Business Services	19	10	5	0.2
Public Administration, Defence	90	54	27	4.2
Education	32	25	11	1.1
Health	18	17	10	0.5
Other Services	13	13	7	0.3
All	12	10	6	0.3
Sizeclass				
3-49 employees	9	9	5	0.2
50-249 employees	57	30	22	1.0
250+ employees	92	70	63	6.2
All	12	10	6	0.3

Note: The average number of training staff includes both full-time and part-time staff and is expressed in full-time equivalents.

Companies were asked some questions about their training organisation. The answers are set out in Table 2. Twelve percent of companies (7,000) stated that they had an annual training budget which included CVT. Most large companies (92%) had such a budget and over half (57%) of medium-sized companies also had a training

budget. Ten percent of companies had a training centre (either their own or shared) and the percentage of larger companies with such a centre was 70%. Only six percent (3,500) of companies employed full-time training staff (this includes all staff involved with training including management, admin. and trainers.) Full-time staff were found mainly among larger companies and those in public administration and the education sector. On average, there was 0.2 full-time training staff per company. Adding part-timers increased the total effort by half to the figure of 0.3 full-time equivalents, shown in the final column of Table 2.

Training Courses – Participation

The survey did not try to measure the extent of training except for training courses. Thus all questions about numbers and types of participants, types and duration of courses and expenditure only relate to training courses.

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of employees attending one or more courses during 2005. Overall, 711,000 persons attended CVT training courses in 2005. This represents 48% of employees, with the percentage ranging from 22% in small companies, to 44% in medium-sized companies and to 66% in large companies. Another way of expressing this is that 68% of those on training courses worked in large companies, 16% in medium-sized companies and another 16% in small companies. In terms of numbers, the two largest sectors with training courses were manufacturing/industry with 105,000 and wholesale/retail with 101,000. The three largely public sectors - public administration, education and health - had 252,000 persons on training courses. The education, public administration and financial services sectors had participation rates from 68% - 73%. About half of those employed in the manufacturing sector attended courses, a broadly similar proportion to transport and communication, business services and health. The lowest rates (27-29%) were found in construction, hotels and restaurants, and other services.

Table 3
No. and % of Staff on Training Courses by Gender

	Males	Females	Total	Total No.
Economic Sector	%	%	%	(‘000)
Manufacturing, utilities, mining	50	46	48	105
Construction	30	19	29	29
Wholesale and retail trade	30	51	40	101
Hotels and restaurants	26	27	27	35
Transport, communications	51	56	52	46
Financial services	63	71	68	46
Business services	49	43	46	81
Public administration and defence	69	68	68	80
Education	66	76	73	90
Health	42	53	50	82
Other services	28	30	29	16
Total	45	51	48	711

A greater proportion of females (51%) than males (45%) attended CVT training courses. While this might be thought to reflect a greater relative employment of females in large, public sector, organisations, this does not seem to be the case. Within the various categories shown in Table 3, women participate at least as much as men in most sectors except construction and, to a lesser extent, manufacturing and business services. Of course, there may be other differences, apart from sector and size of company, that explain why women attend more training courses than men. However, analyses of other survey results, for example the QNHS, also show that employed women are more likely to receive training than employed men.⁵

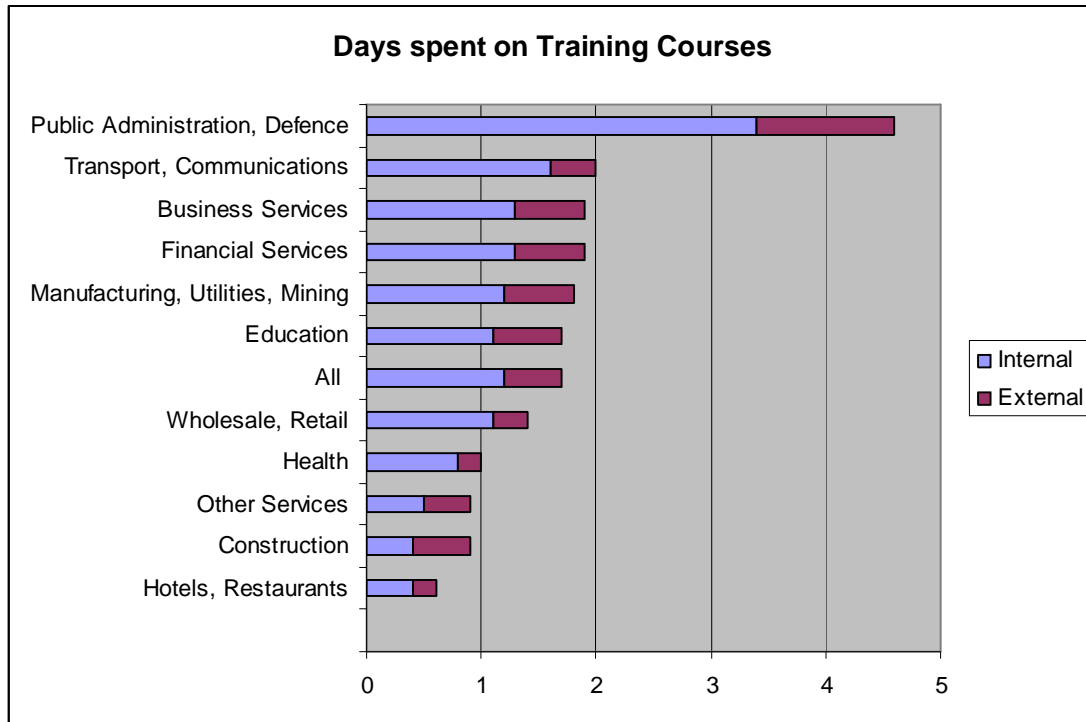
Duration of Training Courses

Figure 1 shows the number of days each employee spent on average on training courses in 2005. On average, there were 1.7 days on training courses. This was made up of 1.2 days on internal training courses (courses designed and managed by

⁵ See, for example, *Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2006*, R. Fox, FÁS, 2007.

the company itself) and 0.5 days on external training courses (managed by outside trainers, though some training may have taken place on the company's premises).

Figure 1



The average duration of training course attendance in public administration was exceptionally high at 4.6 days. Many other sectors were around the average. Surprisingly, health was low, as was construction and hotels/restaurants. An interesting finding emerges when we look at the balance between internal and external courses by size of company (Table 4). This shows that the average duration of external courses is the same across the different size groups, whereas the extent of internal courses varies considerably by size group. This, presumably, reflects the greater ability of larger companies to organise internal courses and gain 'economies of scale' through doing so.

Table 4
No. of Days on Training Courses per Employee

Size Group	Internal	External	Total
3-49 employees	.4	.4	.8
50 – 249 employees	1.0	.5	1.6
250+ employees	1.8	.5	2.3

It can also be calculated that the higher average duration per employee in larger companies shown in Table 4 reflects the higher percentage of employees in such companies attending training courses. Average time spent on training courses for those who attended courses was about 3.5 days in all size groups of companies.

Types of Training Courses

Companies were also asked about the types of training courses that were attended. The pie-chart in Figure 2 shows the principal types attended, and Table 5 presents more details for some of the main sectors (see the CSO publication for details for each sector). Nearly a quarter of the time spent on training courses was in relation to health and safety (including environmental protection). Five other subjects each comprised about ten percent of time spent; sales and marketing (12%), engineering, manufacturing and construction-type subjects (10%), management and administration (9%), ICT, including computer science and computer use, (9%), and finance and office work (9%). Personal development courses made up 6% of time, while languages made up 1% and transport and security another 2%. The remainder of the time (18%) was spent on other, unspecified, subjects.

Figure 2

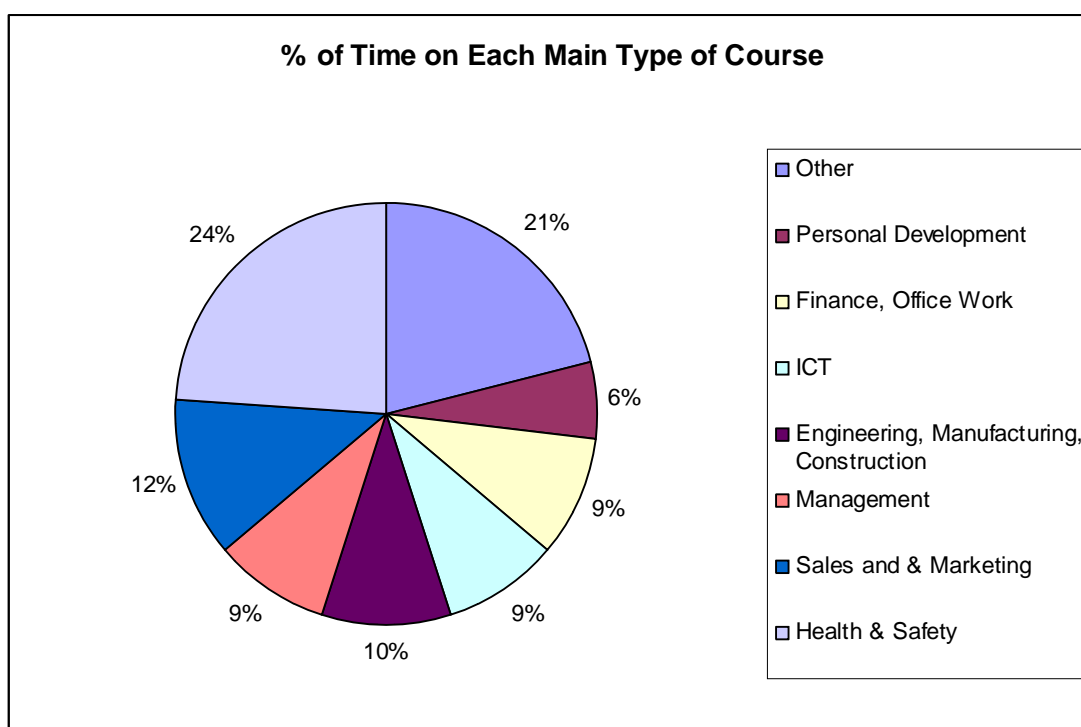


Table 5
% of Time on Each Main Type of Training Course for Selected Sectors

Sector	Health, Safety	Sales Mark.	Eng.Manuf., Const.	Management	Finance Office Work	ICT	Personal Development	Language	Transport Security	Other
Manufacturing Utilities, Mining	30	7	23	9	7	8	5	0	2	8
Construction	49	3	32	3	3	2	1	0	3	4
Wholesale, Retail	22	26	6	8	7	8	4	1	1	16
Financial Services	3	17	0	14	28	18	6	1	1	12
Business Services	12	10	8	11	15	15	6	0	2	21
Public Administration Defence	21	2	4	16	10	12	15	2	3	15
Education	21	1	0	15	9	6	12	1	1	33
Health	17	3	0	8	4	7	17	1	1	41
All	24	12	10	9	9	9	6	1	2	18

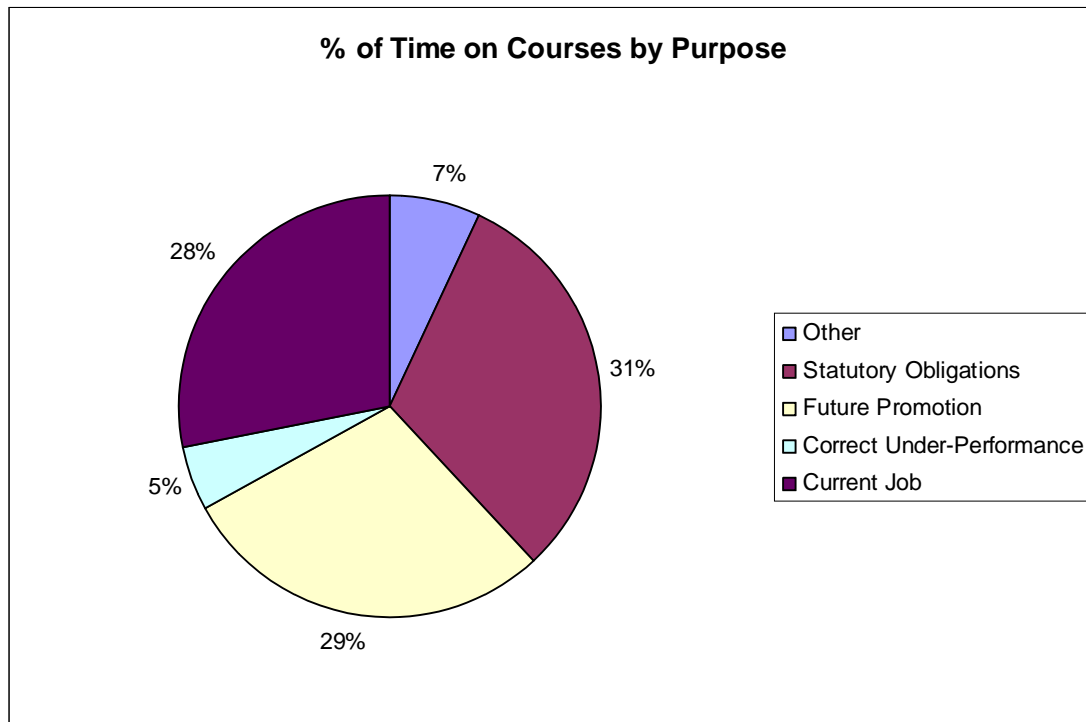
The results in respect of most sectors show expected patterns. For example, nearly half of the training courses in construction were for health and safety, with another third being practical engineering and production skills. Similarly, health and safety was the most frequent course in manufacturing and other industry, with practical skills representing the next largest component. However, in manufacturing, unlike construction, there was also a significant take-up of courses in management, ICT, sales/marketing and finance/office work.

Sales/marketing was the biggest topic for companies in wholesale and retail distribution, where health and safety was also important. A very different pattern emerged in the financial services sector. There, finance, management, ICT and sales/marketing were the most common types of training course. The three public sector areas - public administration, education and health - all gave strong attention to health and safety, with that area making up about one-fifth of time spent on courses. These three sectors all gave a relatively high level of importance to personal development and management courses. Both education and health had a large amount of 'other' courses; presumably courses specific to teaching and health matters.

Reasons for Training Courses

The time spent on training courses was broken down into five broad purposes. This is illustrated in Figure 3. Three purposes each comprised about 30% of training course time: preparing for the current job, preparing for a higher job and complying with statutory obligations. These percentages did not vary significantly by size of company and were also broadly reflected in most sectors.

Figure 3



However, some sectors showed important variations. In the construction sector, two-thirds of training courses were to meet statutory obligations and much less were for performance in the current or future job. Hotels and restaurants did relatively little in terms of training for promotion, while 11% of courses were to correct for under-performance. Statutory obligations were also important for the transport/communications sector, but were relatively less important for financial or business sectors or the three public service sectors. The financial services and public administration sectors stood out as providing 40% of their training courses for promotion purposes.

Training Course Costs

Training course costs were calculated by the CSO on the basis of information collected in the survey. The direct cost of training course fees, travel and subsistence, premises and equipment was directly asked in the survey. In addition, information on wage levels was combined with information on time spent by training staff to estimate the labour costs of all staff involved in the management and provision of training in the company (training staff labour costs). The labour costs of trainees

were also calculated, based on wage costs of employees and the amount of time they spent on training courses. These costs were then expressed as a percentage of total labour costs. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Training Course Costs: Total and as % of Labour Costs

Division	Direct Costs (Fees, T/S, Facilities) %	Trainees' Labour Costs %	Training Staff Labour Costs %	Total Training Costs %	Total Costs (€M)
Manufacturing, Utilities, Mining	.6	.8	1.0	2.4	236
Construction	.3	.4	.8	1.5	66
Wholesale, Retail	.4	.6	1.3	2.3	169
Hotels, Restaurants	.2	.2	2.5	2.9	87
Transport, Communications	.6	.9	1.1	2.6	107
Financial Services	1.2	.8	1.1	3.1	125
Business Services	.8	.8	1.6	3.2	240
Public Administration, Defence	1.5	1.8	.7	4.0	207
Education	.5	.7	.6	1.9	127
Health	1.0	.4	.5	1.9	136
Other Services	.5	.4	1.8	2.8	40
All	.7	.8	1.1	2.6	1,540
Sizeclass					
3-49 employees	.4	.4	2.0	2.9	447
50-249 employees	.7	.7	1.3	2.6	260
250+ employees	.9	1.0	.6	2.4	832
All	.7	.8	1.1	2.6	1,540
Private Sector	.6	.7	1.3	2.7	1,099
Public Sector	.9	1.0	.5	2.4	441

In total, it is estimated that companies spent €1,540 million on training courses in 2005. This represented 2.6% of their labour costs. Given that the total number of companies was 58,730, this averaged at €26,222 per company. By size group, the averages were large (€1.3 million), medium (€100,000) and small (€8,054).

The largest component of these costs (42%) was the labour costs of training staff. This was 1.1% of labour costs. The other two components were direct costs (i.e. fees, travel, facilities and equipment), which made up 0.7% of labour costs, and the labour costs of trainees while on courses, which amounted to 0.8% of labour costs.

Table 6 shows the variation in these costs by sector. The highest percentage was in public administration at 4%, with business services and financial services being at 3.2% and 3.1% respectively.

The figures are also broken down by size of company and public/private sector. It is interesting that the percentage of labour costs spent on training courses declined as the size of company increased. This is due to the much lower percentage spent on training staff in larger companies – presumably because of economies of scale. This may also be the explanation for the lower percentage spent in public than private sector companies. Excluding the labour costs of training staff, the percentage of labour costs spent on training courses increased with size of company; 0.8% for small companies, 1.4% for medium-sized companies and 1.9% for large companies.

Overall, large companies spent €32 million on training courses (a little over half of all training course expenditure). The two largest spending sectors were manufacturing and other industry (€36 million) and business services (€40 million.)

It may be of interest to see the spread of expenditure by companies on the direct costs of training courses. This is presented in Table 7. The wide distribution in the scale of expenditure is shown clearly in the figures. Larger companies spent on average €82,700 on the direct costs of training courses. On the other hand, average expenditure across all companies was €5,800, and for small companies only €900 in 2005. Over two-thirds of companies in five sectors had zero direct costs for training courses in 2005. These sectors were construction, wholesale/retail, hotels/restaurants, transport/communication and other services.

Table 7
Distribution of Direct Cost Payments (% of Companies)

Division	Zero	€ - €99	€1,000- €999	€10,000 +	Average (€)
Manufacturing, Utilities, Mining	56	10	22	13	11,400
Construction	73	13	11	2	1,200
Wholesale, Retail	71	12	13	2	1,500
Hotels, Restaurants	79	13	6	1	500
Transport, Communications	68	7	5	5	8,200
Financial Services	35	14	37	12	33,900
Business Services	50	17	28	5	4,200
Public Administration, Defence	8	3	8	65	298,000
Education	39	32	23	7	19,700
Health	55	15	23	7	35,900
Other Services	68	16	14	2	1,500
All	66	14	16	4	5,800
Sizeclass					
3-49 employees	68	14	16	1	900
50-249 employees	19	0	27	39	20,700
250+ employees	2	0	8	88	382,700

Knowing the time spent on training courses (Figure 1 and Table 4) and the amount spent on direct costs (Table 7) one can calculate the average direct cost of training courses per day. Note that this includes both internal and external courses, and that direct costs include fees, travel costs and the costs of equipment and facilities for internal courses. The figures are presented in Table 8. The average direct cost of a training course per day was €288. Forty-one percent of courses cost under €100 per day and nearly a half between €100 and €499 per day. Eleven percent cost over €500 per day. Public administration, financial services and health had a relatively high percentage of expensive courses. In general, smaller companies, and sectors

dominated by small companies (e.g. construction and hotels/restaurants), had lower average course costs.

Table 8
Direct Costs per Training Course Day
(Percentage of Companies in Each Range)

Division	<€100	€100-€499	€500+	Average
Manufacturing, Utilities, Mining	41	43	16	363
Construction	38	56	6	215
Wholesale, Retail	44	45	11	225
Hotels, Restaurants	67	25	8	151
Transport, Communications,	28	57	15	314
Financial Services	32	49	19	578
Business Services	32	56	12	291
Public Administration, Defence	27	53	20	428
Education	55	34	11	822
Health	32	50	18	405
Other Services	44	42	14	214
All	41	48	11	288
Sizeclass				
3-49 employees	40	48	12	252
50-249 employees	41	46	13	531
250+ employees	40	45	15	505
Private Sector	41	48	11	270
Public Sector	34	48	18	1590

Note: The average cost per day in the public sector seems implausibly high. It may reflect expensive, long-duration courses that are taken by employees outside working hours.

We can also calculate the average total cost per participant on training courses (€1,166) and the average total cost per day of training courses as €18. Finally, it is important in considering figures on training course costs to remember that these are the costs paid by companies. To the extent that some courses are subsidised, either explicitly or indirectly, full costs are not measured by these figures. This point is particularly important in making international comparisons of costs – see such comparisons later in this report.

Non-Training Companies

As shown in Table 1, just over half of the companies provided some CVT for some of their employees in 2005. Thus, 49% of companies did not provide any CVT in 2005. All companies were asked if they had carried out any training in 2004 and if they intended to do so in 2006. Fifty-eight percent said 'no' in 2004, and 69% in 2006. Thus, the survey showed no evidence of a trend to increased training by companies. However, examining the percentages for training courses did show a small increase from 33% in 2004, to 36% in 2005, to 39% in 2006. Such a projected increase must, it should be noted, be taken with a certain amount of scepticism as companies typically have a tendency to be optimistic about future plans for training.

Companies that had provided no training were asked for their reasons. These are set out in Table 9. Companies were allowed to answer 'yes' to up to three of the eight reasons suggested in the questionnaire. Table 9 shows clearly that the predominant reason, cited by a large proportion of companies that did not train, was that the existing skills of staff met the companies' needs. The second reason, given by a quarter of the companies, was that the preferred strategy of the company was to recruit persons with the required skills. Time constraints (17%) and the cost of training courses (11%) were the next most commonly cited reasons. Difficulties in assessing needs (4%) and lack of suitable courses (4%) were mentioned by only a small percentage of non-training companies. There is a clear message from these findings. Many companies do not see a need to train their existing staff. This reason seems a much bigger barrier to attempts to up-skill employees than issues of cost, course availability or time constraints.

Table 9
Reasons for Not Training

Reason	%
Existing Skills Match Needs	83
Strategy to Recruit Persons with Required Skills	28
High Workloads, Limited Time	17
High Costs of Training Courses	11
Difficulty in Assessing Needs	4
Lack of Suitable Courses	4
Focus on Apprentice Training	4
Major Training Effort in Previous Year	2

There were some sectoral differences in the answers. For example, in construction a relatively higher percentage (still only 10%) referred to focussing on the training of apprentices. Ten percent of organisations in the education and other services sectors referred to a lack of suitable training courses as a reason. In general, small companies were more likely to cite the cost of training courses than larger companies, but the percentage was still only 11% of small companies.

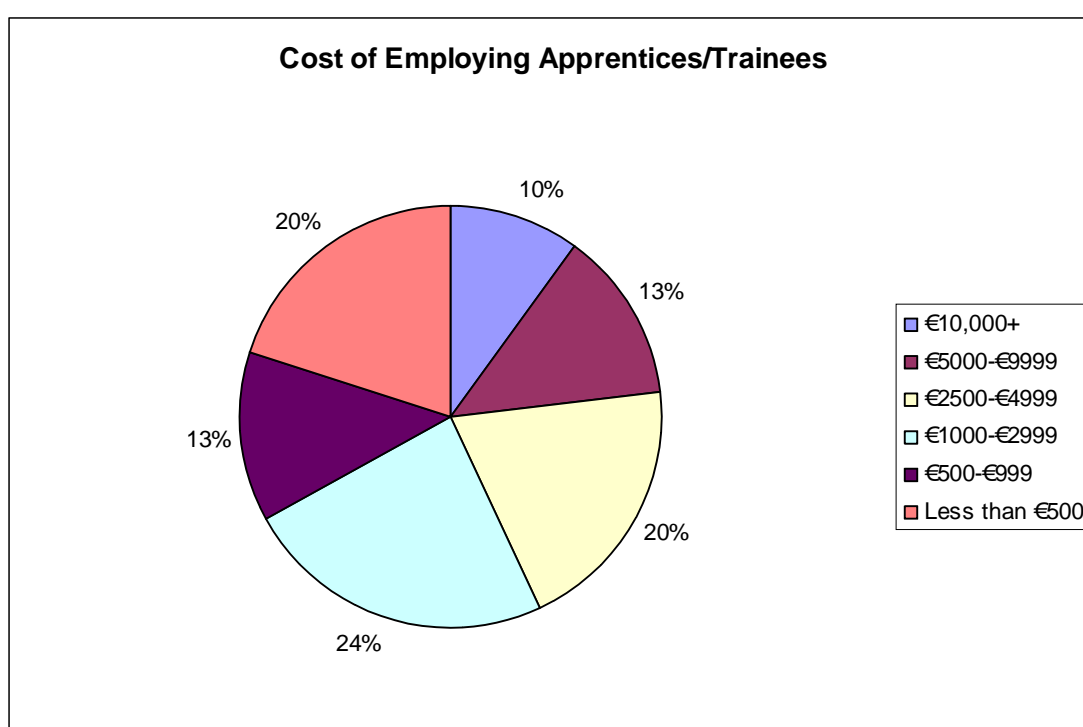
Apprentices/Trainees

Although the survey was designed to gather information on continuing vocational training, it did ask a couple of questions about the other employees of the organisation: apprentices and trainees with a special training contract.

Seventeen percent of companies had at least one apprentice/trainee, with 7% having one, 6% having two or three and 4% having four or more. On average, there were 0.7 apprentices/trainees per company. This number rose to 3.1 for medium-sized companies and 16 for large ones. The construction sector was more likely to have apprentices/trainees; 34% of companies, which resulted in an average of 1.1 per company for the sector. Manufacturing also employed a relatively large number of apprentices/trainees; on average one per company, with 23% of companies employing at least one. Education, wholesale/retail and transport/communications were sectors where relatively few companies employed apprentices/trainees.

Companies were also asked about the cost of employing apprentices/trainees (this question only relates to companies employing apprentices/trainees). The results are presented in Figure 4. Ten percent spent over €10,000 in 2005 and another 33% spent from €2,500 to €9,999. A little over a third (37%) spent between €500 and €2,500, while the remaining 20% spent less than €500. On average, across all companies, the expenditure on apprenticeship was €475.

Figure 4



Comparisons with Previous Surveys

CVTS3 contained similar questions to the two previous CVT surveys carried out in 1993 and 1999. In the Irish case, the main difference in CVTS3 was that it also covered the public sector and companies employing between 3 and 9 persons. It was also much more reliable in that it obtained responses from 4,500 companies compared to the sample of 400 in CVTS2. In order to make comparisons with earlier years, the CSO has prepared analyses excluding companies employing 3 to 9 persons and the

public sector. These comparisons with CVTS1 and CVTS2 are presented in this section. Table 10 presents a summary of the main indicators for the three surveys.

Table 10
Main Indicators of Training 1993, 1999, 2005⁶

Indicator	1993	1999	2005
Percentage of Companies Training			
- Total	77	79	70
- Training Courses	64	56	56
- On-the-Job Training	56	71	45
- Conferences, Seminars	39	55	44
- Self, Open Learning	20	19	24
Percentage of Employees on Training Courses			
- Total Companies	43	41	49
- Small	25	28	25
- Medium	40	41	44
- Large	55	57	68
- Males	42	40	46
- Females	44	43	53
Average number of days on Training Courses			
- Total employees	1.7	2.4	1.7
- Males	1.6	2.3	N/A
- Females	1.7	2.5	N/A
Expenditure on Training Courses	€140m	€364m	€51m
Percentage of Payroll on Training Courses	1.5	2.4	2.5
No. of Employees on Training Courses ('000)	204	251	409
Cost per participant on training courses	€688	€1452	€2080
Cost per day of training courses (over all employees)	€177	€251	€604
Average Duration per participant on Training Courses (Days)	3.9	5.8	3.5
Total Days on Training Courses ('000)	793	1,444	1,431
Cost per day of participants on training courses	€176	€250	€95

⁶ Note: Relates to Companies employing 10 or more in industry and private services.

Broadly, the results of the three surveys seems compatible. The percentage of companies with training courses, the percentage with any form of training, the percentage of staff on training courses, and the average number of days on training courses have remained roughly comparable. However, it would be unwise to regard any changes in the figures between the three surveys as definite. It is not possible to be sure that they do not reflect the changing survey methodology and sample size/response over the three surveys.

In relation to spending, however, it seems clear that there has been a very considerable increase over the period. This is partly due to the expansion in the number of persons employed. Thus in 1999, 41% of staff on training courses represented 251,000 persons out of 612,000 persons employed in the sectors and size groups covered in the survey. By 2005, 49% of staff represented 409,000 persons out of 835,000 employed. In other words, total employment had risen by 36% in the 'population' covered by the survey between 1999 and 2005. The number of persons attending training courses rose from 251,000 to 409,000 over the same period – an increase of 63%. Cost per participant rose from €1,452 to €2,080. The average number of days spent on training courses by those who did participate was 5.8 in 1999 and 3.5 in 2005 – an implausibly large fall. But looking just at the 2005 figures we can see that the average cost per day of those participating in training courses was €95 (i.e. €2,082 ÷ 3.5). Even allowing for sampling errors in the 1999 data, this is a large increase compared to the €250 per day figure for 1999.⁷

On average, companies spent €604 per employee on training courses, resulting in a total spend of €851 million, in 2005, compared to total expenditure of €364 million in 1999. The number of employees attending training courses rose by 63% but total expenditure rose by 133%, over the period. It is also interesting to see that despite this large increase in expenditure, the percentage of labour costs spent on training courses remained broadly the same at 2.5% compared to 2.4% in 1999. This suggests

⁷ Note that it is coincidence that this figure of €250 is nearly identical to the figure of average training course cost per day per employee – also shown in the Table.

that the rise in the cost of training course expenditure was in line with the general rise in labour costs over the period.

Finally, a few further comparisons are indicated in the table. Firstly, it can be seen that the percentage of females attending training courses was greater than the male percentage in each of the three years of the survey. In relation to the differences between small and large companies, it may be noted that over the three surveys the percentage of employees attending training courses in medium and large-sized companies increased, but the percentage in small companies remained the same.

International Comparisons

Finally, we report on international comparisons of the survey results. As at present, Eurostat has published some key results on its web-site but has emphasised that these published results are still provisional. It has not given an EU average of the figures. Nevertheless, the CSO extracted four of the statistics for its publication in December 2007. These were training course costs as a percentage of total labour costs, the percentage of companies providing training courses, the percentage providing other forms of training and the percentage providing any form of training.⁸ In Table 11 we simply show the highest and lowest percentages, the Irish figure and where Ireland ranks in comparison to the other countries (there are 23 countries shown in the provisional results).

Table 11
International Comparisons of Key CVT Indicators

Country Position	% of Labour Costs on Training Courses	% of Companies with Training Courses	% of Companies with other training	% of Companies with any training
Highest %	2.5	81	86	90
Lowest %	.6	19	13	21
Ireland %	2.5	55	61	69
Ireland Rank	1 st	10 th	6 th	10 th

⁸ Note Irish figures use the narrower scope, i.e. 10+ employees and exclude public admin, education and health, to be comparable with EU figures in the Table.

In terms of the percentage of companies providing any training, Ireland ranked 10th. Ireland is above average at 69%, but significantly below the top scoring country (the UK) with 90%. Our ranking for training courses was also 10th, with 55% of companies, compared to Denmark's highest percentage of 81%. Ireland ranked higher in relation to other forms of training. The 61% of companies providing such training in Ireland put us at 6th spot behind the UK with 89%. However, when it comes to spending on training courses, our expenditure of 2.5% of labour costs put us at 'number one'. Other countries with rates of two percent were Denmark (2.2%), Luxembourg (2.2%), the Netherlands (2.2%), Sweden (2.1%) and Slovakia (2%). Unfortunately, we do not have any data to 'get behind' these figures. Thus, it could be that training course costs in Ireland are relatively high (in line with Ireland's prices generally being among the highest in Europe). Or it could be that in other countries training courses are more subsidised so that the cost to companies is less. It may be worth noting, however, that Ireland's percentage of labour costs (2.4%) was ranked fifth in the 1999 CVTS2 survey so that Ireland's relatively high level seems fairly robust. In fact, Ireland's percentage hardly changed between 1999 and 2005 whereas those in the UK, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden all declined.

