

Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2007

Results from the Quarterly National Household Survey 2007

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Executive Summary

There is a strong policy interest in up-skilling the Irish workforce. 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 Government, through FÁS, Skillnets and others, has increased investment in training of the employed in recent years. 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 2007 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 2007, 253,200 (13%) 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), 153,000 (9%) received some education/training. This represents an increase from 8.6% in 2006 and 7.9% in 2005.

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

- Females (13%) 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 4% 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 (17%) and associate professionals (14%) were much more likely to be in receipt of education/training than production operatives (3%) and craftspersons (4%).

The results show a continued increase in the number of employed adults (25-64) receiving training during the 4 weeks covered in the survey. Between 2005 and 2007 the number rose by 26,000 from 127,000 in 2005 to 153,000 in 2007 (an increase of 20%). However, 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 continuing training 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 2007 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 2007; 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 earlier 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 is 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 survey, there will be an element of possible sampling error in the results – in

¹ For example, *Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2006*, R. Fox, FÁS 2007.

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.

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 a 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 2007

A total of 188,900 persons whose Principal Economic Status was at work received education/training (ET) in the four weeks prior to the survey. This represented 10% of those in employment. If we use the ILO definition of employment, the number in education/training was 253,200 and this was 13% of all employed persons. Thus there were 64,300 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	28,400	20	16,500	15	45,000	18
25 – 34	25,000	8	37,000	14	62,000	11
35 – 44	18,800	7	23,400	12	42,300	9
45 – 54	10,400	5	19,100	12	29,500	8
55 – 64	5,100	4	5,000	6	10,100	5
(25 – 64)	(59,300)	(6)	(84,500)	(12)	(143,900)	(9)
Total	87,800	8	101,100	13	188,900	10

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 13% 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. One-fifth (20%) of young males received some education/training. Male participation rates then fell sharply to 8% 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 15% of 15-24 year olds to 14% of 25 – 34 year olds and then down to 6% 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	2,000	2	2,700	5	4,700	3
Junior	4,200	2	5,600	7	9,800	4
Leaving	13,400	6	16,800	9	30,300	7
Post-Leaving	6,000	5	7,700	10	13,700	7
Third-Level	35,600	12	54,400	18	90,000	15
Other/Not Stated	2,600	7	1,900	10	4,500	8
Total	63,800	7	89,200	13	153,000	9

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 of 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 quarter of that rate (4%) for Junior Certificate employees. This pattern is 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	1,200	1	700	8	1,900	2
Manufacturing	8,900	5	5,100	7	13,900	6
Construction	7,000	4	700	6	7,700	4
Wholesale and Retail	5,900	5	7,900	8	13,800	7
Hotels and Restaurants	3,600	10	4,300	9	7,800	9
Transport, Storage & Communications	4,800	6	2,100	9	6,900	6
Financial Intermediation	4,500	15	7,000	17	11,500	16
Other Business Services	10,500	12	10,000	15	20,500	13
Public Admin. & Defence	4,900	10	6,100	13	11,000	11
Education	4,500	13	16,600	19	21,100	17
Health & Social work	4,400	13	23,800	16	28,100	15
Other Community & Social Services	2,200	6	3,300	9	5,500	7
Total	63,800	7	89,200	13	152,900	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 had higher levels of education/training than others. The highest rates of education/training were for employees in health/social work (15%), education (17%), and financial services (16%). The two sectors with the lowest rates of education/training were agriculture (2%) 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	10,800	6	10,800	13	21,500	8
Professionals	15,000	14	20,200	20	35,100	17
Assoc. Professionals	7,800	12	14,600	16	22,500	14
Clerical	5,100	10	18,400	12	23,400	11
Craft/Skilled	8,100	4	1,000	10	9,100	4
Personal Services	5,500	8	13,700	13	19,300	11
Sales	3,000	6	5,300	7	8,300	7
Operatives	3,900	3	800	3	4,700	3
Unskilled	4,900	5	4,200	7	9,200	6
Total	63,800	7	89,200	13	152,900	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 (17% and 14% respectively). The lowest rates of education/training were found among production operatives (3%), craftpersons (4%) and unskilled labourers (6%).

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	30,900	34,000	48
35 – 44	11,600	31,600	27
45 – 54	7,500	23,400	24
55 – 64	2,100	8,400	20
Total	52,100	97,400	35

A total of 52,100 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 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, and from 2002 to 2007 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.⁴ Since that time there has been a steady increase of about half a percentage point each year up to 9.1% in 2007.

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

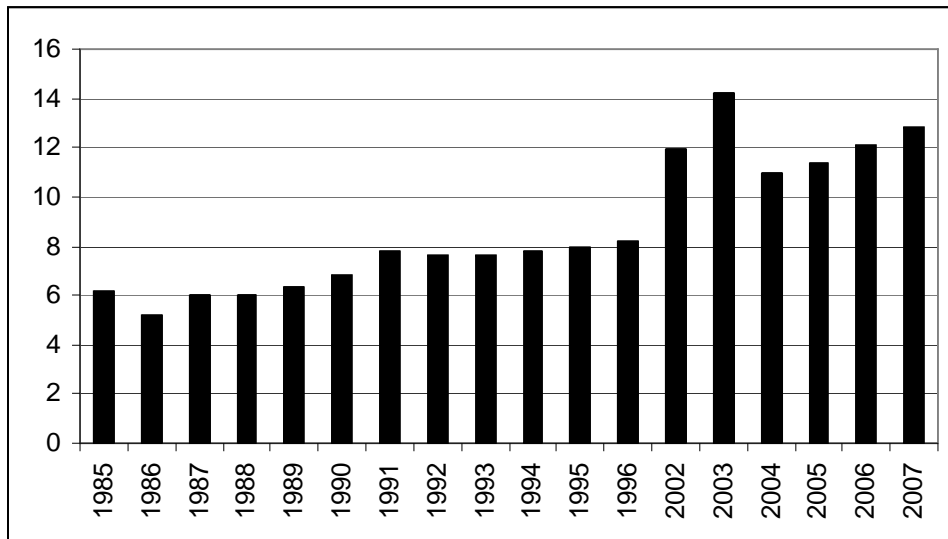
Age Group	1991	1996	2002	2003*	2004	2005	2006	2007
25 – 34	6.5	8.4	10.1	11.7	9.1	9.6	10.6	11.8
35 – 44	4.7	6.5	8.9	10.2	7.4	8.2	8.7	8.9
45 – 54	3.0	3.9	7.0	9.1	6.3	6.7	7.8	7.8
55 – 64	1.5	1.7	4.1	6.8	4.1	5.1	4.8	4.6
Total	4.6	6.1	8.3	10.0	7.3	7.9	8.6	9.1

*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.

⁴ The CSO also revised figures for 2002 to 2006 more recently, but the revisions made only marginal differences to the results. The results published in the previous reports have not been changed here.

Figure 1
Percentage Employed who Received Education/Training 1985 – 2007



Summary Conclusions

This report has provided data on the participation of employed persons in education and training during 2007. About 188,900 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 10% of the total such employed. Considering employed adults (i.e. aged 25 – 64) on an ILO basis the percentage was 9%. Looking at differences in the receipt of education/training between types of employees (aged 25 – 64) showed:

- Females (13%) 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 4% 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 (17%) and associate professionals (14%) 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 a steady increase in participation rates over the last few years.