Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2004

Results from the Quarterly National Household Survey 2004

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Executive Summary

There is a strong policy interest in up-skilling the Irish workforce. The Enterprise Strategy Group, the Task Force on Life Long Learning, the European Commission and FÁS itself among others have identified the need for stronger measures to enhance the education and training of the employed. Statistics can help to provide the basis for appropriate policy-making.

This report presents statistics from the 2004 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 up-dates previous reports by FÁS on the same subject.

Of the 1.7 million employed persons in 2004, 143,000 (8%) 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), 7% received education/training.

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

- Females (9%) were more likely to receive education/training than males (6%).

- Younger employees received more education/training than older employees (8% of 25-34 year olds compared to 4% of 55-64 year olds).

- Better educated employees were much more likely to receive education/training (14% of third-level graduates compared to 2% of those with a Junior Cert).

- Employees in public, business and financial services were more likely to participate than employees in manufacturing or construction.

- Professionals (15%) and associate professionals (12%) were much more likely to be in receipt of education/training than craftpersons (3%) or production operatives (3%).

These results bear out the particular need for further action for poorly-educated, low-skilled, employees as emphasised in the Enterprise Strategy Group's report. FÁS is expanding its programmes for training of the employed in 2005 with a special focus on training of the low-skilled.

Finally, the results showed a decline in overall participation rates compared to 2003, which, however, was higher than earlier years. This fall is unexplained, but should be treated with caution as a possible once-off event which may be reversed in 2005.

Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2004

Introduction

FAS has regularly monitored the participation of employed persons in education/training. This reflects the policy interest in ensuring that employees up-date 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 up-dates a similar report, prepared by FAS in 2004, in respect of data from the 2003 Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS).[1] This report refers to the situation in 2004 and is based on data kindly supplied by the CSO on special request.[2]

While surveys such as the EU-wide Continuing Vocational Training Survey provide data on company activities, the advantage of the QNHS is that it provides information on individuals. It thus permits analyses of the kinds of persons that do, and do not, receive education and training. FAS reports, including the Irish Labour Market Review 2004, have drawn attention to the differing rates of access of employees to education/training. The Enterprise Strategy Group's report noted that "most recent evidence on education and training of the employed suggests that there are particular problems in relation to the needs of low-skilled employed".[3] A regular monitoring of data on participation can help to assess the extent to which these problems are being tackled. The Report of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning noted an absence of consolidated quantitative information on participation in lifelong learning. This report helps to provide input to meet such information needs.

Methodology

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) is 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

[1] 'Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2003', R. Fox, FAS, 2004.
[2] I would like to thank Michael Quinlan and Caroline Barrett of the CSO for supplying the data.
[3] 'Ahead of the Curve', Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group, Forfas, 2004, Page 78.

quarter of 2004. Results for earlier years are also given for comparison. However, it is important to note that exact comparisons over the time period are not possible as the questions used in the survey changed in 2003.[4] This change was based on the experience of the CSO in conducting a 'special module' on lifelong learning within the QNHS in 2003 and changes in requirements at EU level. In previous years a single main question had been asked "Have you received any education or training in the previous four weeks". In the 2003 survey two questions were asked "Have you been a student or an apprentice during the past 4 weeks" and "Have you attended any courses, seminars, conferences or private lessons outside the regular education system during the past 4 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 question 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 report published by FÁS in 2004. The CSO asked the same two questions in 2004 and the same presentation is used here.

All 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 – particularly in relation to small numbers. 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 respondents' 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 (ET) 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-

[4] Also note that results prior to 1998 relate to the annual Labour Force Survey, the predecessor to the QNHS.

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 2004

A total of 194,600 employed (ILO) persons received education/training (ET) in the four weeks prior to the survey. This represented 11% of those in employment. Considering only persons whose Principal Economic Status is at work, 142,800 of these received ET; 8% of the total at work. Thus, the ILO definition includes 51,800 persons who received ET 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	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
15-24	24,200	18	13,000	13	37,200	16
25-34	19,200	7	24,400	10	43,700	8
35-44	15,900	6	16,500	9	32,400	7
45-54	9,600	5	12,400	9	22,000	6
55-64	4,100	3	3,400	5	7,500	4
(25-64)	48,900	6	56,700	9	105,600	7
Total	**73,100**	**7**	**69,700**	**10**	**142,800**	**8**

The data is presented in ten-year age ranges and for men, women, and in total. Two features stand out from Table 1; males were less likely than females to receive education/training, and education/training participation rates, especially for males, declined significantly for older age groups. Thus, 10% of females received ET compared to 7% of males. The strong concentration of ET among employees in the 15-24 year old age group is demonstrated in the Table. Nearly one fifth of young

males received some ET compared to 13% of young females. Male participation rates then fell sharply to 7% of 25- 34 year olds, and then steadily to 3% of the oldest age group (55-64). The age differences for females were less: dropping from 13% to 10% of 25-34 year olds and then down to 5%.

Table 2

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25 – 64) by Education Qualifications and Gender

Education	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	1,900	1	1,100	2	3,000	2
Junior	3,400	2	2,900	4	6,400	2
Leaving	9,700	5	9,700	6	19,400	5
Post-Leaving Cert.	3,900	4	6,500	9	10,600	6
Third-Level	31,500	12	38,900	16	70,400	14
Other/Not-Started	400	3	800	7	1,200	5
Total	**50,800**	**6**	**60,100**	**9**	**110,900**	**7**

Table 2 and the remaining tables of this report will relate to the 25-64 age group and ILO-employed status. Table 2 analyses participation in ET according to the educational qualifications of the employee. A very clear pattern emerges whereby those employees with the highest levels of qualifications received much more ET than those with lower qualifications. Thus 14% of third-level qualified employees received ET compared to much less than half that rate (5%) for Leaving Cert. employees and less than one seventh of that rate (2%) for Junior Cert. employees. These types of differences applied both for men and for women.

An alternative, striking, way of expressing the results in Table 2 is to note that nearly two in every three (63%) of all ET participants were third-level graduates, whereas these make up only one third of employees. There were nearly a quarter of a million male employees aged 35 or more with Primary or Junior certification in 2003. Only

4,100 of these were in receipt of education/training during the four weeks up to the survey.

Table 3

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25-64) by Sector and Gender

Sector	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Agriculture	800	1	500	5	1,400	2
Manufacturing	9,300	6	4,700	6	14,100	6
Electricity, Gas, Water	700	7	200	8	900	7
Construction	3,300	2	900	10	4,100	3
Wholesale/Retail	3,800	4	4,000	4	7,800	4
Hotels, Restaurants	1,700	5	2,200	5	3,800	5
Transport, Storage, Communication	3,400	4	1,500	7	4,800	5
Financial Services	3,900	13	5,100	14	9,000	14
Other Business Services	7,200	10	7,500	13	14,700	11
Public Admin., Defence	5,000	11	3,900	11	8,900	11
Education	4,600	15	11,600	15	16,200	15
Health, Social Work	4,000	13	14,900	12	18,900	12
Other Services	2,500	7	2,700	7	5,200	7
Total	**50,800**	**6**	**60,100**	**9**	**110,900**	**7**

Note: A number of very small sectors are not reported above, but are included in the total figures.

Table 3 analyses the data on the basis of sector of industry. The figures show a varied pattern with the highest rates in the education and financial services at 15% and 14% respectively. Public administration, health and business services also had high rates. Manufacturing had a rate of 6%, which was above the rates of 4%-5% in wholesale/retail, hotels/restaurants and transport. The two sectors with the lowest rates were construction and agriculture. The importance of public sector education/training is apparent from the figures; 44,000 (40%) participants were in the three largely or exclusively publicly-run sectors whereas these sectors comprise only 23% of all 25-64 year old employees.

Table 4

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25 – 64) by Occupational Group and Gender

Occupation		Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	10,300	5	8,400	10	18,600	7
Professionals	14,100	14	15,300	17	29,400	15
Assoc. Profs.	6,100	9	12,300	14	18,400	12
Clerical	2,600	7	10,500	8	13,100	7
Craft/Skilled	5,100	3	1,200	11	6,200	3
Personal Services	4,900	9	6,100	7	11,000	8
Sales	1,900	5	2,600	4	4,400	4
Operatives	3,100	3	700	3	3,800	3
Other Unskilled	2,600	3	3,300	6	6,000	4
Total	**50,800**	**6**	**60,100**	**9**	**110,900**	**7**

Table 4 breaks down the data according to occupational group. Highest rates of participation in education/training were found among professionals (15%) and associate professionals/technicians (12%). Managers, clerical staff and persons engaged in personal services had a rate of 7%-8%. Low rates were found among more manual-type occupations including craftpersons, operatives and un-skilled. The low-rate for craftworkers is, perhaps, noteworthy. However, it must be remembered that a high proportion of young persons in such occupations engage in extensive education/training at a young age and have, therefore, already acquired a recognised qualification. In total, of nearly half a million manual-types employees, only 16,000 received any ET in the period.

Overall, there was a very clear pattern of higher female participation rates in the comparisons. This was true even when the data was broken down by age (Table 1) educational qualification (Table 2), industrial sector (Table 3) or occupational group (Table 4).

As explained in the methodology section, two questions were asked in the survey to ascertain participation in education/training. It is not intended to present extensive results for each question. However, Table 5 presents a summary of the responses.

Table 5

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

Age	Students/Apprentices No.	Other Courses No.	% Students/ Apprentices of Total
25-34	23,900	27,400	47
35-44	10,400	24,400	30
45-54	6,700	17,200	28
55-64	1,500	6,600	19
Total	**42,500**	**75,600**	**36**

A total of 42,500 employed adults (ILO-basis, 25 – 64 age group) stated that they were a student or apprentice during the previous four weeks. Considerably more than that number (75,600) undertook other courses outside the regular education system. The total of these two methods (118,100) exceeds the total number of persons taking any course (110,900) by 7,200. This latter number is, therefore, the number of persons who participated in both types of education/training during the period.

A feature of Table 5 is the changing balance of education/training type for different age groups. Whereas 47% of participation of the younger age group (25-34) was as students/apprentices, this percentage had fallen to 19% 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 for 1991, 1996, 2002, 2003 and 2004 in summary form. There was a steady increase over the years until 2004. In 2004, however, there has been a significant drop in the rate of participation. There is no obvious explanation for this fall and the CSO have

confirmed that the methodology did not change between 2003 and 2004. The fall applies across all the data (eg. gender and age groups) and, indeed, for all adults, not just the employed.[5]

Table 6

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

Age Group	1991	1998	2002	2003*	2004
25-34	6.5	8.4	10.1	11.7	9.1
9.1	4.7	6.5	8.9	10.2	7.4
45-54	3.0	3.9	7.0	9.1	6.3
55-64	1.5	1.7	4.1	6.8	4.1
Total 25-64	**4.6**	**6.1**	**8.3**	**10.0**	**7.3**

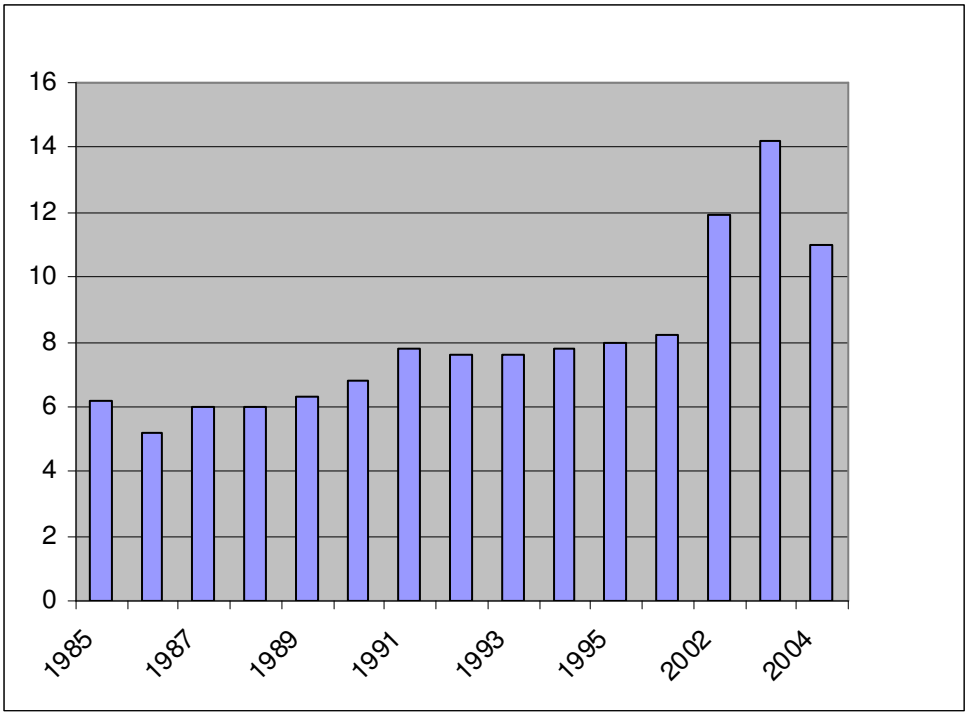
***Note: Change of definition in 2003.**

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 higher levels in the last few years – though with a decline in 2004.

[5] The Eurostat website records that the overall percentage of the Irish population aged 25-64 engaged in education/training over the previous 4 weeks declined from 9.7% in 2003 to 7.2% in 2004.

Figure 1

% Employed who Received Education/Training 1985-2004



Note: From 1991 based on ILO employment status, prior to that PES. Includes all age groups. Further changes of definition in 2003.

Summary Conclusions

This report has provided data on the participation of employed persons in education and training during 2004. About 142,800 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 8% of the total such employed. Considering only adults at work (i.e. aged 25-64) the percentage was 7%. Looking at differences in receipt of education/training between types of employees (aged 25-64) showed:

- Females (9%) were more likely to receive education/training than males (6%).

- Younger employees received more education/training than older employees (8% of 25-34 year olds compared to 4% of 55-64 year olds).

- Better educated employees were much more likely to receive education/training (14% of third-level graduates compared to 2% of those with a Junior Cert).

- Employees in public, business and financial services were more likely to participate than employees in manufacturing or construction.

- Professionals (15%) and associate professionals (12%) were much more likely to be in receipt of education/training than craftpersons (3%) or production operatives (3%).

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 decline in overall participation rates compared to 2003, which, however, was higher than earlier years. This fall is unexplained, but should be treated with caution as a possible once-off event which may be reversed in 2005.

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- Employment Services Customer Satisfaction Survey 2005, R. Sen.
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2004

- National Contact Centre Employer Customer Survey (January – June 2004), R. Sen.
- 2003 Follow-Up Survey of FAS Participants, R. Sen.
- Irish Labour Market Review 2004, B. McCormick.
- Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2003, R. Fox.
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- Occupational Employment Forecasts by Region for 2010, FAS/ESRI Manpower Forecasting Studies No. 11, ESRI. (available from ESRI).
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- Soft Skills Development in the Irish Economy. K. McGinn.