

# This is FET

## Lifelong Learning 2021



**SOLAS**  
learning works



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**Further  
Education  
& Training**

A Report by the  
Data Analytics Unit in SOLAS  
June 2023

### **Authors**

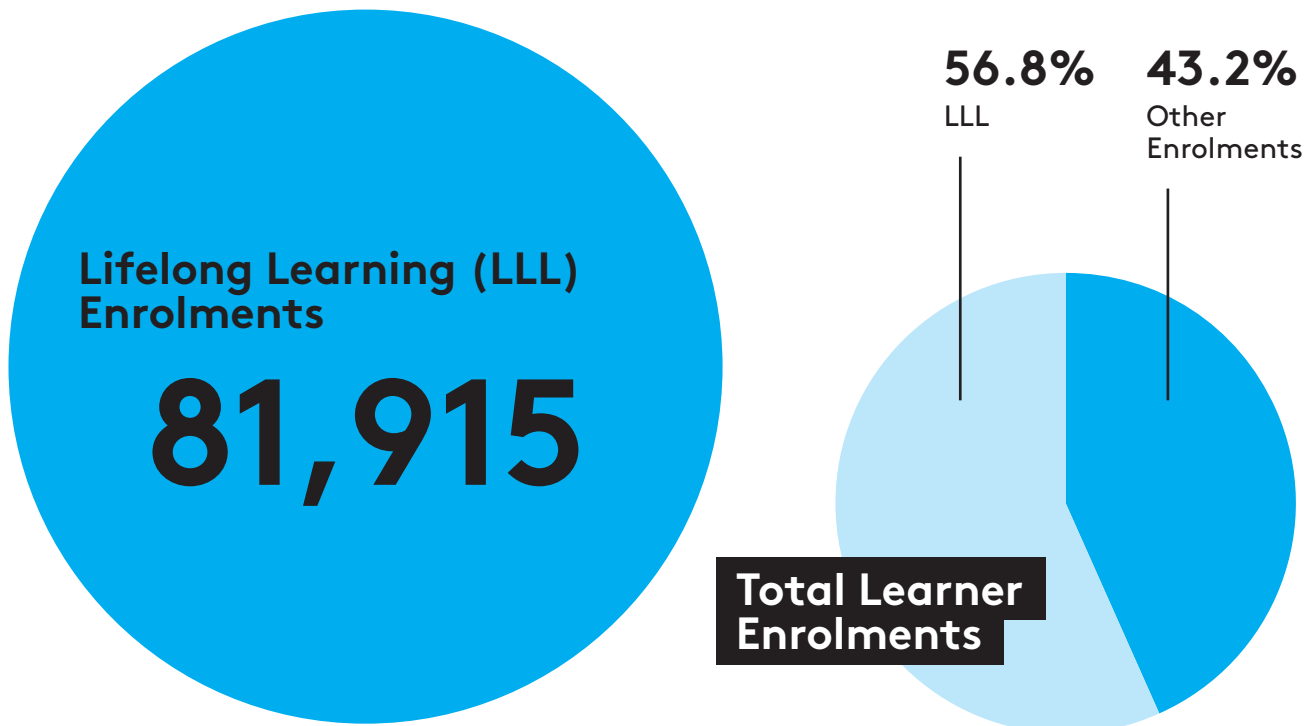
Amelia Dulee-Kinsolving  
Selen Guerin

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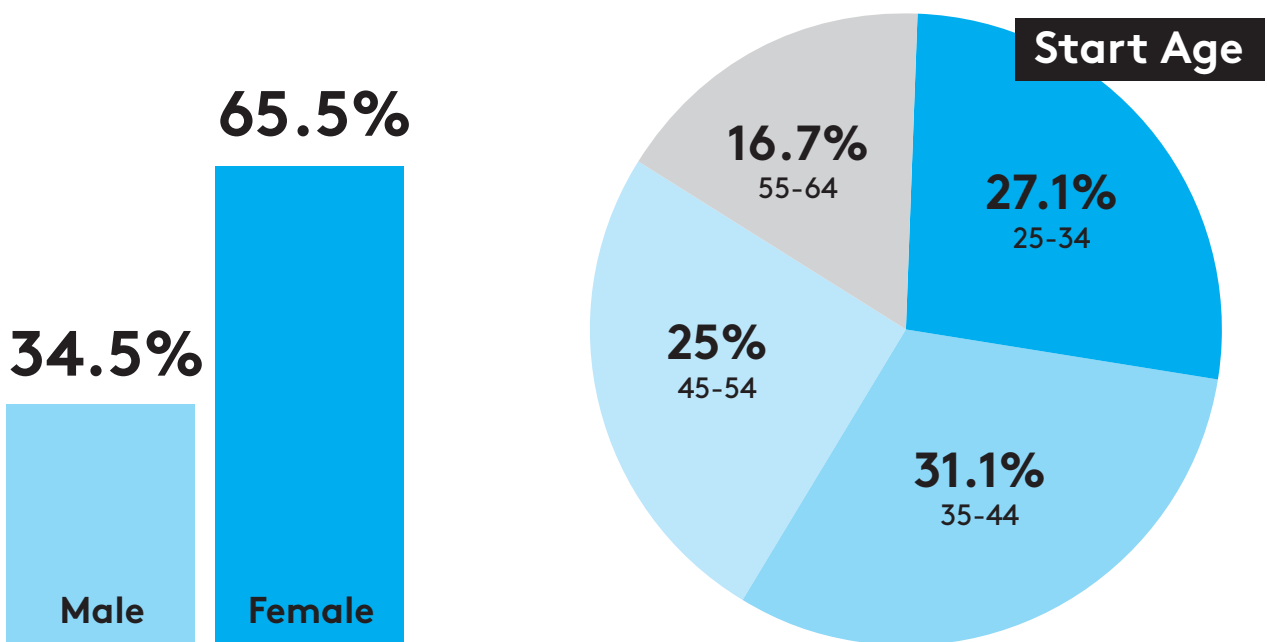
All data is sourced from the Programme and Learner Support Systems (PLSS) database. PLSS collects and processes the personal data of the FET learners who are enrolled in SOLAS funded programmes. This report excludes apprenticeship and eCollege provision.

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

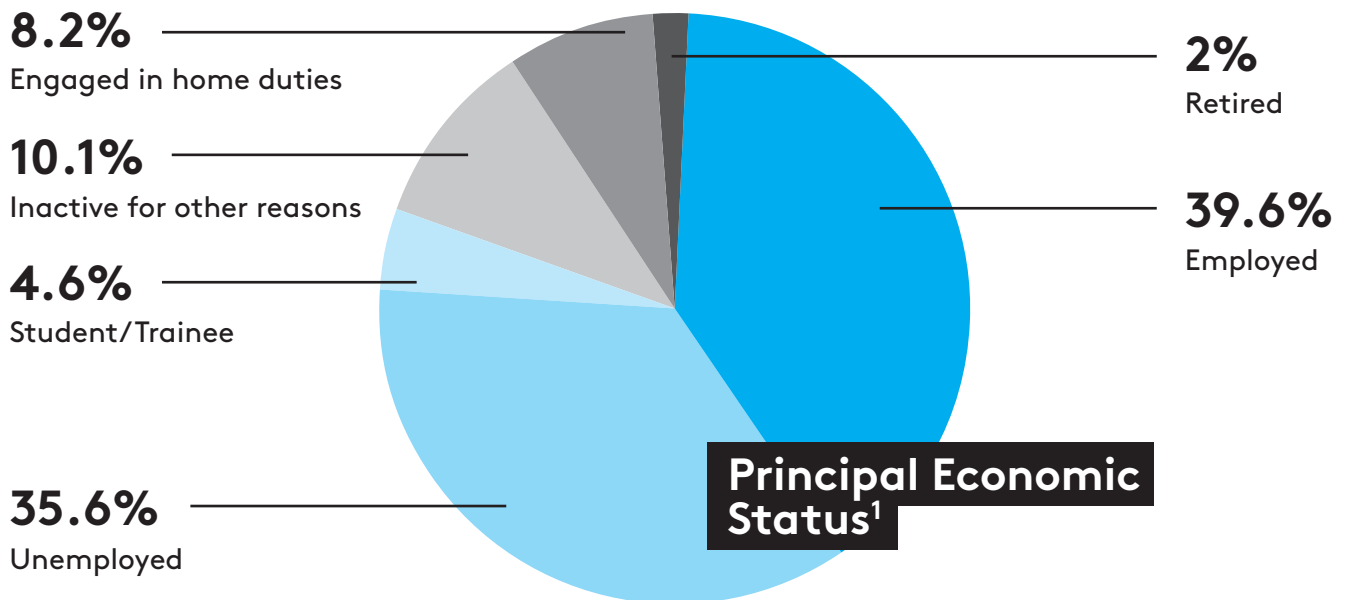
# Enrolments



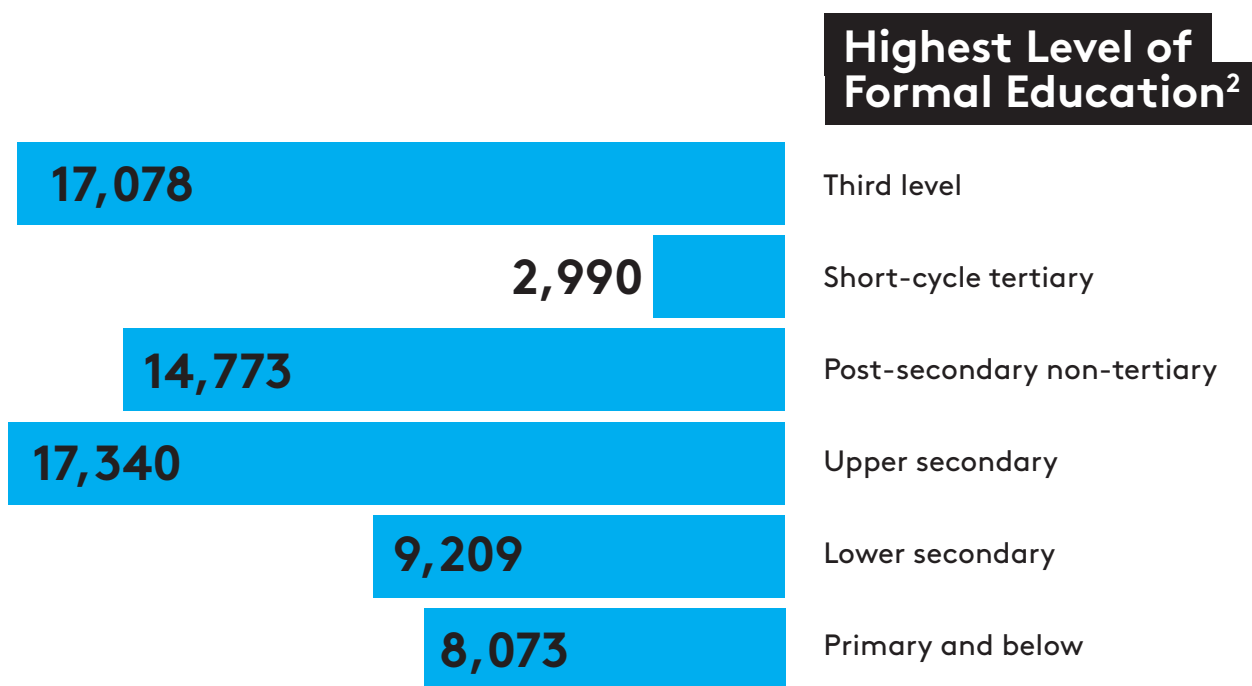
In 2021, there were 81,915 Lifelong Learning (LLL) enrolments, representing 56.8% of the total learner enrolments. Females made up 65.5% of all LLL enrolments.



LLL enrolments were fairly evenly distributed among the age bands, with those aged 55-64 having the lowest percentage of LLL enrolments.



Over one third (39.6%) of LLL enrolments were employed prior to enrolment, whereas 35.6% were unemployed. The remaining (24.8%) LLL enrolments were inactive prior to enrolment.



For LLL enrolments, 17,282 (21.1%) had a lower secondary education or below when enrolling in a FET course, whereas 17,340 (21.2%) had an upper secondary education. The figure also shows that 14,773 (18%) of LLL enrolments 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, 2,990 (3.7%) of LLL enrolments had a short-cycle tertiary education and 17,078 (20.9%) of LLL enrolments had a third level degree education.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this figure is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous principal economic status was captured. The principal economic status response rate for LLL enrolments was 83.5%.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that this figure is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous levels of education were captured. The highest level of formal education response rate was 84.8%.

# Definition of Terms

## **Enrolments**

Enrolments are defined as learners who are on course or have completed a course during 2021.

## **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.

## **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 2021.

## **Lifelong Learning (LLL)**

Lifelong Learning is based on the EU measure of lifelong learning, the number of adults that are 25-64 years of age.

## **Non-NFQ Aligned courses**

This includes completions with certification not aligned with the NFQ.

## **On Course**

On course refers to those learners who were still on course as of December 31st, 2021.

**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.



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