

December 2021

FET IN FOCUS 2021

A STUDY INTO  
FURTHER EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN  
IRELAND


# NON-IRISH NATIONALS IN FET

Based on Non-Irish Nationals  
in Further Education and  
Training in Ireland in 2020

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**SOLAS**  
learning works

Further  
Education  
& Training




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. Please note that apprenticeship and eCollege data are not included in this report.

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

# Non-Irish Nationals in FET

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"This course is a blessing in disguise as we are able to train and do what we love on a daily basis, plus we also learn."

Obi Johnson, Nigerian, Community Education  
Football Association of Ireland (FAI)-ETB Player  
Development course

# Key Findings

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## The FET sector is diverse.

- > In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector, approximately 78% Irish and 22% non-Irish.
- > Among the non-EU learner enrolments, 36.9% were nationals of Asia, 34.2% were nationals of Africa, 16.5% were nationals of the Americas, 11.6% were nationals of Europe and 0.7% were nationals of Oceania.

## FET provides a mechanism for the inclusion of Non-Irish nationals.

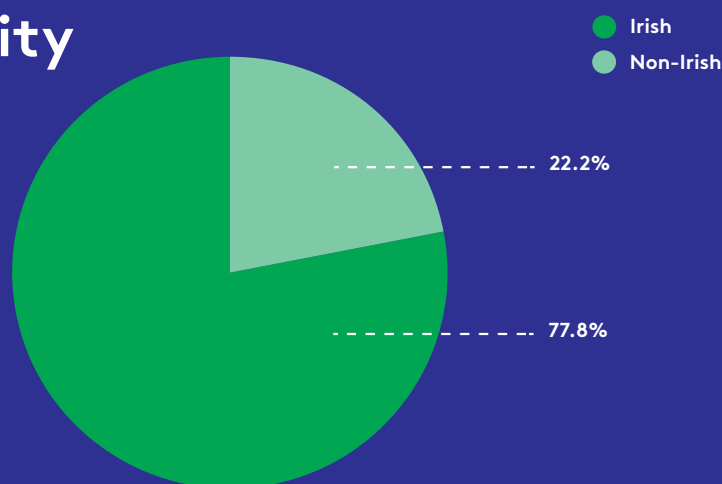
- > English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was one of the most popular courses among non-Irish learners, accounting for 58% of all non-Irish learner enrolments in 2020.
- > The unemployment rate among non-Irish nationals was significantly higher than among Irish nationals in 2020, with 37.8% of non-Irish nationals reporting they were unemployed upon enrolment in a FET course. This compared to 27.4% of Irish nationals reporting they were unemployed upon enrolment in a FET course.
- > Among non-EU nationals, the unemployment rate (40%) was approximately 4% higher than among UK (35.7%) and EU nationals (35.5%).
- > Among non-Irish nationals, 3.3% more learner enrolments reported they were engaged in home duties than among Irish nationals. Approximately, twice as many non-EU nationals reported they were engaged in home duties (11.8%) upon enrolment compared to EU (5.4%) and UK (6.6%) nationals.
- > The share of non-Irish nationals reporting they were inactive prior to enrolment was 10% lower than among Irish nationals who reported they were inactive prior to enrolment. However, among Irish nationals, 9.4% reported an inactive status as retired, whereas among non-Irish nationals, only 1.7% did.



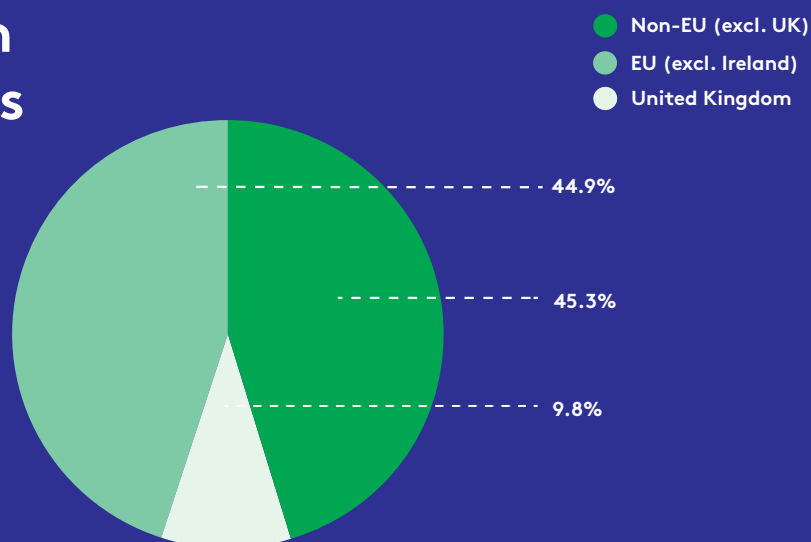
# Enrolments

In 2020, there were 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector.<sup>1</sup> Of these learner enrolments, 77.8% were Irish and 22.2% were non-Irish. Among the non-Irish learner enrolments, 44.9% were EU nationals, 45.3% were non-EU nationals and 9.8% were UK nationals. Among the Non-EU learner enrolments, 36.9% were nationals of Asia, 34.2% were nationals of Africa, 16.5% were nationals of the Americas, 11.6% were nationals of Europe and 0.7% were nationals of Oceania.

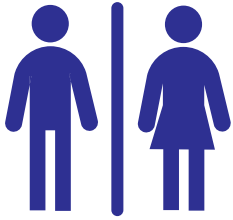
## Nationality



## Non-Irish Nationals

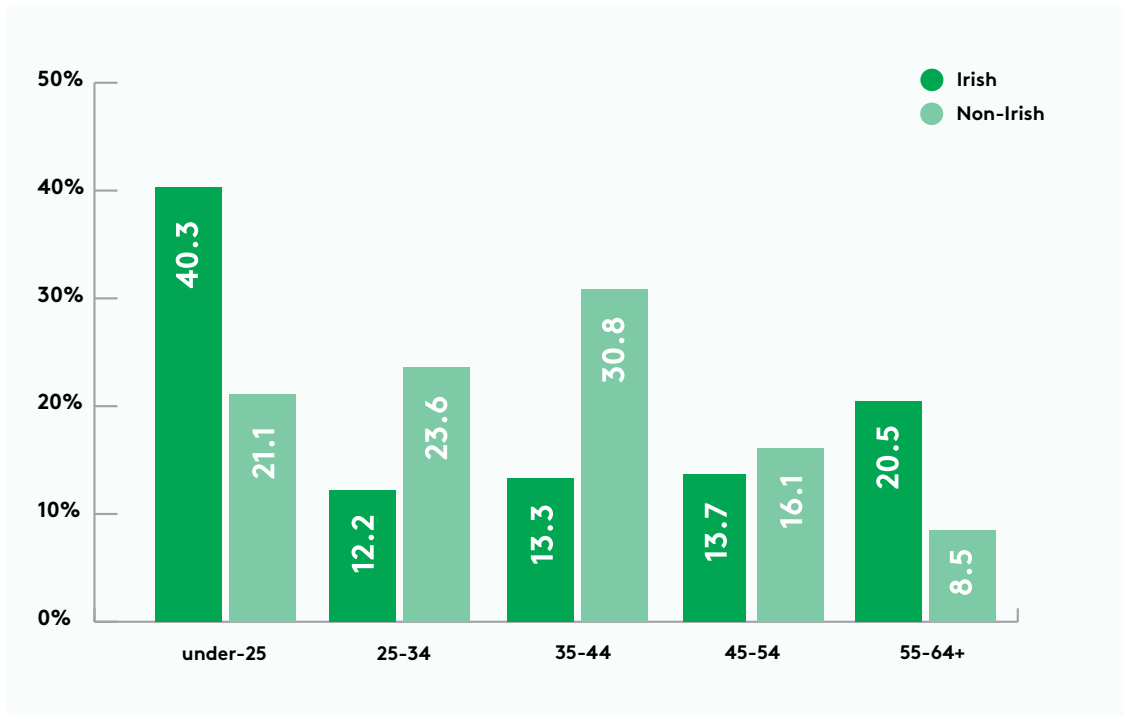


<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and only includes those cases where nationality was captured. The nationality response rate was 79.4% in 2020.



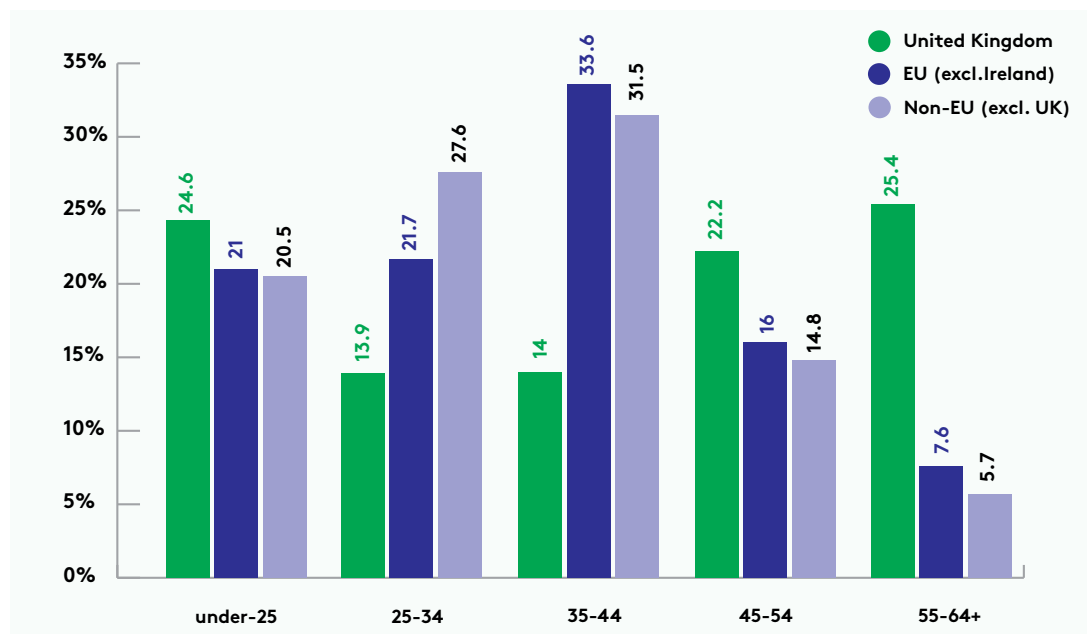
Among Irish learner enrolments, 61% were female and 39% were male, whereas among the non-Irish learner enrolments, 64.5% of FET learners were female and 35.5% were male. Therefore, there was a slightly higher proportion of females among non-Irish nationals, than among Irish nationals.

## Start Age



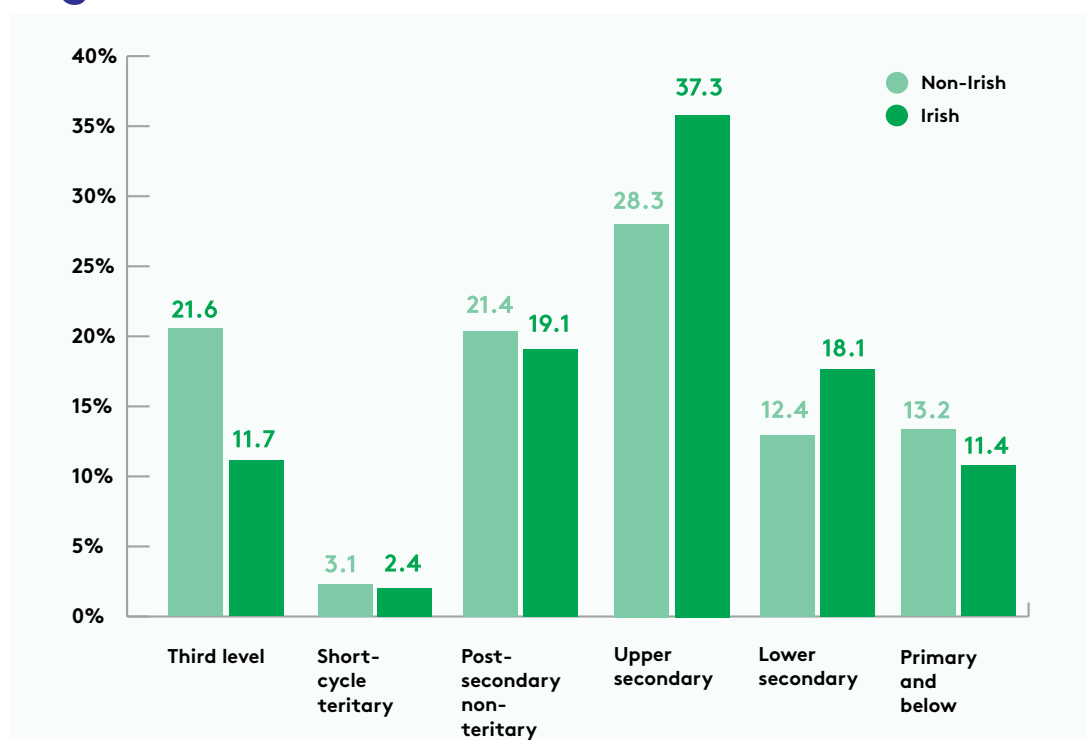
The age profile among Irish nationals is different than non-Irish nationals. Among Irish learner enrolments, 60.8% fall within either the under-25 or the 55-64+ age group. In contrast, among non-Irish learner enrolments, only 29.6% fall within the under-25 or the 55-64+ age group. Instead, Non-Irish are concentrated among the 35-44, 25-34 and under-25 age groups. Overall, Irish learner enrolments tend to be more concentrated in the youngest and oldest age groups, whereas non-Irish learner enrolments tend to be concentrated in the youngest and the 25-44 age groups.

## Non-Irish Nationals: Start Age



Among UK nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was in the under-25, 45-54, and 55-64+ age groups. In contrast, among EU and non-EU nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was found in the under-25, 25-34 and 35-44 age groups. Overall, UK nationals were concentrated in the youngest and two oldest age groups, whereas EU and non-EU nationals were concentrated in the youngest and 25-44 age groups.

## Highest Level of Formal Education

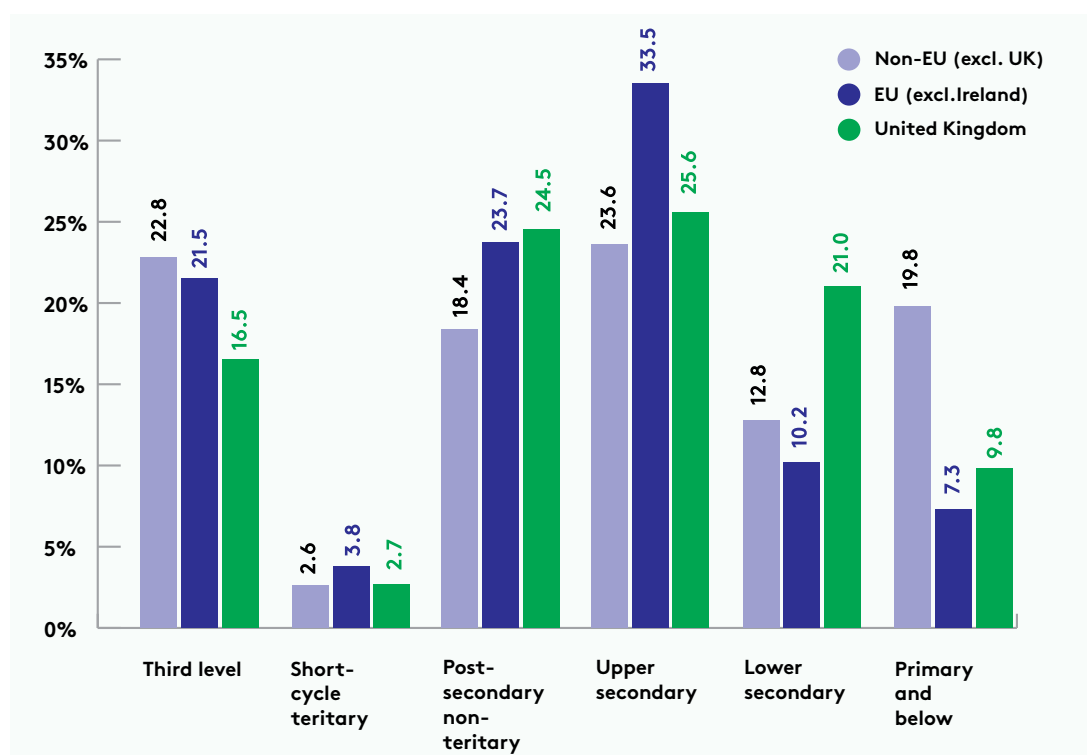


Among non-Irish nationals, one key finding was the higher concentrations of learner enrolments with a third level education than among Irish nationals. Among non-Irish nationals, 21.6% reported they had a third

level education, whereas among Irish nationals only 11.7% reported they had a third level education. For those non-Irish nationals who reported a third level education, the highest concentration of enrolments was in level 5 courses (33.8%) and in ESOL courses (32.3%).

At the lower levels of education, among Irish nationals, 29.5% reported they had a lower secondary or below education level, whereas among the non-Irish nationals 25.6% reported they had a lower secondary or below education level. While Irish nationals reported slightly higher levels of lower secondary and below education *overall*, among non-Irish nationals they still reported higher levels of education at the primary and below level. For those non-Irish that reported a primary and below education level, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was in level 2 courses (26%) and in ESOL courses (42.1%).

## Non-Irish Nationals: Highest Level of Formal Education

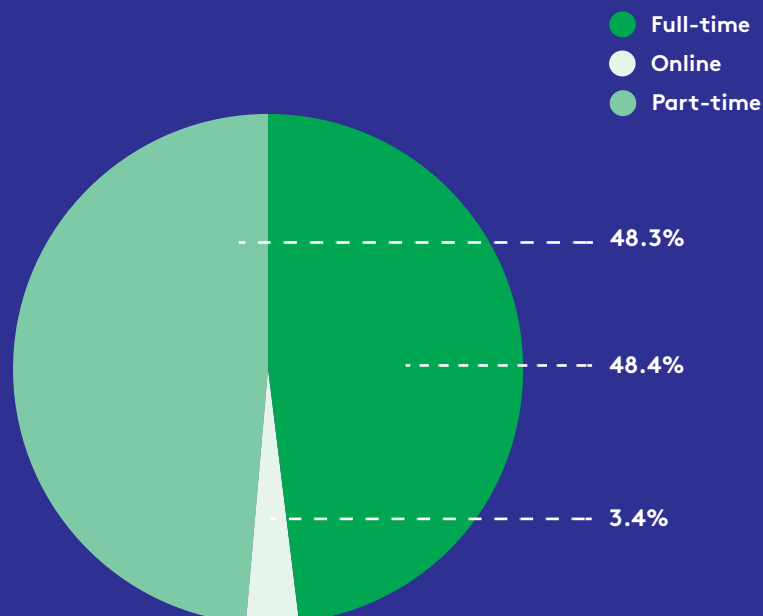


Among non-EU nationals, the highest concentrations of learner enrolments were found at upper secondary (23.6%) and third level (22.8%) education. For EU nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was at upper secondary (33.5%) and post-secondary non-tertiary (23.7%) education levels. Among UK nationals, the highest concentration was at upper secondary (25.6%) and post-secondary non-tertiary (24.5%) education levels. Overall, among non-EU nationals, higher concentrations of learner enrolments were found at the primary and below level compared to among the other non-Irish national groups.

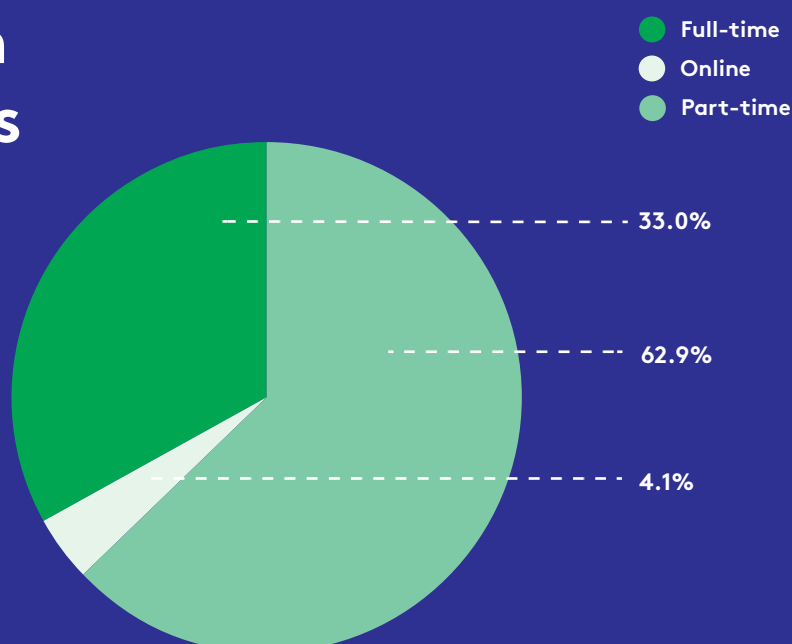


# Delivery Type

## Irish Nationals

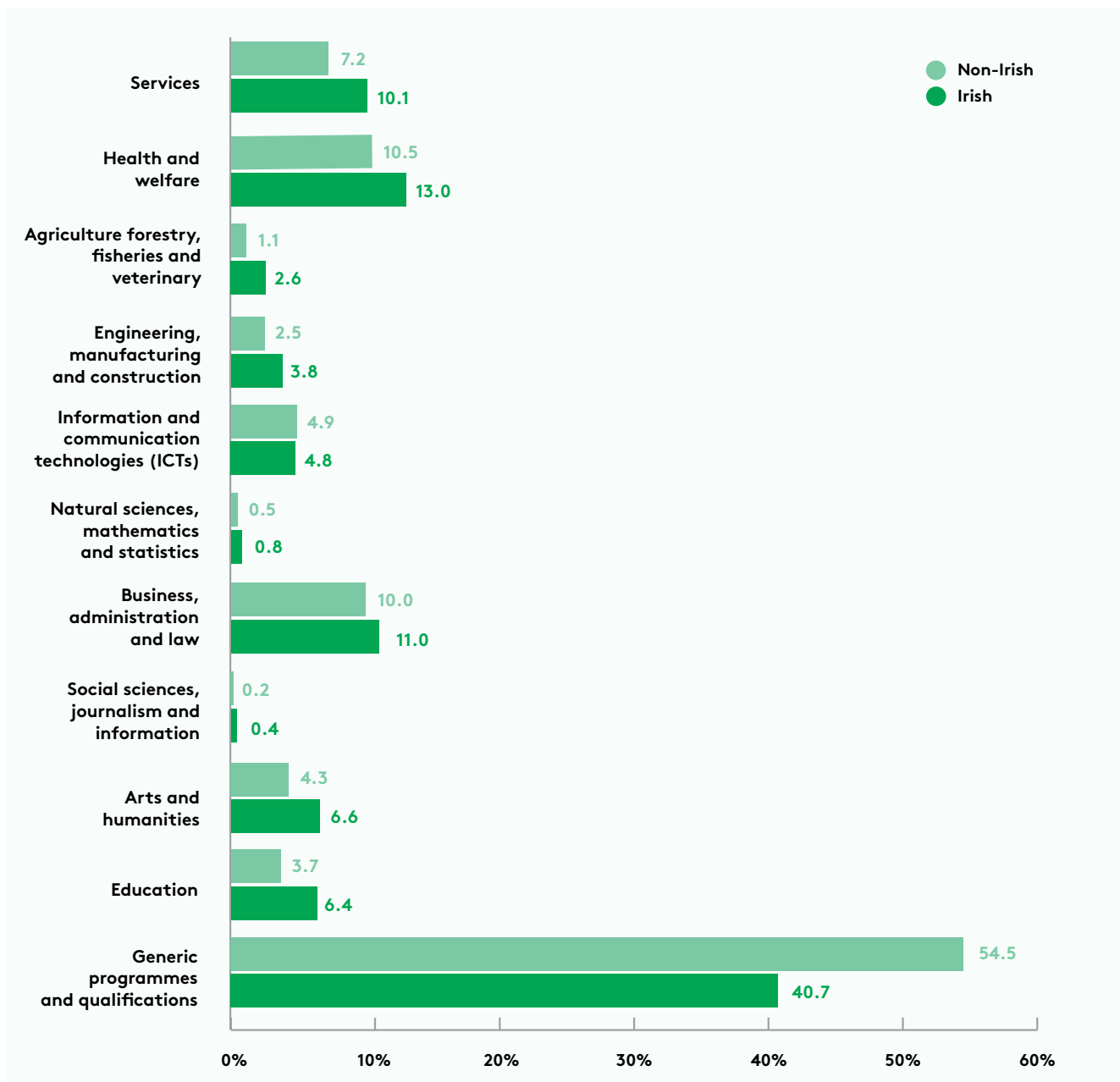


## Non-Irish Nationals



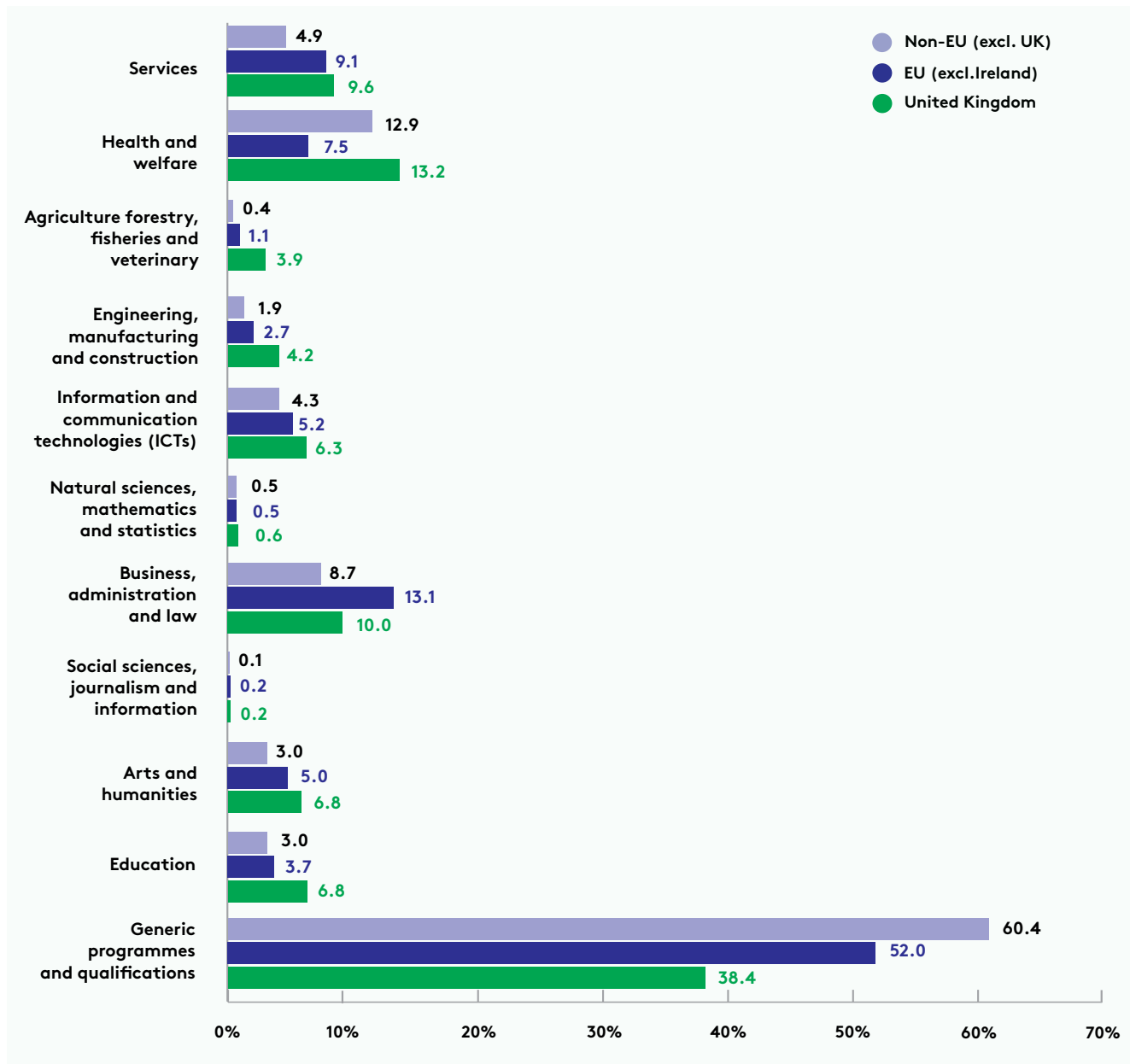
Among Irish nationals, the distribution of learner enrolments was split between full-time and part-time courses, with the remaining 3.4% enrolled in online courses. In contrast, among non-Irish nationals, more than 60% of learner enrolments were in part-time courses and only 33% were in full-time courses. The remaining 4.1% were in online courses. The number of part-time enrolments was the highest among non-EU nationals (66.3%) and EU nationals (61.8%). UK nationals had slightly lower part-time enrolments (53%).

## Field of Study (Broad ISCED)



Among ISCED broad fields of study, over half (54.5%) of non-Irish nationals were concentrated in the generic programmes and qualifications field of study. This was followed by health and welfare (10.5%), business, administration and law (10%), and services (7.2%). Among Irish nationals, a high percentage (40.7%) of learners were also concentrated among generic programmes and qualifications. Similar to non-Irish nationals, this was followed by health and welfare (13%), business, administration and law (11%), and services (10.1%). Overall, while the trend was similar among Irish and non-Irish in relation to the distribution of learner enrolments among the different fields of study, for generic programmes and qualifications, the share of enrolments among non-Irish nationals was 14% higher than the share among Irish nationals.

## Non-Irish Nationals: Field of Study (Broad ISCED)



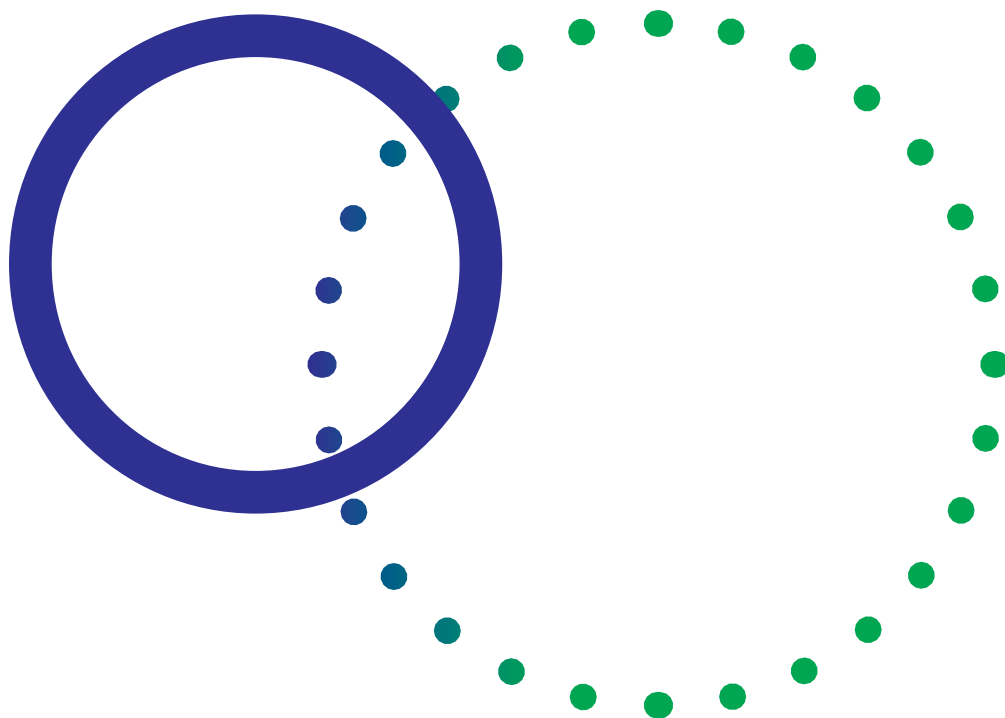
Among non-EU nationals, over 60% of learner enrolments were concentrated in generic programmes and qualifications. This was followed by health and welfare (12.9%), business, administration, and law (8.7%), and services (4.9%). While the concentration of learner enrolments in generic programmes was slightly lower among EU nationals when compared to non-EU nationals, the highest number of learner enrolments was still concentrated in generic programmes and qualifications (52%). This was followed by business, administration, and law (13.1%), services (9.1%) and health and welfare (7.5%).

Among UK nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was also in generic programmes and qualifications (38.4%), albeit this was much lower than among non-EU and EU nationals. This was followed by health and welfare (13.2%), business, administration, and law (10%), and services (9.6%). Overall, the distribution trend among the different fields of study was similar among the three groups of non-Irish nationals, except for health and welfare which was 5.5% lower among EU nationals than among non-EU and UK nationals.

## Programme Category

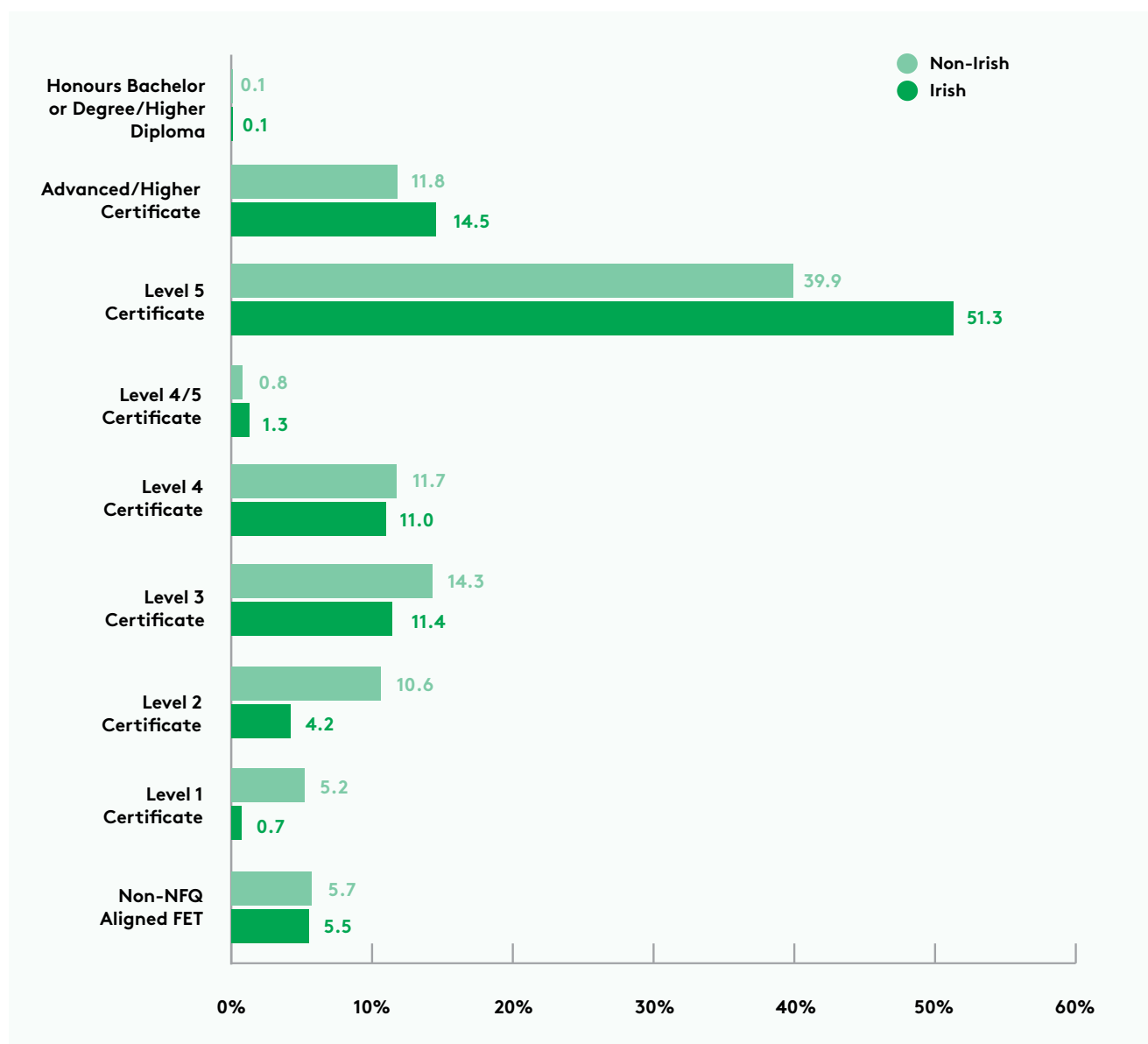
Delivery Type	Programme Category	Irish	Non-Irish
Full-time	Bridging and Foundation Training	135	27
	Community Training Centres	1,432	185
	Specific Skills Training	3,610	1,084
	Traineeship Training	2,198	473
	Local Training Initiatives	1,249	204
	Specialist Training Providers	1,715	246
	VTOS Core	2,392	955
	Youthreach	3,106	490
	Justice Workshop	109	6
	Blended Training	716	293
	Traineeship Employed	552	200
	PLC	32,211	5,992
Part-time	Evening Training	4,076	1,103
	BTEI Groups	10,886	3,128
	Adult Literacy Groups	13,729	3,109
	ITABE	652	329
	Voluntary Literacy Tuition	252	101
	FET Cooperation Hours	1,462	238
	Community Education	15,434	1,957
	Skills for Work	1,871	942
	ESOL	463	8,756
	Refugee Resettlement	0	584
	Libraries Training	0	7
	Other Funding	1,376	301
	Recognition of Prior Learning	73	14
	FET Pathways from School	99	16
Part-time & Full-time	Skills to Advance	3,444	834

When analysing programme categories,<sup>2</sup> programme delivery and category vary between Irish and non-Irish nationals. Among Irish nationals, the distribution of enrolments is fairly even (49.5% full-time programmes versus 53.9% part-time programmes) between part-time and full-time programmes, whereas among non-Irish nationals the distribution of learner enrolments is skewed towards part-time programmes (33% full-time programs versus 69.7% part-time programmes). Among Irish nationals, learner enrolments are concentrated in PLC, Community Education, Adult Literacy groups and BTEI groups. This contrasts with the distribution among non-Irish nationals where enrolments are concentrated in ESOL, PLC, BTEI Groups and Adult Literacy Groups. The ESOL programme accounts for 58% of enrolments among non-Irish nationals. Within the ESOL programme, over 95% of enrolments are non-Irish nationals. This emphasises the important role FET plays in English language acquisition among non-Irish nationals, many of whom may have lower levels of English language skills.



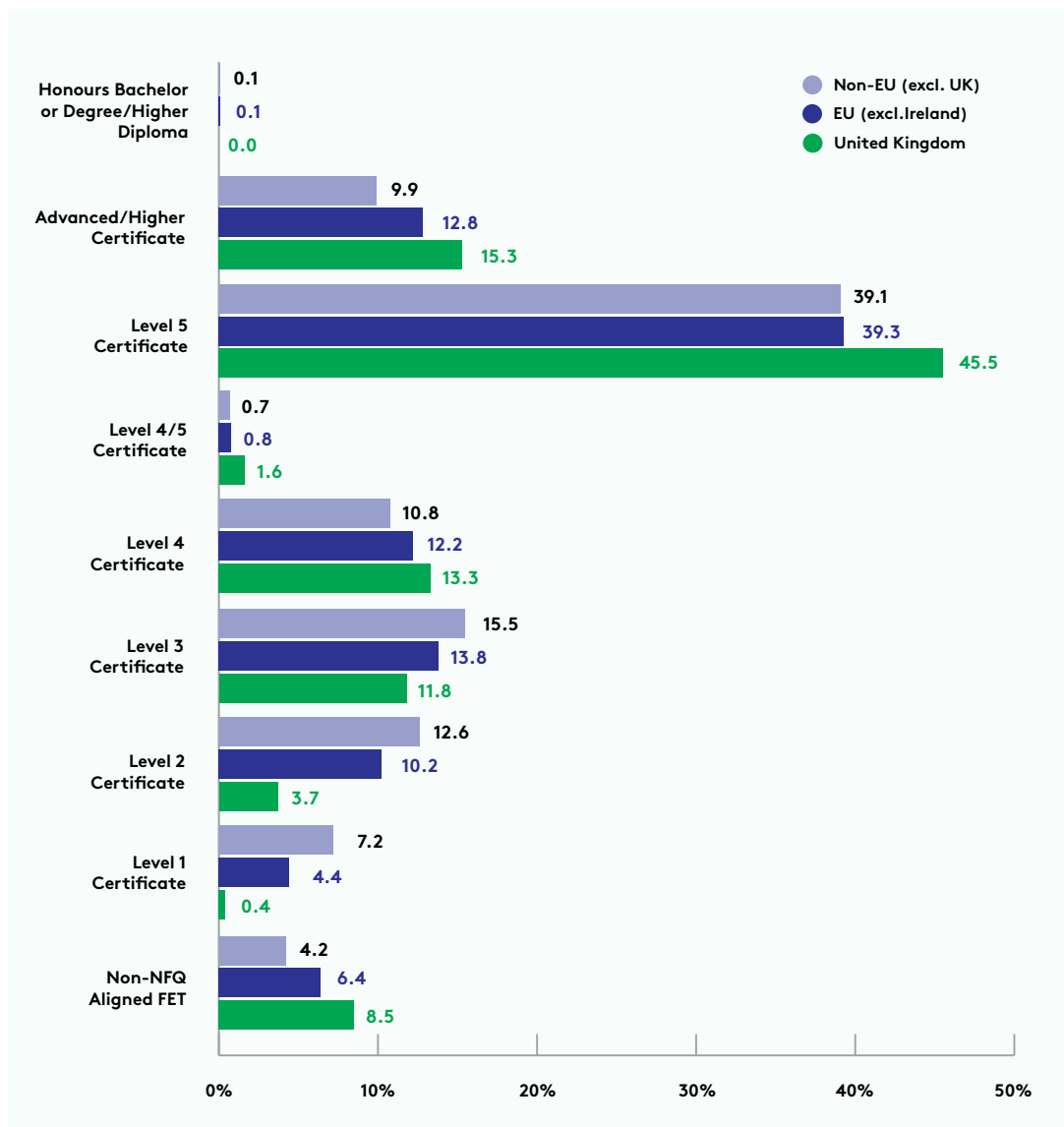
<sup>2</sup> Learners here are unique within programmes, but not necessarily across programmes. It should also be noted that learner counts that are less than 5 are excluded here.

## Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or Equivalent



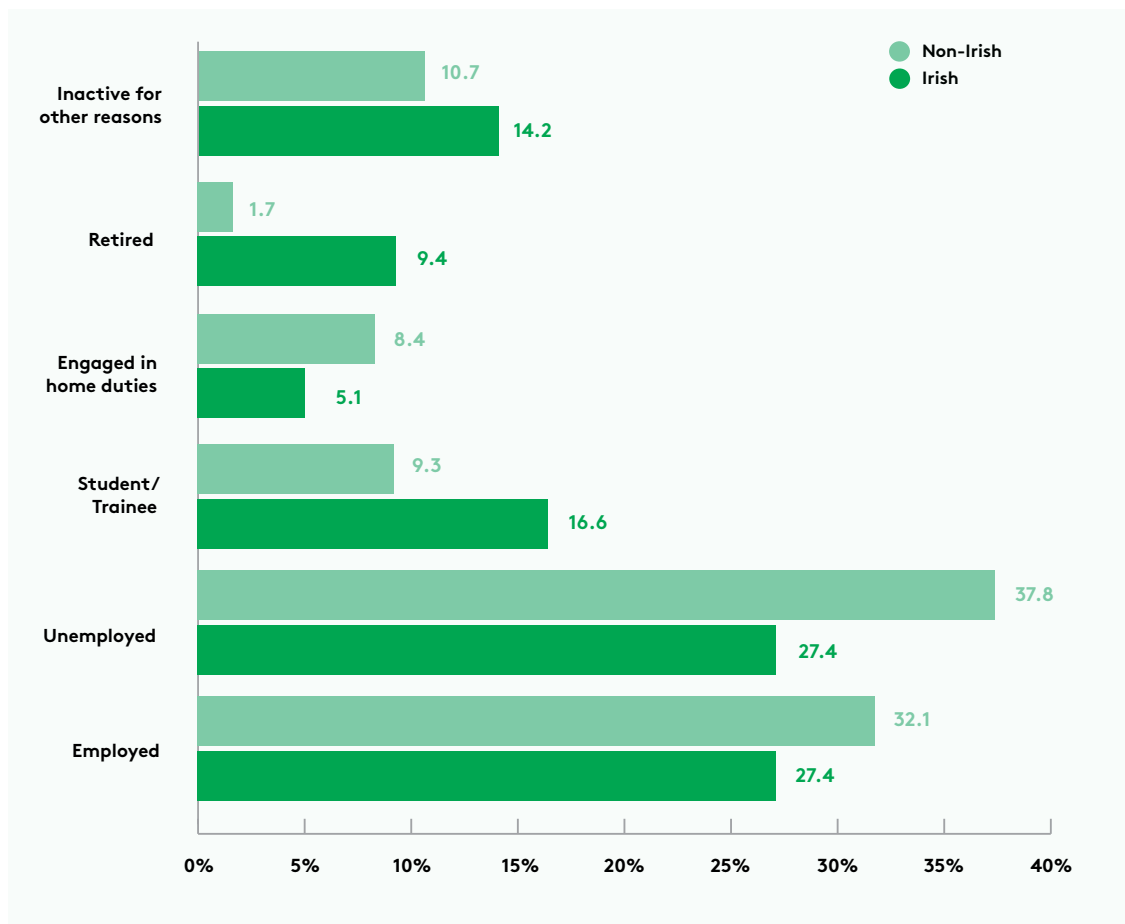
Among Irish nationals, over half of learner enrolments were in level 5 certificate courses. After level 5 certificate courses, this was followed by advanced/higher certificate (14.5%), level 3 certificate (11.4%) and level 4 certificate (11%) courses. Among non-Irish nationals, the highest percentage of enrolments was also among level 5 certificate (39.9%) courses, though it was slightly lower than among Irish nationals. After level 5 courses, this was followed by level 3 certificate (14.3%), advanced/higher certificate (11.8%) and level 4 certificate (11.7%) courses. Overall, Irish nationals had higher percentages of enrolments at levels 5 and above than non-Irish enrolments, whereas non-Irish nationals had higher percentages of learner enrolments in level 1 certificate courses than Irish nationals. Approximately, 78% of the non-Irish nationals enrolled in level 1 certificate courses were enrolled in ESOL courses.

## Non-Irish Nationals: Irish National Framework (NFQ) of Qualifications or Equivalent



Among all three groups of non-Irish nationals, the distribution of enrolments was most concentrated in level 5 certificate courses. After level 5 certificate courses, non-EU nationals were primarily enrolled in level 3 certificate, level 2 certificate and level 4 certificate courses. Among EU nationals, after level 5 certificate courses, learner enrolments were concentrated in level 3 certificate, advanced/higher certificate, and level 4 certificate courses. Finally, among UK nationals, after level 5 certificate course enrolments, the highest concentration of learner enrolments were in advanced/higher certificate, level 4 certificate, and level 3 certificate courses. Overall, more non-EU nationals were enrolled in lower level courses than among EU and UK nationals.

## Principal Economic Status



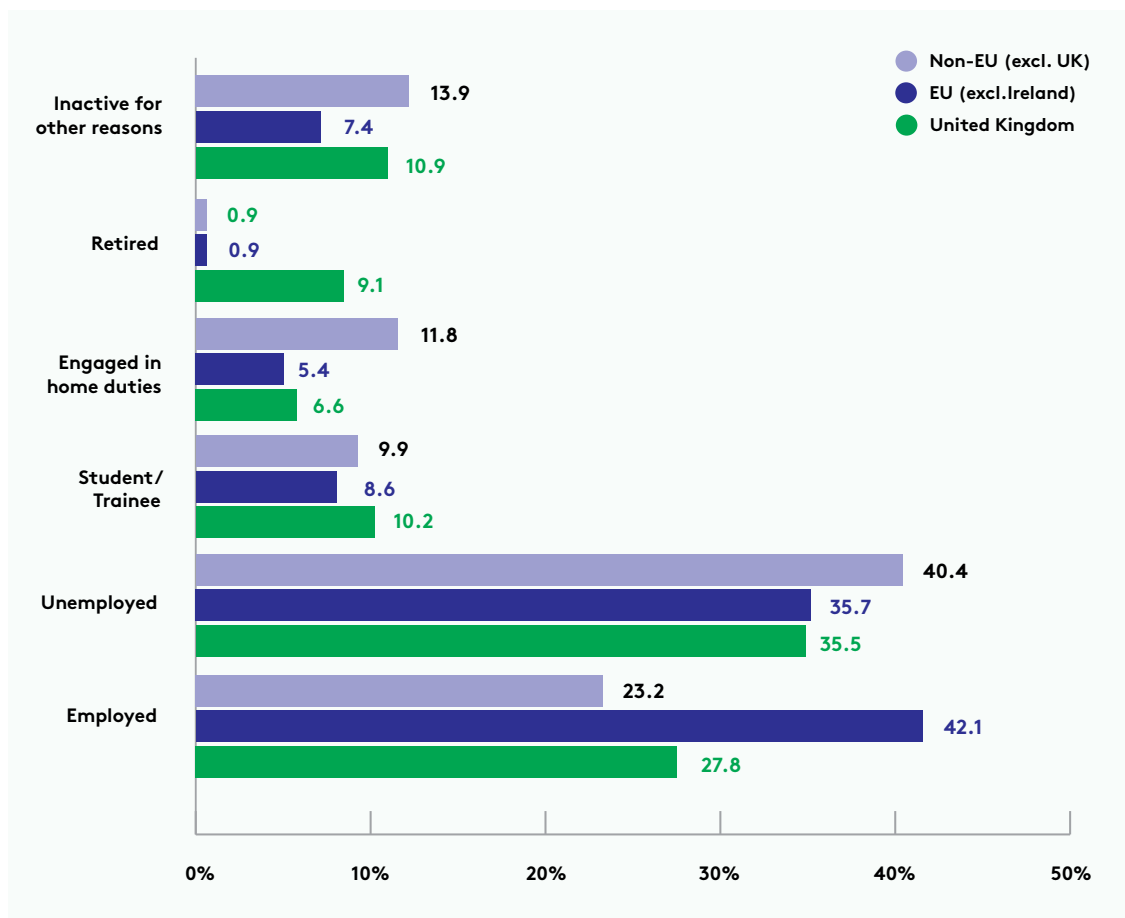
A little over half of Irish nationals reported their Principal Economic Status (PES) as unemployed (27.4%) or employed (27.4%) prior to enrolment. The remaining 45.3% of Irish nationals reported they were inactive prior to enrolment. Among the Irish nationals, the highest percentages of inactive learner enrolments were among student/trainees (16.6%) and those inactive for other reasons (14.2%).

Among non-Irish nationals, approximately 70% reported their PES as unemployed (37.8%) or employed (32.1%) prior to enrolment. The remaining 30.1% reported they were inactive prior to enrolment, with the highest percentages of inactive learner enrolments among those inactive for other reasons (10.7%) and student/trainees (9.3%).

Overall, the distribution of Irish nationals was 10.4% lower for those who were unemployed and 4.7% lower for those who were employed when compared to the non-Irish nationals. When looking at learners who reported an inactive PES among Irish nationals, the distribution among Irish nationals was higher compared to non-Irish nationals in all PES categories, except for among those learner enrolments who reported they were engaged in home duties. Among non-Irish nationals, 3.3% more learner enrolments reported they were engaged in home duties, than among the Irish nationals.



## Non-Irish Nationals: Principal Economic Status

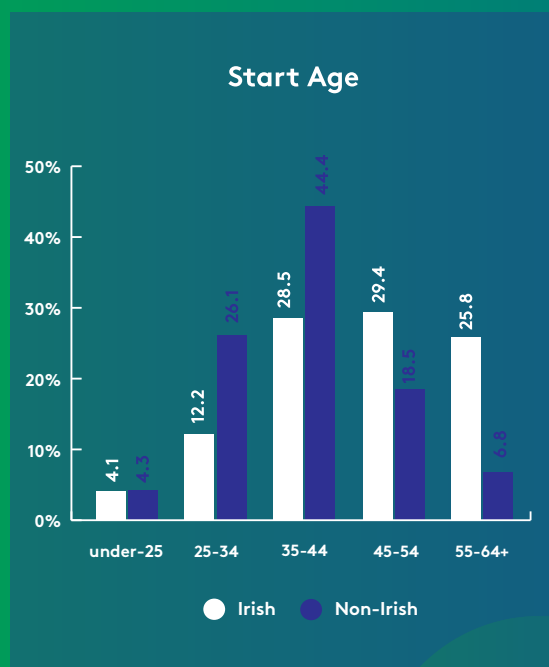


Among non-EU nationals, approximately 40% of learner enrolments reported their PES as unemployed prior to enrolment, 4% more than among UK and EU nationals. Higher shares of non-EU nationals were also found among those who were engaged in home duties (11.8%) and those who reported they were inactive for other reasons (13.9%). Among non-EU nationals, twice as many reported a PES status as engaged in home duties compared to among EU and UK nationals. In contrast, among EU nationals, over 40% reported their PES as employed prior to enrolment, 14% higher than the share of UK nationals and 18.9% higher than the share of non-EU nationals. Importantly, the high percentage of learner enrolments reporting a PES status of unemployed, engaged in home duties and inactive for other reasons, may be closely tied to Irish immigration regulations which may restrict or in some cases prohibit working permission for non-EU nationals, but still allow the option to study in FET.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in addition to enabling non-EU nationals to upskill in key areas (e.g. ESOL courses) that are necessary for labour market integration, FET also provides a mechanism for inclusion for those non-EU nationals who may have restricted working permissions.

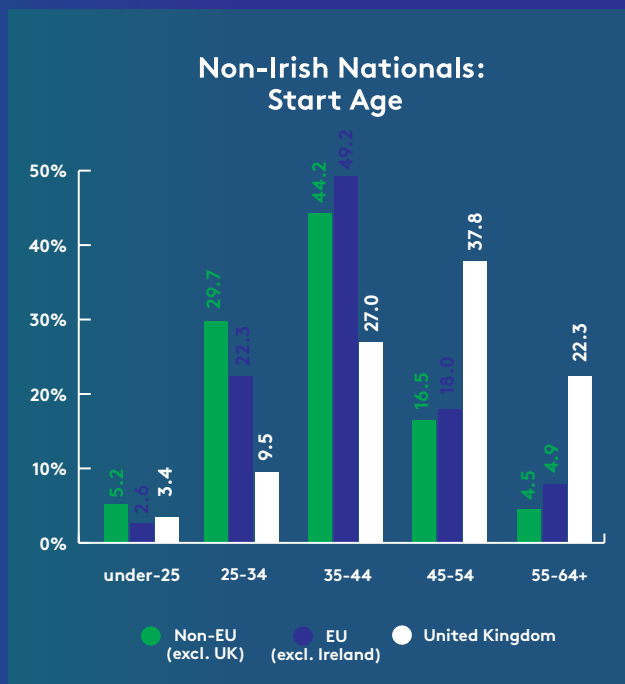
<sup>3</sup> See: [Immigration permission/stamps - Immigration Service Delivery \(irishimmigration.ie\)](https://www.irishimmigration.ie/immigration-permission/stamps) for a full list of immigration permissions for non-EEA nationals in Ireland.

# FOCUS STUDY: Irish & Non-Irish Nationals Engaged in Home Duties

Among non-Irish nationals, 8.4% of learner enrolments reported their Principal Economic Status (PES) as engaged in home duties, 3.3% higher than among Irish nationals. The contrast was even greater among non-EU nationals with 11.8% reporting they were engaged in home duties prior to enrolment in a FET course. While the gender profile remained consistent (approximately 95% female versus 5% male), regardless of whether a learner reported they were Irish or non-Irish, some aspects of the profile differed, particularly age, education and award level.



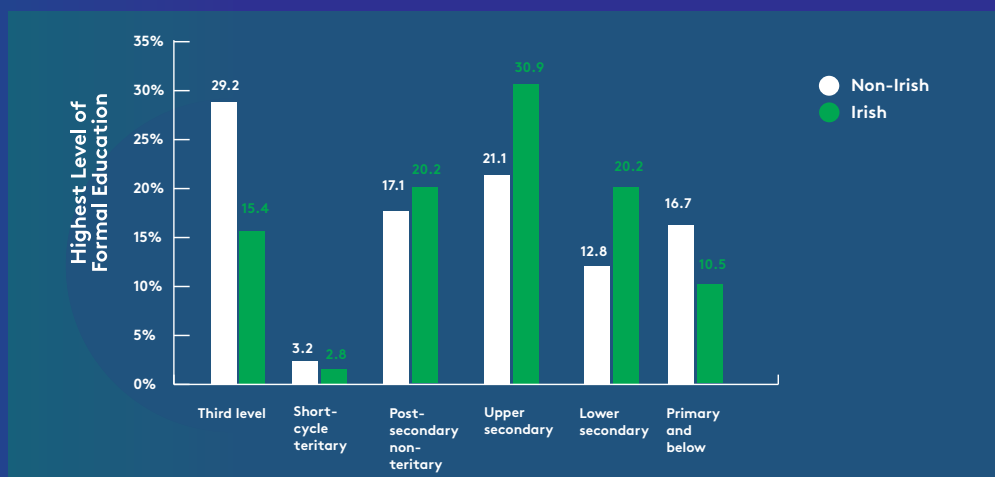
Among Irish nationals who reported their PES as engaged in home duties prior to enrolment in a FET programme, only 12.2% were within the 25-34 age group. This contrasts with non-Irish nationals, where 26.1% of learner enrolments were in the 25-34 age group. Overall, among the Irish nationals who reported their PES as engaged in home duties, learner enrolments were slightly older, with 83.7% concentrated in the 35-64+ age groups. This compared with only 69.7% falling within the 35-64+ age groups among non-Irish nationals.



Among non-EU nationals over one third (34.9%) of learner enrolments who reported they were engaged in home duties were 34 years or younger. This compared to a quarter (24.9%) of those 34 years and younger among EU nationals and 12.9% among UK nationals.

Among EU nationals, 75.1% of learner enrolments that reported they were engaged in home duties reported they were 35-64+ years old.

This compared to 87.1% among UK nationals and 65.2% among non-EU nationals. Overall, the age distribution of learner enrolments among those who reported they were engaged in home duties was lower among non-Irish nationals, particularly among non-EU nationals, when compared to Irish nationals. This could be a reflection of differences in the age of first time mothers among non-Irish and Irish nationals.<sup>4</sup>



In relation to education, among non-Irish nationals who reported their PES as engaged in home duties, the highest concentration of learner enrolments were those who reported a third level education (29.2%). In contrast, among Irish nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments were those who reported an upper secondary education level (30.9%). Overall, among non-Irish nationals, higher levels of third level education were reported than compared to among Irish nationals.

<sup>4</sup> According to the CSO statistics, the average age for first time mothers was 31.4 years of age for Q1 2020. See: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-vs/vitalstatisticsfirstquarter2020/> Vital Statistics First Quarter 2020 - CSO - Central Statistics Office for more information.

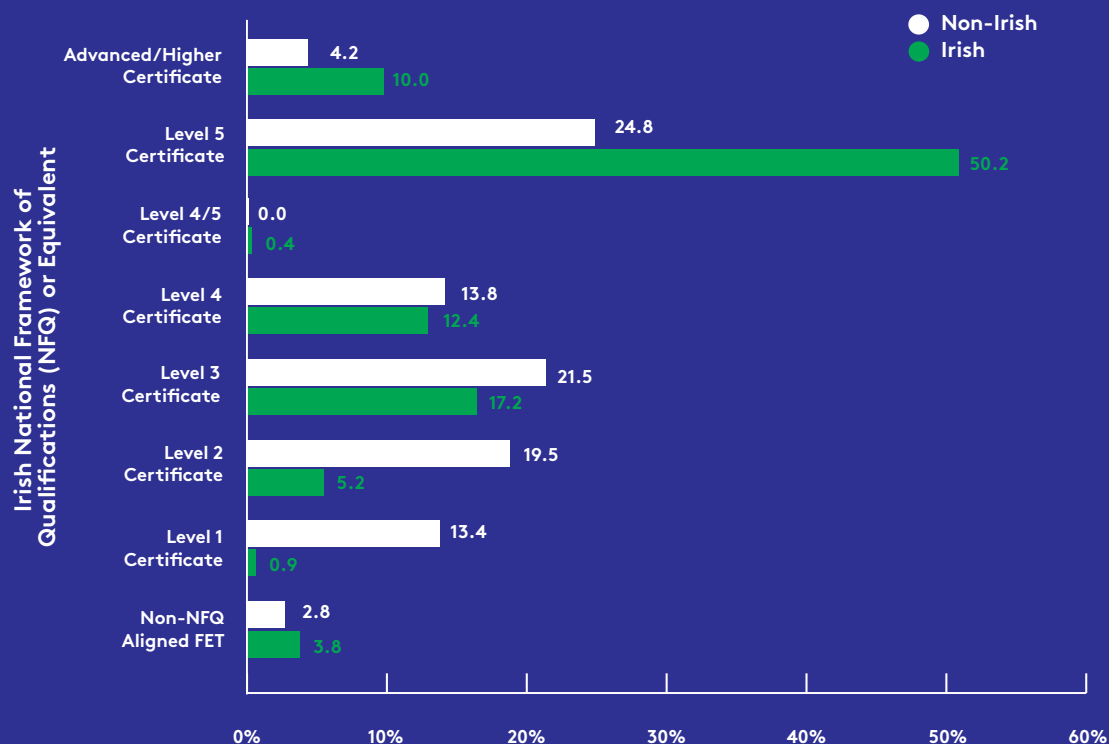
Of those non-Irish nationals who reported a PES as engaged in home duties and a third level education, 44.3% were enrolled in ESOL courses, 12.2% in BTEI and 11.4% in Adult Literacy groups.



Among non-EU nationals, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was among those who had a third level education (31.3%), whereas the second highest concentration of learner enrolments was among those that reported a primary and below education level (21.7%). Therefore, the cohort of non-EU nationals in FET had both high and low levels of education. For non-EU nationals with a primary and below education level, 61.1% were enrolled in ESOL courses, 16.4% in Adult Literacy groups, and 6.2% in the Refugee Resettlement programme. Among non-EU nationals with a third level education, 44.3% were enrolled in ESOL courses, 12.3% in BTEI groups, and 11.4% in Adult Literacy groups. Therefore, the percentage of enrolments in ESOL courses was higher among those learners that reported a primary and below education level than compared to those learners that reported a third level education.

Among EU nationals, the highest concentration was among those with a third level education (26.9%) and the second highest was among those with an upper secondary level education (26.4%). Among those with third level education, 42.9% were enrolled in ESOL courses, 12.3% in Adult Literacy groups, and 11.7% in BTEI groups.

Among UK Nationals that reported a PES as engaged in home duties, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was among those with a lower secondary level (25.7%) education and the second highest was among those with a post-secondary non-tertiary level (24.3%) education. For those UK nationals that reported a lower secondary education, 26.3% were enrolled in BTEI groups, 21.1% were enrolled in Community Education, and 13.2% were enrolled in Adult Literacy groups. This more closely reflects the overall population of FET enrolments among Irish nationals.



Among Irish nationals, half (50.2%) of those who reported a PES as engaged in home duties were enrolled in level 5 courses. In contrast, among non-Irish nationals who reported a PES as engaged in home duties only a quarter (24.8%) of enrolments were at level 5, with over half (54.4%) of learners enrolled in courses at level 3 and below.

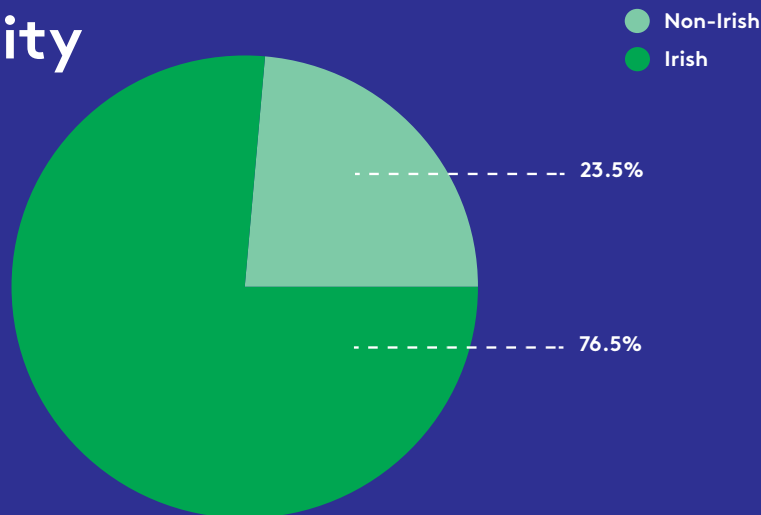


Among non-EU nationals who reported they were engaged in home duties, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was in level 3 courses (23.3%), while 38.4% were enrolled in courses at level 2 and below. For EU nationals who reported they were engaged in home duties, the highest concentration of learner enrolments was in courses at level 5 (25.8%), and a little over half (50.2%) of EU nationals were enrolled in courses at level 3 and below. Among UK nationals that reported they were engaged in home duties, and similar to Irish nationals, over half (52.4%) were enrolled in courses at level 5 and only 17.5% were enrolled in courses at level 3 and below. Therefore, among UK nationals, higher percentages of enrolments are found in level 5 and above courses, whereas among EU and particularly non-EU nationals, higher percentages of learner enrolments are found in levels 1-3 courses.

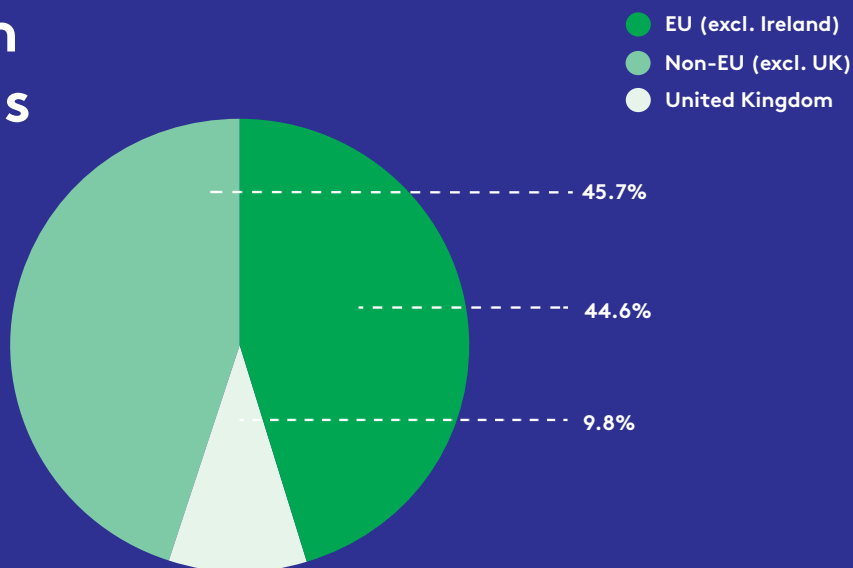
Overall, for those non-Irish nationals engaged in home duties, FET played a key role in providing foundational skill development, particularly in level 1-3 courses for non-EU and EU nationals. In addition, FET provided a mechanism for the inclusion of non-Irish nationals engaged in home duties who had both high and low levels of education, thus enabling these FET learners to advance their education and training, as well as enhance their skill set to access the labour market.

# Completions

## Nationality

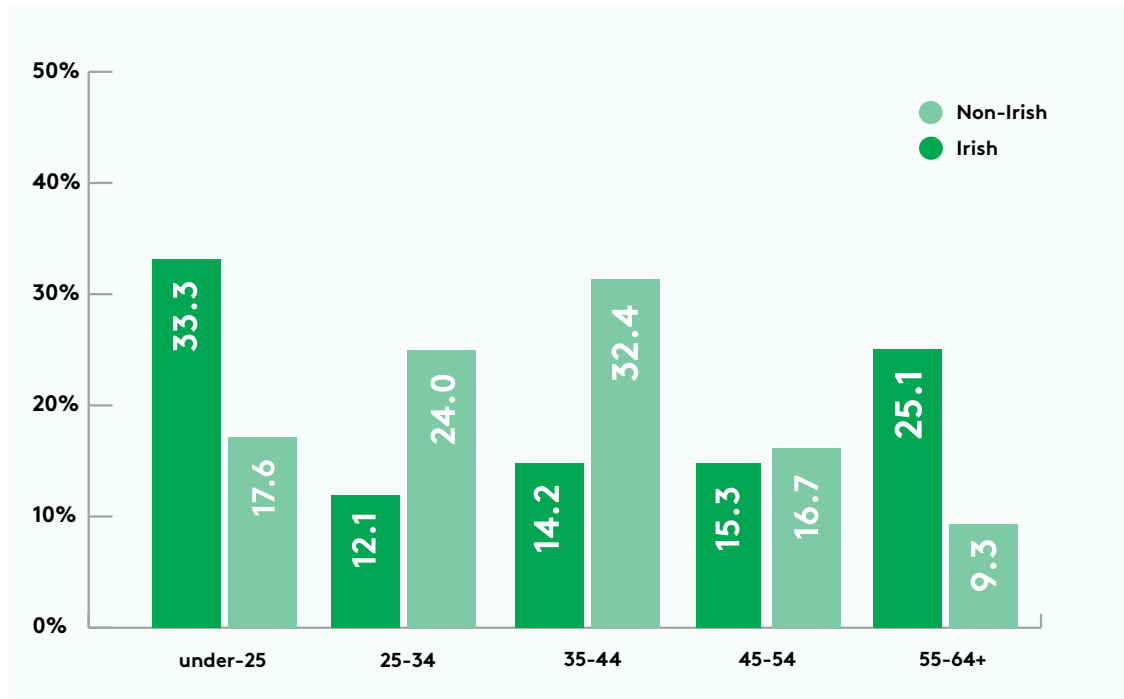


## Non-Irish Nationals



In 2020, 76.5% of learner completions were Irish and 23.5% were non-Irish. Among the non-Irish learner enrolments, 44.6% were EU nationals, 45.7% were non-EU nationals and 9.8% were UK nationals.

## Start Age

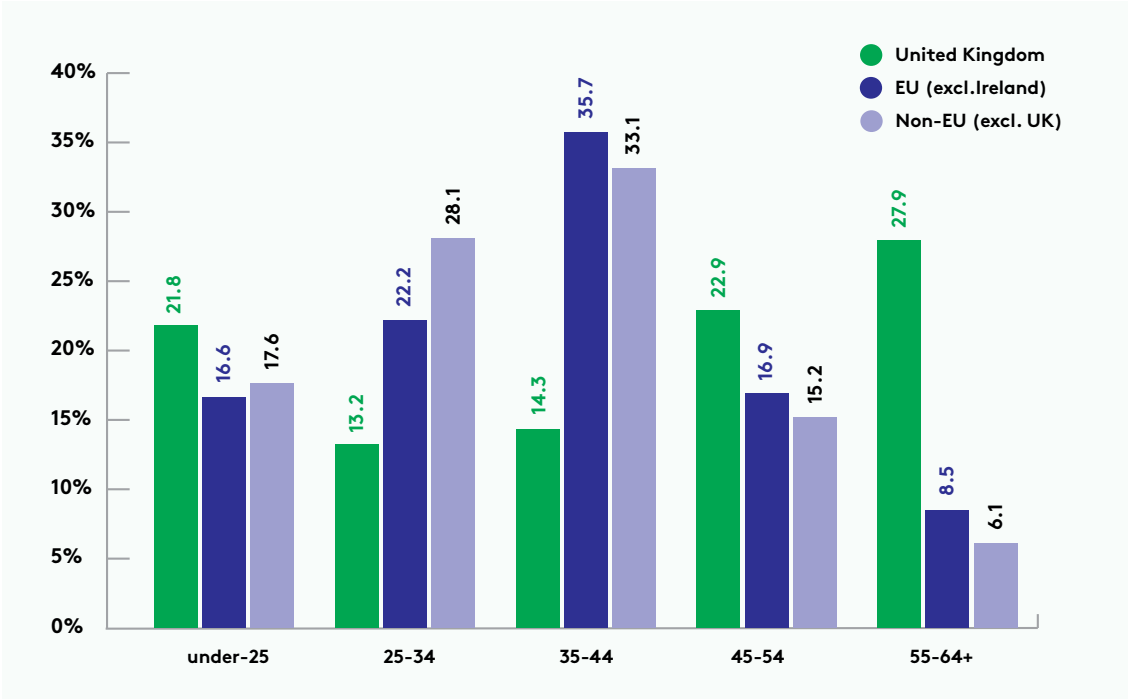


The start age among Irish and non-Irish national learner completions was similar to enrolments, with over half (58.4%) of Irish completions in the under-25 or the 55-64+ age group. Among non-Irish learner completions, only 26.9% fell within the under-25 or the 55-64+ age group, whereas over half (56.4%) of learner completions among non-Irish nationals were among the 35-44 and 25-34 age groups. Overall, learner completions among Irish nationals were concentrated in the youngest and oldest age groups, whereas among non-Irish nationals completions were concentrated in the middle age groups.

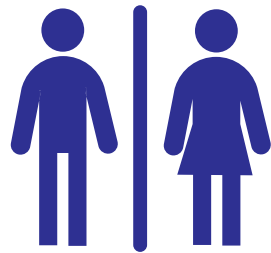




# Non-Irish Nationals: Start Age

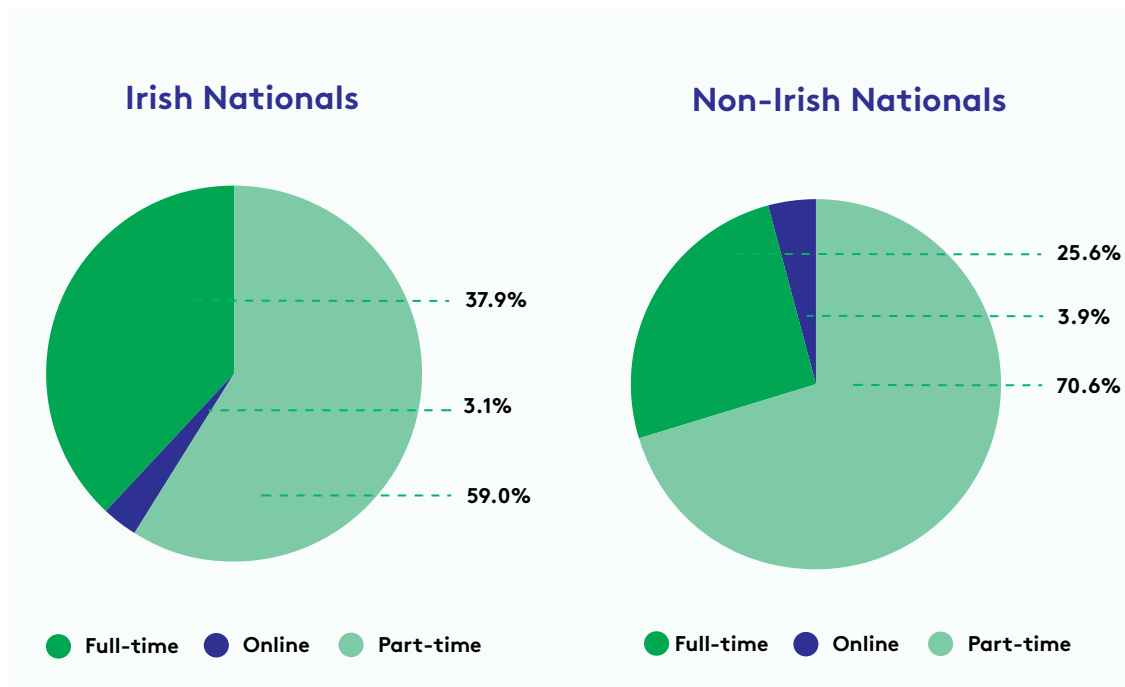


Among UK nationals the highest concentration of learner completions were in the 55-64+, 45-54 and the under-25 age groups. This contrasted with EU nationals which had the highest concentration of learner completions in the 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 age groups. Non-EU nationals had the highest percentage of learner completions in the under-25, 25-34, and 35-44 age groups. Overall, completions among UK nationals were more concentrated in the youngest and older age groups, whereas among EU and non-EU nationals, completions were concentrated among the middle and youngest age groups.



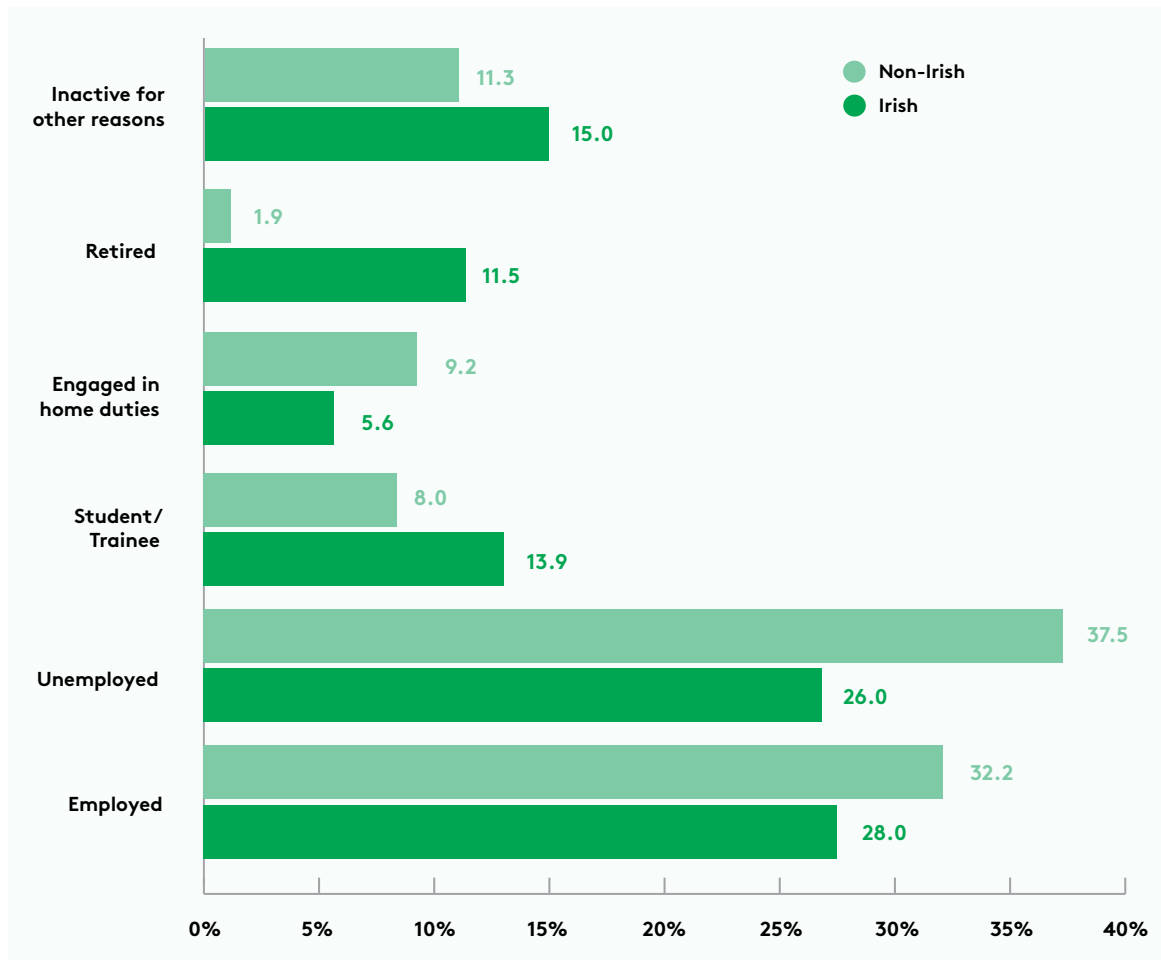
Among Irish learner completions, 62.1% were female and 37.9% were male, whereas among the non-Irish learner completions, 65.7% were female and 34.4% were male. Similar to enrolments, there was a slightly higher percentage of female completions among non-Irish nationals compared to Irish nationals.

## Delivery Type



Among Irish nationals, 59% of Irish nationals completed part-time courses, whereas 37.9% completed full-time courses and the remaining 3.1% completed online courses. This approximately 20 percent point difference between full-time and part-time completions contrasts with the delivery type among Irish learner enrolments, where part-time and full-time enrolments were more evenly distributed. Among non-Irish nationals, 70.6% completed part-time courses and only one quarter (25.6%) completed full-time courses. The remaining 3.9% of non-Irish nationals completed online courses. Similar to Irish nationals, higher percentages of non-Irish nationals completed part-time courses. However, among non-Irish nationals the percentage of part-time completions was more pronounced, with a 45 percent point difference between part-time and full-time completions. Among non-Irish nationals, the percentage of part-time completions was the highest among non-EU nationals (73.7%), followed by EU nationals (69.4%), and finally UK nationals (61.1%).

## Principal Economic Status



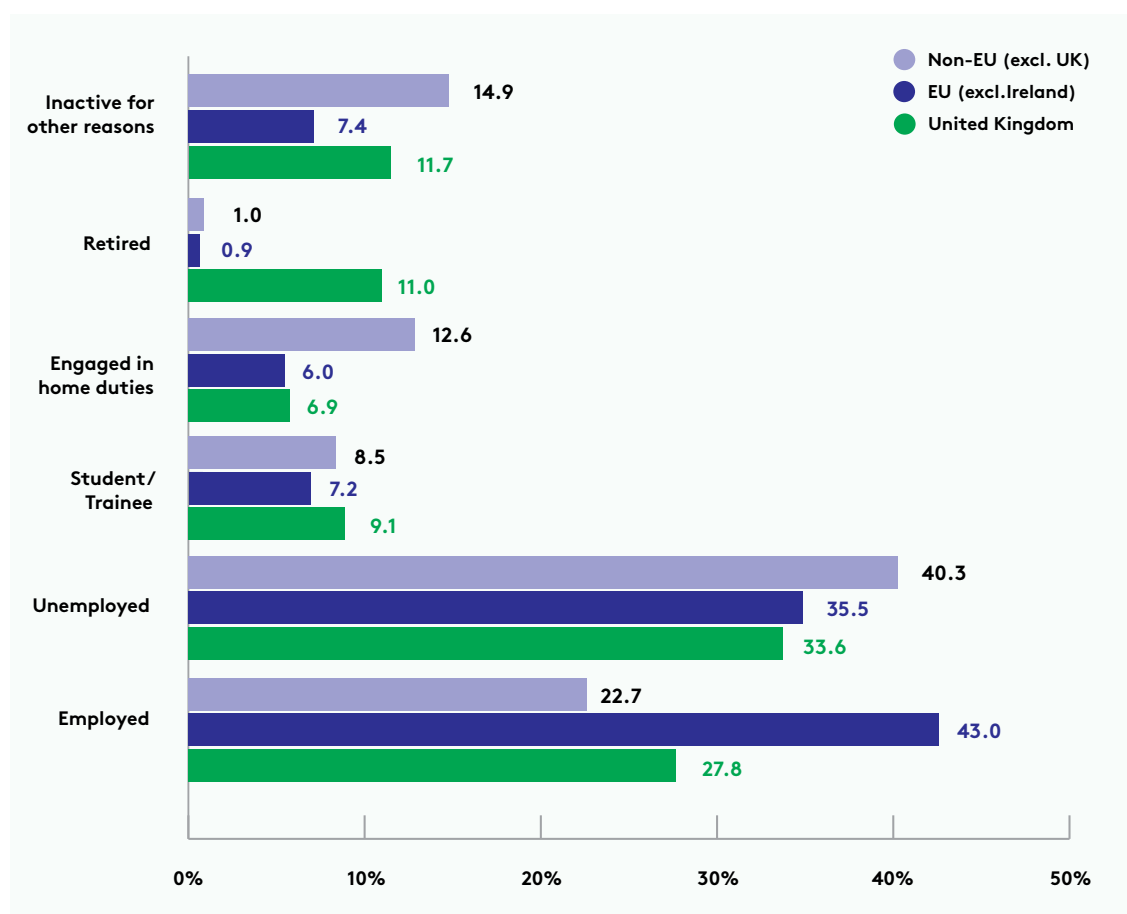
Similar to Irish national learner enrolments, over half of Irish nationals who completed a FET course reported their Principal Economic Status (PES) as unemployed (26%) or employed (28%). The remaining 46% of Irish nationals that completed a FET course reported they were inactive. Among Irish nationals, the highest percentages of inactive learner completions were among student/trainees (13.9%) and those inactive for other reasons (15%).

Among non-Irish nationals, approximately 70% reported their PES as unemployed (37.5%) or employed (32.2%) prior to completion. The remaining 30.4% reported they were inactive prior to enrolment, with the highest percentages of inactive learner enrolments among those inactive for other reasons (11.3%) and those engaged in home duties (9.2%).

Overall, among Irish nationals, there were lower percentages of learners that reported a PES as unemployed or employed than non-Irish nationals who completed a FET course. Among those Irish nationals who reported a PES as inactive, the percentage of learner completions was higher in all PES categories compared to non-Irish nationals. The exception was among those learner completions who reported they were engaged in home duties. Among non-Irish nationals, 3.6% more learner enrolments

reported they were engaged in home duties than among Irish nationals who completed a FET course.

## Non-Irish Nationals: Principal Economic Status



Among non-EU nationals, 40.3% of learner enrolments reported their PES as unemployed prior to completion. This compares to 33.6% among UK nationals and 35.5% among EU nationals. Therefore, slightly higher shares of non-EU nationals were unemployed prior to completion of a FET course. Higher shares of non-EU nationals were also found among those who were engaged in home duties (12.6%) and those who reported they were inactive for other reasons (14.9%). In contrast, among EU nationals, 43% reported their PES as employed prior to enrolment, 15.2% higher than the share of UK nationals and 20.3% higher than the share of non-EU nationals. These differences among the three groups of non-Irish nationals that completed a FET course are very similar to the previous findings among non-Irish nationals that were enrolled in a FET course.

# Certified Completions

	Irish	Non-Irish
Fully certified	50.6%	44.0%
Partially certified	17.2%	14.4%
No certification achieved	25.6%	35.0%
Waiting on certification details	6.6%	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

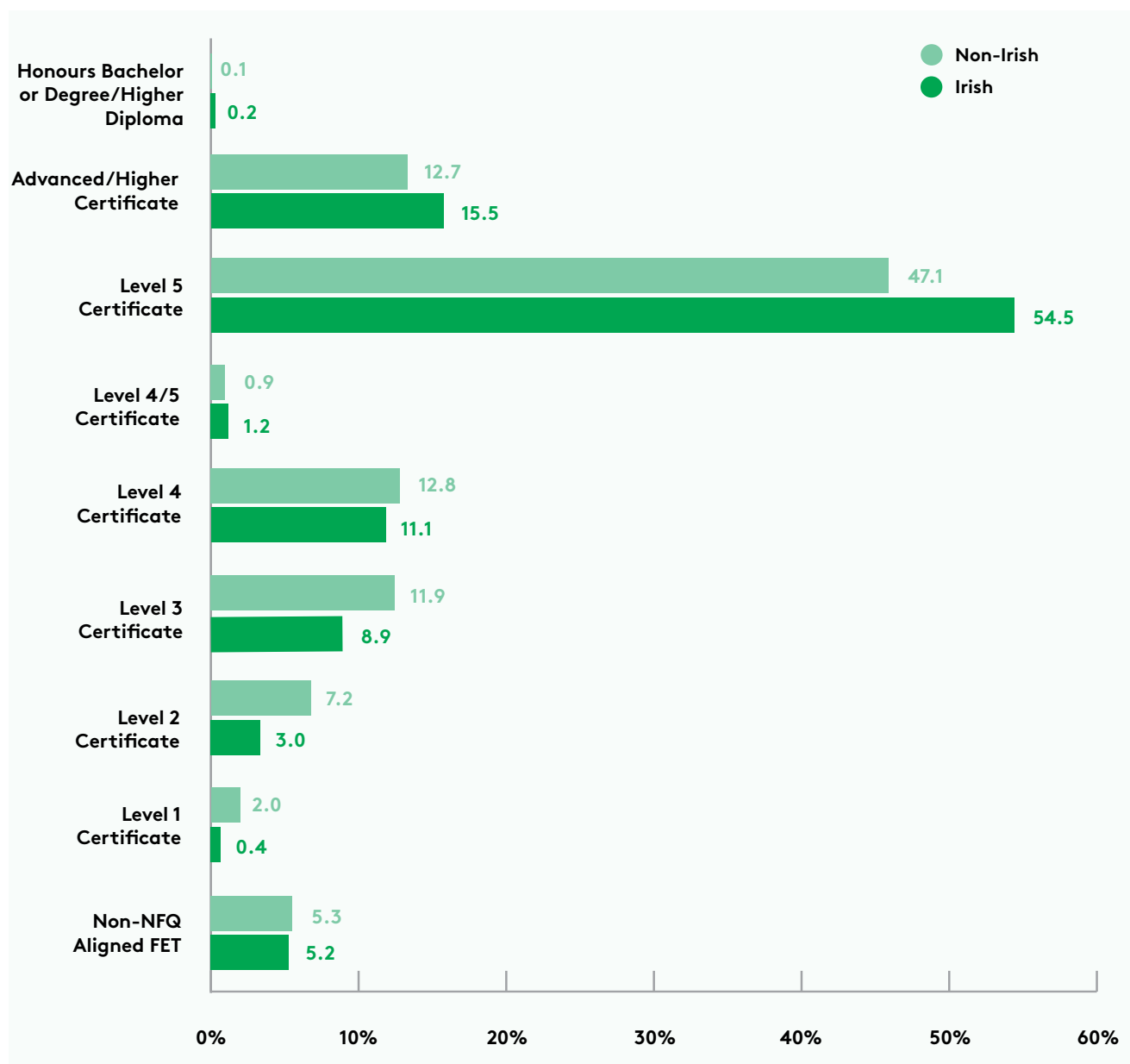
In 2020, the certification rate among Irish nationals was 67.8%, higher than among non-Irish nationals (58.4%) and only slightly lower than the national certification rate (69.8%). The percentage of learners who did not achieve certification was also much higher among non-Irish nationals (35%) than among Irish nationals (25.6%).

## Non-Irish Nationals: Certified Completions

	United Kingdom	EU (excl. Ireland)	Non-EU (excl. UK)
Fully certified	51.0%	45.8%	40.5%
Partially certified	16.1%	15.2%	13.2%
No certification achieved	23.7%	32.9%	39.8%
Waiting on certification details	9.3%	6.1%	6.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

For non-Irish nationals, the certification rate was the highest among UK nationals (67.1%), followed by EU nationals (61%), and finally non-EU nationals (53.7%). While all certification rates were below the national average, the non-EU national certification rate was approximately 16% less than the national average. In addition, non-EU nationals had the highest percentage of learners that did not achieve certification (39.8%).

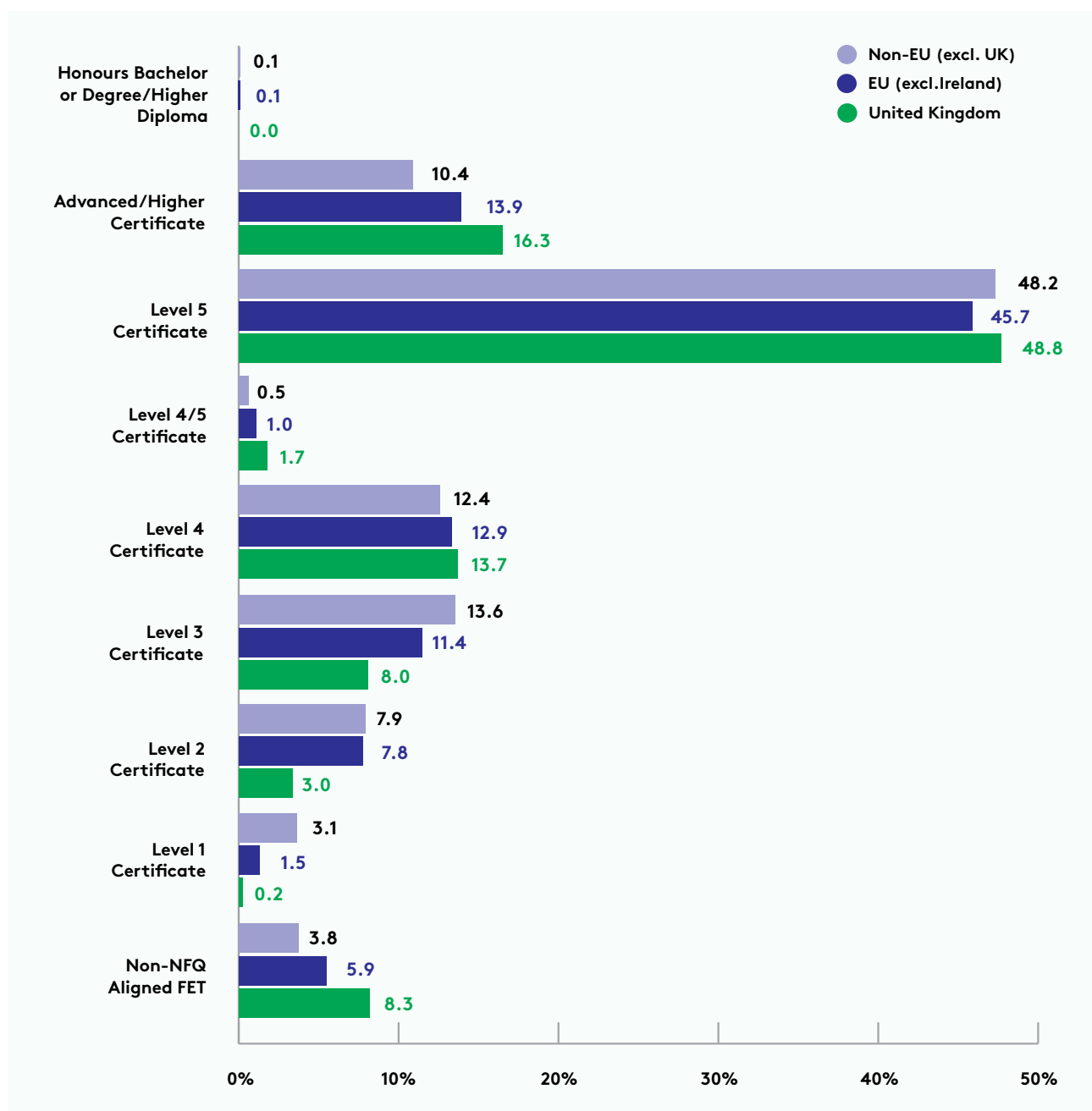
## Certified Completions by Award Level



Among, Irish nationals, over half of certified completions were in level 5 courses (54.5%). This was followed by certified completions at advanced/higher certificate level (15.5%), level 4 (11.1%), and level 3 (8.9%) courses.

Among non-Irish nationals, a little under half (47.1%) of certified completions were in level 5 courses. This was followed by certified completions at level 4 (12.8%), advanced/higher certificate (12.7%) and level 3 (11.9%) courses. Overall, the biggest difference between Irish and non-Irish nationals was the higher percentage of certified learner completions at lower award levels among non-Irish nationals. Among non-Irish nationals 21.1% of certified completions were from levels 1-3, whereas among Irish nationals only 12.3% of certified completions were from levels 1-3.

## Non-Irish Nationals: Certified Completion by Award Level



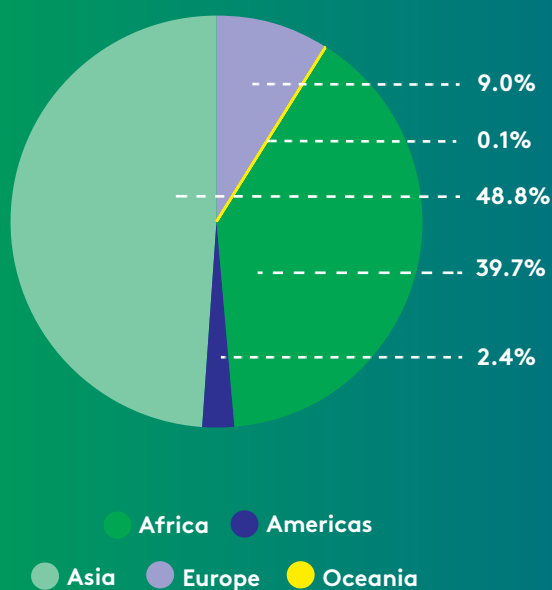
Among non-EU, EU and UK nationals the highest percentages of certified completions were in level 5 courses. For non-EU nationals, in addition to level 5 courses, high concentrations of learner completions were found at level 3, level 4 and advanced/higher level courses. Among EU nationals, in addition to level 5, certified completions were highly concentrated at the advanced/higher certificate level, level 4, and level 3. For UK nationals, high percentages of certified completions were also found at advanced/higher certificate levels, at level 4, and in non-NFQ aligned FET. Overall, non-EU nationals had the highest percentage of certified completions at lower award levels 1-3 (24.6%). This was closely followed by EU nationals (20.7%).

# FOCUS STUDY: Refugees and Asylum Seekers

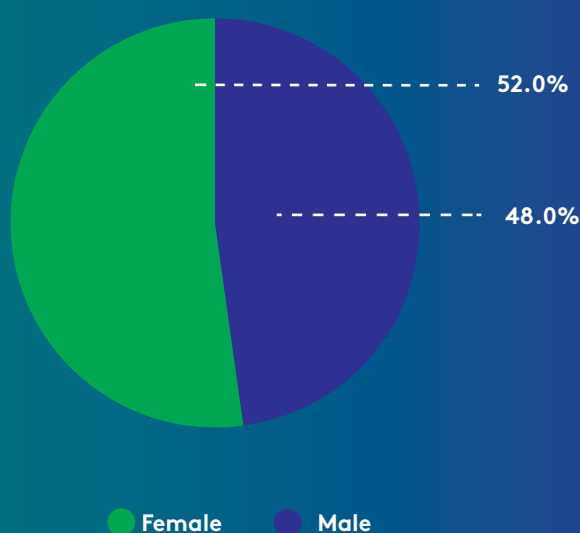
In 2020, 855 learner enrolments reported their residency status as asylum seekers and 1,165 as refugees in the FET sector. Among those learners who reported a nationality, 97.5% reported they were non-Irish.<sup>5</sup> Approximately half of refugees and asylum seekers enrolled in FET reported they were nationals of the geographic region Asia, whereas 39.7% reported they were nationals of the geographic region Africa.

Among refugees and asylum seekers, 52% of learner enrolments were female and 48% were male. This nearly even gender distribution differs from the higher proportion of females (61.1%) in the population of FET learner enrolments in 2020.

Nationality by Regions

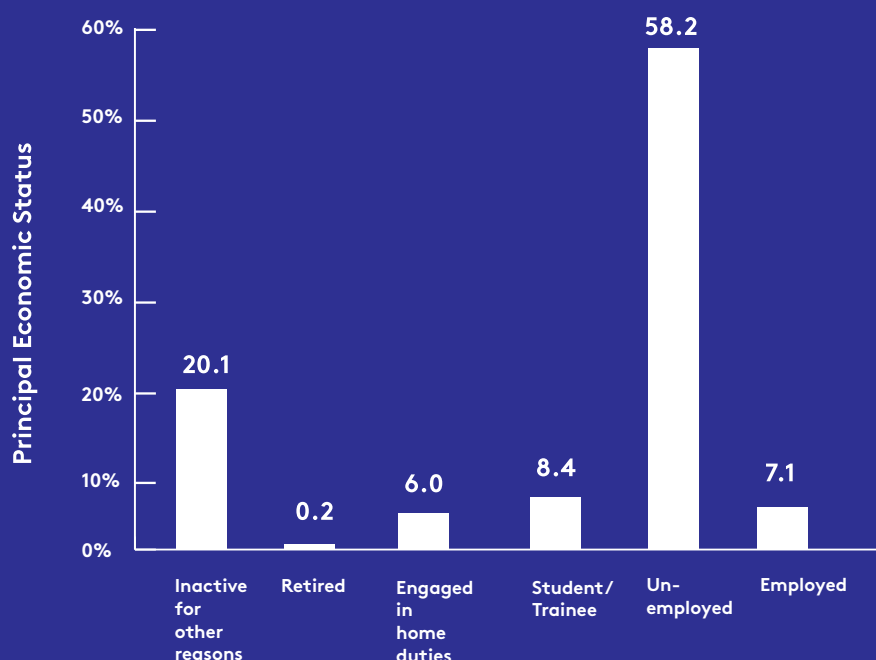
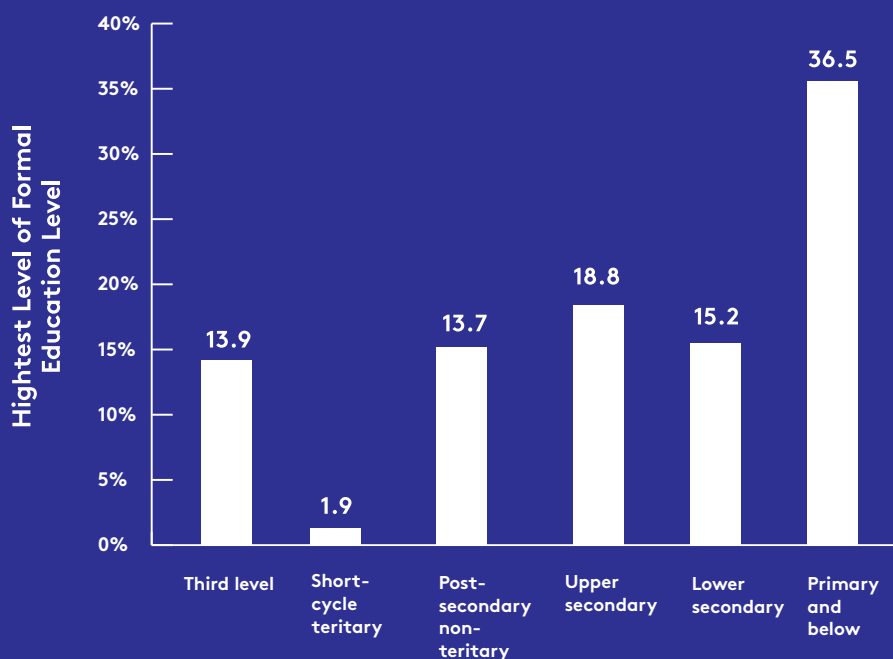


Gender



<sup>5</sup> Please note that residency status and nationality are self-reported by the learner. Therefore, nationality and/or residency status only refer to those cases where it was captured.





Among refugees and asylum seekers, 36.5% of learners reported they had a primary and below education level and 15.2% reported they had a lower secondary education when enrolling in a FET course. In contrast, only 13.7% reported they had a post-secondary non-tertiary education and 13.9% reported a third level education. In relation to Principal Economic Status (PES), over 50% reported they were unemployed, while 34.7% reported they were inactive. Thus, over half (51.7%) of refugees and asylum seekers had low levels of education and 84.7% were inactive or unemployed. Therefore, FET plays an important role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers who may be distant from the labour market and/or lacking core skills (e.g. English language skills) necessary to progress into other FET or Higher Education courses or enter the labour market.

# Definition of Terms

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## Activity

The sum of learners multiplied by the number of courses which they have been enrolled in or completed within a programme or across different programmes, or providers during 2020.

## Certified Completions

In the FET sector, not all learner completions lead to an award through a recognised awarding body in the FET sector. Therefore, certified completions refer only to the total number of certified completions in 2020.

## Certification Rate

The sum of only full and partial learner completions that gained an award through a recognised awarding body in 2020.

## Completions

Total number of learners who have a finish date of a course (regardless of whether the course is certified or not) in 2020. Completions include partial and full completers, but exclude early leavers.

## Enrolments

Enrolments are defined as learners who are on course or have completed a course during 2020.

## Field of Study

This is defined and categorized 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.

## Full Completions

Learners who have completed 90 percent or more of the course and its requirements in 2020.

## 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

A learner who has self-reported their nationality or citizenship as Irish.

## 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. CFA 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 2020.

## Non-Irish

A learner who has self-reported their nationality or citizenship as something other than Irish.

## Non-NFQ Aligned courses

This includes completions with certification not aligned with the NFQ.

## On Course

This refers to those learners who were still on course as of December 31st, 2020.

## Partial Completions

Learners who have completed more than 25 percent but less than 90 percent of a course and its requirements in 2020.

## 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's degree, Honours Bachelor degree, Professional, Post-Graduate, Doctorate or Higher degree courses.





Alongside this research paper, SOLAS has also published a magazine on Diversity in FET which is available on the SOLAS website [solas.ie](http://solas.ie).

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