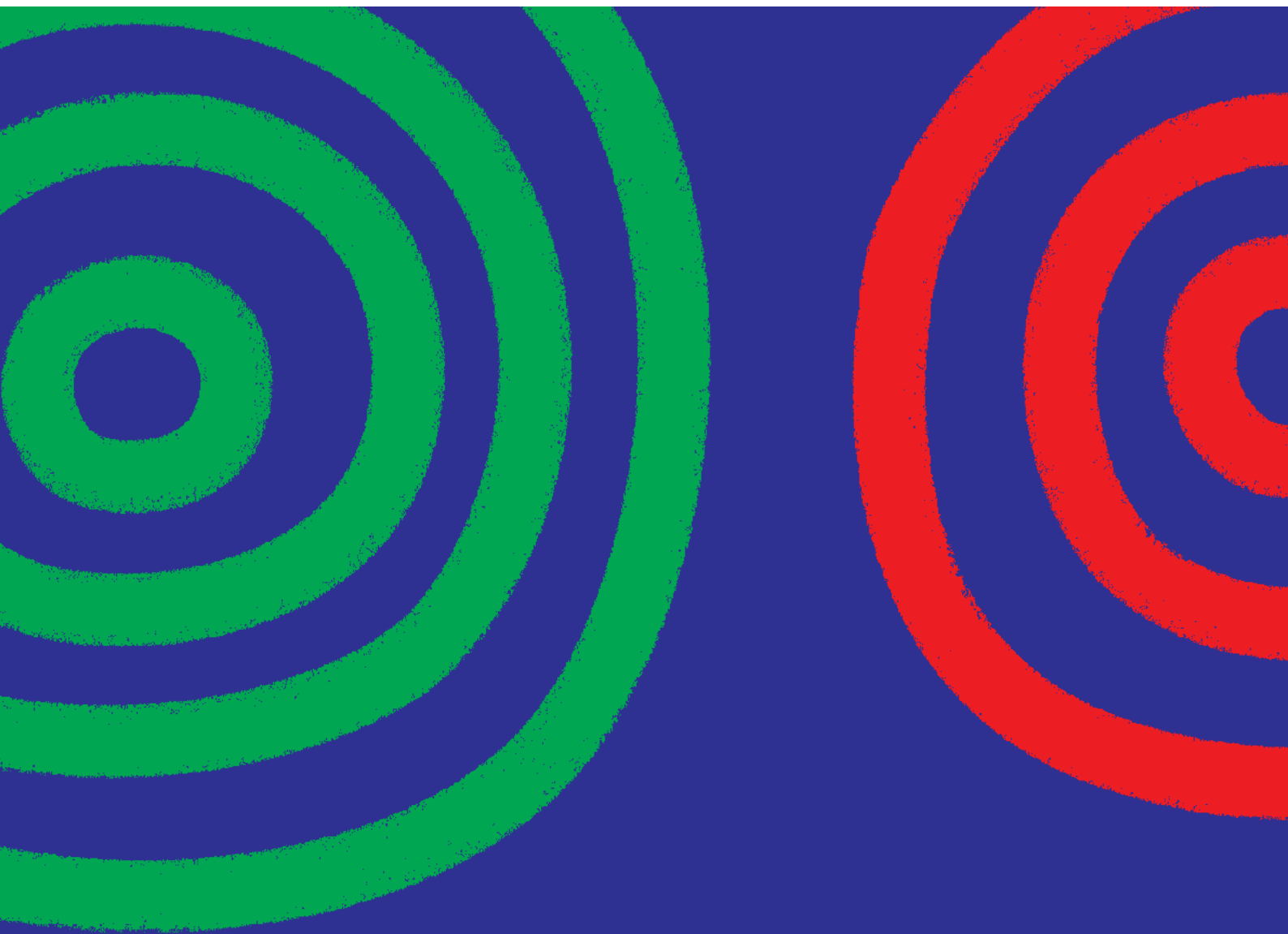


# This is FET Facts and Figures 2020



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**Further  
Education  
& Training**

A Report by the  
Data Analytics Unit in SOLAS  
December 2021

### **Authors**

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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.

# FET Statistics

**Enrolments**

**151,630**



**Learner Completions**

**108,793**



**Learner Certified Completions**

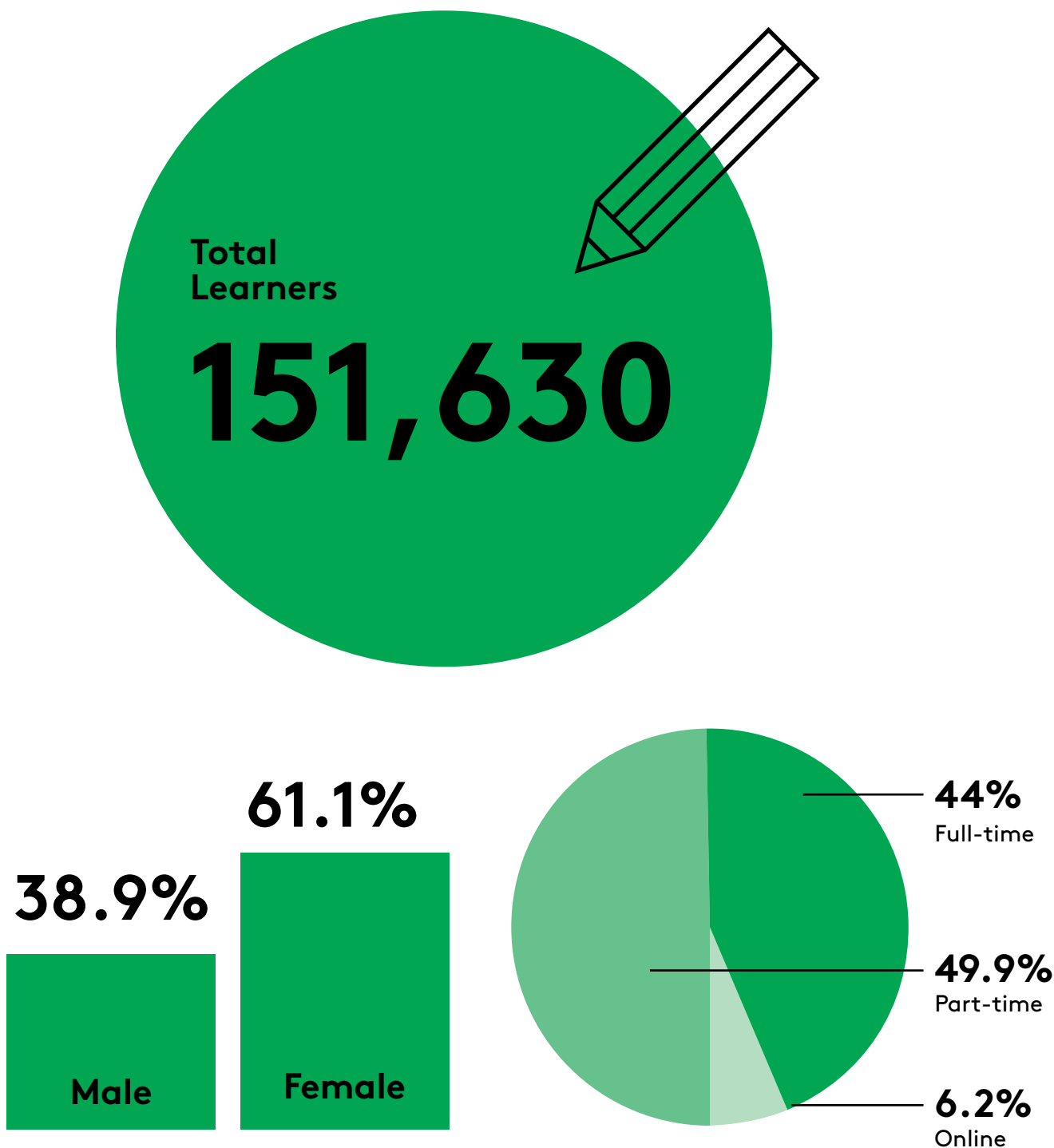
**76,638**

In 2020, 151,630 unique learners were enrolled in FET courses. Of these enrolments, 108,793 learners partially or fully completed their course(s). Of the 108,793 learner completions, 76,638 of these learner completions were certified.

# Section 1: Enrolments

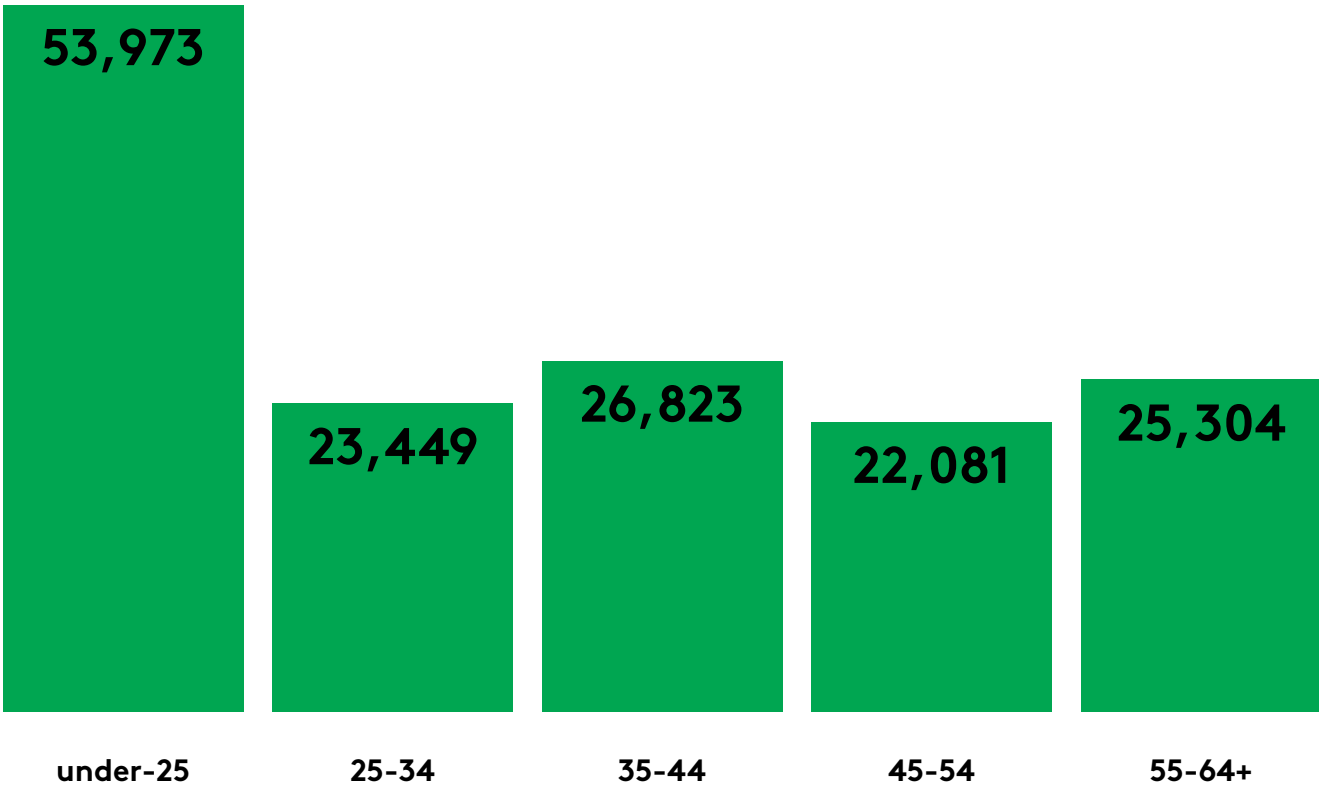


# Enrolments



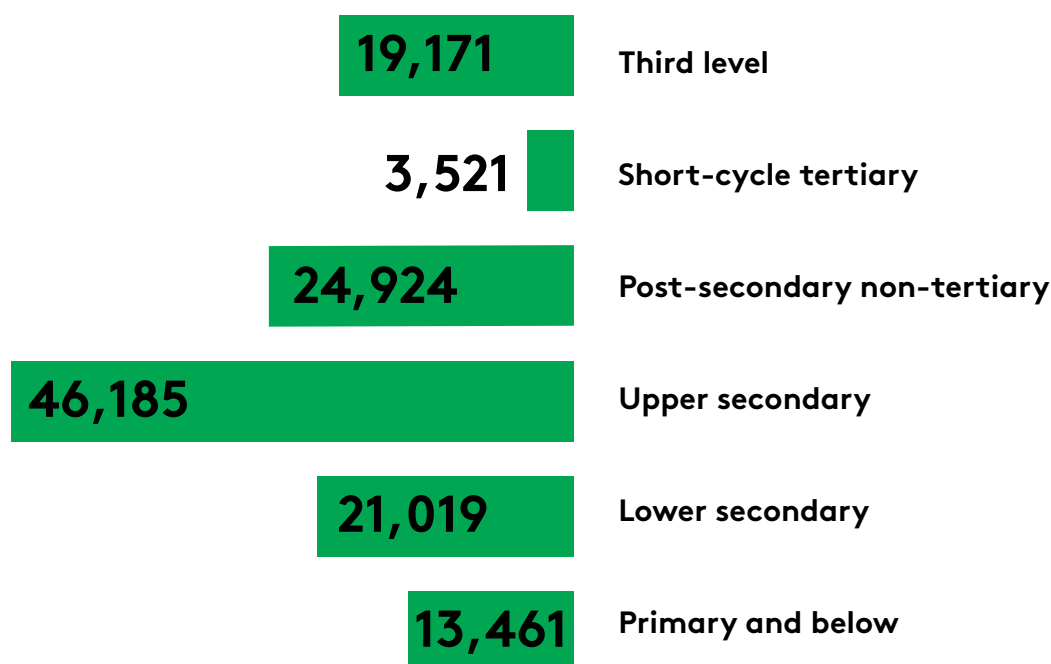
In 2020, there were 151,630 learner enrolments. Of these learner enrolments, 61.1% were female and 38.9% were male. The distribution of enrolments was higher among part-time courses (49.9%), than full-time courses (44%), with a small percentage (6.2%) also undertaking online courses.

# Start Age



Enrolments were primarily concentrated among the under-25s, representing over one third of all enrolments in 2020.

# Highest Level of Formal Education<sup>1</sup>

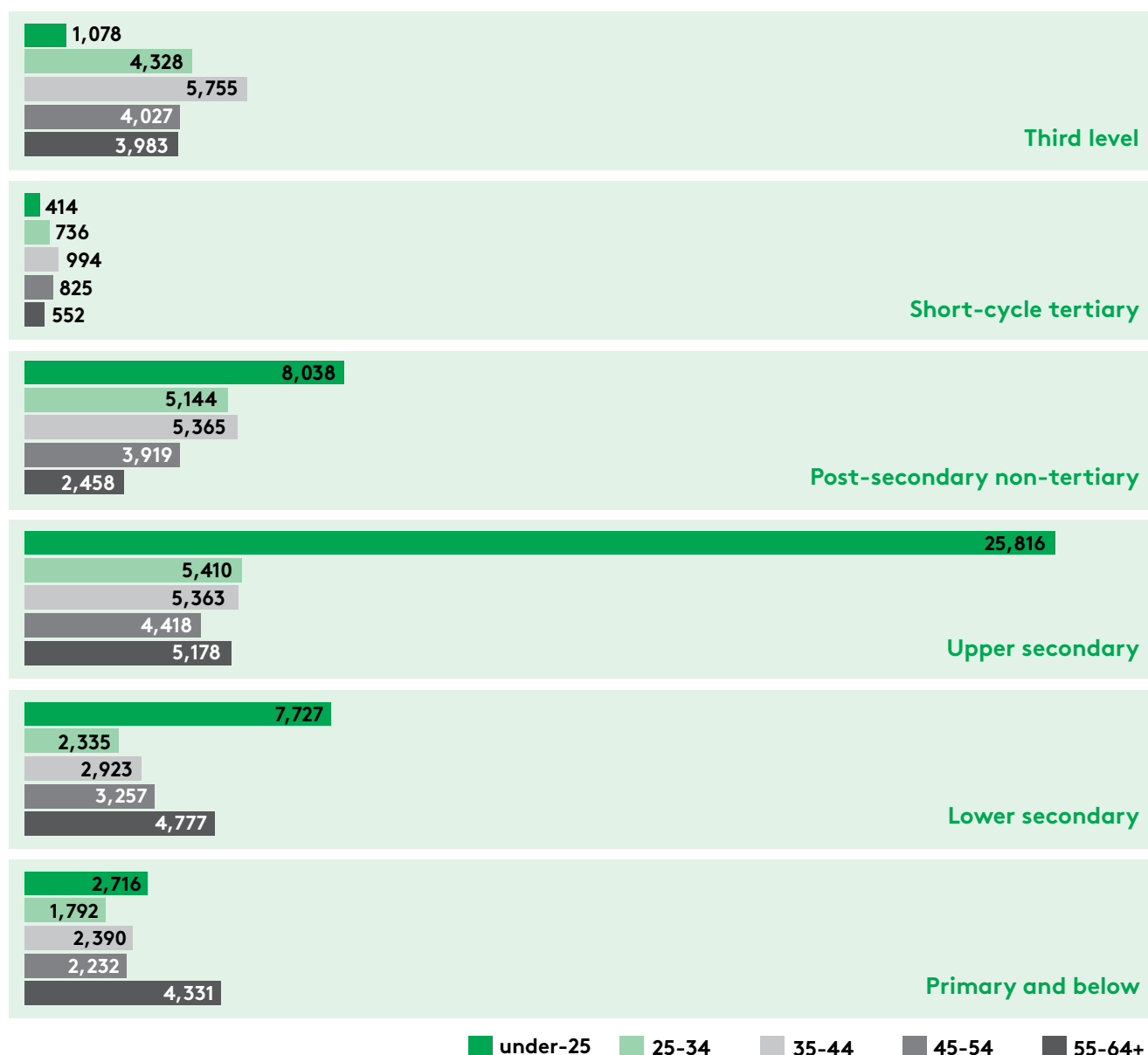


In 2020, 34,480 (26.9%) of learners had a lower secondary education or below when enrolling in a FET course, whereas 46,185 (36%) unique learners had an upper secondary education. The figure also shows that 24,924 (19.4%) of learners had a post-secondary non-tertiary education, an education group primarily comprised of individuals enrolled in FET level 4-6 courses (e.g. Post Leaving Certificate and Back to Education Initiative). In addition, the figure shows that 3,521 (2.7%) learners had a short-cycle tertiary education and 19,171 (14.9%) learners had a third level degree education.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous levels of education were captured.

# Highest Level of Formal Education by Start Age<sup>2</sup>

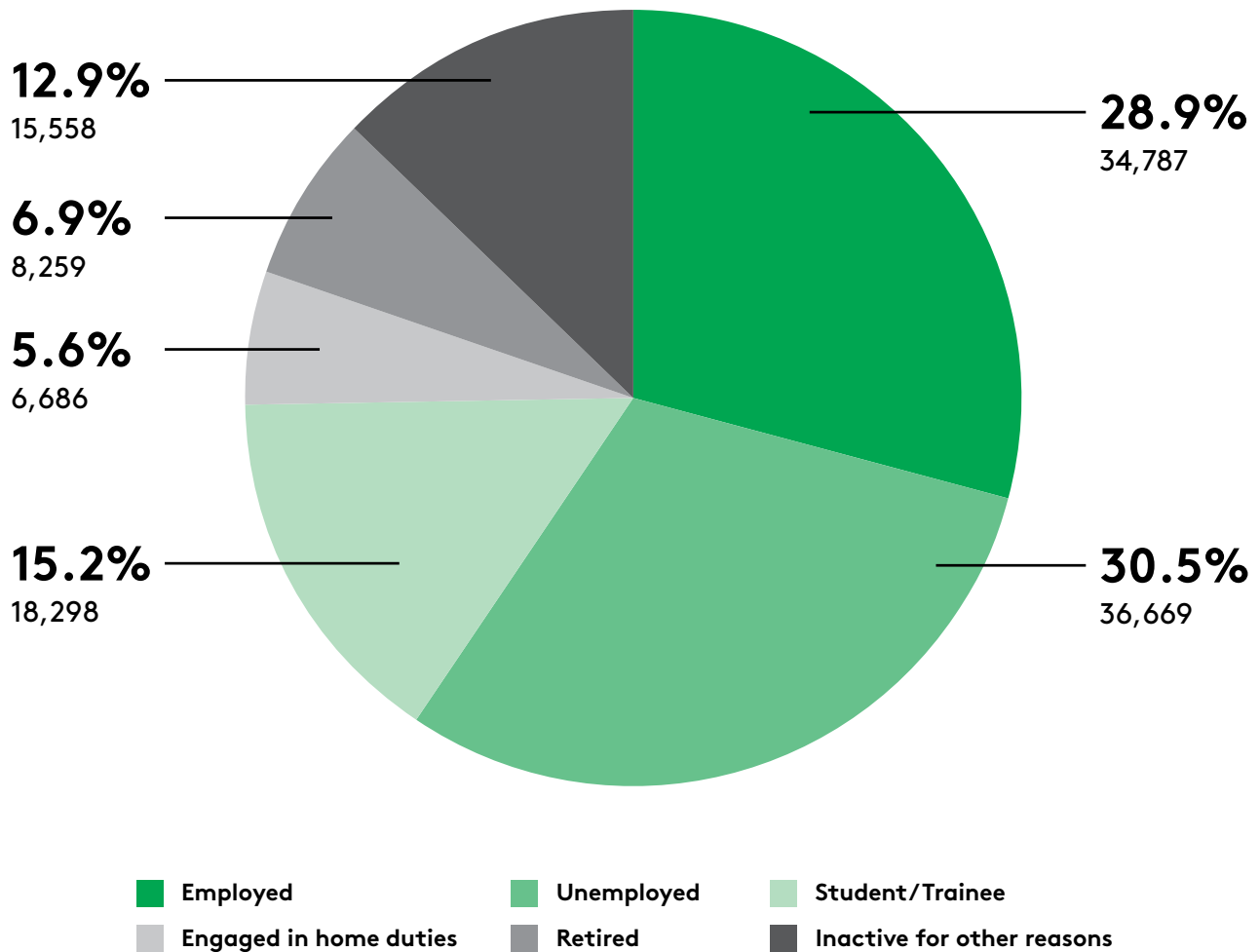


The under-25 age group had the highest concentration among lower secondary, upper secondary, and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education prior to enrolment, whereas the 55-64+ age group had the highest concentration among those learners with primary and below education. For short-cycle tertiary non-degree education and third level degree education, the age groups were distributed relatively evenly, with the exception of the under-25 age group among those learners with a third level degree education.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous levels of education and age were captured.



# Principal Economic Status<sup>3</sup>



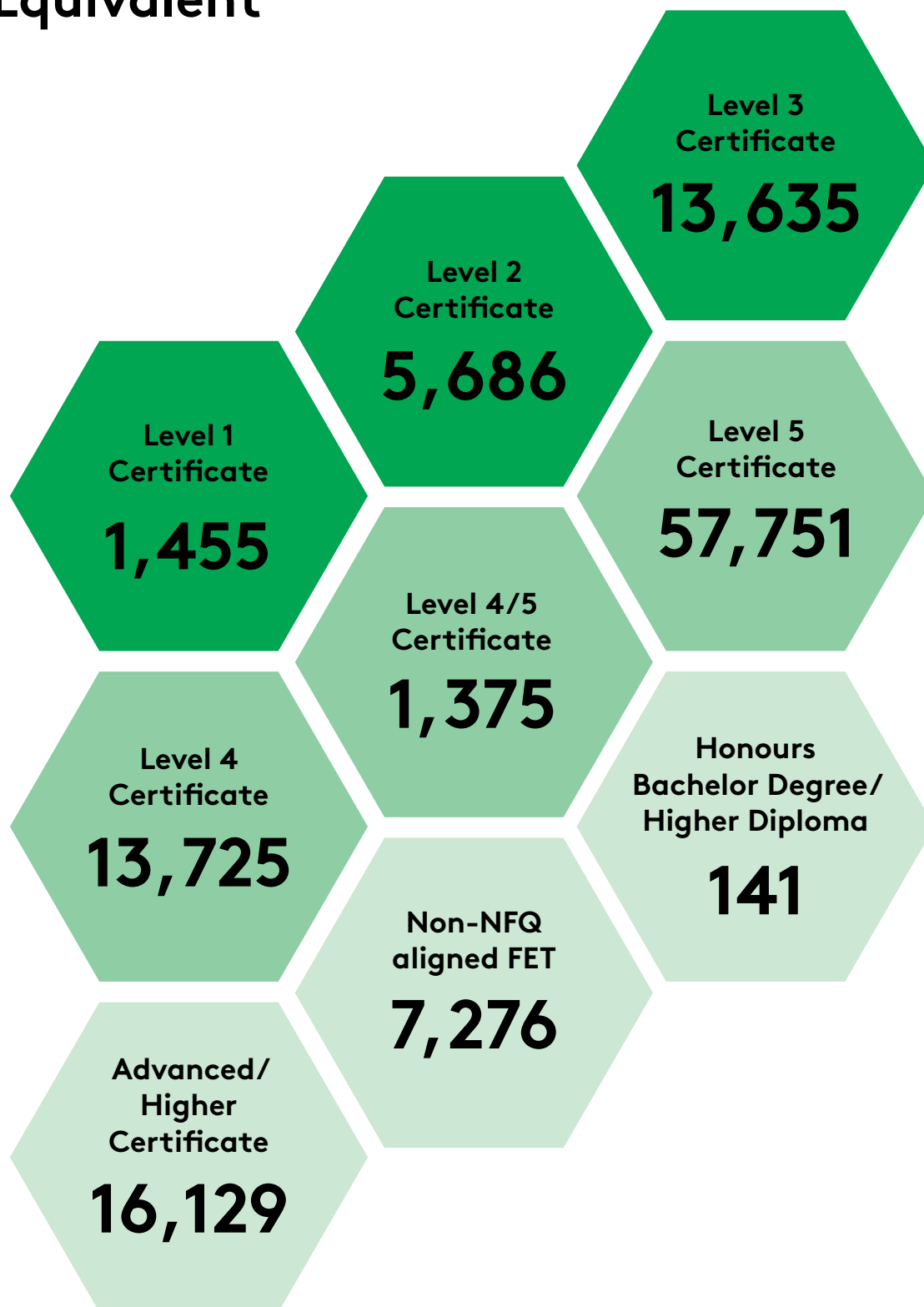
In 2020, 30.5% of learners were unemployed prior to enrolment, while 28.9% were employed. The remaining 40.6% of learners were inactive prior to enrolment.

Of those learners who were unemployed, **46.1% were long-term unemployed.**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous economic status was captured. The principal economic status response rate for learner enrolments was 79.3%.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this only captures those cases where the previous start date of principal economic status was captured.

# Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or Equivalent<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> This excludes learners enrolled in courses that do not lead to an award through a recognised awarding body.

# Programme Category

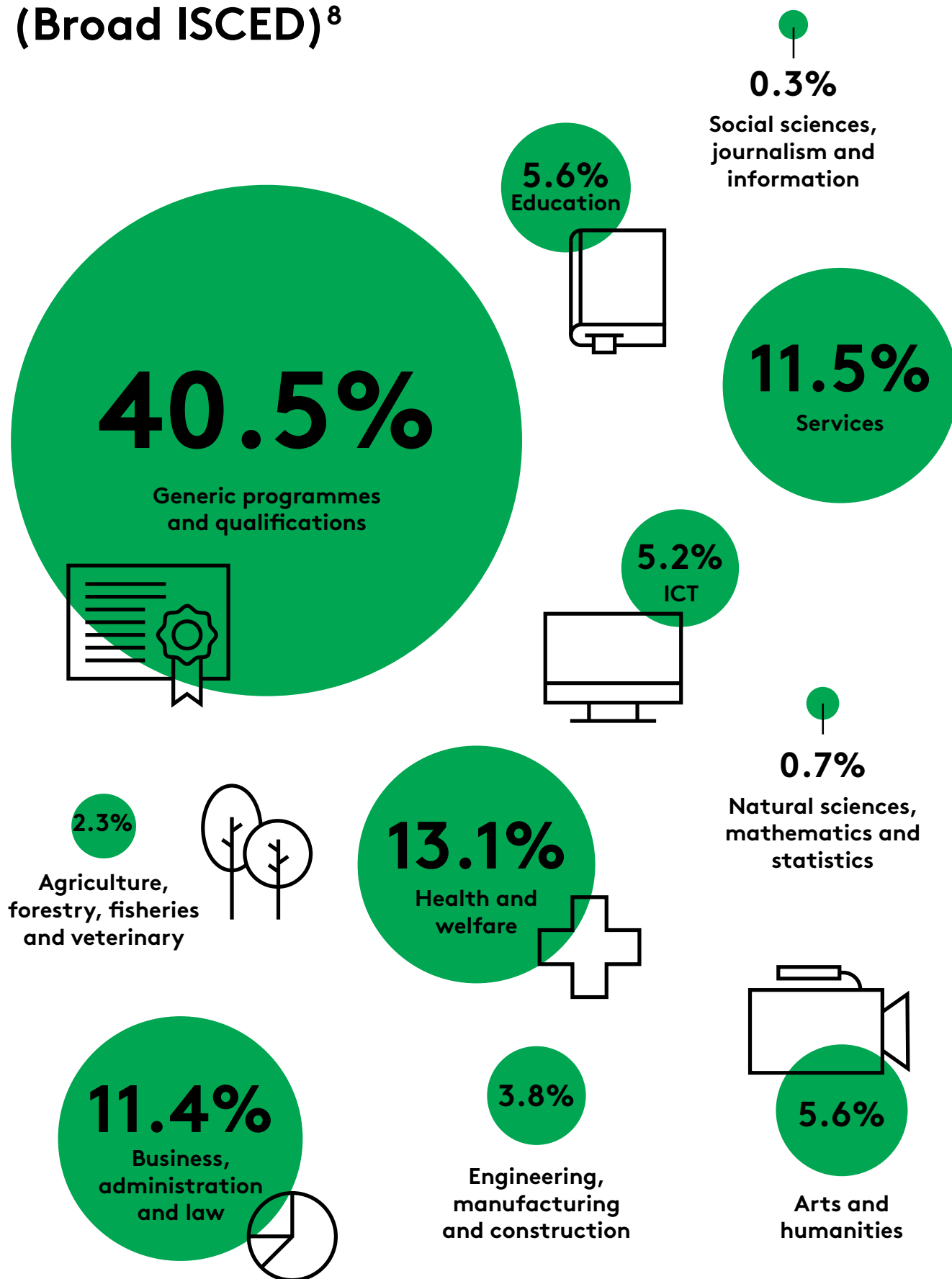
	Programme Category <sup>6</sup>	Learners
Full-time	Blended Training	1,746
	Bridging and Foundation Training	189
	Community Training Centres	2,118
	Justice Workshop	161
	Local Training Initiatives	2,253
	PLC <sup>7</sup>	45,333
	Specialist Training Providers	2,828
	Specific Skills Training	7,350
	Traineeship Employed	1,048
	Traineeship Training	3,476
	VTOS Core	4,057
	Youthreach	3,908
Part-time	Adult Literacy Groups	19,108
	BTEI Groups	16,151
	Community Education	21,129
	ESOL	9,946
	Evening Training	10,824
	FET Cooperation Hours	2,010
	FET Pathways from School	116
	ITABE	1,066
	Libraries Training	8
	Other Funding	2,454
	Recognition of Prior Learning	108
	Refugee Resettlement	616
	Skills for Work	3,119
	Voluntary Literacy Tuition	375
Part-time & Full-time	Skills to Advance	6,538

Among full-time programmes, enrolments were concentrated among Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, Specific Skills Training and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) Core programmes. For part-time programmes, enrolments were concentrated among Community Education, Adult Literacy Groups, and BTEI Groups. In addition, there were 6,538 learners enrolled in the mixed, full-time and part-time, programme Skills to Advance.

<sup>6</sup> Learners here are unique within programmes, but not necessarily across programmes.

<sup>7</sup> PLC courses run on an academic year, whereas this figure includes two groups of starters from two academic years. Therefore, this figure for PLC courses is higher than that of a normal academic year.

# Field of Study (Broad ISCED)<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Field of study is defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

Field of study (Broad ISCED)	Examples of courses
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Horticulture
	Animal care
Arts and humanities	Art, craft and design
	Film and TV production
Business, administration and law	Business studies
	Office administration
Education	Early childhood care and education
	Special needs assisting
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Welding
	Engineering technology
Generic programmes and qualifications	Employability skills
	ESOL English language
	Health and wellbeing
	Arts and crafts
ICT	Information and communications technology
	Computer science
Health and welfare	Nursing studies
	Infection, prevention and control
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	Applied science/laboratory techniques
	Pre-university science
Services	Post Covid-19 hospitality operations
	Sports, recreation and exercise
Social sciences, journalism and information	Journalism for the digital age
	Cultural and heritage studies

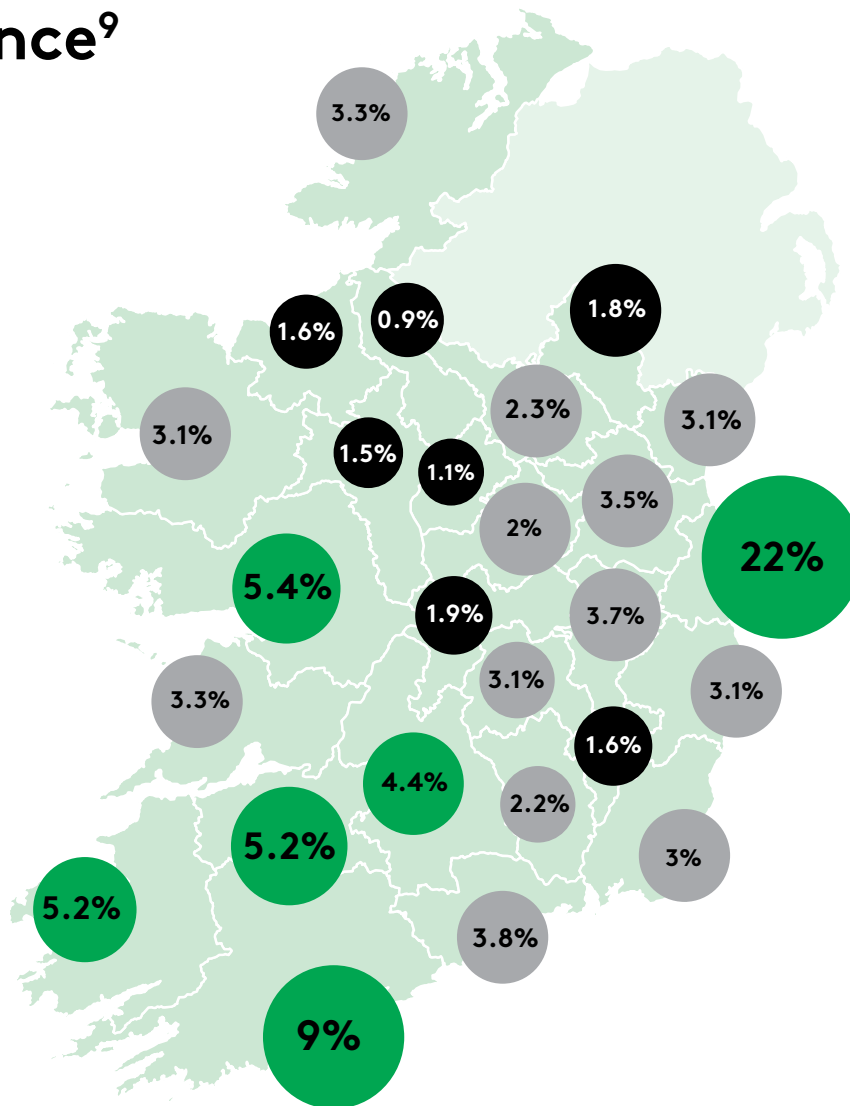
# Field of Study (Broad ISCED) by Delivery Type

	Full-time	Part-time	Online	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	2,429	996	0	3,425
Arts and humanities	7,926	599	0	8,525
Business, administration and law	10,414	5,535	1,392	17,341
Education	4,148	4,185	222	8,555
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	3,844	1,771	71	5,686
Generic programmes and qualifications	9,728	49,791	1,877	61,396
Health and welfare	12,110	5,925	1,871	19,906
ICT	4,028	2,553	1,258	7,839
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	1,032	13	0	1,045
Services	10,573	4,197	2,691	17,461
Social sciences, journalism and information	419	32	0	451
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,651</b>	<b>75,597</b>	<b>9,382</b>	<b>151,630</b>

Overall, enrolments were primarily concentrated among the generic programmes and qualifications ISCED field of study, representing close to half (40.5%) of all enrolments in 2020. This was followed by health and welfare (13.1%), services (11.5%), and business, administration and law (11.4%).

For full-time learner enrolments, health and welfare and services had the highest numbers of learners. In addition, business, administration and law and generic programmes and qualifications also had high numbers of full-time enrolments. For part-time enrolments, generic programmes and qualifications had the highest numbers of learners. This was followed by health and welfare, business, administration and law, and services. Among online enrolments, services had the highest number of learners. This was followed by generic programmes and qualifications and health and welfare.

## County of Residence<sup>9</sup>

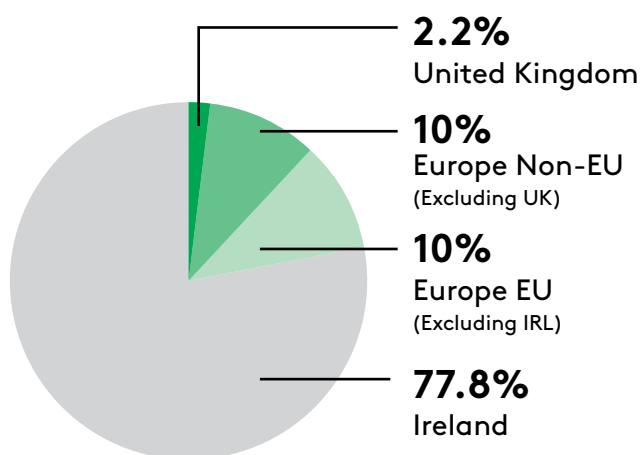
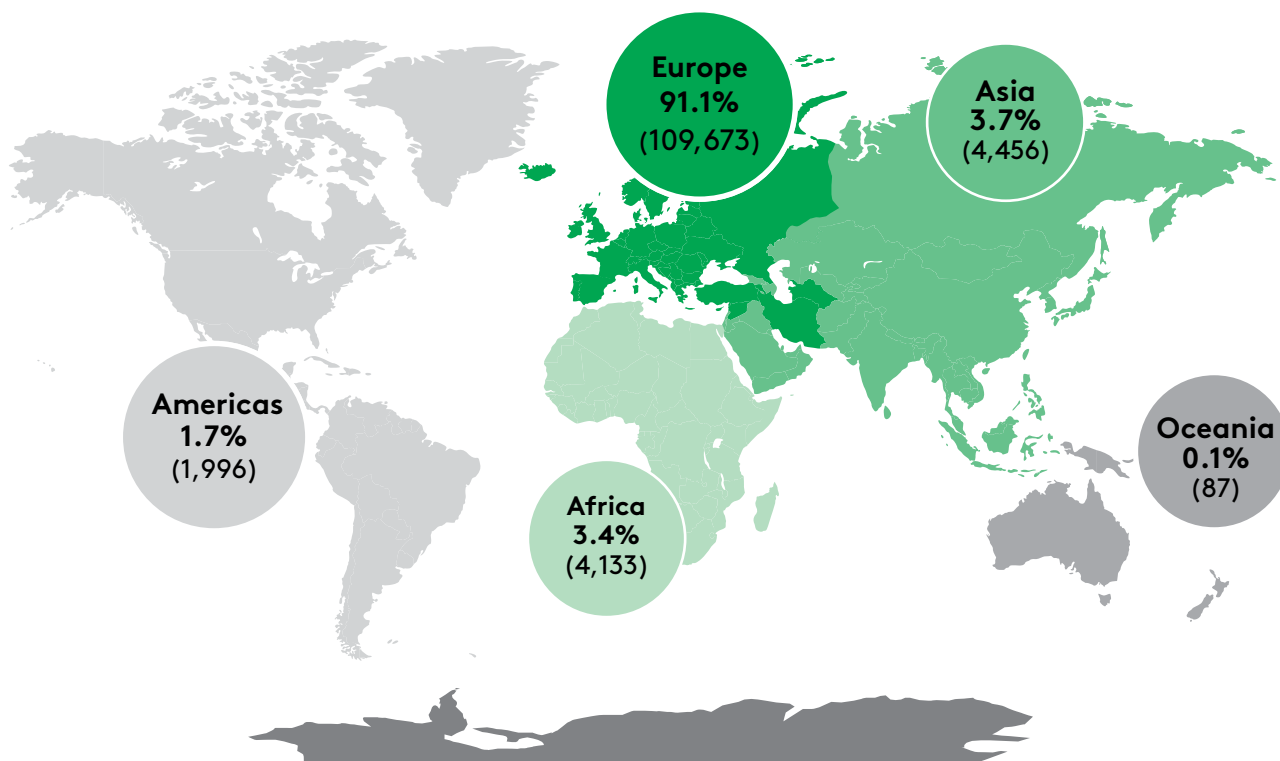


Carlow	2,381	1.6%	Longford	1,580	1.1%
Cavan	3,414	2.3%	Louth	4,551	3.1%
Clare	4,884	3.3%	Mayo	4,491	3.1%
Cork	13,164	9%	Meath	5,047	3.5%
Donegal	4,791	3.3%	Monaghan	2,634	1.8%
Dublin	32,272	22%	Offaly	2,821	1.9%
Galway	7,964	5.4%	Roscommon	2,239	1.5%
Kerry	7,670	5.2%	Sligo	2,355	1.6%
Kildare	5,433	3.7%	Tipperary	6,389	4.4%
Kilkenny	3,253	2.2%	Waterford	5,348	3.7%
Laois	3,108	2.1%	Westmeath	2,875	2%
Leitrim	1,343	0.9%	Wexford	4,349	3%
Limerick	7,557	5.2%	Wicklow	4,486	3.1%
<b>Total</b>				<b>146,399</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and excludes non-responses, unknown responses and those learners with a county of residence in Northern Ireland.

# Nationality<sup>10</sup>

In 2020, there were **197 different** nationalities enrolled in FET.

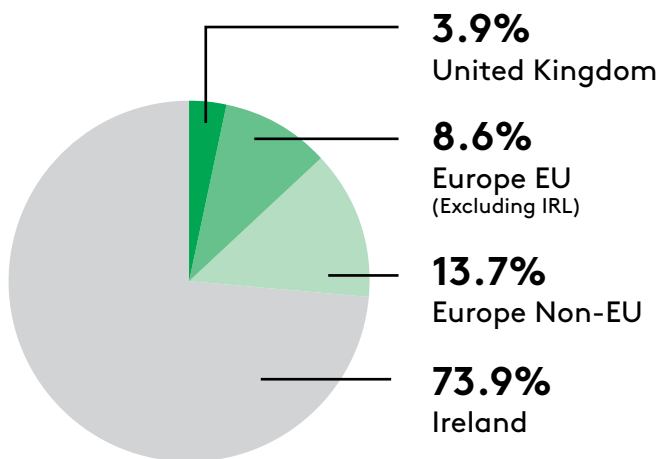
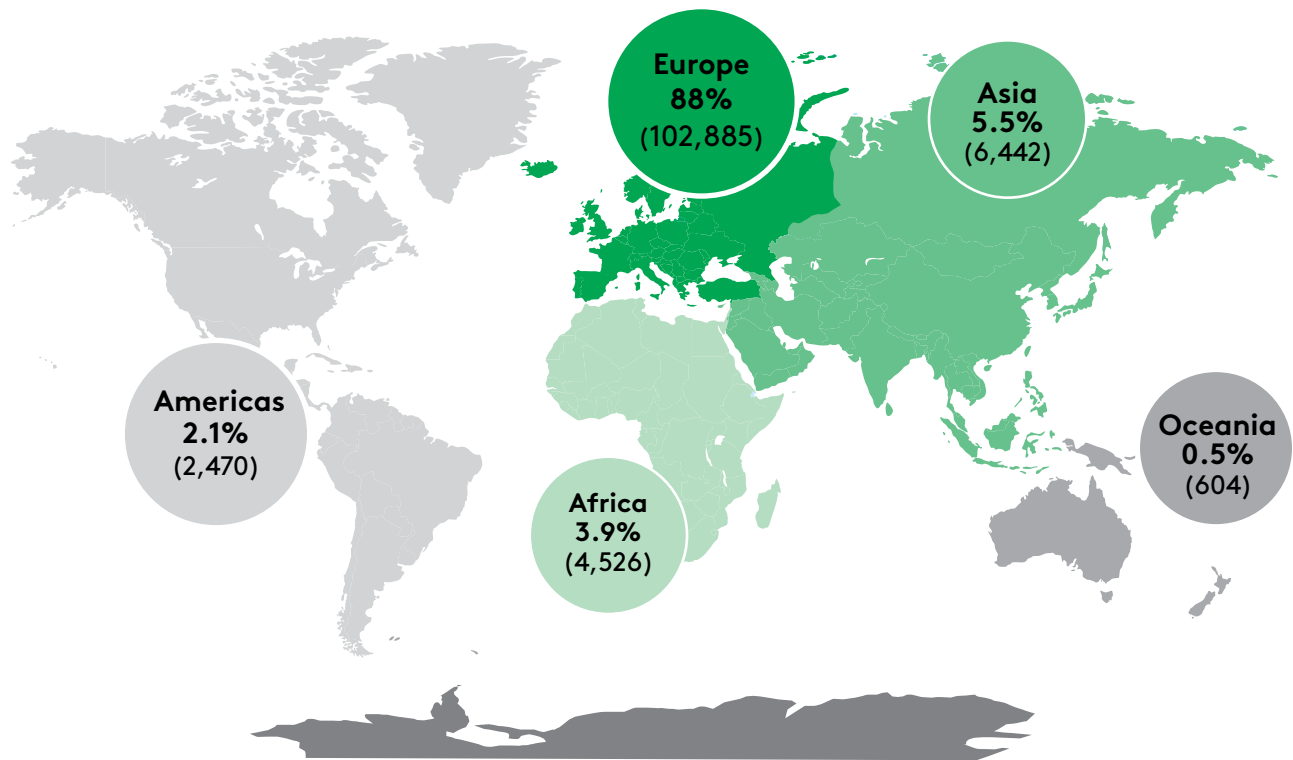


The highest percentage of learner enrolments were nationals of Europe (91.1%). This was followed by Asia (3.7%), Africa (3.4%), the Americas (1.7%) and Oceania (0.1%). The majority of unique learners were nationals of Ireland (77.8%), followed by Europe EU (10%), Europe Non-EU (10%) and the United Kingdom (2.2%).

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where nationality was captured.



# Country of birth<sup>11</sup>



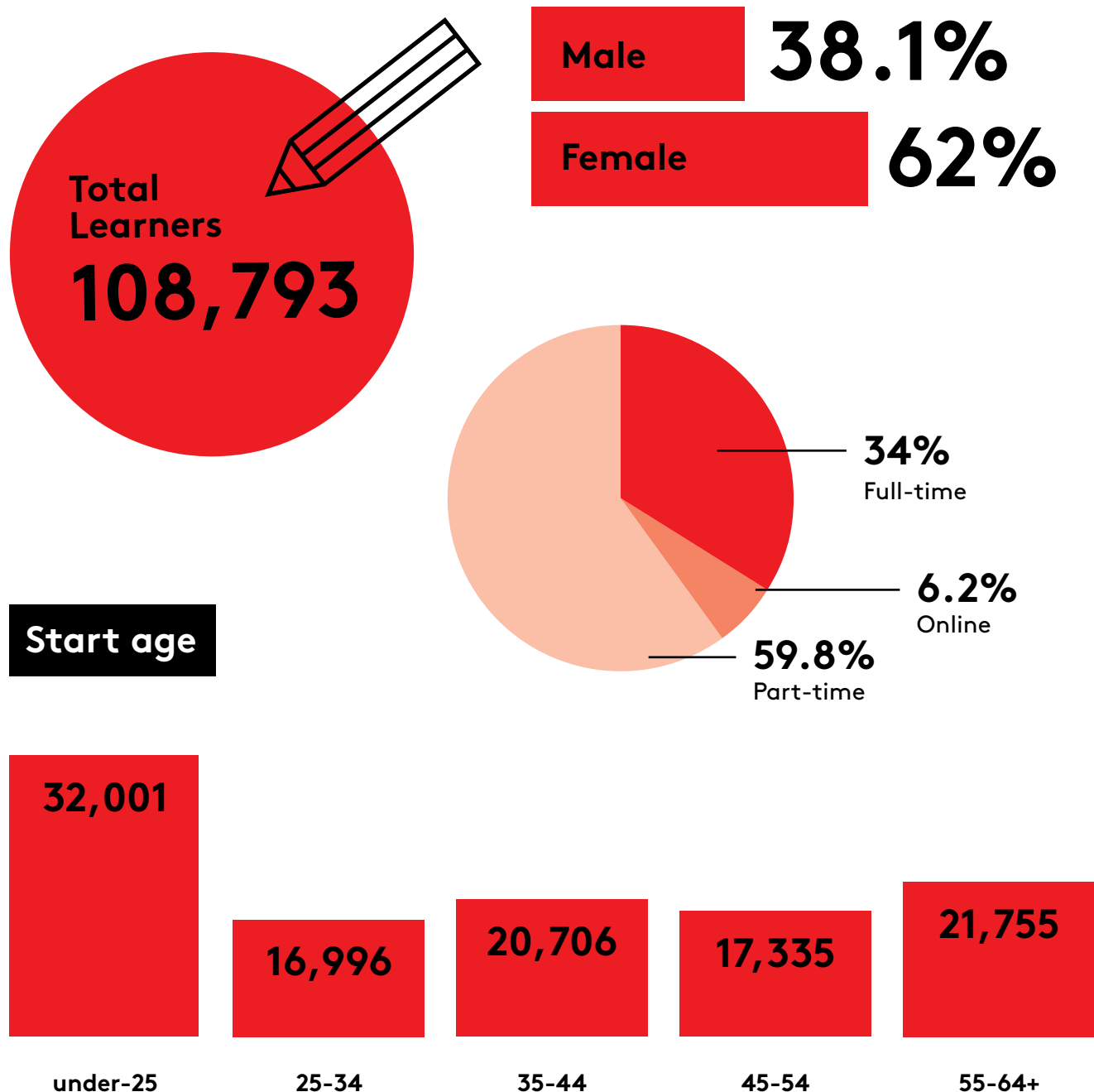
The highest percentage of unique learner enrolments were born in Europe (88%). This was followed by Asia (5.5%), Africa (3.9%), the Americas (2.1%), and Oceania (0.5%). The majority of learners were born in Ireland (73.9%), followed by Europe Non-EU (13.7%), Europe EU (8.6%) and the United Kingdom (3.9%).

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where country of birth was captured.

# Section 2: Completions

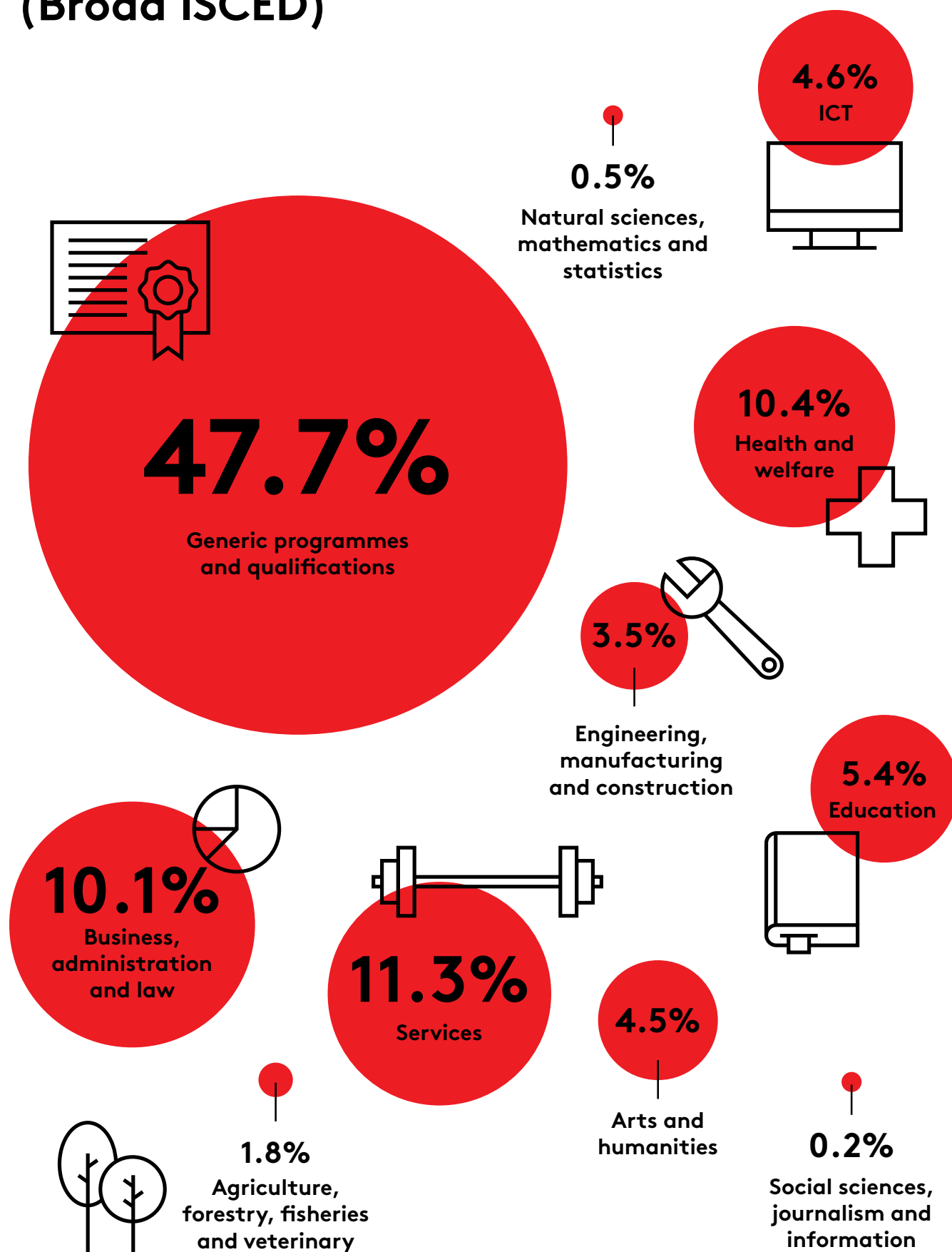


# Completions



In 2020, there were 108,793 learner completions. Of these learner completions, 62% were female and 38.1% were male. The distribution of completions was higher among part-time courses (59.8%), than full-time courses (34%), with a small percentage (6.2%) completing online courses. Approximately half of all completions were among the under-25 and 55-64+ age groups.

# Field of Study (Broad ISCED)



Field of Study (Broad ISCED)	Examples of courses
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Horticulture
	Animal care
Arts and humanities	Art, craft and design
	Film and TV production
Business, administration and law	Business studies
	Office administration
Education	Early childhood care and education
	Special needs assisting
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Welding
	Engineering technology
Generic programmes and qualifications	Employability skills
	ESOL English language
	Health and wellbeing
	Arts and crafts
Health and welfare	Nursing studies
	Infection, prevention and control
ICT	Information and communications technology
	Computer science
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	Applied science/laboratory techniques
	Pre-university science
Services	Post Covid-19 hospitality operations
	Sports, recreation and exercise
Social sciences, journalism and information	Journalism for the digital age
	Cultural and heritage studies

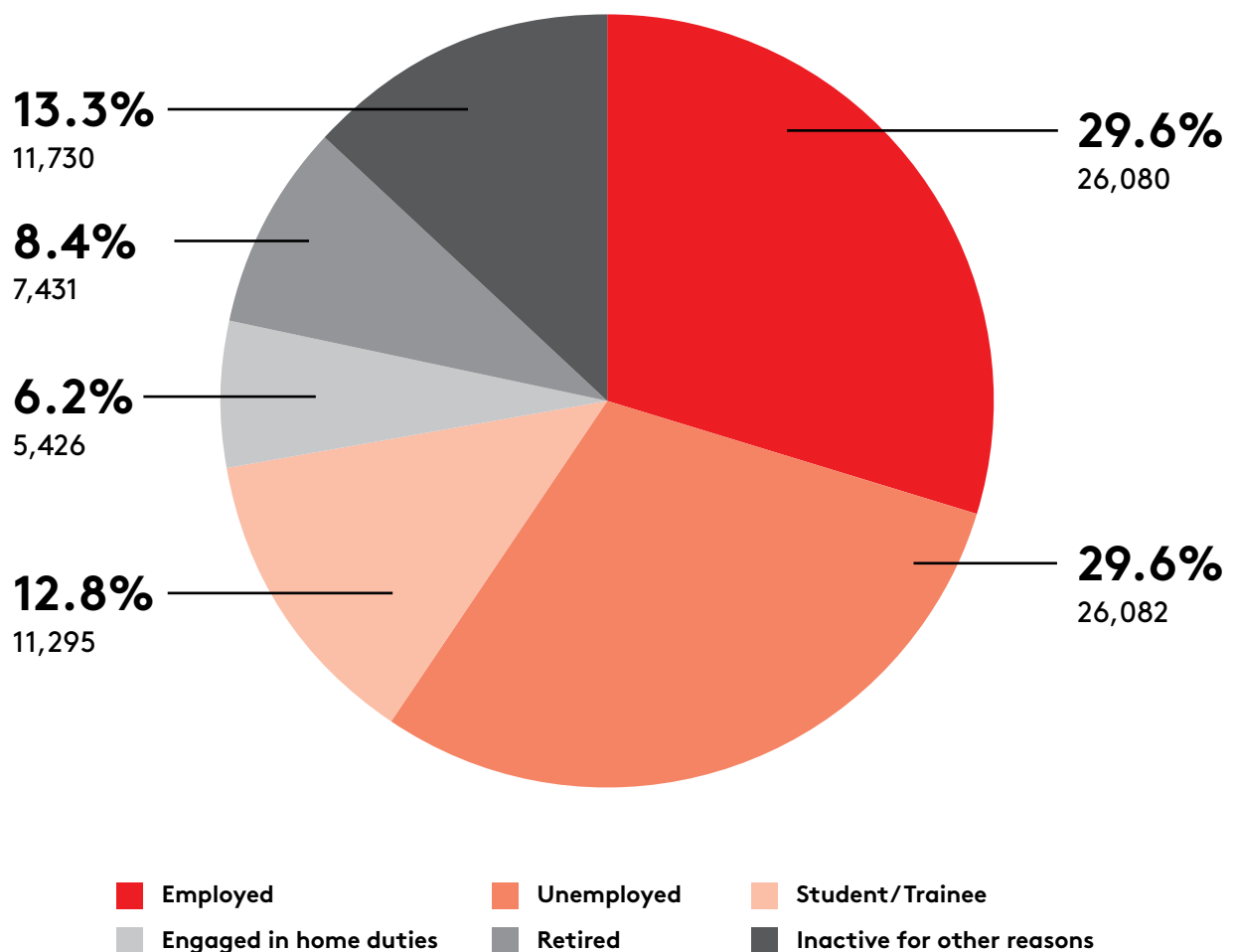
# Field of Study (Broad ISCED) by Delivery Type

	Full-time	Part-time	Online	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1,248	717	0	1965
Arts and humanities	4,477	386	0	4,863
Business, administration and law	5,932	4,212	882	11,026
Education	2,400	3,290	159	5,849
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	2,122	1,617	69	3,808
Generic programmes and qualifications	5,976	44,560	1,380	51,916
Health and welfare	5,899	4,644	725	11,268
ICT	2,318	1,926	778	5,022
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	487	15	0	502
Services	5,876	3,727	2,737	12,340
Social sciences, journalism and information	226	8	0	234
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,961</b>	<b>65,102</b>	<b>6,730</b>	<b>108,793</b>

Overall, generic programmes and qualifications had the highest numbers of learners, with 47.7% of learner completions in this field of study. This was followed by services (11.3%), health and welfare (10.4%), and business, administration and law (10.1%).

For full-time learner completions, generic programmes and qualifications and business, administration and law had the highest numbers of learners. In addition, health and welfare and services also had high numbers of full-time completions. For part-time completions, generic programmes and qualifications accounted for approximately three fourths of all part-time completions. This was followed by health and welfare, business, administration and law, and services. Among online completions, services had the highest number of learners. This was followed by generic programmes and qualifications and business, administration and law.

# Principal Economic Status<sup>12</sup>



In 2020, 29.6% of learners were unemployed prior to completion, while 29.6% were employed. The remaining 40.8% of learners were inactive prior to completion.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that this calculation is an estimate and includes only those cases where previous principal economic status was captured. The principal economic status response rate for learner completions was 80.9%.

# Certified Completions

## Certified Completions by Outcomes <sup>13</sup>

	Learners	Percent
Fully certified	41,275	53.9
Partially certified	12,233	16
No certification achieved	18,519	24.2
Waiting for certification details	4,611	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>76,638</b>	<b>100</b>

In 2020, the certification rate (full + partially certified) was 69.8%. Of the remaining certified learner completions, 6% were waiting for certification details and 24.2% did not achieve certification.

## Certified Completions by Award Level

	Learners	Percent
Non-NFQ Aligned FET <sup>14</sup>	3,549	6.6
Level 1 Certificate	461	0.9
Level 2 Certificate	2,490	4.7
Level 3 Certificate	5,036	9.4
Level 4 Certificate	6,069	11.3
Level 4/5 Certificate	549	1
Level 5 Certificate	27,743	51.9
Advanced Certificate/Higher Certificate	7,550	14.1
Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	61	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,508</b>	<b>100</b>

In 2020, 51.9% of certified completions were at level 5, whereas 11.3% were at level 4, 9.4% at level 3 and 14.1% at an advanced or higher certificate level. In addition, 6.6% of certified completions were non-NFQ aligned FET awards.

<sup>13</sup> This excludes completions where the course did not have an award through a recognised awarding body.

<sup>14</sup> This includes full and partial learner completions that gained an award through a recognised awarding body, but the awards were not aligned with the NFQ.



## Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)<sup>15</sup>

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
<b>Non-NFQ aligned FET</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	384	20	404
Education	2		2
Business, administration and law	276	55	331
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	4		4
ICT	796	411	1207
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	789	67	856
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	6		6
Services	1091	129	1220
<b>Total</b>	<b>3348</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>4030</b>
<b>Level 1 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	464	96	560
<b>Level 2 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	2779	430	3209
<b>Level 3 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	4523	1661	6184
Business, administration and law	2		2
ICT	47	14	61
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	20	24	44
Services	24	3	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>4616</b>	<b>1702</b>	<b>6318</b>

<sup>15</sup> Learner activity refers to the sum of instances of learner full and partial completions that gained an award through a recognised awarding body in 2020. For example, a learner may be enrolled and attain a certified completion in multiple courses (e.g. an ESOL course and an evening training course).

## Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
<b>Level 4 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	1873	1301	3174
Education	65	24	89
Business, administration and law	696	378	1074
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	9	7	16
ICT	446	261	707
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	478	49	527
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	418	172	590
Health and welfare	6		6
Services	826	207	1033
<b>Total</b>	<b>4817</b>	<b>2399</b>	<b>7216</b>
<b>Level 4/5 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	421	164	585
<b>Level 5 Certificate</b>			
Generic programmes and qualifications	472	209	681
Education	3128	699	3827
Arts and humanities	1796	889	2685
Social sciences, journalism and information	139	44	183
Business, administration and law	4749	1303	6052
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	385	50	435
ICT	915	408	1323
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	985	299	1284
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	730	197	927
Health and welfare	8915	2021	10936
Services	2264	1068	3332
<b>Total</b>	<b>24478</b>	<b>7187</b>	<b>31665</b>

## Certified Completions by Field of Study (Broad ISCED), Award Level and Outcomes (Learner Activity)

	Fully Certified	Partially Certified	Total
<b>Advanced Certificate/Higher Certificate</b>			
Education	2313	371	2684
Arts and humanities	853	404	1257
Social sciences, journalism and information	8	1	9
Business, administration and law	1830	395	2225
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	4	6	10
ICT	207	67	274
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	157	20	177
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	186	76	262
Health and welfare	344	173	517
Services	793	251	1044
<b>Total</b>	<b>6695</b>	<b>1764</b>	<b>8459</b>
<b>Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma</b>			
Arts and humanities	61		61

## Certified Completions by Field of Study (Detailed ISCED) and Award Level (Learner Activity)

	Non-NFQ Aligned FET	Level 1 Certificate	Level 2 Certificate	Level 3 Certificate
Accounting and taxation				
Agriculture				
Architecture and town planning	8			
Arts				
Audio-visual techniques and media production				
Basic programmes and qualifications	368	542	3,209	4,225
Biological and related sciences				
Biology				
Building and civil engineering	6			9
Business and administration	19			
Child care and youth services				
Computer use	935			22
Crop and livestock production				
Database and network design and administration	90			
Education				
Education and Training not elsewhere classified				
Education science				
Electricity and energy	32			
Electronics and automation				
Engineering and engineering trades				8
Engineering, manufacturing and construction				37
Fashion, interior and industrial design				
Finance, banking and insurance	30			
Fine Arts				
Fisheries				
Food processing				
Generic programmes and qualifications				44
Handicrafts				
Hair and beauty services	54			
Health				
Horticulture				
Hotel, restaurants and catering	346			17

Level 4 Certificate	Level 4/5 Certificate	Level 5 Certificate	Advanced Certificate/ Higher Certificate	Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	Total
			462		462
		18	30		48
15		57	28		108
		463	4		467
		944	502	61	1,507
2,544	585	674			12,147
		435			435
			10		10
191		305			511
		1,761	588		2,368
		134			134
5		461	45		1,468
			10		10
		375	90		555
			499		499
		89	8		97
			55		55
194		101	33		360
13		14	97		124
64		456			528
					37
		441	256		697
		3			33
		412	261		673
		8			8
		90			90
					44
		110	21		131
318		1,251	248		1,871
		1,704	150		1,854
590		275	45		910
561		338	25		1,287

## Certified Completions by Field of Study (Detailed ISCED) and Award Level (Learner Activity)

	Non-NFQ Aligned FET	Level 1 Certificate	Level 2 Certificate	Level 3 Certificate
Information and communication technologies (ICTs)	139			
Journalism and reporting				
Law				
Literacy and numeracy				659
Management and administration	218			
Manufacturing and processing	8			
Marketing and advertising	17			
Materials (glass, paper, plastic and wood)				
Mechanics and metal trades	706			
Motor vehicles, ships and aircraft	96			
Music and performing arts				
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics				
Nursing and midwifery				
Occupational health and safety	366			
Personal skills and development		18		1,297
Pharmacy				
Philosophy and ethics				
Physical sciences	4			
Protection of persons and property				
Secretarial and office work				
Social and behavioural sciences				
Social work and counselling				
Sociology and cultural studies				
Software and applications development and analysis	90			
Sports	1			
Teacher training with subject specialisation	2			
Therapy and rehabilitation				
Training for pre-school teachers				
Transport services	458			
Travel, tourism and leisure	31			
Veterinary	6			
Welfare				
Wholesale and retail sales				
	<b>4,030</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>3,209</b>	<b>6,318</b>

Level 4 Certificate	Level 4/5 Certificate	Level 5 Certificate	Advanced Certificate/ Higher Certificate	Honours Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma	Total
672			14		825
		88			88
		260			260
					659
		2,229	949		3,396
			8		16
		159			176
2		90	19		111
26		2			734
22		169			287
		298	241		539
16					16
		6,268			6,268
					366
653					1,968
		15			15
		17			17
					4
79		147	15		241
783		1,405	218		2,406
			9		9
		1,165	231		1,396
		95			95
		487	125		702
71		1,032	300		1,404
					2
		94	8		102
95		3,748	2,134		5,977
		8			466
11		577	420		1,039
		626	177		809
		1,525	124		1,649
291		242			533
7,216	585	31,665	8,459	61	62,103

# Definition of Terms

## 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 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.

## Full Completions

Learners who have completed 90 per cent 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 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 2020.

**Long-term Unemployed**

This refers to any person who is unemployed for 12 months or more.

**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**

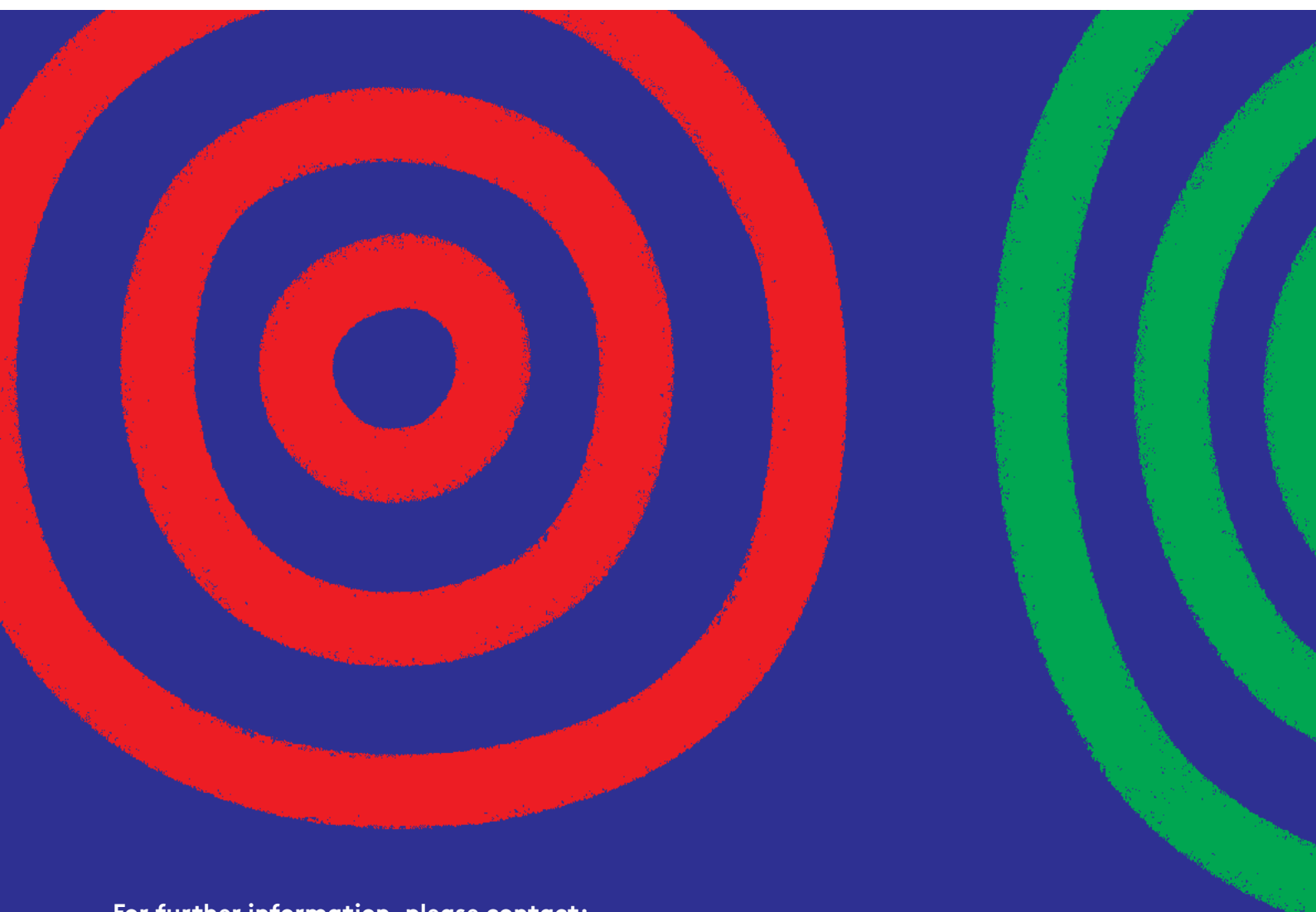
This refers to third level non-degree courses and includes higher certificate NFQ level 6 courses and diploma NFQ level 7 courses. These courses are usually of one year in duration and are often vocational in nature.

**Third Level**

This refers to Ordinary Bachelor degree, Honours Bachelor degree, Professional, Post-Graduate, Doctorate or Higher degree courses.







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