

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND -
A Quantitative Analysis of the Sector
December 2005

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I. CONTEXT

- I.1. Education and training is the heartbeat of the modern economy. As the world continues to move from an industrialised to a knowledge-based economy, learning and training policies have become increasingly important.
- I.2. Establishing and maintaining the centrality of the learner is now widely recognised as critical, coupled with an awareness that an individual's learning objectives may change over the course of his/her lifetime. At European Union level, the White Paper on Education and Training (EU, 1995)¹ identified the need of *all* citizens to develop a knowledge base. This White paper and other reports have warned against the danger of social exclusion among some groups in society based on lack of knowledge^{2,3}.
- I.3. At a national level, it was planned since the early 1990s that further education and training would be formally recognised and provided for in Ireland. Later in the decade, developing a strategy of lifelong learning throughout the educational system became a national policy objective. There was historic progress towards achieving this goal in 1999 with the enactment of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act. The Act, in common with the EU White Paper, identifies learners as the driving force in all education and training activities and emphasises the importance of meeting their needs as the Irish system grows. This Act also led to the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority, Higher Education and Training Awards Council and Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).
- I.4. Awards in the further education and training sector were previously made by FÁS, the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), the National Tourism Certification Board (now Fáilte Ireland) and Teagasc. As an interim measure FETAC is responsible for making these awards. FETAC will develop new named awards in conjunction with the recently developed National Framework of Qualifications (see diagram 1).
- I.5. FETAC is also required to promote enhanced access to learning and opportunities for progression and ensure that all modes of learning are valued and recognised.
- I.6. The Further Education and Training sector (FET) is a key provider of knowledge, skills and competence. As a first step towards understanding the dynamics of the sector there is a need to gather information on what makes up the FET sector.
- I.7. FETAC⁴ is committed to prioritising and catering for learners' needs by providing further education and training awards that are accessible, relevant, of high quality and status and have national and international currency. To this end, FETAC have outlined in their Strategic Plan that they will:
 - Make awards that are inclusive, relevant and responsive to diverse learning environments, including the workplace.

¹European Commission 1995, *White Paper on Education and Training -Teaching and Learning -Towards the Learning Society* COM(95)590

²Lifelong learning in Asia and the Pacific, ILO Regional Tripartite Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand 8 – 10 December 2003, International Labour Office

³Larsen & Istance 2001, *Lifelong Learning for All*, OECD observer, OECD

⁴FETAC *Strategic Plan 2003-2006*, 2003

- Consult with learners and draw on research and data to identify and meet the needs of learners in diverse learning environments.
- I.8. It is important to understand the knowledge ‘stocks and flows’ of the FET sector in order to progress and develop an efficient and responsive education and training system. This information is critical in order for FETAC to understand, anticipate and provide for the needs and future needs of learners.
 - I.9. Further education and training is a vibrant, rapidly growing part of education and training in Ireland. It caters for a diverse range of settings, learners and fields of learning. Learning takes place in a range of environments, including centres of further education, training centres, Institutes of Technology, community-based centres and the workplace.
 - I.10. There is currently a lack of clarity on what comprises the Further Education and Training (FET) field in Ireland. Comprehensive data related to further education and training are extremely limited, particularly in terms of the ‘flow’ or numbers enrolled in FET. There is also a paucity of international data and efforts are in place to redress this situation⁵. ‘Information needs’ to be addressed at an international level include the development of comparable data across both national and regional levels in order to provide a means of measuring and benchmarking further education and training.
 - I.11. As mentioned, this information process will ultimately support efforts to identify and thus respond accordingly to learner needs. It will also address concerns identified by the Task Force on Lifelong Learning which stated in their report⁶ that there was ‘*an absence of consolidated information on participation in Lifelong Learning*’.

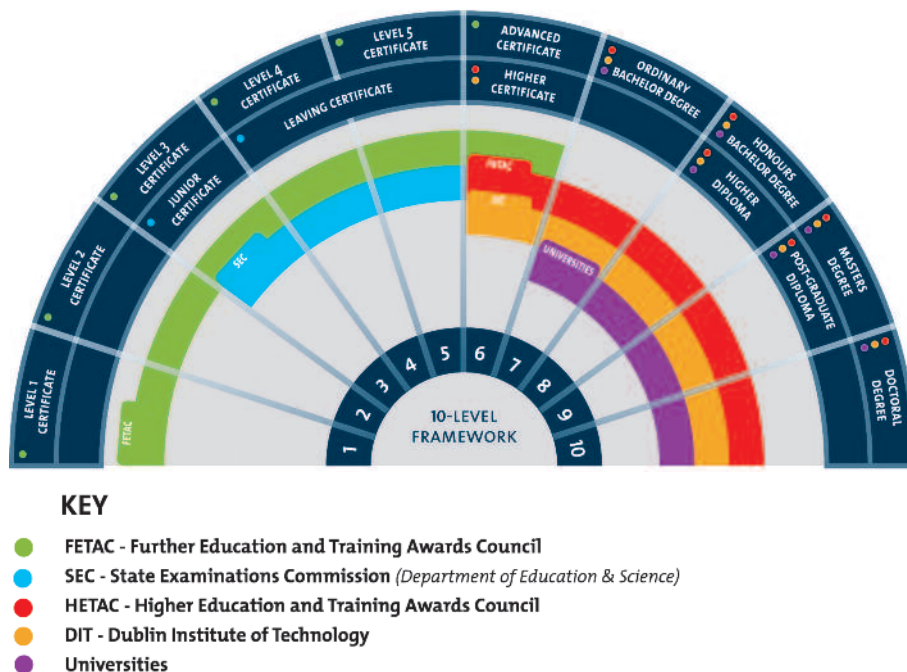
⁵ Gnahn, Pehl & Seidel 2004, *Towards a European Statistics for Adult Education*, Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung

⁶ Report of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning 2002, Government Publications, Dublin

2. FEATURES OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) SECTOR IN IRELAND

- 2.1. Further Education and Training (FET) is difficult to comprehensively define. The 1999 Qualifications Act tentatively sets out further education and training as encompassing ‘education and training other than primary or post-primary education or higher education and training’. In the 1999 Qualifications Act the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) is specified as the body which will determine the definition of further education and training. To this end the NQAI have defined further education and training awards as ‘those made by the Further Education and Training Awards Council at Levels 1 to 6’ on the National Framework of Qualifications⁷.

DIAGRAM 1: National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland ⁸



The National Framework of Qualifications is a 10-level structure and is depicted in Diagram 1. Each level has an associated set of learning outcomes that are expected of a learner if s/he is to receive an award at that level. At each of the 10 levels there are one or more award-types. An award-type is a type of named award that shares common features and is independent of fields of learning e.g. Higher Diploma.

On the Framework, awards at levels 7 to 10 are made by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and the universities. At level 6, the Advanced Certificate is made by FETAC and the Higher Certificate award is made by HETAC and the DIT. At levels 3 to 5, the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate awards are made by the State Examinations Commissions (SEC/Department of Education and Science). Other awards at levels 1-5 are made by FETAC.

⁷National Qualifications Authority of Ireland 2003, *Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications*, Dublin

⁸NQAI 2005. Retrieved: Oct 11 2005, from <http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/TheFramework/DiagramTheNationalFrameworkofQualifications/larger/>

- 2.2. Further education and training is a diverse and dynamic sector, typical features of which include:
- Further education and training programmes typically have a vocational focus and reflect national, regional or sectoral economic needs. Programmes also aim to develop personal skills.
 - Programmes are provided by a vast array of institutions including Further Education centres (such as second level schools, vocational education committees); FÁS, Teagasc, Fáilte Ireland and Bord Iascaigh Mhara centres and colleges; professional bodies and the workplace (private and public sectors). Programmes leading to FETAC awards are delivered by over 2,000 providers.
 - FET programmes are funded from a wide range of sources and the cohort undertaking any one programme does not fit a prescribed profile (in terms of age, existing qualifications etc.).
 - As stated earlier, awards are at levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications

3. OBJECTIVE OF PAPER

- 3.1. This paper sets out to:
- Delineate Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland
 - Present national data on FET in terms of annual ‘throughput population’ or ‘flow’ and ‘stocks’. The scale of FET learning can be gauged in terms of both flows and stock. Flows show the share of individuals that undertake learning during a defined period. Stocks depict the share of individuals who have attained a particular skill level at a particular time.
 - Present corresponding national data in terms of estimated annual public funding of FET

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The ‘flow’ data were collected through a literature search and direct contact with the Department of Education and Science and the providers FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc, Bord Iascaigh Mhara. Skillnets was also contacted. The ‘stock data’ were provided from FETAC databases.

5. DATA LIMITATIONS

- 5.1. It is important to point out, for the purposes of this paper, only formal further education and training (which is typically provided through programmes) is considered. In addition, the data for formal learning are largely dependent on data availability. Thus, whilst the data are comprehensive for publicly funded agencies who also provide or perform education and training such as FÁS, data for education and training funded through indirect public/private funds and performed in the private sector are limited⁹.
- 5.2. In terms of enrolments the data are headcount and therefore include double-counts. For example, of the 1,885 registrations for Bord Iascaigh Mhara programmes in 2002 this included only 1,425 participants. The exception being Post Leaving Certificate course (PLC) data, which are national census data, are exclusively full-time enrolments and do not include double counts.
- 5.3. The term 'learner' is used interchangeably with 'enrolment' in this paper. Both terms refer to the numbers of registrations rather than actual numbers of participants. These data are estimated and do not take into account factors such as course duration or delivery (part time/full time).
- 5.4. Non-formal and informal learning which takes place in the home, work-place and the community are also integral to FET. These modes of learning are, however, difficult, if not impossible, to quantify and are thus excluded from this paper.

⁹ As an example: The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) do not provide training, however as a service to the food industry they have compiled a "Food Safety Training Courses" database (www.fsai.ie/industry/training) which acts as a directory detailing some of the training providers and courses in food safety and hygiene available nationwide. This database lists around 300 different courses provided by approximately 40 listed providers. The FSAI state that the list is not a complete listing of courses available. This reflects the extent of training available to industry in only one specific area, and is an indication of the significant 'gap' that exists in terms of capturing workplace Education & Training in this paper.

6. FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND - FINDINGS

6.1. Findings - FET Providers

Further Education and Training is provided by a wide range of organisations and through a myriad of courses and programmes^{10, 11, 12}. The main providers are summarised below:

Further Education Centres

Further Education Centres encompass a broad span of course providers, including Vocational Educational Committees (VECs), secondary schools, comprehensive schools and community schools/colleges, and a variety of adult learning and community education centres.

There are currently 1,417¹³ Further Education centres registered with FETAC comprising of:

- Adult and Community Education and Training Centres
- Adult Literacy Centres
- Centres for Learners with Special Needs
- Community Training Workshops
- Post Leaving Cert (PLC) Centres/Further Education Colleges
- Secondary/Comprehensive Schools and Community Schools/Colleges
- Vocational Schools
- Vocational Training Opportunity Schemes (VTOS)
- Youthreach Centres
- Workplace Learning Centres

Programmes offered by Further Education Centres cover all broad fields of education and training.

FÁS

FÁS programmes also cover all broad fields of Education and training. FÁS offers a wide range of apprenticeships, training for the unemployed and training in the workplace (e.g. health and safety programmes). FÁS has 20 training centres, seven of which are located in Dublin¹⁴. FÁS also operate temporary centres, and in partnership with Institutes of Technology.

Teagasc

Teagasc provides further education and training from its 33 centres¹⁵ (one of which is based in Dublin). The programmes cover all aspects of agriculture, including horticulture and food science, and are targeted to meet specific needs of farmers and the food industry, in addition to broader vocational certificate programmes. Teagasc also operate temporary centres, and in partnership with Institutes of Technology.

¹⁰Refer to *A Brief Description of the Irish Education System (loc. cit.)*

¹¹For more information: Further Education Funding Council 2000, *Aspects of Post-compulsory Education & Training in Ireland International Report from the Inspectorate*, Further Education Funding Council, UK

¹²For more information: *Cedefop Community study visits programme for those responsible for vocational training VET for adults in Ireland (2002/1)* Study visit group no 24

¹³FETAC schools common database Feb 17 2005

¹⁴FÁS Ireland 2005. Retrieved: Jan 10th 2005, from <http://www.fas.ie>

¹⁵Teagasc 2005. Retrieved: Jan 10th 2005, from <http://www.teagasc.ie>

Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland has four training centres¹⁶ one of which is located in Dublin. Programmes are provided in the fields of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, and Tourism. The programmes are a mix of theoretical and workbased learning. Programmes include craft training (e.g. professional chef), adult training and training targeted to enterprises (e.g. safety programmes). Fáilte Ireland also operate temporary centres and in partnership with Institutes of Technology.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Bord Iascaigh Mhara operates three permanent centres, in addition to two mobile coastal training units. One of the permanent centres is located in Dublin. Programmes are provided in fisheries and encompass commercial fishing, aquaculture, communications and Health & Safety.

The Workplace

Learning and training in the workplace takes place in many companies and businesses throughout Ireland. It is coordinated through a range of schemes developed by various agencies and by individual firms. Schemes available through Fáilte Ireland, FÁS and Skillnets are described briefly in this paper. In addition, some information is given in an attempt to gauge the level of activity in this sector.

Other Providers

FET is also available through the Institutes of Technology, National College of Ireland, Tipperary Institute, professional bodies and some private colleges. This paper does not cover these providers.

¹⁶Fáilte Ireland 2004, *Annual Report 2003*, Dublin

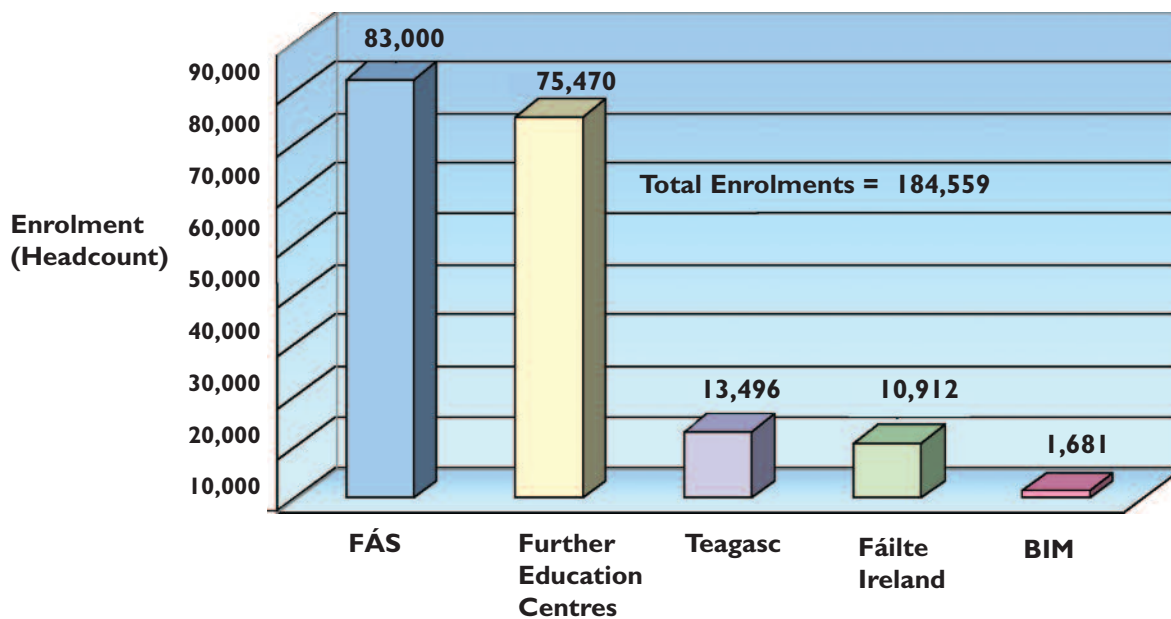
6.2 Findings - Flow data - Enrolments (Headcount)

6.2.1 Aggregate 'flow' data - enrolments¹⁷

Figure 1 shows the aggregate annual enrolments for the providers: Further Education Centres, FÁS, Teagasc, Fáilte Ireland and Bord Iascaigh Mhara. The data were sourced by provider and relate to 2003 and 2004 data, and as such provide an approximate annual total. In this paper, enrolments include all learners with an education/training centre for all 'live' programmes (e.g. across all years). As stated earlier (Section 5), these data do not distinguish between learners on part-time, full time, short or long term programmes, the exception being Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC) data which are exclusively full-time.

Total enrolments over a year reach 184,559¹⁸. FÁS accounts for 83,000 learners, or a share of 45% (2003 data) and the Further Education centres accounts for 75,470 learners, 41% of the total (2003 data), followed by Teagasc which caters for approximately 7% or 13,496 learners (2004 data) annually. Fáilte Ireland accounts for a 6% share of the total enrolments, or 10,912 learners (2004 data) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara which caters for approximately 1,681 learners or just under a 1% share of all enrolments (2004 data) annually.

FIGURE 1: Enrolments of learners by programme providers in Further Education & Training, 2003 and 2004 data



6.2.2. Breakdown of 'flow' data - Enrolments by the Major Providers

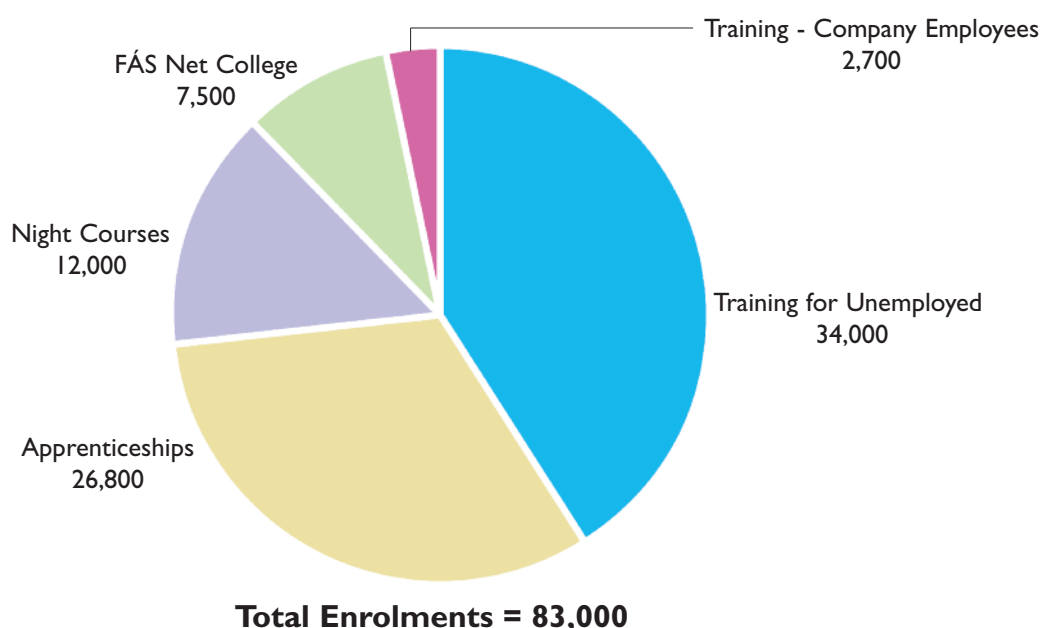
The following figures show the numbers (headcount) enrolled in each major programme type categorised by provider (i.e. Further Education Centres, FÁS etc.).

¹⁷Percentages throughout this report have been rounded up to nearest whole number

¹⁸Counts throughout this report are exact figures unless otherwise stated

Figure 2 indicates the breakdown by programme type of total enrolments in FÁS programmes in 2003. Training for the unemployed accounted for just over 40% of all enrolments in FÁS recording 34,000 learners. A share of 32% or 26,800 learners were enrolled in apprenticeship programmes during 2003. Night courses accounted for a further 14% or 12,000 learners. FÁS Net College programmes accounted for 9% or 7,500 learners, whilst the remaining 3% (2,700) of learners were company employees enrolled for various training initiatives. FÁS recorded a total of 83,000 enrolments in 2003¹⁹. It is also worth noting that 125,000 employees enrolled for Safe Pass and 3,512 for the Construction Skills Certificate in 2003. These are very short programmes and are therefore not included in the enrolments data²⁰. The Safe Pass is delivered as a one-day course and the Construction Skills Certificate usually constitutes a two-day programme of training and assessment.

FIGURE 2: Enrolments of learners by programmes in FÁS, 2003



Further Education (FE) centres accounted for 75,470 enrolments in 2003. Figure 3 indicates the breakdown by programme type of total enrolments. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Education and training accounted for 38% of all enrolments in FE centres recording 28,656 learners. A similar percentage of learners (38%; 28,363 learners) were enrolled in adult literacy programmes during 2003. The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) accounted for a further 8%, or 6,000 learners. Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) programmes accounted for just over 7% of learners in FE centres, recording 5,625 learners in 2003. The remaining 9% (6,826) of learners were registered under Youthreach and Traveller or Adult Guidance Education programmes²¹.

Recent research conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute on behalf of the Department of Education and Science²² showed that 4.6% of school leavers in 2001 with a PLC qualification went on to participate subsequently in state sponsored eg. FÁS or Cert (Fáilte Ireland) programmes. The same study showed that a higher proportion of females (21.5%) than males (7.5%) had left school with a PLC qualification.

¹⁹Data sourced from FÁS 2004, *Annual Report 2003*, Dublin and Roger Fox, Patrick Losty, David Dunne personal communication

²⁰Data sourced from FÁS 2004, *Annual Report 2003*, Dublin and Roger Fox personal communication

²¹Department of Education and Science, 2002 (unpubs) *Further Education Report-Statistical Report 2001/2002*. Peter Kelly personal communication

²²Economic and Social Research Institute 2003, *Annual School Leavers Survey 2001*, Dublin

FIGURE 3: Enrolments of learners by programmes in Further Education centres, 2003

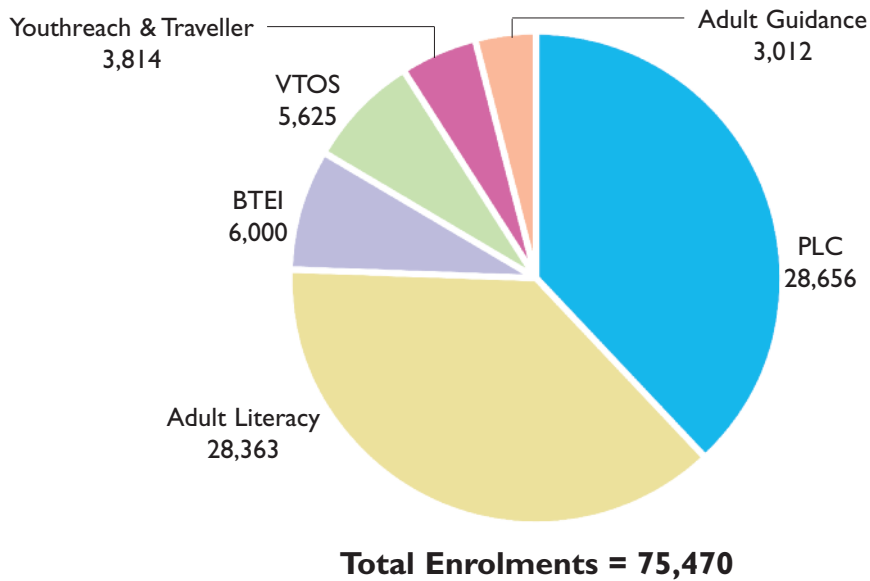


Figure 4 indicates the breakdown by programme type of total enrolments which amounted to 13,496 in Teagasc in 2004. Farmer Training programmes accounted for 77% of all enrolments with 10,420 learners. The Teagasc Vocational Certificate in 2004 represented a share of 12% or 1,576 of all learners enrolled on Teagasc programmes. The remaining 1,500 learners (11%) were enrolled in Food Industry Training.

FIGURE 4: Enrolments of learners by programmes in Teagasc, 2004

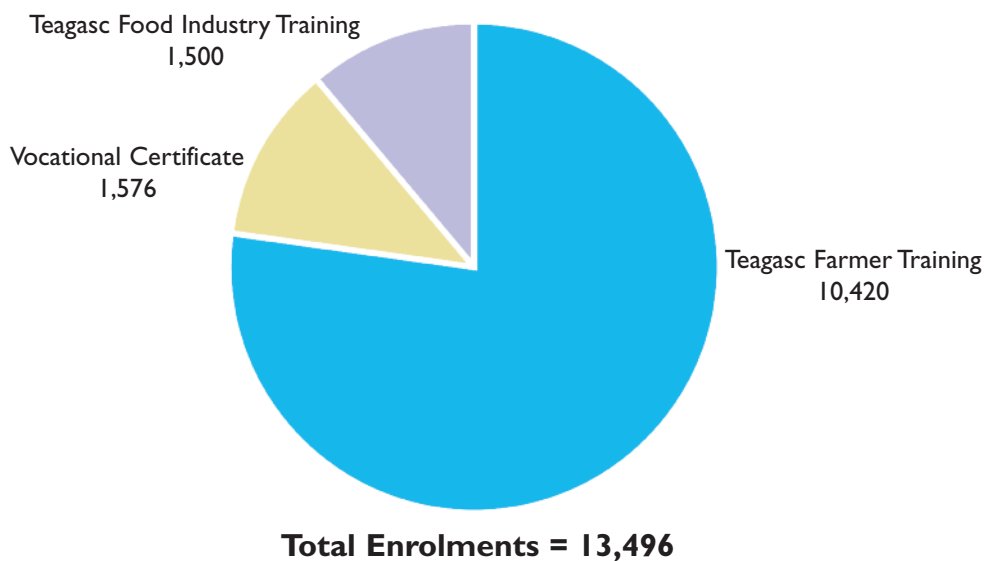
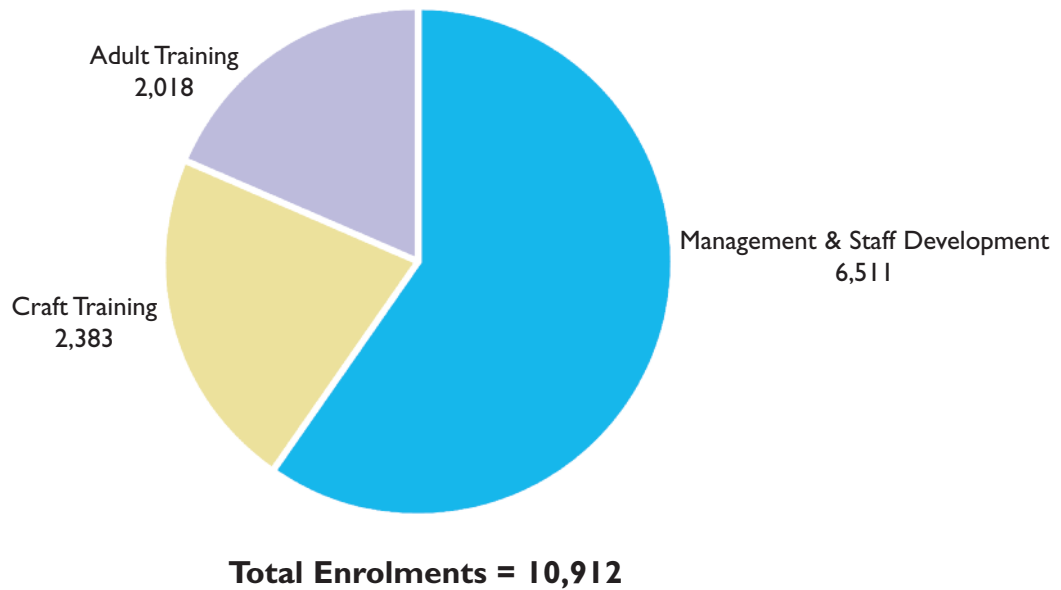


Figure 5 indicates the breakdown by programme type of total enrolments which amounted to 10,912 in Fáilte Ireland in 2004. The largest proportion of learners (59%) were enrolled on Management and Staff Development programmes (6,511 learners) Craft Training programmes accounted for a share of 22% (2,383 learners). Finally, 19% of earners (2,018 learners) were enrolled in Adult Training programmes during 2004²³.

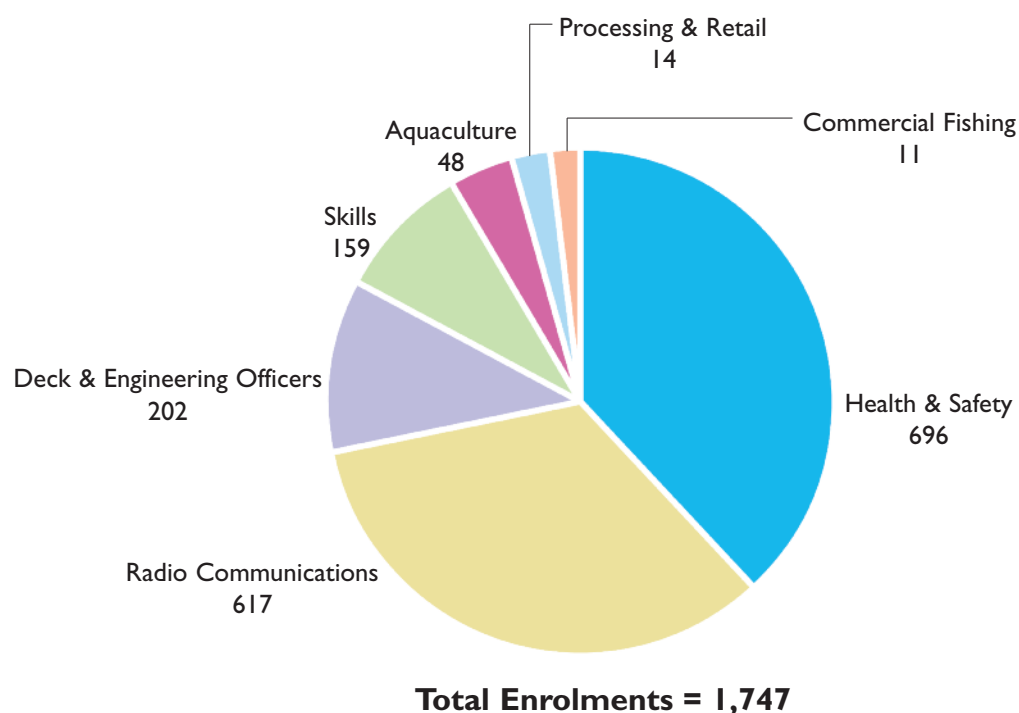
FIGURE 5: Enrolments of learners by programmes in Fáilte Ireland, 2004



²³Data sourced from Fáilte Ireland 2004, *Annual Report 2003* and Alice Coleman personal communication

Figure 6 indicates the breakdown by programme type of total enrolments which amounted to 1,747 in Bord Iascaigh Mhara in 2004. Almost 40% or 696 learners were enrolled on Health and Safety programmes. 35% of all enrolments in 2004 were in radio communications. 11% or 202 learners were pursuing Deck or Engineer Officer awards. 159 learners (9%) were enrolled on Skills Training. 48 learners were enrolled on Aquaculture programmes. This amounted to just under 3% of all enrolments. Similar numbers of learners were enrolled on Processing & Retail and Commercial Fishing programmes in 2004, 14 and 11 learners respectively.

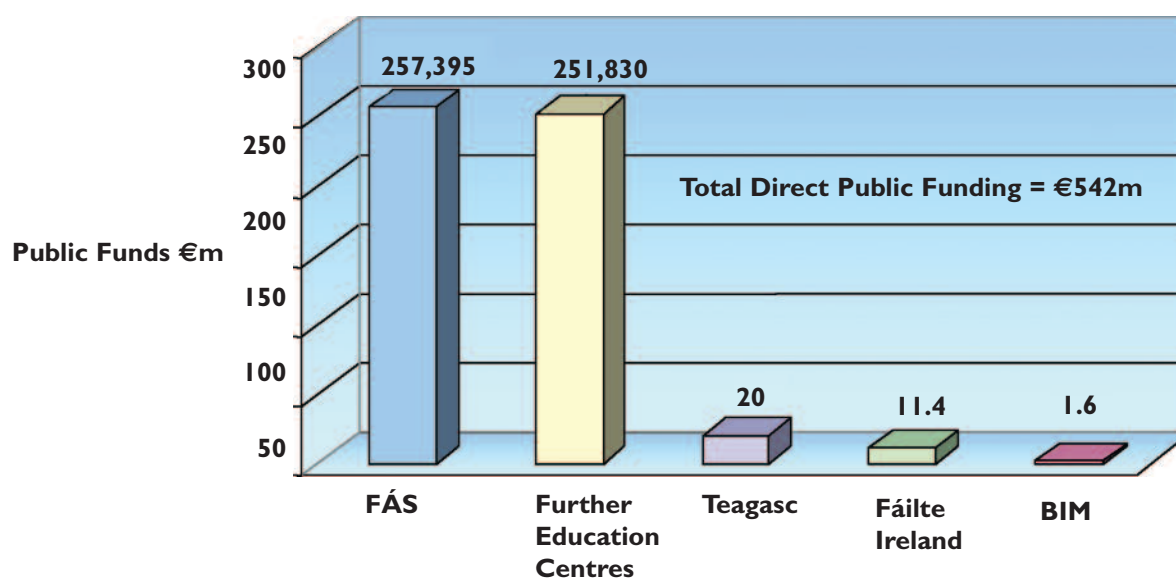
FIGURE 6: Enrolments of learners by programmes in Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 2004



6.2.3. Underlying Public Funding

The following direct public funds were provided for FET programmes and are approximate annual figures. From Figure 7, it is estimated that €542m was provided to the listed providers in the form of direct public funding. FÁS accounted for €257m or 47% of this total (2003 data) followed by Further Education centres accounting for 46% of the total, reaching €252m (2003 data). Teagasc received €20m or 4% of the total (2004 data), whereas Fáilte Ireland accounted for €11.4m or 2% of the total (2004 data). Bord Iascaigh Mhara received the remaining funding (€1.6m). Earned income is not included in the public funding figures²⁴.

FIGURE 7: Direct public funds provided for FET programmes (latest data available refer to text)

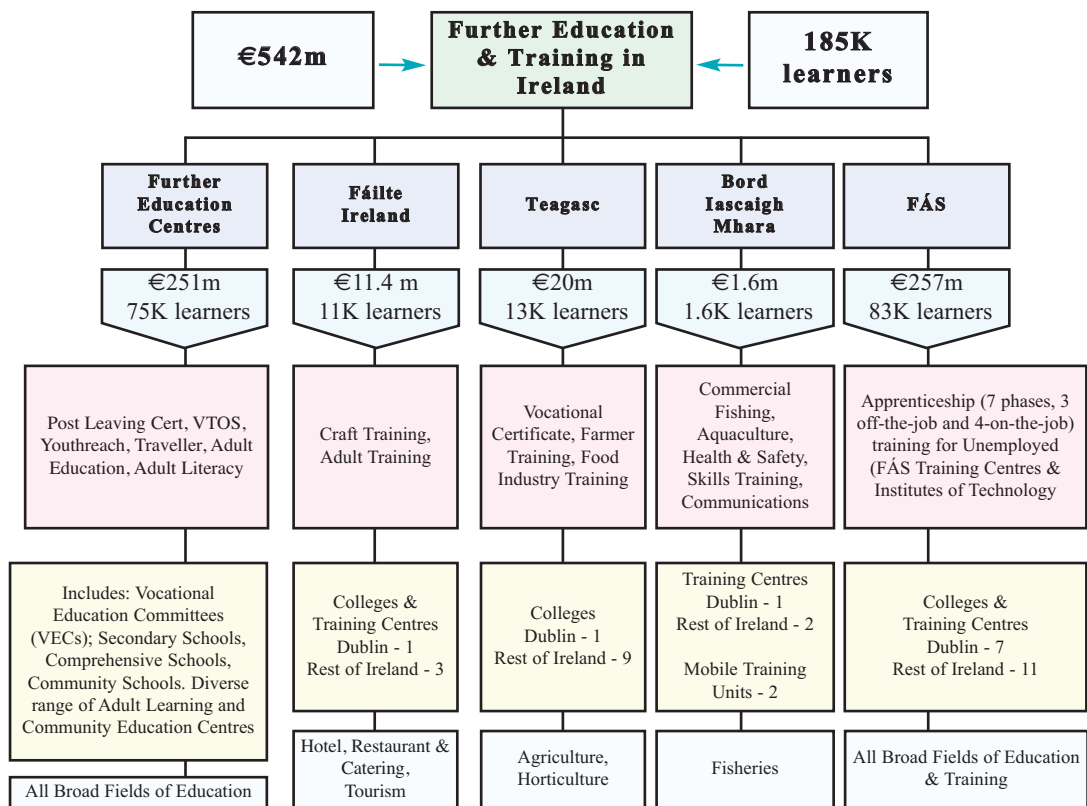


²⁴Data sources *loc. cit.*

6.2.4. Summary Chart

Figure 8 provides a summary of the key data for typical annual enrolments in and direct public funds provided for FET programmes by FÁS, Further Education centres, Teagasc, Fáilte Ireland and Bord Iascaigh Mhara. In summary, the latest available data show that €542m is provided in public funding annually and that 184,559 learners enrolled on FET programmes which received direct public funds.

FIGURE 8: Summary of enrolments and direct public funds provided for FET programmes 2003 data for FÁS, Further Education centres, Teagasc and Fáilte Ireland and 2002 data for Bord Iascaigh Mhara



6.3. Education & Training for Employed People

National Training Survey 1998

The majority of training for employed people is directly managed and funded by enterprises without any direct state involvement. In 2000, IBEC completed a National Training Survey²⁵. The results are based on figures for 1998 and the key results and findings of the survey are set out below:

- The average cost of training as a percentage of payroll was 3% for all companies. This indicates a significant increase in the amount of employer provided training in Ireland.

²⁵Some 1,292 companies responded to the survey, covering a total of 196,695 employees. IBEC, 2000, *National Training Survey 1998, Dublin*

- The average number of days training provided per employee per annum was 5.11 days. Some 18% of responding companies provided over 10 days training per annum.
- Over eight out of 10 companies had a training programme/plan in place and seven out of 10 conducted a training audit of their employees.
- Some 46% of companies indicated that the type of training they had undertaken had changed in the last three years with 32% of companies indicating that their training had become more structured or formalised. A further 16% of companies indicated that they had more IT/Technology training. Other areas where training had increased included - Health and Safety, Personal Development/Soft Skills and Management training.

Second Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2000/2001

The most recent data available²⁶ on continuing vocational training in the EU showed that in 1999, 79% of Irish companies offered some training to employees. Ireland was among the top five countries with regard to hours spent on training per participant. The average employee in Ireland spent 40 hours (5 days) on training. An average of 52% of all employees attended training.

The survey showed that marginally more females than males attended training programmes. 53% of females compared with 52% of males participated in training in 1999. A total of 2.4% of labour costs was spent on training. Most of the training carried out was in the area of Environmental Protection followed by Occupation Health and Safety. This percentage includes personnel absence costs as well as direct costs related to training.

The majority of training took place within companies. 88% of companies in total organised external training programmes, 58% organised internal training. 64% of all training in Ireland was internal. The largest proportion of external training was provided by private providers followed by specialised continuing training institutions.

The Irish Labour Market Review 2003

FÁS reported that in 2002 117,000 employed 25-64 year olds (8.3%) received education/training during the four weeks of the survey²⁷. This was an increase from 6.1% in 1996 and 4.6% in 1991. Thus, the percentage has nearly doubled over the last decade.

Females were much more likely to participate than males. Younger people were more likely to avail of training than older people. In general, the rate of participation was much higher in the (mainly white-collar) private services sectors, such as financial and business services, and the public services (all over 10%). Manufacturing had a below-average rate of 7%, while construction, wholesale/retail and hotels/restaurants all had low rates of 4%.

The figures also show that employee training re-inforces educational attainment differences. Thus 15% of employed persons with a third-level qualification were in receipt of

²⁶European Commission 2000/2001 *Second Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2)*

²⁷Extract from-Fox Roger 2003 *The Irish Labour Market Review 2003, Challenges facing the Irish Labour Market*, FÁS

education/training, compared to 7% of persons with a Leaving Certificate and 4% with a Junior Certificate.

The Irish Labour Market Review 2004

FÁS²⁸ reported on information from the 2003 Quarterly National Household survey provided to FÁS by the Central Statistics Office. The survey asked respondents whether they had received any education or training during the previous four weeks. The main results were:

- In 2003 9.7% of Irish people aged between 25-64 had received education and training in the previous four weeks. This proportion has increased from 8.3% in 2002. The percentage of 25-64 year olds receiving education and training in 2004 however has decreased from 9.7% to 7.2%²⁹.
- The research also showed that access to education and training among the employed is not evenly distributed. Older employees are less likely to receive training than younger employees, with 7% of 55-64 year old employees receiving training compared to 12% of 25-34 year olds.

6.4 Publicly Funded Support for in-company training

The Irish government uses a number of mechanisms to support or encourage training by companies³⁰.

The National Training Fund

The National Training Fund was established under the National Training Fund Act, 2000. This fund has replaced the work of the levy/grant scheme as a dedicated fund to finance a range of schemes aimed at: raising the skills of those in employment; providing training to those who wish to acquire skills for the purposes of taking up employment; providing information in relation to existing, or likely future skills requirements in the economy. The Fund supports a range of training schemes operated by FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Shannon Development, HEA, IEI and Skillnets. It is envisaged that the Fund will also support new initiatives in the area of lifelong learning. The Fund also supports the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and the Skills & Labour Market Research Unit which is based in FÁS.

The Competency Development Programme (CDP)

The Competency Development Programme (CDP) is funded by the Irish Exchequer and the European Social Fund. The CDP came into operation when the 'Training Support Scheme' and 'Construction Training Incentive Scheme' were terminated at the end of 2002. The aim of the CDP is to raise the competency level of targeted employees in particular occupations within specific sectors to ensure that the national stock of skills matches the national human resource requirements for continuous economic growth.

²⁸Extract from – Fox, Roger 2004 *The Irish Labour Market Review 2004, A FÁS Review of Irish Labour Market Trends and Policies*, FÁS

²⁹Mary Dunne personal correspondence 28 April 2005

³⁰Cedefop Community study visits (*loc. cit.*)

Networks of Training Advisers

FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Teagasc all have staff training advisers whose role is to encourage, advise and assist enterprises to identify and meet their human resource development needs.

Skillnets

Skillnets is an enterprise led body set up in November 1998, which focuses on mobilising groups or networks of companies to develop strategic responses 'tailor made' to their own training needs through 'The Networks Programme' Skillnets has facilitated the development of over 40 networks, some of which are regionally based and other sector specific. Skillnets is funded under the new 'National Training Fund' through the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. The companies contribute an average of 32% of the costs of training.

Data available³¹ show that over a period of 18 months between 1999 and 2000, 3,802 companies were involved, whilst 10,686 employees received training during this period. The funding of Skillnets over the period late 1999 to end 2001 amounted to €18.8m, of which €10.8m was received through direct public funds. Between 1999 and 2001 a total of 58 training networks have been supported involving 4,000 companies and 13,000 employees³².

The companies have contributed an average of 32% of the costs of training. The study also showed that many of these training networks were developing strategic certification systems which included a high level of recognition of prior learning. Many of the models were competence rather than instructional models. Funding for Skillnets from the National Training Fund will be €8 million in 2006 and €10 million per annum thereafter.

Training Programmes

The provision by public sector bodies of training programmes for employed persons. This accounts for a relatively small amount of training for employed people.

6.5 Findings - Stock data

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the scale of FET learning can be gauged in terms of both flows and stocks. Stocks depict the share of individuals who have attained a particular skill level at a particular time.

Caveats in Interpreting these Data (These caveats also apply for flow data).

- The numbers listed are not definitive due to the complex nature of the data (and means of collection) under investigation.
- The data are collected in different ways which will have a bearing on how to interpret these data. An example of this is the evidence that there are large numbers of Specific Skills Certificates (operated by FÁS) awarded. It is particularly important to bear in mind that

³¹Skillnets 2001, *Skillnets Review 1999 -2000*. Dublin

³²Skillnets 2003, *Final Report Training Networks Programme, 1999-2002*.

these awards do not equate to actual numbers of learners, i.e, a learner may achieve several Specific Skills Certificates throughout a year. Similarly, there are large numbers of Records of Achievement provided through NCVA programmes, although these are more likely to be aligned to approximate numbers of learners, i.e a Record of Achievement may cite 10 modules on one award, rather than a learner receiving 10 Records of Achievement.

- The data are likely to include double-counts in most instances. Teagasc for example may operate an NCVA programme and one award may be counted under Teagasc and separately as an NCVA award. As mentioned previously the data gathered on PLC courses is census data and therefore not subject to double counts. Conversely, in some cases the awards categorised under e.g. Teagasc may be under-represented as they are incorporated under the category NCVA. Bord lascaigh Mhara are also captured under the category NCVA.
- The enrolments data cannot be directly correlated to awards data, in terms of completion rates etc. Neither purports to quantify actual numbers of learners.

FETAC Awards made in 2004

Table I indicates the numbers of FETAC awards in 2004 categorised according to former awarding body. From the table, it is evident that FÁS and NCVA account for a large share (94%) of awards. This is due to the large numbers of Specific Skills Certificate operated by FÁS and the Records of Achievement provided through NCVA programmes. Teagasc and Fáilte Ireland programmes account for 5% of the total numbers of awards. NCEA programmes account for a small minority (1%) of awards.

TABLE I: Numbers of FETAC Awards categorised by Former Awarding Body, 2004^{33, 34}

Award	Numbers of Awards	Percentage Share of All Awards
NCVA*	47,193	48%
FÁS	45,223	46%
Fáilte Ireland	2,087	2%
Teagasc	3,142	3%
NCEA	258	1%
TOTAL	97,903	100%

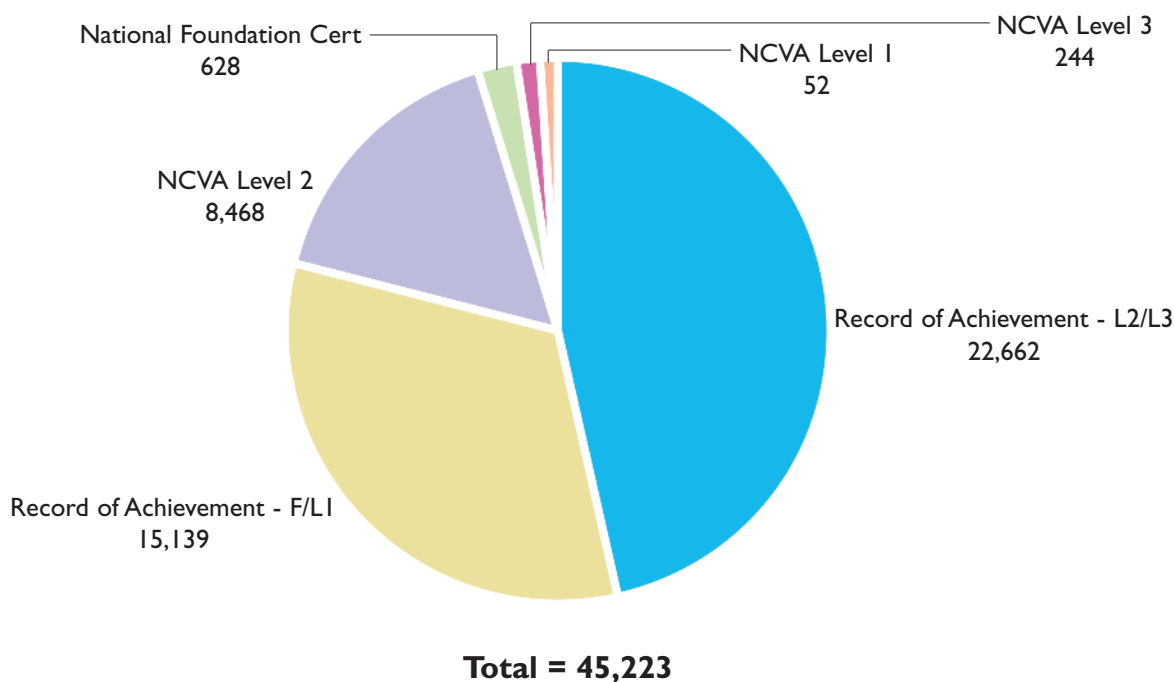
* includes Bord lascaigh Mhara awards

³³FETAC databases

³⁴These data may include double counts. In relation to Specific Skills Certificates (operated by FÁS) for example, large numbers of SSC are awarded annually. These awards do not equate to actual numbers of learners, i.e, a learner may achieve several Specific Skills Certificates throughout a year.

Figure 9 indicates the breakdown of FETAC awards categorised as awards achieved, through completing programmes provided by FÁS, which amounted to 45,223. Of this 36,581 or 81% were Specific Skills Certificates. National Craft Certificates accounted for 5,514 awards or a share of 12%. This was followed by a share of 4% or 1,701 Introductory Vocational Skills Certificates. The remaining share of 3% (1,427) of awards was National Skills Certificates.

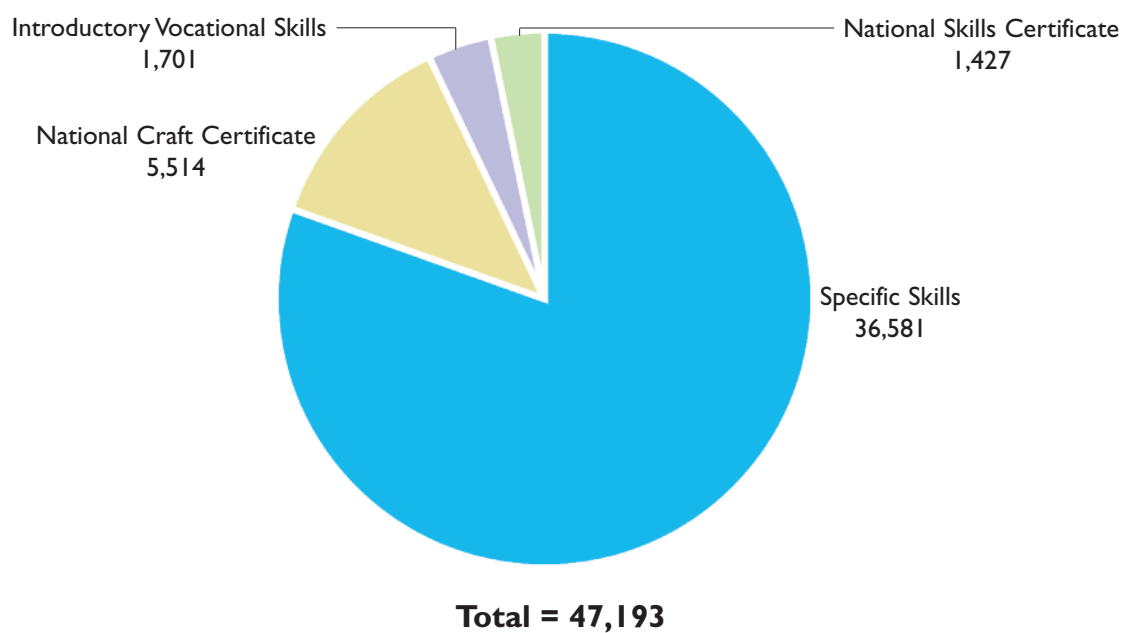
FIGURE 9: Breakdown of FETAC Awards by Type of Award by programmes provided by FÁS, 2004³⁵



Note: Specific Skills has been placed at level 4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland (NFQ); National Craft Certificate at level 6; Introductory Vocational Skills at level 3 and National Skills Certificate at levels 4, 5 and 6.

Figure 10 indicates the breakdown of FETAC awards in 2004 achieved, through completing NCVA programmes provided by various providers including a wide range of Further Education Centres. This totalled 47,193 awards. The majority, 80% (or 37,801), of awards were Records of Achievement. NCVA level 2 Certificates accounted for 18% of the total or 8,468 awards. The remaining share of 924 awards included 628 National Foundation Certificates, 52 NCVA Level 1 Certificates and 244 (0.5%) NCVA Level 3 Certificates.

FIGURE 10: Breakdown of FETAC Awards by Type of Award for NCVA programmes, 2004^{36, 37}



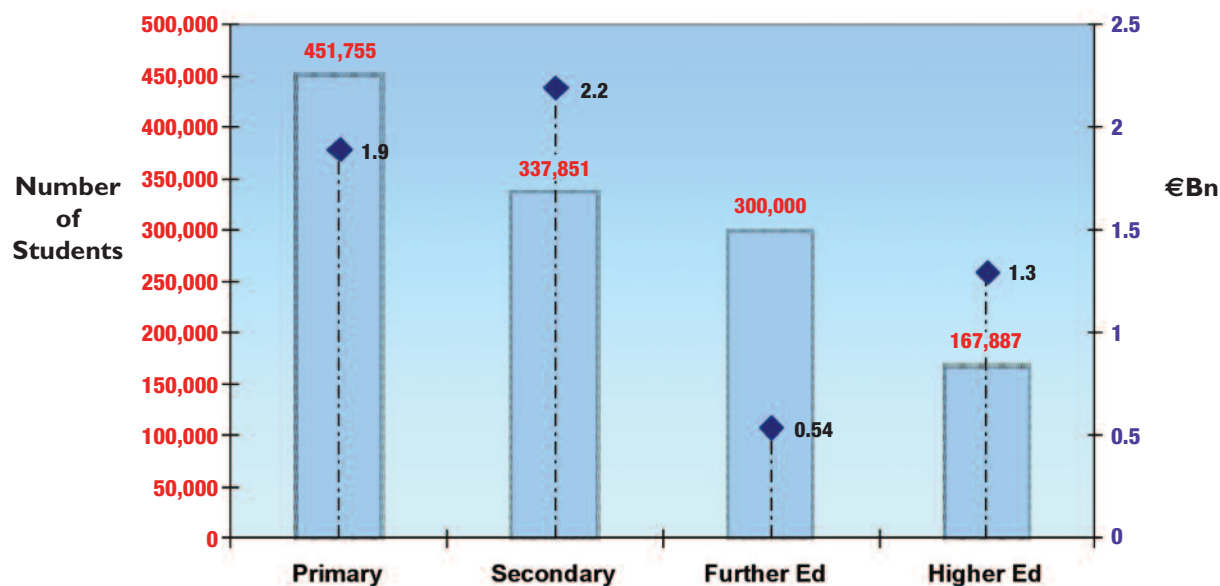
Note: NCVA Foundation Level has been placed at level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland (NFQ). NCVA level 1 has been placed at level 4 on the NFQ. NCVA level 2 has been placed at level 5 on the NFQ. NCVA level 3 has been placed at level 6 on the NFQ

7. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Figure 11 shows expenditure on education and training per student among the OECD countries. Expenditure on education per student at each level of education is obtained by dividing the total expenditure on educational institutions at that level by the number of full-time students (part-time students are converted to full-time equivalents). Only those educational institutions and programmes are taken into account for which both enrolment and expenditure data are available. Expenditure in national currency is converted to US dollars by PPP exchange rates. The PPP exchange rate is used because the market exchange rate is affected by many factors (interest rates, trade policies, expectations of economic growth, etc.) that have little to do with relative purchasing power of currencies in different countries. All expenditure data have been adjusted to 2001 prices using the GDP price deflator³⁸.

As is evident from the graph, Ireland saw the most dramatic increase in expenditure per student for the period 1995 to 2001. Expenditure in 'primary and secondary' education in Ireland, which **includes further education and training**, has risen from approximately US\$3,000 ppp in 1995 to just under US\$5,000 ppp in 2001. Expenditure in tertiary education in Ireland has increased dramatically from approximately US\$7,000 ppp in 1995 to US\$10,000 ppp in 2001.

FIGURE 11: Expenditure on Education and Training per Student OECD Countries (Notes: In this graph primary, secondary category includes further education and training. US\$ PPP equals US dollars purchasing power parity). (Chart source: OECD, available from <http://www.oecd.org>)

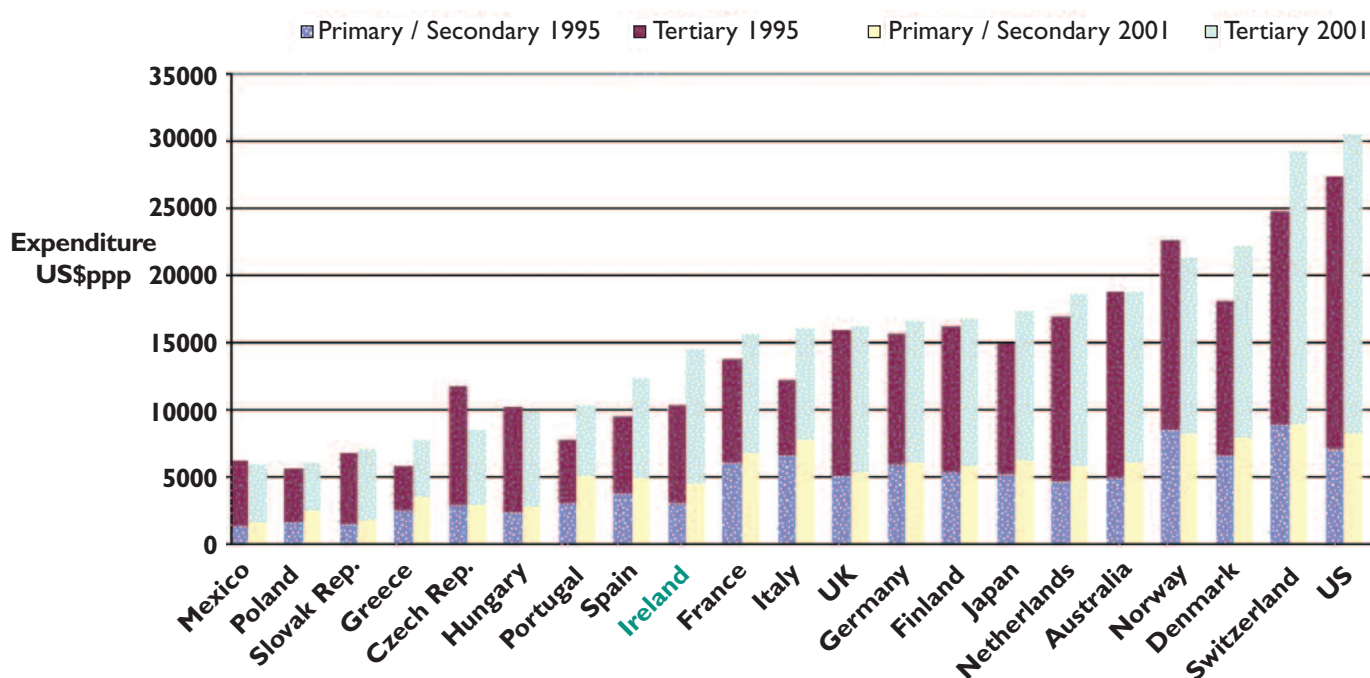


³⁸Source: Information extracted from *OECD Factbook 2005*, (2005), OECD, Paris.

Expenditure on education and training has risen in Ireland in recent years. Figure 12 provides an estimated breakdown of expenditure of public funds by sector of education and training for Ireland in 2004. It is evident from the graph that €1.9 billion in direct public funding was dedicated to primary education which had a cohort of 450,000 full time students in 2004. In the same year, secondary education, with a mainly full time student cohort of almost 350,000, received €2.2 billion. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector, with a student cohort of 300,000 comprising full and part time learners, received €0.54 billion. The Higher Education sector, with 170,000 learners, received €1.3 billion in public funding.

These data are estimated and do not take account of factors such as course duration or delivery (part time/full time). These data also include double counts. It should be noted that approximately 30,000 learners undertaking Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programmes are shown in both the 'secondary' and 'further education' data due to corresponding data collection practices.

FIGURE 12: Expenditure of direct public funds and numbers of students across the education and training system



8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This paper has consolidated available information and attempted to quantify the extent of FET in Ireland. This process will ultimately support efforts to identify and thus respond accordingly to learner needs. It also addresses concerns identified by the Task Force on Lifelong Learning which stated in their report that there was ‘*an absence of consolidated information on participation in Lifelong Learning*’³⁹.
- 8.2 The level of public funding for the programmes operated by FE centres, FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc and Bord Iascaigh Mhara is estimated in this study to be in the region of €550m.
- 8.3 This paper provides an initial base from which to build a more complete picture, in terms of enrolments and public funding, of FET in Ireland.
- 8.4 A definitive total number of enrolments can not be provided due to a lack of available data on privately funded FET and/or work based learning. From the available data in this study it is known that there are in excess of 300,000 enrolments in FET in Ireland on an annual basis. This figure includes full and part time enrolment data and does not differentiate between short and long term courses. This conservative figure of 300,000 includes those enrolled in publicly funded programmes (estimated at approximately 183,000) operated by FE centres, FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc and Bord Iascaigh Mhara, as well as those (140,000 approximately) enrolled on self-funded Adult part-time courses in FE Centres⁴⁰.
- 8.5 In line with one of the objectives of the Expert Group on Skills Needs to ‘*obtain information from training and education providers on their current and expected output of sub-tertiary qualified persons*’⁴¹, FETAC are working towards quality data management, collection and retrieval systems.

³⁹Report from Task Force on lifelong learning (*loc. cit.*)

⁴⁰Sourced from Department of Education & Science

⁴¹<http://www.forfas.ie/publications/futureskills/intro.htm> (retrieved 20 May, 2005)

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