



EUROSTUDENT SURVEY VI

REPORT ON THE SOCIAL AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN IRELAND

2016

David Harmon & Dr Stephen Erskine
Insight Statistical Consulting
www.insightsc.ie



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Foreword

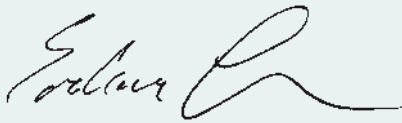
Higher education is vital to Ireland's continued social and economic progress. Increasing awareness of its contribution to personal growth and career enhancement, and to the economic recovery of Irish society, together with initiatives to widen access have led to greater desire to attend higher education and ongoing increases in participation rates. These rising expectations and increased student numbers, coupled with severe fiscal constraints, initiated a period of intense policy development in recent years. In light of such changes, it has become of paramount importance to ensure that high quality data are used to inform sound policy decisions. Furthermore, it has become increasingly accepted that the student perspective or 'voice' is critical in doing so. This report, which presents the findings of the sixth Eurostudent survey of over 20,000 higher education students in Ireland, makes a valuable contribution to addressing information deficits, providing a wealth of internationally comparable demographic, economic and social data. These data provide insights into the quality of life of the increasingly diverse student population in Irish higher education and how this influences their learning experience.

The subject content of this report comes within the context of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019, which has a vision to ensure that the student body within higher education reflects the diversity of Ireland's population, and outlines key goals, objectives and targets for groups that continue to be underrepresented in higher education. The report reflects the progress that has been made in recent years in widening participation and improving the quality of the student experience. It also enhances our understanding and deepens our knowledge of the challenges that remain in terms of students' experience, particularly for non-traditional students for whom it may be a "first in family" experience in higher education.

The report focuses on many aspects of student life, and the living conditions of students, and also investigates temporary international mobility and students' assessment of both their studies and future plans. In the main, the findings show high levels of overall student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, the timetabling of studies and the facilities of the institution. Furthermore, students appear to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them from their institution. Students also report high levels of 'fitting into' higher education and appear to have few doubts that higher education was the right choice for them.

This is further demonstrated by most students reporting that they would recommend their choice of programme to other students. This survey is also a key source of data on student income and expenditure. For instance, it highlights that accommodation is the largest single expenditure item accounting for over 40% of all expenditure, with the average spend on accommodation totaling €365 per month.

I would like to thank David Harmon and Stephen Erskine from Insight Statistical Consulting for preparing this report, the Eurostudent VI Steering Group for their expert oversight of the project as well as the participating higher education institutions for their assistance and co-operation. Most importantly, I would like to thank the students who generously took the time to respond to this important survey. The report is a valuable resource for all higher education stakeholders, and in conjunction with other valuable student surveys (e.g. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement), I expect that the findings will stimulate reflection and an open discussion on how we can collectively improve the student experience of higher education in Ireland for an increasingly diverse student body.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Love', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Graham Love,
Chief Executive,
Higher Education Authority (HEA)

Executive Summary

The main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collate comparable data from 30 countries on the social dimension of European higher education. It focuses on the socio-economic background and on the living conditions of students. It also investigates other interesting aspects of student life such as international mobility and employment during term-time. The core project provides reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons (disseminated through www.eurostudent.eu), but this report provides results from over 20,000 students attending higher education institutions in Ireland. The survey is co-ordinated in Europe by the German Federal Ministry of Education and marks the sixth such survey of its kind.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 was endorsed by the Government of Ireland as the blueprint for the sector and which sets out changes that are aimed at providing:

- a more flexible system, with a greater choice of provision and modes of learning for an increasingly diverse cohort of students;
- improvements in the quality of the student-experience, the quality of teaching and learning, and the relevance of learning outcomes; and
- higher education that connects more effectively with wider social, economic and enterprise needs through its staff, the quality of its graduates, the relevance of its programmes, the quality of its research and its ability to translate that into high-value jobs and real benefits for society.

Higher education is vital to Ireland's continued social and economic progress. Ireland has achieved an impressive level of expansion of higher education participation over recent decades (HEA, 2016). To ensure continued progress, a key objective set by the HEA is to increase the number of students in part-time and flexible learning through a series of initiatives.

Since the mid-1990s, the HEA has encouraged higher education institutions (HEIs) to enrol more students from under-represented socio-economic groups, e.g. those from non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled socio-economic backgrounds. Ireland has had national targets to increase representation of these groups since 2001, as set out most recently in the National Access Plan 2015-2019.

Ireland is one of 30 countries which participated in the Eurostudent VI survey, and this report continues the initiative of previous Eurostudent reports through extensively analysing the characteristics of students studying in Ireland by examining the demographic profile of the student population, the courses they are undertaking, their income and expenditure, their accommodation and employment, the route they took into higher education and the extent to which they study abroad as part of their programme.

Twenty-six higher education institutions in Ireland participated in Eurostudent VI and students responded through an online survey portal (see Appendix A: Background for further information). Approximately 20,000 valid student responses were collated and this represented a response rate of approximately 10% of all students (an increase from 5.1% in Eurostudent V, 2013).

The valid survey-responses were weighted to reflect the known population parameters of inter-locked gender, age, qualification, status (full/part-time) by type of institution. Since response rates were different for various sub-populations of students, a series of weights was calculated to reflect these different response-rates (see Appendix B: Response Rate and Weighting for further information). As with all sample surveys, it is assumed that the sample of students from the sub-populations is a representative sample from their respective population.



Demographics

- The proportion of students studying at Irish higher educational institutions has steadily increased in recent years. Since the Eurostudent V survey, which was conducted in 2013, the numbers of students enrolled in higher education has increased by 7.8 percent¹.
- While the gender balance at higher level is relatively even, a higher proportion of females were found in certain study areas; for example, in Education, Services, Social Science, and Humanities and Arts. Male students by comparison were found more in the areas of Engineering/Manufacturing/Construction, Maths/Computing/Computer Science, and Sport and Leisure. Similar proportions of male and female students were found in the areas of Science, and Business.
- A higher proportion of male students attend Institutes of Technology than females, and a higher proportion of female students are found at Universities or Associate/Affiliate Colleges.
- 32 percent of the total student population are in receipt of funding from a non-repayable national student source, for example, a Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant, or the Irish Research Council.
- Mature students² account for 22 percent of the total student population, and have an average age of 36.3 (34.4 for full-time students and 39.2 for part-time students).
- Of the part-time undergraduate student population, 90 percent are mature students.
- Mature students are more likely to attend Institutes of Technology than Universities or their Associate/Affiliate Colleges. Mature students are also more likely to study at HEIs outside of Dublin.
- The survey indicates that 12 percent of the total student population have children. This is two percentage points higher than what was observed in last Eurostudent report. However, this rise is unequally distributed across students. Of the full-time undergraduate population only six percent of students have children, whereas this was 10 percent in Eurostudent V. Of the part-time undergraduate population, 48 percent have children, whereas in Eurostudent V this was 45 percent. For postgraduates, 11 percent of full-time students have children, and 47 percent of part-time students have children. Of the total postgraduate population, 27 percent have children, which is similar to the level of 28 percent observed in the previous Eurostudent report.

1 HEA 2015/2016 – Key Facts and Figures 15/16 HEA: Dublin.

2 A mature student is an undergraduate student who was 23 or over on the 1st of January of the year of entry to the higher education institution.

- Of the total student population with children, the median age of the youngest child was 7, and in terms of dependency three-quarters of all children of students are 14 years old or younger.
- It stands to reason that there would be relationship between mature student status and having children, and this is borne out by the results of the survey. Less than one percent of full-time non-mature undergraduates have children, whereas for full-time mature students this is 35 percent. Furthermore, for part-time non-mature undergraduates only 3.5 percent have children, whereas 53 percent of part-time mature undergraduates have children.

Course Characteristics

- Student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, the timetabling of their studies and the facilities of their institutions is high. Furthermore, students appear to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them from their institutions. Students also report high levels of feeling that they 'fit' into higher education, and appear to have few doubts that higher education was the right choice for them. This is further demonstrated by most students reporting that they would recommend their study programme to other students.
- However, the proportion of students reporting that they feel like they are 'partners in education' is almost balanced by the proportion of students feeling that they are treated like 'detached consumers'. A similar pattern is found when students were asked if their lecturers "are concerned about their learning progress", with 36 percent of the total student population disagreeing with the statement to 40 percent agreeing with the statement. Furthermore, students feel more prepared to enter the Irish labour market than the international labour market, even though a large proportion of students indicate that they will have to move overseas to gain employment in their study area.
- The average weekly time spent in study related activities for full-time students is 37.5 hours. This is broken down into 20.5 hours spent in taught studies and 17 hours spent on personal study time. The average weekly time spent in study related activities for part-time students is 21.6 hours. This is broken down into 8.9 hours spent in taught studies and 12.6 hours spent on personal study time.

Disability

- Overall, approximately 20% of all students indicated that they have a disability³. A higher level of disability is noted for full-time students than part-time students.
- The study areas with the highest proportions of students with disabilities are Catering, Humanities and Arts, and Social Science. The study areas with the lowest proportions of students with disabilities are Education, and Health and Welfare.
- The most commonly reported disabilities are mental health problems, and learning disabilities.
- Approximately eight percent of students with disabilities consider their disability as *severely limiting* their studies.

3 The survey asked whether the student had a disability, impairment, long-standing health problem or functional limitation, i.e. health problem that has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months.

College Entry Route

- The majority of students entering higher education enter through the traditional route of the Leaving Certificate examinations. The highest proportion of students with an Irish Leaving Certificate was noted for full-time undergraduates (88%). The lowest proportion was noted for full-time postgraduates (66%).
- Mature students are more likely to enter higher education without a Leaving Certificate. Twelve percent of mature students do not have a Leaving Certificate, which can be compared against two percent in the rest of the undergraduate student population.
- Although the Leaving Certificate is the main qualifier for entry into higher education, the survey asked if any other competences or experiences that were gained outside of the formal education system were recognised for their first admittance to higher education in Ireland. These competences or experiences could include work experience, non-formal courses, self-study, volunteer work, and so on. Institutes of Technology appear to more willing to recognise competences and experiences outside of education than Universities in admitting students to their programmes (27 to 19 percent). This also appears to be evident for part-time undergraduates with 36 percent of these students having other competences recognised, compared against 20 percent of the full-time undergraduate population.
- Parental education appears to influence whether students delay transition into higher education. For students where the highest parental educational level was up to Junior Certificate, 31 percent of students delayed their transition to higher education. For students with parents educated to the post-Leaving Certificate level, this figure is only seven percent.

Income and Expenditure

EUROSTUDENT VI MONTHLY INCOME AND LIVING COSTS EXPENDITURE SUMMARY (IN EUROS)

Eurostudent VI (2016)				
	Undergraduate		Postgraduates ⁴	All Students
	Full-time	Part-time		
Total Income	621	1,519	1,188	754
Living Cost Expenses				
Paid by Student	360	1,177	862	486
Paid by Parent/Partner	358	232	332	346
Total Living Cost Expenses	718	1,409	1,194	832

⁴ In Eurostudent V, all postgraduate students were examined together, so for ease of comparison with the following table this table also present figures for all postgraduate full-time and part-time students combined.

- The above table presents a summary of the monthly income and expenditure for students and shows that the overall average income for all students is €754, and the average monthly expenditure of all students on living costs was €832 (42 percent of which is provided by the someone other than the student, i.e. parent or partner).
- Accommodation was the largest single expenditure which accounts for over 40 percent of all expenditure, and the average spend on accommodation was €365.
- Approximately 36 percent of the total student population say that they are experiencing serious financial problems, and the degree to which they are experiencing this appears to be related to their age. Older students appear to be more likely to experience financial difficulties with 42 percent of students over the age of 24 saying that this is the case for them.

EUROSTUDENT V MONTHLY INCOME AND LIVING COSTS EXPENDITURE SUMMARY (IN EUROS)

Eurostudent V (2013)				
	Undergraduates		Postgraduates	All Students
	Full-time	Part-time		
Total Income	545	1,264	1,219	734
Living Cost Expenses				
Paid by Student	426	1,153	1,044	607
Paid by Parent/Partner	266	173	152	237
Total Living Cost Expenses	692	1,326	1,196	844

- To aid comparison with income and expenditure in Eurostudent VI the above table presents a summary of the average monthly income and expenditure for students from the previous Eurostudent V report.
- Since the last Eurostudent report, average monthly income has increased, postgraduates students appear to be the exception. Average monthly living costs have remained relatively static.
- For full-time undergraduates and all postgraduates the distribution of costs is now to a lesser extent borne by the students themselves and instead students are more reliant on these costs being met by their parents and partners.

Accommodation

- Where students live appears to depend on their formal status and programme. Full-time undergraduates are likely to live with their parents or in student accommodation, whereas part-time students are more likely to live with their partners in private accommodation.
- Students living in halls of residence tend to spend less time on personal study than students living in other forms of accommodation.

Employment

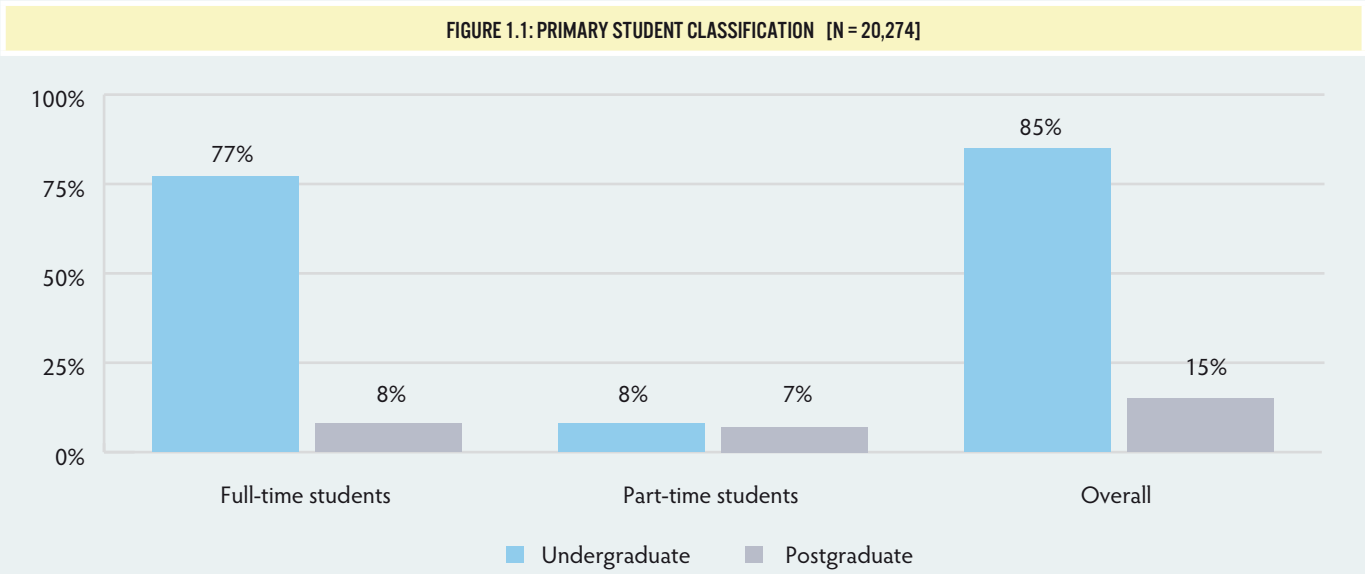
- Before entering higher education most full-time students have not been in employment. This continues during term-time as this study finds that most full-time students do not work during the semester. Outside of term-time however, they do work. This indicates that students shift their focus between employment and studying depending on the time of year.
- For part-time students, there does not appear to be a shift in focus. Instead part-time students are likely to be in employment both during the semester and outside of term-time.
- This balance between working and studying appears to affect how students evaluate their time, with students in employment indicating that they would like to spend more time on personal study, and students who are not in employment indicating that they would like to spend more time on paid work.
- Full-time students are likely to be employed in a field not closely related to their study area. Whereas for part-time students their employment is often closely related to their study area which appears to indicate that they are working before entering higher education and choosing vocational courses.

Student Mobility

- Ireland has a low rate of student mobility and there appear to be a number of obstacles to them enrolling in a course in another country, with the primary factors being the financial burden, the time away from their families, and their competence in other languages.
- The likelihood of studying abroad appears to be influenced positively by age, HEI type (University or Associated/Affiliate College), educational level attained by parents (higher level), perceived financial status (well-off) and the ability to speak multiple languages.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The primary student-classification used within this report is summarised below.



The overall student population in higher education in this report is primarily classified by the type of course being undertaken (undergraduate or postgraduate) and their formal status on their respective courses (being either full-time or part-time students). Most students in higher education are undertaking undergraduate courses (85 percent of the population). The majority of these undergraduates are studying full-time (77 percent), whereas only eight percent of undergraduates are studying part-time. Postgraduates form 15 percent of the total student population and of this eight percent are studying full-time and seven percent are part-time.

This set of primary classifications is cross-referenced with several key characteristics of the student population in Table 1.1 below.

TABLE 1.1: KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS [N=20,274]

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total	Valid N
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		
Male	50%	52%	44%	46%	49%	9,964
Female	50%	48%	56%	54%	51%	10,310
Universities	58%	37%	83%	76%	59%	12,050
Institutes of Technology	42%	63%	17%	24%	41%	8,224
Domestic student	90%	77%	67%	83%	86%	17,470
International student ⁵	10%	23%	33%	17%	14%	2,775
Mature Undergraduate ⁶	15%	90%			22%	3,812
Non-Mature Undergraduate	85%	10%			78%	13,460
Grant/Scholarship Recipient	38%	8%	15%	5%	32%	3,405
Not Grant/Scholarship Recipient	62%	92%	85%	95%	68%	7,176
Dublin Institution	40%	53%	50%	71%	44%	8,954
Non-Dublin Institution	60%	47%	50%	29%	56%	11,320
Overall	77%	8%	8%	7%	100%	

Some of the following features stand out when looking at this cross-tabulation of the distribution of student characteristics.

- The gender distribution for full-time and part-time undergraduates is relatively even, whereas for postgraduates' females form 56 percent of full-time students and 54 percent of part-time students.
- 63 percent of part-time undergraduates attend Institutes of Technology whereas 37 percent attend Universities or associate/affiliated colleges⁷.
- Over three-quarters (76%) of part-time postgraduates' study at Universities. This rises to 83 percent for full-time postgraduates.
- International students are more prominent in full-time postgraduate courses.

⁵ International students (based on foreign qualification).

⁶ Age 23 or over on the 1st of January of the year of entry into higher education.

⁷ Unless explicitly stated, Universities and associate and affiliated colleges are considered together as one category of higher education institution. As such, when discussing universities, it can be safely assumed that this also refers to associate and affiliated colleges (cf. Appendix A for further details).

- A mature student is defined as an undergraduate student who was 23 or over on the 1st of January of the year of entry to the higher education institution (HEI)⁸. Of the students undertaking part-time undergraduate courses, 90 percent of them are mature students, whereas for full-time undergraduates only 15 percent of them are mature students.
- 38 percent of full-time undergraduate students, 15 percent of full-time postgraduate students, eight percent of part-time undergraduate students, and five percent of part-time postgraduate students are in receipt of funding from a non-repayable national student source, for example, a Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant, or the Irish Research Council.
- 60 percent of full-time undergraduates are based in institutions outside of Dublin, whereas 71 percent of part-time postgraduates are studying in Dublin-based institutions.

The proportion of students studying at Irish higher educational institutions has steadily increased in recent years. For example, since the last Eurostudent survey which was conducted in 2013, the numbers of students enrolled has increased by 7.8 percent⁹. The increased access to and uptake in higher education has contributed to the diversification of the student population as well as to the courses offered by the institutions. This chapter provides an overview of some of the socio-demographic characteristics of this student population under three main thematic headings; gender, age, and location of the higher education institution they are attending.

The structure of this chapter is as follows; the first section looks at the composition of the student population and the proportion of male and female students undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate studies, at both a full-time and part-time level. This report then looks at what type of HEI each gender is studying at and the distribution of gender across disciplines within Higher education institutions. The second section of this chapter examines the age profile of students and looks at the proportion of the undergraduate population that is classed as mature, and the relationship between mature student status and the likelihood of having children. The final section of this chapter examines where in Ireland students are studying, be it at University or an Institute of Technology and whether these institutions are located within Dublin or outside of the capital.

1.1 Gender Profile

As noted in Figure 1.1 above, within the sample 85 percent are undergraduates, whereas 15 percent are postgraduates.

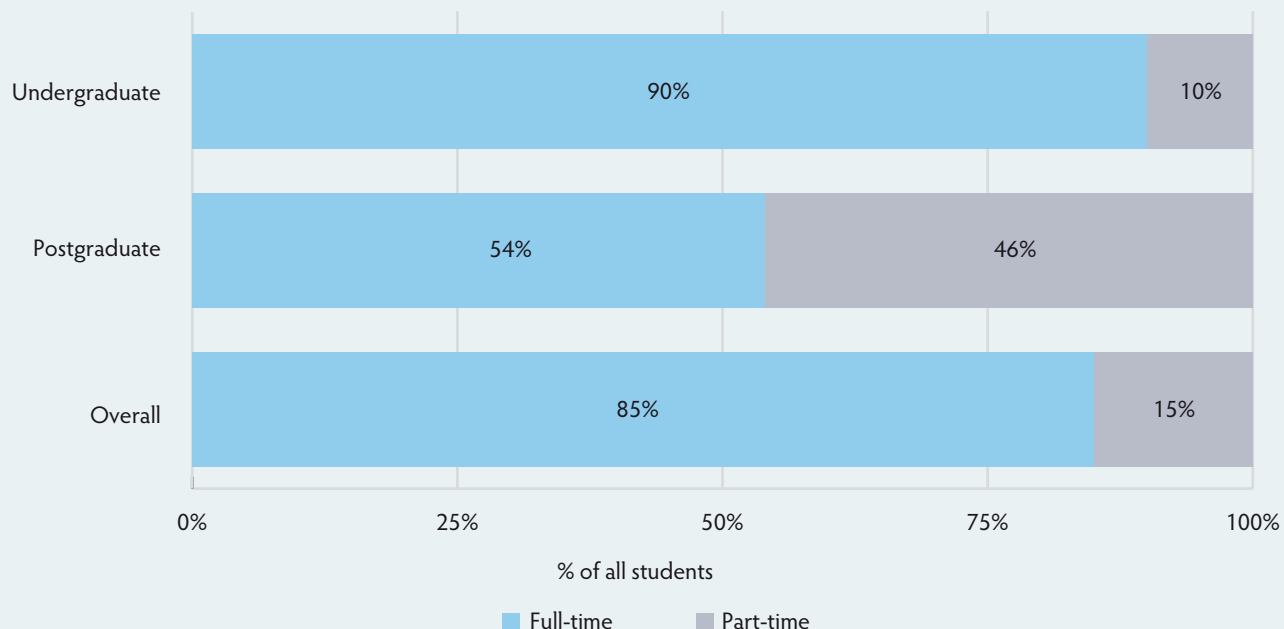
Of the whole student population, the majority of students are full-time undergraduates, who form 77 percent of the population. Eight percent are doing full-time postgraduate courses and the distribution of part-time students in the population is relatively even with eight percent taking undergraduate courses and seven percent taking postgraduate courses.

8 HEA 2015/2016 – Key Facts and Figures 15/16 HEA: Dublin.

9 HEA 2015/2016 – Key Facts and Figures 15/16 HEA: Dublin.

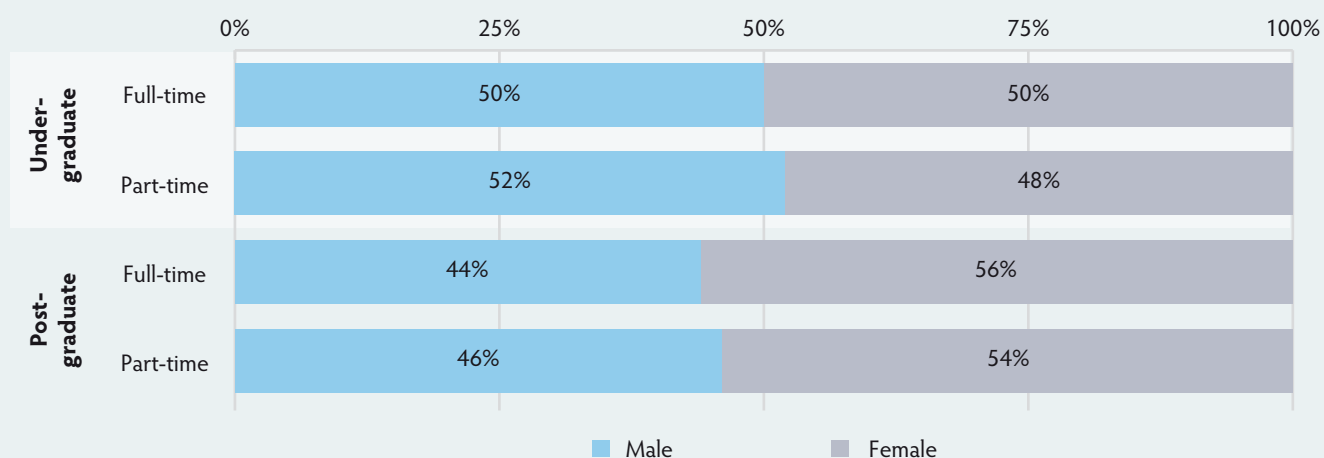
When the distribution of part-time/full-time students across undergraduate/postgraduate courses is examined, the pattern remains very similar and is shown in Figure 1.2. Ninety percent of undergraduates are full-time students whereas for postgraduate courses this is more evenly balanced with 54 percent studying full-time and 46 percent studying part-time.

FIGURE 1.2: THE DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME/PART-TIME STUDENTS ACROSS UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE COURSES [N=20,274]



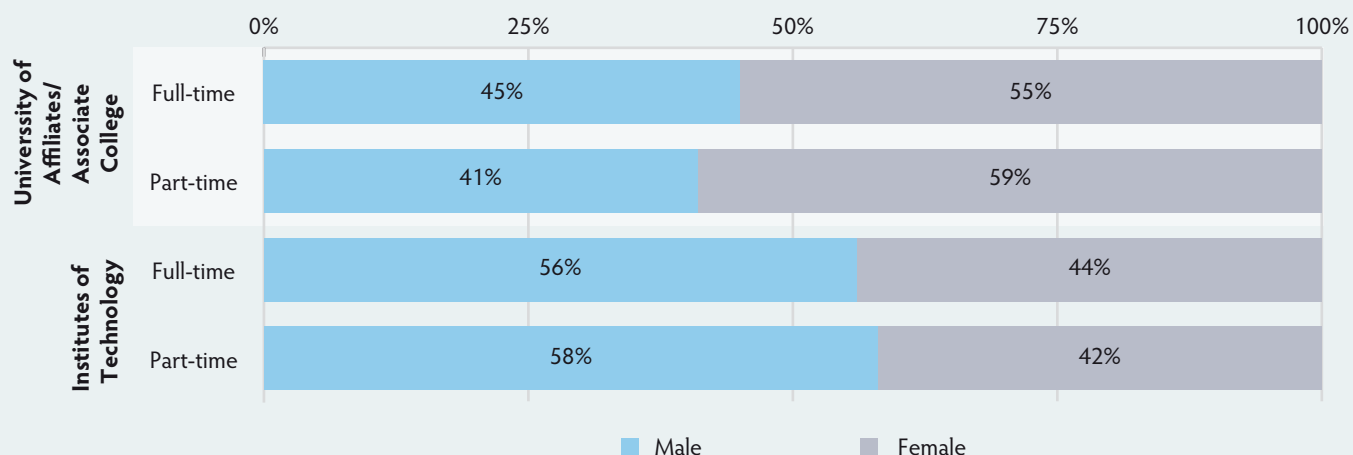
With regard to the distribution of genders across courses, it is seen from Figure 1.3 below that at the undergraduate level the gender balance is quite even, with 50 percent of full-time undergraduates and 48 percent of part-time undergraduates being female. At the postgraduate level this balance shifts toward greater representation of females, with 56 percent of full-time postgraduates and 54 percent of part-time postgraduates being female.

FIGURE 1.3: THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALE/FEMALE STUDENTS ACROSS UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE COURSES [N=20,274]



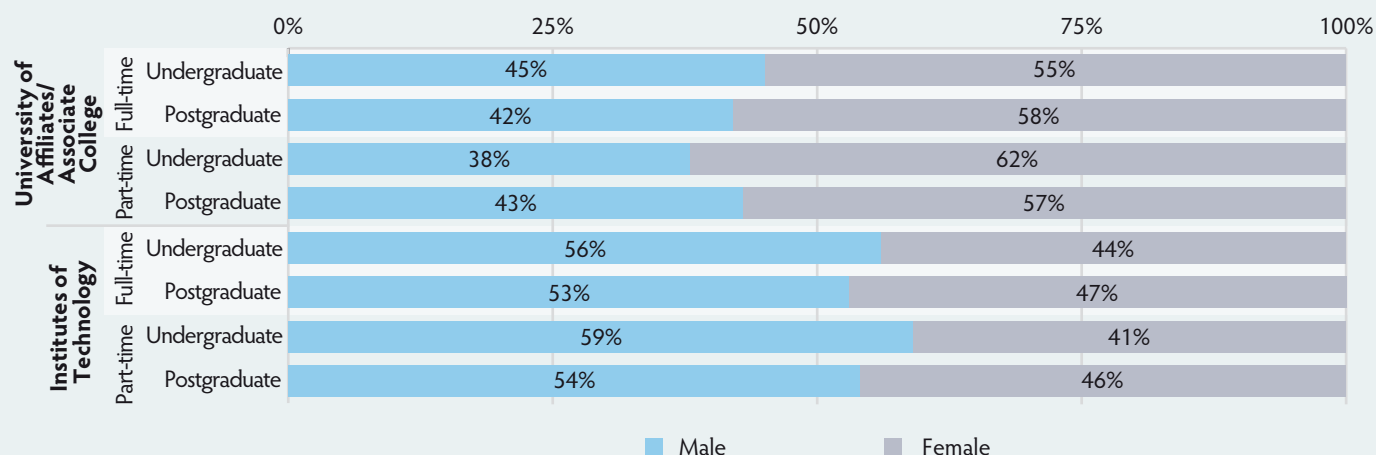
However, when this gender division across the type of institution attended is examined, this difference becomes more pronounced with more females attending Universities (or associate/affiliated colleges) regardless of whether they are full or part-time students (55 percent and 59 percent respectively). In contrast, a higher proportion of males attend Institutes of Technology, and again this pattern appears to hold regardless of whether they are full or part-time students (56 percent and 58 percent in these cases). This is illustrated in Figure 1.4.

FIGURE 1.4: THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALE/FEMALE STUDENTS BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION [N=20,274]



Furthermore, this pattern is replicated when the type of degree being undertaken is examined. At each level, be it undergraduate or postgraduate, full-time or part-time, a greater proportion of females are attending Universities and associate/affiliated colleges, and conversely a greater proportion of males are attending Institutes of Technology. This pattern is illustrated in Figure 1.5.

FIGURE 1.5: THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALE/FEMALE STUDENTS BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND DEGREE TYPE [N=20,274]



From Table 1.2 one can see that of the total student population, almost a fifth (19 percent) are studying Humanities and Arts, of which 84 percent are full-time undergraduates, six percent are part-time undergraduates and the remaining 10 percent are postgraduate students.

There is a higher proportion of part-time undergraduates in Catering (17 percent), Services (16 percent), Business (12 percent), and Law (11 percent). In addition, a higher proportion of postgraduate students are found in Education (28 percent), Social Science (23 percent), Business (18 percent), and Health and Welfare (18 percent).

The proportion of students across Science, Maths/Computing/Computer Science, Engineering/Manufacturing/Construction has remained relatively consistent to that observed in the previous Eurostudent report (36 percent to the Eurostudent V report proportion of 37 percent).

TABLE 1.2: MAIN STUDY AREA BY STUDENT STATUS [N=20,274]

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Education	64%	8%	14%	14%	7%
Humanities and Arts	84%	6%	7%	3%	19%
Social Science	68%	8%	13%	10%	5%
Business	69%	12%	7%	11%	16%
Law	74%	11%	9%	6%	3%
Science	84%	7%	6%	3%	15%
Maths, Computing/Computer Science	76%	9%	8%	7%	10%
Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction	79%	9%	8%	4%	11%
Agriculture and Veterinary	89%	2%	7%	3%	2%
Health and Welfare	76%	6%	7%	11%	10%
Sport and Leisure	87%	7%	4%	2%	1%
Catering	75%	17%	4%	5%	1%
Services	69%	16%	7%	8%	1%
Overall	77%	8%	8%	7%	100%

Table 1.3 shows the study-programme profile for each discipline. As one can see from this table, Ordinary and Honours Bachelors Degrees account for 78 percent of all study programmes. A high proportion of Humanities and Arts (71 percent), Science (68 percent), Agriculture and Veterinary (67 percent) and Law (65 percent) students are studying on Honours programmes. Whereas Catering programmes has the highest proportion (31 percent) of students enrolled for Higher Certificates.

At the postgraduate level, Taught Master's Degrees are more popular to Postgraduate Certificates/Diplomas or Research Master's Degrees (10 percent to three and two percent respectively). And within this category, a high proportion of student are enrolled in Social Science (19 percent), Education (18 percent), and Business (13 percent) programmes.

TABLE 1.3: MAIN STUDY AREA BY STUDY PROGRAMME [N=20,274]

	Higher Certificate	Diploma	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Honours Bachelor Degree	PG Cert/ Diploma	Taught Master's Degree	Research Master's Degree	Total
Education	2%	2%	13%	56%	7%	18%	3%	100%
Humanities and Arts	3%	2%	15%	71%	1%	8%	1%	100%
Social Science	2%	3%	15%	57%	3%	19%	2%	100%
Business	7%	3%	16%	56%	4%	13%	1%	100%
Law	2%	2%	16%	65%	4%	10%	1%	100%
Science	6%	2%	16%	68%	1%	6%	2%	100%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	6%	1%	19%	59%	5%	9%	1%	100%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	6%	2%	27%	53%	2%	8%	2%	100%
Agriculture and Veterinary	3%	1%	20%	67%	2%	3%	5%	100%
Health and Welfare	4%	2%	12%	64%	5%	11%	2%	100%
Sport and Leisure	8%	3%	27%	56%	0%	4%	3%	100%
Catering	31%	3%	22%	35%	2%	3%	3%	100%
Services	7%	6%	33%	39%	3%	12%	0%	100%
Overall	5%	2%	17%	61%	3%	10%	2%	100%

Table 1.4 shows the percentage of students and their gender breakdown across each study programme. The total row shows that the overall proportions of males and females undertaking courses to be broadly similar. Undergraduates of each form 43 percent of the total student population, and the difference of one percent between postgraduate students is almost negligible. It is when we look at which programmes are undertaken by each gender that noticeable differences occur. A higher proportion of females were found in the study areas of Education (74 percent), Services (68 percent), Social Science (67 percent), Health and Welfare (67 percent), Catering (66 percent), and Humanities and Arts (64 percent). Male students by comparison were found more in the areas of Engineering/Manufacturing/Construction (83 percent), Maths/Computing/Computer Science (81 percent) and Sport and Leisure (67 percent).

TABLE 1.4: MAIN STUDY AREA BY GENDER [N=20,274]

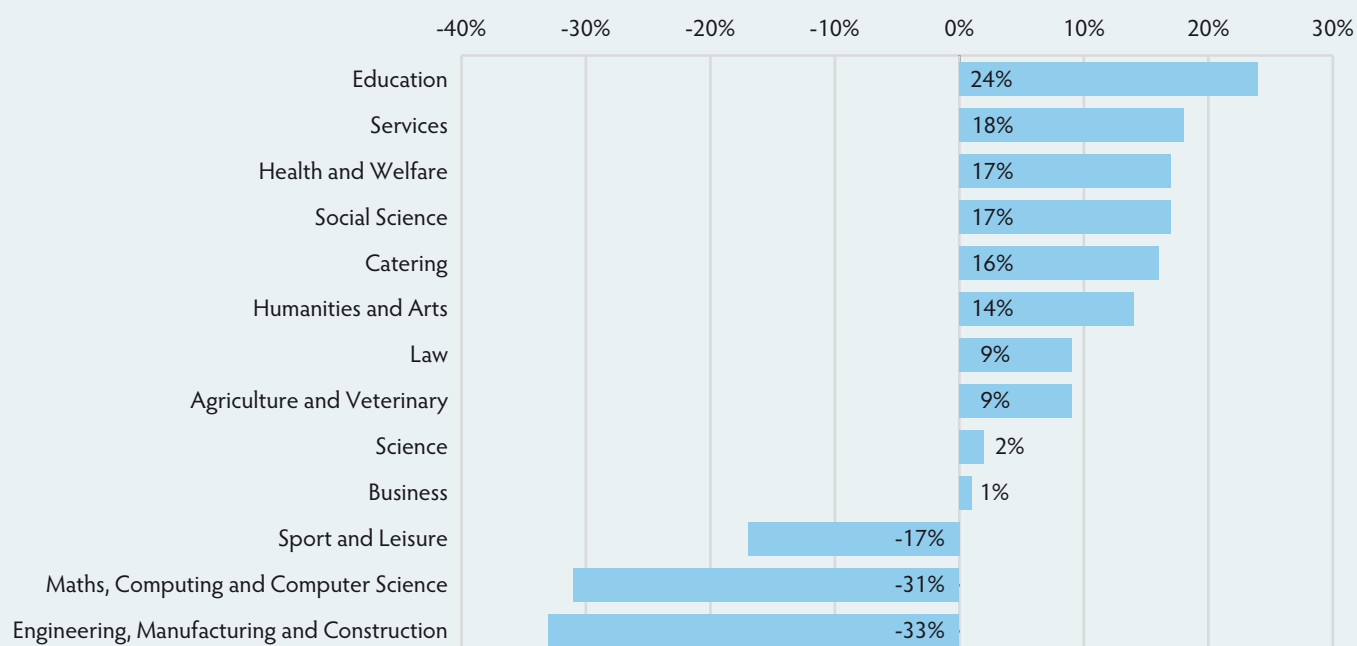
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Education	19%	53%	7%	21%	26%	74%	7%
Humanities and Arts	33%	57%	4%	7%	36%	64%	19%
Social Science	25%	51%	8%	15%	33%	67%	5%
Business	40%	42%	9%	9%	49%	51%	16%
Law	35%	50%	5%	10%	41%	59%	3%
Science	44%	47%	4%	5%	48%	52%	15%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	70%	16%	11%	4%	81%	19%	10%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	74%	14%	9%	3%	83%	17%	11%
Agriculture and Veterinary	37%	53%	4%	5%	41%	59%	2%
Health and Welfare	28%	54%	5%	13%	33%	67%	10%
Sport and Leisure	63%	30%	3%	3%	67%	33%	1%
Catering	31%	61%	3%	5%	34%	66%	1%
Services	27%	58%	5%	10%	32%	68%	1%
Overall	43%	43%	7%	8%	49%	51%	100%

If one was to provide an estimate of the proportions of each gender in each programme, without any information about gender or the influences this has upon course selection, then it follows that the best estimate would be that of the overall distribution of genders within the population. As such, without any further information in this regard, it would be feasible to expect to see each programme having close to a 50-50 split between the genders. However, this is not what is observed. Figure 1.6 shows the difference between gender parity and the observed levels of uptake for each programme for female students.

The figures for the differences between gender parity and the observed data have been calculated by subtracting fifty percent from the observed percentage of females in each study area. As such, positive values indicate female over-representation, negative values indicate female under-representation, and values close to zero indicate equal representation between males and females in that study area.

As one can see from this chart, Business and Science come close to an equal division across the genders. For all other programmes one gender predominates in the fashion discussed above, with the greatest divisions being in Maths/Computing/Computer Science and Engineering/Manufacturing/Construction where females are heavily under-represented, and Education where we see an over-representation of female students.

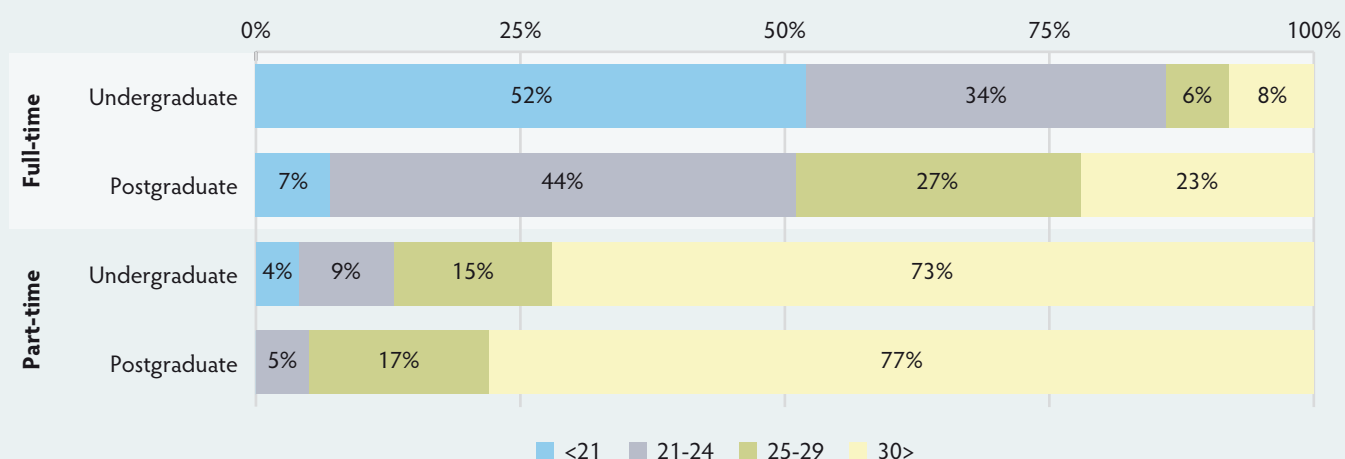
FIGURE 1.6: TOTAL PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE BEFORE GENDER PARITY ACROSS DISCIPLINES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS [N=20,274]



1.2 Age Profile

Ireland has a relatively young student population with the median age for all respondents being 21.8. However, this single number hides a lot of the variation across course type and status of study. Full-time undergraduates have a median age of 20.9 whereas for part-time undergraduates the median age is 36.4. This pattern is also evident at the postgraduate level with the median age for full-time postgraduates being 24.9 and for part-time students this is 37.7. The age profile of each student cohort is illustrated in Figure 1.7 below.

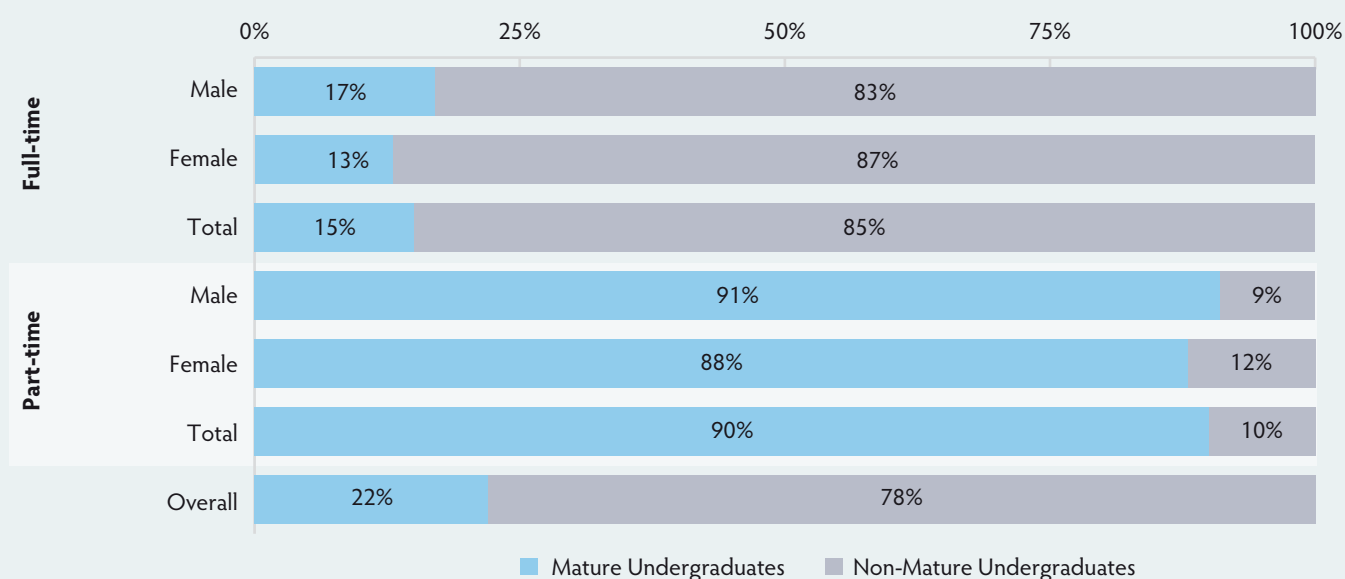
FIGURE 1.7: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION [N=20,251]



Mature students are defined as undergraduates who are 23 or over on the 1st of January of the year of entry into a higher education institution. By this criterion, mature students account for 22 percent of the total student population, and have an average age of 36.3 (34.4 for full-time students and 39.2 for part-time students).

When we examine the distribution of mature students by formal status, it is evident that the majority of the part-time student population are mature students (90 percent), this is illustrated in Figure 1.8 below. In contrast, only 15 percent of the full-time undergraduate student population are classified as mature. Furthermore, unlike the type of higher education institution attended, the gender of students does not appear to have an appreciable impact on their choice of conducting their studies part or full-time, as both genders are present in the mature student population in similar quantities.

FIGURE 1.8: PERCENTAGE OF MATURE STUDENTS BY FORMAL STATUS AND GENDER [N=17,274]



The survey indicates that 12 percent of the total student population have children. Of the full-time undergraduate population only six percent of students have children. This increases to 48 percent of the part-time undergraduate population. For postgraduates, 11 percent of full-time students have children and 47 percent of part-time students have children. Of the total student population with children, the median age of the youngest child was 7, and in terms of dependency three-quarters of all children of students are 14 years old or younger.

It stands to reason that there would be relationship between mature student status and having children, and this is borne out by the results of the survey. Less than one percent of full-time non-mature undergraduates have children, whereas for full-time mature students this is 35 percent. Furthermore, for part-time non-mature undergraduates only 3.5 percent have children, whereas 53 percent of part-time mature undergraduates have children.

1.3 Location

Table 1.5 shows that 77 percent of the total student population are full-time undergraduates. Within this, 58 percent of the attend Universities or associate/affiliated colleges. In contrast, 63 percent of part-time undergraduates attend Institutes of Technology, though this is part of a much smaller proportion of the total student population (8 percent). For postgraduates, the majority of both full-time and part-time postgraduates attend universities (83 and 76 percent respectively).

TABLE 1.5: THE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACROSS UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY [N=20,274]

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Universities	58%	37%	83%	76%	59%
Institutes of Technology	42%	63%	17%	24%	41%
Percent of Total	77%	8%	8%	7%	100%

As one can be seen from Table 1.6 below, the distribution of the full-time undergraduate student population appears to be split relatively evenly with 26 percent attending Universities in Dublin, 32 percent attending Universities outside of Dublin and 28 percent attending Institutes of Technology outside of Dublin. However, only 14 percent of full-time undergraduates attend Institutes of Technology in Dublin, though this could be explained by the fact that there are more Institutes of Technology outside of Dublin than there are in the capital (four are in Dublin, ten in the rest of the country).

For part-time undergraduates, 38 percent of this group attend Institutes of Technology in Dublin whereas only 15 percent attend universities in Dublin. For postgraduates, regardless of their location more students attend universities than Institutes of Technology.

TABLE 1.6: THE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACROSS UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY [N=20,274]

		Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Universities	Dublin	26%	15%	45%	57%	29%
	Non-Dublin	32%	22%	38%	20%	31%
Institutes of Technology	Dublin	14%	38%	5%	14%	15%
	Non-Dublin	28%	25%	12%	10%	25%
Percent of Total		77%	8%	8%	7%	100%

It is also worth examining where mature undergraduate students are studying. Table 1.7 shows that 43 percent of full-time undergraduates (43 percent) attend Institutes of Technology outside of Dublin, the next largest group (23 percent) attend universities outside of Dublin. For part-time mature undergraduates, 40 percent are at Institutes of Technology within Dublin.

TABLE 1.7: THE DISTRIBUTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ACROSS UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY [N=17,272]

		Mature Undergraduate		Non-Mature Undergraduate	
		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Universities	Dublin	18%	14%	27%	20%
	Non-Dublin	23%	21%	34%	31%
Institutes of Technology	Dublin	16%	40%	14%	25%
	Non-Dublin	43%	25%	25%	24%
Percent of All Undergraduates		13%	9%	77%	1%

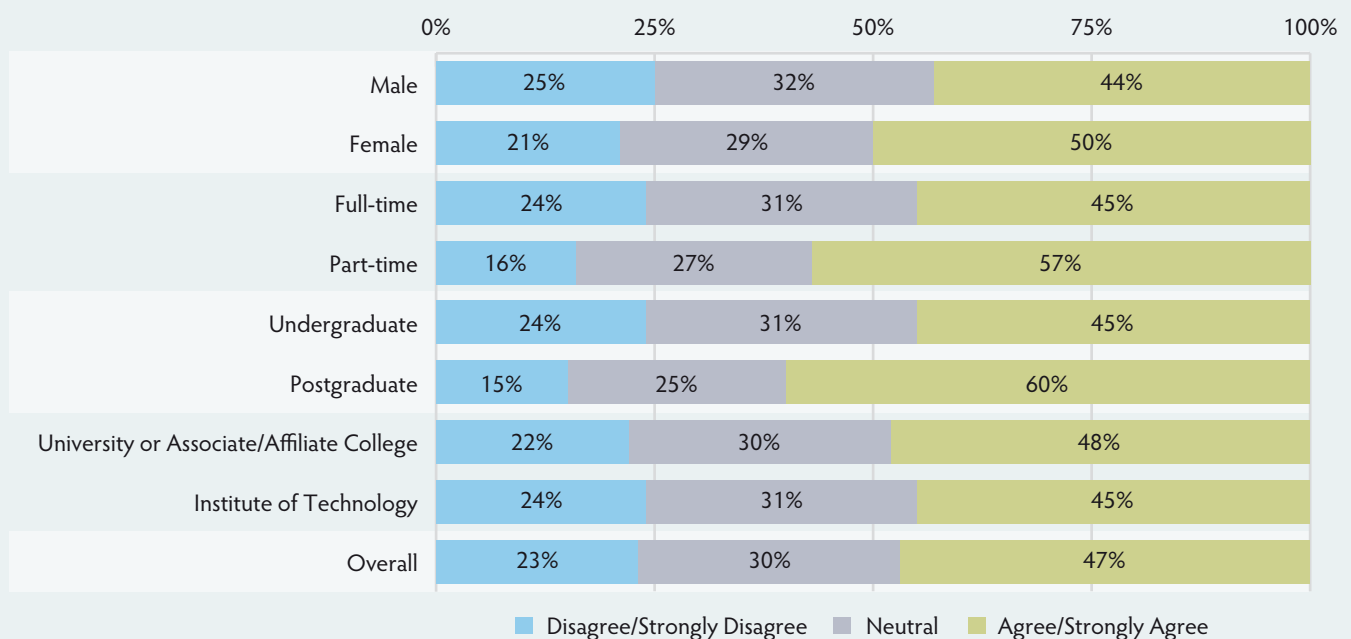
2. COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

The previous chapter gave an overview of the socio-demographic profile of the student population. This chapter examines how these students feel about the courses they are taking, and the ability of higher education institutions to meet students' perceived requirements, how their courses will affect their employability, as well as their future study intentions. The final section of this chapter examines the amount of time students spend in both a structured learning environment – be it lectures, seminars or laboratory sessions – and on their own personal study.

2.1 Satisfaction with General Higher Education Experience

The survey asked the degree to which students agreed with several statements about their experiences in higher education. The responses to which are presented in Figures 2.1 through to 2.7.

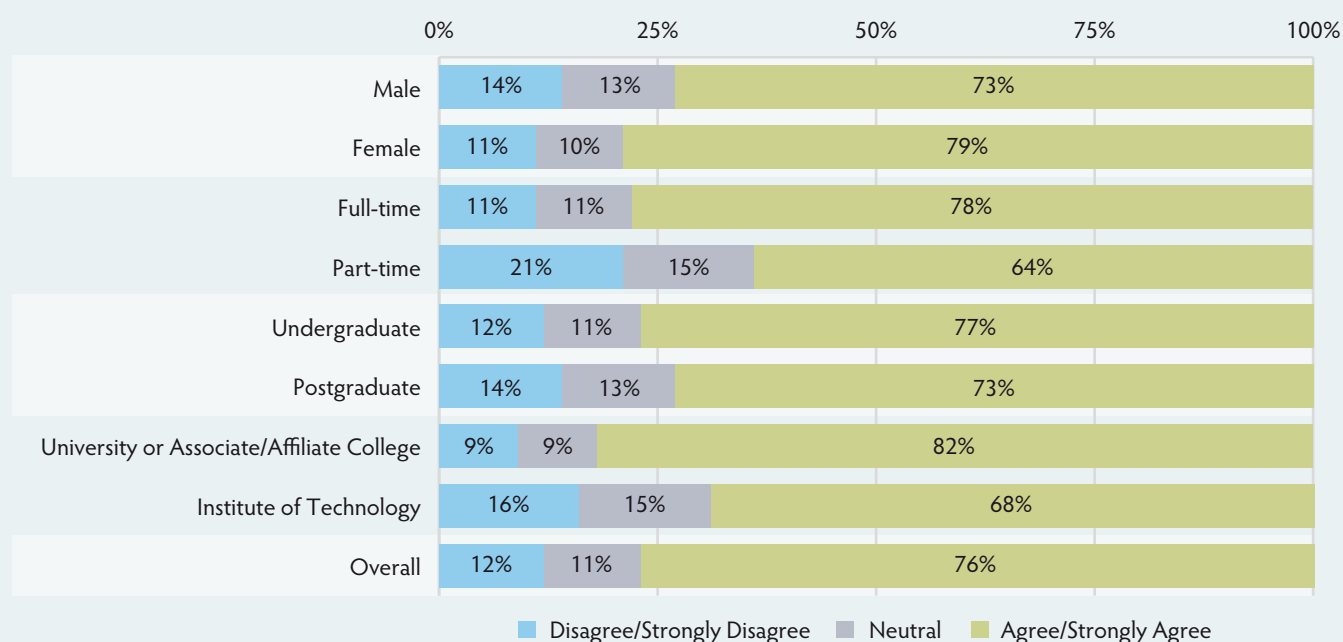
FIGURE 2.1: "MY LECTURERS INSPIRE ME" [N=19,622]



From Figure 2.1, when respondents were asked if their lecturers inspired them, we find some variation across a number of demographic characteristics. At the aggregate level, 47 percent of students either agree or strongly agree with this statement. The greatest level of support is found for this statement amongst postgraduate, and part-time students (60 percent and 57 percent). Lower levels of support are found among males (44 percent), full-time students (45 percent), undergraduate students (45 percent), and for students attending Institutes of Technology (45 percent).

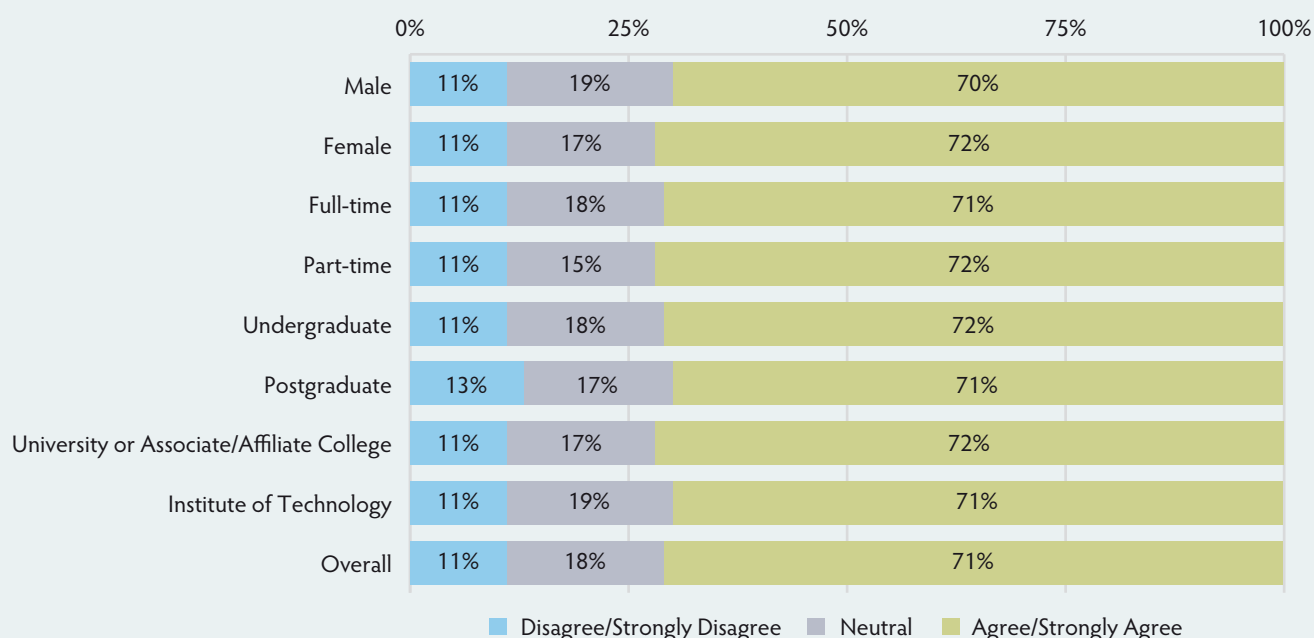
From Figure 2.2, when respondents were asked if it was always clear to them that they would study in higher education there appears to be a more consistent level of support with 76 percent of students at the aggregate level agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The lowest level of support is found among part-time students (64 percent), and those attending Institutes of Technology (68 percent). As has been noted in Chapter 1, mature students predominantly study part-time and at Institutes of Technology. With this considered, these lower levels of support are more understandable as these students have often taken non-traditional routes into third-level education.

FIGURE 2.2: "IT WAS ALWAYS CLEAR I WOULD STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ONE DAY" [N=19,643]



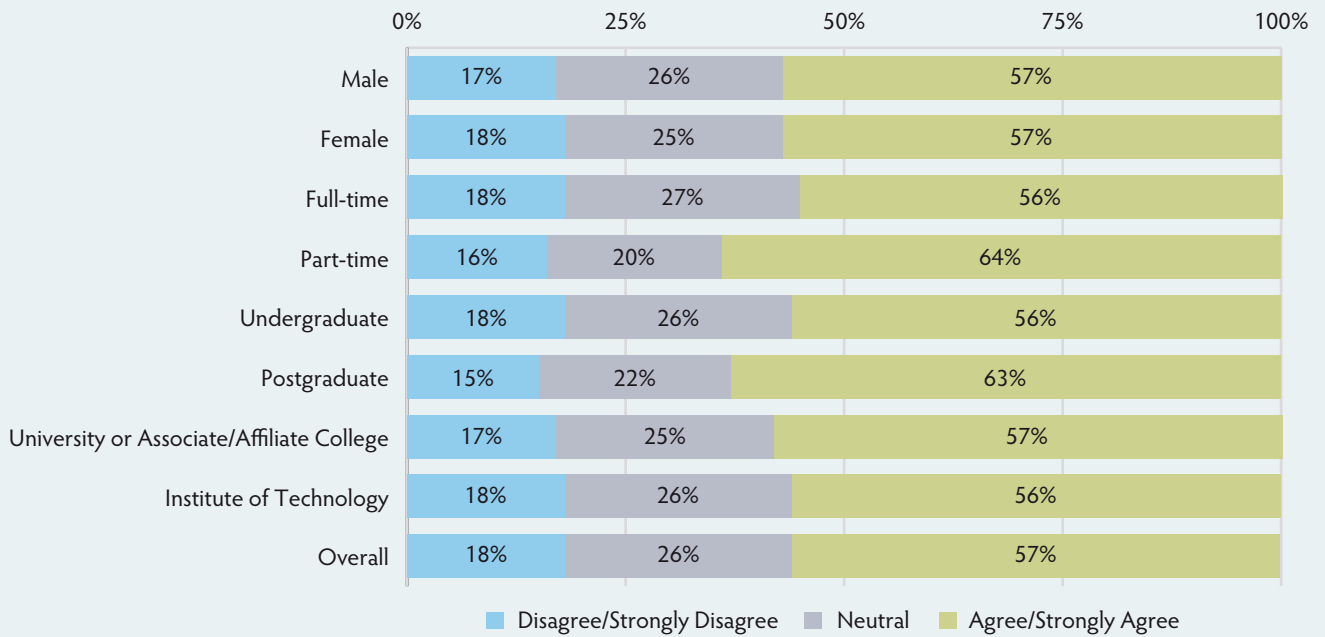
From Figure 2.3, when respondents were asked if they would recommend their current study programme to other students the results were uniform, in that they display a considerable level of support for their programmes, as at least 70 percent either agree or strongly agree with this statement. In contrast, the aggregated level of disagreement with this statement is only 11 percent.

FIGURE 2.3: "I WOULD RECOMMEND MY CURRENT STUDY PROGRAMME TO OTHER STUDENTS" [N=19,658]



From Figure 2.4, when respondents were asked if it was clear from the beginning of their programme what was expected of them, there again appears to be consistent levels of support for this statement. At the aggregate level 57 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, and this rises to 63 percent for postgraduates and 64 percent for part-time students.

FIGURE 2.4: "IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE START WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM ME IN MY CURRENT STUDY PROGRAMME" [N=19,656]



The survey responses illustrated in Figures 2.5 and 2.6 both appear to capture an underlying sentiment about feeling like one "belongs in higher education". As such, the fact that both Figures provide consistent views provides some confidence. In Figure 2.5, at the aggregate level, 75 percent of students disagree with the statement that they often feel that they don't belong in higher education. This corresponds with the 68 percent of respondents at the aggregate level in Figure 2.6 who disagree with questioning whether engaging in higher education was the right choice for themselves. Furthermore, the results obtained across the various sub-categories of students in both charts are remarkably similar.

FIGURE 2.5: "I OFTEN HAVE THE FEELING I DON'T BELONG IN HIGHER EDUCATION" [N=19,635]

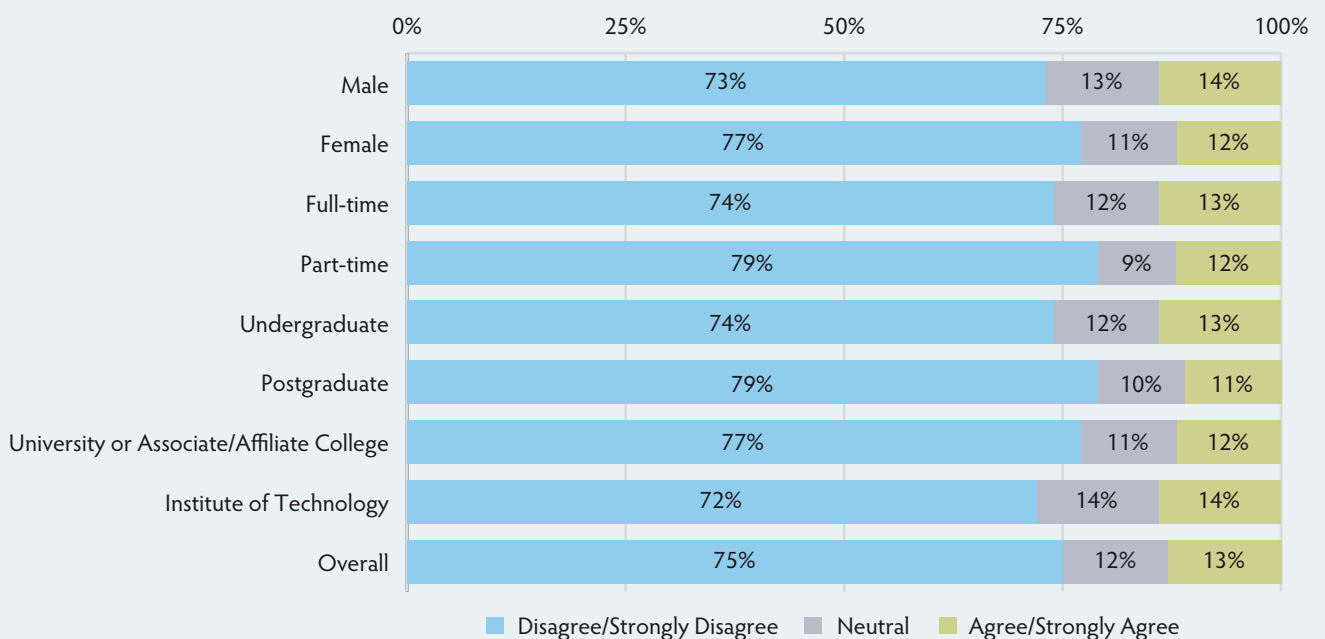
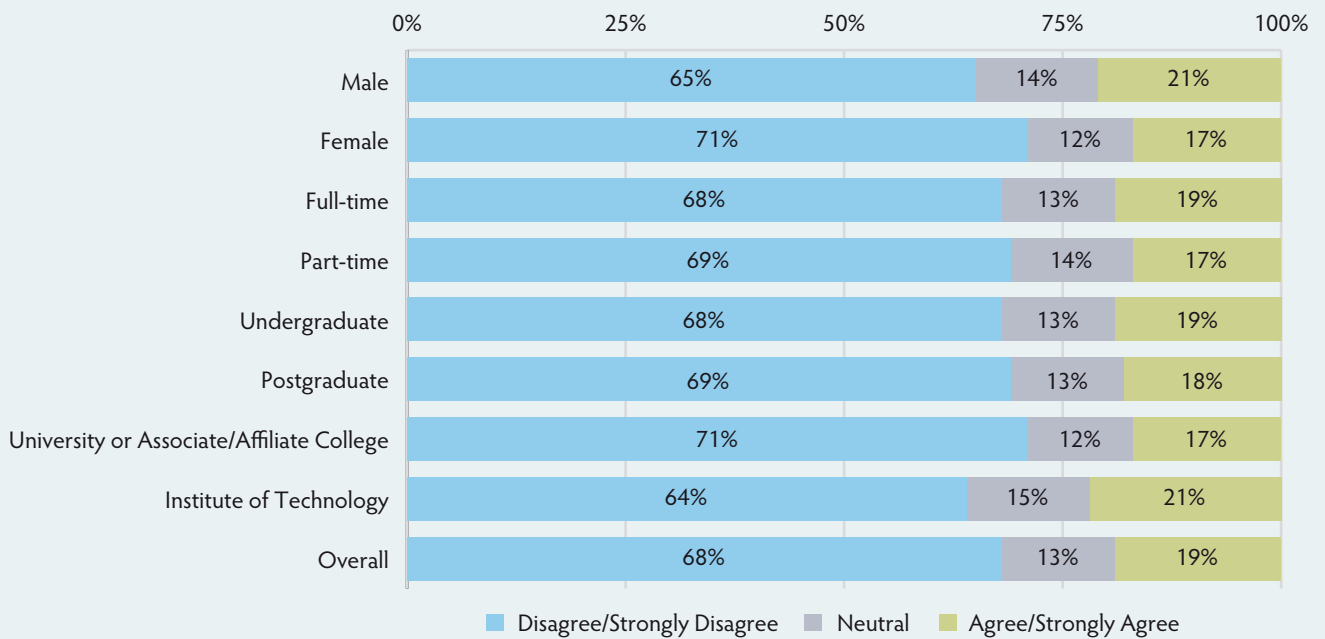
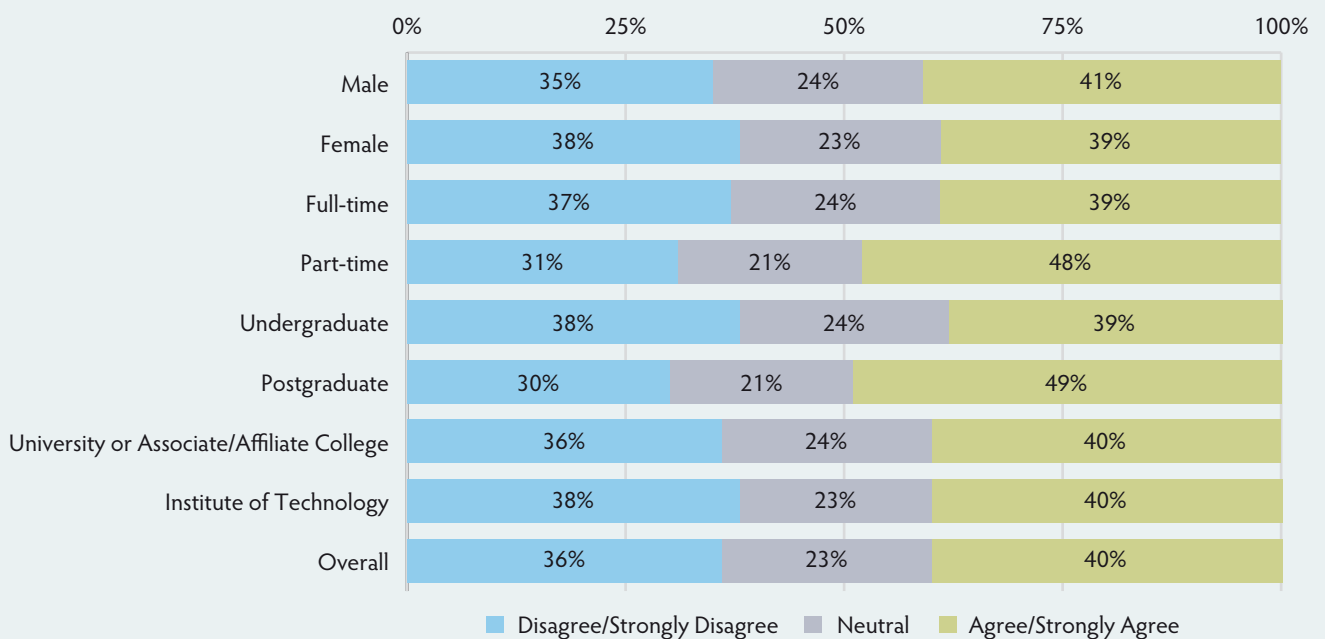


FIGURE 2.6: "I SOMETIMES ASK MYSELF WHETHER STUDYING IN HIGHER EDUCATION WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME" [N=19,622]



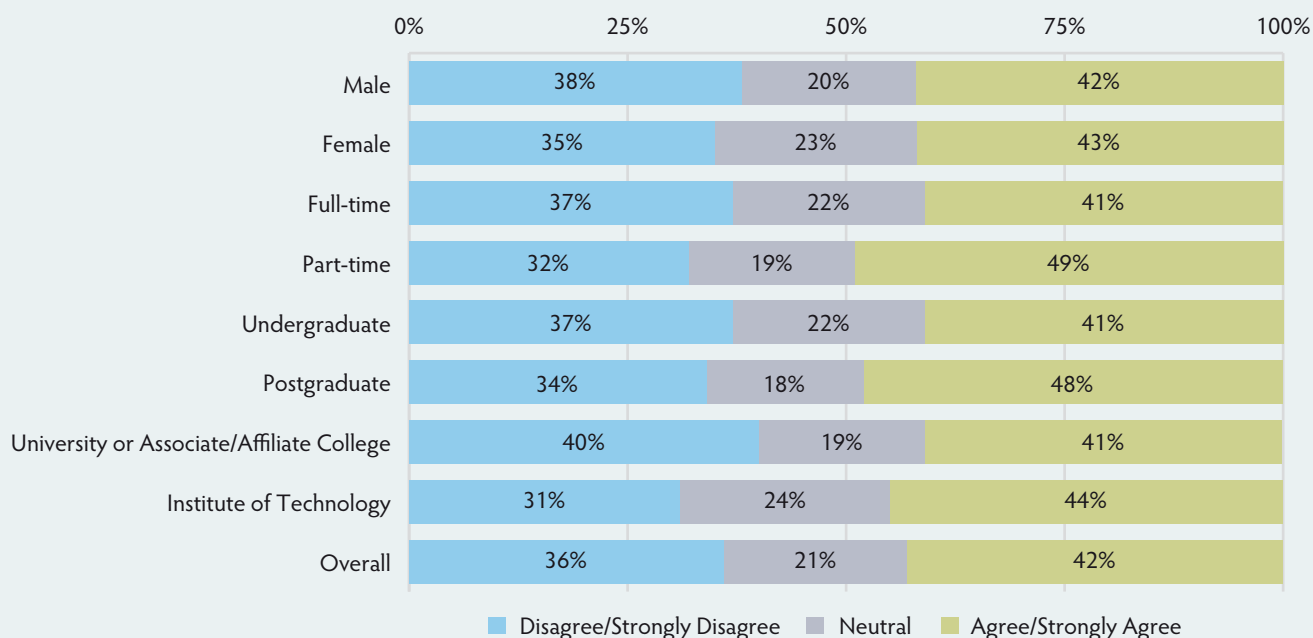
The uniformity of the results illustrated in Figure 2.7 are potentially of greater concern for higher education institutions. It is evident from this chart that the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statements 'my lecturers are concerned with my learning progress' is very similar to the percentage of respondents disagreeing with the statement. At the aggregate level, 40 percent of students agree or strongly agree with the statement whereas 36 percent disagree or strongly disagree, and this pattern is replicated across each of the sub-categories. In addition, a substantial component of between a fifth and a quarter of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

FIGURE 2.7: "MY LECTURERS ARE CONCERNED WITH MY LEARNING PROGRESS" [N=19,648]



Another area of potential concern for Higher education institutions is shown in Figure 2.8 which illustrates students' responses to the question of whether they feel treated by their institutions as being 'detached consumers' or 'partners in education'. At the aggregate level, 42 percent of students feel like they are partners in education, however 36 percent feel like detached consumers. This pattern is replicated in each of the sub-categories, in that a similar proportion of students feel like they are partners in education but a substantial component of almost equal strength feel the opposite.

FIGURE 2.8: "ARE STUDENTS TREATED AS DETACHED CONSUMERS OR PARTNERS IN EDUCATION?" [N=20,216]

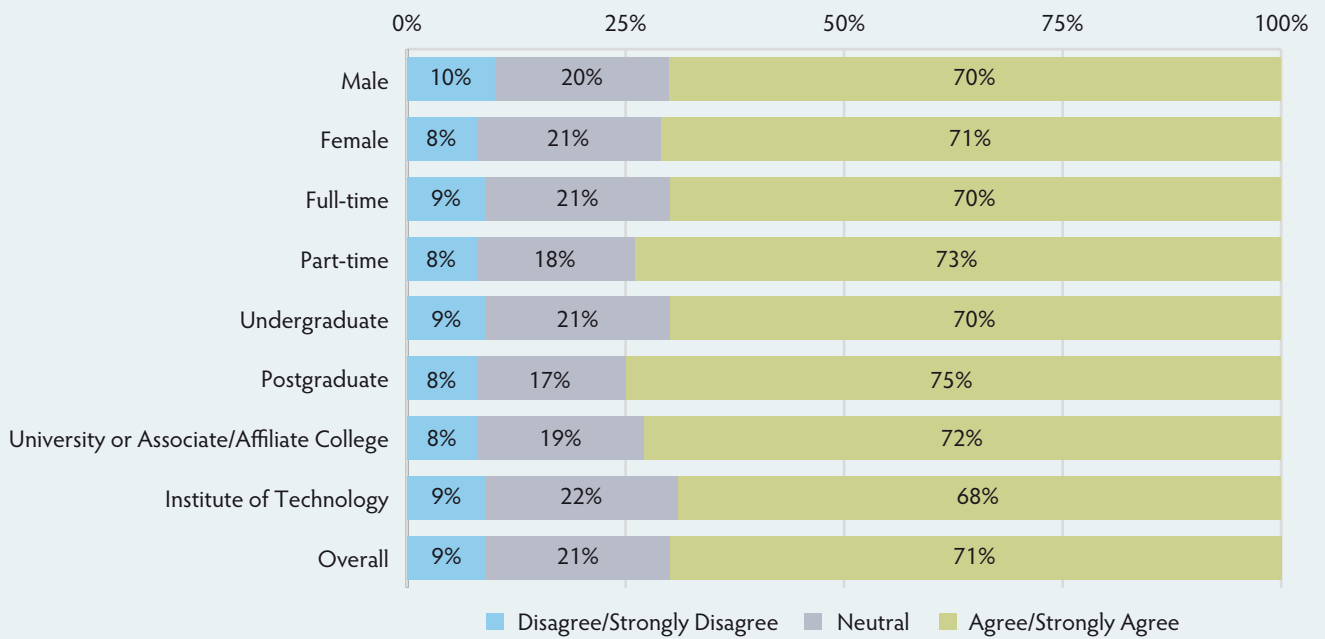


In sum, the responses to the last two questions point to a number of areas for potential improvement by individual lecturers, schools, departments, and ultimately the institutions themselves.

2.2 Satisfaction with Specific Higher Education Experience

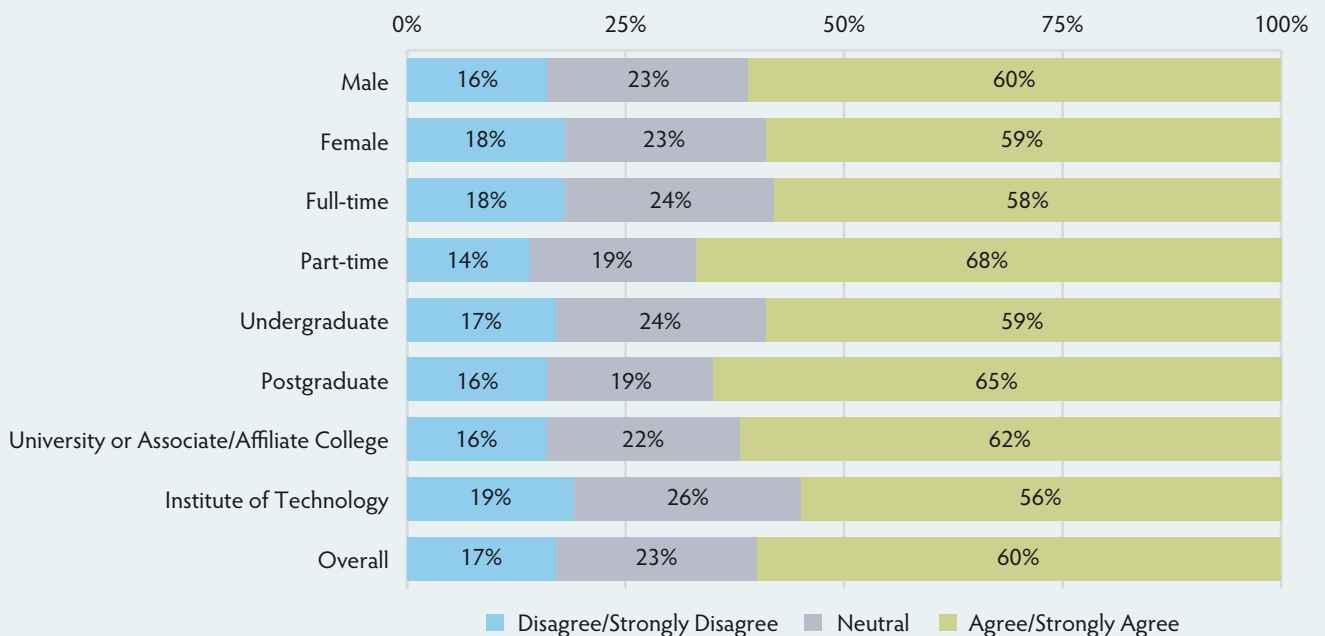
The set of statements discussed in Section 2.1 are intended to capture the general feelings of students about their experiences in higher level education, this section provides an overview of the specific experiences students have on their respective courses. As one can see from Figure 2.9 when asked about the quality of teaching on their courses, the majority of students at the aggregate level (71 percent) are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching on their course. Once again, this pattern is consistent across each of the sub-categories of students.

FIGURE 2.9: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF TEACHING [N=18,501]



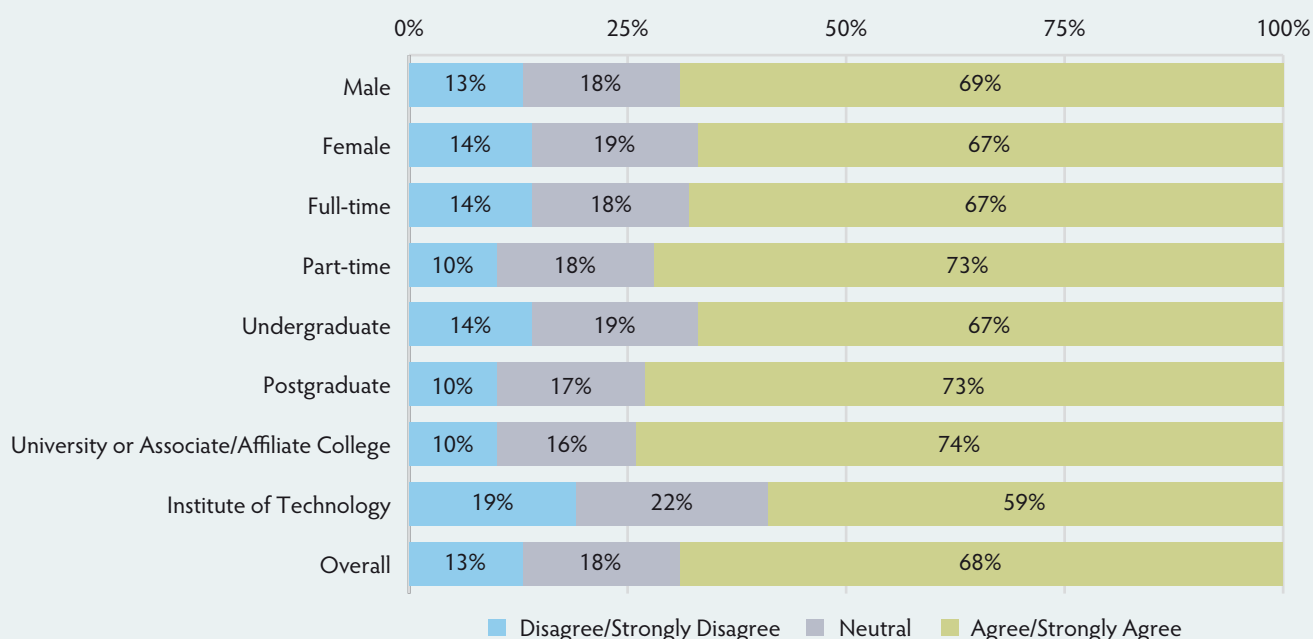
From Figure 2.10, the general level of satisfaction with the organisation of studies and timetable is somewhat lower than that achieved in Figure 2.9 with only 60 percent of students at the aggregate level expressing satisfaction. This rises to 68 percent for part-time students.

FIGURE 2.10: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE ORGANISATION OF STUDIES AND TIMETABLES [N=18,451]



A similar pattern is found in Figure 2.11 when students are asked about their level of satisfaction with the study facilities at their institution. At the aggregate level 68 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities. The biggest difference however, is between universities and Institutes of Technology. Seventy-four percent of students attending universities expressed high levels of satisfaction with the study facilities. In contrast, only 59 percent of students at Institutes of Technology did the same. Furthermore, for students at universities only 10 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the facilities whereas this is almost twice as much (19 percent) for students at Institutes of Technology.

FIGURE 2.11: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE STUDY FACILITIES [N=18,445]



While some students may be motivated to undertake higher level education purely for the sake of education, they are most likely a minority. Rather, it is unlikely that most students would sign-up for the years of maintained effort that one must commit to when undertaking a course at a higher-level institution without there being some tangible benefits at its conclusion. As such, greater employability is often seen a crucial reason for undertaking higher level education and the set of questions below asked if the competences students gained during their study programme had prepared them well to enter the labour market once they had graduated.

Figure 2.12 shows students' perceived preparedness by their institutions for the Irish labour market and on the whole, these are positive. For each sub-category of students at least 65 percent feel well or very well prepared to enter the Irish labour market. The highest levels of 83 and 81 percent are for part-time and postgraduate students respectively. Furthermore, the percentage of students who feel poorly prepared to enter the Irish labour market is very low at only nine percent of the total student population.

FIGURE 2.12: DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS FEEL PREPARED TO ENTER THE IRISH LABOUR MARKET [N=20,198]

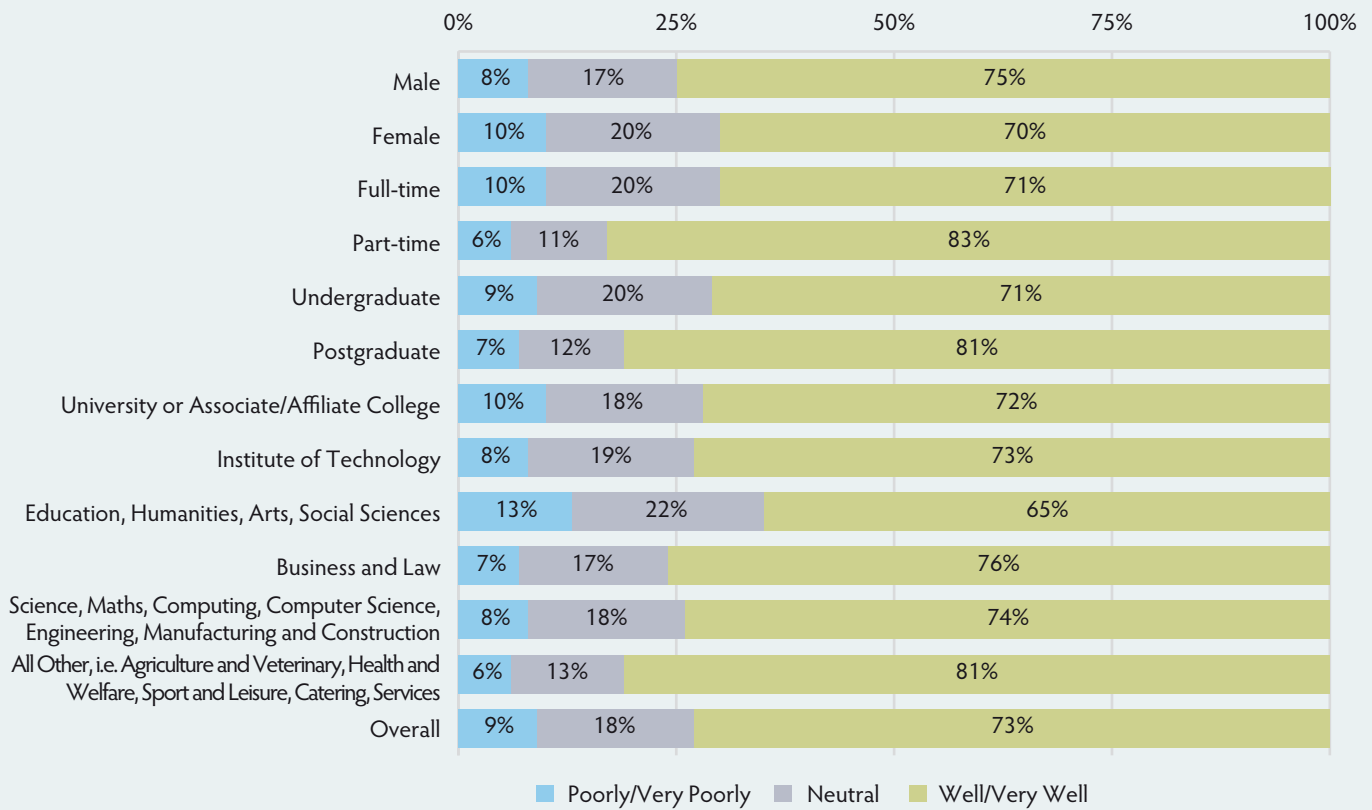
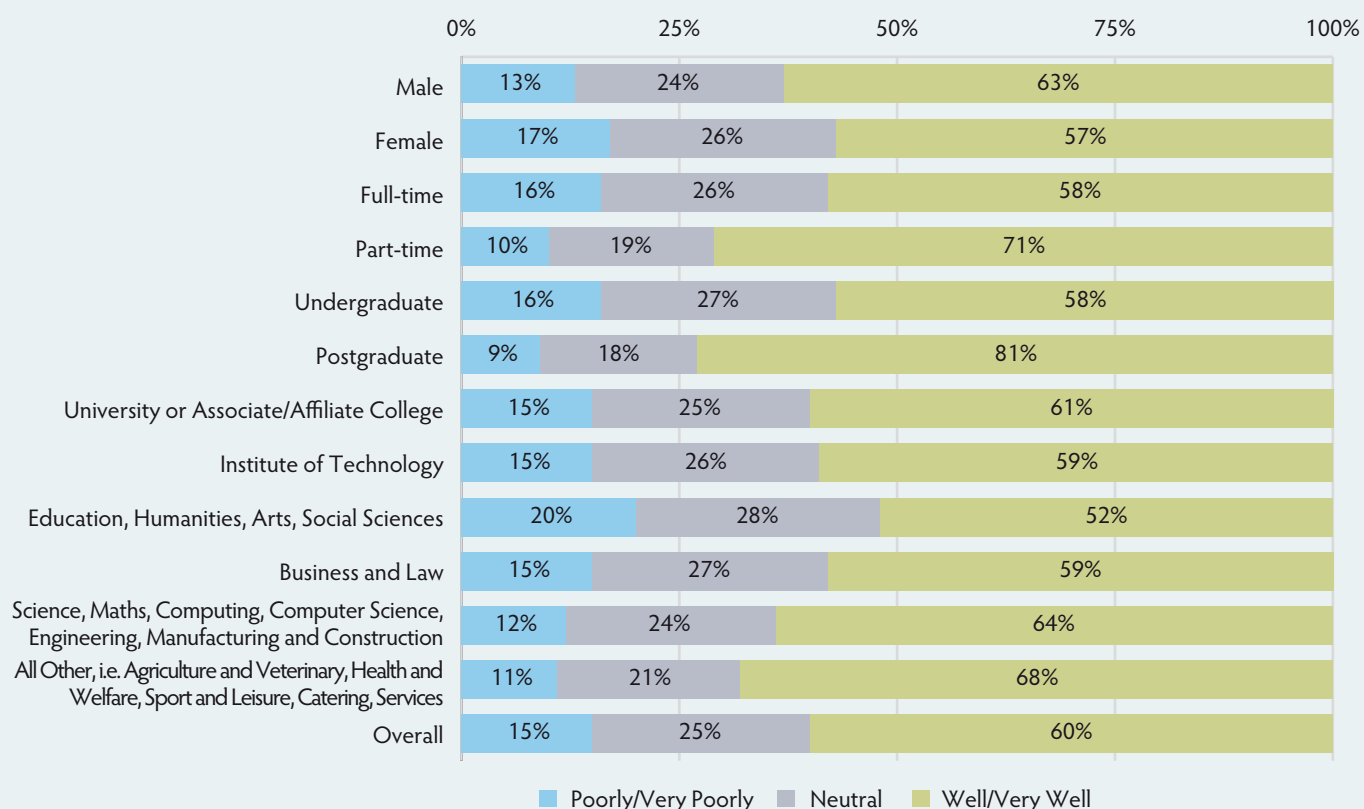


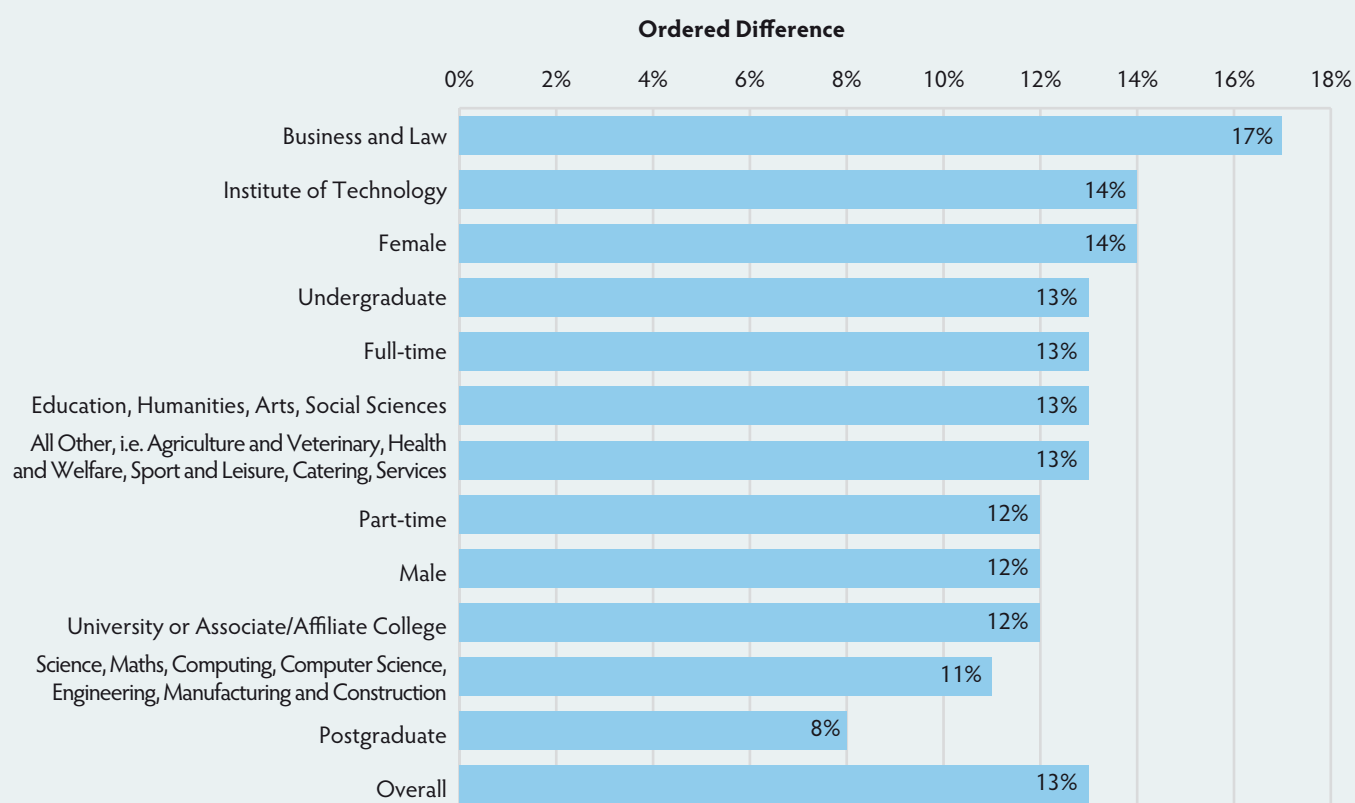
Figure 2.13 presents a similar picture in that most students feel well or very well prepared to enter the International labour market. At the aggregate level 60 percent of students feel this way. This proportion rises to 73 percent of postgraduates compared against 58 percent for undergraduates. Furthermore, the difference between the genders and across institution type are minor.

FIGURE 2.13: DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS FEEL PREPARED TO ENTER THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MARKET [N=19,853]



However, the interesting differences lie in the relative levels of perceived preparedness between the Irish and International labour markets. In each case, more students feel like they are prepared for entry into the Irish labour market than elsewhere. Figure 2.14 presents these differences in rank order and for each sub-category of student this pattern is present.

FIGURE 2.14: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PREPAREDNESS FOR THE IRISH AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MARKETS

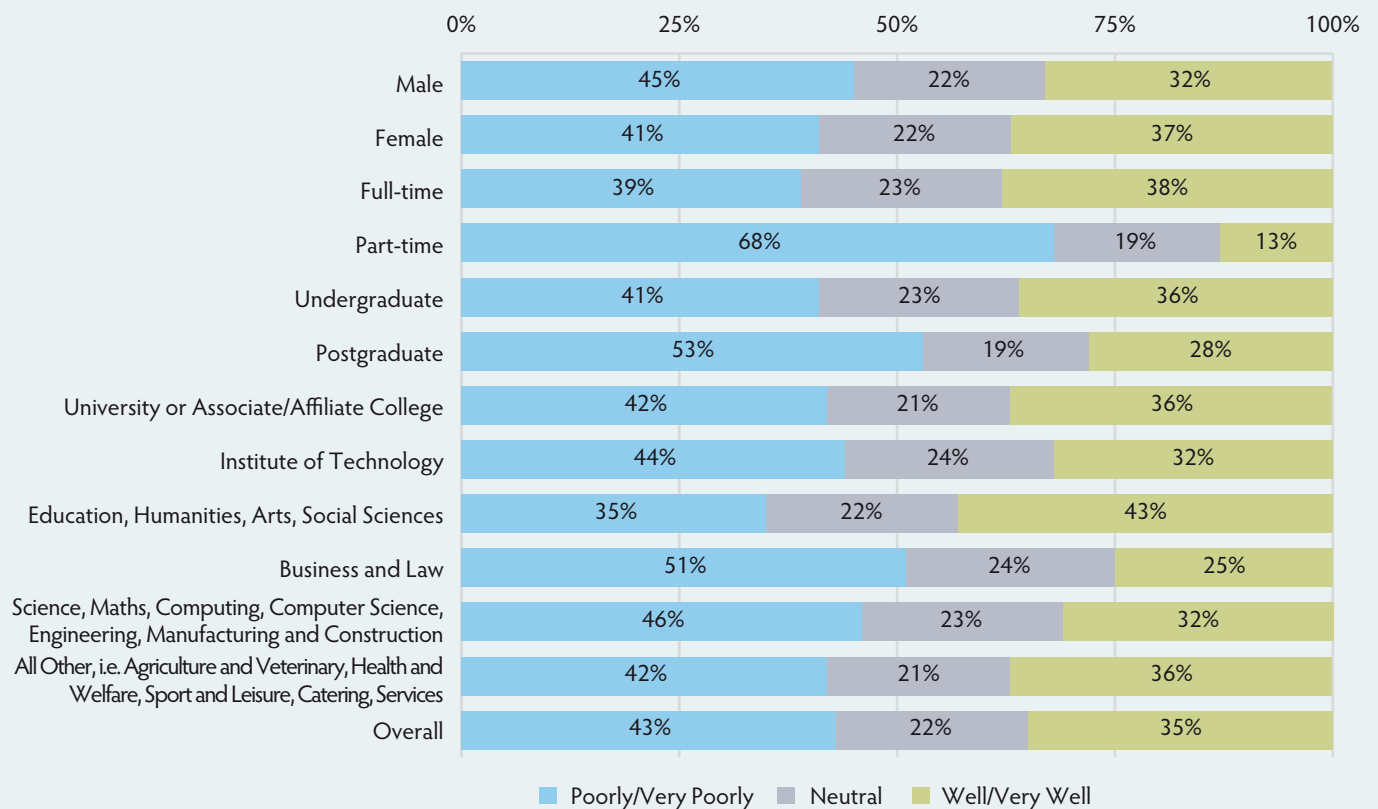


This could be considered a minor difference of trivial importance if the majority of Irish graduates end up in the Irish labour market, however as Figures 2.15 and 2.16 show a large proportion of students feel like they will have to go abroad in order to find work in their area of study.

In Figure 2.15, of the total student population, 43 percent disagree with the statement “I will have to go abroad in order to find work in my study background after graduation”. This falls to 39 percent of full-time students, however this is only one percent more than full-time students who disagree with the statement. For part-time students, some 68 percent of them disagree with the statement and only 13 percent feel that they may have to go abroad to find work in their study area. Though as noted in Chapter 1 the majority of part-time students are mature and are thus more likely to be unable/unwilling (due to other commitments such as having children, or already being employed) to seek employment outside of the country. In this respect, it is not their part-time status influencing whether they would look for employment outside of Ireland instead it is the background of student who enrolls in a part-time course.

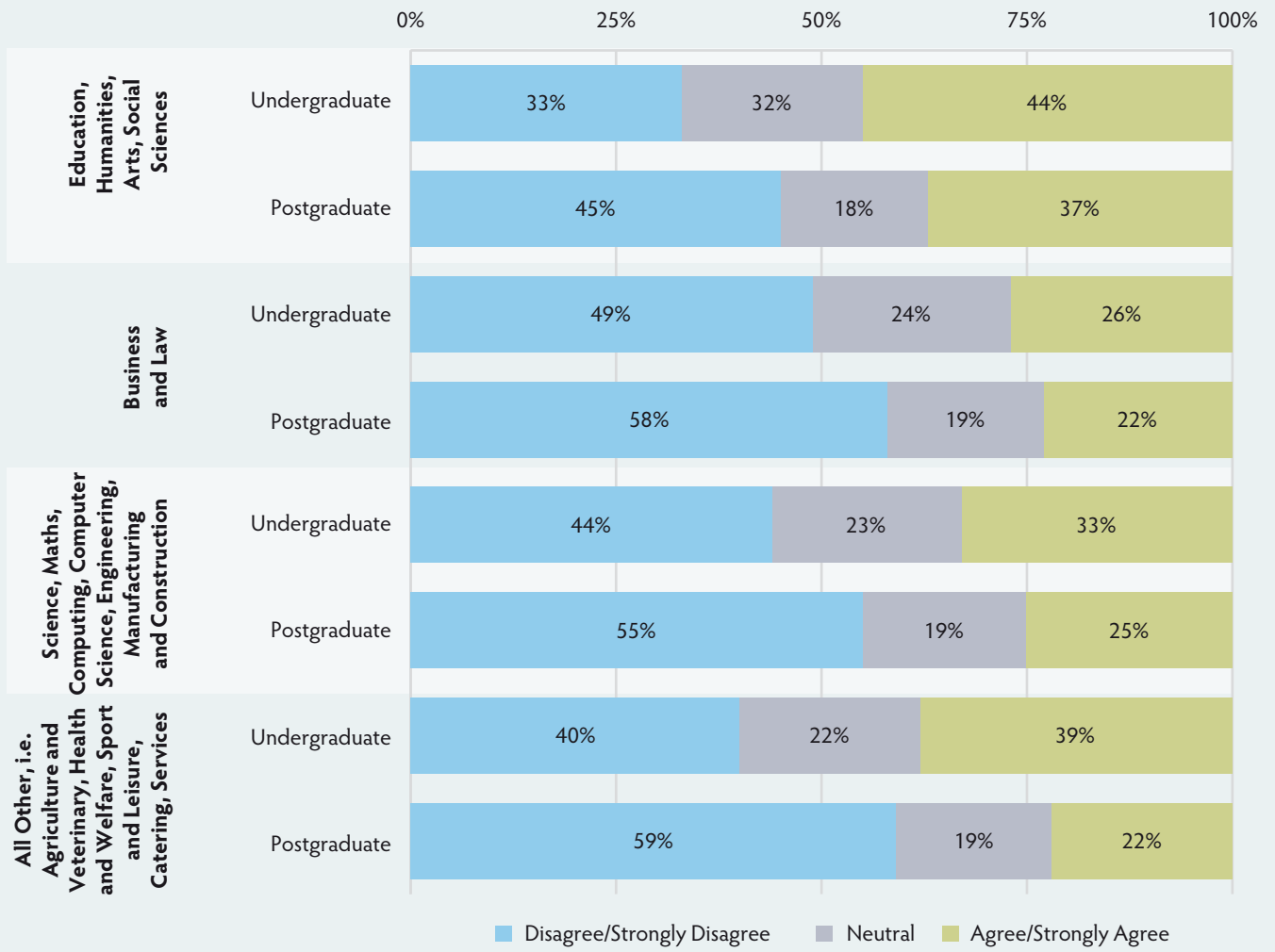
The next biggest difference is that found between undergraduate and postgraduate students. For undergraduates, 36 percent feel like they will have to go abroad to obtain employment in their study field whereas only 28 percent of postgraduate students feel the same way.

FIGURE 2.15: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH EMIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT ACROSS KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS. [N=13,684]



A similar pattern is shown in Figure 2.16 in that when undergraduate and postgraduate students are broken down by broad discipline type, a greater percentage of each postgraduate sub-category feel like they will be able to stay in Ireland and find employment in their study area. For undergraduates, a large proportion of them feel otherwise. For example, 44 percent of undergraduates in Education, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences feel like they will have to go abroad. However, this is the case for only 26 percent of Law and Business undergraduates.

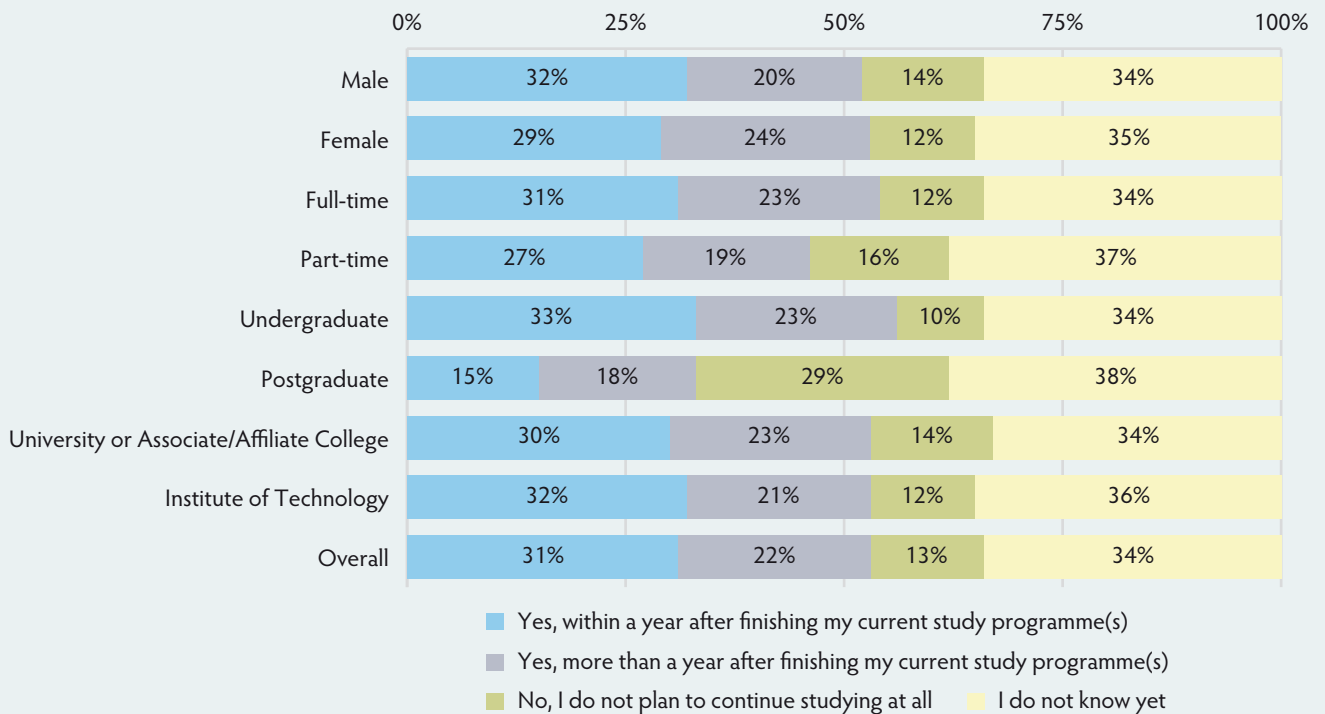
FIGURE 2.16: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH EMIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT ACROSS DISCIPLINES. [N=13,684]



2.3 Future Study Intentions

All students were asked about their future study intentions and Figure 2.17 illustrates the differences across a number of key student characteristics.

FIGURE 2.17: FUTURE STUDY INTENTIONS ACROSS KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS [N=20,251]

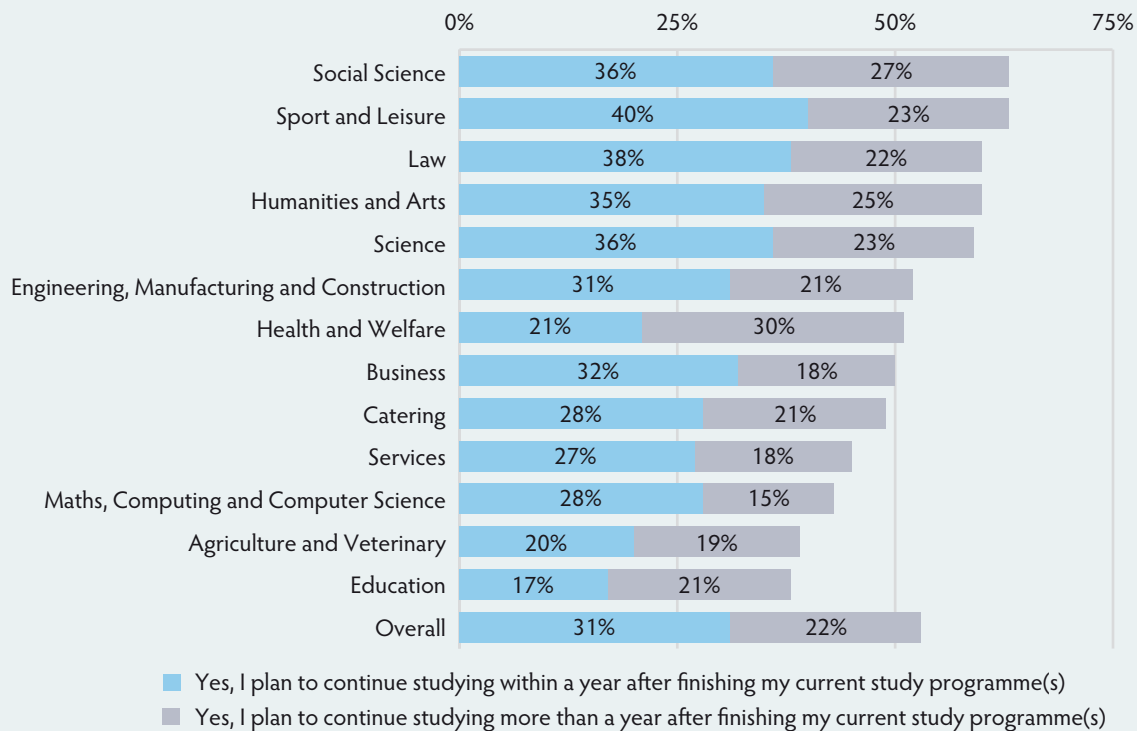


When all students were asked about their further study intentions, 13 percent indicated that they had no intention of undertaking further study, while 34 percent were undecided about this. The remaining 53 percent planned to study after graduating from their current course, and were split between students who planned to continue studying within a year (31 percent) and those who planned to resume study at a future point (22 percent).

Although the proportion of students who indicated that they were undecided about their plans for future study does not differ significantly across student-types, only 10 percent of undergraduates said that they planned not to continue studying. This is in contrast to postgraduates where 29 percent said that they planned not to continue studying, which in itself is understandable as they have already continued studying beyond undergraduate level.

Of the students that planned to continue studying, Figure 2.18 shows these future study intentions across each main study area.

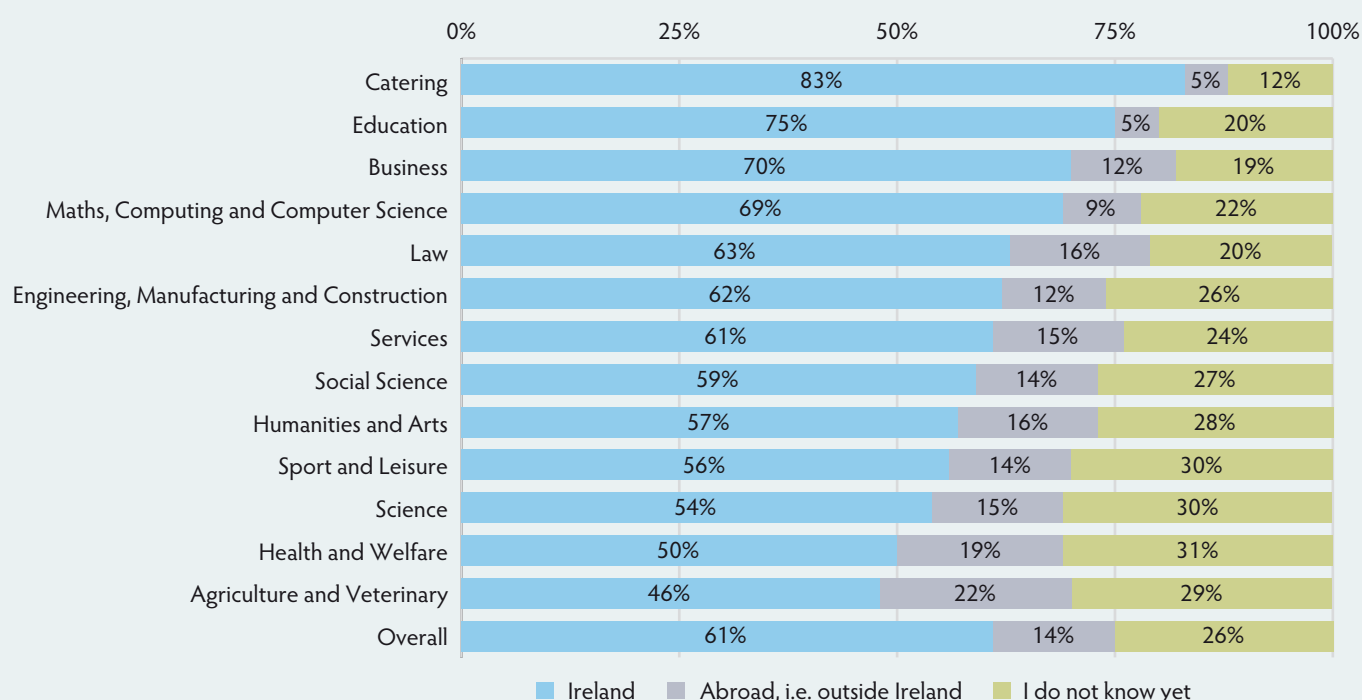
FIGURE 2.18: FUTURE STUDY INTENTIONS BY MAIN STUDY AREA [N=20,251]



Of the students that plan to continue studying the trend appears to be that greater numbers of them would like to pursue this within a year of graduating from their current programme rather than at a later point. Only students on Health and Welfare, and Education courses is this the opposite case. Students on Social Science, and Sport and Leisure courses appear to be the most likely to continue their studies, and after these groups 60 percent of Law students indicated that they planned to continue their studies. This is perhaps because of the necessity to commit to a formal training programme post-degree in order to subsequently practice Law.

Of the students that planned to continue studying, Figure 2.19 shows where these students intend to pursue their further study. Of the total student population that wishes to continue studying, 61 percent indicated that they would like to do this in Ireland. Fourteen percent intend to do this abroad and 26 percent did not currently know. When this is broken down across disciplines, for almost all disciplines a majority of students indicate that they intend for their future study to be conducted in Ireland, with the largest difference being for Catering students of which 83 percent intend to continue studying in Ireland. Only for Agriculture and Veterinary students does this fall below 50 percent.

FIGURE 2.19: INTENDED FUTURE STUDY LOCATION ACROSS MAIN STUDY AREA [N=10,659]



2.4 Course Workload

The final section in this chapter looks at the amount of time that students report as spending on their studies. In the survey, this is broken down by time spent in taught studies (for example, timetabled classes, lectures and seminars), time spent on personal study, and the total time spent in study related activities which is the sum of these. The key delineator in the amount of time spent studying appears to be the formal status of the student, whether they are full or part-time. Part-time students, by definition, spend less time in the formal learning environment of attending lectures and seminars. As such, to look only at the workload of the total student population would present biased averages. Because of this, the tables below present the average weekly workload for full and part-time students separately.

The average weekly workload for full-time students is presented in Table 2.1. Of this sub-population, the average weekly time spent in study related activities is 37.5 hours. This is itself broken down into 20.5 hours spent in taught studies and 17 hours spent on personal study time. However, these averages hide some interesting variation across sub-categories.

1. There does not appear to be any substantial differences in the amount of time male and female students spend studying.
2. The amount of time spent in taught studies is relatively fixed, with on average, undergraduate students spending almost 21 hours in taught studies. Whereas, for postgraduate students this is only 17 hours. This shortfall is made up for in postgraduate study by the greater emphasis placed on personal study. In this regard, postgraduate students on average spend almost 25 hours per week on personal study. In contrast, this is only 16.1 hours for undergraduates, which in itself can be further separated as non-mature undergraduates appear to spend even less time in personal study (15.5 hours), whereas mature students bring up the average by spending 19.8 hours on personal study.

3. Across disciplines Arts, Humanities, Education, and Social Science student spend on average 17.7 hours per week in taught studies, and a similar amount of time on personal study (17.6 hours). Business and Law students appear to spend the least amount of time in taught studies (17.2 hours) and additionally even less time on personal study (14.9 hours). In contrast, for Science, Maths, Computing and Engineering students the average amount of time spent in taught studies is 23 hours, and 16.8 hours on personal study.
4. Across institution type there are some notable differences. Students appear on average to spend more time in taught studies in Institutes of Technology than in Universities. However, the opposite is the case when we look at personal study as students at Universities spend almost four hours more per week on this than students at Institutes of Technology.
5. There is some variation across the year of study. First year students spend on average 20.6 hours per week in taught studies and 15.1 hours on personal study. In contrast, fourth year students spend on average 18.6 hours per week in taught classes and almost 24 hours on personal study. Both of these trends make sense in context as most final year courses include a written thesis component, as such less time is spent on lectures, seminars and so on. This thesis component overlaps with personal study which would increase the average time spent on personal study. Furthermore, in preparation for final examinations we would expect fourth year students to spend more time on personal study than students in other year groups.
6. Research has shown a clear negative correlation between the amount of time spent in employment whilst at in higher education and overall grades achieved (Tessema *et al* 2014; Pike *et al* 2008). The causal relationship this strand of research proposes is that students who are employed while also studying have distinct pressures on their time and are less able to devote significant amounts of time to their own education. This appears to be the case here. The amount of time spent in taught studies as noted above is relatively fixed and as such there are no substantive differences between employed and unemployed students. However, when we look at the amount of time they spend on personal study, significant differences are immediately evident. Unemployed students spend on average 18.6 hours per week on personal study. For employed students this is only 15.1 hours. This at first glance may appear to be relatively minor, but it should be borne in mind that over the course of a semester the cumulative effect of this gap is more than a typical working week of forty hours¹⁰.

¹⁰ A typical semester is twelve weeks, $12 \times 3.5 = 42$ hours.

TABLE 2.1: AVERAGE WEEKLY WORKLOAD (IN HOURS) FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS [N=13,057]

	Taught studies	Personal study time	Total study related activities
Male	20.9	16.4	37.3
Female	20.2	17.5	37.7
Undergraduate	20.9	16.1	37.1
– Mature Undergraduate	22.3	19.8	42.1
– Non-Mature Undergraduate	20.7	15.5	36.2
Postgraduate	17.0	24.7	41.7
Education, Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences	17.7	17.6	35.3
Business and Law	17.2	14.9	32.0
Science, Maths, Computing, Computer Science, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	23.0	16.8	39.8
All Other, i.e. Agriculture and Veterinary, Health and Welfare, Sport and Leisure, Catering, Services	23.9	18.4	42.3
First Year Student	20.6	15.1	35.7
Second Year Student	20.8	15.3	36.1
Third Year Student	21.6	17.1	38.7
Fourth Year Student	18.6	23.9	42.5
University or Associate/Affiliate College	19.1	18.3	37.5
Institute of Technology	22.8	14.8	37.6
Employed during term-time	20.2	15.1	35.3
Unemployed during term-time	20.8	18.6	39.4
Overall	20.5	17.0	37.5

Table 2.2 presents the average weekly workload for part-time students. Of this sub-population, the average weekly time spent in study related activities is 21.6 hours. As is expected, this is considerably less than that of full-time students. This is divided between 8.9 hours spent in taught studies and 12.6 hours spent on personal study time. Furthermore, there does appear to be differences across genders for part-time students with male students spending more time in taught studies than women, though this is likely to be down to course choice (cf. Section 1.1 and the average time spend in taught studies across disciplines in this table). Female part-time students appear to spend almost two hours more on average on personal study.

Undergraduate part-time students spent almost 10 hours in taught studies. Whereas, for postgraduate students this is only 7.8 hours. Again, this shortfall is made up for in postgraduate study by the greater emphasis placed on personal study. In this regard, postgraduate students on average spend just over 14 hours per week on personal study. To compare, this is only 11.4 hours for undergraduates. Within the undergraduate category, and in contrast to their full-time counterparts, mature part-time students spend on average less time (11.3 hours) on personal study than non-mature students (12.2 hours).

TABLE 2.2: AVERAGE WEEKLY WORKLOAD (IN HOURS) FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS [N=2,262]

	Taught studies	Personal study time	Total study related activities
Male	9.5	11.8	21.3
Female	8.3	13.5	21.8
Undergraduate	9.9	11.4	21.3
– Mature Undergraduate	9.5	11.3	20.8
– Non-Mature Undergraduate	13.3	12.2	25.5
Postgraduate	7.8	14.2	21.9
Education, Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences	7.4	13.3	20.7
Business and Law	9.0	11.9	20.9
Science, Maths, Computing, Computer Science, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	10.3	12.4	22.6
All Other, i.e. Agriculture and Veterinary, Health and Welfare, Sport and Leisure, Catering, Services	8.7	13.4	22.1
First Year Student	8.9	12.5	21.3
Second Year Student	8.0	13.0	21.1
Third Year Student	10.1	11.5	21.6
Fourth Year Student	9.9	13.9	23.8
University or Associate/Affiliate College	7.9	13.7	21.6
Institute of Technology	10.1	11.4	21.5
Employed during term-time	8.3	11.9	20.1
Unemployed during term-time	12.3	16.4	28.7
Overall	8.9	12.6	21.6

Part-time students across year groups appear to spend a similar amount of time on taught classes. With regard to personal study time, as has been discussed, part-time students already have other pressures on their time and as such are much more restricted in the amount of time that they can devote to personal study. However, there still appears to be an increase in the amount of time spent in personal study in fourth year over earlier year groups, although it is less dramatic than that found in the full-time student cohort.

Across institution type, part-time students spend more time in taught studies in Institutes of Technology than in Universities. However, like full-time students above, the opposite is the case when we look at personal study as students at Universities spend just over two hours more per week on personal study than students at Institutes of Technology.

Finally, like full-time students, employment appears to affect the amount of time part-time students are able to devote to study. In this case, we see substantial differences for both taught (4 hours less than unemployed students) and personal study time (4.5 hours less than unemployed students).

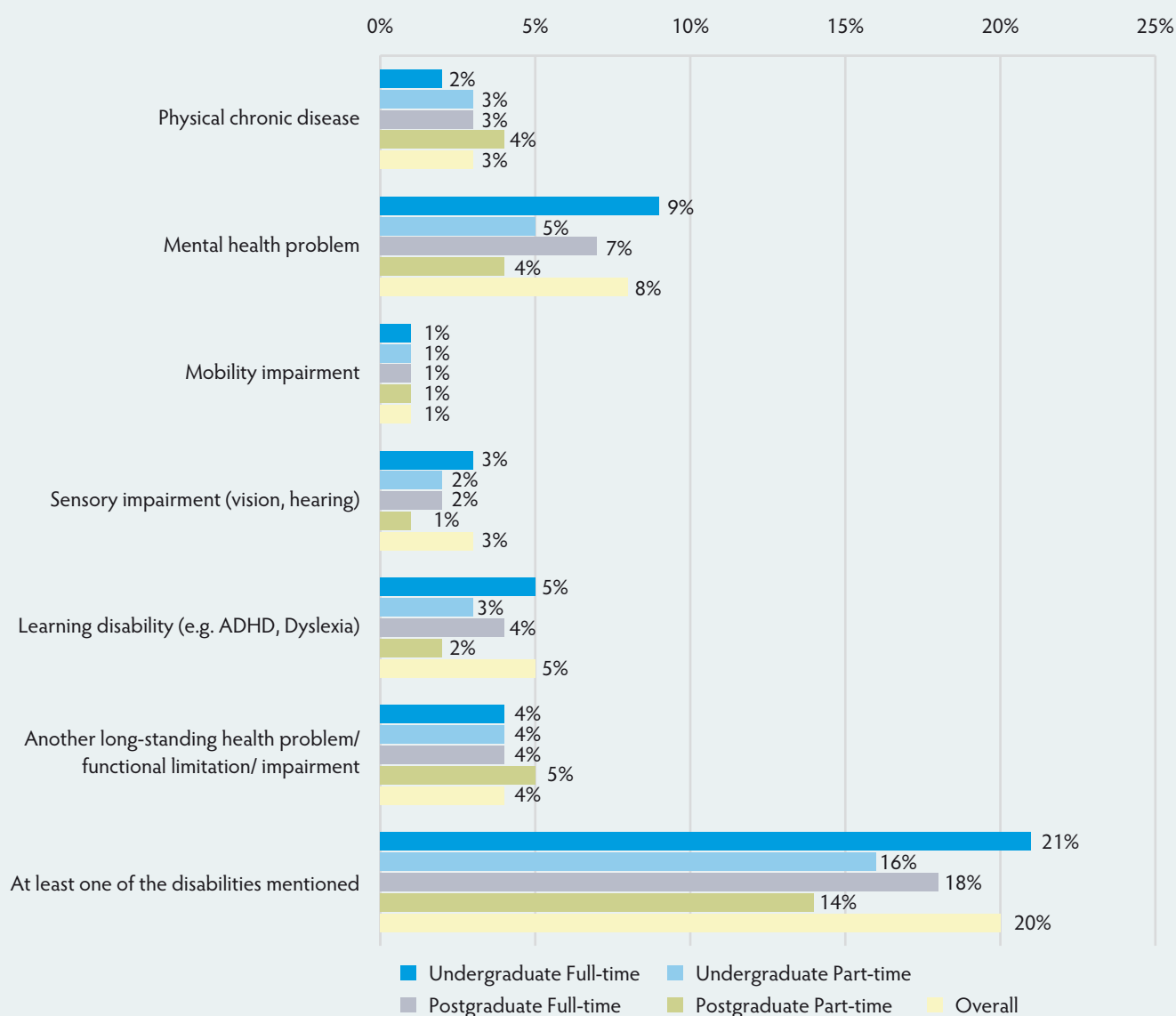
3. DISABILITY

Historically, students with disabilities have been under-represented in Irish higher education due to a lack of support throughout the education system and lower educational expectations¹¹.

This survey asked students if they had a disability, long-standing health problem, or functional limitation, where a long-standing health problem is defined as a health problem that has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months. The proportion of students indicating that they had one of these is approximately 20 percent of this student population. This is broken down into 21 percent of all full-time undergraduates, 16 percent of all part-time undergraduates, 18 percent of all full-time postgraduates, and 14 percent of all part-time postgraduates.

The profile of each category of disability by their student status is presented in Figure 3.1 below (note that students can have more than one disability).

FIGURE 3.1: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY BY STUDENT STATUS [N=15,721]



11 HEA 2015 – National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019, HEA: Dublin.

In this chart, and each of the ones below, mental health problems and learning disabilities are the two main disabilities cited by respondents.

FIGURE 3.2: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY BY GENDER [N=15,721]

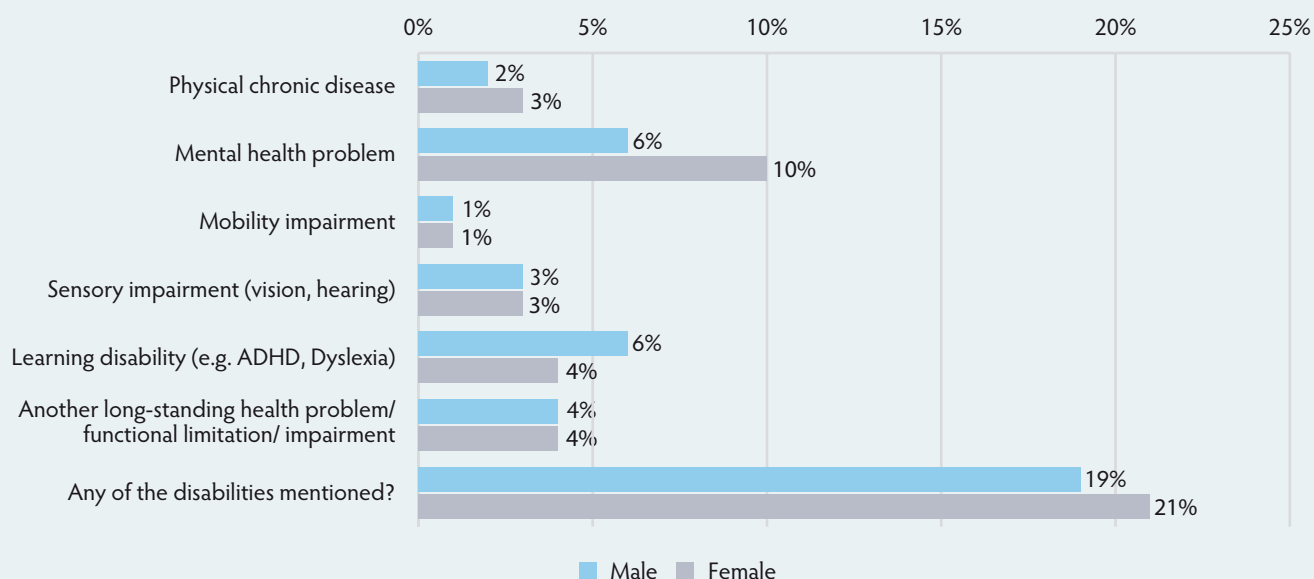


Figure 3.2 profiles the percentage of students with disabilities by gender. For the most part, each gender experiences a similar distribution of disabilities. However, female students appear to be more likely to suffer mental problems than male students (10 percent to six percent) and male students appear to be more likely to suffer from a learning disability (6 percent to four percent).

The disability status across each of the main study areas is shown in Table 3.1. The most commonly reported disability was a mental health problem (8 percent) and this percentage was highest for students in Humanities and Arts (13 percent), Social Science (11 percent), Law and Science (10 percent each).

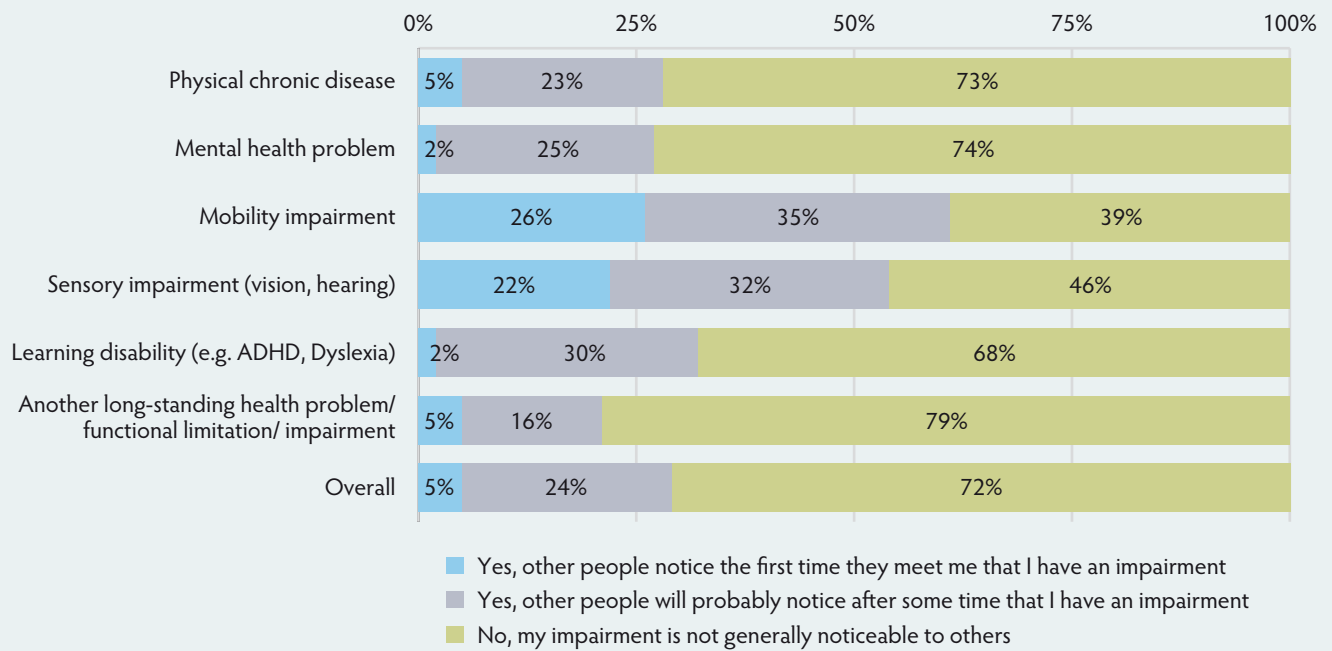
TABLE 3.1: MAIN STUDY AREA AND DISABILITY STATUS [N=15,689]

	Physical chronic disease	Mental health problem	Mobility impairment	Sensory impairment (vision, hearing)	Learning disability (e.g. ADHD, Dyslexia)	Other long-standing health problem	No disability
Education	2%	5%	0%	1%	2%	5%	86%
Humanities and Arts	3%	13%	1%	3%	6%	5%	74%
Social Science	4%	11%	1%	3%	7%	4%	75%
Business	2%	6%	1%	2%	4%	3%	84%
Law	3%	10%	2%	3%	3%	5%	78%
Science	3%	10%	0%	3%	5%	4%	78%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	3%	7%	2%	2%	6%	4%	80%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	2%	4%	1%	3%	6%	4%	83%
Agriculture and Veterinary	2%	9%	1%	2%	4%	7%	80%
Health and Welfare	3%	5%	1%	2%	2%	3%	86%
Sport and Leisure	3%	5%	1%	3%	9%	6%	79%
Catering	1%	9%	1%	3%	10%	9%	72%
Services	3%	4%	0%	1%	11%	2%	79%
Overall	3%	8%	1%	3%	5%	4%	80%

The study areas with the highest proportions of students with any of the disabilities provided were Catering (28 percent), Humanities and Arts (26 percent) and Social Science (25 percent). The study areas with the lowest proportions of students with any of the disabilities provided were Education (14 percent), and Health and Welfare (14 percent).

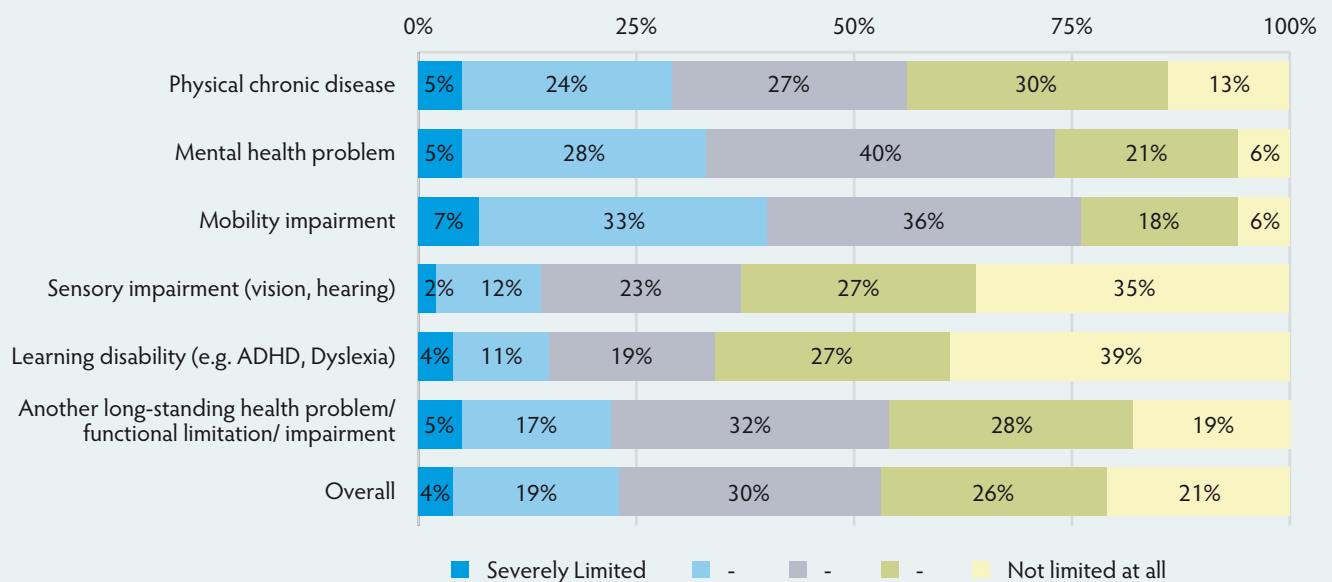
Of the students that report disabilities, Figure 3.3 shows the degree to which their disability is noticeable to others. On average, 72 percent of students report that their impairment is not generally noticeable to others, and for five percent of students their impairment is noticeable the first time they meet people. However, within these figures there is substantial variation across categories of impairment. For students with mobility or sensory impairment they appear to have more noticeable impairments (26 and 22 percent of students with these impairments reporting that these are immediately noticeable). Whereas for students with learning disabilities or mental health problems the majority note that they are not generally noticeable to others.

FIGURE 3.3: THE DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS' IMPAIRMENTS ARE NOTICEABLE TO OTHERS [N=3,578]



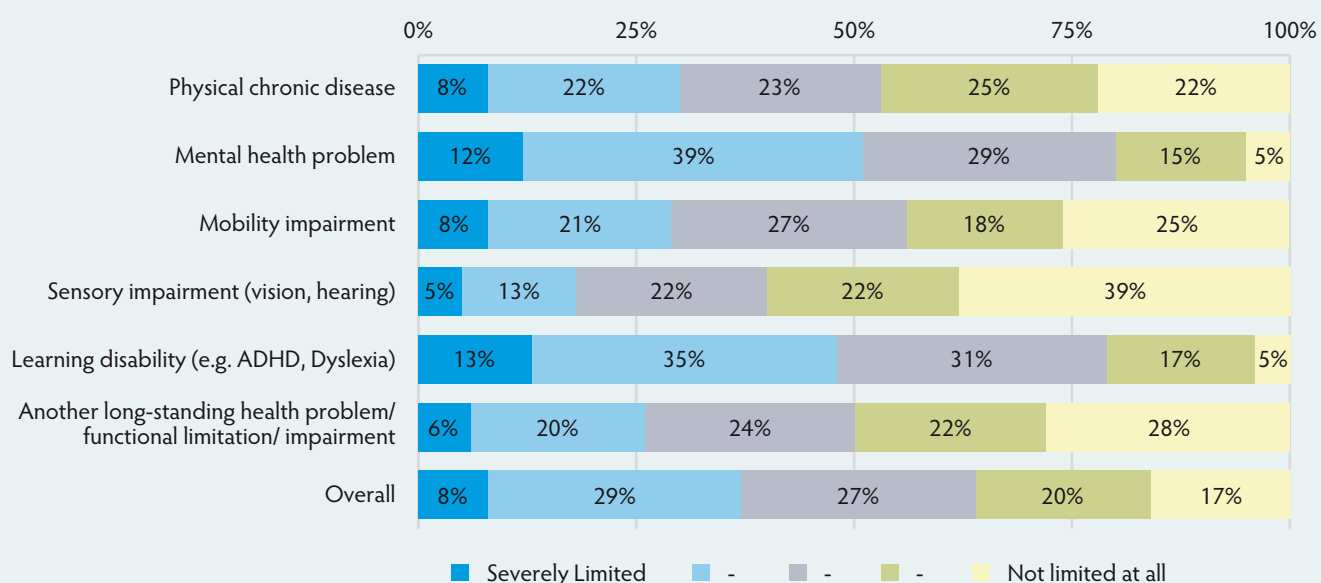
The survey asked two questions about the degree to which their impairments affect the lives of students. Figure 3.4 illustrates the degree to which students' impairments affect their everyday lives and shows that approximately 21 percent of students with at least one form of disability considered their disability to not be limiting at all to their everyday activities. Whereas four percent considered their impairment to be severely limiting. The disability that was noted as the biggest obstacle to everyday life was mobility impairment, where 40 percent of respondents said that this limited or severely limited their everyday activities.

FIGURE 3.4: THE DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS' IMPAIRMENTS LIMIT THEIR NORMAL EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES [N=3,054]



In contrast to the above, Figure 3.5 illustrates the degree to which students' impairments limit their studies. In this regard, approximately 17 percent of students with at least one form of disability considered their disability to not be limiting at all to their studies. Whereas eight percent considered their impairment to be severely limiting. The disability that was noted as the biggest obstacle to studies was having a learning difficulty where 48 percent of respondents said that this limited or severely limited their ability to study. Intriguingly, a relatively high proportion of students with sensory impairments (61 percent) considered these impairments of being little to no obstacle to study. This could be due to the fact that they are likely to have lived with these impairments throughout their education and they have therefore become a way of life, thus not limiting their approach to their studies.

FIGURE 3.5: THE DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS' IMPAIRMENTS LIMIT THEIR STUDIES [N=3,047]

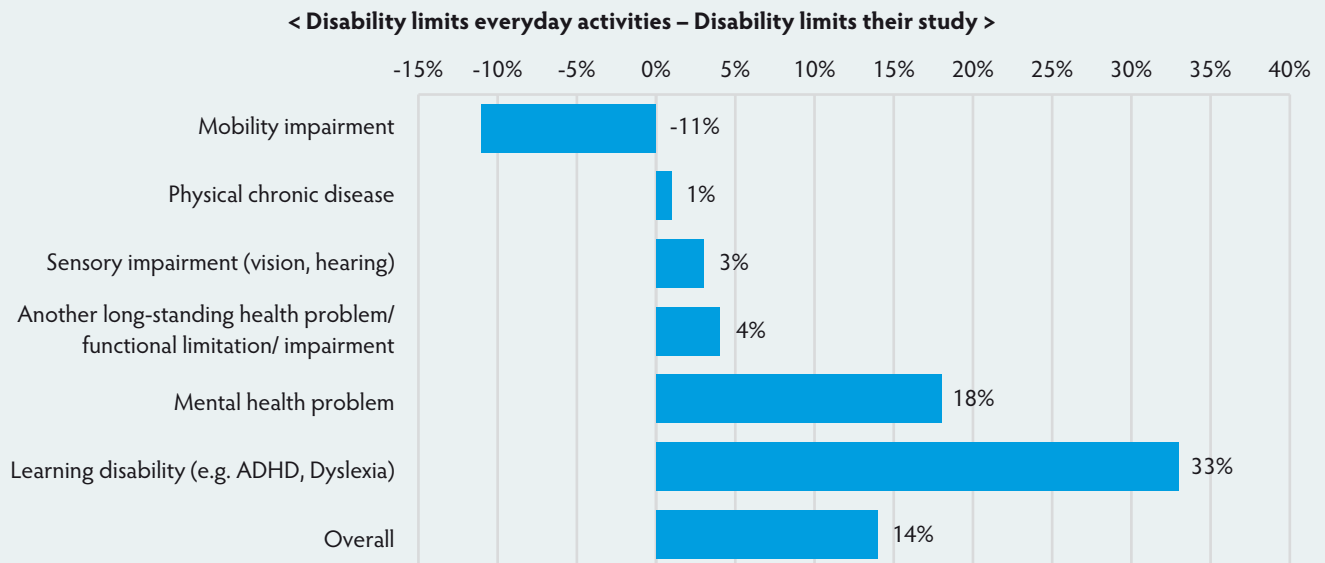


While these charts are in themselves interesting, it is possible to use these responses to calculate the degree to which different disabilities affect students, and crucially, if different impairments have a greater effect on studying or on everyday activities.

Figure 3.6 presents this through subtracting the percentage of responses given by students who feel that their disability limits or severely limits their everyday activities from the percentage of responses given by students who feel that their disability limits or severely limits their studies. As a result, negative values indicate that a form of disability affects everyday life more than studies, and positive values indicate that a form of disability affects studying more than everyday life. A value close to zero indicates that this form of disability equally affects everyday life and studies.

As such from the chart, it is evident that mobility impairment appears to have a greater negative impact on everyday life than it does on studies. Whereas chronic physical disease and sensory impairment appear to equally affect everyday life and studies. In contrast, having a mental health problem or learning disability has a much greater negative effect on studying than general day-to-day life.

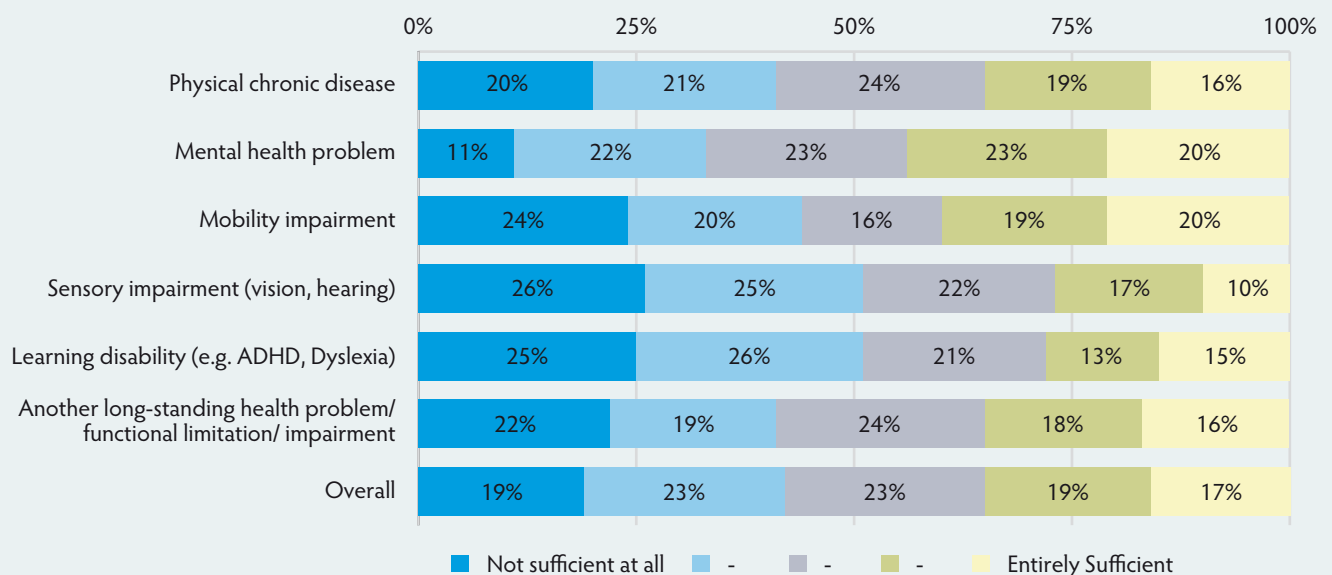
FIGURE 3.6: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMPAIRMENTS LIMITING EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES VERSUS STUDIES [N=3,047]



Students with disabilities were further asked if they wanted or needed support in their studies from public or institutional sources. The proportion of students wanted or needing support ranged from 86 percent for those with learning disabilities, 83 for students with mental health problems, and 79 percent for students with mobility impairments to 66 percent for students with sensory impairments.

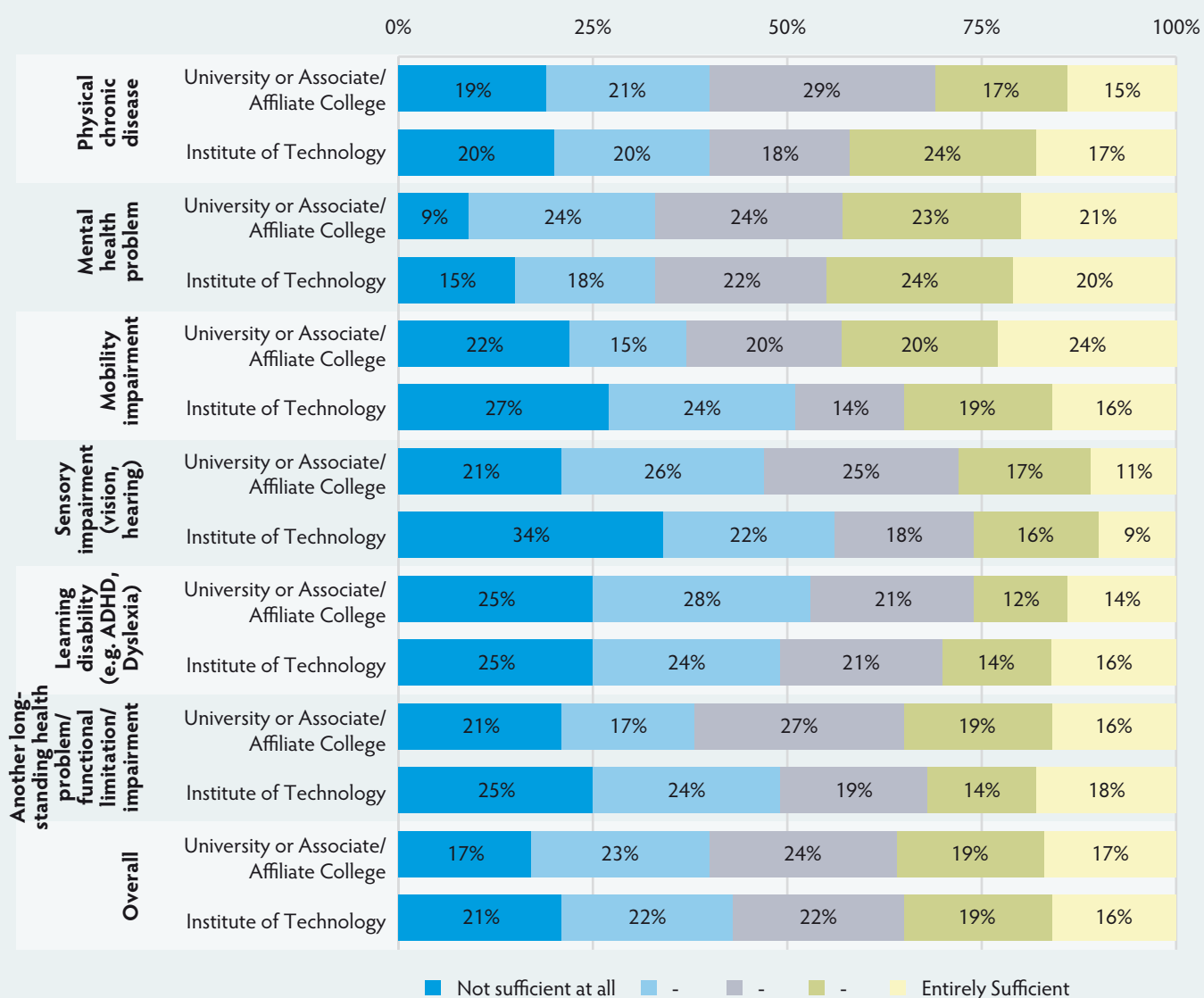
Furthermore, the student population that indicated they had a disability and wanted/needed support were asked to rate the level of support they currently receive. The results of which are displayed in Figure 3.7. As pointed out in Figure 3.1 the greatest proportion of students with disabilities appears to be those with mental health problems and of this group 43 percent of them rated the level of institutional support as insufficient (combining the bottom two categories). Furthermore, although only 66 percent of students with sensory impairments wanted/needed support, of the students that receive support, 27 percent indicated that the level of support they receive is sufficient or entirely sufficient.

FIGURE 3.7: RATINGS OF THE SUPPORT STUDENTS RECEIVE TO OVERCOME THEIR LIMITATIONS [N=2,007]



The results when further broken down by type of institution are presented in Figure 3.8 and show that the type of higher education institution that students are attending provides similar results across most categories. However, one large difference is for students with mobility impairment at universities, where 51 percent rate the level of support they receive as being not sufficient at all (again, through combining the bottom two categories). This contrasts with only 37 percent of students with mobility problems at Institutes of Technology. This could be due to the age of buildings, as universities tend to have older facilities which could make accessibility more difficult.

FIGURE 3.8: RATINGS OF THE SUPPORT STUDENTS RECEIVE TO OVERCOME THEIR LIMITATIONS BY HEI [N=2,008]



4. COLLEGE ENTRY ROUTE

4.1 Entry Qualifications

While in recent years Ireland has increased the level of participation in higher education, the majority of students in higher education still enter via the traditional route of completing Leaving Certificate examinations¹².

Of the total student population 84 percent have a Leaving Certificate which has been obtained in Ireland, 12 percent have a qualification equivalent to the Leaving Certificate obtained abroad, and four percent do not have a Leaving Certificate. Figure 4.1 presents this distribution across student-type and formal status and shows that only three percent of full-time undergraduates and part-time postgraduates do not have a Leaving Certificate. Whereas for part-time undergraduates and full-time postgraduates this percentage is eight percent.

Some 26 percent of full-time postgraduates have Leaving Certificate equivalents from other countries which in part, may indicate the diversity of the postgraduate student population and the desirability of studying in Ireland (cf. Table 1.1).

FIGURE 4.1: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH LEAVING CERTIFICATE (OR FOREIGN EQUIVALENT) BY FORMAL STATUS [N=20,262]

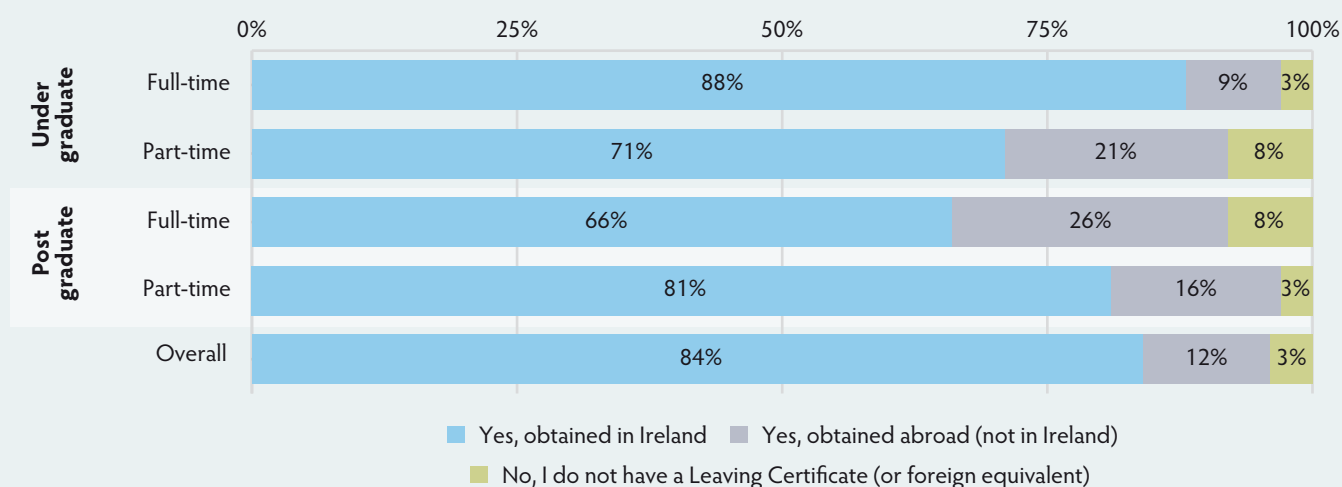
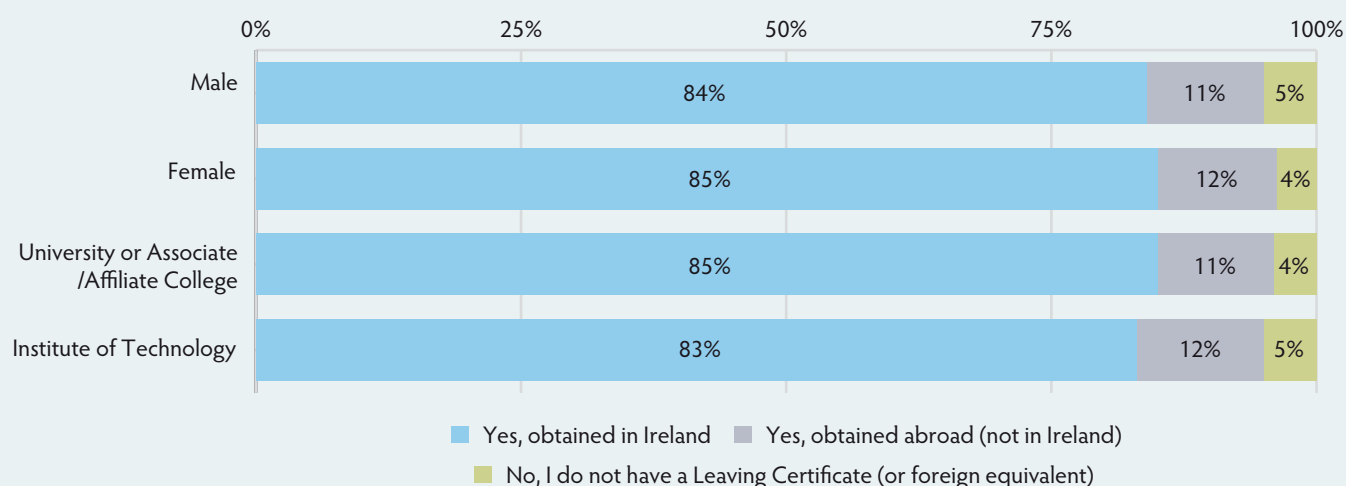


Figure 4.2 presents the distribution of entry qualifications across gender and higher education institution type. In this regard, the distribution is more uniform, in that there are no substantial differences between male and female students, and between students at Universities or Institutes of Technology.

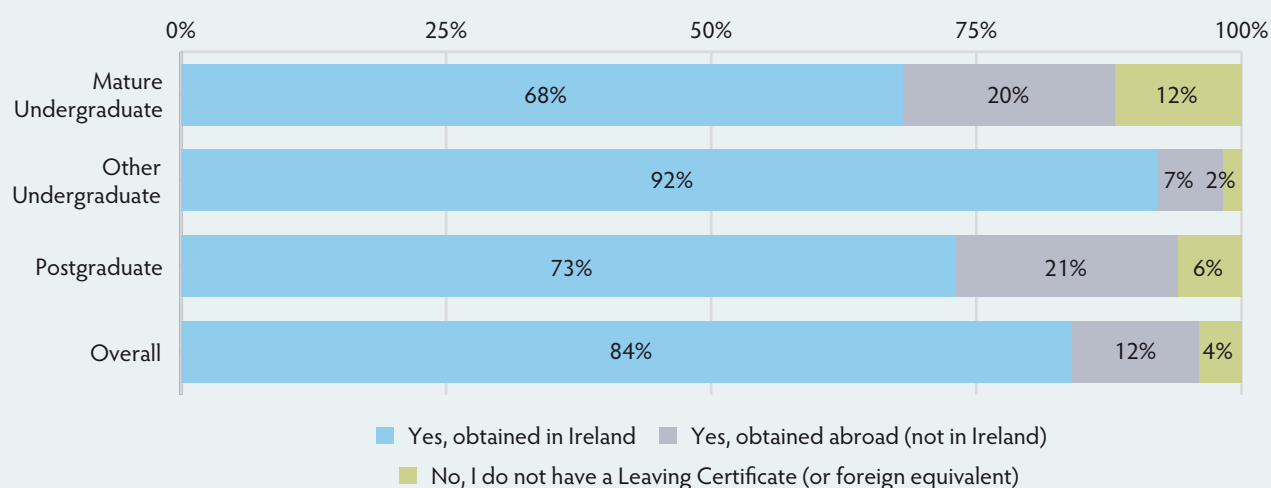
12 HEA 2015 – National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019, HEA: Dublin.

FIGURE 4.2: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH LEAVING CERTIFICATE (OR FOREIGN EQUIVALENT) BY GENDER AND HEI [N=20,262]



In this survey, approximately 22 percent of undergraduates are classed as mature, that is being 23 or over on the 1st of January of the year of entry into higher education. By definition, this group is older than the general student population, and it also known from Chapter 1 that mature students are more likely to have children. From Figure 4.3 we can add another feature of mature students, in that they are also more likely to enter higher education without a Leaving Certificate, as this chart shows that 12 percent of mature students do not have a Leaving Certificate, which can be compared against two percent in the rest of the undergraduate student population.

FIGURE 4.3: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH LEAVING CERTIFICATE (OR FOREIGN EQUIVALENT) BY STUDENT TYPE [N=20,262]



The distribution of entry qualifications by study area is shown in Table 4.1. For the most part, the distribution of qualifications is relatively uniform. However, a few figures stand out. Some 95 percent of Sport and Leisure students entered their programme with a Leaving Certificate¹³, this is closely followed by 94 percent of Education students. The highest proportion of students without a Leaving Certificate (or equivalent) is found in Social Sciences with nine percent of students. Health and Welfare, Catering and Services have the highest proportions of students with entry qualifications obtained outside of Ireland.

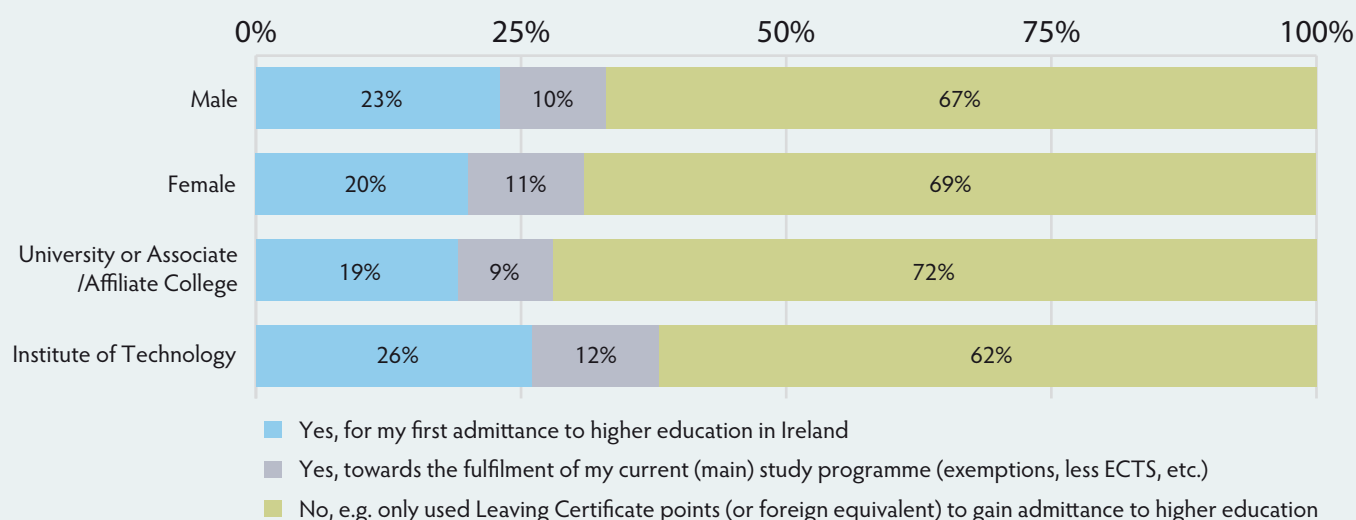
13 Note small sample size (N = 302).

TABLE 4.1: ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS BY MAIN STUDY AREA [N=20,262]

	Yes, obtained in Ireland	Yes, obtained abroad (not in Ireland)	No, I do not have a Leaving Certificate (or foreign equivalent)	Total
Education	94%	4%	2%	7%
Humanities and Arts	86%	10%	4%	19%
Social Science	79%	12%	9%	5%
Business	84%	12%	4%	16%
Law	86%	11%	3%	3%
Science	87%	10%	2%	15%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	81%	15%	5%	10%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	83%	12%	4%	11%
Agriculture and Veterinary	87%	8%	5%	2%
Health and Welfare	77%	17%	5%	10%
Sport and Leisure	95%	3%	3%	1%
Catering	79%	17%	4%	1%
Services	80%	16%	5%	1%
Overall	84%	12%	4%	100%

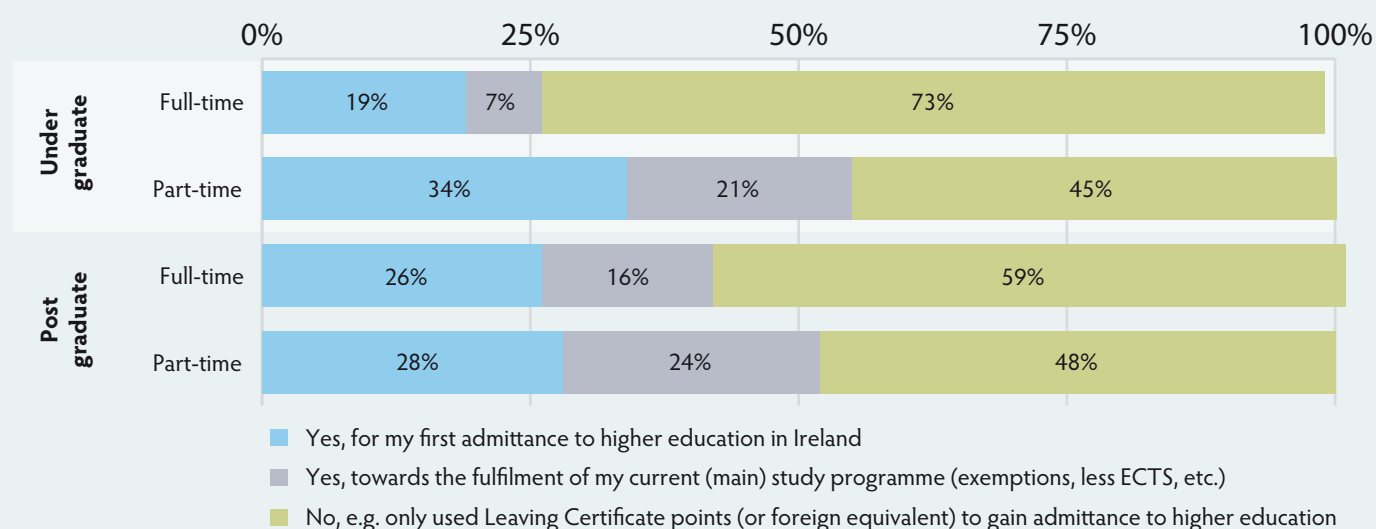
Furthermore, although the Leaving Certificate is the main qualifier for entry into higher education, the survey asked if any other competences or experiences that were gained outside of the formal education system were recognised for their first admittance to higher education in Ireland or credited towards the fulfilment of their current study programme. These competences or experiences could include work experience, non-formal courses, self-study, volunteer work, and so on.

FIGURE 4.4: RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES/EXPERIENCES GAINED OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION BY GENDER AND HEI [N=19,843]



Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show this level of recognition by higher education institutions across gender, institution type, and student status, and there are a few things of note. First of all, there does not appear to be a bias across genders as the levels of recognition are very similar for each other. Secondly, Institutes of Technology appear to more willing to recognise competences and experiences outside of education than Universities in admitting students to their programmes (27 to 19 percent). This also appears to be evident for part-time undergraduates. Finally, part-time postgraduate programmes appear to be more willing to recognise other competences and experiences as part of their programmes than full-time postgraduate programmes (25 to 16 percent).

FIGURE 4.5: RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCES/EXPERIENCES GAINED OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION BY FORMAL STATUS [N=19,843]



4.2 Nature of Transition to Higher Education

Direct transition students are defined as those students who entered higher education for the first time within two years after graduating from school. Delayed transition students are defined as students who entered higher education for the first time more than two years after leaving the school system.

Figure 4.6 presents the length of time between finishing school and entering higher education across student status. For full-time undergraduates and postgraduates, the distribution is almost identical with over 80 percent entering higher education within one year of finishing school. For part-time undergraduates, this figure is only 49 percent, with approximately 42 percent delaying entry into higher education for over two years.

FIGURE 4.6: LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION BY FORMAL STATUS [N=19,441]

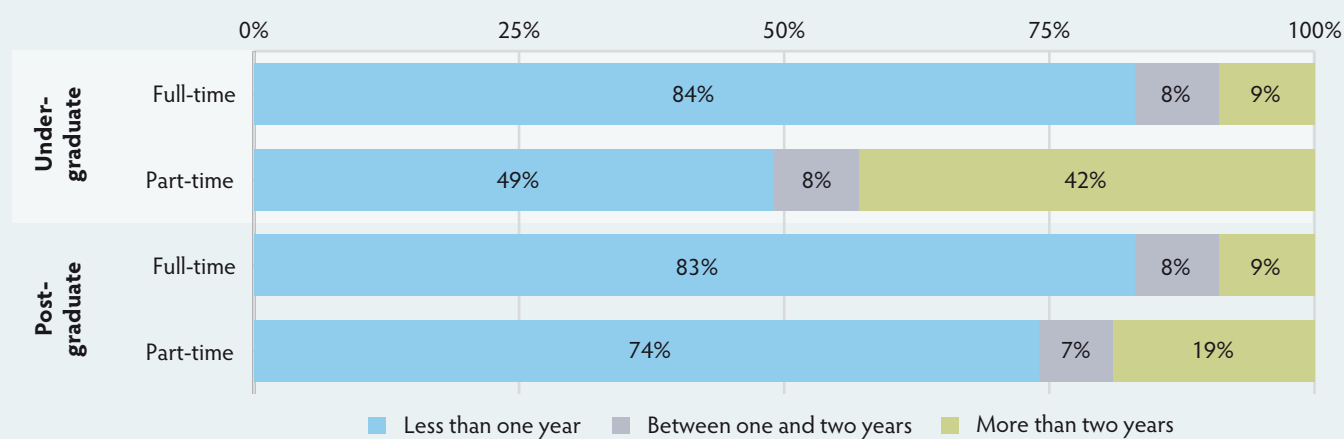


Figure 4.7 presents the length of time between finishing school and entering higher education across gender and higher educational institution type. Again, as would be expected there does not appear to be much of substantial gender difference as the proportions for male and female students are relatively similar. However, there does appear to be a difference across type of higher education institution. Some 85 percent of students at universities enter within one year of finishing school. In contrast for Institutes of Technology, this figure is only 73 percent. Furthermore, 18 percent of students at Institutes of Technology delay entry for more than two years, compared against only nine percent for students at universities.

FIGURE 4.7: LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION BY GENDER AND HEI [N=19,441]

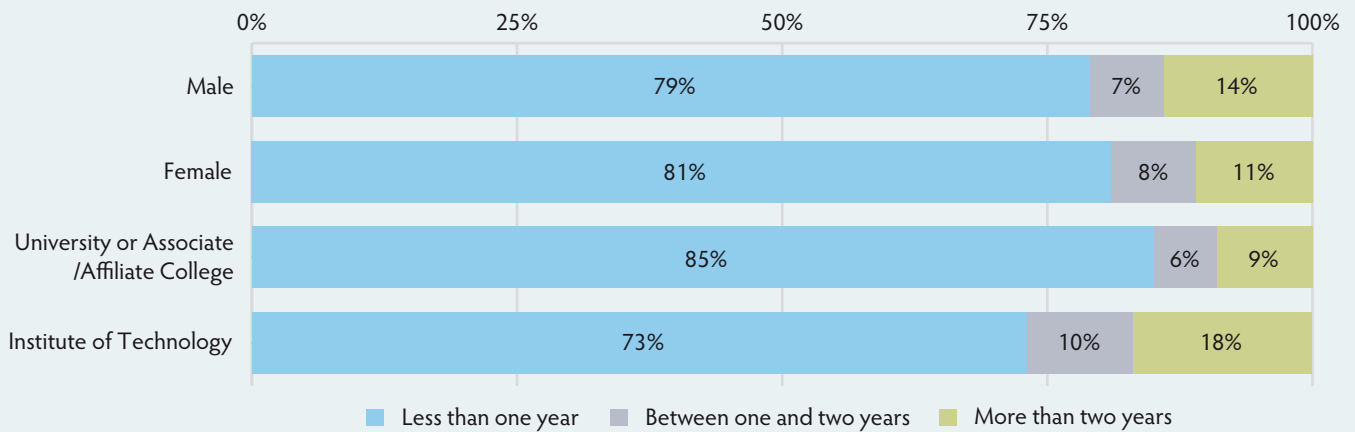
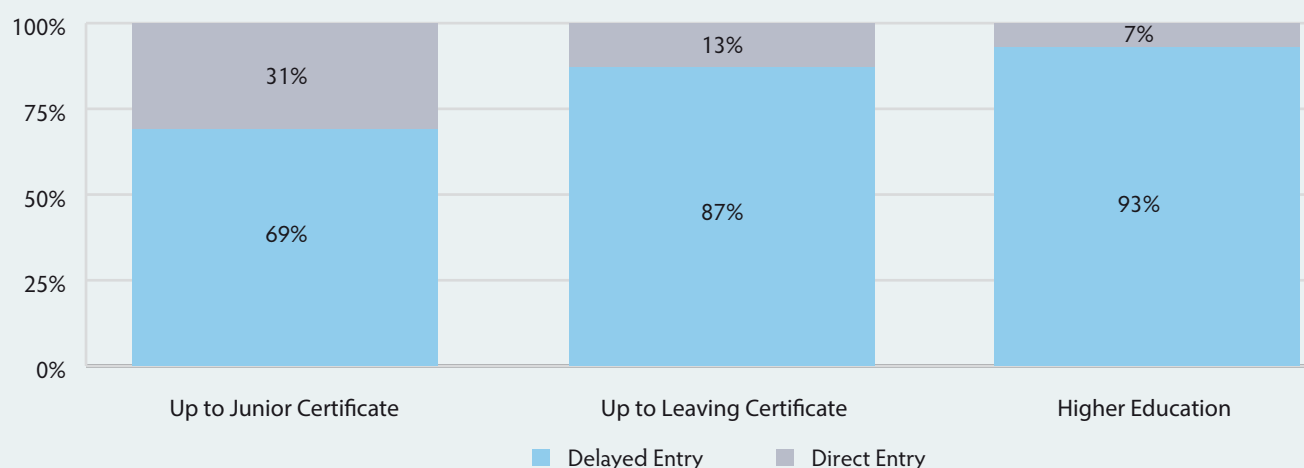


Figure 4.8 examines the relationship between parental education and whether students enter higher education directly from school or delay it until a later date.

For students where the highest parental educational level was up to Junior Certificate, 31 percent of students delayed their transition to higher education. This can be directly compared against students where the highest parental educational level is post-Leaving Certificate and this figure is only seven percent. Some 69 percent of students where the highest parental educational level was up to Junior Certificate directly entered higher education, and 93 percent of students directly entered higher education when the parental education level was post-Leaving Certificate.

Figure 4.8 appears to demonstrate that students from family backgrounds with higher levels of parental education are more likely to transition directly to higher education than students of families with lower level of educational attainment. Likewise, students from family backgrounds of lower levels of parental education are more likely to delay their entry into higher education.

FIGURE 4.8: LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION [N=14,790]



4.3 Interruptions to Study

The section above examined the amount of time between students completing school and entering higher education. However, while in higher education it is possible for students to take a break in their studies. Table 4.2 examines the extent to which students have (officially or unofficially) taken a break for at least two consecutive semesters (which is equivalent to an academic year).

For most categories of students, the average rate in interruption of studies is around five percent, with there being no obvious differences across gender or higher education institution type. One notable difference however, is for part-time undergraduates where some 11 percent have taken a break in their studies.

TABLE 4.2: INTERRUPTION TO (MAIN) STUDY PROGRAMME BY KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS [N=19,567]

Interrupted Studies?	Male	Female	University	Institute of Technology	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
					Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Yes	5%	4%	4%	6%	4%	11%	5%	5%
No	95%	96%	96%	94%	96%	89%	95%	95%
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In addition, the survey asked respondents for the reasons why they had interrupted their studies (note that students can provide more than one reason for interrupting their studies). Table 4.3 shows the proportions of responses by student status. For each category of student, financial difficulties appear to be the most likely cause of interrupting studies. Work-related reasons were provided for 27 percent of part-time undergraduates, and postgraduates.

TABLE 4.3: REASONS FOR INTERRUPTING STUDY BY STUDENT STATUS [N=881]

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Financial difficulties	32%	29%	28%	29%
Family-related reasons (e.g. pregnancy, care of children, parents etc.)	17%	23%	18%	19%
Work-related reasons (e.g. non-compulsory internship, job opportunity)	16%	27%	11%	27%
Health-related reasons	25%	17%	24%	17%
Lack of motivation	26%	19%	16%	7%
Other reasons	26%	19%	26%	28%
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.4 shows the proportions of responses by gender and higher education institution type. Again, financial difficulties appear to be the main cause of interrupting studies although health related reasons feature more prominently among female students. In relation to institution type, students at Institutes of Technology are more likely to cite financial difficulties than students at universities.

Some 23 percent of female students said that they interrupted their studies because of family-related reasons, whereas only 15 percent of males did the same. An opposite pattern appears to be the case for work-related reasons where 24 percent of male students said that this was the cause of their interruption of studies, and only 12 percent of female students did likewise.

TABLE 4.4: REASONS FOR INTERRUPTING STUDY BY GENDER AND TYPE OF HEI [N=881]

	Male	Female	University	Institute of Technology
Financial difficulties	33%	28%	25%	36%
Family-related reasons (e.g. pregnancy, care of children, parents etc.)	15%	23%	16%	21%
Work-related reasons (e.g. non-compulsory internship, job opportunity)	24%	12%	17%	20%
Health-related reasons	18%	29%	26%	20%
Lack of motivation	25%	18%	21%	22%
Other reasons	22%	27%	27%	22%
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.4 Entry Profile of Master's Students

Figure 4.9 presents where Master's students completed their undergraduate programme by gender, formal status and higher education institution type. It is evident from this chart that similar proportions of both male and female students have completed their undergraduate degree in Ireland and abroad. Approximately 70 percent have done their undergraduate degree in Ireland, and around 24 percent of students have completed their undergraduate degree outside of Ireland.

When we look at this distribution by formal status some differences emerge. For full-time postgraduates, 30 percent have completed their undergraduate degree abroad, and 63 percent have completed it in Ireland. However, for part-time students only 15 percent have completed their undergraduate degree outside of Ireland and 82 percent completed their undergraduate degree in Ireland.

Furthermore, Master's students studying at Institutes of Technology are slightly more likely to have completed their undergraduate degree within Ireland.

FIGURE 4.9: "IN WHICH COUNTRY DID YOU FINISH YOUR DEGREE LEADING TO YOUR CURRENT MASTERS PROGRAMME?" [N=2,320]

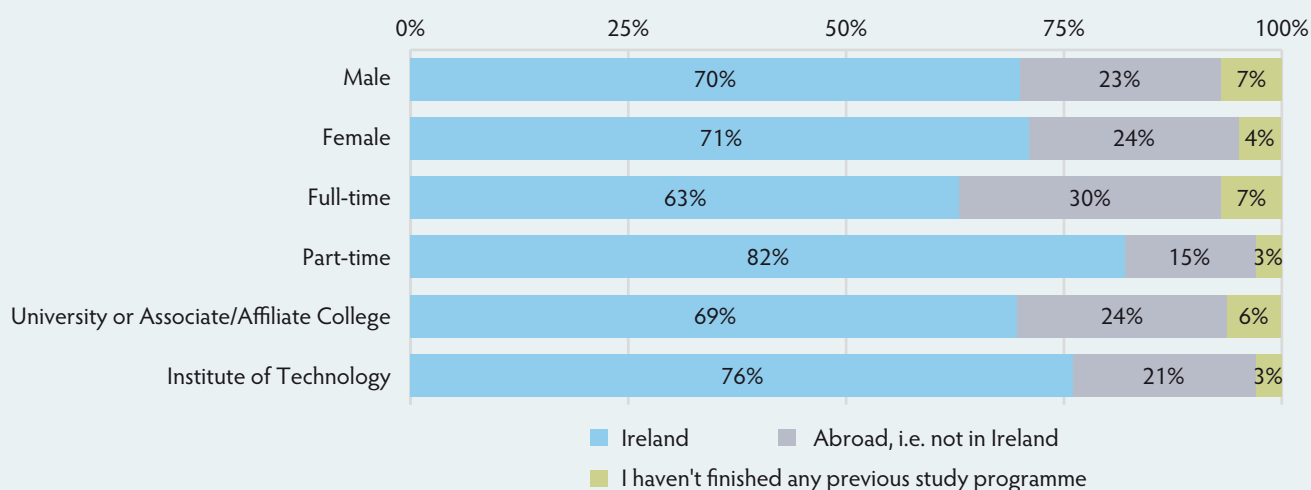


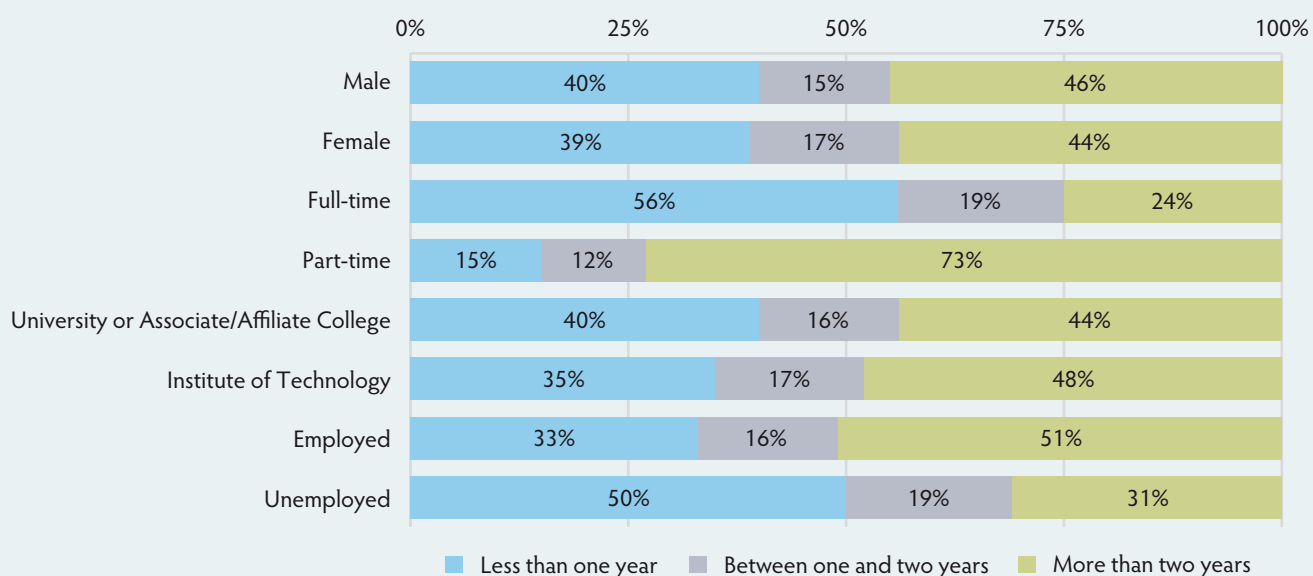
Figure 4.10 shows the length of time between Master's students finishing their undergraduate programme and beginning their postgraduate study across a number of categories. The first thing of note is that there does not appear to be any differences in the distributions across gender and higher educational institution type.

Across formal status, full-time students appear to move directly from undergraduate to postgraduate study as 56 percent do this within one year. Part-time students appear to move less directly, in that 73 percent have delayed more than two years between their undergraduate (or other programme) and current postgraduate programme.

In addition, for students that are employed during the semester, 51 percent delayed beginning postgraduate study for at least two years. Whereas for students that do not work during the semester approximately 50 percent of them moved onto postgraduate study within one year of completing their undergraduate degree. This difference in length of time between finishing an undergraduate programme and beginning a postgraduate programme based upon employment suggest that students who work during term-time have had to save before beginning their postgraduate studies, and that their continued employment is necessary

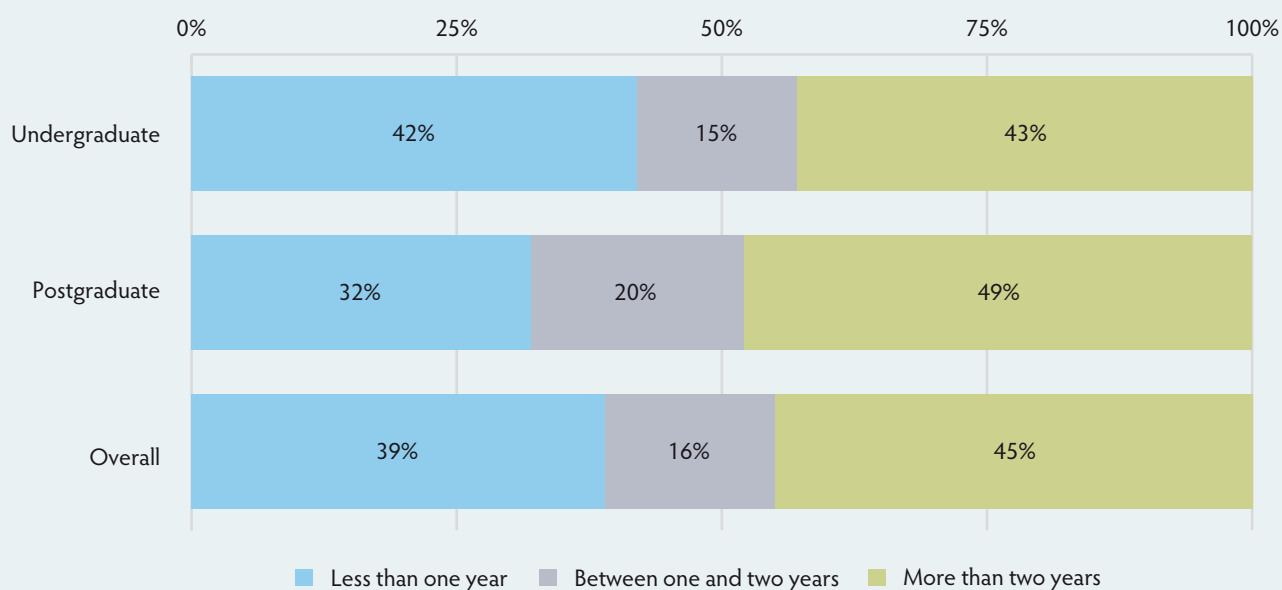
to support themselves through higher education. Whereas for students that do not work they could be relying on other sources of financial support, the most likely being their parents. This is explored further in the next chapter.

FIGURE 4.10: LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDY BY KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS [N=2,190]



The final chart in this chapter looks at the length of time taken between programmes for students who completed their undergraduate degree outside of Ireland and those who completed their undergraduate degree in Ireland. For students who completed their undergraduate degree in Ireland, it appears that 42 percent move directly into postgraduate study whereas 43 percent hold off entering for at least two years. In contrast, only 32 percent of master's students who completed their undergraduate degree outside of Ireland move into postgraduate study with a year. Instead 49 percent delay entry into postgraduate study for at least two years.

FIGURE 4.11: LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDY BY PLACE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDY [N=2,190]



5. STUDENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

This chapter details the income and expenditure patterns of students in higher education in Ireland, analysing the interrelationships of gender, student-type, and living arrangements. After this, the financial well-being of students is explored through examining the extent to which students are facing financial difficulties.

5.1 Student Income

In terms of the income-distribution across the various sources of income for each student-type, the next set of tables split the total student population into two groups; students who are employed during term-time and those that are not. It would be expected for the distribution to income to be significantly different across each group, as students who are employed have an additional income source, which may mean that they are less dependent on other sources of income. In contrast, students who are not employed may be more dependent on certain sources of income. Table 5.1 shows the results. In terms of the actual monetary values, these are presented in Table 5.2. Chapter 7 goes into further detail about student employment but it is worth noting here that for full-time students' 46 percent of undergraduates and 45 percent of postgraduates are employed. For part-time students' 81 percent of undergraduates and 86 percent of postgraduates are employed.

For full-time undergraduates who are employed, the distribution of their total income was derived from a variety of sources, for example, on average 49 percent was from their current employment, 13 percent was savings from their previous employment, 18 percent was from their families or partners, and 15 percent from non-repayable student sources, such as the SUSI grant. A similar distribution is evident for full-time postgraduate students. For part-time undergraduates and postgraduates who are employed during term-time, their total income was primarily derived from employment, 87 percent and 95 percent of the total respectively.

For full-time undergraduates who are not employed, the proportion of total income was derived from a much narrower range of sources. On average, 35 percent of their total income is from their parents or family, 34 percent is from non-repayable student sources, such as the SUSI grant, and 12 percent was savings from their previous employment.

Again, a similar distribution is evident for full-time postgraduate students. Though this group of students appear to be even more dependent on their parents/family for financial support with 43 percent of their income coming from this source. For part-time undergraduates and postgraduates who are not employed during term-time, the majority of their total income (43 percent) was derived from other public sources such as benefits or pensions. Parental/family contributions also account for 24 percent of their total income.

TABLE 5.1: INCOME DISTRIBUTION PROFILE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS [N=10,581]

Students employed during term-time	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Provision from family/partner	18%	4%	15%	1%	12%
National student source non-repayable	15%	2%	9%	1%	10%
National student source repayable	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%
Non-country sources	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Self-earned from current paid job	49%	87%	54%	95%	64%
Self-earned from previous paid job	13%	2%	12%	1%	9%
Other public source	2%	4%	2%	1%	2%
Other private source – not repayable	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Other private source – repayable	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Students not employed during term-time	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Provision from family/partner	35%	24%	43%	24%	36%
National student source non-repayable	34%	10%	16%	9%	31%
National student source repayable	3%	4%	5%	0%	3%
Non-country sources	6%	8%	12%	0%	7%
Self-earned from current paid job	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Self-earned from previous paid job	12%	6%	15%	20%	12%
Other public source	7%	43%	6%	43%	9%
Other private source – not repayable	1%	3%	2%	4%	1%
Other private source – repayable	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The average monthly income across each type of student and their employment status is presented in Table 5.2. The overall average income for all students is €910 for students who are employed and €568 for students who are not employed. The overall average is €754 for all students, which when split by sub-category of student is €621 for full-time undergraduates, €1,519 for part-time undergraduates, €835 for full-time undergraduates and €1,816 for part-time postgraduates.

These overall averages are higher than those obtained in the Eurostudent V survey, where on average the total monthly income for students was €734, which when broken down by type of student was €545 for full-time undergraduates, €1,264 for part-time undergraduates and €1,219 for postgraduates (part-time and full-time postgraduate students were analysed together in this survey).

TABLE 5.2: AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME BY SOURCE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS (IN EUROS) [N=10,581]

Students employed during term-time	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Provision from family/partner	122	60	143	23	110
National student source non-repayable	106	34	87	15	90
National student source repayable	14	4	27	18	14
Non-country sources	3	0	21	1	4
Self-earned from current paid job	339	1,488	508	1,825	581
Self-earned from previous paid job	89	30	116	19	79
Other public source	14	71	17	21	20
Other private source – not repayable	3	9	6	4	4
Other private source – repayable	6	11	14	3	7
Sub-total	697	1,707	939	1,929	910
Students not employed during term-time	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Provision from family/partner	192	162	316	197	203
National student source non-repayable	186	67	116	77	175
National student source repayable	14	29	36	0	16
Non-country sources	33	58	91	0	39
Self-earned from current paid job	0	0	0	0	0
Self-earned from previous paid job	65	41	108	167	70
Other public source	41	291	42	359	51
Other private source – not repayable	6	18	15	30	7
Other private source – repayable	6	16	14	7	7
Sub-total	542	681	739	837	568
Overall	621	1,519	835	1,816	754

For employed students, within each sub-category of student, the average monthly income ranges from €697 for full-time undergraduates to €1,929 for part-time postgraduates. Part-time students earn considerably more than full-time students from their current employment, which as noted in Table 5.1 also is a larger component of their overall income, whereas full-time students receive more from their families/partners.

For unemployed students, within each sub-category of student, the average monthly income ranges from €542 for full-time undergraduates to €837 for part-time postgraduates. Full-time undergraduate students on average receive €192 per month from their parents/families, and this rises to €316 for full-time postgraduate students. Part-time students also on average receive a sizable stipend from their parents/families/partners but their largest source appears to be public sources, where on average, undergraduates receive €291 and postgraduate students receive €359.

The average monthly income for students living with their parents, and for those living independently is shown in Table 5.3. From this table, it is evident that students who do not live with their parents have higher incomes across almost all income categories. Average monthly income from paid employment for students who do not live with their parents is €355, which is 44 percent more than the average monthly income from employment for students who live with their parents (€247). However, this additional income for students in employment who live outside the parental home may be offset by the higher costs of private accommodation. This is discussed in the next section.

TABLE 5.3: AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME BY SOURCE AND LIVING STATUS (IN EUROS)

	Living with Parents	Not Living with Parents	All Students
Provision from family/partner	92	189	153
National student source – non-repayable	103	144	129
National student source – repayable	12	17	15
Non-country sources	3	30	20
Self-earned from current paid job	247	355	315
Self-earned from previous paid job	78	74	75
Other public source	18	44	34
Other private source – non-repayable	3	7	5
Other private source – repayable	4	9	7
Total	560	868	754
N	3,940	6,619	10,559

5.2 Student Expenditure

On the expenditure side, Table 5.4 shows the average monthly expenses (split by expenses covered by students and expenses paid for by others).

The average monthly expenditure of all students was €832 of which €486 of this amount was met by the students themselves, with the remaining €346 being provided by others (such as their partners or parents). Accommodation was the largest single expenditure which accounts for over 40 percent of all expenditure, and the average spend on accommodation was €365.

Of the expenses being paid by students, the average expenses for part-time students (at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level) was higher than full-time students. Furthermore, of the expenses being paid for by others, for full-time students (at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level) these costs are being borne by others to a greater extent than the expenses paid by others for part-time students.

The total expenditure of full-time undergraduates per month is €718, and 50 percent of this amount is covered by parents/partners or others. Whereas the total expenditure for full-time postgraduates per month is €915, and 40 percent of this amount is covered by parents/partners or others. The associated income of these cohorts is €621 and €835 respectively (cf. Table 5.2), which illustrates the extent to which full-time students depend on external financial assistance to meet their needs.

In contrast, the total expenditure for part-time undergraduates per month is €1,409 and only 16 percent of this amount is covered by parents/partners or others, and the total expenditure for part-time postgraduates per month is €1,673, of which only 17 percent of this amount is covered by parents/partners or others.

The associated income of each of these cohorts is presented in Table 5.2, and when we subtract the amount of income received from the average level of expenditure we note that for each group, monthly outgoings are close to (if not exceed) the total amount of income received which illustrates the extent to which all students depend on external financial assistance to meet their needs, and the financial burden that higher education places on others beyond those actually studying. Furthermore, this is before we include the expenses per semester for study-related items which are discussed further below.

TABLE 5.4: MONTHLY EXPENSES PER STUDENT-TYPE (IN EUROS) [N=11,631]

Paid by Student	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Accommodation	100	467	203	564	157
Food	80	218	114	234	100
Transportation	55	115	62	126	64
Communication	17	40	22	43	21
Health costs	3	28	10	46	8
Childcare	3	34	7	43	7
Debt payments (except mortgage)	9	75	21	92	19
Social and leisure activities	53	82	63	117	59
Other regular living costs	41	120	49	129	52
Sub-total	360	1,177	551	1,395	486

Paid by Parent/Partner/Other	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Accommodation	218	114	220	147	207
Food	61	37	63	34	58
Transportation	24	11	19	11	22
Communication	9	5	7	5	8
Health costs	12	8	10	8	11
Childcare	2	8	2	12	3
Debt payments (except mortgage)	6	6	8	11	6
Social and leisure activities	11	6	14	9	11
Other regular living costs	15	10	16	11	15
Sub-total	358	232	364	278	346

Total Expenditure Cost	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Accommodation	317	581	423	711	365
Food	141	255	177	269	158
Transportation	79	126	81	137	85
Communication	26	45	29	48	29
Health costs	15	35	21	54	19
Childcare	4	42	9	55	10
Debt payments (except mortgage)	14	81	29	103	25
Social and leisure activities	64	88	77	125	70
Other regular living costs	56	130	65	140	66
Total	718	1,409	915	1,673	832

As noted above the single largest expenditure is accommodation, however, while other costs remain relatively constant regardless of where a student is studying, the cost of accommodation varies significantly depending on the location of the HEI. Table 5.5 below presents the average monthly costs of accommodation for students studying at HEIs in Dublin and for those outside of the capital. On average, students studying in Dublin pay €92 more (€416 in Dublin and €324 outside Dublin) for their accommodation each month than students studying elsewhere. This works out as 28 percent more than their counterparts studying outside of the capital. Furthermore, this difference is consistently present across each type of student.

TABLE 5.5: MONTHLY ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES PER STUDENT-TYPE BY LOCATION (IN EUROS) [N=9,495]

	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Dublin					
Paid out of own pocket	90	524	215	597	180
Paid by others	255	113	269	149	236
Total Expenditure Costs	344	638	484	746	416
Non-Dublin					
Paid out of own pocket	106	405	189	481	140
Paid by others	192	114	164	143	184
Total Expenditure Costs	299	519	354	624	324

The expenses incurred by students living with their parents compared with those of students living outside of the parental household is presented in Table 5.6. Students living with their parents incurred lower costs of living in all expenditure items with the exception of transportation. This suggests that this group live a greater distance from their higher education institution, but this cost in higher levels of expenses in transportation expenses is mitigated by the amount of money they do not have to outlay for accommodation closer to their higher education institution.

TABLE 5.6: MONTHLY EXPENDITURE BY LIVING WITH PARENTS (IN EUROS)

	Living with Parents	Not Living with Parents	All Students
Accommodation	31	233	157
Food	63	122	100
Transportation	70	60	63
Communication	17	23	21
Health costs	4	10	8
Childcare	1	11	7
Debt payments (except mortgage)	12	22	19
Social and leisure activities	59	59	59
Other regular living costs	44	56	52
Total	301	596	486
N	4,332	7,276	11,608

The average expenses per month for study-related items across student-type and formal status is outlined in Table 5.7. The total expenditure for full-time undergraduates is €411 per month and for full-time postgraduates is €797. In contrast, the study related costs for part-time undergraduates is approximately €289 and for part-time postgraduates is €476. The majority of these expenses for all students is taken up by tuition and other related fees (over 90 percent in each case). Though of course, for part-time students the overall cost is lower due because of the lower fees for part-time study.

For full-time undergraduates, the majority of the study-related expenses (80 percent) are met by the parents or partners of these students. A similar pattern emerges for full-time postgraduates where 57 percent of the study-related expenses are paid for by parents or partners of the students. However, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level for part-time students only 28 percent of these costs are met by the parents or partners of the students, which indicates the greater financial burden that these costs have upon part-time students.

Taken together, it is apparent that all groups of students experience a burden in the form of expenses when conducting their studies. However, for full-time students this burden is on others, whereas for part-time students this burden is largely borne by the individual students.

TABLE 5.7: AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES FOR STUDY-RELATED ITEMS BY STUDENT-TYPE (IN EUROS) [N=11,631]

Paid by student	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Tuition, registration, examination and administrative fees	65	187	320	313	108
Contributions to the college and student associations	3	2	2	2	3
Learning materials	13	15	15	22	14
Other regular study-related expenses	2	4	3	6	3
Total study-related expenses	84	209	340	343	128
Paid by Parent/Partner/Other	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Tuition, registration, examination and administrative fees	315	76	447	129	300
Contributions to the college and student associations	5	1	3	1	4
Learning materials	6	2	5	2	6
Other regular study-related expenses	2	1	2	1	2
Total study-related expenses	327	80	457	132	312
Total Study-Related Expenditure	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		All Students
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Tuition, registration, examination and administrative fees	379	263	767	443	409
Contributions to the college and student associations	8	3	5	3	7
Learning materials	20	17	20	23	20
Other regular study-related expenses	4	5	5	7	4
Total study-related expenses	411	289	797	476	440

5.3 Financial Well-Being

The above sections have outlined the income and expenditure of students and found that the expenses of students often outstrip their incomes, and for certain groups of students they are heavily reliant upon external support from the parents or partners. In the survey, students were asked about the extent to which they were experiencing financial difficulties on a five-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to experiencing 'very serious financial difficulties'. Table 5.8 presents these results across a range of student characteristics.

The last column of the table shows the percentage of students experiencing serious or very serious financial difficulties (i.e. top two ratings in scale) and approximately 36 percent of the total student population say that this is the case. However, there is also significant variation across a number of sub-categories of students.

One of the categories where we do not find significant variation is across gender. Male and female students appear to experience financial difficulties to the same extent. With regard to age, this table shows that older students appear to be more likely to experience financial difficulties with 42 percent of students over the age of 24 saying that this is the case for them. We find a similar pattern for mature students with 48 percent of them indicating they are currently experiencing financial difficulties.

Full-time students regardless of whether they are on undergraduate or postgraduate programmes appear to be more likely to experience financial difficulties than their part-time counterparts, which coincides with what was discussed above, as this group of students appear to be heavily reliant on the continued support of their families or partners for the maintenance of their education.

Furthermore, students in Institutes of Technology appear to be more likely to experience financial difficulties than students in Universities. Furthermore, and much as one would expect students who work during the semester appear to experience lower levels of financial difficulties than students who do not work.

Finally, in this survey we have no clear indicator of the social class of respondents, instead the highest level of parental education can be used as a (somewhat imperfect) proxy. However, despite the inherent problems this method poses, a clear relationship does emerge between the level of parental education and the extent to which students feel financially secure; with higher levels of parental education corresponding with lower levels of financial insecurity.

TABLE 5.8: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES [N=15,702]

		Not at all	–	–	–	Very serious	% Serious/ Very serious
Male		15%	20%	30%	24%	11%	35%
Female		11%	19%	33%	24%	12%	36%
Age							
	<21	13%	23%	33%	23%	8%	31%
	21-23	12%	20%	33%	25%	10%	35%
	24+	13%	15%	30%	24%	18%	42%
Undergraduate							
	Full-time	12%	20%	32%	25%	12%	37%
	Part-time	17%	18%	34%	19%	11%	31%
Postgraduate							
	Full-time	13%	18%	31%	25%	13%	38%
	Part-time	23%	20%	31%	18%	8%	25%
Mature Undergraduate		10%	13%	29%	25%	22%	48%
Non-Mature Undergraduate		13%	22%	33%	24%	9%	33%
University or Associate/ Affiliate College		14%	22%	32%	22%	9%	32%
Institute of Technology		10%	16%	32%	26%	16%	42%
Employed		14%	20%	33%	23%	10%	33%
Unemployed		12%	19%	30%	25%	14%	39%
Highest Level of Parental Education							
Up to Junior Cert		11%	14%	30%	27%	18%	45%
Up to Leaving Cert		11%	19%	32%	25%	13%	38%
Higher Education		14%	22%	31%	23%	10%	33%
Total		13%	20%	32%	24%	12%	36%

6. STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

In recent years, both the cost of property and the rent charged for accommodation has increased substantially¹⁴. Furthermore, in the last chapter it was shown that the cost of accommodation accounts for over forty percent of students' total expenditure. Because of these factors, the cost of accommodation can force students to live further from campus in cheaper locations, or alternatively remain living in their family home and have long commutes to their higher education institution. This chapter focuses on where students choose to live, with whom, and the degree to which students are satisfied with their accommodation with respect to how it fulfils various criteria.

In the survey, students were asked who do they live with during term-time. Table 6.1 shows the proportions of students in each category (note that students could provide more than one answer).

Of the total student population, 41 percent live with other people (most often other students), 38 percent live with their parents or other relatives, (within this category 97 percent of these students live with their parents, the other three percent live with other family members), 14 percent of students live with their partners or spouses, seven percent live with their children, and five percent live by themselves.

The variation across each of the sub-groups of students is largely what would be expected, in that full-time undergraduates live with their parents, or with other students. Whereas part-time undergraduates – which as noted in the earlier chapters are more likely to be older than full-time undergraduates – mainly live with their partners. The pattern found across age group also reinforces this.

Students at Institutes of Technology appear to be more likely than students at Universities to live with their parents, and the same appears to be the case for students whose higher educational institution is located in Dublin, compared against students attending institutions outside of Dublin.

14 Lyons, R. (2017). The Daft.ie House Price Report: An analysis of recent trends in the Irish residential sales market, 2017 Q1.
Lyons, R. (2017). The Daft.ie Rental Price Report: An analysis of recent trends in the Irish rental market for 2017, Q1.

TABLE 6.1: WHO STUDENTS LIVE WITH DURING TERM-TIME [N=19,453]

		Parents (or other relatives)	Partner/ Spouse	Child or Children	Other people	I live alone
Undergraduate	Full-time	44%	6%	3%	46%	4%
	Part-time	19%	49%	26%	12%	10%
Postgraduate	Full-time	29%	16%	6%	46%	9%
	Part-time	12%	55%	24%	16%	11%
Male		40%	15%	6%	39%	6%
Female		36%	13%	8%	43%	5%
Age	<21	50%	2%	0%	48%	2%
	21-23	44%	3%	0%	52%	3%
	24+	19%	39%	21%	24%	11%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		34%	12%	5%	49%	5%
Institute of Technology		45%	17%	9%	30%	6%
Dublin		43%	16%	7%	33%	6%
Non-Dublin		34%	12%	6%	48%	5%
Employed (in term-time)		39%	18%	8%	37%	5%
Unemployed (in term-time)		36%	10%	5%	47%	6%
Total		38%	14%	7%	41%	5%

Table 6.2 presents the distribution of where students live during term-time for which the responses are categorised as either living with their parents, living in student accommodation (i.e. dormitories or halls of residence) or neither living with their parents or in student accommodation (i.e. some form of private accommodation).

Of the total student population, 38 percent live with their parents, 43 percent live in private accommodation, and 19 percent live in student accommodation. Again, there is substantial variation within sub-categories of students.

Full-time undergraduates are most likely to live with their parents (44 percent), or in private accommodation (33 percent). In contrast, part-time students and full-time postgraduates are most likely to live in private accommodation. This may be a function of age, as we can see that in the age categories, as students get older they become less likely to live in their parents' home and instead live in private accommodation. And as previously noted, part-time students tend to be older than full-time undergraduates and by virtue of taking the time to complete an undergraduate degree, postgraduate students tend to be older than full-time undergraduates.

TABLE 6.2: WHERE STUDENTS LIVE DURING TERM-TIME [N=19,335]

		With parents	In student accommodation	Neither with parents nor in student accommodation
Undergraduate	Full-time	44%	23%	33%
	Part-time	19%	2%	79%
Postgraduate	Full-time	29%	16%	55%
	Part-time	12%	1%	87%
Male		41%	17%	42%
Female		37%	21%	43%
Age	<21	50%	29%	21%
	21-23	44%	21%	35%
	24+	19%	5%	76%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		34%	21%	45%
Institute of Technology		46%	16%	39%
Dublin		44%	11%	46%
Non-Dublin		34%	26%	40%
Employed		39%	16%	45%
Unemployed		36%	23%	41%
Total		38%	19%	43%

Like Table 6.1, students at Institutes of Technology appear to be more likely than students at Universities to live with their parents, and the same appears to be the case for students whose higher educational institution is located in Dublin, compared against students attending institutions outside of Dublin. Furthermore, only 11 percent of students studying in Dublin live in student accommodation; given that outside Dublin 26 percent of students avail of this, this may be due to a relative paucity of student accommodation in the capital relative to that available in the rest of the country.

6.1 Satisfaction with Accommodation

All students were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their accommodation, and Figures 6.1 to 6.4 present the relative levels of satisfaction across the different types of accommodation.

Figure 6.1 outlines students' relative levels of satisfaction with the cost of their accommodation, and unsurprisingly students who live with their parents display very high levels of satisfaction with the cost of their accommodation as presumably they have to pay little to no rent. In contrast, much higher levels of dissatisfaction with the cost of accommodation are evident across the other categories, with full-time students

(at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level) expressing high levels of dissatisfaction with the cost of living in student accommodation.

FIGURE 6.1: STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE COST OF THEIR ACCOMMODATION [N=18,476]

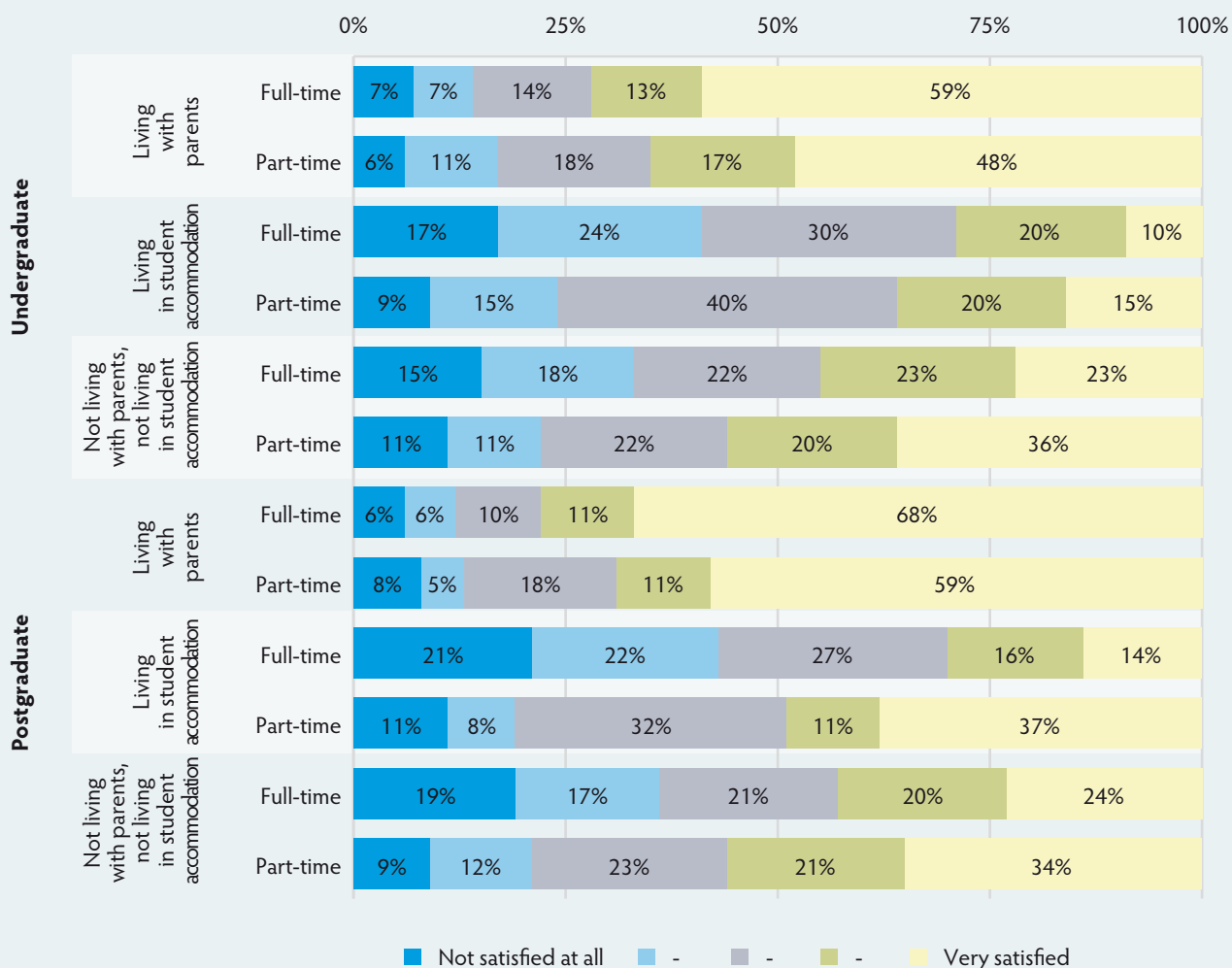


Figure 6.2 presents the relative levels of satisfaction with the location of their accommodation, and in this regard, across all sub-categories of students there appears to be relatively high levels of satisfaction as the majority of students are either satisfied or highly satisfied with the location of their accommodation.

FIGURE 6.2: STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE LOCATION OF THEIR ACCOMMODATION [N=18,502]

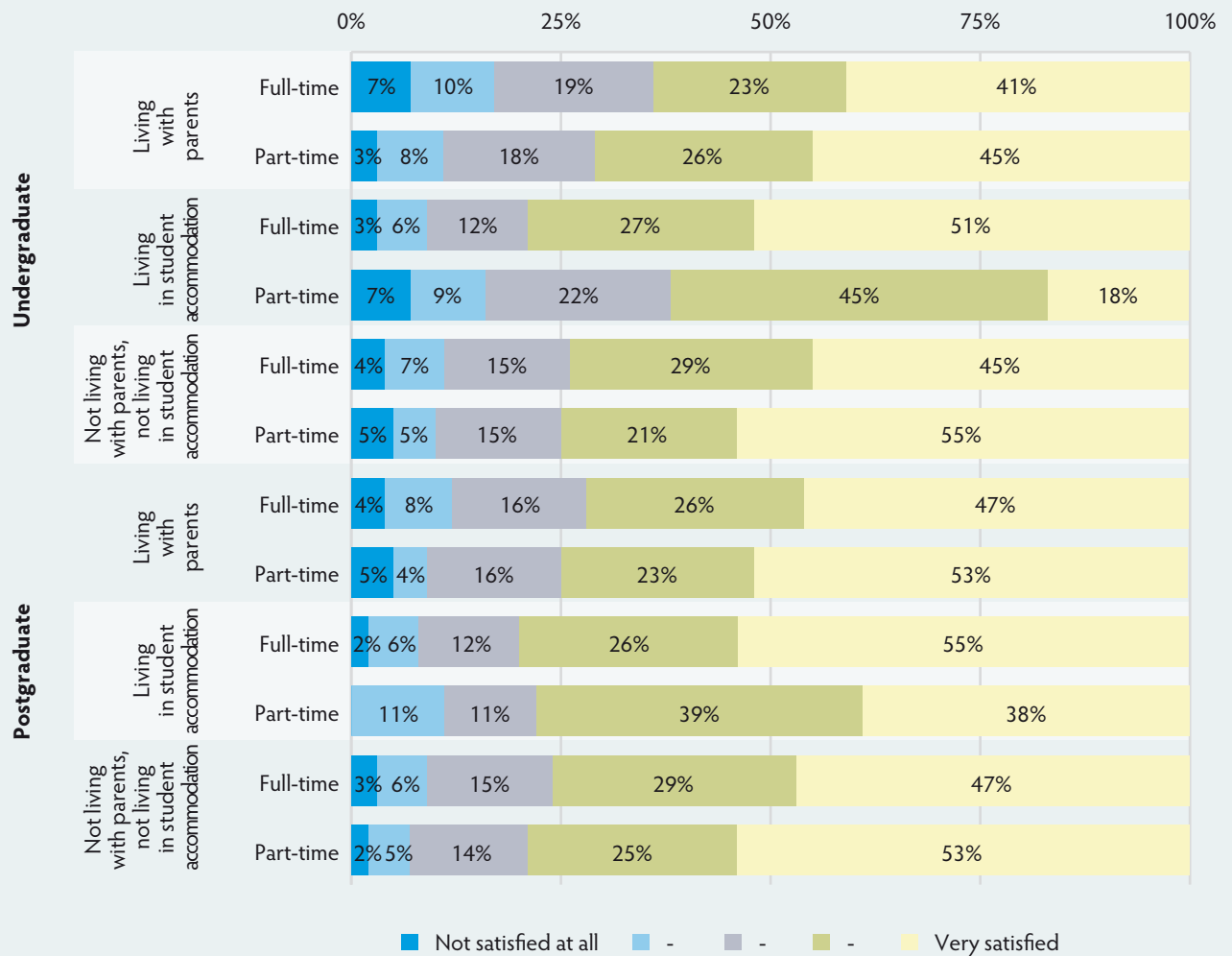
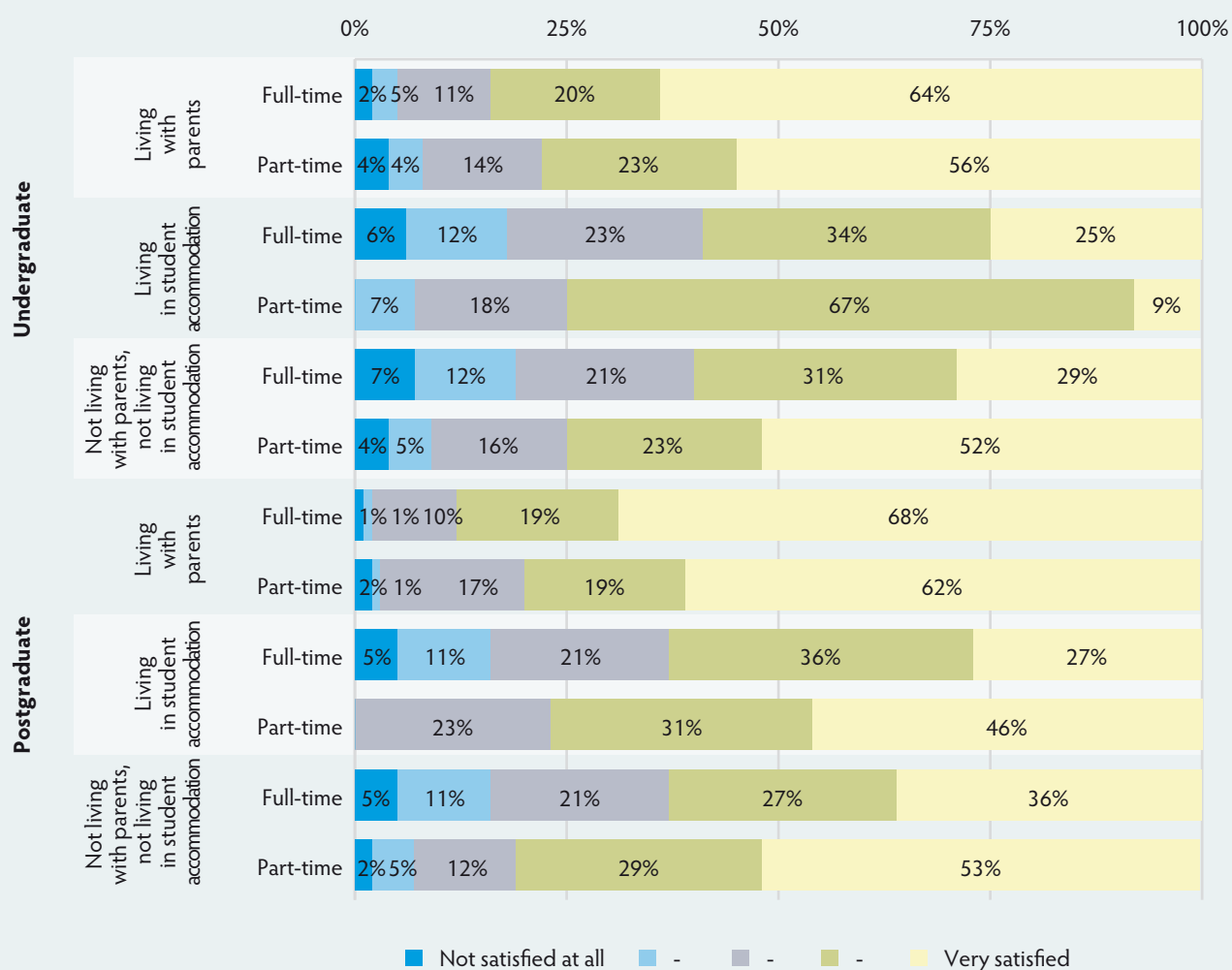


Figure 6.3 outlines the relative levels of satisfaction with the overall condition of their accommodation, and much like Figure 6.1 we see that students who live with their parents display very high levels of satisfaction with the overall condition of their accommodation. In contrast, there appears to be somewhat lower levels of satisfaction with the overall condition of accommodation across the other categories, with full-time students (at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level) living in student accommodation expressing the lowest levels of satisfaction.

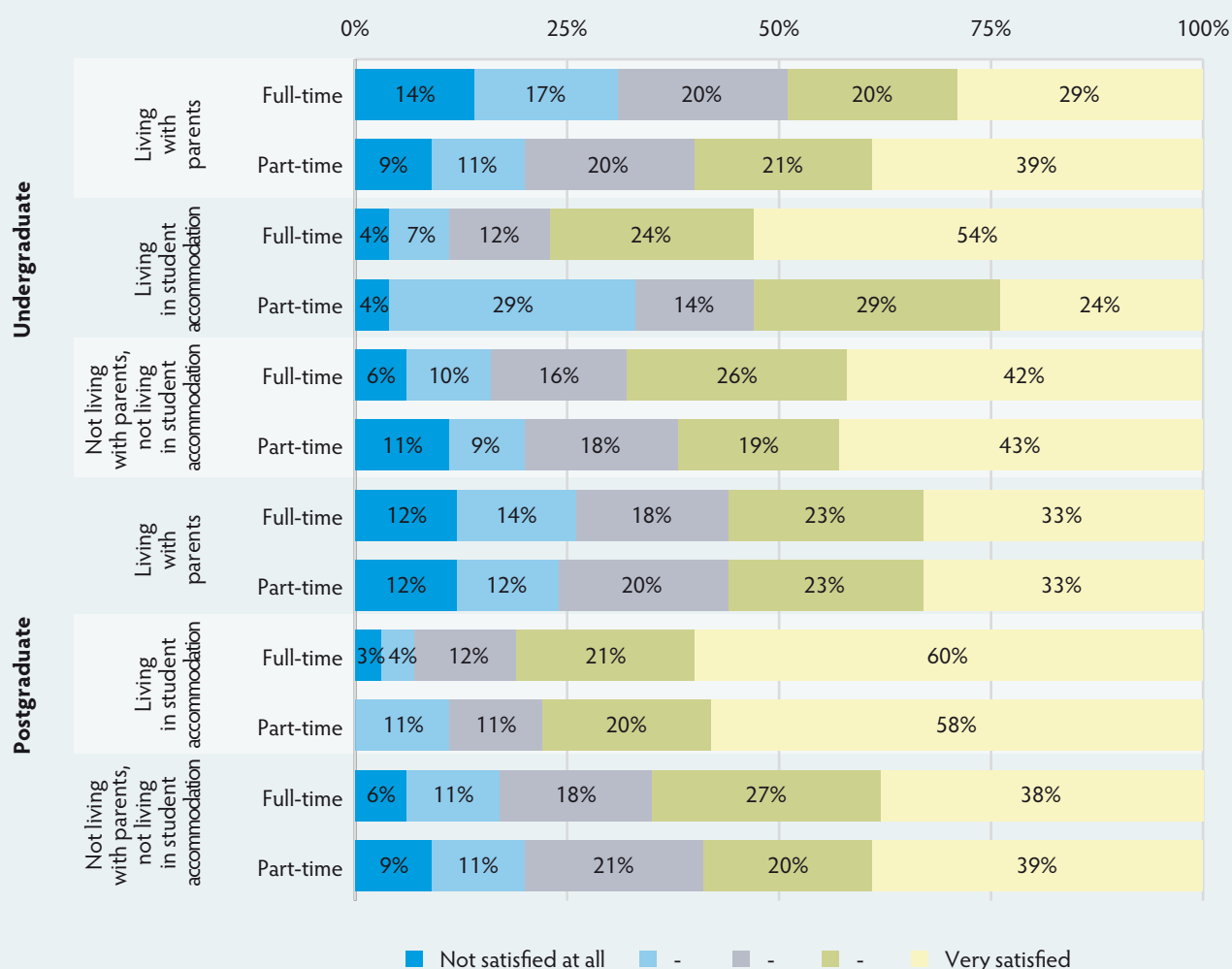
FIGURE 6.3: STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE OVERALL CONDITION OF THEIR ACCOMMODATION [N=18,502]



The final chart, Figure 6.4, presents students' levels of satisfaction with the time it takes to travel between their accommodation and their higher education institution. From this chart, students living in student accommodation express the highest levels of satisfaction with the travel time between their accommodation and their institutions, presumably because halls of residence and suchlike are typically located in close proximity to the campus of their institutions, in order to make travelling between the two very easy. However, there does appear to be relatively high levels of dissatisfaction for part-time undergraduates living in student accommodation, but there are very few of these students in the sample (note this is based on only thirty students, whereas for each of the other sub-categories there are between 240 and 6,400 cases).

For students living with their parents we see an almost uniform distribution across ratings as presumably some students' parents live relatively close to campus and others do not. Although as noted in Chapter 5, the greater distance it is necessary to travel between the two is ostensibly outweighed by the lower overall cost of accommodation.

FIGURE 6.4: STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN THEIR ACCOMMODATION AND HEI [N=18,544]



6.2 The Relationship between Student Accommodation and Time Spent Studying

A recent study completed using data from Eurostudent III to IV examined the amount of time Irish students living in student accommodation spent on personal study time¹⁵. Theoretically, because student accommodation tends to be close to the institutional campus, students who live in halls of residence should have fewer obstacles to their study, which as a result should lead to them spending more time on personal study. Research conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States has indicated this is the case in these countries, but Gormley (2016) found the opposite to be the case in Ireland. This study found that students living in student accommodation spent a lower amount of time in educationally purposeful activities than average. Whereas those in private accommodation, or living with their parents spent the most time on these activities.

As this is an interesting finding which runs counter to what is found in other countries, it is worthwhile examining if this is still the case in Ireland using the latest Eurostudent data. Table 6.3 below presents a regression model of the effect that living in student accommodation has upon the amount of time spent on personal study, along with a number of control variables, mostly in the form of indicator variables. It is worth

¹⁵ Gormley, B. (2016). Commuting versus resident students: Differences in Irish student engagement, social and living conditions based on place of residence. PhD Thesis. University of Sheffield.

noting that this model only examines undergraduate students. As pointed out above, very few postgraduate students actually live in student accommodation, and tend to study more. As such, postgraduate students have been excluded from this model to avoid any potential for biased coefficients.

This model shows that students living in student accommodation spend fewer hours on personal study than students living elsewhere, and that this coefficient is significant at the 0.001 level, which means that it is *extremely* unlikely to occur by chance. Furthermore, these results appear to be robust to the inclusion of numerous controls which could feasibly be behind the difference found between students that live in student accommodation, and those living elsewhere. Instead what is evident is that living in student accommodation along with a host of other factors affect the amount of time spent in personal study. For example, being employed during term-time and studying Business and Law appear to significantly negatively affect the amount of time spent in personal study (cf. Table 2.1). In contrast, being one or more of the following factors; female, older, a full-time student, unemployed during term-time, studying at a university, or Dublin-based institution, appear to have significant positive effects on the number of hours spent on personal study.

TABLE 6.3: SUMMARY OF THE EFFECT LIVING IN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION HAS UPON TIME SPENT ON PERSONAL STUDY [N=8,881]

Live in Student Accommodation	-2.3 (0.3) ***
Female	1.3 (0.3) ***
(Ref: Male)	
Age	0.2 (<0.1) ***
Full-time student	7.5 (0.5) ***
(Ref: Part-time student)	
University or Associate/Affiliate College	2.3 (0.3) ***
(Ref: Institute of Technology)	
Dublin-based Institution	1.4 (0.3) ***
(Ref: Non-Dublin-based institution)	
Employed during Term-time	-3.6 (0.3) ***
(Ref: Not Employed Term-time)	
Highest Level of Parental Education:	
– Up to Leaving Certificate	-0.2 (0.5)
– Higher Education	0.3 (0.4)
(Ref: Up to Junior Certificate)	
Study Programme:	
– Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Education	-1.2 (0.4)
– Business and Law	-3.0 (0.5) ***
– Science, Maths, Computing, Engineering	-0.8 (0.4)
(Ref: All others)	
Intercept	5.9 (1.2) ***
Adjusted R-squared	0.10
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Standard errors in parentheses.	
Dependent Variable: the number of hours per week spent in personal study. Undergraduate students only	

7. STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Working can give students a better understanding of what they are being taught, assist in their choice of career-path, and alleviate any financial strain that they may encounter across the academic year. On the other hand, working while studying may lead to greater absence from lectures, and as noted earlier in this report, reduced time for personal study, which could result in poorer overall levels of academic achievement. This is supported by existing research which showed that working over twenty hours per week had a detrimental impact upon grades achieved by students (Tessema *et al* 2014; Pike *et al* 2008). This chapter analyses the extent to which students in higher education in Ireland work during term-time, the amount of time they spend in employment, the reasons behind their decisions to work during the term, the degree to which (if any) their job relates to their chosen subject area, and the balance between employment and studying.

7.1 Employment during Term-time

However, before continuing it is worth noting that the key delineator in whether students are employed appears to be the formal status of the student; whether they are full or part-time. Part-time students, by definition, have more time available to spend outside of the structured learning environment, and as has been previously noted, tend to be older and more likely to have children, which means they are less likely to be dependent upon their parents for financial support and more likely to have dependents themselves and as such, need employment to maintain their studies. Full-time students which as noted in Chapters 5 and 6 are more likely to rely upon financial support from their parents and/or live with their parents have less of a need for additional finances and instead can concentrate (if they so wish) upon their studies.

Because of this, these two sub-groups within the population have very different experiences of employment and to examine them together would camouflage how each group evaluates their employment. Because of this, this chapter discusses the results pertaining to these two sub-groups separately.

All students were asked if they had a paid job (or paid internship) during the current semester. Table 7.1 presents the level of employment for full-time students across a number of student characteristics.

Of the total full-time student population, approximately 46 percent of students work during term-time (27 percent throughout the whole semester, and 19 percent who only work occasionally), and 54 percent do not work at all during term-time. Furthermore, this distribution does not change much over our sub-categories of interest. Although male students and students not living with their parents appear to work slightly less than female students and students who live with their parents.

TABLE 7.1: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT ACROSS KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS – FULL-TIME STUDENTS ONLY [N=14,357]

		Yes, I work during the whole semester	Yes, I work from time to time during the semester	No, I don't work during the semester
Undergraduate		27%	19%	54%
Postgraduate		27%	18%	55%
Male		24%	18%	57%
Female		30%	20%	50%
Age	<21	25%	21%	54%
	21-23	32%	20%	48%
	24+	24%	14%	61%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		27%	20%	53%
Institute of Technology		27%	17%	56%
Dublin		28%	19%	53%
Non-Dublin		27%	19%	54%
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	25%	16%	58%
	Up to Leaving Cert	30%	18%	51%
	Post Leaving Cert	27%	20%	53%
Living with Parents		33%	19%	47%
Not Living with Parents		23%	19%	58%
Overall		27%	19%	54%

Table 7.2 presents the level of employment for part-time students across a number of student characteristics. Of the total part-time student population – and in stark contrast to that observed in the full-time student population – approximately 83 percent of students work during term-time (77 percent throughout the whole semester, and six percent who only work occasionally) and only 17 percent do not work at all. There is also some variation in the levels of employment across a number of the sub-categories of interest. For example, postgraduate part-time students appear to have higher levels of employment than undergraduate students. With regard to the relationship between age and employment, the level of employment appears to increase with age, and more students appear to work throughout the semester rather than occasionally.

TABLE 7.2: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT ACROSS KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS – PART-TIME STUDENTS ONLY [N=2,509]

		Yes, I work during the whole semester	Yes, I work from time to time during the semester	No, I don't work during the semester
Undergraduate		74%	7%	19%
Postgraduate		81%	5%	14%
Male		78%	6%	16%
Female		76%	6%	18%
Age	<21	43%	33%	24%
	21-23	60%	15%	25%
	>23	79%	5%	16%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		79%	6%	15%
Institute of Technology		75%	6%	19%
Dublin		79%	6%	15%
Non-Dublin		74%	6%	20%
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	81%	4%	15%
	Up to Leaving Cert	78%	6%	16%
	Post Leaving Cert	75%	7%	18%
Living with Parents		68%	9%	23%
Not Living with Parents		79%	6%	16%
Overall		77%	6%	17%

Table 7.3 presents the employment status of students across their study area, and for the most part the patterns present in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 are also evident in this table. Full-time students appear to have lower levels of employment than part-time students. There is also less variation across study area for full-time students, whereas there is substantial variation for part-time students with the level of employment throughout the semester ranging from 62 percent for Science students to 93 percent for Education students. In addition, Education students appear to have higher than average levels of employment at both the part-time and full-time level.

TABLE 7.3: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT ACROSS STUDY PROGRAMME [N=16,886]

	Yes, I work during the whole semester	Yes, I work from time to time during the semester	No, I don't work during the semester
Full-time			
Education	34%	26%	40%
Humanities and Arts	27%	19%	54%
Social Science	30%	18%	52%
Business	33%	20%	47%
Law	27%	18%	55%
Science	25%	18%	57%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	24%	15%	62%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	25%	19%	56%
Agriculture and Veterinary	27%	21%	52%
Health and Welfare	25%	17%	58%
Sport and Leisure	26%	26%	49%
Catering	26%	28%	46%
Services	23%	29%	49%
Overall	27%	19%	54%
Part-time			
Education	93%	4%	4%
Humanities and Arts	63%	10%	27%
Social Science	82%	3%	15%
Business	78%	4%	18%
Law	76%	14%	10%
Science	62%	7%	31%
Maths, Computing and Computer Science	78%	2%	20%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	80%	9%	11%
Agriculture and Veterinary	85%	15%	0%
Health and Welfare	81%	8%	10%
Sport and Leisure	66%	16%	18%
Catering	79%	6%	15%
Services	87%	7%	5%
Overall	77%	6%	17%

Table 7.4 presents the average amount of time spent working by students who work throughout the entire semester (note that students who work from time to time during the semester are not included in this subgroup). Of this population, full-time students who work spend on average almost 19 hours per week in employment. For part-time students, the average amount of time spent in employment is just over 37 hours per week. Furthermore, across our sub-categories of interest there is not much variation. Only age appears to have some substantive effect on the amount of time spent in employment, with younger students spending less time working than older students.

TABLE 7.4: AVERAGE TIME (IN HOURS) SPENT ON PAID JOBS DURING WEEK IN LECTURE PERIOD [STUDENTS WORKING DURING THE WHOLE SEMESTER ONLY, N=5,832]

		Full-time	Part-time
Undergraduate		18.10	37.02
Postgraduate		20.57	37.87
Male		19.96	40.41
Female		17.08	34.46
Age	<21	16.47	21.17
	21-23	19.07	31.37
	24+	21.21	37.87
University or Associate/Affiliate College		17.83	36.50
Institute of Technology		19.18	38.63
Dublin		17.73	38.39
Non-Dublin		18.80	35.83
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	19.29	37.70
	Up to Leaving Cert	18.25	38.64
	Post Leaving Cert	18.11	36.98
Living with Parents		17.90	34.46
Not Living with Parents		18.77	37.89
Overall		18.34	37.44

Table 7.5 presents a logistic regression model of a number of factors and the effect that they have upon the likelihood of full-time students working throughout (rather than occasionally) during term-time. The dependent variable in this model is a binary variable constructed from the survey question "Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current semester?" Students that worked during the whole semester were coded as one, and those that did not work, or only worked "from time to time" were coded as zero.

The key characteristics included in each of the tables thus far have also been included as independent variables in this model. In addition, these have been supplemented by some additional variables which can be theorised to have an effect on the likelihood of working. For example, students from outside of Ireland could be expected to be less likely to work during term-time because they could be expected to focus solely on their studies due the higher levels of tuition fees they have to pay. Furthermore, if they are from outside of the European Union they may not be permitted to seek employment in Ireland. In addition, it could be argued that students are less likely to seek employment if their costs are being met by income received from their parents, family or partners; as such these financial contributions are also included in the model below.

From this model, gender appears to have a significant impact on the likelihood of being continuously employed during term-time, with female students being more likely to have a job than male students. Students living with their parents, students at Dublin-based higher education institutions, students on Business and Law courses, and students whose parents are educated up to the Leaving Certificate level are each also more likely than their counterparts to be in employment. Each of these variables are statistically significant at least at the 0.05 level.

In contrast, as theorised above, international students are less likely to be in employment than students from Ireland. This is significant at the 0.001 level. In addition, grant recipients are also less likely than students who do not receive grants to be employment, this is potentially due to their costs being met by their grants.

TABLE 7.5: SUMMARY OF THE EFFECT THAT KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS HAVE UPON WORKING DURING TERM-TIME [FULL-TIME STUDENTS ONLY, N=9,269]

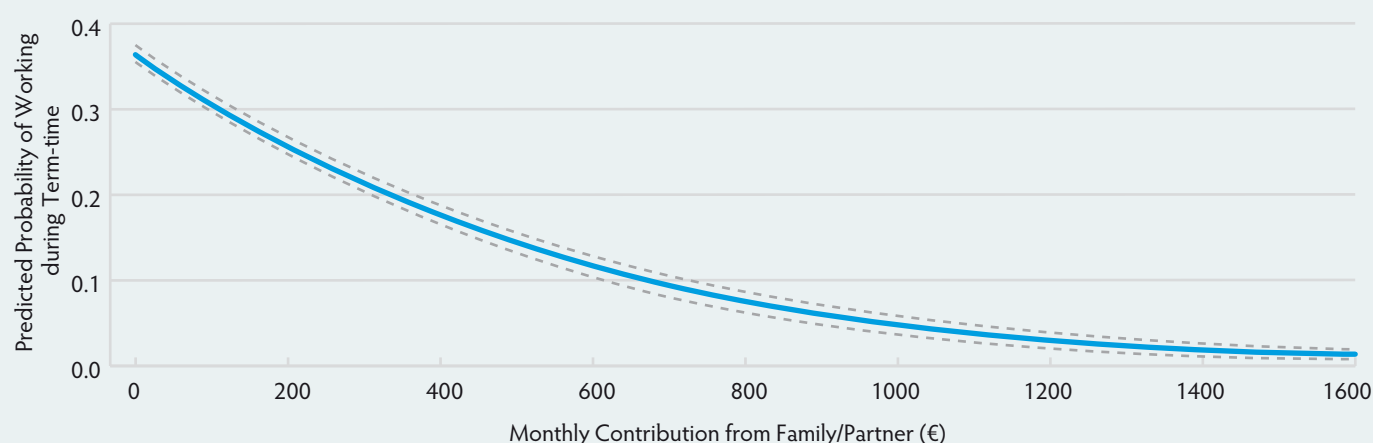
	Logged Odds	Odds Ratio	Significance
Female	0.36 (0.05)	1.43 (0.07)	***
(Ref: Male)			
Age:			
– 21 to 23	0.33 (0.06)	1.39 (0.08)	***
– Older than 23	0.00 (0.08)	1.00 (0.08)	***
(Ref: Younger than 21)			
Undergraduate	-0.06 (0.1)	0.94 (0.09)	
(Ref: Postgraduate)			
University or Associate/Affiliate College	0.07 (0.06)	1.07 (0.06)	
(Ref: Institute of Technology)			
International Student	-1.02 (0.11)	0.36 (0.04)	***
(Ref: Irish Student)			
Grant Recipient	-0.66 (0.06)	0.52 (0.03)	***
(Ref: Non-Grant Recipient)			
Living with Parents	0.19 (0.05)	1.21 (0.07)	***
(Ref: Not Living with Parents)			
Dublin-based HEI	0.15 (0.05)	1.16 (0.06)	**
(Ref: HEI outside of Dublin)			
Course			
– Education, Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences	0.13 (0.08)	1.14 (0.09)	
– Business and Law	0.31 (0.09)	1.36 (0.12)	***
– Science, Maths, Computing, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	0.01 (0.08)	1.01 (0.08)	
(Ref: All Other)			
Highest Level of Parental Education:			
– Up to Leaving Certificate	0.22 (0.1)	1.24 (0.12)	*
– Higher Education	0.08 (0.09)	1.09 (0.10)	
(Ref: Up to Junior Certificate)			
Monthly Provision from Family/Partner	0.00 (<0.01)	1.00 (<0.01)	***
Intercept	-0.85 (0.17)	0.43 (0.07)	***
Nagelkerke R-squared	0.68		

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Standard errors in parentheses. Full-time students only.

A similar case has been made for students who receive income from their parents, family or partners. Nevertheless, this coefficient deserves further exploration as logistic regression coefficients and often odds ratios do not lend themselves to ready interpretation, the impact of this variable could be overlooked. Both the coefficient and the odds ratio for this variable are very small, though highly significant. This could lead one to expect the influence of this variable to be minor at best. However, it is worth noting that this coefficient is the logged odds change in the likelihood of working for a one-unit change in the independent variable. In this case, a one-unit change is a student receiving one Euro from their parents, family or partner.

By itself, receiving a single euro (per month) is unlikely to substantively impact the likelihood of a student working. It is instead the cumulative impact of this variable that has an effect, with students who receive larger monthly contributions from their parents, family or partner being less likely to need to be employed to cover their living expenses. This is illustrated further in Figure 7.1 below. This graph presents the marginal effect that receiving a monthly contribution from parents, family or partner has upon the likelihood of a student working continuously during term-time. It is immediately evident that students who receive large monthly contributions are very unlikely to work and in contrast, students who do not receive any income from their parents, family or partners are much more likely to be employed.

FIGURE 7.1: MARGINAL EFFECT THAT REGULAR FAMILIAL PAYMENTS HAVE UPON LIKELIHOOD OF EMPLOYMENT [N=10,069]



7.2 Employment Outside of Term-time

So far, two patterns have emerged in that full-time students are less likely to be in employment during term-time than part-time students, and these patterns hold up over a range of potential mediating characteristics. However, this is not the only period of time in which students could have been employed. The survey asks students if they had a job before entering higher education, and also asks if they have had a job during a lecture-free period (i.e. outside of term-time) over the last year.

Table 7.6 presents the degree to which full-time students were employed before entering higher education for the first time. Of the total full-time student population, approximately 50 percent of students did not work before entering higher education for the first time, 24 percent had occasional employment for less than a year, and 26 percent were employed for over a year (12 percent worked less than 20 hours per week and 14 percent worked more than 20 hours per week). For undergraduates, the trend appears to be for entry into higher education without any substantive experience of employment. For postgraduates however, 25 percent say that they have worked continuously for over a year (and more than 20 hours per week) before beginning. This is perhaps due to the need to save money before starting their postgraduate programme. Similar cases can be made for students not living with their parents as 28 percent of these students say that they have worked continuously for over a year (and more than 20 hours per week) before entering higher education, and for older students (24 and over) of which 46 percent have worked continuously for over a year (and more than 20 hours per week) before entering higher education. Both of which suggest that without the financial support of their parents (through the reduced cost of accommodation and potential transfers in kind) they have to work before entering higher education to save money to maintain themselves while studying.

TABLE 7.6: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT BEFORE ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION (FULL-TIME STUDENTS ONLY) [N=16,573]

		Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and at least 20h per week	Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and less than 20h per week	Yes, I worked, but less than one year	No, I did not work prior to entering higher education
Undergraduate		13%	11%	25%	52%
Postgraduate		25%	14%	23%	38%
Male		15%	10%	26%	49%
Female		12%	12%	24%	51%
Age	<21	3%	9%	28%	59%
	21-23	8%	13%	26%	53%
	24+	46%	12%	17%	25%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		15%	11%	25%	49%
Institute of Technology		15%	12%	24%	49%
Dublin		12%	10%	25%	53%
Non-Dublin		14%	11%	26%	49%
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	11%	11%	27%	50%
	Up to Leaving Cert	18%	10%	21%	51%
	Post Leaving Cert	12%	10%	26%	52%
Living with Parents		15%	11%	24%	49%
Not Living with Parents		28%	10%	18%	44%
Overall		14%	12%	24%	50%

Table 7.7 presents the degree to which part-time students were employed before entering higher education for the first time. Of the total part-time student population, only 25 percent of students did not work before entering higher education for the first time, 15 percent had occasional employment for less than a year, and 60 percent were employed for over a year (10 percent worked less than 20 hours per week and 50 percent worked more than 20 hours per week).

From this table, part-time undergraduates appear to be more likely to have worked for over a year and for over 20 hours per week. Again, as noted elsewhere part-time undergraduates are more likely to be older and not reliant upon financial support from their parents as such require employment to support themselves and save money before entering higher education. This is also supported by the pattern found across the age and not living with parents' categories. Male students appear to be more likely to have worked for over a year and for over 20 hours per week than female students. The same appears to be the case for students at Institutes of Technology over students at Universities.

TABLE 7.7: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT BEFORE ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION (PART-TIME STUDENTS ONLY) [N=2,956]

		Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and at least 20h per week	Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and less than 20h per week	Yes, I worked, but less than one year	No, I did not work prior to entering higher education
Undergraduate		59%	8%	12%	20%
Postgraduate		40%	12%	18%	30%
Male		54%	8%	14%	24%
Female		47%	12%	15%	26%
Age	<21	22%	19%	21%	38%
	21-23	20%	17%	21%	42%
	24+	53%	10%	14%	24%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		44%	12%	16%	28%
Institute of Technology		59%	8%	12%	21%
Dublin		50%	10%	14%	25%
Non-Dublin		51%	10%	15%	24%
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	57%	9%	13%	21%
	Up to Leaving Cert	52%	11%	15%	22%
	Post Leaving Cert	44%	11%	15%	29%
Living with Parents		37%	15%	19%	28%
Not Living with Parents		53%	9%	14%	24%
Overall		50%	10%	15%	25%

Table 7.8 presents the degree to which full-time and part-time students were employed during a lecture-free period over the last year. Of the total full-time student population, approximately 59 percent of students worked during a lecture-free period. As noted in Table 7.1 only 46 percent of full-time students work during term-time. As such, this suggests that these students tend to work outside of term-time, and during the academic year focus on their studies. In contrast, 81 percent of part-time students worked during a lecture-free period, which is marginally lower than the 83 percent that work during term-time. As such, this suggests that part-time students balance work and study together, rather than alternating between the two depending on the time of year as full-time students appear to do.

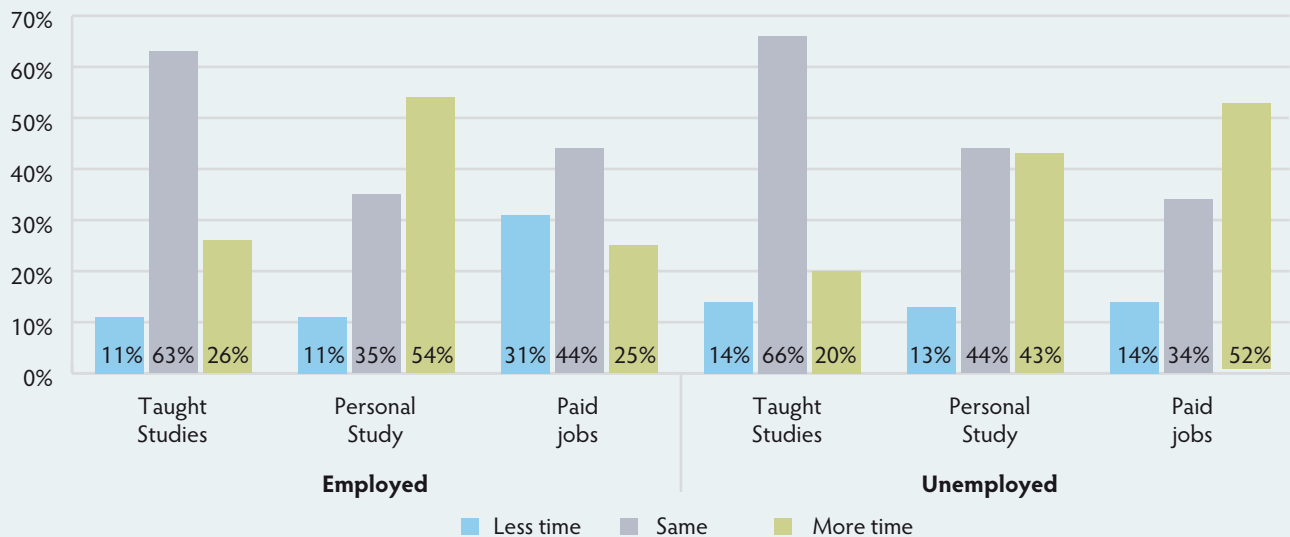
TABLE 7.8: LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT DURING LECTURE-FREE PERIODS/HOLIDAYS [N=15,971]

		Full-time		Part-time	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Undergraduate		59%	41%	79%	21%
Postgraduate		55%	45%	83%	17%
Male		56%	44%	82%	18%
Female		62%	38%	81%	19%
Age	<21	58%	42%	73%	27%
	21-23	69%	31%	71%	29%
	24+	47%	53%	82%	18%
University or Associate/Affiliate College		63%	37%	82%	18%
Institute of Technology		52%	48%	80%	20%
Dublin		60%	40%	83%	17%
Non-Dublin		58%	42%	79%	21%
Highest Level of Parental Education	Up to Junior Cert	49%	51%	84%	16%
	Up to Leaving Cert	60%	40%	84%	16%
	Post Leaving Cert	62%	38%	81%	19%
Living with Parents		62%	38%	72%	28%
Not Living with Parents		57%	43%	83%	17%
Overall		59%	41%	81%	19%

7.3 The Balance between Employment and Education

The allocation of students' time on personal study, taught studies and employment is presented in Figure 7.2. This chart shows how students would want to spend their time across employment status. Regardless of whether students are employed or not, most students (between 63 and 66 percent) would not change the amount of time they allocate to taught studies. However, across the time students would like to spend on personal study and employment, there is an interesting pattern. The majority of students who are employed during term-time (54 percent) would like to devote more time to personal study, and a large proportion (31 percent) would like to spend less time working. In contrast, the majority of students who are unemployed (52 percent) would like to devote more of their time to employment, and either the same amount or more time on their own studies. As such, these patterns point to some dissatisfaction by students on their work-study balance in that students who are working would like to spend more time on their studies, whereas students who are unemployed and have more time to spend on their studies, would like to spend more of their time in employment.

FIGURE 7.2: POTENTIAL BALANCE BETWEEN TIME STUDYING AND EMPLOYMENT BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS [N=15,293]



All students who had a paid job within the current semester were asked to what extent a series of statements applied to them, Figure 7.3 illustrates the results across full and part-time students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Of the students that work on average, 51 percent of full-time undergraduates and 60 percent of full-time postgraduates agree totally with the statement, "I work to cover my living costs". This increases to 76 percent and 77 percent for part-time undergraduates and postgraduates respectively.

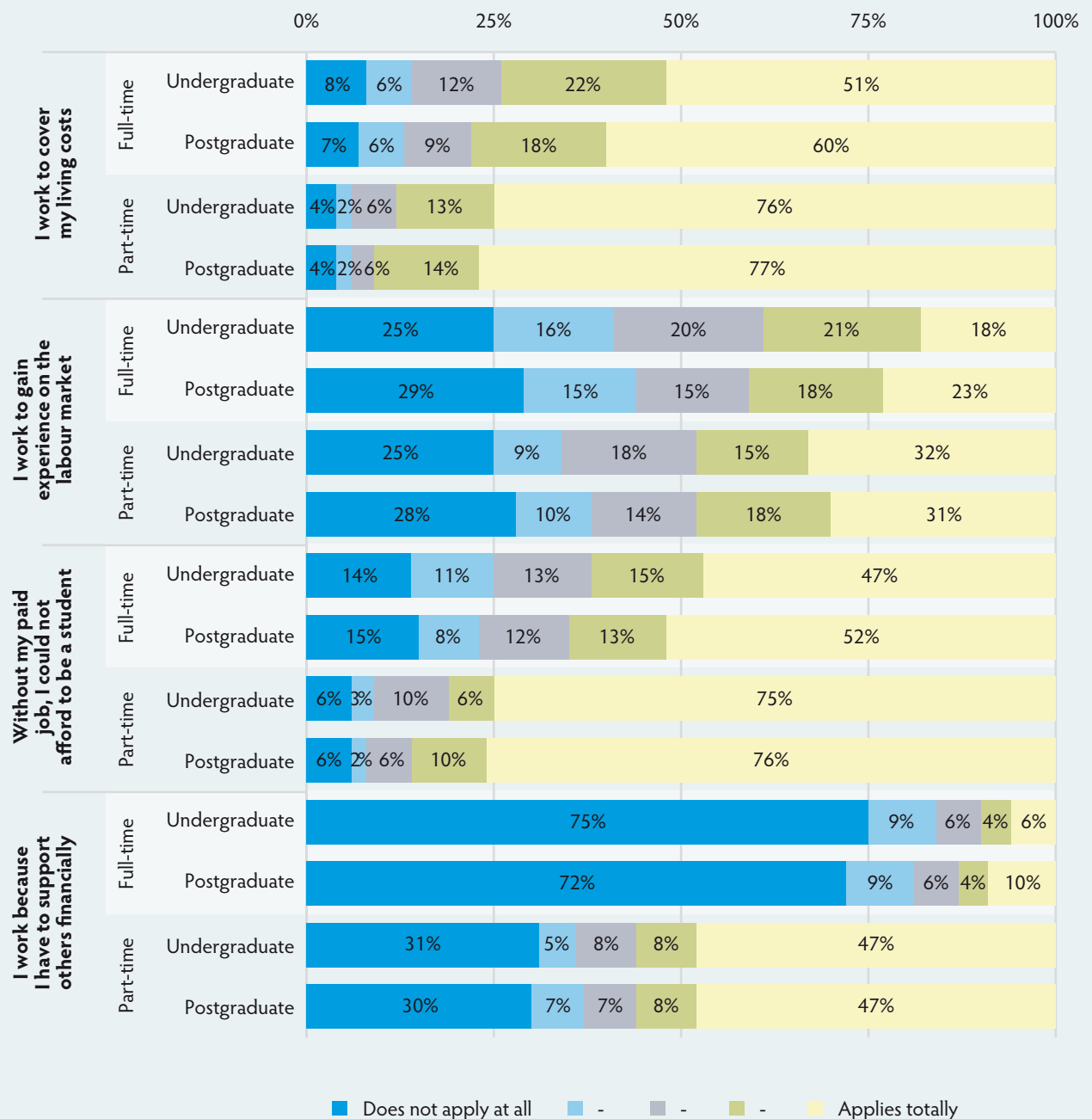
The distribution of responses for the second statement, "I work to gain experience on the labour market" across students is more uniform with an almost equal distribution in each category across each type of student. In general, part-time students were marginally more likely to agree with this statement.

The third statement is "without my paid job, I could not afford to be a student" is supported totally by 47 percent of full-time undergraduates and 52 percent of full-time postgraduates. This rises to 75 percent for part-time undergraduates and 76 percent of part-time postgraduates.

The final statement "I work because I have to support others financially" shows the greatest degree of variation across part-time and full-time students as 75 percent of full-time undergraduates and 72 percent of full-time postgraduates say that this does not apply to them at all. However, the opposite appears to be the case for part-time students as 47 percent of both part-time undergraduates and postgraduates totally agree with this statement.

Once again, reactions to these statements appear to be linked through the formal status of students and the corresponding characteristics they are likely to exhibit. For example, we already know that part-time students tend to be older, and less reliant on their parents to support them financially, as such these students tend to display a greater need to work to support both themselves and others.

FIGURE 7.3: EXTENT TO WHICH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS APPLY TO STUDENTS [N=8,397]



Figures 7.4 and 7.5 present how closely students' jobs relate to the content of their study programmes for full-time and part-time students separately. For full-time students across the categories of interest, the trend appears to be for jobs to have little to no relation to their study programme. For part-time students however, the opposite appears to be the case, in that their jobs are closely related to their study programmes. Only part-time students that are less than 23 and/or live with their parents appear to not follow this pattern.

As such, these distinct patterns suggest that full-time students are employed solely to support themselves and are happy to work in a field that bears little to no relation to their overall field of interest. In contrast, part-time students' employment appears to be closely related to their field of study which suggests that they are choosing vocational study programmes that closely align with their current jobs, potentially to further develop their skills in these fields, assist their professional development, and further their chosen careers.

This is further supported by Figure 7.6 which show the degree to which students think of themselves as primarily a student or someone who works. Of the total full-time student population, 95 percent of students said that they thought of themselves as a student first, and they work alongside their studies. However, of the total part-time student population 88 percent said that they thought of themselves as working first, and that they study alongside their job. Furthermore, these responses are very consistent across categories of students, with again only younger part-time students and those that live with their parents deviating from the overall trend.

FIGURE 7.4: DEGREE TO WHICH JOB IS RELATED TO CONTENT OF STUDY PROGRAMME (FULL-TIME STUDENTS ONLY) [N=6,456]

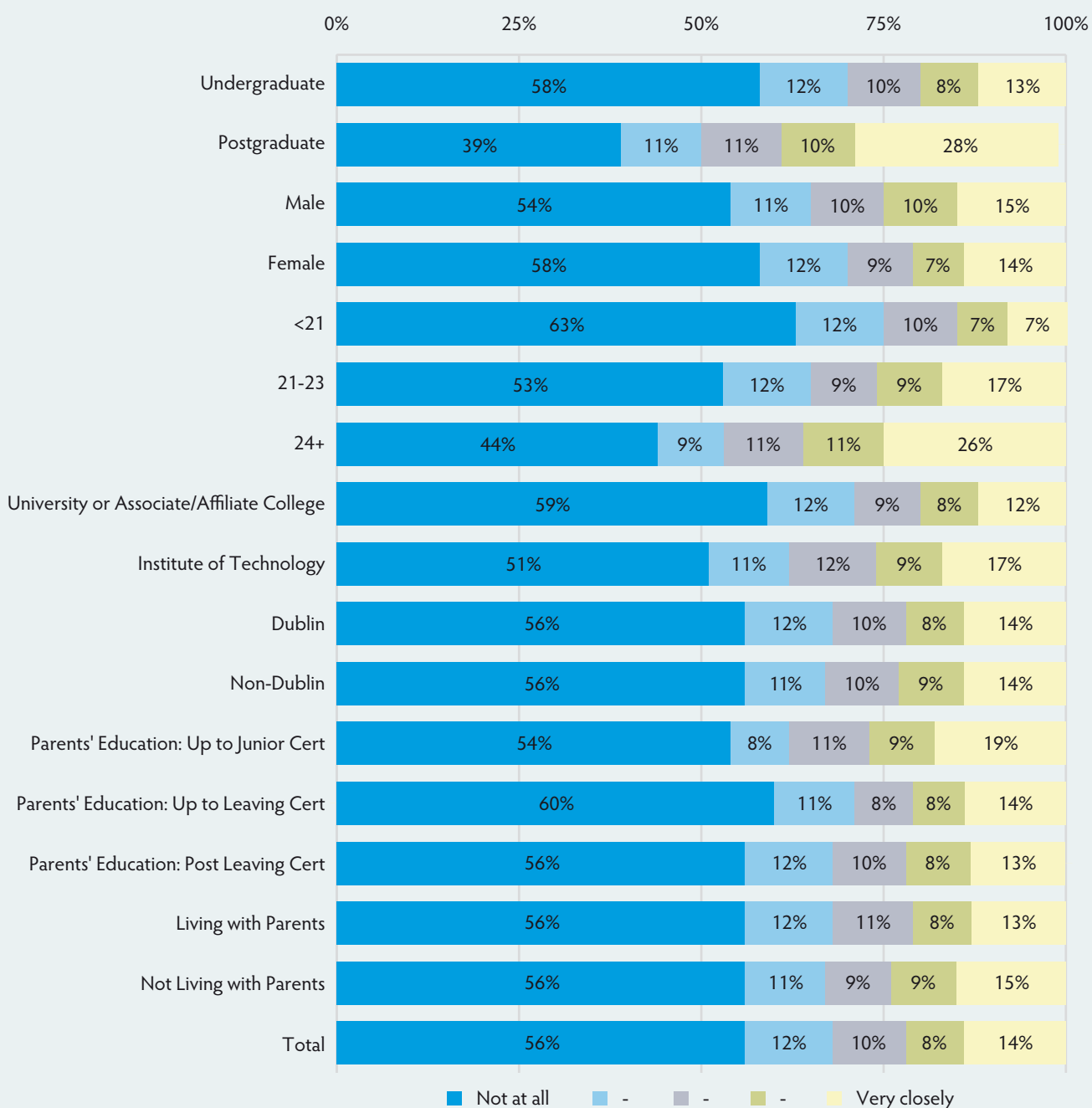


FIGURE 7.5: DEGREE TO WHICH JOB IS RELATED TO CONTENT OF STUDY PROGRAMME (PART-TIME STUDENTS ONLY) N=1,964

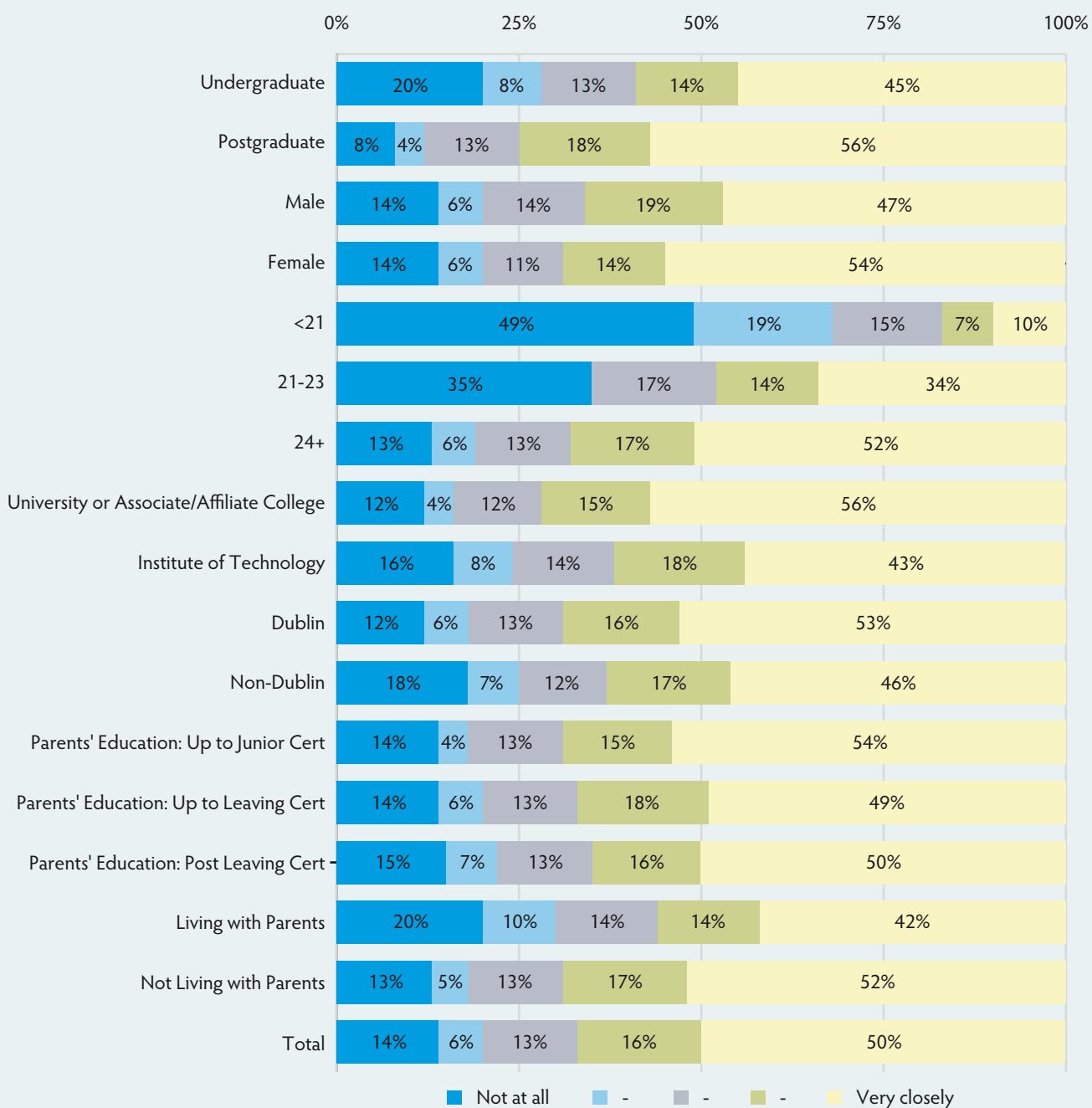
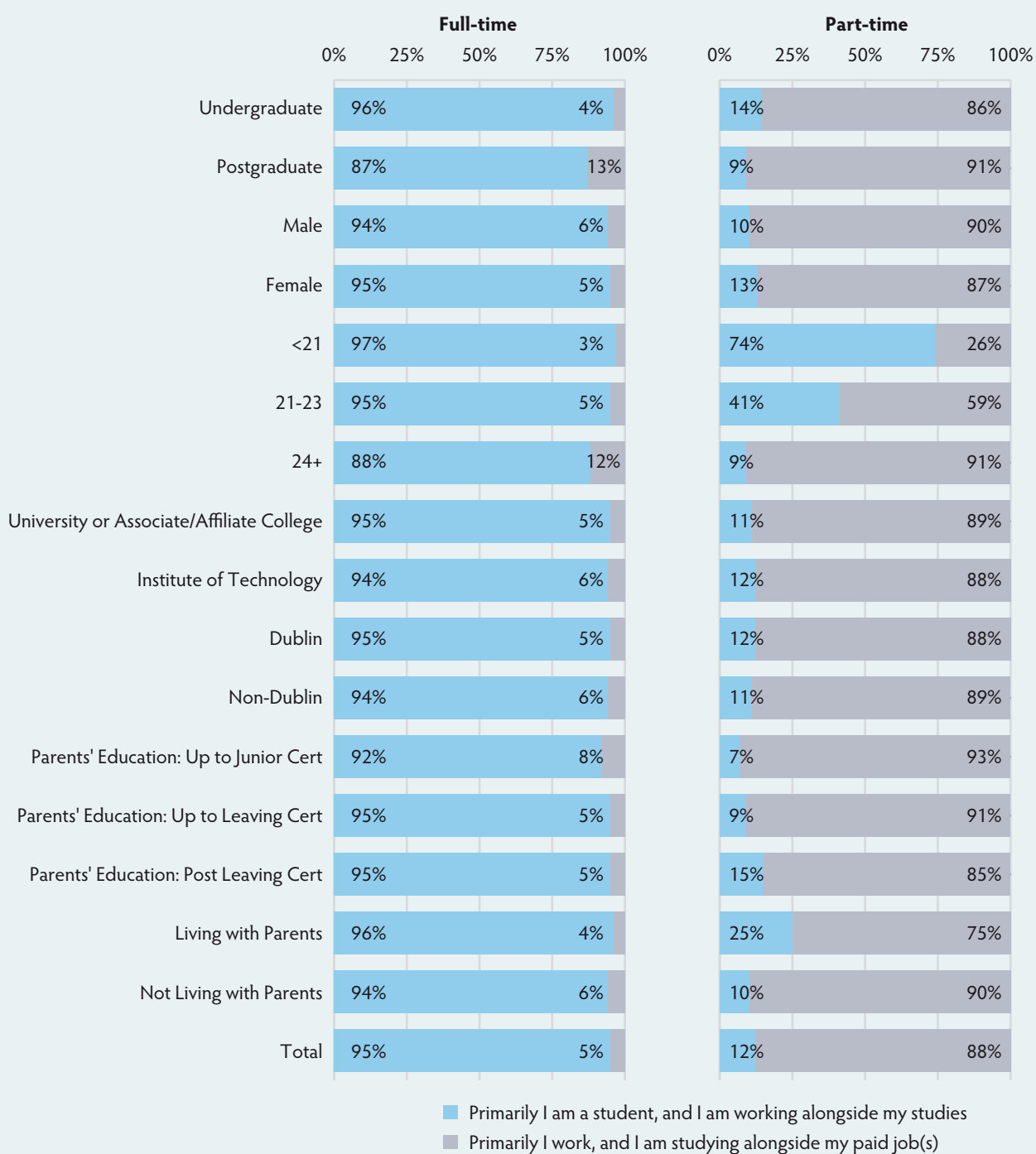


FIGURE 7.6: DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS SEE THEMSELVES AS A STUDENT OR WORKER [N=10,590]



8. STUDENT MOBILITY

There are many advantages for students who choose to study abroad. Student mobility contributes to personal development and enhances linguistic competency and cultural understanding. All of which can also positively influence future employability. In this report, 'studying abroad' refers only to those students who move outside of Ireland and do so temporarily on an accredited basis. The position of students who study abroad for their entire degree is not captured by the Irish portion of the Eurostudent survey as the survey is conducted only on students within Irish higher education institutions.

This chapter analyses the extent to which students in Irish higher education institutions across the different classifications of student, their study programmes and key characteristics, study abroad. Other study-related activities are examined, and the length and location of these activities are profiled. Finally, the potential obstacles to studying abroad for students are considered.

8.1 Studying Abroad

Most Irish students appear to have no intention of studying abroad as part of their programme. As Figure 8.1 shows, 68 percent of students say that they have no plans to study abroad. This can be seen as very high, though this figure has declined over time. In Eurostudent IV, 82 percent of students reported that they had no intention of studying abroad, and in Eurostudent V this figure was 73 percent of students¹⁶.

On the other side of this, only six percent of students have enrolled in higher education abroad. In 2009 the European Commission set a target for 20 percent of graduates from higher education institutions in Europe to have experience of studying or training abroad by 2020¹⁷. Compared against this goal, Ireland has a very low rate of actual student mobility. 26 percent of students report that they have intentions to study abroad though have not do so thus far.

16 Eurostudent IV. Intelligence Brief: Short-term Mobility and Mobility Obstacles. Available at:

http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/IB_Short_term_mobility_091211.pdf

Eurostudent V Database. Available at: <http://database.eurostudent.eu/127#countries%5B%5D=12>.

17 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009). The Bologna Process 2020-The European higher education area in the new decade. Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the EHEA.

FIGURE 8.1: "HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ENROLLED ABROAD AS A STUDENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?" [N=16,161]

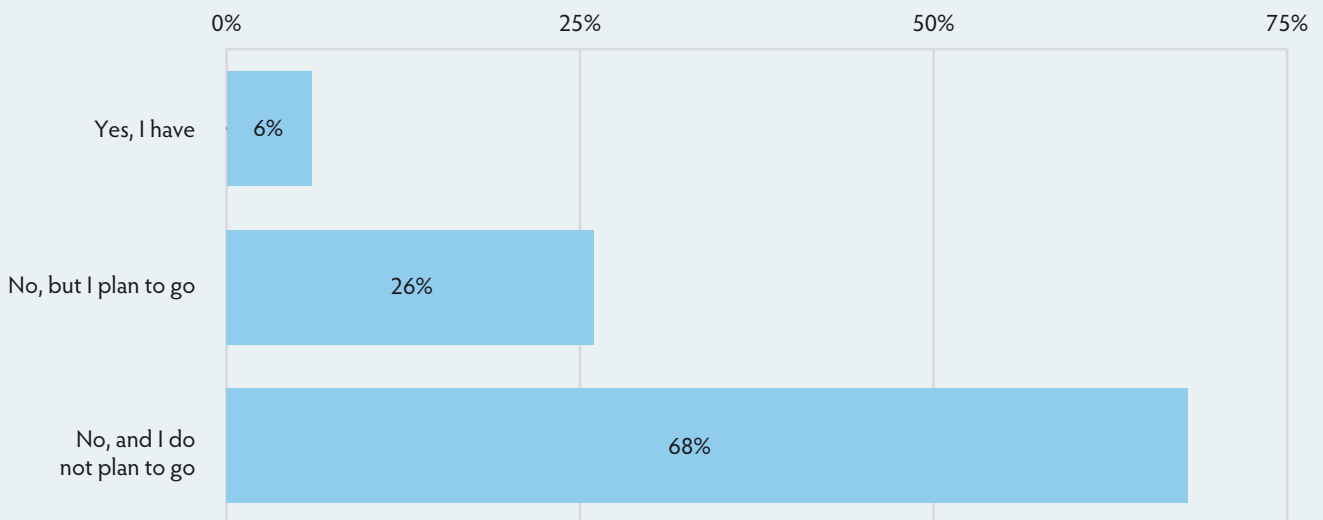


Figure 8.2 illustrates the distribution of students' intentions to study abroad across study programme. The study areas in which students have the greatest propensity to enrol as a student abroad are Law (43 percent), and Humanities and Arts (41 percent). Students of Maths, Computing and Computer Science courses are the least likely to go abroad (23 percent have plans or have been abroad).

FIGURE 8.2: LEVEL OF ENROLMENT ABROAD BY STUDY PROGRAMME [N=16,161]

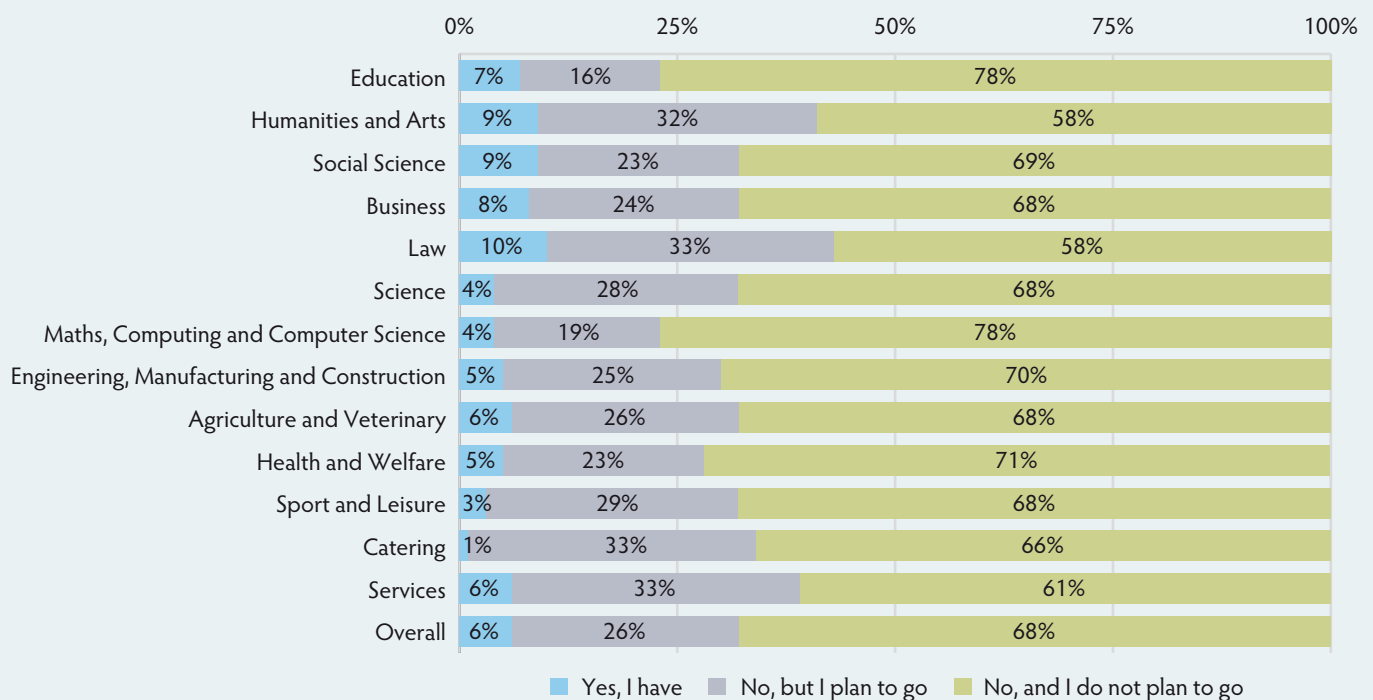
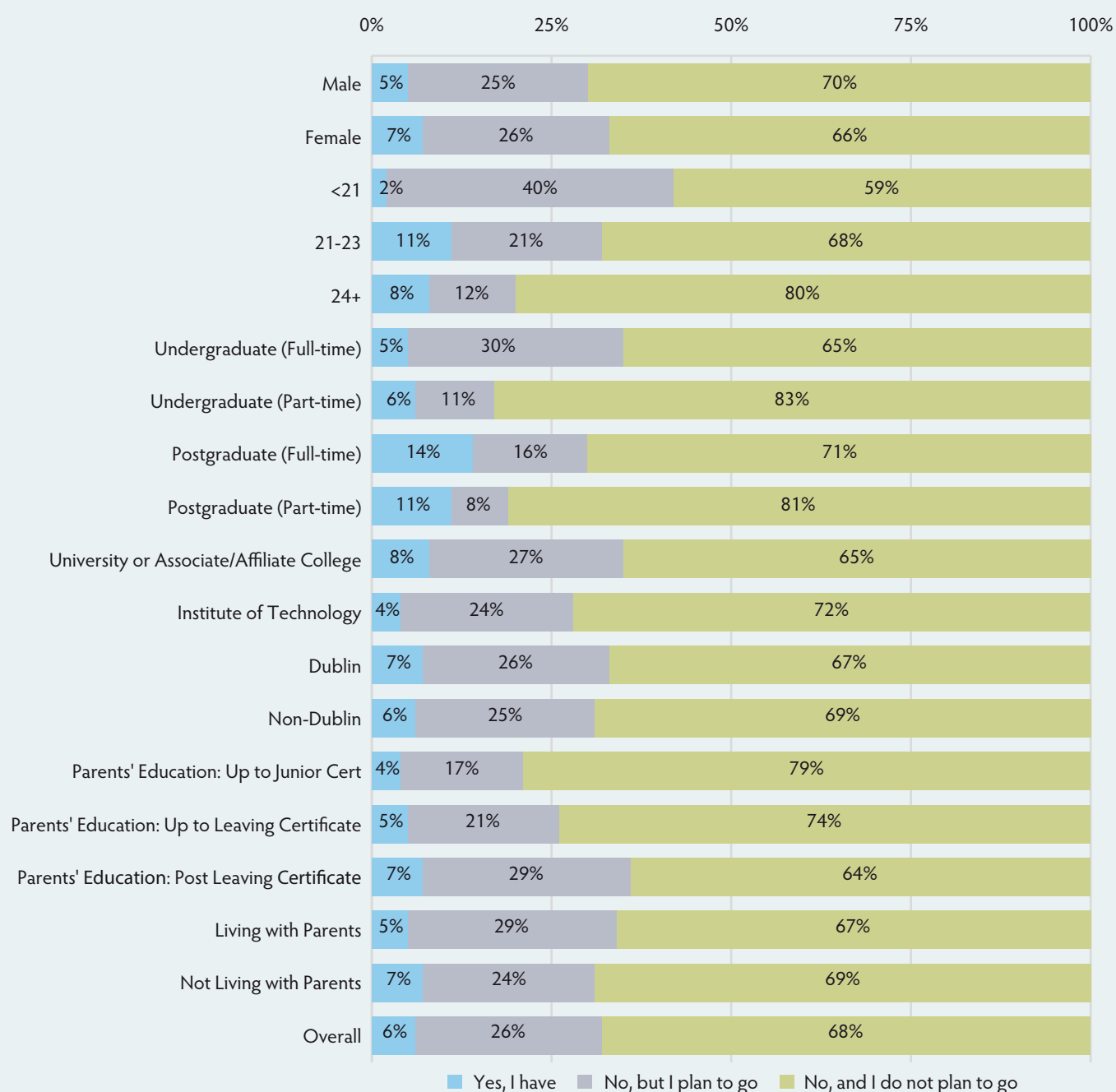


Figure 8.3 illustrates the distribution of students' intentions to study abroad across a number of student characteristics. Students under the age of 21 have the highest proportion of intentions to go abroad (40 percent) and lowest proportion of not planning to go abroad (59 percent). Furthermore, students at University have twice the rate of enrolling abroad (8 percent) than Institutes of Technology (4 percent).

FIGURE 8.3: LEVEL OF ENROLMENT ABROAD ACROSS KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS [N=16,161]



8.2 Students who Studied Abroad

Figure 8.4 includes students who have spent part of their programme abroad and the programme they were on when they went abroad (note that multiple responses were allowed). The majority of students that went abroad were undertaking honours bachelors' degrees (59 percent), the next largest proportion is for students on ordinary bachelors' degrees (18 percent).

FIGURE 8.4: INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY BY STUDY PROGRAMME [N=1,049]

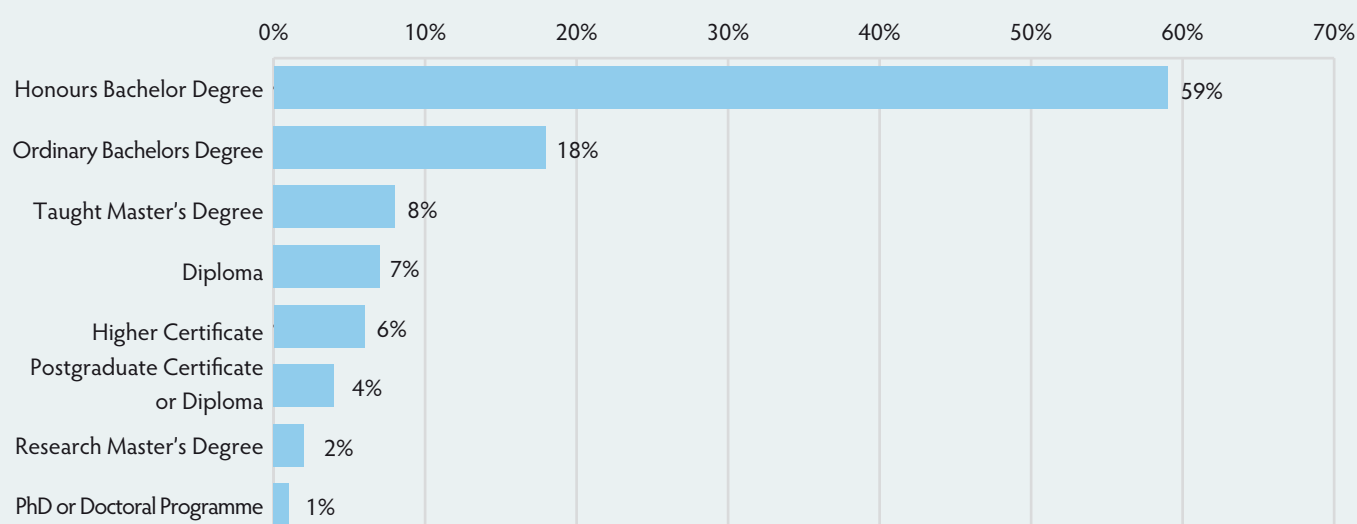


Table 8.1 presents the programmes under which students' international mobility was organised by the type of student and their formal status. Of the total student population who have been abroad, 60 percent of students organised their study abroad through an EU programme such as Erasmus, 21 percent independently organised their study abroad, and 19 percent used some other programme. Students that are on full-time programmes appear to favour EU programmes whereas a disproportional percentage of part-time students appear to organise their own study abroad programmes.

TABLE 8.1: PROGRAMMES UNDER WHICH STUDY ABROAD WAS ORGANISED [N=931]

		EU programme (e.g. Erasmus)	Other Programme	Independently organised, without any programme
Undergraduate	Full-time	66%	20%	15%
	Part-time	49%	13%	38%
Postgraduate	Full-time	58%	22%	19%
	Part-time	43%	16%	42%
Overall		60%	19%	21%

In terms of credits gained from studying abroad Table 8.2 presents the degree to which credit earned during study abroad were recognised by students' home institutions, and from this table it is evident that students whose study abroad was undertaken on an EU Programme were much more likely to have their credits recognised (80 percent were totally recognised).

TABLE 8.2: LEVEL OF RECOGNITION FOR ENROLMENT ABROAD BY HOME INSTITUTION [N=931]

	EU programme (e.g. Erasmus)	Other Programme	Independently organised, without any programme
Yes, all recognised	80%	64%	42%
Yes, partly recognised	7%	9%	6%
No, none were recognised	3%	8%	17%
Did not gain any credits	4%	12%	24%
Don't know (yet)	6%	7%	10%
Overall	100%	100%	100%

The top five countries (in order of preference) in which students chose to study abroad were France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, and Spain. On average, the overall time spent abroad was 6.4 months. Table 8.3 below presents the percentages of students choosing to study in countries where English is predominantly spoken as a first language versus other countries, and also the area favoured by students. As such, almost 30 percent of students choose to study abroad in countries where English is largely the first language of residents. Furthermore, 74 percent of students choose to study within Europe, with the second most preferred area being North America (15 percent).

TABLE 8.3: STUDENTS' AREA/COUNTRY CHOICES FOR STUDYING ABROAD [N=931]

	Percentage of students	Average time (in months)
Countries where English is primarily spoken	29%	6.5
Countries where other languages are primarily spoken	71%	6.4
Europe	74%	6.5
North America	15%	5.7
Asia	7%	6.3
South America	2%	8.6
Oceania	2%	6.3
Africa	0.3%	2.6
Overall	100%	6.4

8.3 Study-related Activities

In addition to students being enrolled abroad in a regular course of study, students were asked about the extent to which they had been abroad for other study related activities during their study-programme. Overall, approximately 14 percent of all full-time undergraduates, 12 percent of part-time undergraduates, 18 percent of part-time postgraduates, and 24 percent of full-time postgraduates have been abroad for at least one of the activities listed in Table 8.4 below. The overall proportion of the total student population to have undertaken one of the study-related activities is 15 percent of the total student population.

TABLE 8.4: STUDY-RELATED ACTIVITIES BY STUDENT-TYPE [N=15,654]

		Research or Fieldtrip	Internship or work placement	Summer or winter school	Language course	Other	None of the above
Undergraduate	FT	5%	5%	1%	3%	1%	86%
	PT	3%	3%	3%	4%	1%	88%
Postgraduate	FT	11%	8%	3%	4%	2%	76%
	PT	7%	5%	2%	2%	2%	82%
Overall		6%	5%	2%	3%	1%	85%

The 'research/fieldtrip' was the most popular study-related activity abroad with six percent of the total student population undertaking such a trip, and this is especially popular with full-time postgraduates (with 11 percent taking a fieldtrip abroad).

Students were also asked about the length of time they spent abroad on each of these activities; these are presented in Table 8.5.

TABLE 8.5: AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME (IN MONTHS) SPENT ON STUDY-RELATED ACTIVITIES BY STUDENT-TYPE [N=15,654]

		Research or Fieldtrip	Internship or work placement	Summer or Winter school	Language course
Undergraduate	Full-time	1.1	4.1	2.1	2.5
	Part-time	2.1	7.9	2.3	5.3
Postgraduate	Full-time	1.4	4.8	1.9	3.2
	Part-time	2.2	5.1	1.1	2.6
Overall		1.3	4.4	1.9	2.8

For the overall student population, the average amount of time spent on research or fieldtrips was approximately 1.3 months, for internships approximately 4.4 months. For Summer/Winter school it was approximately 1.9 months, and for a language course approximately 2.8 months. There was some variation by the type of student and their formal status, for example, part-time undergraduates spending on average approximately 7.9 months on an internship or work placements (higher than other classifications).

The most popular countries for research/field trips were France, the United Kingdom, and Germany which combined constituted almost 40 percent of the total number of research/field trips. For internships, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany were the most popular countries and over 40 percent of the total number of fieldtrips were taken in these countries. For Summer/Winter schools the most popular countries were France, the United Kingdom and the United States and again over 40 percent of Summer/Winter schools attended by students at Irish higher education institutions were in these countries. Finally, the most popular countries for language schools were France, Spain, and Germany of which 72 percent of the total number of students who went on a language course went to one of these countries.

8.4 Obstacles to Studying Abroad

The international mobility of Irish students compares poorly to that of students in other countries¹⁸. It is therefore important to investigate the obstacles to studying abroad experienced by Irish students and the key determinants to students actually being able to relocate for a period to another country.

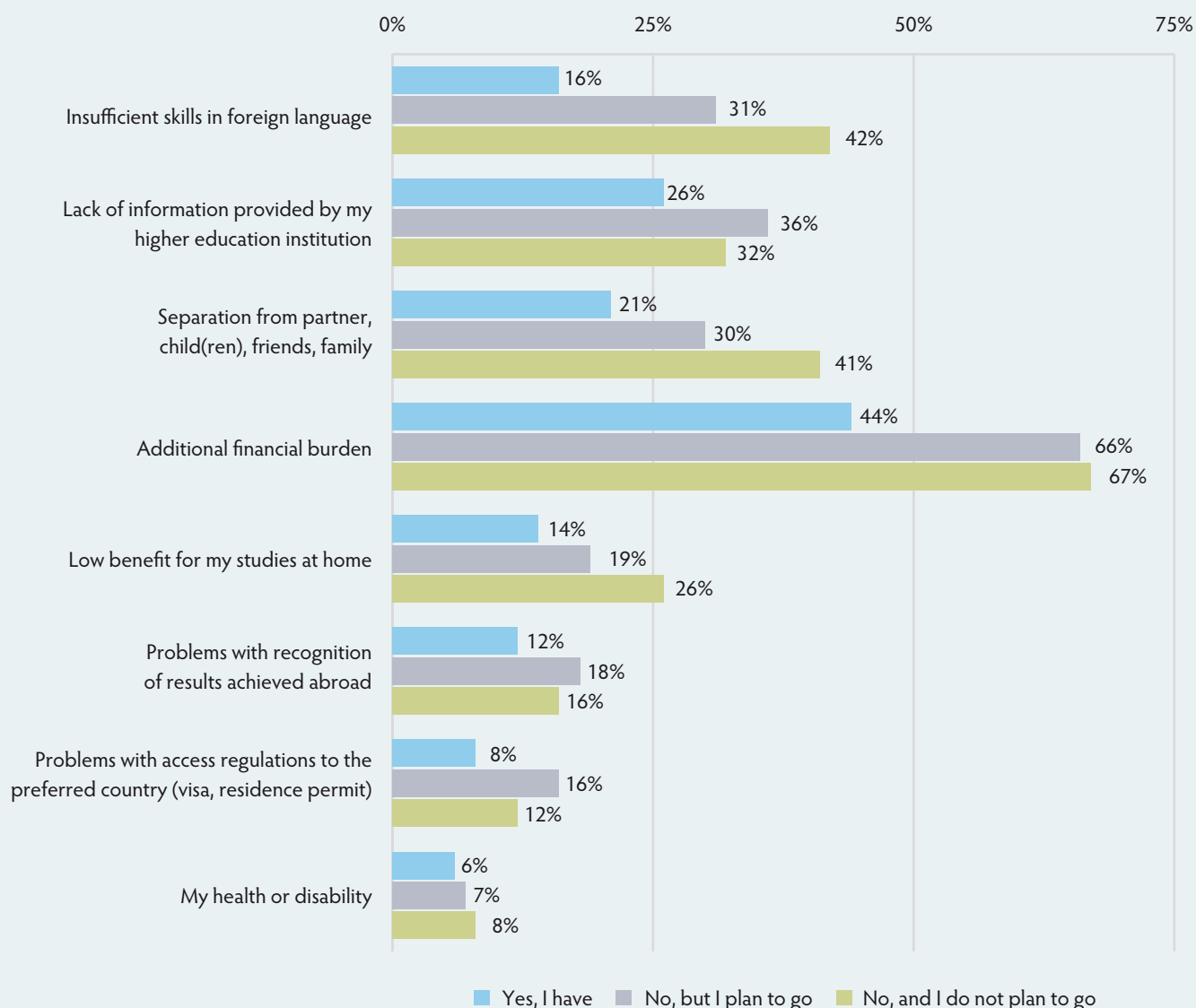
The survey asked students the degree to which a number of factors posed an obstacle to them studying abroad, which could be placed on a scale from one to 5, with one being the factor posed no obstacle and five being a big obstacle. Figure 8.5 presents the percentage of students who gave each factor a four or five on the scale separated into whether they have already studied abroad, they plan to, or have no intentions of studying abroad.

In this chart, there is a noticeable pattern in that students who have already studied abroad do not regard each of the factors to be as big an obstacle as those who have not studied abroad. However, the main obstacle for all students appears to be the additional financial burden that studying abroad poses as this was the obstacle most referred to by each group of students. This was followed by feeling that their language skills were insufficient to studying abroad, and the separation that studying abroad would impose on their families.

18 Hauschildt, K. Gwosć, C. Netz, N and Mishra, S. Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe: Synopsis of Indicators, Eurostudent V 2012-2015.

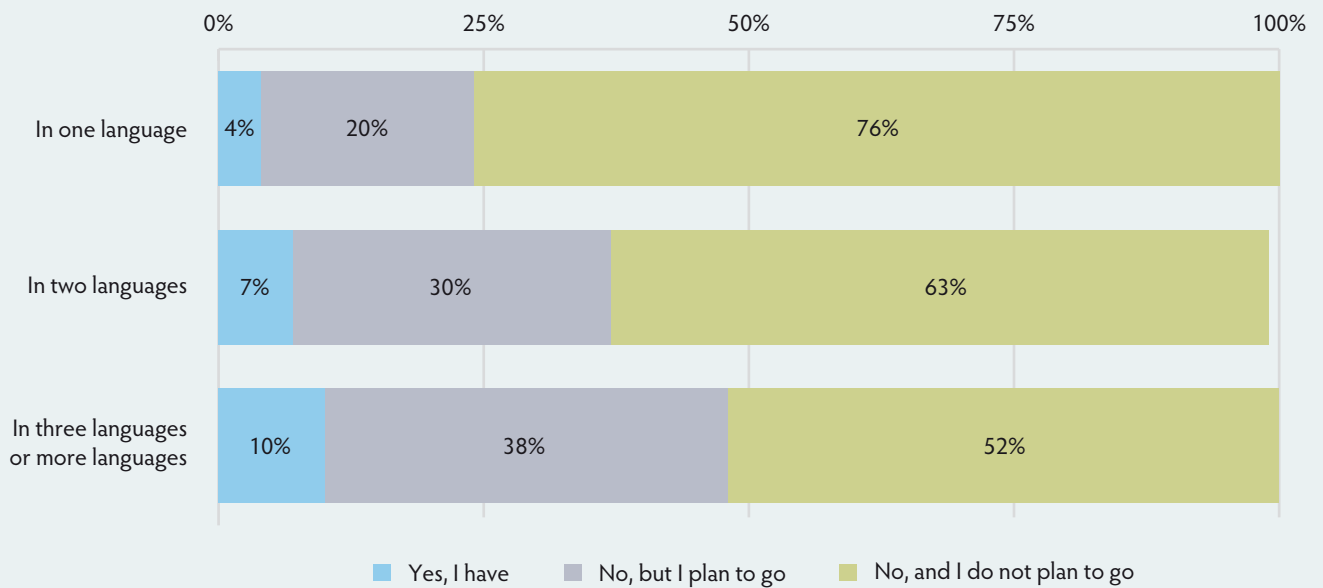
These three obstacles could be thought of as functions of certain attributes within the population. For example, the degree to which a student's language skills are seen as insufficient to studying abroad can be seen as the degree to which they have proficiency in a number of languages. Likewise, the degree to which studying abroad imposes a financial burden is dependent on the financial security of the student or their parents. And the degree to which separation from a student's partner or family is an obstacle could be determined by their age, with older students being more likely to have long-term partners and children. These three factors are explored further below.

FIGURE 8.5: OBSTACLES TO STUDYING ABROAD (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS GIVING A SCORE OF 4 OR 5) [N=14,751]



Students were asked in how many languages did they assess their written and spoken skills as 'very good'. Figure 8.6 plots this variable against students' plans to study abroad. There appears to be a clear relationship between language proficiency and the likelihood of studying abroad. For students comfortable in only one language, 76 percent of them had no intention to study abroad. This figure declines as the number of languages a student is proficient in increases. Furthermore, as competence in languages increase the likelihood of students already having studied abroad also increases.

FIGURE 8.6: LANGUAGE SKILLS AND INTENTIONS TO STUDY ABROAD [N=15,689]



In addition, students were asked which of the sources listed in Table 8.6 did they use to fund their enrolment period abroad, and which source was the primary contributor to their enrolment period abroad.

Approximately 58 percent of students who travelled abroad indicated that at least some funds for this were sourced through a contribution from their parents, family or partner. Furthermore, this was the single largest source of funding for all students as 41 percent of all students who travelled abroad indicated that this was their primary source of funding. This relates back to earlier findings in that parents are heavily involved in the funding of the education of their children at higher level. This could also have an impact on the mobility of students, as parents of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more restricted in the amount of financial support they can provide to their children, which then impinges on students' ability of avail of many of the opportunities provided at higher level.

The second most common source of funding was students' own income (50 percent of all students who studied abroad). This was the primary source of income for 23 percent of students. Grants from the European Union contributed to the study abroad for 46 percent of all students, though this was only the primary source of income for 13 percent of students.

TABLE 8.6: SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR STUDY-ABROAD [N=944]

	Contribution [Multiple Response]	Primary Contributor
Contribution from parents, family or partner	58%	41%
Own income from previous job or own savings	50%	23%
Income from paid job during my studies abroad	13%	6%
Regular study grants or loans from Ireland	15%	12%
Special study grant or loans from Ireland for going abroad	10%	3%
EU study grants or loans (e.g. Erasmus, Other)	46%	13%
Funding from private businesses	3%	1%
Funding from non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	2%	1%
Other	4%	1%
Total		100%

A recently published article by Mairéad Finn and Merike Darmody uses Eurostudent V data to examine factors that lead students deciding to remain in Ireland, rather than spending some of their study programme abroad¹⁹. As such, their research provides a method to look the obstacles to studying abroad and will be used as a template below to examine the relative lack of student mobility in Ireland.

Table 8.7 presents a logistic regression model of a number of factors discussed already in this section which are posited to have an effect upon the likelihood of students studying abroad, along with a number of other control variables. As we have already theorised, linguistic ability, the ability to overcome any financial burden to studying abroad, and age as expected to affect their willingness to relocate for a period abroad. With younger students (who are less likely to have long-term partners or dependents), students with financially well-off families, and students with higher levels of linguistic ability being the most likely to study abroad. The dependent variable in this model is a binary variable constructed from the survey question "have you ever been enrolled abroad since you first entered higher education?". Students that had or plan to are coded as one, and those that had not and did not plan to be were coded as zero. As such the coefficients present in this model present the effect the independent variables have on the likelihood of a student studying abroad.

From this model, it appears that undergraduate status has little/no effect on the likelihood of studying abroad. In contrast, gender does appear to have an effect, in that female students are marginally more likely to study abroad than their male counterparts (significant at the 0.05 level). Age appears to negatively affect the likelihood of studying abroad. The model shows that as students get older they become progressively less likely to enrol outside of Ireland when compared with students who are under 21 (significant at the 0.001 level).

19 Finn, M and Darmody, M (2017) Examining Student Immobility: a study of Irish Undergraduate Students, in Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management Volume 39(4), p423-434.

All the other variables in the model appear to positively affect the likelihood of studying abroad with our key indicators of interest each being found to be statistically significant. Thus, students with parents who are highly educated (an imperfect proxy for income) and perceive themselves be financially very well-off have the greatest chance of studying abroad. Again, each of these coefficients are highly statistically significant. As expected, linguistic ability appears to positively affect the likelihood of studying abroad with students who are extremely competent in foreign languages having the greatest chance to studying abroad (each significant at the 0.001 level). As such, the model presented here finds similar results to that of Finn and Darmody and reinforces their theory about the influences certain socio-economic factors have upon the low levels of Irish student mobility.

TABLE 8.7: SUMMARY OF THE EFFECT KEY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS HAVE ON STUDYING ABROAD [N=14,737]

	Logged Odds	Odds Ratio	Significance
Female	0.09 (0.04)	1.09 (0.04)	*
(Ref: Male)			
Age:			
– 21 to 23	-0.41 (0.04)	0.67 (0.03)	***
– Older than 23	-0.77 (0.06)	0.46 (0.03)	***
(Ref: Younger than 21)			
Full-time student	0.31 (0.07)	1.36 (0.1)	***
(Ref: Part-time student)			
Undergraduate	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)	
(Ref: Postgraduate)			
University or Associate/Affiliate College	0.14 (0.04)	1.15 (0.05)	***
(Ref: Institute of Technology)			
Highest Level of Parental Education:			
– Up to Leaving Certificate	0.08 (0.07)	1.08 (0.08)	
– Higher Education	0.36 (0.06)	1.43 (0.09)	***
(Ref: Up to Junior Certificate)			
Perceived Financial Security:			
– Not very well-off	0.02 (0.07)	1.02 (0.07)	
– Average	-0.02 (0.06)	0.98 (0.06)	
– Somewhat well-off	0.09 (0.07)	1.09 (0.08)	
– Very well-off	0.36 (0.11)	1.44 (0.16)	***
(Ref: Not at all well-off)			
Number of Languages			
– Two	0.45 (0.04)	1.58 (0.07)	***
– Three	0.83 (0.06)	2.29 (0.13)	***
– Four	1.11 (0.14)	3.03 (0.42)	***
– Five or more	1.68 (0.30)	5.37 (1.60)	***
(Ref: One)			
Intercept	-1.34 (0.12)	0.26 (0.03)	***
Nagelkerke R-squared	0.26		

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Standard errors in parentheses.

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APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND

The main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collate comparable data from 30 countries on the social dimension of European higher education. It focuses on the socio-economic background and on the living conditions of students. It also investigates other interesting aspects of student life such as international mobility and employment during term-time. The core project provides reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons (disseminated through www.eurostudent.eu) but this report provides results from over 20,000 students attending higher education institutions in Ireland. The survey is co-ordinated in Europe by the German Federal Ministry of Education and marks the sixth such survey of its kind.

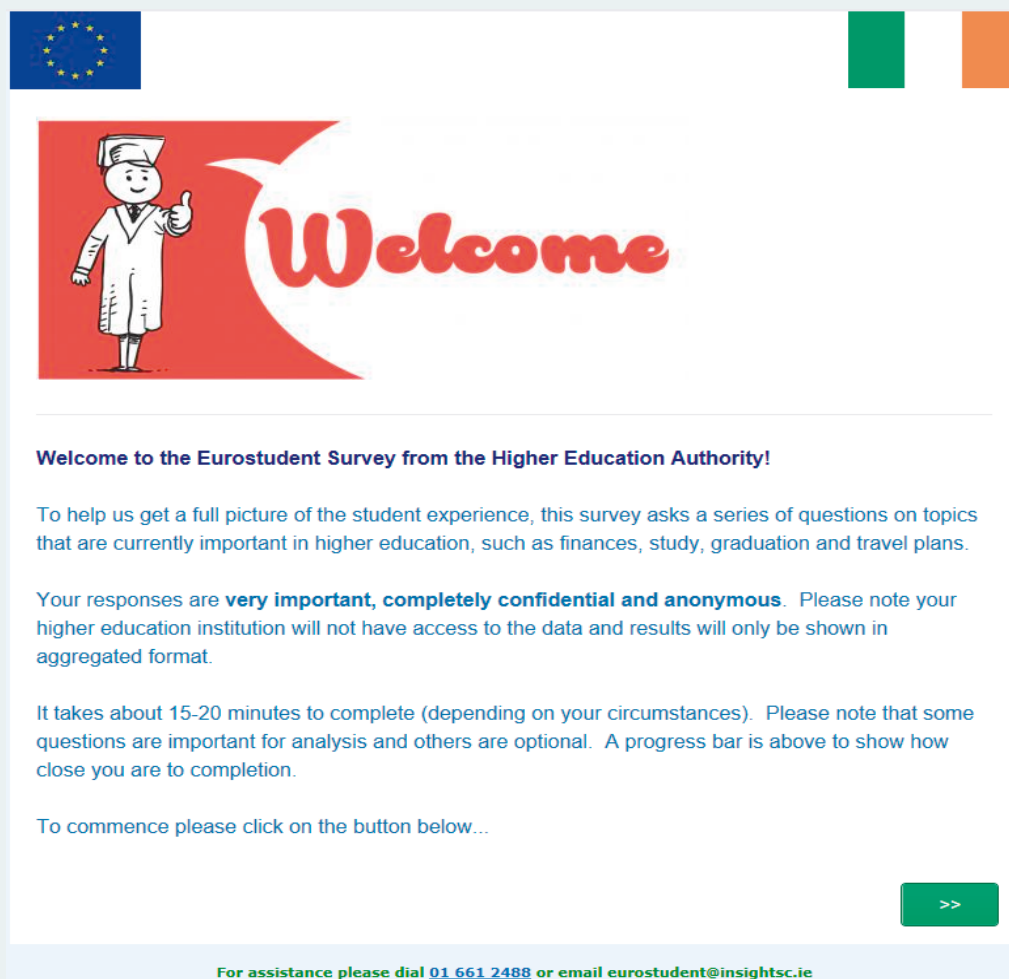
Ireland is one of 30 countries which participated in the Eurostudent VI survey, and this report continues the initiative of previous Eurostudent reports through extensively analysing the characteristics of students studying in Ireland by examining the demographic profile of the student population, the courses they are undertaking, their income and expenditure, their accommodation and employment, the route they took into higher education and the extent to which they study abroad as part of their programme.

The following institutions were invited to participate in Eurostudent VI:

Type	Institution
Universities including Associate and Affiliate Colleges & Royal College of Surgeons Ireland	Dublin City University
	Mary Immaculate College
	Mater Dei Institute of Education
	Maynooth University
	National College of Art & Design
	National University of Ireland, Galway
	Royal College of Surgeons
	St. Angela's College of Education
	St. Patrick's College Drumcondra
	Trinity College Dublin
	University College Cork
	University College Dublin
	University of Limerick
	Waterford Institute of Technology
Institutes of Technology	Athlone Institute of Technology
	Cork Institute of Technology
	Dublin Institute of Technology
	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
	Dundalk Institute of Technology
	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
	Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
	Institute of Technology, Carlow
	Institute of Technology, Sligo
	Institute of Technology, Tallaght
	Institute of Technology, Tralee
	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
	Limerick Institute of Technology
	Waterford Institute of Technology

Each institution participated by issuing an email (or series of emails) to each qualifying student throughout the data collection campaign (April-May 2016).

All students responded through an online survey portal (opening screen below).



Students were invited to participate in the survey via email (directly from their respective institutions) using either a generic link or unique link. The benefits of the unique link allowed students the ability to pause and resume at a later stage, it also ensured that students who already participated did not receive a reminder. However, the unique link also involved additional administrative time to process so not all institutions opted to issue the unique link due to resource constraints. Approximately half of the institutions opted to issue the unique link.

In addition to the email, students were encouraged to respond using social media (Facebook) and poster campaigns (some sample posters are shown below). An incentive was offered in the form of five iPad Minis and 25 vouchers to the value of €25.

FIGURE 1.2: SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT ASPECTS OF STUDY PROGRAMME

Aspect	% of students
Quality of teaching	84
Organisation of studies and timetable	75
Availability to select from a broad variety of courses	65
College administration's attitude towards students	54
Teaching staff's attitude towards students	42
Study facilities (e.g. library, computers, buildings, classroom)	29



EUROSTUDENT SURVEY 2016
Enter @ <http://bit.ly/eurostudentireland>

A comparison of your student life with European counterparts!
Check your email to complete the survey or enter @ <http://bit.ly/eurostudentireland>
Grand prize to be won after closing date of May 27th
See www.eurostudent.eu for further information about the Eurostudent Survey Project



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APPENDIX B: RESPONSE RATE AND WEIGHTING

Approximately 20,000 valid student responses (from a population of approximately 200,000 students²⁰) were collated and this represented a response rate of 10% of all students (an increase from 5.1% in Eurostudent V, 2013).

As with all sample surveys, there is some element of response bias in the data, i.e. certain cohorts are more likely to respond for various reasons. For example, the response rates by each of the key classification variables are:

- **Gender** – 12.0% for female students and 8.3% for male students.
- **Level** – 9.4% for postgraduate students and 10.3% for undergraduate students.
- **Status** – 10.9% for full-time students and 6.2% for part-time students.
- **Institution Type** – 10.3% for students from the Institutes of Technology and 10.1% for students from the Universities (including Associate and Affiliate Colleges & Royal College of Surgeons Ireland).
- **Age** – 10.9% for students aged less than 21 years old, 10.2% for students aged 21 to 23 years old and 9.5% for students aged 24 years and above.

In order to address these imbalances, all valid survey-responses (N = 20,274) were weighted to reflect the known population parameters²¹ of **inter-locked** gender, full-time/part-time status, undergraduate/postgraduate status, age and type of institution. Since response-rates were different for various sub-populations of students, a series of weights were calculated to reflect these different response-rates. In weighting, it is assumed that the sample of students from the sub-populations is a representative sample from their respective populations.

Unless otherwise stated, all results quoted in the report are based on the weighted sample of responses.

20 Students in ISCED 8 study programmes (PhD and Doctoral programmes) were not considered as a target group in Eurostudent VI on grounds that results across countries are difficult to compare.

21 Using SRS 2015/16 dataset.

APPENDIX C: EUROSTUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

EUROSTUDENT VI

QUESTIONNAIRE – IRELAND

A – CLASSIFICATION

1.0 Are you actively pursuing your studies in the current semester in Ireland? [Single choice.] [Compulsory.]

1	Yes	If category "Yes" please continue with question 1.1
2	No, I am (temporarily) studying at a higher education institution abroad, not in Ireland (e.g. on Erasmus)	If categories 2 to 5 ("No,...") please stop answering the questionnaire (respondent is not part of the standard target group)
3	No, I'm currently interrupting my studies (either officially or not)	
4	No, I stopped studying	
5	No, I already graduated and I am not studying anymore	

The following questionnaire often refers to your (current) main study programme. If you are enrolled in more than one study programme, please pick one as your main study programme (the one which is currently more important for your studies) and refer to this study programme throughout the whole questionnaire (unless otherwise specified).

1.1 Is your current (main) study programme formally defined as a distance learning programme? "Distance learning programmes" are study programmes which do not provide any physical face-to-face interaction during lectures. Formally refers to the design of the programme and not your actual behaviour. [Single choice.] [Compulsory.]

1	Yes	If "Yes" please stop answering the questionnaire (respondent is not part of the standard target group)
2	No	If "No" please continue with question 1.2

1.2 At what higher education institution are you studying in the current semester? Please refer to your current (main) study programme. [Single choice.] [Dropdown list.] [Compulsory.]

1	Athlone Institute of Technology	15	Mary Immaculate College
2	Cork Institute of Technology	16	Mater Dei Institute of Education
3	Dublin City University	17	National College of Art & Design
4	Dublin Institute of Technology	18	National University of Ireland, Galway
5	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	19	Maynooth University
6	Dundalk Institute of Technology	20	St. Angela's College of Education
7	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	21	St. Patrick's College Drumcondra
8	Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown	22	Trinity College Dublin
9	Institute of Technology, Carlow	23	University College Cork
10	Institute of Technology, Sligo	24	University College Dublin
11	Institute of Technology, Tallaght	25	University of Limerick
12	Institute of Technology, Tralee	26	Waterford Institute of Technology
13	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	27	Royal College of Surgeons
14	Limerick Institute of Technology		

1.3.1 When were you born? [Compulsory.] [Please provide month and year of your birthday.] [Dropdown menus]

Month _____ Year _____

1.3.2 What is your gender? [Single choice.] [Compulsory.]

1	Female
2	Male
3	I prefer not to assign myself into the above-mentioned categories

1.3.3 What year of the course are you currently in? [Single choice.]	
1	First
2	Second
3	Third
3	Fourth
3	Fifth or higher

B – CURRENT STUDY SITUATION

1.4 With which qualification does your current (main) study programme conclude? If you study more than one course at the same time, please fill-in the survey for your main course and keep to this course throughout the questionnaire. [Single choice.] [Compulsory.] [Altered.]	
1	Higher Certificate
2	Diploma
3	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
4	Honours Bachelor Degree
5	Postgraduate Cert/Diploma
6	Taught Master's Degree
7	Research Master's Degree
8	PhD or Doctoral Programme
9	Other, please specify:

- Qualification replaces degree.
- The options of short national degree [up to 3 years, ISCED 6] and other postgraduate programmes [ISCED 7] do not map onto the Irish options above and are irrelevant in the Irish context.
- ISCED explanations are only shown here for mapping.

If PhD/Doctoral degree please stop answering the questionnaire (respondent is not part of the standard target group)

1.5 What is your current formal status as a student? Please refer to your current (main) study programme. [Single choice.] [Compulsory.]	
1	Full-time student
2	Part-time student
3	Other, please specify: _____

1.6 What is your current (main) study programme? [Single choice.] [Compulsory.] ISCED explanations are only shown here for mapping.			
1	Education	8	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
2	Humanities and Arts	9	Agriculture/Veterinary
3	Social Science	10	Health/Welfare
4	Business	11	Sport/Leisure
5	Law	12	Catering
6	Science	13	Services
7	Maths/Computing/Computer Science	14	Other, please specify: _____

1.7 In which country did you finish your degree leading to your current Master's programme? [Single choice.] [Altered.] Filtered: Only for master students [Code 6 or 7 in Question 1.4.]		
1	Ireland	If country selected/degree finished [cat. 1 or 2] please go to question 1.8
2	Abroad Drop down with list of (other) countries	
3	I haven't finished any previous study programme	If "I haven't finished any previous study programme" [cat. 3] please go to question 1.9.

1.8 How long after graduating from your previous study programme did you start your current Master's programme? [Single choice.] Only for master students who finished a previous degree [Code 1 or 2 in Q1.7.]	
1	Less than one year after graduating
2	Between one year and two years after graduating
3	More than two years after graduating

1.9 How satisfied are you regarding the following aspects of your current (main) study programme? [Scale reversed.]					
	Not satisfied at all				Very Satisfied
Quality of teaching	1	2	3	4	5
Organisation of studies and timetable	1	2	3	4	5
Study facilities (e.g. library, computers, buildings, classrooms)	1	2	3	4	5

1.10 Are you planning to continue studying in higher education after finishing your current study programme(s)? [Single choice.]		
1	Yes, I plan to continue studying within a year after finishing my current study programme(s)	If "Yes, within a year" or "Yes, later" please go to question 1.11.
2	Yes, I plan to continue studying more than a year after finishing my current study programme(s)	
3	No, I do not plan to continue studying at all	If "No, I do not plan to continue studying at all" or "I don't know yet." please go to question 1.12
4	I don't know yet	

1.11 Where are you planning to continue studying after finishing your current study programme(s)? [Single choice.] Filter: Only students planning to continue studying.	
1	Ireland
2	Abroad Drop down with list of (other) countries
3	I don't know yet

1.12 Regarding the competences gained during your current (main) study programme: How well do you think you are prepared for the labour market after graduating? [Scale reversed.]						
	Very poorly				Very well	Unable to rate
National (Irish) labour market	1	2	3	4	5	6
International labour market	1	2	3	4	5	6

1.13 To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Scale reversed. [Order randomised.]]					
	Do not agree at all				Strongly agree
My lecturers inspire me	1	2	3	4	5
It was always clear I would study in higher education one day	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend my current (main) study programme to other students	1	2	3	4	5
It was clear from the beginning what is expected from me in my current (main) study programme	1	2	3	4	5
I often have the feeling that I don't really belong in higher education	1	2	3	4	5
My lecturers are concerned with my learning progress	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes ask myself whether studying in higher education was the right choice for me	1	2	3	4	5

1.14 In your opinion, are students treated as detached consumers or partners in education? [Single choice.]	
1	Detached customers
2	Partners in education
3	Don't know

C – STUDY BACKGROUND

2.0 Do you have a Leaving Certificate or foreign equivalent? [Single choice.] The Leaving Certificate is the final examination in the Irish secondary school system. Other foreign equivalents include the Matura and Baccalauréat.		
1	Yes, obtained in Ireland	If "Yes, obtained in Ireland" or "Yes, obtained abroad" please go to question 2.1
2	Yes, obtained abroad (not in Ireland)	
3	No, I don't have a Leaving Certificate (or foreign equivalent)	If "No, I don't have a Leaving Certificate" please go to question 2.2

2.1 Did you obtain your Leaving Certificate (or foreign equivalent) within six months of leaving the secondary school system for the first time? "Leaving the secondary school system for the first time" refers to the first time you left the secondary school system (with or without graduation). "in direct relation to" means passing the Leaving Certificate within six months after leaving secondary school system for the first-time [Single choice.] Filter: Only students with Leaving Certificate.		
1	Yes, obtained Leaving Certificate (or foreign equivalent) within six months of leaving secondary school system	If "Yes, obtained in Ireland" or "Yes, obtained abroad" please go to question 2.1
2	No, obtained Leaving Certificate more than six months after leaving secondary school system for the first time	If "No, I don't have a Leaving Certificate" please go to question 2.2

Please go to question 2.3.

2.2 Where did you last attend the secondary school system? Secondary school consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (lower secondary), followed by a two or three-year Senior Cycle (upper secondary), depending on whether the optional Transition Year (TY) is taken. [Single choice.] Filter: Only students without Leaving Certificate.	
1	In Ireland
2	Abroad (not in Ireland)

2.3 How long after leaving the secondary school system for the first time? "Leaving the secondary school system for the first time" refers to the first time you left the secondary school system (with or without graduation), even if this was not when you gained the higher education entrance qualification, e.g. Leaving Certificate. First entry in higher education regardless if in Ireland or abroad.	
1	Less than one year
2	Between one and two years
3	More than two years

2.4 When did you enter higher education for the first time? [Dropdown boxes]

Month _____ Year _____

2.5 When did you start your *current* (main) study programme? [Dropdown boxes]

Month _____ Year _____

2.6 Were any competences/experiences you gained outside of the formal education system recognised for your first admittance to higher education in Ireland or credited towards the fulfilment of your current (main) study programme? *Please include any work experience, non-formal courses, self-study, volunteer work etc. that was/were recognised in the frame of your first admittance to higher education in Ireland and/or towards the fulfilment of your study programme (e.g. exemptions from courses or exams). [Multiple answers possible.]*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Yes, for my first admittance to higher education in Ireland |
| 2 | Yes, towards the fulfilment of my current (main) study programme (exemptions, less ECTS, etc.) |
| 3 | No, e.g. only used Leaving Certificate points (or foreign equivalent) to gain admittance to higher education |

2.7 Did you have any paid job(s) prior to entering higher education for the first time? *Please include also paid apprenticeships or paid internships. [Single choice.]*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and at least 20h per week |
| 2 | Yes, I worked continuously for at least one year without interruption and less than 20h per week |
| 3 | Yes, I worked, but less than one year |
| 4 | No, I did not work prior to entering higher education |

2.8 Did you ever (officially or unofficially) interrupt your current (main) study programme for at least two consecutive semesters? *[Single choice.]*

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| 1 | Yes | <i>If "Yes" please go to question 2.9</i> |
| 2 | No | <i>If "No" please go to question 3.0</i> |

2.9 What was/were the reason(s) for the interruption of at least two consecutive semesters during your current (main) study programme? *If you have interrupted your current (main) study programme more than once, please refer to the last interruption. [Multiple answers possible.] Filter: Only students who have interrupted their studies.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Financial difficulties |
| 2 | Family-related reasons (e.g. pregnancy, care of children, parents etc.) |
| 3 | Work-related reasons (e.g. non-compulsory internship, job opportunity) |
| 4 | Health-related reasons |
| 5 | Lack of motivation |
| 6 | Other reasons |

D – LIVING CONDITIONS

3.0 Who do you live with during term time (i.e. Monday to Friday)? [Multiple answers possible.]

1	Parents (or grandparents, uncles, aunts, or similar)	Students living with parents (or grandparents, uncles, aunts, or similar) (cat. 1), irrespective of other answer categories ticked please go to question 3.2. Students not living with parents (or grandparents, uncles, aunts, or similar) (cat.2-5) please go to question 3.1.
2	Partner/spouse	
3	My child(ren)/my partner's child(ren)	
4	With (an)other person(s) not mentioned above (e.g. students, friends, etc.)	
5	I live alone	

3.1 Do you live in student accommodation, e.g. dormitory or halls of residence? [Single choice.] Filter: Only students who do not live with their parents (or grandparents, uncles, aunts, or similar).

1	Yes
2	No

3.2 How satisfied are you with your accommodation concerning the following aspects?

	Not satisfied at all				Very satisfied
Cost	1	2	3	4	5
Location	1	2	3	4	5
Overall condition	1	2	3	4	5
Travel time to higher education institution	1	2	3	4	5

3.3 What is the average monthly amount at your disposal from the following sources during the current semester? <i>"At your disposal" is the money which is meant for monthly consumption, no matter when it was earned.</i>	
Add a '0' if you did not receive any income from a certain source.	Average Amount in Euro (per month)
Provision from family/partner	
Provision from family/partner	
Student support from Irish sources (grant, loan, scholarship)	
Public student grant/scholarship, e.g. SUSI grant	
Public student loan	
Institutional scholarship	
(Public or private) Loan with public guarantee/subsidy of interest	
Student grant/scholarship from a private organisation	
Student loan from a private organisation	
Other student support from national sources	
Student support from non-Irish sources (e.g. home country, EU)	
Student support from non-Irish sources (e.g. home country, EU)	
Self-earned income	
Current paid jobs	
Previous jobs (e.g. earned during holidays) – only average amount used per month	
Other	
Public sources (e.g. child benefit, pension)	
Private sources not repayable (e.g. income from capital, property, occasional income from sales, gifts)	
Private sources repayable (e.g. loan, private borrowing)	
TOTAL AMOUNT	

3.4 What are your average monthly expenses for the following items during the current semester? <i>I.e. all regular costs, excluding costs for items like holidays or large single transactions. Although it might be difficult, please refer only to your own expenses (not those for family/partner, unless specified). "Paid by others": expenses which are paid for you by your parents/partner/employer or others, directly, e.g. rent paid by parent to your landlord. Please do not include any payments made on your behalf by the state. Please enter your best estimates.</i>		
A Living costs per month		
Add '0' if no money was spent on a certain type of costs.	I pay out of my own pocket (in Euro per month)	Paid by parents/ partner/others for me (in Euro per month)
1. Total accommodation cost (rent/mortgage including utilities, water, electricity...)		
2. Food		
3. Transportation		
4. Communication (telephone, internet etc.)		
5. Health costs (e.g. medical insurance)		
6. Childcare		
7. Debt payment (except mortgage)		
8. Social and leisure activities		
9. Other regular living costs (clothing, toiletries, pets, insurance [except medical insurance])		
TOTAL		

B What are your average expenses (in Euro) per semester for the following needs? <i>Please indicate whether costs below are per month, semester or year:</i>	
Month	
Semester	
Year	

<i>Add '0' if no money was spent on a certain type of costs.</i>	I pay out of my own pocket (in Euro)	Paid by parents/ partner/others for me (in Euro)
1. Tuition fees, registration fees, examination fees, administrative fees		
2. Contributions to the college and student associations, e.g. membership to clubs and societies		
3. Learning materials (e.g. books, photocopying, DVDs, field trips)		
4. Other regular study-related costs (e.g. private tutoring, additional courses)		
TOTAL		

3.5 To what extent are you currently experiencing financial difficulties? <i>[Reversed.]</i>				
Not at all				Very seriously
1	2	3	4	5

3.6 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current semester? <i>Please include also paid internships. [Single choice.]</i>		
1	Yes, I work during the whole semester	<i>If "Yes, I work during the whole semester" or "Yes, I work from time to time during the semester" please go to question 3.7</i>
2	Yes, I work from time to time during the semester	
3	No, I don't work during the semester	<i>If "No, I don't work during the semester" please go to question 3.11</i>

3.7 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current semester? <i>Filter: Only students who work during the semester.</i>
Paid job(s): _____ h/week

3.8 To what extent do the following statements apply to your situation? <i>Please refer to your paid job(s) during the current semester. [Scales reversed.] Filter: Only students who work during the semester</i>					
	Does not apply at all				Applies totally
I work to cover my living costs	1	2	3	4	5
I work to gain experience on the labour market	1	2	3	4	5
Without my paid job, I could not afford to be a student	1	2	3	4	5
I work because I have to support others financially (children, partner, parents etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

3.9 How closely related is/are your paid job(s) to the content of your study programme? <i>Please refer to your paid job(s) during the current semester. Filter: Only students who work during the semester.</i>				
Not at all				Very closely
1	2	3	4	5

3.10 Which of the following describes your current situation best? <i>[Single choice.] Filter: Only students who work during the semester.</i>	
1	Primarily I am a student, and I am working alongside my studies
2	Primarily I work, and I am studying alongside my paid job(s)

3.11 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current semester? <i>Try to fill in the amount of hours per day for each day of the week, including the weekend. Add a '0' if no hours were spent on an activity on the respective day. In case lectures do not take place weekly (e.g. 8hrs-seminars on three days of the semester), please average out the total time spent accordingly. Please refer to hours of 60min here.</i>							
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Taught studies (lessons, seminars, labs, tests, etc.)							
Personal study time (like preparation, learning, homework)							

3.12 Looking at the time you spend on study-related activities and paid job(s) during the current semester, please indicate if you would like to spend less or more time on the following activities: <i>Students currently without paid jobs: Please also indicate if you would like to spend the same time (i.e. none) or more (some) time on paid jobs.</i>			
	Less time	Same	More time
Taught studies	1	2	3
Personal study	1	2	3
Paid jobs	1	2	3

3.13 Did you have (a) paid job(s) during the lecture-free period/holidays during the last 12 months? <i>Please include also paid internships. [Single choice.]</i>	
1	Yes
2	No

E – INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

4.0 Have you ever been enrolled abroad since you first entered higher education in Ireland? <i>Please refer only to temporary study periods (not full study programmes) abroad (outside of Ireland). [Single choice.]</i>	
1	Yes, I have (please go on to question 4.2.)
2	No, but I plan to go (please go on to question 4.1.)
3	No, and I do not plan to go (please go on to question 4.7.)

4.1 Which of the following statements describes your current plans for studying abroad? <i>[Single choice.] Filter: Only students who are planning to study abroad. [Questions 4.2 to 4.6: only students who have been enrolled abroad]</i>	
1	I have already made arrangements to go (please go on to question 4.7)
2	I haven't made any arrangements, but I am intending to go (please go on to question 4.7)

If you have been enrolled abroad more than once, please refer to your most recent stay abroad.

4.2 What degree were you studying for in Ireland when you (temporarily) went abroad? <i>If you have studied abroad more than once, please refer to your most recent stay abroad. Multiple answers possible Filter: Only students who have been enrolled abroad. ISCED description will be removed on questionnaire.</i>	
1	Higher Certificate
2	Diploma
3	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
4	Honours Bachelor Degree
5	Postgraduate Cert/Diploma
6	Taught Master's Degree
7	Research Master's Degree
8	PhD or Doctoral Programme
9	Other, please specify:

4.3 In which country were you enrolled, and for how long? <i>Filter: Only students who have been enrolled abroad.</i>	
Country: _____ <i>[drop down list with countries]</i>	
Duration in months: _____	

4.4 Were the credits (ECTS, certificates) you gained for your enrolment abroad recognised by your home institution? <i>[Single choice.] Filter: Only students who have been enrolled abroad.</i>	
1	Yes, all of the credits were recognised
2	Yes, the credits were partly recognised
3	No, none of the credits were recognised
4	I did not gain any credits for my studies abroad
5	I don't know (yet)

4.5 Within which of the following organisational frameworks was your enrolment abroad organised? <i>[Single choice.] Filter: Only students who have been enrolled abroad</i>	
1	EU programme (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus)
2	Other programme, please specify:
3	Independently organised, without any programme

4.6 Which of the following sources did you use to fund your enrolment period abroad, and which one of them was your primary source of funding? Please think about all costs of studying abroad, including e.g. travel costs to the foreign location and tuition/registration fees at the host institution. Please indicate all sources of funding you used (multiple answers) and the primary source of funding (single choice). Filter: Only students who have been enrolled abroad.

	Sources of funding [Multiple answers possible]	Primary source of funding [Single choice]
1. Contribution from parents/family/partner		
2. Own income from previous job or own savings		
3. Income from paid job during my studies abroad		
4. Regular study grants/loans from home country		
5. Special study grant/loans from home country for going abroad		
6. EU study grants/loans (e.g. Erasmus, Other)		
7. Funding from private businesses		
8. Funding from non-governmental organisations (NGOs)		
9. Other, please specify:.....		

[Questions 4.7. to 4.8: all students]

4.7 To what extent are or were the following aspects an obstacle for enrolment abroad to you? If you have been enrolled abroad, please consider to which extent the following aspects were real obstacles to the planning and implementation of the period abroad. If you have not been enrolled abroad (yet), please consider to which extent the following aspects currently deter you from going abroad.

	Big obstacle				No obstacle
Insufficient skills in foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of information provided by my HEI	1	2	3	4	5
Separation from partner, child(ren), friends, family	1	2	3	4	5
Additional financial burden	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of paid job	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of motivation	1	2	3	4	5
Low benefit for my studies at home	1	2	3	4	5
Difficult integration of enrolment abroad into the structure of my home study programme	1	2	3	4	5
Problems with recognition of results achieved abroad	1	2	3	4	5
Problems with access regulations to the preferred country (visa, residence permit)	1	2	3	4	5
Limited admittance to mobility programmes	1	2	3	4	5
My health/disability	1	2	3	4	5

4.8 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities as a student in higher education in Ireland? Abroad: outside of Ireland

	Please indicate all that apply	
Research/fieldtrip		If at least one "Yes" please go to question 4.9
Internship/work placement		
Summer/winter school		If all "No" please go to question 4.10
Language course		
Other, please specify:		

4.9 Please fill in, per activity, the following details for your most recent study-related stay abroad. *Abroad: outside of Ireland Filter: Only students who have been abroad for study-related activities*

	Duration in months	Country	Did you gain ECTS* with it?		
			Yes	No	Not sure yet
1. Research/Fieldtrip			1	2	3
2. Internship/work placement			1	2	3
3. Summer/winter school			1	2	3
4. Language course			1	2	3
5. Other, please specify:			1	2	3

* ECTS-European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

4.10 I will have to go abroad in order to find work in my study background after graduation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

F – PERSONAL DETAILS

In order to be able to statistically compare the survey data with the official student statistics we would be grateful if you could provide the following information. Your anonymity shall remain unaffected.

5.2 With which sex are you officially registered at your current higher education institution? *[Single choice.] This question is purely for statistical purposes. Filter: Students who prefer not to assign themselves, i.e. code 3 (Other) from 1.3.2.*

1	Female
2	Male

5.3 In which country were you and your parents (or those who raised you) born? *Please enter "Don't know" if unknown*

	Country
1. You	[drop-down list]
2. Father/Guardian 1	[drop-down list]
3. Mother/Guardian 2	[drop-down list]

5.4 What is/are your native language(s)? *[Multiple answers possible.]*

1	English
2	Irish
3	Other1, please specify:.....
4	Other2, please specify:.....
5	Other3, please specify:.....

5.5 In how many languages do you assess your written and spoken skills as (very) good (including your native language(s))?

1	In one language
2	In two languages
3	In three languages
4	In four languages
5	In more than four languages

5.6 Do you have any children? [Single choice.]		
1	Yes	If "Yes" continue with question 5.7
2	No	If "No" continue with question 5.8

5.7 How old is your youngest child? Filter: Only students who have children.
___ year(s) of age

5.8 Please indicate if you have a disability, impairment, long-standing health problem or functional limitation. "Long-standing health problem" describes a health problem that has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months. [Multiple answers possible.]		
1	Yes, physical chronic disease	If "Yes..." continue with question 5.9
2	Yes, mental health problem	
3	Yes, mobility impairment	
4	Yes, sensory impairment (vision, hearing)	
5	Yes, learning disability (e.g. ADHD, Dyslexia)	
6	Yes, another long-standing health problem/functional limitation/impairment/etc.	
7	No	If "No" continue with question 6.0

[Only students who have indicated an impairment] The following questions are directed at students with disabilities, health impairments, physical chronic diseases, mental health problems, learning disabilities, other long-standing health problems or functional limitations.

To keep the texts brief, we use the term "impairment" as an umbrella term. We hope you will understand this decision, even if you personally prefer the use of another term.

5.9 Is/are your impairment(s) noticeable to others? [Single choice.] Filter: Only students who have indicated an impairment.	
1	Yes, other people notice the first time they meet me that I have an impairment
2	Yes, other people will probably notice after some time that I have an impairment
3	No, my impairment is not generally noticeable to others

5.10 To what extent does/do your impairment(s) limit your... Filter: Only students who have indicated an impairment					
	Severely limited				Not limited at all
Normal everyday activities	1	2	3	4	5
Studies	1	2	3	4	5

If "in your studies" = "not limited at all" continue with question 6.0, irrespective of answer regarding "activities people usually do"

If "in your studies" = "somewhat limited" (category 1 to 4) continue with question 5.11, irrespective of answer regarding "activities people usually do"

5.11 Please think of the limitations you face in your studies due to your impairment: How would you rate the public and institutional support you receive to overcome these limitations? [Single choice.] Filter: Only students who have indicated an impairment that is at least somewhat limiting					
Not sufficient at all				Entirely sufficient	I do not need/want any support
1	2	3	4	5	6

The following questions are about your mother and father or those person(s) who raised you.

6.0. What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained?		
	Father or Guardian 1	Mother or Guardian 2
1. No formal qualification [ISCED 0]	1	1
2. Primary only [ISCED 1]	2	2
3. Group/Inter/Junior Certificate [ISCED 2]	3	3
4. Apprenticeship without Leaving Certificate [ISCED 2]	4	4
5. Leaving Certificate [ISCED 3]	5	5
6. FETAC Certificate/Other Further Education [ISCED 3]	6	6
7. Apprenticeship with Leaving Certificate [ISCED 3]	7	7
8. Higher Certificate [ISCED 5]	8	8
9. Diploma [ISCED 5]	9	9
10. Ordinary Bachelor Degree [ISCED 6]	10	10
11. Honours Bachelor Degree [ISCED 7]	11	11
12. Postgraduate Cert/Diploma [ISCED 7]	12	12
13. Master's Degree [ISCED 7]	13	13
14. PhD or higher [ISCED 8]	14	14
15. I don't know	15	15

6.1 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or guardians) are compared with other families? If one or both of your parents is/are deceased, please refer to their most recent financial situation. [Single choice.]				
Not at all well-off	Not very well-off	Average	Somewhat well-off	Very well-off
1	2	3	4	5

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1998. The public sector has also become an important employer of people with disabilities. In 1998, 1.2 million people with disabilities were employed in the public sector, compared with 0.8 million in 1980.

There are a number of reasons why the public sector has become an important employer of people with disabilities. One reason is that the public sector has a long history of employing people with disabilities. In the 19th century, the public sector employed people with disabilities in a number of different roles, including as clerks, typists, and stenographers. In the 20th century, the public sector employed people with disabilities in a number of different roles, including as teachers, nurses, and social workers.

Another reason why the public sector has become an important employer of people with disabilities is that the public sector has a number of advantages over the private sector. One advantage is that the public sector is not subject to the same profit pressures as the private sector. This means that the public sector can afford to pay people with disabilities a fair wage, even if they are not as productive as people without disabilities.

Another advantage is that the public sector has a number of policies in place that make it easier for people with disabilities to work. For example, the public sector has a number of policies that make it easier for people with disabilities to get a job, such as providing training and support for people with disabilities. The public sector also has a number of policies that make it easier for people with disabilities to stay in their jobs, such as providing flexible working hours and a supportive work environment.

There are a number of challenges that the public sector faces in employing people with disabilities. One challenge is that the public sector has a number of different departments, each with its own set of policies and procedures. This can make it difficult for people with disabilities to navigate the public sector and find a job. Another challenge is that the public sector has a number of different funding sources, which can make it difficult to secure the funding needed to employ people with disabilities.

Despite these challenges, the public sector remains an important employer of people with disabilities. In the future, the public sector should continue to work to improve its policies and procedures in order to make it easier for people with disabilities to work. The public sector should also continue to work to secure the funding needed to employ people with disabilities.

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