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Eurostudent Survey II:

Irish Report on the Social and Living Conditions of Higher Education Students 2003/2004

MERIKE DARMODY, EMER SMYTH, PHILIP O'CONNELL,
JAMES WILLIAMS, BERNADETTE RYAN

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The Eurostudent Survey, and in particular this Irish Report, explores the characteristics of Ireland's student population, the economic circumstances they find themselves in, and their living circumstances.

Participation in higher education in Ireland is a success story. From a low base of 11% participation in 1966, and still as low as 20% in 1980, today some 55% of school leavers are entering higher education. While this is still somewhat short of leading OECD countries, it is a very rapid increase in a relatively short period of time. A key part of this progress has been a wider and deeper understanding of the role higher education plays in personal development and economic well being as Ireland moves to being a knowledge economy. Another contributor has been the range of measures put in place to encourage those not traditionally represented to enter higher education, including adult learners, people with disabilities and those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This is a very positive development for the people concerned but also because we can better achieve our ambition to be a knowledge economy if we provide avenues to participation by all who can benefit.

The profile of higher education students is now more diversified than at any time previously. The present survey allows us to chart the differing experiences of part-time and full-time students, as well as the experience of students across the range of educational institutions, from the traditional universities, institutes of technology and other higher education institutions. The survey provides information on the characteristics of the student population, how they experience life at this level of education and how they balance multiple demands on their time and finances.

From the survey we see that the 'typical' full-time student in Ireland is 22 years of age; studying towards a primary degree; is single without dependent children, and has entered higher education directly from secondary school. On the other hand part-time students tend to be older, on average 34 years of age, and are more likely to be working, either full-time or part-time, and to be married with children. Part-time students are also more likely to use 'non-traditional' routes to gain access to higher education.

The present 'Irish Report of the Eurostudent Survey' is the second in a series (the first was carried out in 2000 and published in 2001), allowing us to gauge how the student population has changed over that time, and how their material situation has altered with the development of the wider economy. The present study has also collected information on some aspects of students' living situation. In particular, the survey looked at part-time employment among students, and how this affected the other areas of their student experience.

An interesting finding is that despite the recent focus from groups such as the Enterprise Strategy Group and the ESRI, pointing to the need for continued investment in education and training to sustain Irish competitiveness, part-time participation (despite a significant rise since the last survey) is much lower than full-time participation (22% vs. 78%). Those students who are availing of part-time participation tend to do so as part of their career development (some 69% are in studies closely related to their job), and/or with employer support (around 33% of those paying course fees received financial support from their employer). We know already that the companies most likely to invest in education and training for their employees are large multi-nationals. This survey suggests that up-skilling is a limited feature of the Irish higher education system and that, in order for individuals to benefit from such up-skilling, they need to be already well positioned, with both an established career and a supportive employer. This has significant policy implications, given that there is evidence that a majority of new jobs in Ireland will need some form of third level skills.

The HEA would like to express its appreciation for the work done by the ESRI, and in particular Emer Smyth, Merike Darmody, James Williams, Philip O'Connell, and Bernadette Ryan in conducting the 2003 Eurostudent Survey. The HEA is also grateful for the time and commitment of the members of the steering committee set up to guide the conduct and publication of this work. They include:

Anne Carpenter, Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology,
Anne O'Shea, Council of Heads of Irish Universities,
Heledd Fychan, Union of Students in Ireland,
Mary Dunne, Department of Education and Science
Fergal Costello, Higher Education Authority,
Barbara Carr, Higher Education Authority.

Finally, thanks are also due the members of the Statistics Unit in the HEA who supported the study - Brian Dennehy, Frank Condon, Oliver Mooney and Adrian O'Donoghue.

Tom Boland
Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROFILE

Recent decades have seen a dramatic expansion of enrolment in higher education institutions in Ireland. This expansion has been accompanied by a diversification of the profile of students pursuing higher education. There are notable differences in the experiences and profiles of part-time and full-time students pursuing higher education in Ireland. A 'typical'¹ full-time student is on average 22 years of age, pursuing a primary degree (67%), single (88%), has no children and has entered higher education after the completion of the Leaving Certificate. Part-time students, however, tend to be older, on average 32 years of age, are more likely to be engaged in full-time or part-time employment and married with children (only 12% reported being single). Part-time students are also more likely to use 'non-traditional' (i.e. Mature Years, Access, etc.) entry routes to higher education.

ACCOMMODATION

The highest proportion of full-time and part-time students live in a rented house or a flat (39%). Thirty-three per cent of students live with their parents/relatives, 17 per cent in their own household, 7 per cent in college residences either on or off the campus and 4 per cent in lodgings/digs. Students under 20 years of age pursuing a primary degree are more likely to live with their parents/ relatives or in designated student accommodation than older students. In general, all students spend a significant amount of their monthly income on accommodation, which is more expensive in larger towns and cities, especially in Dublin where the total average monthly accommodation costs amount to €417. Students living in student accommodation spend more on average on their accommodation compared to other groups. Students living with their parents or relatives expressed the highest level of satisfaction with their accommodation while satisfaction levels were lowest among those living in student accommodation. Overall the average distance of students' accommodation from college was 2.5 miles. The data also showed that, as might be expected, the further the accommodation, the longer students spent travelling to college.

INCOME

The average monthly direct income received by third-level students is €830. As might be expected, part-time students have substantially higher monthly incomes than full-time students (€1934 compared with €578). For both full-time and part-time students, the main source of income is employment. Over half of full-time students receive some income from their family while 40 per cent receive some support from the State (in the form of grants, social welfare payments or State scholarships). Fifty-four per cent of students also receive indirect support from their family in the form of a subsidy towards accommodation or other expenses. The proportion of students receiving such subsidies is higher among the younger age group on full-time courses.

1: The median is used as the 'average/typical' age in this report. The median age is the point at which half of the sampled students are older than this age while half are younger.

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure among higher education students is highest on accommodation and food. In general, expenditure levels are significantly higher among part-time students who spend an average of €1110 per month on various items compared with €611 among full-time students.

EMPLOYMENT

International studies show that more students are coming to university after working for a period of time and an increasing number are taking up employment while still in college. In Ireland, part-time students are much more likely to have held a regular job before college than full-time students (73 per cent compared with 22 per cent). Over half (53%) of students participating in the study hold regular jobs, 15 per cent work occasionally while 32 per cent do not hold a paid job during term-time. Female students were more likely to report being in regular paid employment than their male counterparts (47% compared with 39%) However, full-time students whose parents have third-level qualifications are less likely to hold regular jobs than whose parents have lower educational levels. The largest single group of full-time students in employment work 6 to 10 hours per week with just 7 per cent working more than twenty hours per week. In general, students' term-time jobs in Ireland are not related to their main field of study. The occupational profile of full-time and part-time workers differs markedly. In contrast to the concentration of full-time workers in service employment, part-time workers tend to be concentrated in professional and managerial employment. Students working during term-time tend to be less 'satisfied' with their workload than those not engaged in paid employment.

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

In general, third-level students participating in the survey tend to describe their current financial situation as fair or good. However, part-time students are much more likely to describe their financial situation as good (40%) compared to their full-time counterparts (24%), a pattern that must be seen in the context of higher incomes among this group. Students' satisfaction with their financial situation is also clearly linked with their income - among both full-time and part-time students, those with higher satisfaction levels tend to have higher incomes. Students from the professional classes are more likely to report being 'very satisfied' with their material well-being compared to those from working-class backgrounds. Full-time students were more likely to report being 'satisfied' with their workload while part-time students were more likely to find their workload 'acceptable'. Dissatisfaction levels are related to the number of hours worked per week and to the number of hours spent in lectures and tutorials.

STUDENT MOBILITY

Approximately 10 per cent of students had studied abroad at some point during their current course. Study-related activities abroad were more common among students from higher social classes and those whose parents were highly educated. Study abroad was more common among students on Humanities and Social Sciences courses than other areas. In general, students rely on their families or employment for funding their study abroad. Overall fluency levels in foreign languages are relatively low but proficiency is greater among those who have studied abroad.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Irish higher education sector, considered to be a key driver for the economy, has expanded significantly in recent years. The proportion of school leavers progressing to full-time third-level education has risen from an estimated 44 per cent in 1998 to 54 per cent in 2003 (Fitzpatrick Associates and O'Connell, 2005). Furthermore, the stock of students in third-level education has grown from approximately 21,000 in 1965 to over 137,000 by 2003 (OECD, 2004). In addition to an overall increase in participation in higher education, there has been an increasing emphasis on improving access for adult learners, people with disabilities and those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds through widening access routes, access programmes, improved facilities and financial supports. However, young people from professional and managerial backgrounds continue to be over-represented among those attending higher education institutions, particularly in degree programmes (Fitzpatrick Associates and O'Connell, 2005).

Recognition of the importance of higher education is reflected in the level of State expenditure on education in general and on the tertiary sector in particular. Expenditure on education in general reached almost 6 billion euro in 2003. Public expenditure on education in Ireland was 4.3% of GDP in 2001 compared to 5.1% in the European Union as a whole. However, investment in third-level education in Ireland is approximately 1.2% of GDP compared with 1.1% in the European Union.

An expansion of enrolment in Irish higher education has been accompanied by the introduction of new third-level institutions as well as the diversification of the profile of students pursuing higher education. There are notable differences in the experiences and profiles of part-time and full-time students pursuing higher education in Ireland. However, the experience of students within universities, institutes of technology and other higher education institutions has not been sufficiently analysed. The Irish Report of the Eurostudent Survey is designed to present detailed information on the social and economic conditions of students participating in higher education. The aim of the study is to document students' experiences in terms of their accommodation situation, sources of income, expenditure levels and overall well-being. The *Eurostudent Survey*, therefore, provides an important empirical basis for higher education policy. Similar surveys have been conducted in other European countries and the data collected in different countries therefore allow for cross-national comparison of students' socio-economic conditions.

This report presents the main findings of the *Eurostudent* 2003/2004 Survey carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute for the Higher Education Authority. Analyses allow for comparison with the situation of higher education students at an earlier time-point (see Ryan and O'Kelly, 2001). The present study has also collected additional information on some aspects of students' living situation. In particular, the survey collected more detailed information on part-time employment among students, including the type of work they undertake and whether they work at weekends or during the week. Analyses of these data complement work already undertaken by the ESRI on part-time employment among second-level students (McCoy and Smyth, 2004).

2. THE SURVEY AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The survey was carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute who were advised by a steering committee set up by the Higher Education Authority. The Eurostudent postal questionnaire was sent to 12,482 students in Irish third-level institutions. The participating third-level institutions were asked to select a random sample of students and to distribute the questionnaire. Questionnaires were returned by 3,900 individuals (55% female and 45% male), which gives an overall response rate of 31%. Response rates by individual higher education institutions participating in the study are presented in Table 1. The study includes universities, institutes of technology, colleges of education and other third-level colleges. Weighting was used to ensure that the responses were representative of the total student population in terms of full or part-time status, institution and gender.

The study explored students' experiences in universities, institutes of technology and other third-level institutions. Of the total sample surveyed:

- Fifty-one per cent of students were in universities and forty-nine per cent were in other types of third-level institutions.
- Fifty-four per cent of full-time students were under 21 years old, 33 per cent were aged 21 to 24 and 13 per cent were aged 25 or over.
- Overall 78 per cent of the Irish third-level students surveyed are taking a full-time and 22 per cent a part-time course.

The European study excluded certain categories such as PhD students and international students. In contrast, the Irish report includes students from all course levels (from National Certificate to Ph.D.) as well as both Irish and international students. Of the total sample, 94 per cent were Irish nationals and 6 per cent came from countries such as Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and elsewhere.

The report is divided into seven main chapters. Chapter 1 presents information on the socio-demographic characteristics of higher education students in Ireland. The chapter examines course characteristics by gender and social class comparing the situation of full-time and part-time students. Chapter 2 deals with accommodation issues while Chapter 3 discusses students' income patterns as well as sources of income. Chapter 4 focuses on students' expenditure, exploring differences between the expenditure patterns of full-time and part-time students. Chapter 5 deals with students' employment, describing the nature and extent of their employment. Chapter 6 looks at students' well-being in general, and experiences of overseas study of Irish students are analysed in Chapter 7.

Table 1: Responses to Questionnaire

Third-level Institutions	Number sent	Number of responses	Response Rate (%)
National University of Ireland, Cork	892	329	36.9
National University of Ireland, Dublin	1294	489	37.8
National University of Ireland, Galway	784	248	31.6
Trinity College, Dublin	932	317	34.0
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	398	85	21.4
Dublin City University	523	178	34.0
St. Patrick's Teacher Training College	258	102	39.5
University of Limerick	647	238	36.8
Mary Immaculate College	246	174	70.7
National College of Art & Design	124	26	21.0
Dublin Institute of Technology	1010	302	29.9
Athlone Institute of Technology	316	53	16.8
Institute of Technology, Carlow	268	79	29.5
Cork Institute of Technology	622	153	24.6
Dundalk Institute of Technology	271	75	27.7
Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology	393	67	17.0
Letterkenny Institute of Technology (incl. Tourism College, Killybegs)	386	67	17.4
Limerick Institute of Technology	330	110	33.3
Institute of Technology, Sligo	318	102	32.1
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	261	72	27.6
Institute of Technology, Tralee	259	83	32.0
Waterford Institute of Technology	472	133	28.2
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design	155	43	27.7
Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown	200	47	23.5
Tipperary Institute	200	70	35.0
St Angela's College	62	26	41.9
National College of Ireland	293	90	30.7
Mater Dei Institute	184	92	50.0
Pontifical College	137	19	13.9
Colaiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin	88	6	6.8
Frobel College, Blackrock	56	11	19.6
COI College, Rathmines	53	9	17.0
St. Catherine's College, Sion Hill	50	5	10.0
Total	12482	3900	31.2

1

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN IRELAND

Increased access to higher education over the years has contributed to a diversification of the student intake and the courses offered by higher education institutions. International research shows that the diversification of entry routes to higher education increasingly blurs the identities of students in terms of their age, social background and other characteristics (Erlach, 2004). In other words, students with different profiles and characteristics may have different experiences in college (Reay et al., 2001). While most of the research carried out among students in higher education is focused on ‘traditional’ full-time students, less is known about others who engage in part-time study. The aim of this report is to address this gap in research and explore what it is like to be a student in Ireland. This chapter presents a description of the socio-demographic characteristics of third-level students in Ireland.

1. COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

The study shows that overall, 78 per cent of the Irish third-level students surveyed were taking a full-time and 22 per cent a part-time course. There are no marked gender differences in the proportion taking full-time or part-time courses. The study revealed, however, that students under the age of 21 are more likely to undertake a full-time rather than a part-time course. As might be expected, older students were over-represented on part-time courses, as most of them were likely to be engaged in full-time or part-time employment.

Figure 1: Proportion of full and part-time students by main field of study

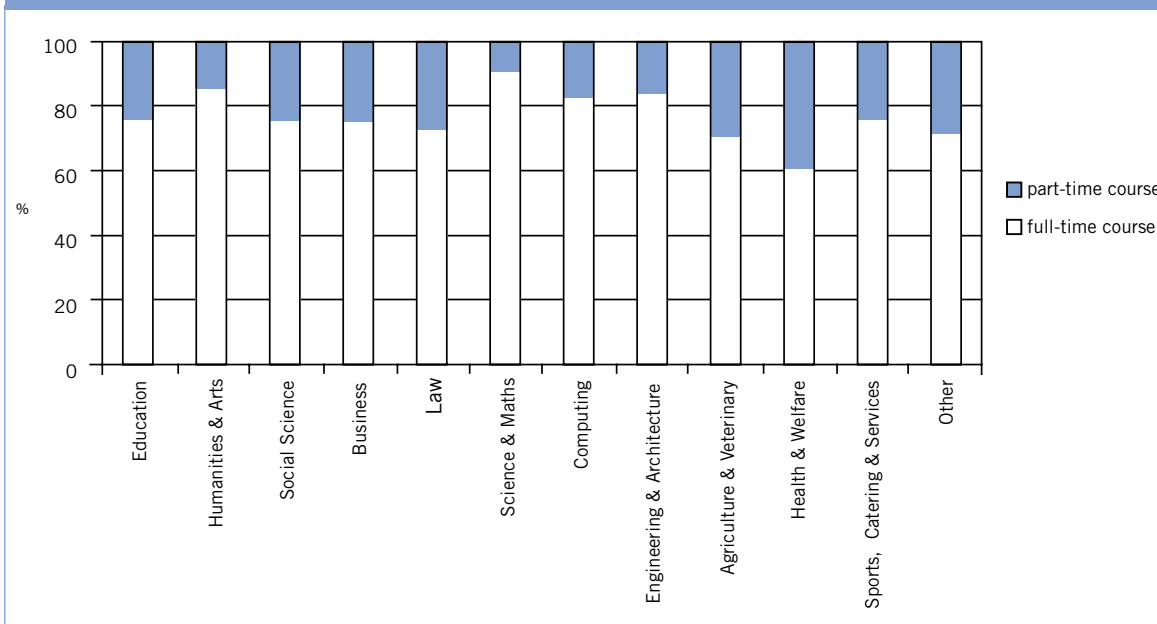


Figure 1 indicates the proportion of full and part-time students by the main field of study. In line with the findings by Ryan and O’Kelly (2001), part-time students make up the highest proportion of students in Health and Welfare and the lowest proportion of students in Science and Mathematics. In terms of their distribution across the different fields of study, part-time students are over-represented in health/welfare

and business; 44 per cent of part-time students are on such courses compared with 28 per cent of full-time students. The total average length of study across the disciplines was 3.6 years. Just over half (51%) of the students were enrolled in universities and the rest (49%) in other third-level institutions. An overall majority (58%) of students were enrolled on primary (undergraduate) degree courses, 17 per cent in postgraduate courses and a further 24 per cent in undergraduate certificate/diploma courses.

Table 2: Level of course (% within full-time and part-time courses)

	Full-time %	Part-time %	Total %
National Certificate	8.0	17.4	10.0
National Diploma	11.5	23.9	14.1
Primary Degree	66.6	24.8	57.8
Postgraduate Diploma	3.4	9.2	4.6
Masters Degree	6.2	20.7	9.2
PhD	4.1	1.5	3.5
Unspecified	0.3	2.6	0.8
Total	100	100	100

The majority of students taking full-time courses are pursuing a primary degree (see Table 2). In contrast, part-time students are fairly evenly spread between primary degrees, Masters' degrees and National Diploma courses. This pattern corresponds broadly with the findings in the previous Eurostudent survey. However, the numbers of students pursuing National Certificate on a full-time basis has dropped (15% in 2000) and an increased number of students study for a full-time PhD (2.3% in 2000). Females were more likely to pursue degree courses² compared to males (69% males and 72% females).

As found by Clancy (1995) and Fitzpatrick Associates and O'Connell (2005), the pattern of admission by field of study remains very gender stereotyped. Table 3 presents field of study by gender of the student. Of all the students surveyed, the largest proportion is enrolled in Business Studies and the smallest in Agriculture/Veterinary. Business Studies represents the largest single category among both male and female students. Engineering/ Architecture is more popular with male students while Humanities and Arts are more popular with females.

2: Degree courses comprise primary degrees, masters' degrees and PhDs

Table 3: Gender and main field of study

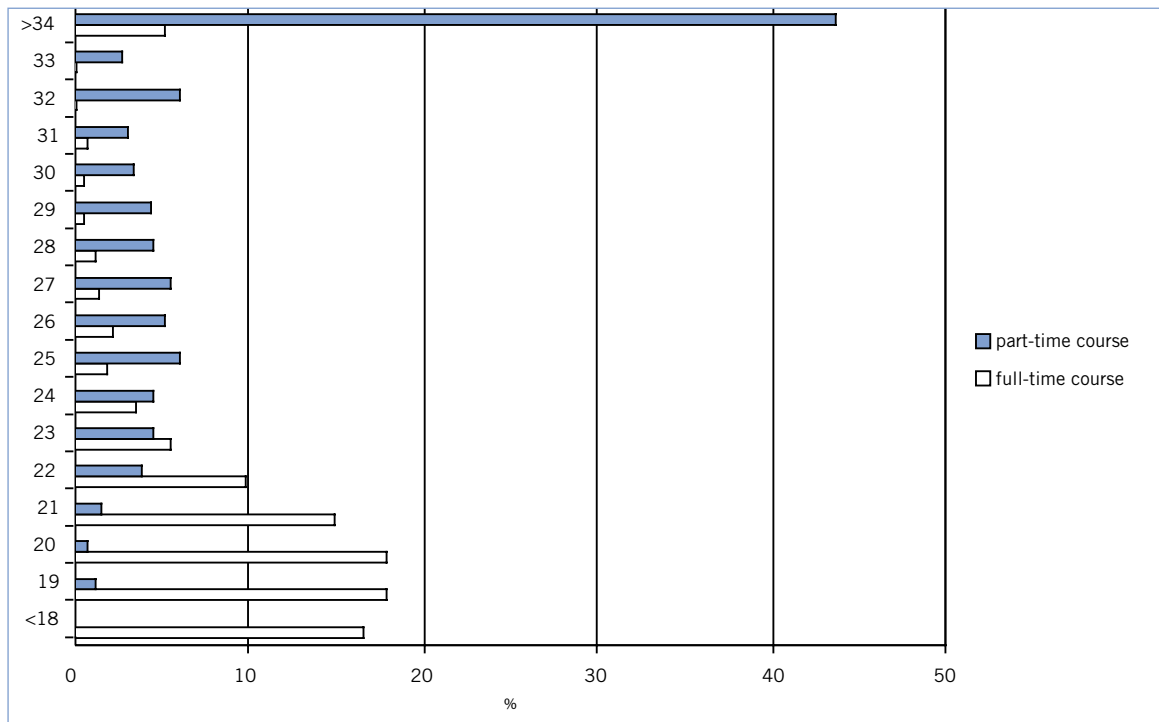
	Male %	Female %	Total %
Education	4.3	8.1	6.4
Humanities and Arts	12.2	20.4	16.7
Social Science	2.4	6.0	4.3
Business Studies	23.2	23.2	23.2
Law	2.9	4.0	3.5
Science and Maths	9.8	12.7	11.4
Computing	10.4	4.1	7.0
Engineering/Architecture	25.3	3.7	13.4
Agriculture/ Veterinary	0.9	0.8	0.8
Health/Welfare	4.1	12.1	8.5
Sport/Catering	2.2	2.4	2.3
Other	2.5	2.6	2.5
Total	100%	100%	100%

2. BACKGROUND AND FAMILY STATUS

As seen in Figure 2, the majority of students in the sample were under 22 years of age. There were more females than males across all age categories. However, the percentage of females in the older (mature) age categories is marginally higher.

There are marked differences between full-time and part-time students in their age distribution; part-time students are 32 years of age on average compared to 22 years of age among full-time students. Among students in the older age-groups (25 and over), there were significantly more part-time students (83%).

Figure 2: Age distribution of Irish third-level students



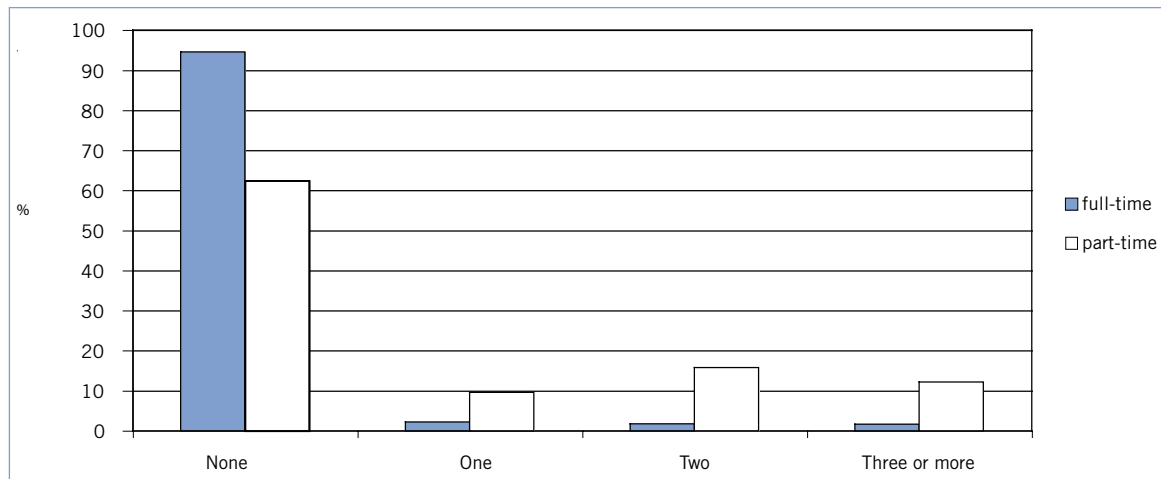
The majority (81%) of students participating in the survey were single³, 17 per cent were married or living as a couple and 2 per cent of the students fell into the 'divorced/ widowed/ separated' category. Full-time students were more likely to report being single (88% compared with 12% of part-time students)⁴. Only a relatively small number of sampled students had children (12%)⁵. Of the students with children, 30 per cent had one child, 39 per cent had two and 31 per cent had three or more children. A quarter of those with children had a youngest child at the pre-school stage, around half had school-going children (aged 4-15) while just over a quarter had a youngest child aged over 15 years of age. The majority of students with children were older than 25 years of age. Not surprisingly, given their age profile, students with children are over-represented on part-time courses as demonstrated by Figure 3. The proportion of students married or with children did not vary significantly by gender.

3. The proportion of single students in 2003/2004 survey is somewhat lower compared to the findings in 2001 (93% reported being single); however, this is mainly due to the increase in the proportion of part-time and older students.

4. In 2001 4 per cent of full-time students were married (29% part-time); an additional 4 per cent of full-time students (6% part-time) were living with a regular partner.

5. The corresponding figure in 2001 survey was 7 per cent.

Figure 3: Number of Children by full/part-time status



3. DISABILITY STATUS

Little is known about the experiences of third-level students with disabilities and the way in which different sources define 'disability' differ. AHEAD (2002) offers the following definition of disability focusing on the social and environmental barriers a person encounters that restrict participation:

A student is disabled if she or he requires a facility which is not part of the mainstream provision of the college concerned, to enable participation in the college to the full extent of her or his capabilities and without which she or he would be educationally disadvantaged in comparison with peers (Ibid. p.8).

In 2004 AHEAD carried out a detailed survey of students with disabilities for the Higher Education Authority including a breakdown across all third-level institutions. The study identified a total of 1,367 undergraduate students with disabilities in the study year 1998/1999 of which 40 per cent were first year students. Calculations using full-time undergraduate student totals revealed that the proportion of students with disabilities accounted for 1.1 per cent. Further analysis showed that the proportion of such students was largest in Arts and that asthma was the most commonly reported type of disability.

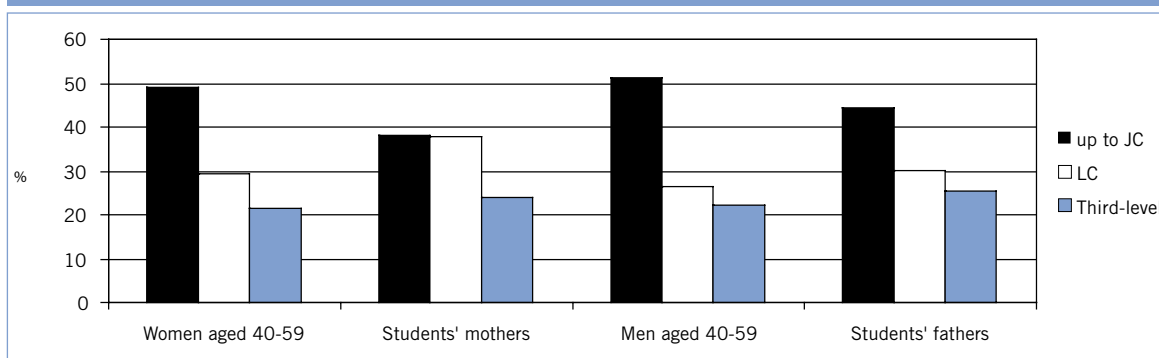
The Eurostudent study demonstrates that, of all the students surveyed, the vast majority did not report either physical or other disabilities; of the total sample, 1.3 per cent reported having a physical disability while 2 per cent reported having 'other' disabilities. The category 'other disability' was unspecified in the questionnaire so respondents may have interpreted it differently. There were no significant differences between full-time and part-time students in the prevalence of physical disabilities⁶. Because of the small numbers of students involved, there is little significant variation across courses and fields of study in the representation of students with disabilities. However, students with disabilities make up a somewhat higher proportion of those in Humanities, Arts and Social Science courses than in other areas.

6. Among full-time students there were 1.2 per cent with physical disabilities (1.7% part-time) and the proportion of 'other' disabilities among full-time students was 2 per cent (2.2% part-time).

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The level of parents' education is often indicative of the likelihood of their children's entry to third-level education (Reay et al., 2001a, 2001b.). The Eurostudent Report of 2001 also indicated a clear correlation between fathers' educational level and students' participation levels in higher education (Ryan and O'Kelly, 2001). Similar trends were observed in this study. Figure 4 indicates that the vast majority (73%) of students in higher education have at least one parent who has a Leaving Certificate or higher qualification. Compared with the national population aged 40 to 59 years of age, students' parents are under-represented among those with less than a Junior Certificate qualification and over-represented among those with upper secondary and higher education qualifications. This pattern is similar to that found in the previous Irish Report.

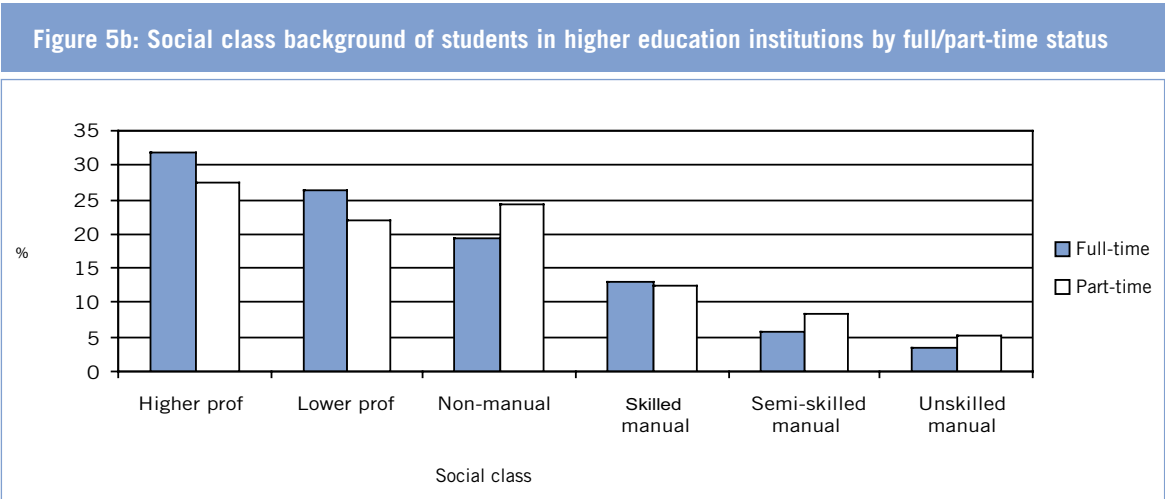
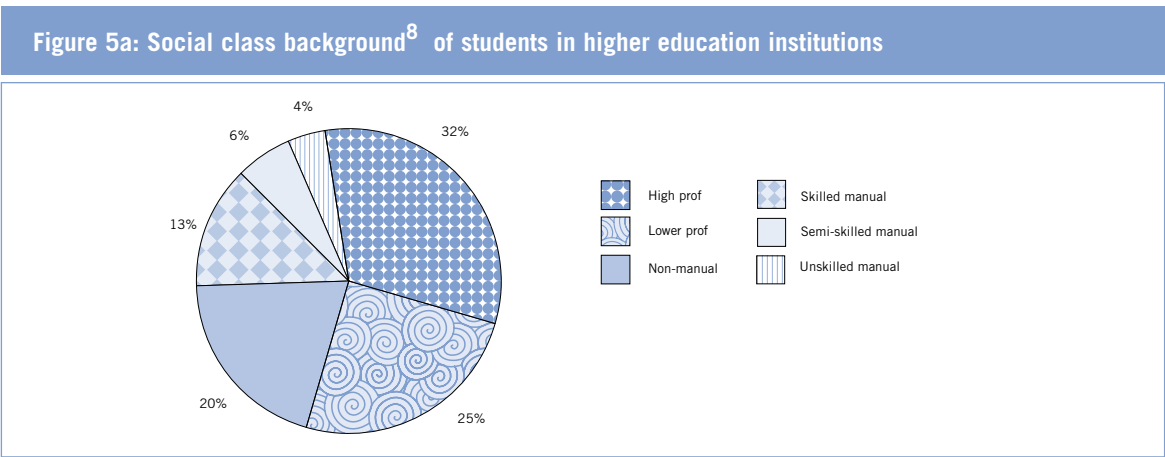
Figure 4: Parental education levels ⁷



The link between educational attainment and social class is well documented internationally (Eriksson and Jonsson, 1996; Reay et al., 2001a and 2001b). The children of parents from higher social classes are more likely to benefit from third-level education compared to those from lower socio-economic groups. Social class background of new entrants in higher education in Ireland was first explored in the *Investment in Education* report (1966) and has remained an important topic in discussing inequalities in higher education. Several subsequent official reports such as the report on the *National Education Convention* (1994) and the *White Paper on Education* (1995) have highlighted the need to address educational disadvantage and equalise the social class profile of third level students. Despite efforts made to address the issue, access to higher education has remained a problem for certain socio-economic groups.

7. For comparison purposes, the proportion of men and women in the population by level of education is provided.

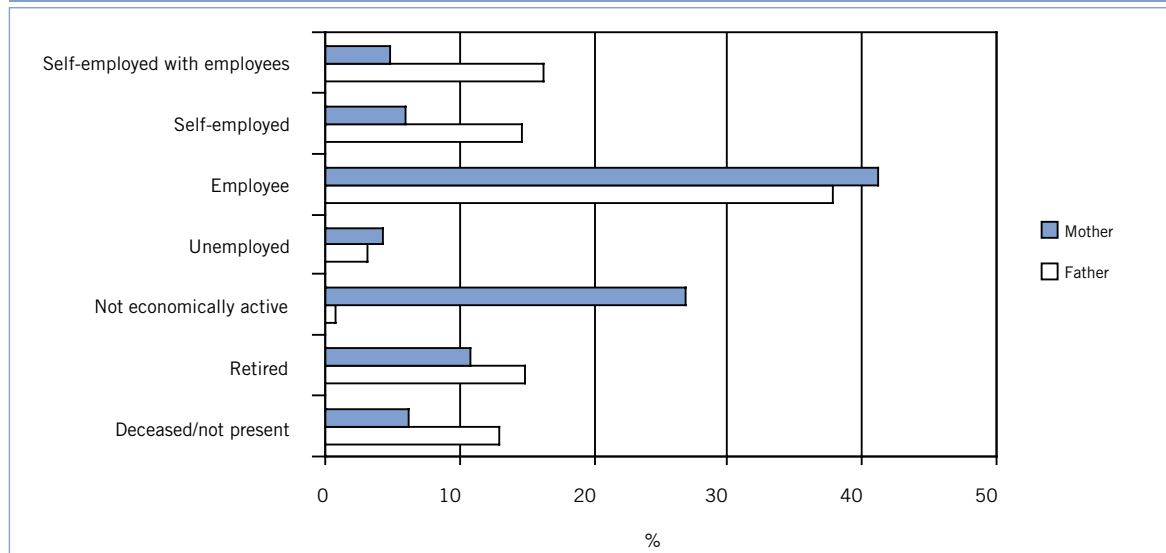
In keeping with the international pattern, Figure 5a indicates that those from professional backgrounds make up over half of the student group; this group is, therefore, over-represented compared with their prevalence in the national population (see Fitzpatrick Associates and O'Connell, 2005). The pattern is consistent with evidence from earlier time-points (see Ryan and O'Kelly, 2001; Clancy and Hall, 2000). Figure 5b shows that part-time students are somewhat more likely to come from semi-skilled or unskilled manual backgrounds, and less likely to come from professional backgrounds, than full-time students.



The Eurostudent survey of 2003/2004 revealed that the majority of students' mothers and fathers are economically active as employees (see Figure 6). Only a small percentage of respondents reported that their parents were unemployed. Compared with the national population, those from unemployed households are under-represented in higher education.

8. The figure presents a hierarchical classification of social class background using the measure employed by the CSO.

Figure 6: Parents' employment status



Participation patterns must also be seen in a wider family context. Seventy-eight per cent of students in the study reported having siblings who have either completed third-level education or were currently enrolled on a third-level course. This shows that students are more likely to enter third level institutions when family members have already benefited from higher education.

Students were asked to estimate the net monthly income of their family household. Over a fifth of respondents reported monthly family incomes of more than 4000 euro while 15 per cent reported incomes of less than 1000 euro (see Table 4). Household incomes tend to be higher among part-time students than full-time students.

Table 4: Estimation of net monthly income of family household⁹

€	%
<600	5.9
600-1000	8.7
1000-1500	11.1
1500-2000	12.6
2000-2500	13.1
2500-3000	13.4
3000-4000	14.1
>4000	21.1

9. 'Family household' was intended to relate to the parental household. However, some mature students may have interpreted the question as relating to their own household.

5. ENTRY ROUTE¹⁰

Improved access to higher education has resulted in a diversification of the courses offered by higher education institutions as well as the profile of students deciding to undertake study at tertiary level. Internationally, an increasing number of people entering these institutions are older than 18 years of age (Bienfeld and Almqvist 2004). Routes to higher education are also increasingly open to students from lower social classes further contributing to the diversity of student population, as reported in international studies (Erllich, 2004).

In keeping with the study by Ryan and O’Kelly (2001) and Clancy (1995), an overall majority (74%) of the surveyed Irish students entered third-level education through a traditional route, that is, on the basis of their Leaving Certificate results. The remaining 26 per cent gained entry on the basis of FETAC/NCVA qualifications, participation in access/foundation programmes or on the basis of mature years (being over 23 years of age). The break-down of the proportion of Irish full-time and part-time students’ entry routes is presented in Table 5. The proportion of students taking a non-traditional entry route was higher among part-time students (see Figure 7). Non-traditional entry routes were more likely to be used by students from unskilled manual backgrounds compared to those from professional backgrounds (see Figure 8). Forty-four per cent of the students taking non-traditional routes were older than 34 years of age, reflecting the fact that most of those taking a non-traditional route do so on the basis of mature years¹¹.

Table 5: Entry routes among Irish students by full/part-time status

	Full-time course %	Part-time course %
FETAC/NCVA	2.4	4.1
Mature years	5.1	23.5
Access	1.0	2.2
Traditional	80.1	52.2
Other	11.4	18.0
Total	100	100

10. For these analyses, foreign students have been excluded from the categories of ‘traditional entry’ and ‘non-traditional entry’.

11. It should be noted, however, that a significant proportion of mature students enter through traditional entry routes.

Figure 7: Proportion of full and part-time students taking traditional and non-traditional entry routes

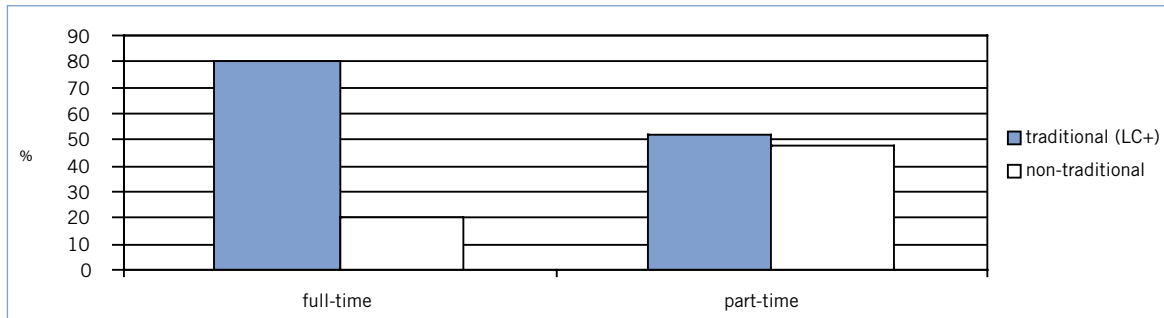
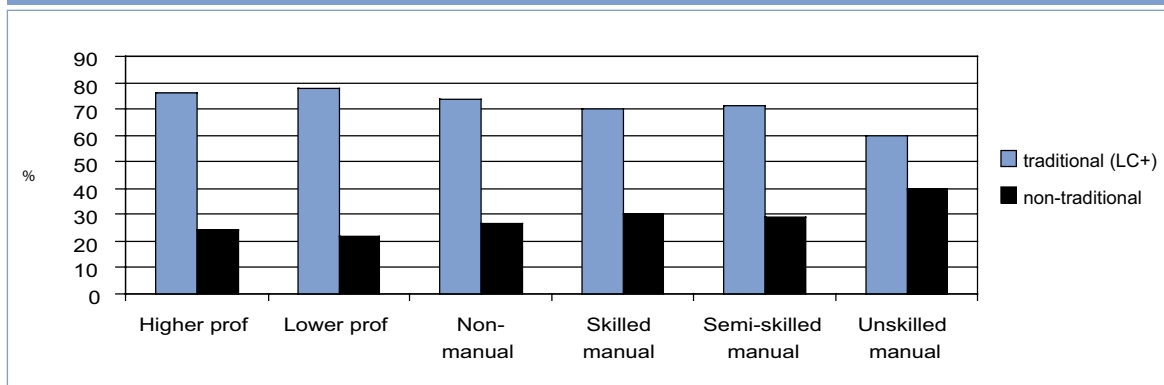


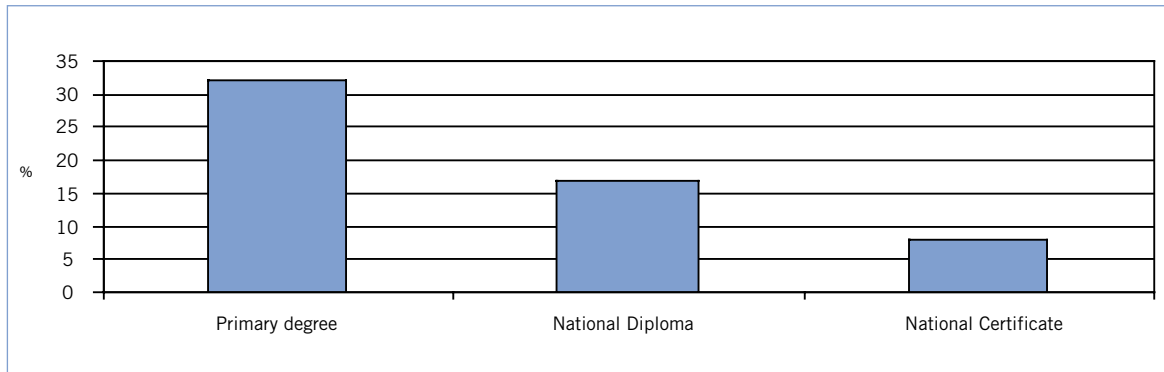
Figure 8: Entry route and social class



6. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THIRD-LEVEL EDUCATION

Thirty-three per cent of all students had previously been registered on a third-level course. This reflects the numbers of students on postgraduate courses as well as those who have progressed from other courses or not completed previous courses. Among those on undergraduate courses, 8 per cent of those on National Certificate courses, 17 per cent of those on National Diploma courses and 32 per cent of those on primary degree courses had previously taken part in a third-level course. These patterns reflect the extent to which students on National Certificate or Diploma courses may progress to other third level programmes.

Figure 9: Undergraduate Students previously registered on a 3rd level course



7. STUDY INTENTIONS AFTER GRADUATION

The findings about students' future plans are similar to those reported by Ryan and Kelly (2001). Just under half (47%) stated that they intend to undertake another course at the end of the present one, 12 per cent did not and 40 per cent were undecided. Students pursuing national certificate courses were most likely to report their willingness to continue their studies (65% compared with 49% of those on degree courses).

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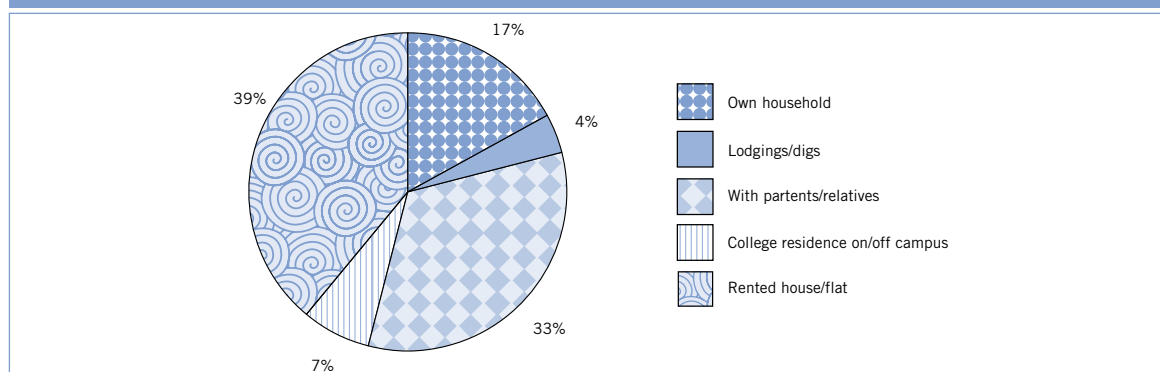
ACCOMMODATION

The patterns of student accommodation differ across Europe. Bienfeld and Almqvist (2004) argue that the type of residence used by students reflects the relative cultural importance of the family in different countries whereby some students will live at home with their parents while others will live in independent accommodation. Place of residence can strongly influence students' satisfaction with their life. While some students may be 'satisfied' with living at home in order to reduce expenditure, others may feel less content with the situation perhaps indicating that they may be missing out on some important elements of student life (MORI /UNITE, 2004). This chapter explores the issue within the Irish context.

1. ACCOMMODATION DURING TERM TIME

As shown in Figure 10, the largest group of students live in a rented house or a flat (39%), 33 per cent live with their parents/relatives, 17 per cent in their own household, 7 per cent in college residences either on or off the campus and 4 per cent in lodgings/digs.

Figure 10: Type of accommodation



While full-time students were more likely to reside in student halls or live with their parents or relatives, part-time students tended to live in their own household during term-time. Those living in rented accommodation make up the largest group across different age-groups. However, students under 20 years of age are more likely to live with their parents/ relatives than older students. Living in designated student accommodation was also the most prevalent among those aged under 20 years of age. Analyses show that students living in larger towns are more likely to live with their parents or relatives than those in smaller study locations. The proportion of students living at home was the highest in Dublin (53%). The greater number of higher education institutions in larger towns and cities is likely to facilitate young people continuing to live in the parental home while attending college.

2. COSTS OF ACCOMMODATION

Table 6 presents the monthly accommodation costs of students not living with their parents/ relatives. It distinguishes between direct payments by the students themselves and parental contributions to their accommodation expenses. The cost of accommodation was the highest among those living in student accommodation. Those living in their own household were less reliant on subsidies from their parents, reflecting the predominance of older and part-time students among this group. The cost of accommodation is higher in larger towns and cities, especially in Dublin. Total average monthly accommodation costs in Dublin amounted to €417 compared with €341 in Limerick and €351 in Cork. The figures compare to an average cost of €291 elsewhere in the country.

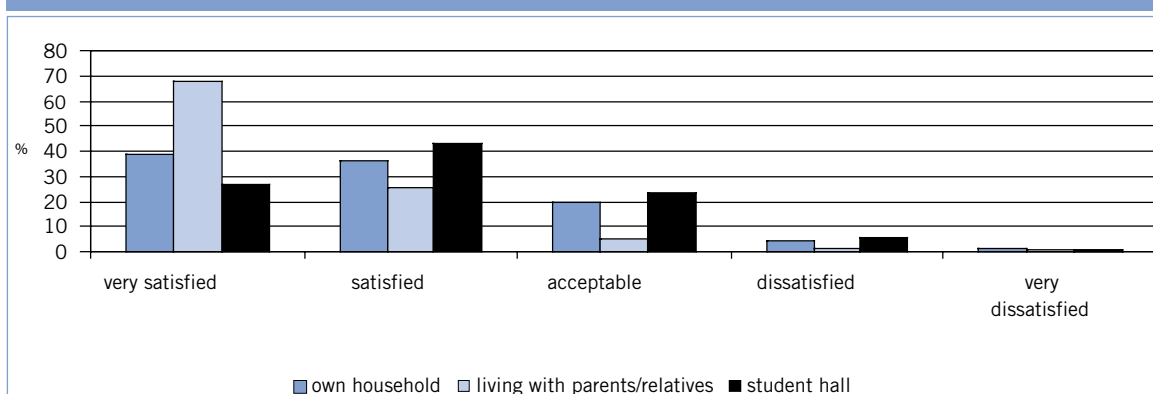
Table 6: Monthly accommodation costs (mean in euro) – students in own households only

Type of residence	Payments by students	Family subsidy	Total
Own household	352.11	52.52	404.63
Rented house/flat	292.94	95.69	388.63
Lodgings/digs	273.09	108.02	381.11
Student hall on/off campus	218.31	200.54	418.85

3. SATISFACTION WITH ACCOMMODATION

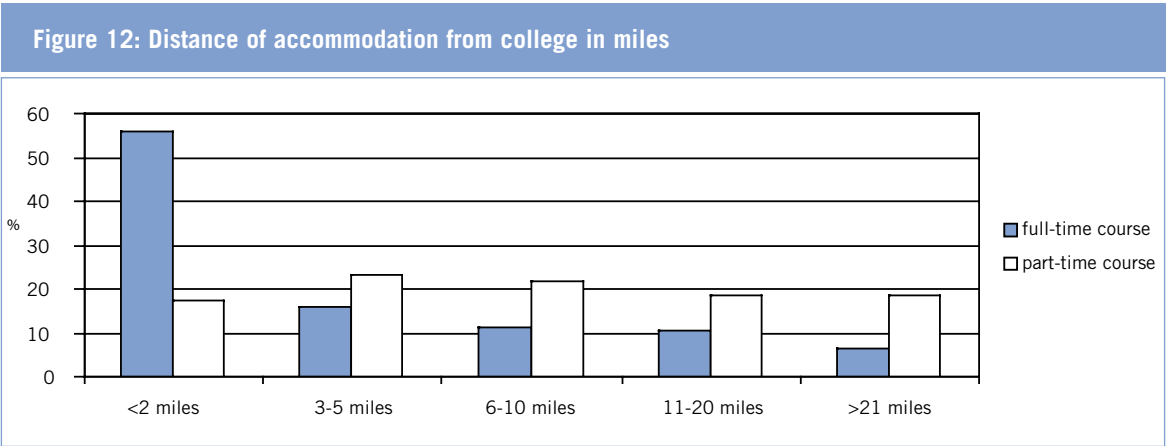
Overall, higher education students were satisfied with their accommodation: 48 per cent were 'very satisfied', 33 per cent were 'satisfied', 15 per cent considered their accommodation 'acceptable', 3 per cent were 'dissatisfied' and 1 per cent 'very dissatisfied' with their living conditions. Those living with their parents or relatives expressed the highest level of satisfaction while satisfaction levels were lowest among those living in student accommodation (see Figure 11). The percentage of students reporting being 'very satisfied' with accommodation was also higher among part-time students who lived in their own households.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with accommodation



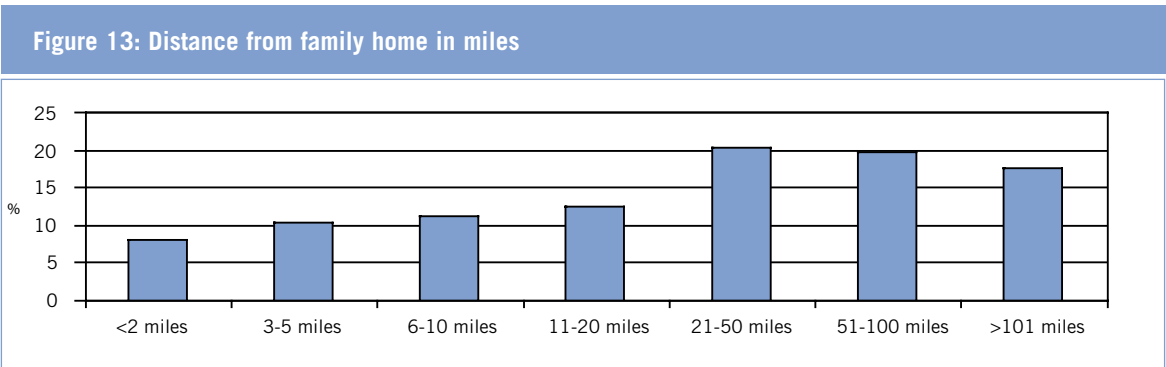
4. DISTANCE OF ACCOMMODATION FROM COLLEGE

Overall the average distance of students' accommodation from college was 2.5 miles. Full-time students are over-represented among those living closer to the college with the majority living less than 2 miles from the college (see Figure 12).



5. DISTANCE OF PARENTAL HOME FROM COLLEGE

Among the students surveyed, only a relatively small proportion reported that their parental home was within 2 miles of their college¹². Many students reported having their parental home more than 20 miles from the college they attend (see Figure 13). The average distance between the parental home and college was 11 miles.

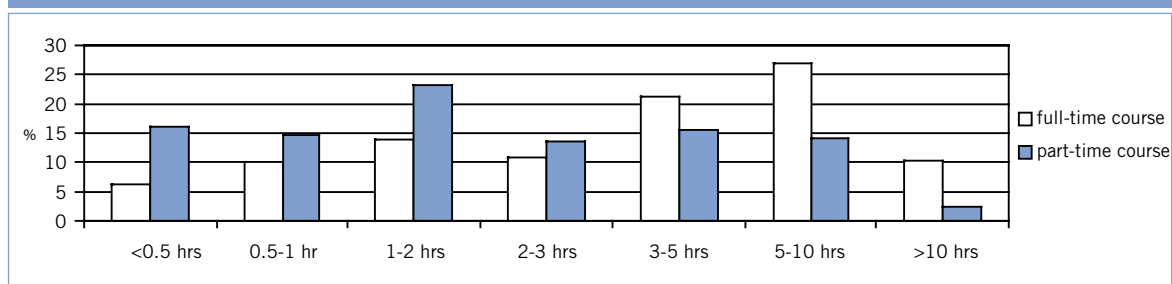


12. It should be noted that the figures exclude students whose family home is outside Ireland.

6. TIME SPENT ON TRAVELLING TO COLLEGE¹³

Overall, students spend on average 4.5 hours per week travelling to and from college. Although many students live within 2 miles of the college and do not need to spend much time travelling, there are some students who spend more than 10 hours per week travelling between their accommodation and college. Twenty-six per cent of full-time students spend 5-10 hours every week travelling from college to their accommodation compared to 13 per cent of part-time students in the same category (Figure 14). The data also showed that, as might be expected, the further the accommodation, the longer students spent travelling to college.

Figure 14: Hours per week travelling to and from college



7. EXPENDITURE ON TRANSPORT

A number of students spend a substantial amount per month on transport. Thirty-two per cent of students spend between 51 and 100 euro per month on travel while 3 per cent spend over 200 euro (Figure 15). There is no significant variation by location of the higher education institution but, as might be expected, students who live further away from the college spend more on travel (€127 euro per month for those living more than 20 miles away compared with €50 per month for those living within 2 miles). Looking at the type of course (part-time/full-time) students are taking, it emerges that part-time students are disproportionately likely to spend over €100 on transport (see Figure 16) as they are less likely to live close to the higher education institution.

13. This analysis refers to travel during term time.

Figure 15: Monthly spending on transport (€)

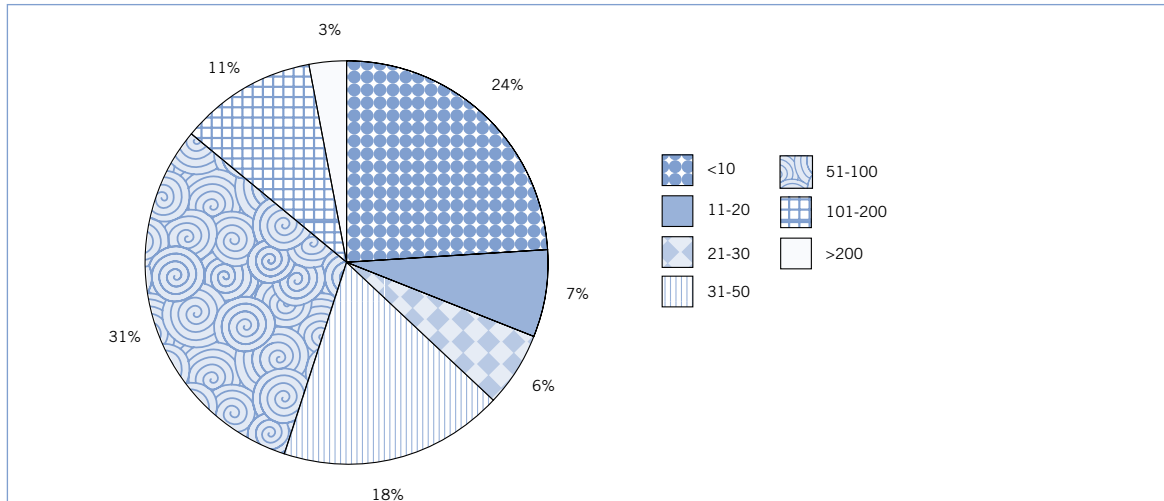
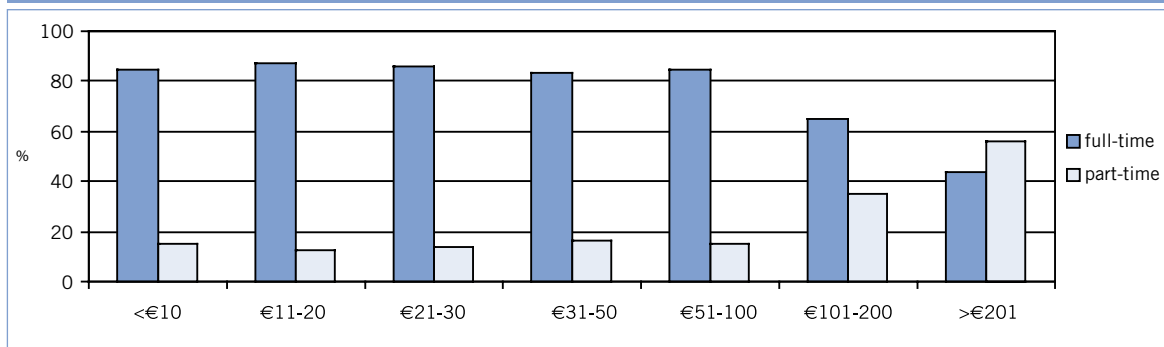


Figure 16: Monthly spending on transport by full/part-time status



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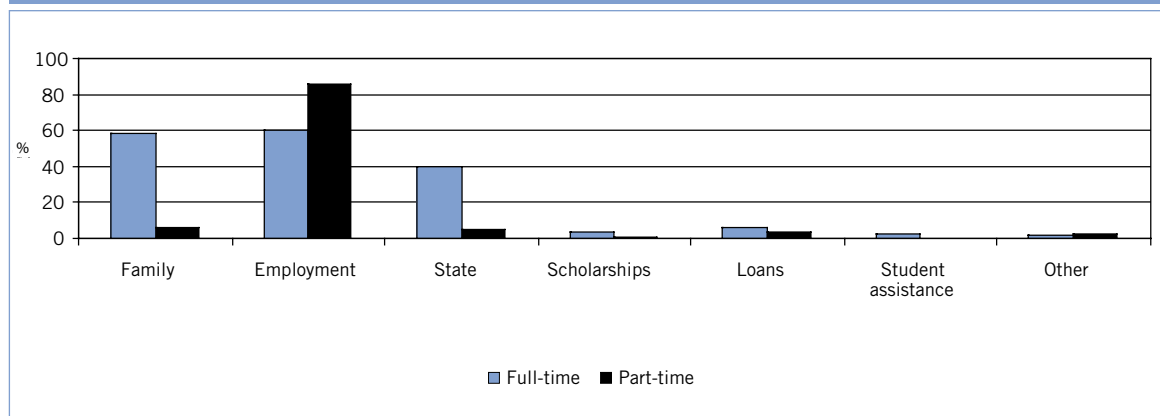
STUDENT INCOME

While in the United Kingdom student loans are becoming a more common financial support for students in higher education, a large number of students also rely on their parents for extra support (MORI/UNITE, 2004). Additional financial assistance can be drawn from state support systems (Clancy, 1995) as well as from paid part-time work. This chapter discusses the various sources of income available to students.

1. SOURCES OF INCOME

The sources of income of students attending Irish higher education institutions include their family, State grants (including local authority, VEC or other state grants), earnings and savings from their own employment, State fellowships or scholarships, private fellowships or scholarships, social welfare (e.g. the back to education scheme and lone parents' scheme), bank loans, student assistance fund and other sources. Most students draw on multiple sources of income, for example, engaging in paid employment and receiving money from their family. Regarding the main sources of income, the majority of both full-time and part-time students receive income from employment (Figure 17). In the case of full-time students, over half receive some income from their family while 40 per cent receive some support from the State (in the form of grants, social welfare payments or State scholarships). The proportion of students receiving income from other sources is relatively small.

Figure 17: Sources of income by full-time/part-time status

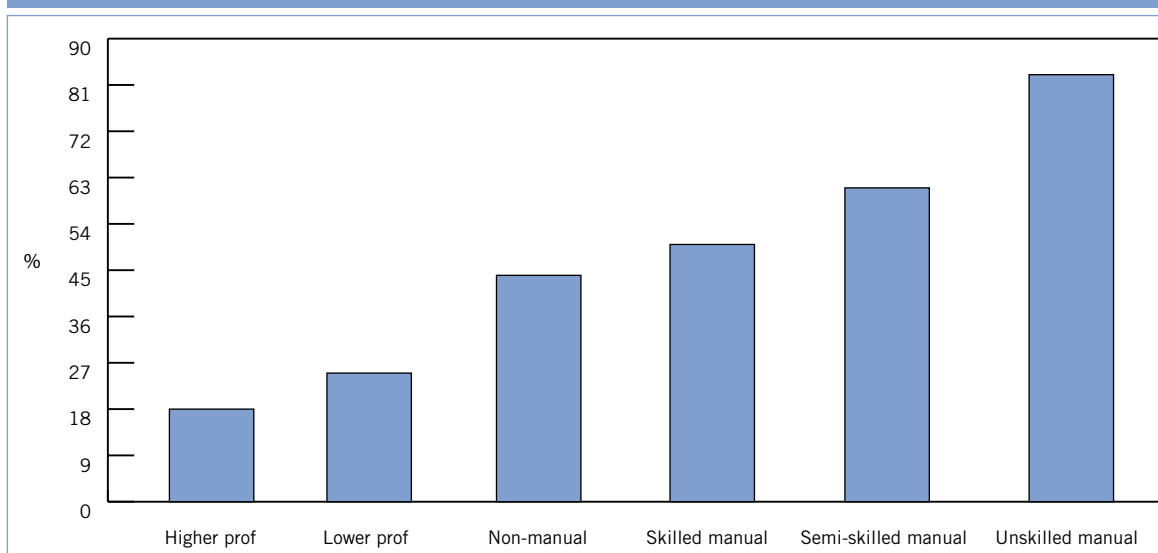


In addition to the students who receive direct payments from their family, a considerable proportion of students (54%) reported that their family provided indirect support in the form of a subsidy towards accommodation or other expenses. The proportion of students who receive indirect support is higher among younger students on full-time courses. The highest proportion of students receiving indirect support live with their parents/relatives. Students living in their own household, in contrast, are least likely to receive indirect support from their parents.

2. RECEIPT OF STATE GRANTS BY FAMILY BACKGROUND

The proportion of full-time students in receipt of local authority or other State grants is, as might be expected, closely related to students' family background characteristics¹⁴. Figure 18 indicates that the vast majority of full-time students from unskilled manual backgrounds receive State grants compared with 17 per cent of those from higher professional backgrounds. This pattern is mirrored when parental educational levels are considered; 59 per cent of those whose parents had a Junior Certificate or lower receive grants compared with 16 per cent of those whose parents had a third-level qualification.

Figure 18: Proportion receiving State grants by parental social class (full-time students)



Not surprisingly, given the basis for grant assessment, the proportion receiving State grants is closely related to the monthly income of the family household (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Proportion receiving State grants by family net monthly household income (full-time students)



14. Thirty-five per cent of full-time students in the sample receive grants, in line with national figures (Department of Education and Science, 2003).

3. AMOUNT OF INCOME FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

Considering direct income, the average monthly amount received by third-level students is €830. As might be expected, part-time students have substantially higher monthly incomes than full-time students (€1934 compared with €578). If account is taken of the subsidy given by the family, the overall average income of full-time students is €840. For both full-time and part-time students, employment represents the single main source of income. However, full-time students also receive substantial amounts of income from their family and the State (Table 7).

Table 7: Average monthly amount received from main sources (direct income only) (€)

	Full-time	Part-time	All
Family	166	35	142
State payments	137	16	113
Employment	227	1851	530

4. INCOME BY GENDER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Analysis of the amount of income received by gender revealed that male students receive higher income than female students (see Table 8) both in terms of direct cash or cash combined with intangibles (that is, indirect subsidies to living expenses received from parents). On closer inspection, this pattern is found to be due to higher employment incomes among male students on part-time courses. When only full-time students are considered, there is no significant income difference by gender.

Table 8: Total income by gender (€)

	Mean, Total income cash only	Mean, Total income cash and intangibles
All students		
Males	879	1095
Females	790	1013
Full-time students only		
Males	591	842
Female	567	838

When cash income is considered, students from higher professional backgrounds have the highest monthly incomes but overall class differences are not significant. However, when indirect parental contributions are considered, significant differences are found by social class background with students from the higher professional classes in more advantageous positions compared to those from working-class backgrounds (Table 9).

Table 9: Total income by social class (full-time students only)

Parental social class	Mean, cash	Mean, cash and intangibles
Higher professional	599	940
Lower professional	563	830
Non-manual	575	789
Skilled manual	588	804
Semiskilled manual	569	728
Unskilled manual	568	789

Exploring students' expenditure patterns enables one to have a better understanding of their life-style and quality of life. International studies suggest that, while students in higher education spend freely on entertainment and alcohol, the largest part of their income is spent on accommodation (MORI/UNITE, 2004; Pirie and Worcester, 1999). This chapter focuses on the expenditure patterns of full-time and part-time students attending Irish higher education institutions.

1. ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE

Students were asked to indicate how much they spend on average each month on various items. The figures relate to direct expenditure and exclude, for example, parental contributions towards accommodations costs. Students' monthly expenditure totals on average €698 per month. Expenditure is highest on accommodation and food (see Table 10) in line with a study carried out in the United Kingdom (MORI/UNITE, 2004).

Table 10: Average monthly expenditure on different items (€)

Items	Average expenditure per month	Average expenditure per month – living with parents/ relatives	Average expenditure per month – living in own household	Average expenditure per month – living in student hall
Accommodation	180.64	28.24	261.68	204.87
Transport	67.57	70.67	67.06	58.29
Food	118.65	79.37	138.79	130.58
Clothing and toiletries	48.95	49.10	49.66	42.89
Regular bills	28.13	7.49	41.45	13.43
Medical expenses	6.99	4.86	8.32	5.79
Mobile phone	37.26	39.41	36.21	36.28
Alcohol	83.43	95.72	79.05	65.00
Tobacco	11.29	12.72	10.85	8.58
Entertainment/ recreation	41.64	46.21	39.68	37.29
Loan repayments	40.62	35.41	46.06	21.00
Study books & materials	25.30	22.00	26.37	30.87
Savings	4.14	1.63	5.81	1.98
Childcare	1.46	1.17	1.70	0.88
Insurance	2.02	0.72	3.00	0.00
Other	0.23	0.00	0.38	0.00
Total	698	494.72	816.07	657.73

A closer look at the figures also demonstrates that Irish third-level students spend on average €83 per month on alcohol. Average monthly spending on mobile phones is €37. As can be expected, direct expenditure on accommodation is highest among students living in their own households compared to those living with parents/relatives or in student halls. However, Chapter Two has indicated that overall rental costs are highest in student accommodation; the discrepancy is accounted for by the greater reliance of these students on parental assistance with accommodation costs. Students living in their own households also tend to spend more per month on regular bills (€41) compared to other groups of students. Students living with parents/relatives are likely to spend more on mobile phones, alcohol, tobacco and entertainment and less on accommodation, food and regular bills compared to other students. Students coming from families with a monthly net income of up to €1,500 spend less on alcohol and entertainment compared to students from more affluent backgrounds.

2. SPENDING BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Given the very different income profiles of full-time and part-time students (see Chapter 4), it is not surprising that expenditure levels are significantly higher among part-time students; they spend an average of €1110 per month compared with €611 among full-time students.

Overall expenditure levels among full-time students do not vary significantly by gender (see Table 11a). However, male students tended to report spending more on food and alcohol, whereas female students spend more on clothing and toiletries, bills, mobile phones, loan repayments and study materials. Surprisingly, students from higher social class backgrounds tend to spend less compared to those from lower classes. This appears to be related to the higher levels of parental subsidy received by students from professional backgrounds (see Chapter 3). Expenditure is higher among part-time than full-time students on all items of expenditure with the exception of alcohol in case of male students (see Table 11b).

Table 11a: Average direct monthly spending during term-time (full-time students) (€)

Items	Males	Females
Accommodation	155.65	158.48
Transport	57.63	61.49
Food	114.39	105.06
Clothing and toiletries	31.68	51.84
Regular bills	18.97	22.47
Medical expenses	3.94	6.89
Mobile phone	32.91	39.43
Alcohol	102.11	69.50
Tobacco	8.64	11.23
Entertainment/ recreation	37.77	37.41
Loan repayments	15.42	19.11
Study books & materials	21.89	27.81
Other	1.71	6.85
Total	602.78	617.62

Table 11b: Average direct monthly spending during term-time (part-time students) (€)

Items	Males	Females
Accommodation	280.11	301.02
Transport	105.97	103.08
Food	159.76	164.06
Clothing and toiletries	59.10	92.48
Regular bills	60.69	63.46
Medical expenses	13.91	13.55
Mobile phone	39.10	42.25
Alcohol	93.92	67.69
Tobacco	12.85	20.18
Entertainment/ recreation	56.87	63.36
Loan repayments	156.59	145.37
Study books & materials	20.59	29.76
Other	12.56	32.50
Total	1071.99	1139.08

As well as collecting information on regular expenditure items for students, full-time undergraduate students were asked who had paid their college registration fee while part-time and postgraduate students were asked about who had paid their course fees. In half of cases, registration fees were paid by students' families; in almost a third of cases, they were paid by the State and a fifth of students paid their own registration fees. Of those paying course fees, 41 per cent paid the fees themselves, a third received a contribution from their employer, 16 per cent were reliant on the state while 12 per cent were reliant on their family.

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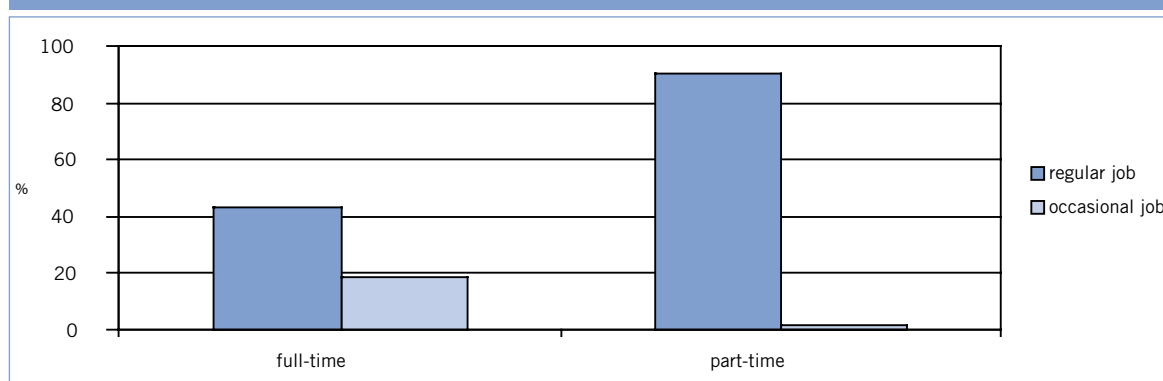
STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Over the years the profile and background of students attending tertiary courses has changed dramatically. International studies show that the student population in higher education institutions has become more diverse and more students are coming to university from work and an increasing number are taking up employment while still in college (McInnis, 2004). While most students engage in some form of employment during their studies, a number of students across Europe are obliged to take up employment during term time in order to support themselves financially. This is especially so in countries where access to financial support is assessed on the basis of parental income (Bienfeld and Almqvist, 2004). As increasing proportions of students are combining work with study, this survey aims to take an in-depth approach to the issue exploring the proportion of students in Irish third-level institutions who work during term-time, the characteristics of such students, the amount of time they devote to term-time work and the nature of their jobs. This chapter also explores the relationship between students' employment and life satisfaction.

1. PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WORKING TERM- TIME

The majority of students surveyed work during term-time. Fifty three per cent of students hold regular jobs, 15 per cent work occasionally while 32 per cent do not hold a paid job during term-time. A large proportion of both part-time and full-time students have a regular job during term-time (see Figure 20). However, almost all part-time students are in regular employment.

Figure 20: Working during term-time by full/part-time status



Almost all students (95%) had some previous work experience, even on a casual or holiday work basis, before entering third-level education. In addition, almost a third of students had held a regular full-time job before going to college. Part-time students were much more likely to have held a regular job before college than full-time students (73% compared with 22%). Students from working-class backgrounds were more likely to report having worked before entering college. This pattern is mainly due to their representation on part-time courses although among those on full-time courses, students from unskilled manual backgrounds are somewhat more likely to have worked than those from higher professional

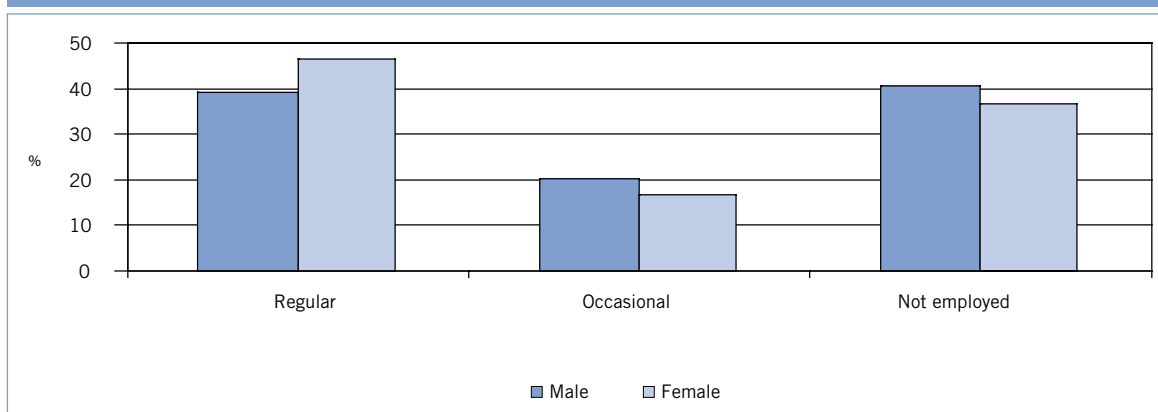
backgrounds (28% compared with 19%). Female students were somewhat more likely than male students to report having no work experience prior to enrolment, although the difference is not significant.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN PAID EMPLOYMENT

Although most students are engaged in paid employment while studying, there are groups who are more likely to do so. International studies show that students from a working class background and those over 21 years of age at the start of their course are more likely to be in paid employment while in college (MORI/UNITE, 2004).

The previous section of the chapter has indicated that almost all part-time students surveyed are engaged in paid employment. For this reason, this section explores the characteristics of full-time students who are in paid employment. Female students were more likely to report being in regular paid employment than their male counterparts (47% compared with 39%) (see Figure 21)¹⁵, consistent with the findings of Callender and Kemp (2000) in the British context. Interestingly, employment rates did not vary significantly by parental social class for full-time students¹⁶. However, full-time students whose parents have third-level qualifications are less likely to work, and if they do, to do so on an occasional basis only, than those whose parents had lower educational levels (see Figure 22).

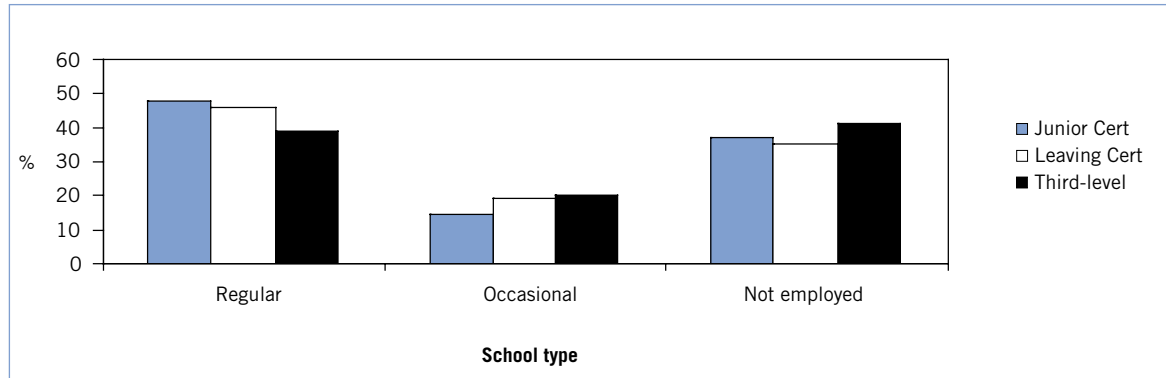
Figure 21: Full-time students in paid employment by gender



15. Ryan and O'Kelly (2001) report that the percentage of students who choose not to work during term-time was much the same with male and female students.

16. In the same vein, term-time work was not significantly associated with parents' socio-economic position in the UK (Callender and Kemp, 2000).

Figure 22: Full-time students in paid employment by parental education ¹⁷



There is some variation across field of study in the proportion of students in term-time employment; regular employment rates among full-time students are highest among those on social science and business courses.

A logistic regression model was used in order to assess the characteristics associated with working part-time in a regular job while in college. The model relates to full-time students only due to the fact that the vast majority of part-time students are in paid employment. The factors examined relate to gender, age, family status, other sources of income, institution attended and stage of the course. The coefficients in the model indicate the likelihood that students with a given characteristic will be in regular employment during term-time. Positive coefficients indicate that these students are more likely to be employed while negative coefficients indicate that these students are less likely to be employed.

Table 12: Factors predicting regular employment during term-time among full-time students (logistic regression model)

Factor	B
Constant	0.636***
Older student (>23 years of age)	-0.431***
Female	-0.187
Receives income from family	-0.791***
Receives income from State (grant, social welfare)	-0.608***
Lives with parents	0.453***
Married or living as a couple	0.364
Has child/children	-0.663**
Father has third-level qualification	-0.340***
Attending university	-0.292***
Final year of course	-0.375***

Note: *** p<.001, ** p<.01.

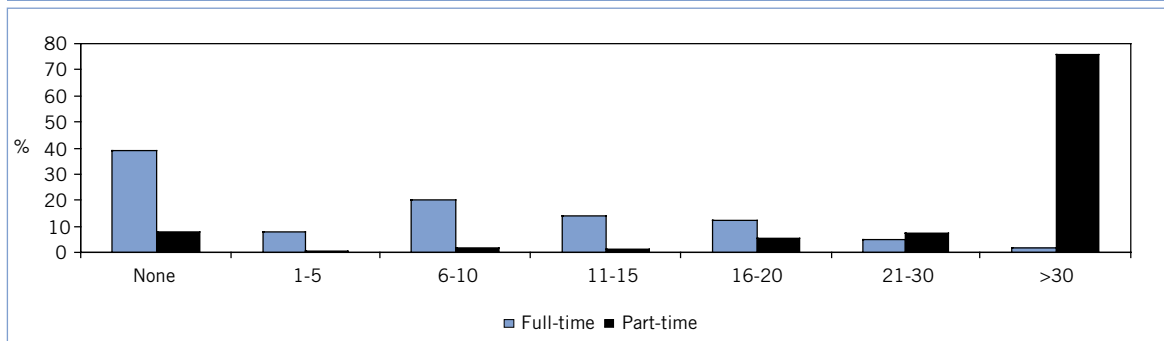
17. This refers to the highest parental education level.

The likelihood of working part-time is found to vary significantly across different groups of students. Older students (that is, those aged over 23 years) are found to be less likely to engage in term-time working. No significant gender differences in the prevalence of working are found when other background factors are taken into account. Having other sources of income means that students are less likely to work; those who receive regular cash from their parents and those who receive State financial support (in the form of a grant or social welfare payment) are significantly less likely to work than other students. Students who live with their parents are more likely to engage in term-time work than those living in their own households, all else being equal. Full-time students with children are less likely to work part-time, indicating greater time constraints for these students. In keeping with the pattern indicated in Figure 22, students whose fathers have a third-level qualification are less likely to work than other students. Those attending a university are less likely to work part-time as are those in the final year of their course, indicating some adjustment of work commitments to study demands at this stage. In sum, the analyses indicate that the prevalence of part-time employment among full-time students is responsive to the availability of other sources of financial support and to study demands within third-level education.

3. HOURS OF WORK

International studies report that the extent and nature of term-time employment often have a detrimental impact on students' academic performance (Ford et al., 1995). Metcalf (2001) found, in her study of employment patterns of British higher education students, that full-time employment was the norm with a small percentage of students working long hours. In Ireland, students were asked the number hours they worked per week (see Figure 23). The largest single group of full-time students in employment work 6 to 10 hours per week with just 7 per cent working more than twenty hours per week. In contrast, three-quarters of part-time students are working more than thirty hours a week.

Figure 23: Hours of work per week by full/part-time status



Among full-time students, half of those in employment work weekends only, 15 per cent work weekdays only (either daytime or evening) while just over a third work both weekdays and weekends. Compared to the study conducted by Ryan and O'Kelly (2001), the proportion of full-time students in regular

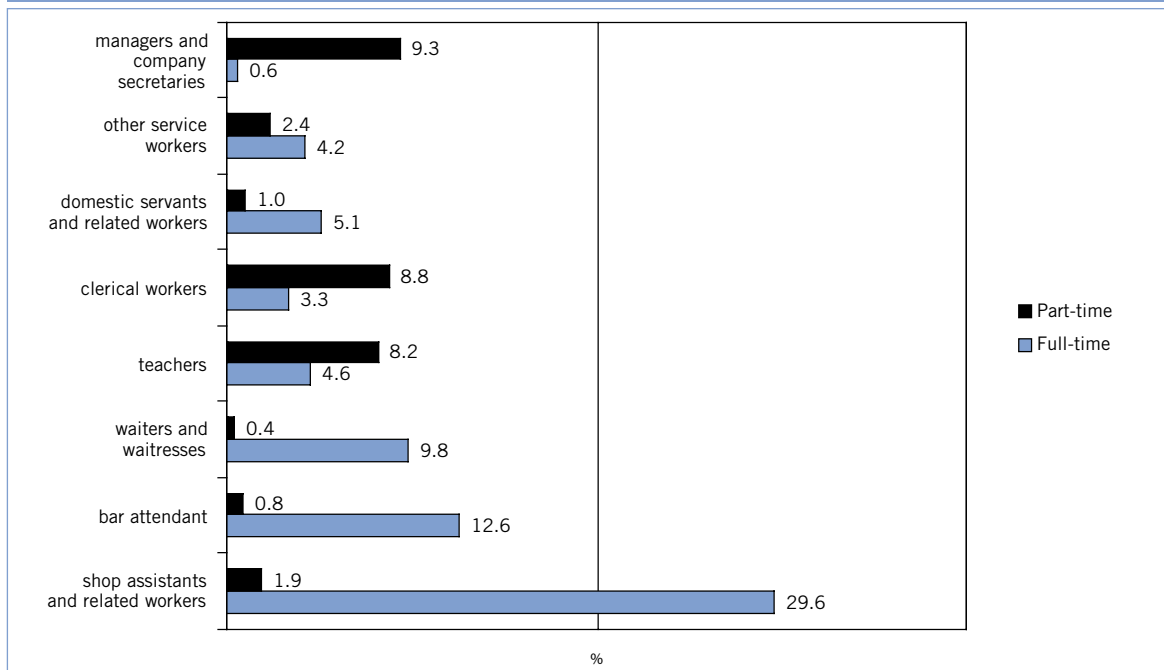
employment has decreased (46% in 2000 compared to 39% in 2004). The average number of hours in employment per week has remained the same at 14 hours per week compared to the findings by Ryan and O'Kelly (2001). The extent to which working part-time leads to student dissatisfaction with their workload is discussed later in this chapter.

4. TYPE OF JOB

As might be expected, the occupational profile of full-time and part-time workers differs markedly. Full-time students tend to be concentrated in routine service work, for example, working in shops, restaurants and bars. In contrast, part-time students in full-time jobs tend to be concentrated in professional and managerial employment; 44 per cent hold professional jobs, 14 per cent associate professional jobs and 13 per cent managerial jobs.

Figure 24 compares the proportions of full-time and part-time workers in a selected number of occupations. Jobs such as shop assistants and similar workers were more likely to have been held by full-time students whereas part-time students were more numerous in clerical and teaching jobs.

Figure 24: Most popular jobs held by third-level students



5. RELATIONSHIP OF JOB TO FIELD OF STUDY

Some international studies demonstrate that, while the majority of students in higher education are engaged in paid employment, their job is rarely related to the field of study or their possible future vocation but rather serves to sustain themselves (Ford et al., 1995; Bienefeld and Almqvist, 2004). In the same vein, this study found that students' term-time jobs in Ireland are not generally related to their main field of study. Fifty-two per cent of students who work during term-time hold an occupation that is not at all related to their field of study, 18 per cent have a job that is 'slightly' related, 12 per cent have a job that is 'mainly' related while 18 per cent hold a job which is 'fully' related to their field of study. As can be expected, the situation is very different for full-time and part-time students. For the majority of full-time students, their employment is not at all related to their field of study, a pattern which is consistent with their concentration in service employment (see above). In contrast, people engaged in part-time courses are more likely to be in a job that is related to their field of study either fully (42%) or mainly (28%) (see Figure 24).

Figure 25: Relationship of job to the field of study

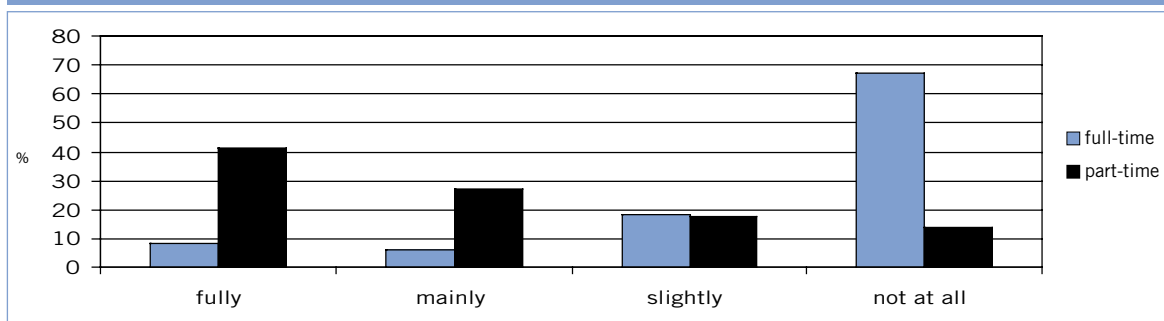
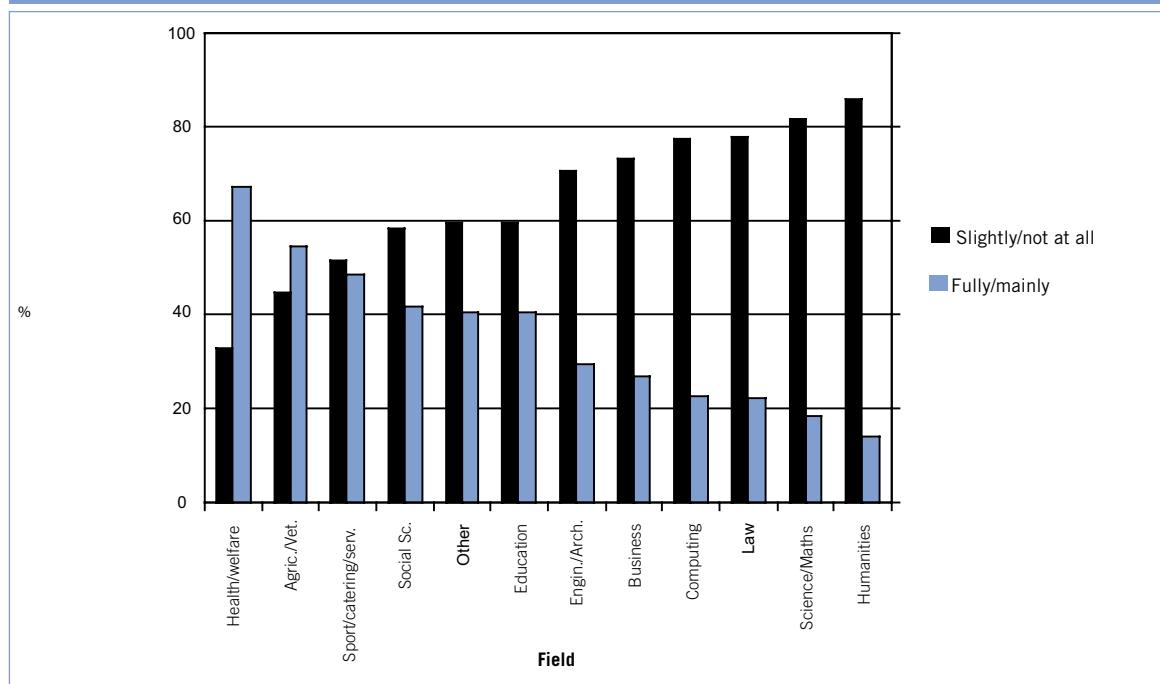


Figure 26: Relationship of job to the main field of study

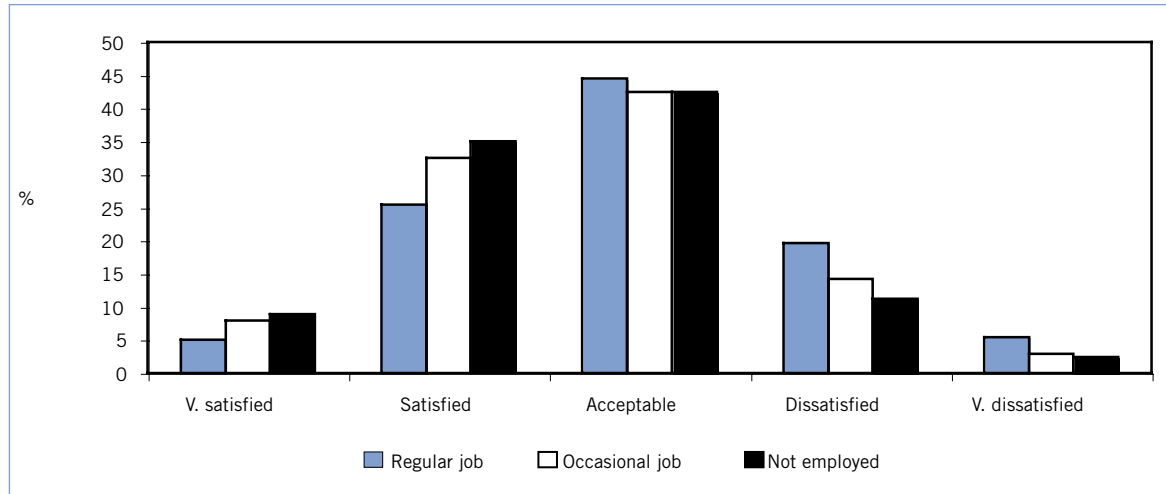


Field of study and term-time occupation were most closely related for those taking courses in health and welfare (67%), agriculture and veterinary (55%) and least likely in science and humanities/arts (see Figure 26). Analysis of the source of funding of college fees showed that, while full-time students were more likely to get their fees paid by the state, a notable proportion of part-time students financed their study by themselves or received a contribution from their employer, especially when the field of study was 'fully' or 'mainly' associated with their work.

6. EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Extensive working hours while studying can have an adverse impact on students' quality of life and their academic achievement. This can have serious consequences for students already disadvantaged in higher education such as students from a working class background. Having to work longer hours in order to maintain themselves may thus result in increased inequalities within higher education (Metcalf, 2001). The impact of part-time work on student performance cannot be explored in the current study. However, the association between term-time work and life satisfaction among students can be investigated.

Figure 26: Working during term-time by satisfaction with workload (full-time students only)



While many international studies point to the adverse effects of term-time work on students' academic performance and well-being, a significant proportion of students do not believe that working has a negative effect on their studies (Student Living Report, 2004). It could be argued that it is the extent to which students engage in paid employment during term-time that affects their studies. In general, students working during term-time tend to be less 'satisfied' with their workload than those not engaged in paid employment (see Figure 26). However, there is no marked relationship between working part-time and students' perceptions of their material well-being.

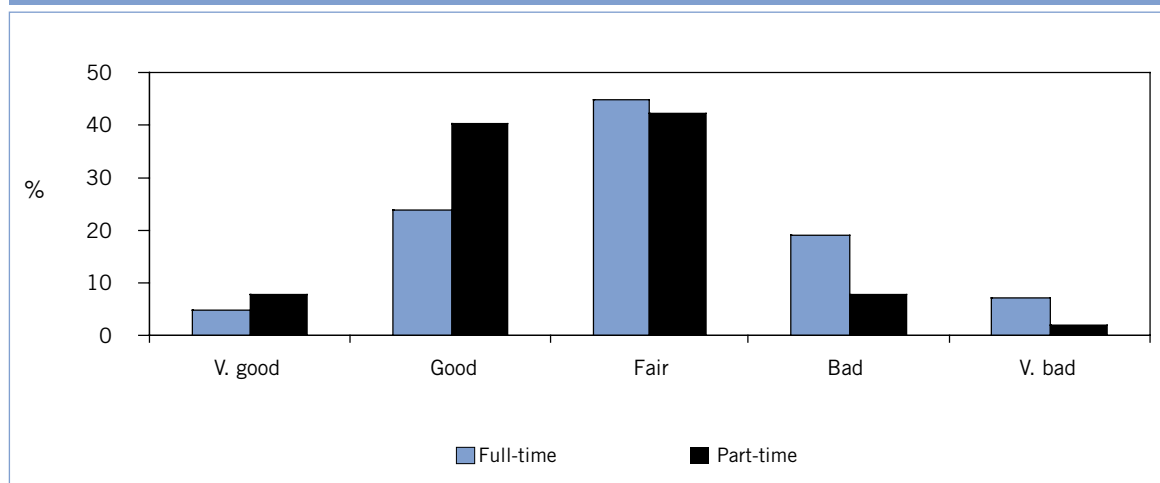
6 | STUDENT FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Students' well-being in college often depends on the resources available to them. An increasing number of students in the United Kingdom are balancing their study with term-time and/or occasional work as discussed in Chapter Five. Contrary to the popular belief that students work in order to finance their lifestyle, a recent British study *Student Living Report* (MORI/UNITE, 2004) found that an increasing proportion of students are working just to survive while seven in ten need money for basic essentials. Hence one of the key concerns of many students is how to balance academic, social and work commitments as reported by *The University Lifestyle Survey* (SODEXHO, 2004). This chapter explores students' financial well-being in Ireland. It discusses the effects of full/part-time status, social class background and family status on satisfaction with their workload in terms of work and study.

1. SATISFACTION WITH FINANCIAL SITUATION AND FINANCIAL/MATERIAL WELL-BEING

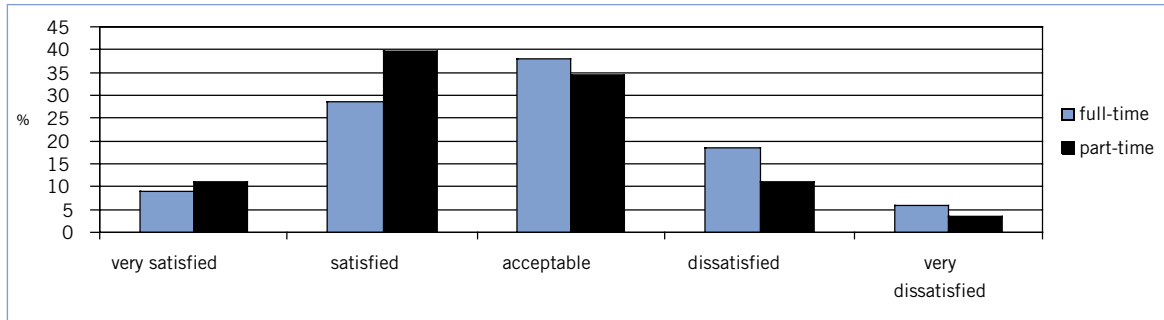
The financial situation of a student has a strong effect on students' well-being and experience of college life. In general, third-level students participating in the survey tend to describe their current financial situation as fair or good (Figure 27). However, part-time students are much more likely to describe their financial situation as good (40%) compared to their full-time counterparts (24%), a pattern that must be seen in the context of higher incomes among this group (see Chapter 3). Nineteen per cent of full-time students reported their financial situation as bad compared to 8 per cent of part-time students, which is in line with the findings by Ryan and O'Kelly (2001).

Figure 27: Perception of current financial situation



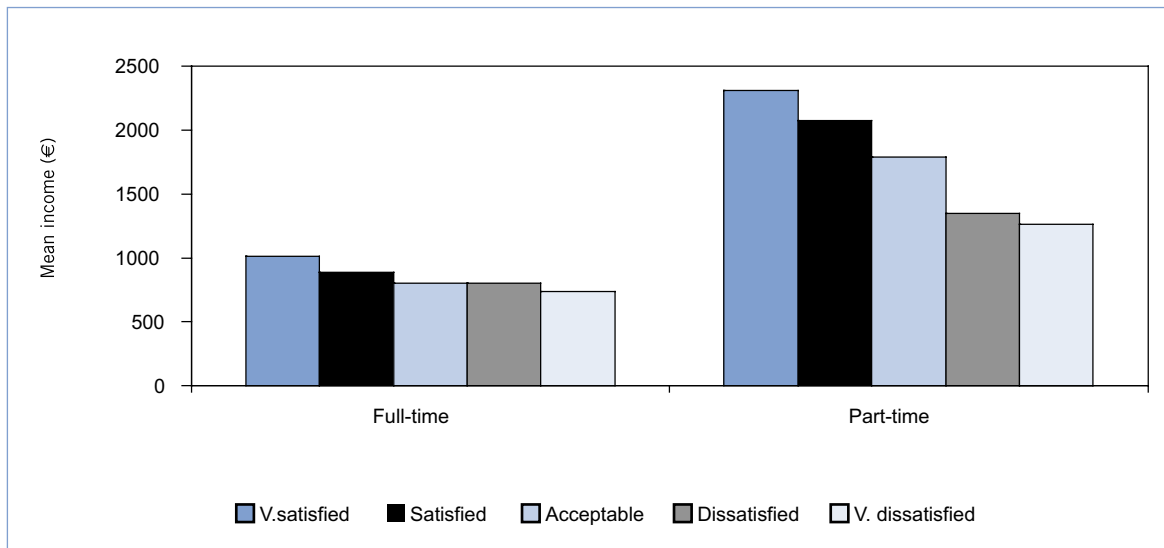
A very similar picture is revealed when students were asked about their levels of satisfaction with their financial well-being with most describing themselves as 'satisfied' or finding the situation 'acceptable'. More part-time students seem to be 'satisfied' with their financial well-being compared to full-time students (see Figure 28) as their income is generally higher than that of full-time students.

Figure 28: Satisfaction with financial situation by full/part-time status



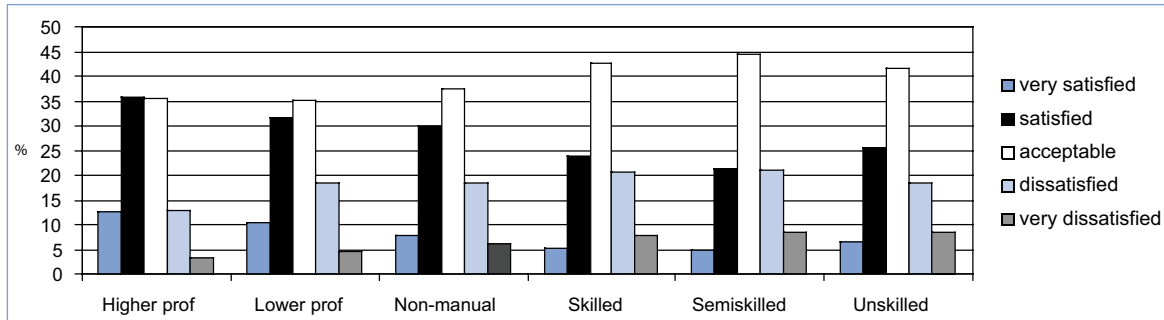
Students' satisfaction with their financial situation is also clearly linked with their income. As might be expected, there is a clear relationship between actual levels of income and satisfaction with financial well-being. Among both full-time and part-time students, those with higher satisfaction levels tend to have significantly higher incomes (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Mean income by satisfaction with financial well-being



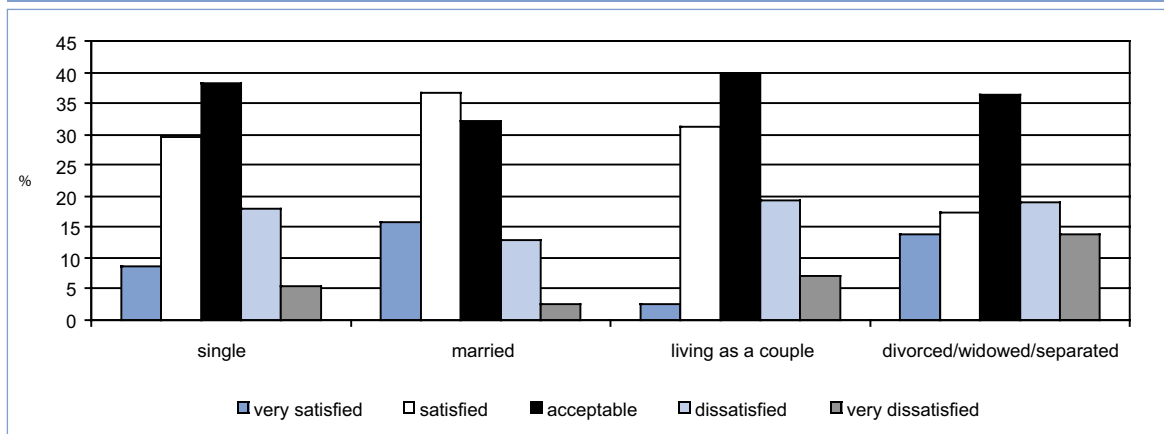
Students from the professional classes are more likely to report being 'very satisfied' with their material well-being compared to those from working-class backgrounds (see Figure 30), although financial issues concern a significant minority of all social class groups (see also Ryan and O'Kelly, 2001).

Figure 30: Satisfaction with material well-being by social class



Married students had the highest satisfaction levels with their material well-being with the lowest levels found among students who were divorced, widowed or separated (see Figure 31)¹⁸. Among full-time students, those with children tend to be more dissatisfied with their material well-being than those with no children (41% compared with 24%).

Figure 31: Satisfaction with material well-being by marital status



The financial situation of a student may dictate which higher education institution he or she will go to depending on affordability of accommodation (MORI/UNITE, 2004). The study showed that a number of students living with their parents/guardian do so in order to save money or because they can not afford to live away from home.

A strong correlation between financial situation and type of residence was also reported in the Irish context by Ryan and O'Kelly (2001). Table 12 describes full-time students' satisfaction with their financial situation. Full-time students living with parents are somewhat more likely to be 'very satisfied'

18. This pattern should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of students in the latter category.

with their financial situation. It could be argued that as the largest proportion of students' income is spent on accommodation living at home would seem a good option to many full-time students (Student Living Report, 2004).

Table 12: Financial Satisfaction of Full-time Students by Type of Residence

	own household (%)	living with parents (%)	student hall (%)	Total (%)
very satisfied	8.0	10.8	13.1	9.3
satisfied	30.0	29.5	36.0	30.3
acceptable	38.0	38.1	33.0	37.7
dissatisfied	18.6	15.8	12.7	17.3
very dissatisfied	5.3	5.8	5.2	5.4
Total	100	100	100	100

As reported by the *University Lifestyle Survey* (MORI/UNITE, 2004) in Britain, many students eat regularly, but some are missing meals. Going without a main meal could be taken as a potential indicator of financial strain. Students were asked how many days in the previous week they had missed a main meal (Figure 32). A considerable proportion (48%) of students had missed a meal on at least one occasion and a fifth had missed their main meal on three or more occasions. Full-time students were more likely to go without regular meals compared to part-time students (51% and 36% respectively). Female students (55%) were more likely to skip their main meal at least once a week compared to males (45%). Students who went four or more days without a main meal were least satisfied with their material/financial well-being indicating significant financial strain among this group (Figure 33).

Figure 32: Missing main meal (full-time and part-time students)

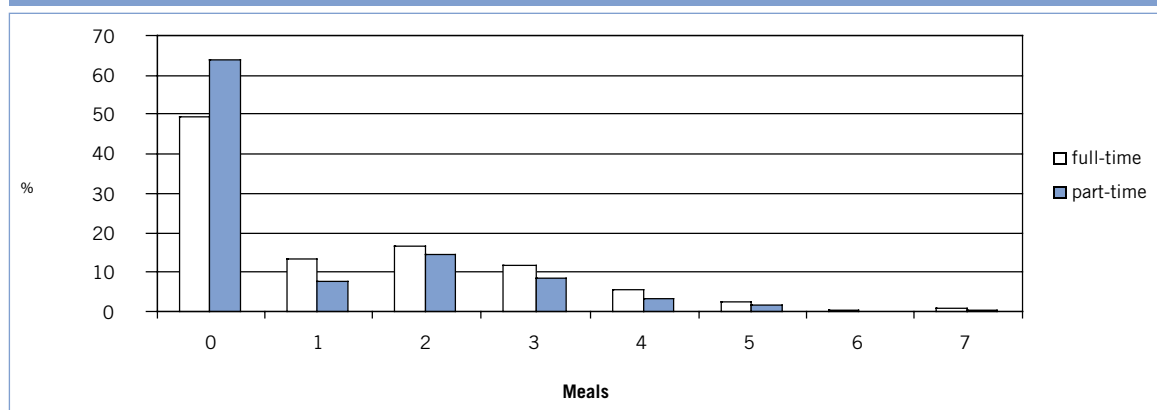


Figure 33: Satisfaction with financial/material well-being by number of meals missed

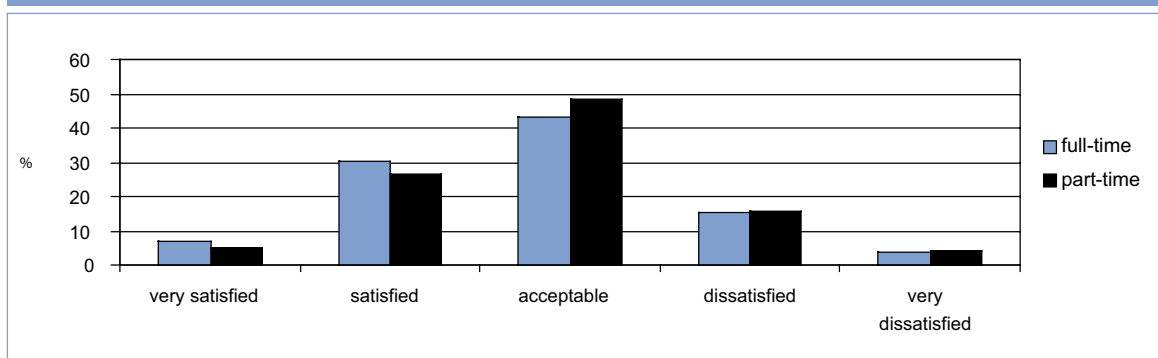


3. SATISFACTION WITH WORKLOAD

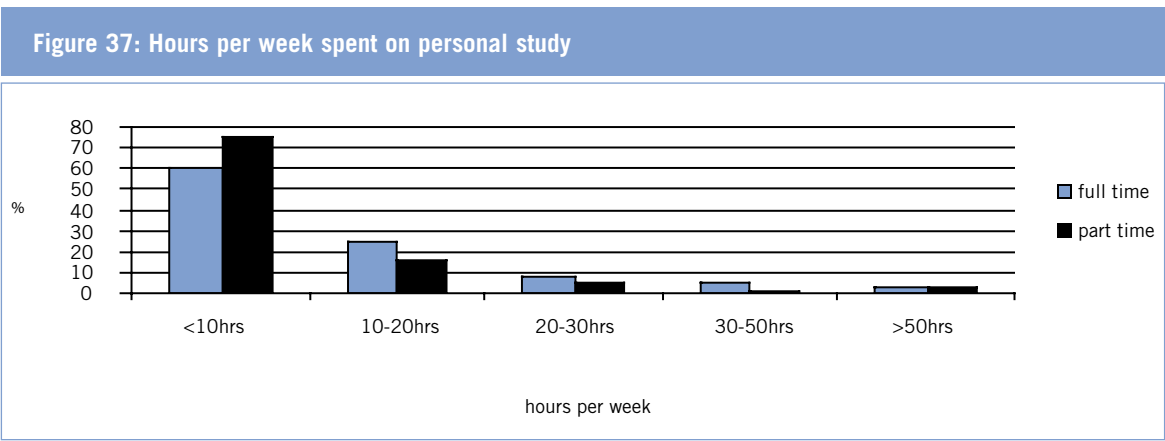
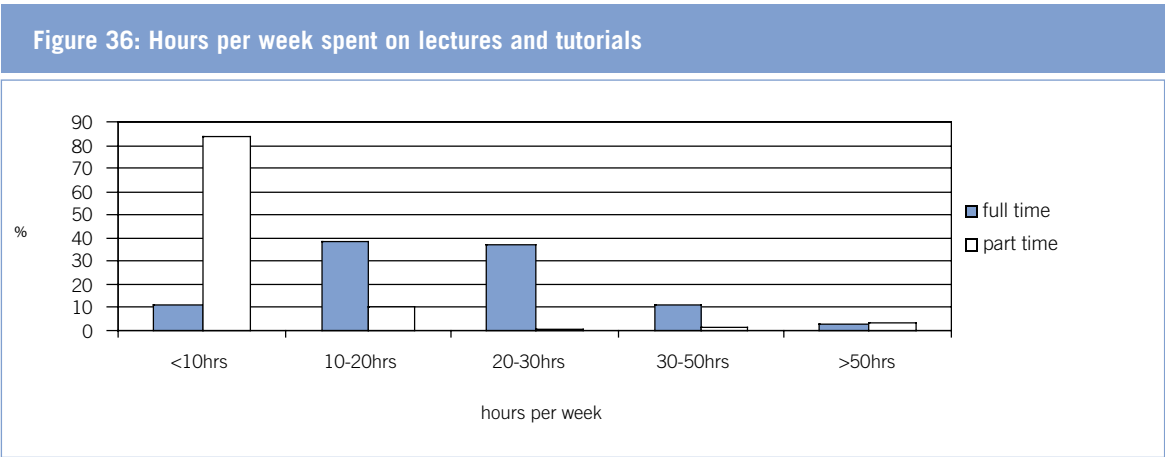
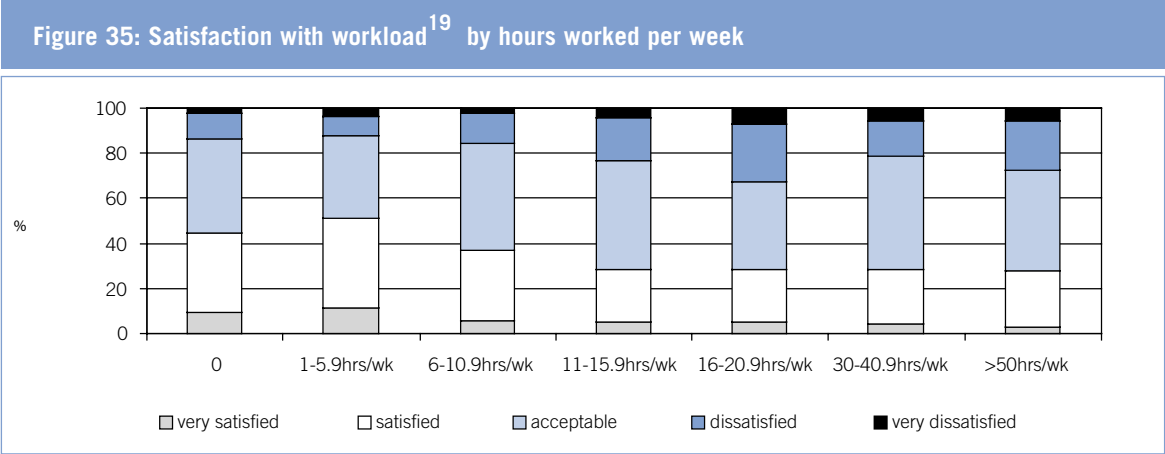
The extent of workload while in college can have a serious impact on students' well-being. Working long hours during term-time can have an adverse effect on study as students find it hard to balance work and study demands and consequently miss lectures and achieve lower grades (Metcalf, 2001; Curtis and Shani, 2002). However, other studies suggest that term-time work is more likely to impact on leisure time rather than time devoted to study (Paton-Saltzberg and Lindsay, 1993) or that study is not affected by working under 15 hours per week (Ryan and O'Kelly, 2001).

The largest single group of students tended to find their workload (study and job combined) 'acceptable'. Full-time students were more likely to report being 'satisfied' with their workload while part-time students were more likely to find their workload 'acceptable' (see Figure 34). Among full-time students, male students are more likely to be 'satisfied' with their workload than their female counterparts (41% and 35% respectively). In addition, full-time students who work part-time are less likely to be 'satisfied' with their workload than those not in paid employment (see Chapter 5).

Figure 34: Satisfaction with workload by full/part-time status



As could be expected, dissatisfaction levels are related to the number of hours worked per week (see Figure 35) and to the number of hours spent in lectures and tutorials. The figure shows that the levels of dissatisfaction rise when the extent of term-time work exceeds 16 hours per week, which is consistent with the earlier study by Ryan and O’Kelly (2001).



19. This figure refers to study and job combined.

Further analysis presented in Figures 36 and 37 show that, as might be expected, part-time students tend to spend less time per week on lectures and tutorials compared to full-time students during term time. Most full-time students spend between 10 to 30 hours per week on lectures and tutorials. Analysis of students' time spent on personal study reveals that high proportions of full-time and part-time students spend less than 10 hours a week during term time on personal study. The less time was taken up by attending lectures and study the more likely the students were to report that they were 'satisfied' with their workload. Full-time students were more 'satisfied' with their workload compared to part-time students. Students studying Humanities and Arts were more likely to be 'satisfied' with their workload than those studying Engineering and Architecture.

6. SATISFACTION WITH COURSE

Among other factors, students' satisfaction with their course can influence their motivation to finish their studies (Healy and Lynch, 1999). The majority of students surveyed for this study were 'satisfied' with their course of study; 22 per cent were 'very satisfied', 51 per cent were 'satisfied', 20 per cent found their course 'acceptable', 6 per cent were 'dissatisfied' and 1 per cent were 'very dissatisfied'. Satisfaction levels did not vary between full-time and part-time students. However, differences could be observed by field of education (Figure 38). Students in Social Sciences and Law courses tended to report the highest satisfaction levels with the lowest satisfaction levels found in Computing Studies. Unfortunately, the study does not enable us to determine the reasons behind student dissatisfaction with their course.

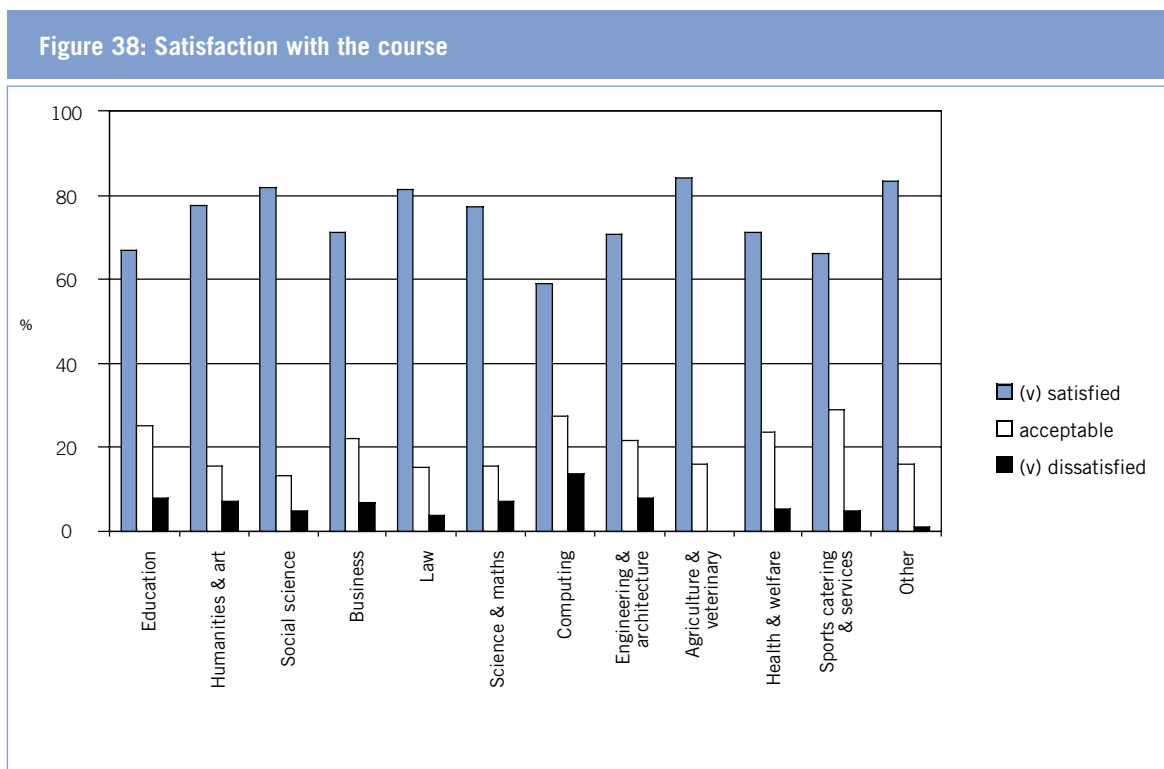
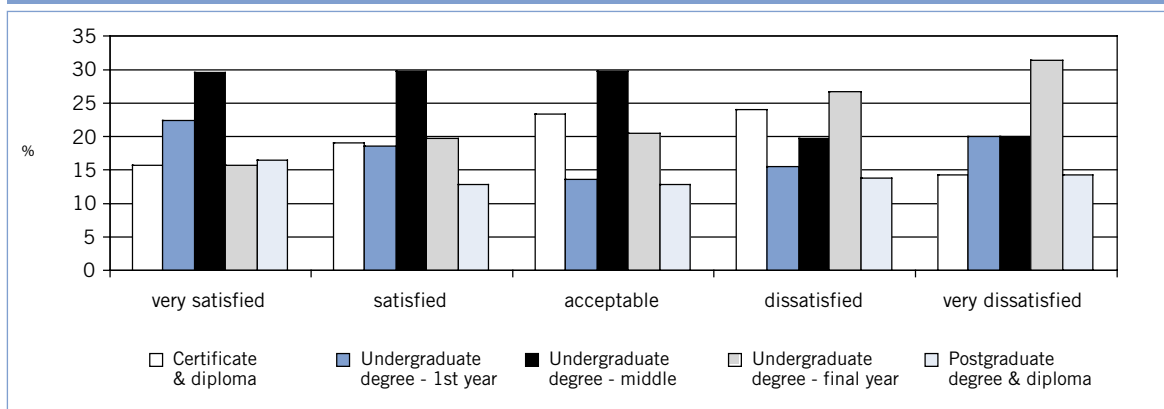


Figure 39 shows that students in their final year on undergraduate degree course report higher levels of dissatisfaction while students in the middle of their undergraduate degree and first year students are most likely to be 'very satisfied' with their course. In general, students in the middle of their degree as well as on their final year were somewhat more likely to report dissatisfaction with workload. While postgraduate students spend the least amount of time in lectures and tutorials, the numbers of first year students (20%) and those in the middle of the degree (30%) who spend up to 30 hours in lectures and tutorials are relatively high. Postgraduate students are more likely to spend a considerable amount of time on personal study. In general, students in the middle of their degree spend more time on personal study and lectures compared to other groups.

Figure 39: Satisfaction with course



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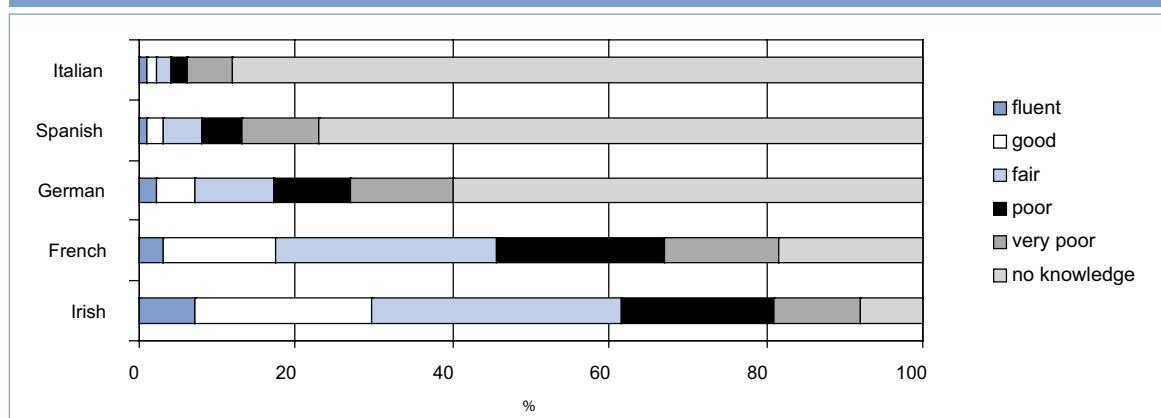
LANGUAGE
FLUENCY AND
OVERSEAS STUDY

For most students who continue their studies in higher education institutions, access to courses in another country has been made possible thanks to the availability of various courses and programmes that aim to encourage international mobility of students. However, such mobility has remained relatively modest in Europe and elsewhere (Teichler, 2004). This chapter takes a closer look at the international mobility of Irish students, focusing on their language fluency, experience and nature of overseas study and plans concerning future study abroad.

1. LANGUAGE FLUENCY ²⁰

Study abroad is often linked to fluency in foreign languages. In this study, Irish students were asked about the extent of their fluency in a number of European languages. The analysis shows that Irish students are most fluent in Irish and French and most have no knowledge of German, Spanish and Italian (Figure 40). Even when students have some knowledge of the language in question, many tend to report their fluency as poor. Fluency levels are somewhat better in French than in the other foreign languages. The findings are in line with an earlier study carried out in Ireland by Ryan and O’Kelly (2001) who report that students’ knowledge of foreign languages is poor, with somewhat better fluency in French and German. Poor knowledge of foreign languages can hinder studies abroad. Teichler (2004) writing about ERASMUS students reports that almost half of the students participating in the programme take courses in a language other than their mother tongue. A high proportion of such students report that they had language deficiencies when they arrived in the host country. It can be argued that such students may easily run into difficulties with their study when the level of language proficiency is low.

Figure 40: Fluency levels in various languages



20. Foreign nationals were excluded from this analysis.

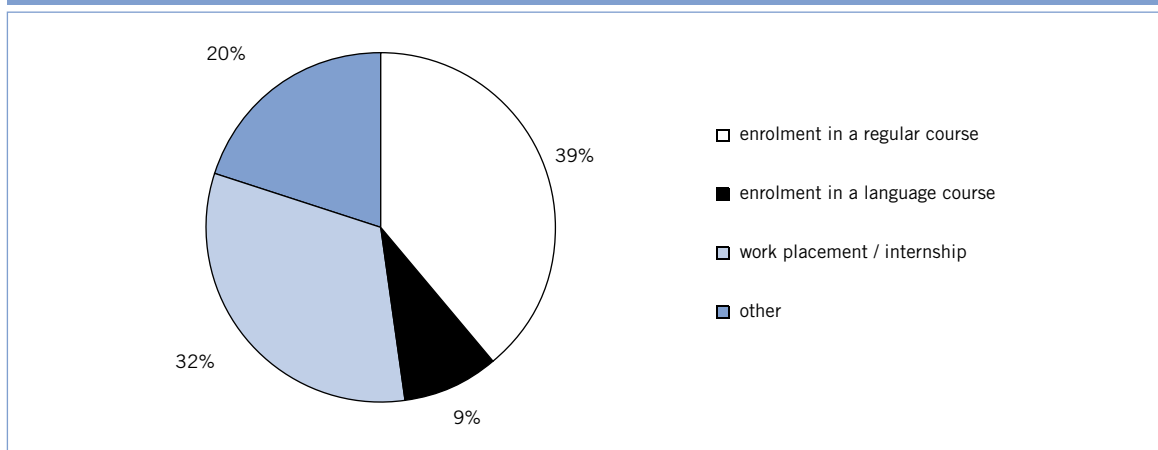
2. PROPORTION WHO HAVE STUDIED OVERSEAS

Only very few students in Ireland, 10 per cent in total, have been abroad for study-related activities, a pattern which is in accordance with the earlier study by Ryan and O'Kelly (2001). Participation in overseas study does not vary by whether students are enrolled in a full-time or part-time course. Irish students who come from higher (13%) or lower professional backgrounds (11%) are more likely to spend some time abroad than students coming from skilled manual (5%), semiskilled (7%) or unskilled (4%) backgrounds. Parents' educational background also seems to be a factor influencing the process – the offspring of parents with third-level education are more likely to study abroad. There is a clear relationship between foreign language proficiency and having spent time studying abroad. Over a third of students with fluent/very good skills in a foreign language have studied abroad compared with 7 per cent of those with only very poor language skills. The direction of the relationship cannot be determined from the survey; it may be that students who are fluent are more likely to want to study abroad or conversely, time abroad may enhance students' language skills.

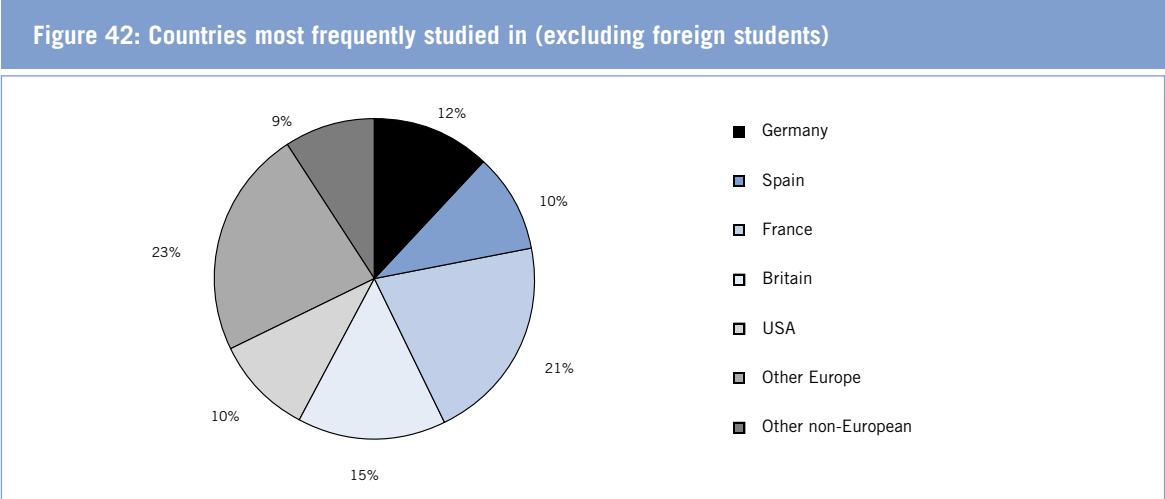
3. NATURE OF OVERSEAS STUDY

According to Teichler (2004), students have certain expectations of their study abroad hoping to benefit from academic, cultural, linguistic and professional activities as well as anticipating engagement in interesting extracurricular life. In general, study abroad is often seen as academic enhancement. However, only a small proportion of Irish students had spent time abroad for study-related activities while in third-level education. Such visits usually involved enrolment in a regular course or a work experience placement/internship (see Figure 41). Only a minority of students went abroad as part of a European programme such as ERASMUS or LINGUA. Most students who had been abroad for study-related activities had done so in the middle of their course.

Figure 41: Study abroad by Area of Activity



There is some variation in mobility patterns by field of study. Students on humanities courses are the most likely to have spent time abroad followed in prevalence by social science/business/law students. Mobility rates are considerably lower in science, engineering and agriculture than on other courses. This trend has remained unchanged in recent years (Ryan and O’Kelly, 2001).

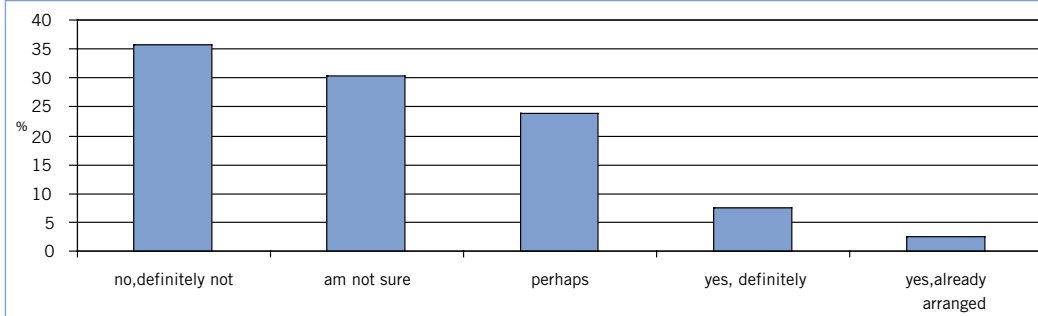


Students in Ireland are most likely to visit France for their study related activities. The other favoured countries are Germany, Spain, Britain and U.S.A (see Figure 42). There is a strong link between fluency in languages and travel destination as Irish students reported being more fluent in these languages. Irish students who studied abroad were mainly reliant on private sources of income, especially their family or partner, which seem to indicate that the sources of alternative support may be limited (Ryan and O’Kelly, 2001). Only 18 per cent were reliant on public sources of support, such as state grants, EU study grants and grants from the host country. The 15 per cent of students who drew on other income sources includes 10 per cent who took out a bank loan to go abroad.

4. PLANS REGARDING FUTURE STUDY OVERSEAS

Out of the overall number of Irish students surveyed who have not already studied abroad, only very few have definite plans regarding future study-related activity abroad (Figure 43).

Figure 43: Plans for Study Abroad



The likelihood of students' visit abroad seems to be linked to parents' social class and level of education. Students whose parents come from professional backgrounds and who have third-level education are more likely to have definite plans regarding future study abroad. Students who are fluent in foreign languages are also more likely to plan studying abroad. Students studying humanities, arts and business courses seem to be more definite about their plans to study abroad. Most of the students who already had arrangements in place for study abroad are on a primary degree course.

CONCLUSIONS

This report has set out to explore the experiences of students in higher education institutions in Ireland. The majority of higher education students are found to be broadly 'satisfied' with their material well-being, accommodation and workload. However, the experiences of full-time and part-time students vary notably. Part-time students are more likely to be 'satisfied' with their material situation compared to full-time students, which could be explained by higher incomes among the former. While full-time students were more 'satisfied' with their accommodation when living with parents/relatives, part-time students were most 'satisfied' living in their own households. The less time taken up by attending lectures and study the more likely the students were to report that they were 'satisfied' with their workload. Full-time students were more 'satisfied' with their workload compared to the part-time students.

The study also demonstrated a link between material well-being and term-time work. Nineteen per cent of full-time students and 8 per cent of part-time students consider their material situation to be bad. The study clearly showed that students whose parents had lower levels of education were more likely to take up term-time work, some of them also working long hours. The length of employment influenced satisfaction with workload; in particular, the levels of dissatisfaction among students rose when the extent of term-time work exceeded 16 hours per week.

This study also demonstrates that access to higher education and succeeding in it continues to be a problem for certain students. Despite the need to address the issue of educational inequality in higher education highlighted in various official reports, young people from professional and managerial backgrounds continue to be over-represented among those attending higher education institutions, particularly in degree programmes (Fitzpatrick Associates and O'Connell, 2005). Equality of access and participation in higher education continues to be an issue and many students experience certain barriers in entering and succeeding in higher education (Lynch, 1999).

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APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

EURO – STUDENT SURVEY 2003

PART ONE: YOUR STUDIES

1. At which college are you studying: _____
2. Are you taking:
 - (a) a full-time course..... ☐₁
 - (b) a part-time course..... ☐₂
 - (c) other (eg. e-learning, distance education) ☐₃ Please specify _____
3. What qualification should you have at the end of the course?
 - (a) a National Certificate..... ☐₁
 - (b) a National Diploma ☐₂
 - (c) a Primary Degree ☐₃
 - (d) a Postgraduate Diploma ☐₄
 - (e) a Masters Degree ☐₅
 - (f) a Ph.D ☐₆
 - (g) Other (specify)..... ☐₇
4. What is your present main area of study? (Tick one only).
 - (a) Education..... ☐₁
 - (b) Humanities & Arts..... ☐₂
 - (c) Social Science..... ☐₃
 - (d) Business..... ☐₄
 - (e) Law ☐₅
 - (f) Science..... ☐₆
 - (g) Maths ☐₇
 - (h) Computing/Computer Science..... ☐₈
 - (i) Engineering/Architecture..... ☐₉
 - (j) Agriculture/Veterinary ☐₁₀
 - (k) Health/Welfare ☐₁₁
 - (l) Sport/Catering/Services..... ☐₁₂
 - (m) Other (specify)..... ☐₁₃
5. (a)How long is the course in total? _____ years
 (b) What year of this course are you currently in? _____
6. Did you first enter Third Level on the basis of your Leaving Certificate only?
 Yes ☐₁ (Go to Q7) No ☐₂

(a) If no, on what basis did you first enter Third Level?

 - 1.FETAC/NCVA qualification..... ☐₁
 - 2.On the basis of mature years (23 plus)..... ☐₂
 - 3. Access/Foundation programme..... ☐₃
 - 4. Other (specify)..... ☐₄

7. Have you previously been registered for ANY OTHER Third Level courses?
 Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂ (Go to next question)

If yes: How many years did you study on these courses? _____

8. Do you intend to study further after you graduate?
 Yes..... ☐₁ No ☐₂ Don't know..... ☐₃

PART TWO: YOUR LIFE AS A STUDENT

9.(a) Where do you live during term time?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Lodgings/digs <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | 4. Rented house/flat..... <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ |
| 2. With parents/relatives <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ | 5. Own household <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ |
| 3. College residence on/off campus <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ | |

(b) How far is your accommodation from college? _____ miles

(c) Is your family home in Ireland?

Yes ☐₁

No..... ☐₂ (Go to Q10)

(i) If yes, how far is it from college? _____ miles

(ii) If yes, in which county is it located? _____

10. (a) Do you receive any income from each of the following sources?

(b) IF SO, What is the AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME at your personal disposal from each of the sources?

	Yes	No	Amount (average monthly)
• Your family.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Local Authority/VEC/Other State grants.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Earnings/savings from employment.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• State Fellowships/Scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Private Fellowships/Scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Social Welfare (e.g. Back to Ed, Lone Parents etc.).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Bank/Building Society/Credit Union Loan.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Student Assistance Fund (Hardship Fund)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____
• Other sources (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	€ _____

11. Does your family contribute indirectly per month to your living expenses in other ways? For example, free lodging or food, paying for books, clothes etc?

Yes ☐₁

No..... ☐₂ (Go to Q12)

If yes, THE MONTHLY SUPPORT IS APPROXIMATELY WORTH (please figure out what you would have to pay if you had to cover these items with your own money):

(i) Lodging/accommodation (including utilities) ... € _____

(ii) Other expenses € _____

12. During term time, approximately how much do you spend on average EACH MONTH on the following items? (not those already paid directly by parents)

Monthly Expenditure in €	Monthly Expenditure in €
• Accommodation..... € _____	• Alcohol..... € _____
• Transport..... € _____	• Tobacco..... € _____
• Food..... € _____	• Entertainment..... € _____
• Clothing & toiletries..... € _____	• Loan repayments..... € _____
• Regular bills (ESB etc.)..... € _____	• Study books & material... € _____
• Medical expenses..... € _____	• Other (specify)..... € _____
• Mobile phone..... € _____	

13. Are you a full-time undergraduate student?

Yes ☐1

No (i.e. part-time or post-graduate) ... ☐2

14. How was your registration fee (Student Services Charge) paid/funded this year?
Tick all that apply.

- i) By yourself ☐1 Amount € _____
 j) Your Family ☐2 Amount € _____
 k) State ☐3
 l) Other (specify) ☐4
 (Go to Q16)

15. How are your college fees being paid/funded this year? Please give amounts for full academic year.

- a) By yourself ☐1 Amount € _____
 b) Your Family ☐2 Amount € _____
 c) State ☐3 Amount € _____
 d) Employer paid/reimbursed .. ☐4 Amount € _____
 e) Other (specify) ☐5 Amount € _____
 f) Total Full year Fee ☐6 € _____

(Go to Q16)

16. How would you best describe your current financial situation. (Tick one only)

Very Good ☐1 Good ☐2 Fair ☐3 Bad ☐4 Very Bad ☐5

17. Please rate your general satisfaction with the following: (Tick one box on each line)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Acceptable	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Your accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Your work-load [study & job combined]	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Your financial/ material well-being	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Your course	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

18. During term-time, how many HOURS PER WEEK do you spend on the following activities? (Try to remember day by day and fill in the sum of hours over the whole week including the week end):

- Lectures/Tutorials/Practicals etc. hrs/wk
- Personal Study hrs/wk
- Playing sports/taking part in clubs and societies hrs/wk
- Travelling between accommodation and college (to and from) ... hrs/wk

19. During term-time, do you hold a paid job or jobs? Please count any work you do for pay, no matter how irregular it might be.

Yes, regular (every week) .. ☐1 Yes, occasional .. ☐2 No ... ☐3 (Go to Q.20)

IF YES

(a) Do you usually work: Tick all that apply

Saturdays ☐1 Sundays ☐2 Weekdays (during day) ☐3 Weekdays (evenings) .. ☐4

(b) What is the name or title of your job? _____

(c) How many hours per week do you usually work? _____ hrs/wk

(d) Is your job related to your main area of study? Please tick one:

Fully ☐1 Mainly ☐2 Slightly ☐3 Not at all ☐4

20. How many days in the past week have you had no main meal? _____

PART THREE: STUDY ABROAD/INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

21. (a) How would you describe your fluency in the following languages. (Tick one box on each line)

	fluent	good	fair	poor	very poor	No Knowledge
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
French	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
German	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) What language do you mostly speak in your family home? Tick one only.

English ☐ Irish ☐ Other (specify) ☐

21. Have you been abroad for study-related activities while in third level? (study-course, language course, internship, etc.)

Yes ☐ No ☐ If No, please go to Question 24.

22. If YES, what kind of study related activity (tick as appropriate) and for how long?

- enrolment in a regular course ☐ months
- a specialised language course ☐ months
- work placement/internship ☐ months
- other (specify, eg. summer school) ☐ months

23. (a) With regard to your LONGEST study-related activity abroad:

- In what country was it?
- Was it part of a programme? Such as:

- 1. ERASMUS/SOCRATES ☐
- 2. LINGUA ☐
- 3. Other EU programme ... ☐
- 4. Other programme ☐ fill in the name
- 5. No programme ☐

(b) Approximately, what was the TOTAL cost of this period abroad? €

(c) How was this financed? (Please ensure total equals 100%)

Source	% of Total
Family/parents' contribution	
Own previous job income	
Working abroad while studying	
EU Grant	
Home state grant	
Host country grant	
Bank Loan	
Other (specify)	
Total	100%

(d) At what stage in your studies was this?

At the beginning ☐ In the middle ☐ Towards the end ☐

THIS SECTION TO BE ANSWERED BY ALL STUDENTS:

24. Are you planning any study-related activity abroad? (study-course, language course, internship, others)

No, definitely not ☐ I am not sure ☐ Perhaps ☐ Yes, definitely ☐ Yes, already arranged ☐

PART FOUR: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

25. Date of birth: Day Month Year
26. Gender: Male ☐₁ Female ☐₂
27. Are you an Irish national: Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂
- If NO, what nationality are you? _____
28. Are you:
 Single ☐₁ Married ☐₂ Living as a couple ☐₃ Divorced/Widowed/Separated ☐₄
29. Do you have any children? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂
- IF YES, how many children do you have? _____
 What is the age of your youngest child? _____
30. Do you have special needs because of:
- | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) a physical disability | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ | (b) other disability | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
31. What work experience did you have before entering Third Level? Please tick all that apply.
- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Casual/holiday work | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ |
| Regular full-time job | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Apprenticeship | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ |
| FÁS or other state-sponsored course | <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ |
| None | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ |

PART FIVE: FAMILY BACKGROUND

32. What is the current status of your parents?
- | | Father | Mother |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Self-employed with employees, (including farmer) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Self-employed with no employees, (including farmer) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Economically not active (e.g. home duties) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Retired | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
| Deceased/parent not present | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ |
33. What is/was the name or title of your parents' jobs? (If s/he no longer at work, what did s/he do when s/he had a job? Please describe as fully as possible: if farmer indicate acreage; if in Civil Service, Army or Gardai, indicate rank or grade.)
- Father _____ Mother _____

34. What are the actual (or former if economically not active) occupations of your father and mother? Please classify the job according to one of the following categories of occupation. (Please tick one under father and one under mother)

	Father	Mother
- senior officials/managers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
- professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
- technicians and associate professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
- clerks	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
- service workers/sales workers	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
- skilled agricultural and fishery workers	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
- craft and related trades workers	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
- plant and mechanical operators and assemblers	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
- elementary occupations/housework	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
- military	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10

35. What is the highest level of education achieved by your parents? (Please tick one box under father and one under mother)

	Father	Mother
1. No formal qualification.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
2. Primary only.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
3. Group/Inter/Junior Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
4. Leaving Certificate.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. Apprenticeship with Leaving Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. Apprenticeship without Leaving Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
7. Leaving Cert. & professional qualification...	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
8. Third-level diploma/certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
9. Third-level degree or higher.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

36. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Brothers _____ Sisters _____

37. How many of them:

- (a) completed 3rd level education?
 (b) are currently in 3rd level education?
 (c) are still at school?
 (d) are not yet at school?

38. Please try to estimate the net (after tax) MONTHLY income of your family household:

1. up to €600☐1
 2. > €600 – 1,000☐2
 3. > €1,000 – 1,500☐3
 4. > €1,500 – 2,000☐4
 5. > €2,000 – 2,500☐5
 6. > €2,500 – 3,000☐6
 7. > €3,000 – 4,000☐7
 8. > €4,000 and over☐8

39. Finally, any further comment you would like to make about your life as a student.

Please place this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided and return as soon as possible. Thank you very much for your help.

APPENDIX 2: STUDENTS' OWN VIEWS

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STUDENTS' OWN VIEWS ON THEIR SITUATION

At the end of the questionnaire, students were given an opportunity to comment on any issues they considered relevant concerning their experience in the tertiary sector to date. Here are some of their views:²¹

Accommodation

Accommodation was often a source of complaint among students participating in the study. Availability and quality of student halls was often criticised, as were spiralling living costs in major cities, especially in Dublin:

- “ Accommodation is extremely expensive and on campus places are not always available to students.”
- “ Appropriate accommodation is very sparse and expensive”
- “ Inadequate accommodation, severely overpriced”.
- “ Accommodation is so expensive in Dublin that I have been forced to live at home, I therefore spend up to 2 hours travelling to college every morning and the same home!”

Childcare

Some students felt that the college does not provide adequate support for those who have children either in the form of a grant or childcare:

- “ As a single, lone parent I have difficulty getting childcare. I do not receive a grant as I live at home, even though I have a dependent. This makes it difficult for me to be financially independent. I do not receive a grant as I am under 23”.
- “ Childcare facilities for students at all levels of education in Ireland (from adult basic education to post-graduate level) are wholly and completely inadequate. I would not have been able to continue my studies without strong family support”.

Financial Strain

- “ I find that lack of finances is responsible for a lot of pressure felt during term time. All saved or earned money goes on living essentials (rent and food) and as I receive no financial assistance, I find that the quality of my work in college suffers”.
- “ Dublin offers little financial relief for the student, I would prefer not to work”.
- “ Financial situations are the biggest worry to all students, more time should be spent on studying rather than earning money to study”.

21. Although not representative, the quotes provide a good example of issues that the students attending Irish tertiary system consider relevant.

Support

“My academic guidance and support levels are a total joke”.

“As an MPhil student, I find there is no proper/regular supervision. As a result you are left very much to your own devices. Regular meetings with supervisors would, I feel, bring about more positive results”.

“There is also a lack of personal development and career advice for students”.

“Being a mature student with some difficulties, I feel there should be some access to help in the form of special/remedial tutors for basics (maths, in my case), or a panel of people”

Expense of resources and facilities in colleges

“Art students have more costs to incur during the term for materials – they are very expensive”.

“Reading material/ textbook allowance would have been a huge help. Average book cost 50 euro and we are required 12 per term. Class size of 80 students with only 5 textbooks per subject in library. Need more college computers for research in library”.

“Better student services and facilities needed in our college”.

“Great lack of facilities, e.g. computers internet access.

“Books and notes expensive, libraries poor and transport expensive and poor”.

“Need better sports facilities”.

“As an art student (particularly fashion design) I spend about 350 a month on necessary materials. There's a trip abroad every year to buy collection fabrics we must also pay for because Ireland is not satisfactory for fabric purchasing”.

“Books are too expensive. Publishers are making a fortune. Gives richer students an advantage”.

Balance between study and employment

“ There is a huge pressure on time when working full-time – family, study, etc.”

“ As a parent and student it is time management which provides the greatest challenge, more than financial management”.

“ As a part-time student it is very hard to judge work and study time. I have to work to survive! At present my expenditure exceeds my income”.

“ As a student I find the workload acceptable. But if I had a part-time job during term-time, I think that my studies would be badly affected. Therefore I find it important to have a part-time job outside term-time and save up money that way”.

“ As I work full-time I don't have much of a student life”.

“ Being a part-time student, working by day and having a young family is very tough but challenging”.

“ College is great but doesn't give you much free time, with practicals, write-ups, reports and other college work”.

“ Getting the work, study, family balance right is very difficult, I'm stressed out most of the time”.

“ Had such high personal expectations when coming to university that just can't be achieved because of work and study commitments. So stressful trying to achieve a balance”.

“ As a mature student and single parent it is very difficult financially. I feel the government does nothing to encourage mature people back to 3rd level education”.

Travel-related issues

“ I really enjoy it [student life] but find travelling difficult as the distance makes it difficult to enjoy/ take part in many clubs/societies”.

“ I spend 4 hours a day sitting on or waiting for a bus”.

“ I spend most of my time on commuter transport”.

“ I travel so much to college every day that it tires me out but I can't afford to move closer without taking up a third job that I have no time for”.

“ Its very difficult to study while constantly worrying about money, I can't afford to live close to college because of my financial situation so have to travel 40 miles to and from college”.

“ The travelling is the main problem, i.e., cost, time and effect on my health”.

Being A Third-level Student

“ As of yet, I do not have any complaints. It’s tough going though, and I’m always broke”.

“ Being a student isn’t as easy as people believe. It’s very stressful and worrying and, we need more support from college and governmental bodies”.

“ Can be demanding at times and sometimes the “laissez-faire” approach by lecturers is annoying”.

“ College is a big change from secondary school. It takes a while to adjust to the workload”.

“ College is hard, its long hours and money is scarce. But I can see why people say it’s the best time of your life”.

“ Difficult, yet enjoyable. Coming from disadvantaged background, a huge sense of achievement”.

“ Great social life, lots of good friends, overall having a brilliant time”.

“ It can be a struggle sometimes – being the first one in the family to go to university”.

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