

7. Education

Participation in education

Historical perspective

Education and unemployment

Field of study

Increase in students slows down

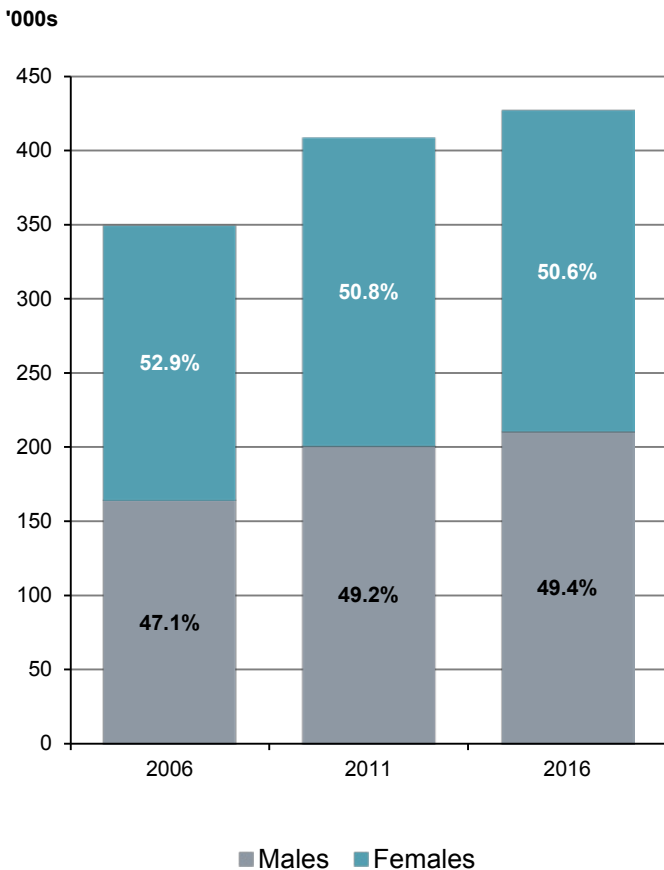
Census 2016 saw an increase in the number of students aged 15 years and over since 2011 – up from 408,838 to 427,128, a rise of 4.5 per cent or 18,290.

Male students accounted for 53.9 per cent of this increase bringing their share of the student population to 49.4 per cent, up from 49.2 per cent in 2011.

During the previous inter-censal period of 2006 to 2011, the growth in the numbers of students was stronger, increasing by 59,242 or 16.9 per cent over the five years. Males accounted for 61.7 per cent of the increase.

[See web table EZ001](#)

Figure 7.1 Total number of students aged 15 and over, 2006-2016



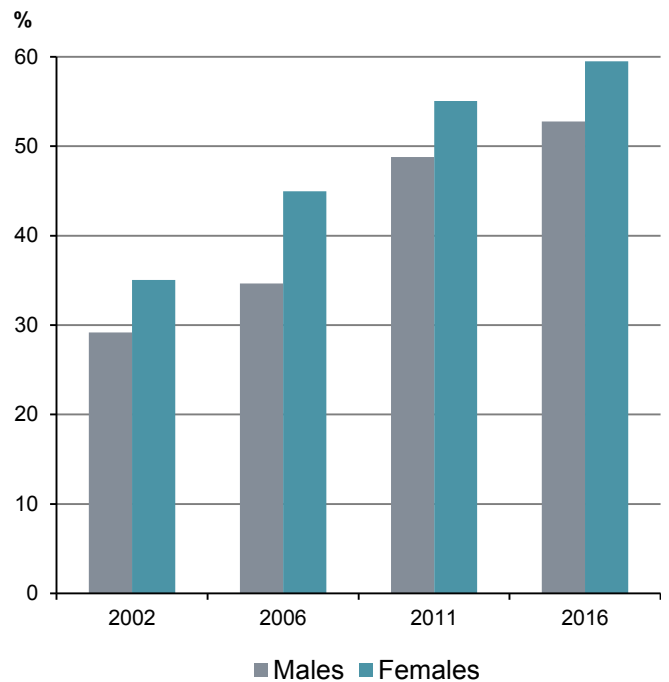
Gap between female and male education rates level off

Census results have consistently revealed higher levels of female participation in education among those aged 19 to 22 years (the college years) compared with males. This pattern has been repeated in census 2016.

Education participation among females for this age group was 59.5 per cent while that for males was 6.7 per cent lower at 52.8 per cent. The gap is widest amongst twenty year olds with 65.5 per cent of females indicating they were a student compared with 56.7 per cent of males.

For both sexes, rates have increased on 2011 with males increasing from 48.8 per cent in 2011 to 52.8 per cent in 2016, while female rates increased from 55.1 per cent to 59.5 per cent.

Figure 7.2 Participation rate of males and females aged 19-22 years in education, 2002-2016



Historical perspective

The progressive improvement in education attainment (and education ceased) can be seen in the census results. For those aged 60 and over, 34.4 per cent were educated to primary level compared with only 3.6 per cent for those aged 15-39. Looking at the equivalent rates from 2011 emphasises this improvement.

A more educated population

The increasing proportion of younger people with a third level qualification can be seen in Figure 7.3. In April 2016, 49.8 per cent of those aged 30-39 were educated to third level (up from 46.5% in 2011) compared with 33.0 per cent for the 50-59 age group (up from 27.1% five years earlier).

See web table EZ055

Figure 7.3 Percentage of persons with a third level qualification by age, 2006-2016

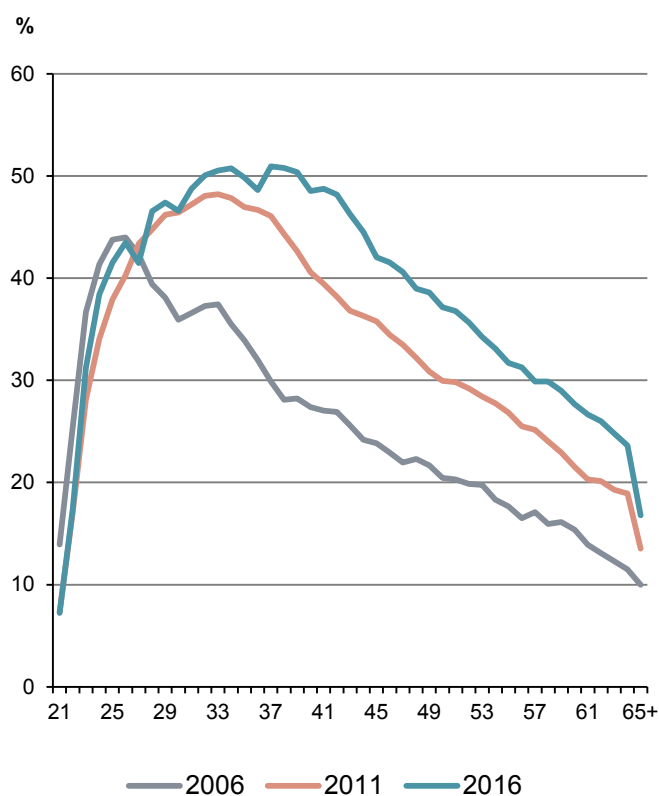
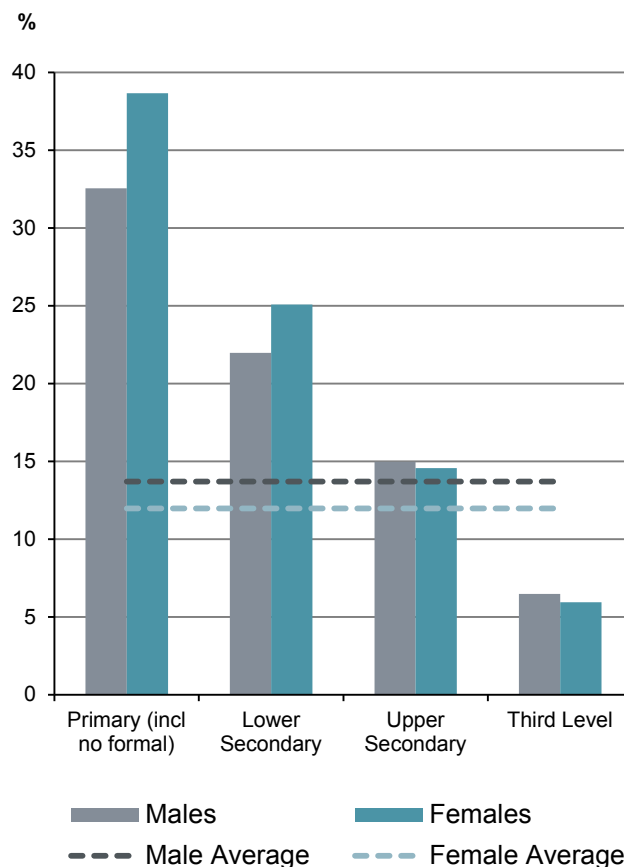


Figure 7.4 Unemployment rate by level of education attained to date, 2016



Education and unemployment

Figure 7.4 shows how the level of educational attainment and unemployment were related in April 2016. The unemployment rate for people who had attained a primary education at most was 34.6 per cent. This compared to an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent for those with a third level degree or higher. As the level of education increases the rate of unemployment decreases.

The rate of unemployment for females was higher than for males at primary or lower secondary level of education. For those educated to upper secondary or third level, the unemployment rate for females was lower than for males. For example, unemployment amongst women with a third level degree was 5.9 per cent compared with 6.5 per cent for men.

The skill set of the population

Of the total population aged 15 years and over who had completed their education, 50.5 per cent, or 1,563,969 people, indicated they had a qualification (other than Junior or Leaving Certificate). The proportion varies by age, with just under two thirds of 25-34 year olds (66.0%) indicating they had a qualification compared with 27.4 per cent of those aged 65 and over.

The most popular Field of Study category overall was Social Sciences, Business and Law with 453,971 people (up from 413,959 in 2011), representing 29.0 per cent of all respondents; this is followed by Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction with 272,231 people (down from 284,925 five years earlier).

Certain Field of Study categories showed strong differences by sex with over 90 per cent dominated by one sex or the other. The most notable were training for pre-school teachers (99.1%), childcare and youth services (97.4%) and secretarial and office work (96.7%) which were all mainly represented by women while motor vehicles, ship and aircraft qualifications contained only very small numbers of females (1.4%).

[See web table EZ032](#)

It's a fact!

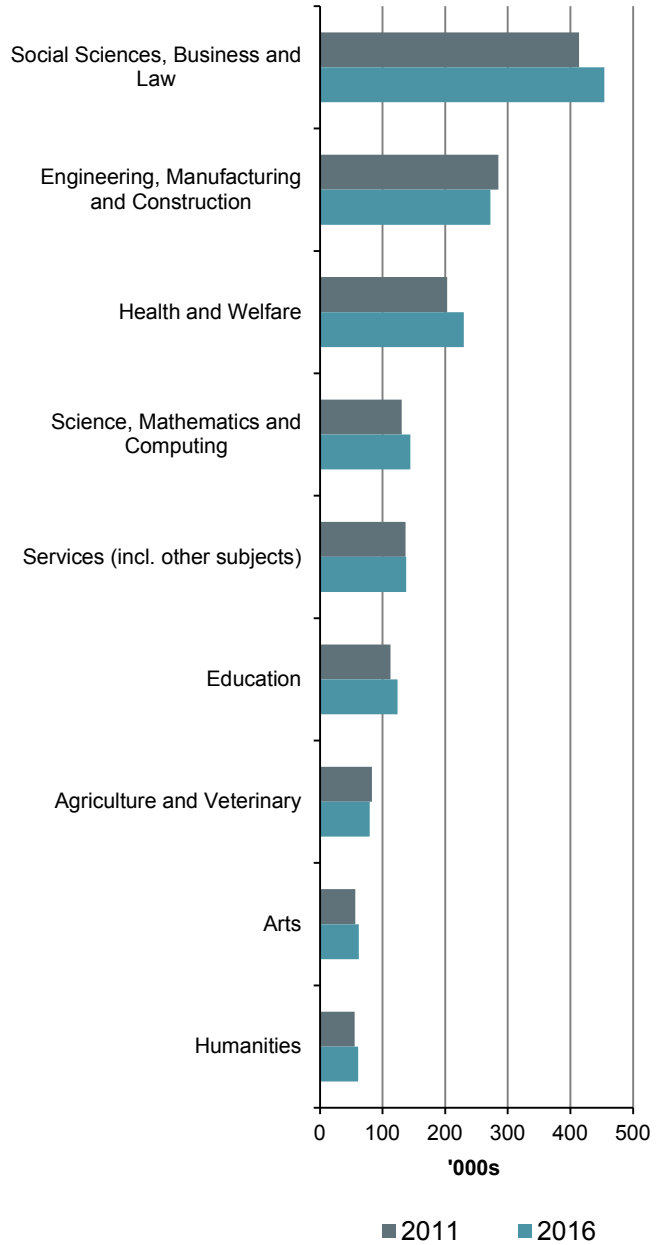
90.7%

The percentage of people with an Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction qualification who were male

84.4%

The percentage of people with a Health and Welfare qualification who were female

Figure 7.5 Field of study, 2011 and 2016



Field of study and level of education

Figure 7.6 presents field of study and level of education attained for people who had ceased their full-time education in 2011 and 2016. Humanities had the highest proportion of people with a third level qualification (94.1%), whilst Agriculture and Veterinary had the lowest proportion (40.9%).

Agriculture and Veterinary in turn had the highest proportion of people whose highest educational attainment was up to lower secondary level (30.2%).

[See web table EZ036](#)

Figure 7.6 Field of study by level of education, 2011 and 2016

