

Under the *National Reform Programme*, (target 4 for Education), Ireland's headline target was to reduce the percentage of 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training to **8%**; and to increase the share of 30-34 year olds who have completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 60%. The rate for 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training for the year 2011 was only 10.6%, according to *Eurostat*.

In the OECD - *Education at a glance: OECD Indicators*, in a Survey of Adult Skills for students in tertiary education (20-34) for the year 2012 the following were the findings for Ireland:

- Whose parents have not attained upper second level education is **16%**; [OECD average is 9%]
- Whose parents have an upper secondary education is **33%**; [OECD average is 37%]
- Whose parents have a tertiary education degree is **51%**; [OECD average is 55%]

The targets for entry rates to higher education for underrepresented socio-economic groups for Ireland were as follows:

- for Non-manual in 2013 it is 42%; in 2020 it is 54%
- semi and unskilled manual in 2013 it is 45%; in 2020 it is 54%

According to the *National plan for Equity of Access 2008-2013* published in 2004, only one third of the children from the semi and unskilled manual socio-economic backgrounds enter third level education. In the skilled manual group, the figure was 50%. The lowest category of entrants at 27%, entitled 'Non-manual' accounted for one-fifth of Irish households.

According to the *Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Census 2011* a total of 595,335 persons, accounting for 13.0% of the population, had a **disability** in April 2011. Of these 289,728 (48.7%) were male while 305,607 (51.3%) were female. Of the total of 595,335 persons with a disability 37,687 or 6.3% indicated that they spoke a language other than English or Irish at home.

Lower level of education for persons with a disability

Amongst disabled persons aged 15 to 49 16.3% had completed no higher than primary level education compared with 5.1% for the general population in this age group, while lower secondary school was the highest level completed by 22.3% of disabled compared with 15.1 per cent for all persons. People with a disability were also much less likely to have completed third level education, with 24.5 per cent being educated to this level, compared with 38.7 per cent of the overall population.

Age education completed

Census 2011 shows that people with a disability ceased their full-time education at an earlier age than the total population with 8,313 or 7.4 per cent of disabled persons aged 15 to 49 having left full-time education before reaching the age of 15, compared with 32.7 per cent for the State as a whole. 9.7 per cent of disabled people aged 15 to 49 stayed in education until the age of 25 or higher, compared with 10.5 per cent of the general population.

Labour force participation

Among the total population in the 16-64 age group participation rates (2011) were 78.3% for men and 64.0% for women. For people with disabilities the rates were 51.0% and 40.4% respectively.

Unemployment and disability

The unemployment rate amongst disabled people was 30.8%, compared with 19% for the overall population. The lowest rate of unemployment at 25.3% was amongst persons who were deaf or had a serious hearing impairment while unemployment was highest at 43.9% amongst those with a difficulty in learning, remembering or concentrating. Unemployment was greatest amongst males for every type of disability, exceeding female unemployment by 12% for those with a psychological or emotional condition.

Learners with disabilities

People with disabilities have, to date, been significantly under-represented in Irish higher-education for reasons to do with historic lack of supports for people with disabilities throughout the education system and low educational expectations. There has been a significant increase in the participation rates of such students in recent years, due in part to a higher level of diagnosis as well as the increased provision of vital learning supports, assistive technology and other necessary accommodations. One such valuable support has been the **Fund for Students with Disabilities** which provides funding to institutions for students who require additional supports and services. The numbers of students benefiting from the Fund has increased steadily over time. An allocation of almost €13.5 million was made under the Fund in 2007/2008, benefiting a total of 3,099 students. While progress has been made in increasing the number of students with disabilities in higher education, people with physical and sensory disabilities continue to have very low participation rates.

Target group	Baseline (1998)	Target for 2006	Outcome (year)
Semi-and unskilled manual	23%	27%	33% (2004)
Mature students (23+)	4.5%	10%	12.6% (2006)
Students with disabilities	0.9%	1.8%	3.2% (2005)