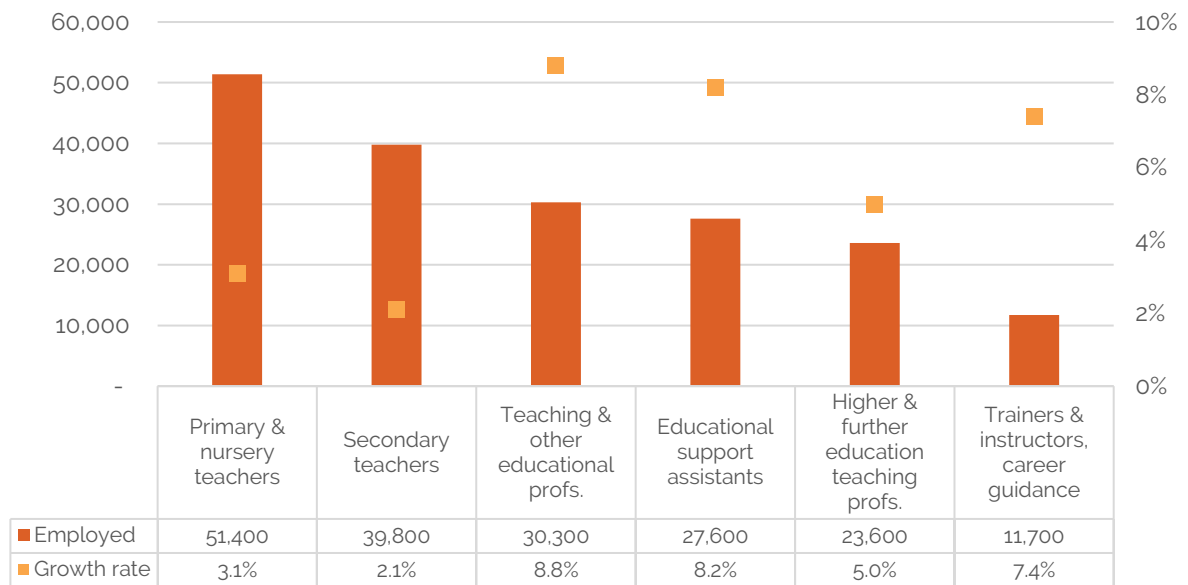


10.5 Education Occupations

Figure 10.5 Annual Average Employment (2023) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2018-2023)



Overall employment	184,500
Share of total workforce	7.0%
Main sectors of employment	95% - Education sector
Employment growth	+39,200 between 2018 and 2023 +4.9% on average annually (compared to +3.5% for total workforce)

2023	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Higher & further education teaching profs.	55%	79%	[29%]	74%	99%	70	
Secondary teachers	67%	86%	[14%]	95%	99%	...	
Primary & nursery teachers	88%	85%	...	96%	96%	...	
Teaching & other educational profs.	72%	73%	33%	84%	89%	50	
Educational support assistants	93%	71%	27%	94%	46%	...	
Trainers & instructors, career guidance	[63%]	77%	...	84%	76%	6	
Overall total	75%	80%	20%	90%	87%	126	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment growth for this occupational group was above average, with an additional 39,200 persons employed over the five-year period. Three quarters of those employed were female and most were Irish citizens. The demand for primary teachers is projected to decrease over the next decade, driven by declining numbers of enrolments, although the extent to which the continued war in Ukraine will impact future enrolment figures is as yet unclear.¹ Increasing enrolments at post-primary level up to the latter part of this decade are expected to result in an under-supply of post-primary teachers until the mid-2030s.

In March 2024, there were 74,146 FTE (full time equivalent) equating to 78,646 teachers employed working in the Irish education system. Despite this, issues with recruiting and retaining teachers have been highlighted for both primary level (e.g. regional issues and/or availability of substitute teachers) and for post-primary teachers (subject-specific). The on-going cost of living crisis and lack of affordable housing, which is having a negative impact on the recruitment and retention of key workers across several economic sectors, is deemed to be a significant factor particularly for schools in urban areas, as highlighted at the annual conference of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation in April 2024.² Policy responses to issues with sourcing teachers have included:

- increasing the number of places on teacher training courses on a temporary basis by the Department of Education for the academic year 2024-2025 (290 more places on primary teacher training courses and an additional 200 places on primary teaching masters courses)³
- an increase in the number of allocated teaching posts at both primary and post-primary level
- the expansion of free upskilling programmes which seeks to increase the number of qualified teachers in high-demand subjects
- and increasing the pool of teachers available to undertake substitute work, including encouraging retired teachers to work as substitute teachers.

Enrolment levels across all regions in Ireland, any changes to pupil-teacher ratios, the working patterns of teachers, and other policy initiatives are likely to drive future demand for education-related occupations.

Occupation	Economic summary
Higher & further education teaching profs.	The five-year annual average growth for this occupation was above average, mainly due to an increase of 2,400 persons employed between 2022 and 2023. This occupation is characterised by a higher than average share of persons employed who were female, aged 55 years or over and non-Irish citizens. Both vacancies (advertised through the DSP) and employment permits related mainly to lecturers. Demographic factors and government funding are likely to be the main drivers of demand for these roles.
Secondary teachers Skill shortage: Subject-specific secondary teachers	Since 2020 employment levels have only seen marginal increases, resulting in a below average growth rate annually over the five-year period. Two-thirds of secondary teachers were female, and most were in full-time roles. Recent job hires for these roles far exceeded employment growth which may be indicative of the shorter-term contracts associated with substitute teaching. With enrolments at post-primary level expected to peak in 2025 and decline thereafter, an overall increase in demand is not expected. At the same time, the number of post-primary teachers registered with the Teaching Council has grown by, on average, 1,000 registrations per annum over the last five years. However, recruitment and retention, particularly for certain key subjects has

¹ Enrolments in primary schools are projected to decline annually to 2036, while post-primary school enrolments are estimated to continue to grow to 2025 and then to decline annually thereafter. Department of Education, Projections of full-time enrolments, Primary and Second Level, 2023-2042. March 2024. See <https://www.gov.ie/>

² <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/education/2024/04/02/teachers-leaving-in-droves-due-to-mountain-paperwork-and-rising-living-costs-into-conference-hears/>

³ <https://www.rte.ie/news/education/2023/0327/schools-teacher-shortage>

	<p>become an increasing issue for schools. A 2023 Teachers' Union of Ireland survey found that the most difficult subjects to find qualified teachers for were maths, woodwork/construction studies, Irish, biology, home economics and chemistry.⁴ The Department of Education recently introduced a suite of measures to address teacher demand in priority subjects, including procuring Level 8 programmes to upskill teachers to teach mathematics, physics and Spanish as well as a pilot scheme to facilitate teacher sharing between schools.⁵ The lack of employment growth and the expected future decline in enrolment numbers suggest that employment levels are unlikely to grow for this occupation; however, shortages are arising for teachers in specific subject areas.</p>
Primary & nursery teachers	<p>Employment growth for primary teachers was marginally below average, with employment levels declining by 3,900 between 2022 and 2023. Despite the fall in employment, there was a large volume of recent job hires, indicating that recruitment is continuing, replacing those who have left or those on temporary contracts. Most were female, in full-time positions, and Irish citizens.</p> <p>Despite employment levels declining, recruitment and retention issues continue to persist. The €2,000 incentive scheme for new graduates and a temporary increase in primary teacher training places⁶ have been enacted to assist with alleviating issues filling vacant teacher posts. Future demand for primary teachers will depend on demographic patterns, pupil-teacher ratios and other policy initiatives.</p>
Teaching & other educational profs.	<p>This occupation (which includes special needs teachers, nursery managers/owners and school principals) experienced the highest employment growth rate across all education occupations, with an additional 8,100 persons employed between 2022 and 2023. Most were female and a third were aged 55 years and older which may lead to future demand implications for this role. A small number of employment permits were issued across a range of roles including special needs teachers. Many of the issues regarding recruitment and retention identified in relation to primary and secondary teachers also apply to special needs teachers.</p>
Educational support assistants	<p>Employment growth for educational support assistants was above average over the five-year period, although employment levels remained unchanged between 2022 and 2023. At 93%, educational support assistants had the highest share of females in employment across all education occupations; 27% were aged 55 years and older, which is above the national average. Less than half of those employed held third level qualifications. Recent employment growth is likely the result of additional allocations for special needs assistants' posts, with future demand also likely to be dependent on demographic factors and government funding.</p>
Trainers & instructors, career guidance	<p>Despite little growth in employment levels between 2020 and 2022, employment grew in 2023 (by 1,400 persons) resulting in an above average growth rate annually over the five-year period. A small number of employment permits were issued, mainly for guide dog instructors. It should be noted that career guidance professionals working in the second level system are most likely captured in the secondary teaching occupations. The introduction of additional policy initiatives aimed at increasing Ireland's lifelong learning participation (to reach new EU targets) will likely lead to increased demand for these roles.</p>

⁴ <https://www.tui.ie/news/new-survey-64-of-schools-have-unfilled-vacancies%C2%A0just-1-believe-enough-being-done-by-government.14906.html>

⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/30ed2-launch-of-teacher-sharing-scheme-pilot/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/1e3f9-minister-foley-announces-610-additional-places-on-primary-initial-teacher-education-ite-programmes-over-2023-and-2024/>