

Certification of QQI Major Awards

2014-18



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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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PREFACE

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. Our mission is to sustain public confidence in the quality of education and training, promote trust in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and drive a culture of continuous improvement by education and training providers. QQI is also an awarding body and is currently the only body that makes further education and training (FET) awards that are included in the NFQ.

We are committed to working towards a vision of Ireland as a country that offers extensive high-quality education and training opportunities, enabling learners to fulfil their potential through achieving qualifications that are widely valued nationally and internationally

Our unique position as the agency that spans all post-secondary education and training means that we have been centrally involved in many of the transformations and developments that have occurred in this field in recent years.

The new QQI Data Series will explore QQI's data to contribute to a better understanding of quality and qualifications in post-secondary education and training. It will also help inform and influence policy and contribute to the continuing development of the Irish education, training and qualifications systems.

The QQI Data Series will also help demonstrate to learners, graduates, employers, professional recognition bodies, regulators and policy makers the impact of measures taken by QQI to review and enhance the quality of education and training in Ireland and the national qualifications infrastructure. This will include analysis of QQI's activities as an awarding body.

QQI is committed to an open data policy, creating transparency and contributing to knowledge-sharing. Themes for the series will emerge from the information needs of qualifications users and our stakeholders.



FOREWORD

This report summarises and analyses Major awards made by QQI over a five-year period (2014-2018) for further education and training institutions and certain higher education institutions. QQI is the only body currently awarding FET qualifications that are included in the NFQ. However, QQI awards account for a relatively small fraction of the HE awards made each year that are included in the NFQ.

QQI gathers key data on the recipients of its awards at the point of request for certification. We also collect other types of data in the course of our quality assurance activities with providers of programmes leading to QQI awards, at both institutional and programme levels. These data help us in the performance of our functions not only in certification but in the maintenance and development of the NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) and the quality assurance of providers and their programmes. They provide unique insights into the Irish tertiary education system and the supply of skills to the workforce.

This publication is the first in a new **QQI Data Series** that will explore the data we hold.

More generally, we aim to increase the visibility and availability of data concerning Ireland's tertiary education system quality and qualifications, support its continual improvement, and inform users of educational qualifications such as government, employers, regulators, professional associations and learners.



INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an overview of data together with an analysis of QQI Major awards¹, delivered between 2014 and 2018 by education and training providers offering validated programmes leading to QQI awards. It contains a collation of useful data relating to Major awards achieved by learners who participated in nationally recognised further and higher education and training (FET and HE) courses.

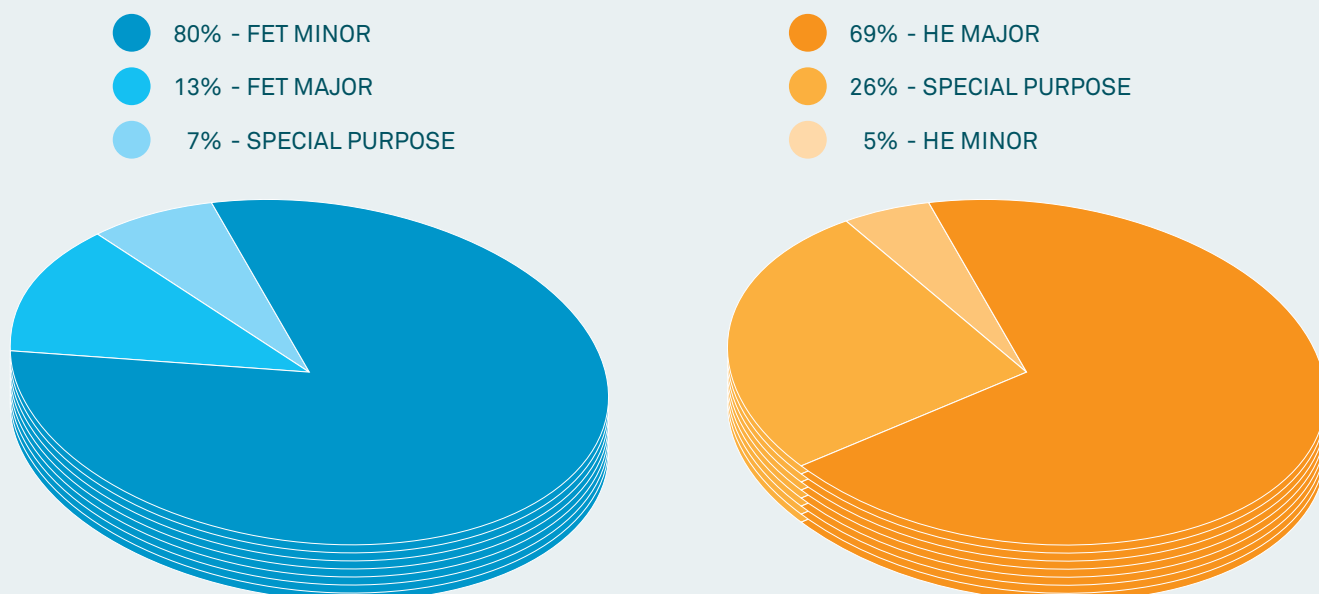
The analysis is of Major FET and HE awards made by QQI. QQI is currently the only awarding body making FET awards that are included in the NFQ, though other FET awarding bodies exist. QQI HE awards account for a relatively small fraction of all HE awards in the NFQ. On average, only 10% of all Major awards in the HE sector and only 6% of Level 8 Honours Degree awards are made by QQI².

QQI Major awards represent, on average, only 15% of all awards achieved by learners year on year, but they are the principal class of award made at each level of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and their analysis provides a useful insight into participation and outcomes in tertiary education in Ireland.

In the FET sector, QQI Major awards represent, on average, 13% of all QQI FET awards, while in the HE sector they represent, on average, 69% of all QQI HE awards.



Figure I – Average proportion of QQI awards in FET and HE sectors by Type between 2014-2018



1 The paper includes information on all FET Major awards, as QQI is the only National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) awarding body in the sector; and on the part of HE Major awards certified by QQI.

2 These proportions are based on and only include figures provided by The Higher Education Authority (HEA). HEA has statutory responsibility for the regulation of the higher education system in Ireland. For further information on the HE sector, visit: <https://hea.ie/statistics/publications/>

OVERVIEW

Between 2014 and 2018, on average, the proportion of QQI Major awards year on year was 15% of all QQI awards made. Between 2014 and 2016, this proportion was 14%; it increased in 2017 by 2 percentage points and by a further 3 percentage points in 2018.

The largest annual number of QQI Major awards made was in 2017, when 40,120 awards were made. That number decreased in 2018 by 4%.



QQI MAJOR AWARDS



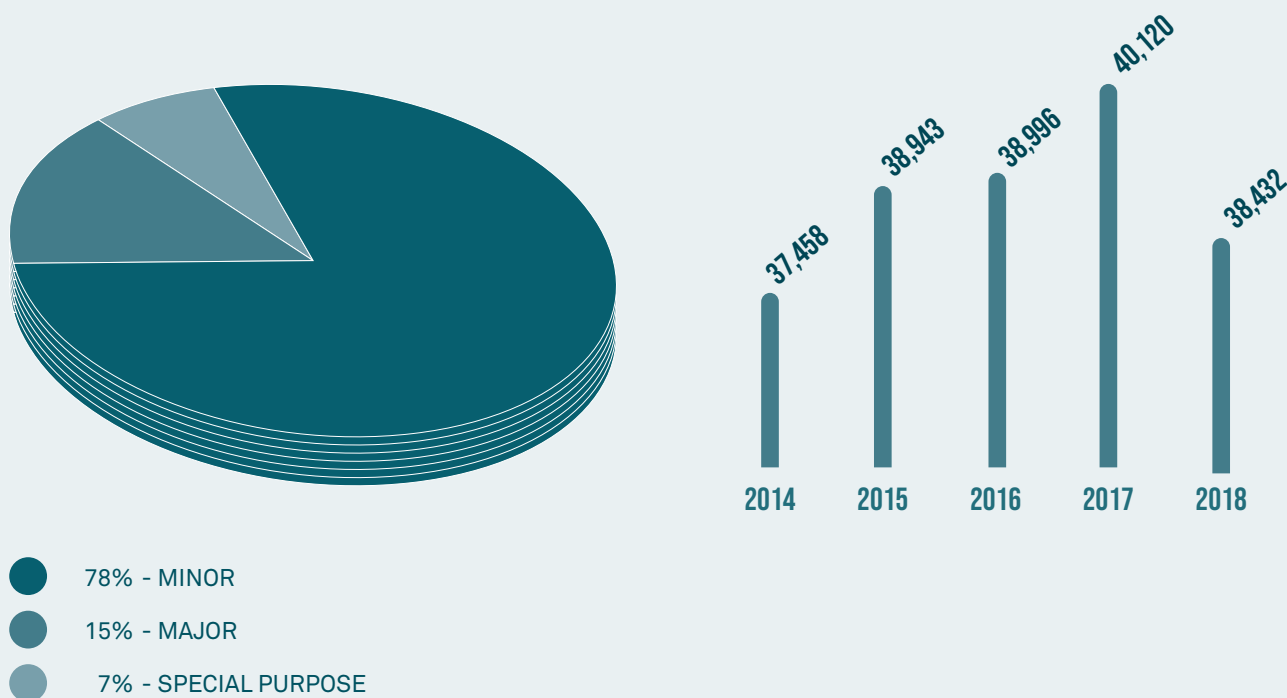
MAJOR AWARDS - 2017

Table I – Number and average percentage of all QQI awards by Type and Sector between 2014-2018

AWARD TYPE	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
MAJOR	37,458	14%	38,943	14%	38,996	14%	40,120	16%	38,432	17%
FET	32,257		33,951		33,507		34,246		32,039	
HE	5,201		4,992		5,489		5,874		6,393	
MINOR	205,217	79%	220,892	79%	220,016	79%	197,215	76%	167,408	74%
FET	204,553		220,446		219,674		196,992		167,070	
HE	664		446		342		223		338	
SPECIAL PURPOSE	16,230	6%	18,954	7%	19,528	7%	21,375	8%	20,183	9%
FET	14,260		16,723		16,885		19,194		18,494	
HE	1,970		2,231		2,643		2,181		1,689	
SUPPLEMENTAL*	220	-	9	-	29	-	57	-	82	-
TOTAL	259,125		278,569		226,105		258,767		226,105	

* Supplemental awards are made in the FET sector only

Figure II – Average proportion and number of all QQI awards by Type between 2014-2018



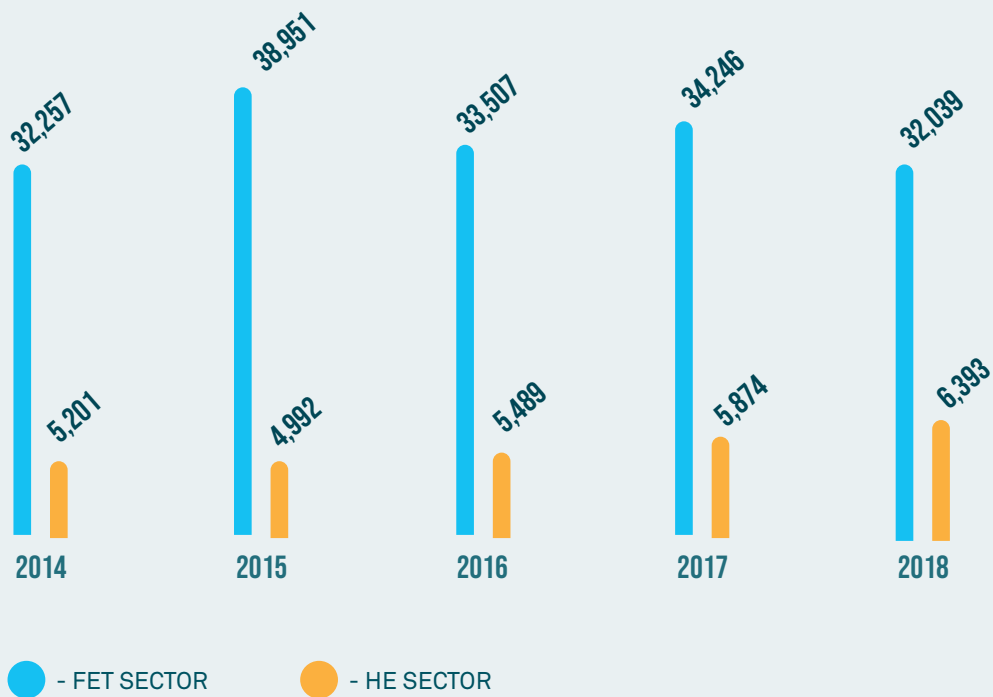
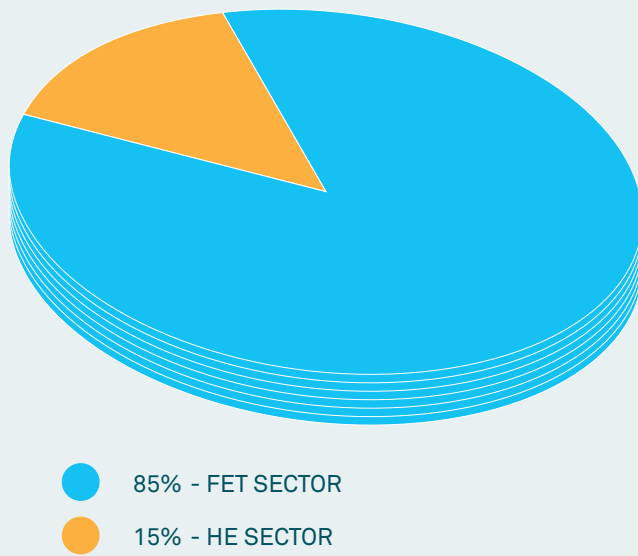
The distribution of these proportions was substantially different in the FET and HE sectors; on average 85% of all QQI Major awards were made in FET and 15% in HE. Although figures fluctuated over the years, it is worth noting that the gap between these proportions narrowed most in 2018 (by two percentage points) when 83% of all QQI Major awards were made in the FET sector and 17% in the HE sector.

It indicates that since 2015 QQI Major awards have been declining in FET but increasing in HE.

Table II – Number and average proportion of QQI Major awards by Sector between 2014-2018

AWARD TYPE	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
FET	32,257	86%	33,951	87%	33,507	85%	34,246	85%	32,039	83%
HE	5,201	14%	4,992	13%	5,489	15%	5,874	15%	6,393	17%

Figure III – Average percentages and total numbers of QQI awards by Type between 2014 and 2018



1. MAJOR AWARDS

BY EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTOR

On average, between 2014 and 2018, 85% of all QQI Major awards were made in the FET sector.

Trends 2014-2018:

- » **In the FET sector:** The number of QQI Major awards achieved by FET learners declined by 1% between 2014 and 2018. The largest number of QQI Major awards made was in 2017, when 34,246 awards were made; the number declined by 6% between 2017 and 2018.
- » **In the HE sector:** The number of QQI Major awards achieved by HE learners increased by 23% between 2014 and 2018; it peaked in 2018 when 6,393 Major awards were made.

Table 1 – Number of QQI Major awards by Sector and Percentage Change between 2014-2018

EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
FET	32,257	33,951	33,507	34,246	32,039	- 1%
HE	5,201	4,992	5,489	5,874	6,393	+ 23%
TOTAL NUMBERS	37,458	38,943	38,996	40,120	38,432	+ 3%

Figure 1 – Number of QQI Major awards by Sector between 2014-2018

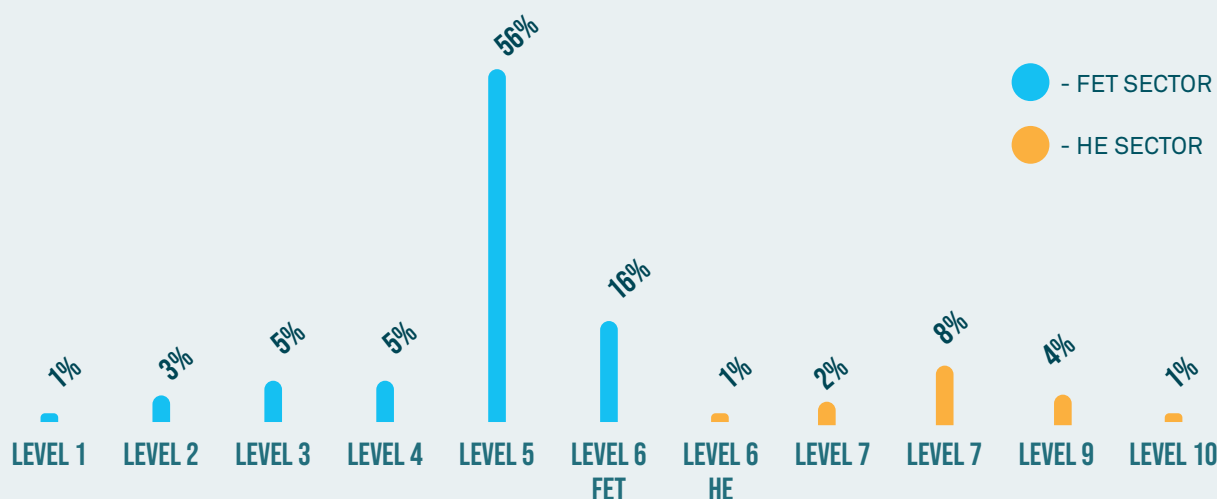


2. MAJOR AWARDS

BY NFQ LEVELS

Between 2014 and 2018, the majority of all QQI Major awards were made at Level 5 (on average, 56% of all Major awards were made at this level); followed by Level 6 (17%) and Level 8 (8%).

Figure 2 – Average proportion of QQI Major awards by NFQ Levels between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

2.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector

- » The majority of QQI Major awards were made at Level 5 (65% on average of all awards made in the sector).
- » The number of QQI Major awards decreased at the lowest levels of the NFQ, i.e. at Levels 1 to 4; significantly at Level 3. The decline in demand at these levels may be explained by the substantial improvement in the level of prior achievement of those seeking further education³. The decline in numbers at the lower levels of the NFQ was also observed in Minor awards (see summary on QQI website [here](#)).
- » QQI Major awards increased by 6% and 4% at Levels 5 and 6 respectively between 2014-2018.
- » Numbers at Level 5 decreased substantially in 2018.

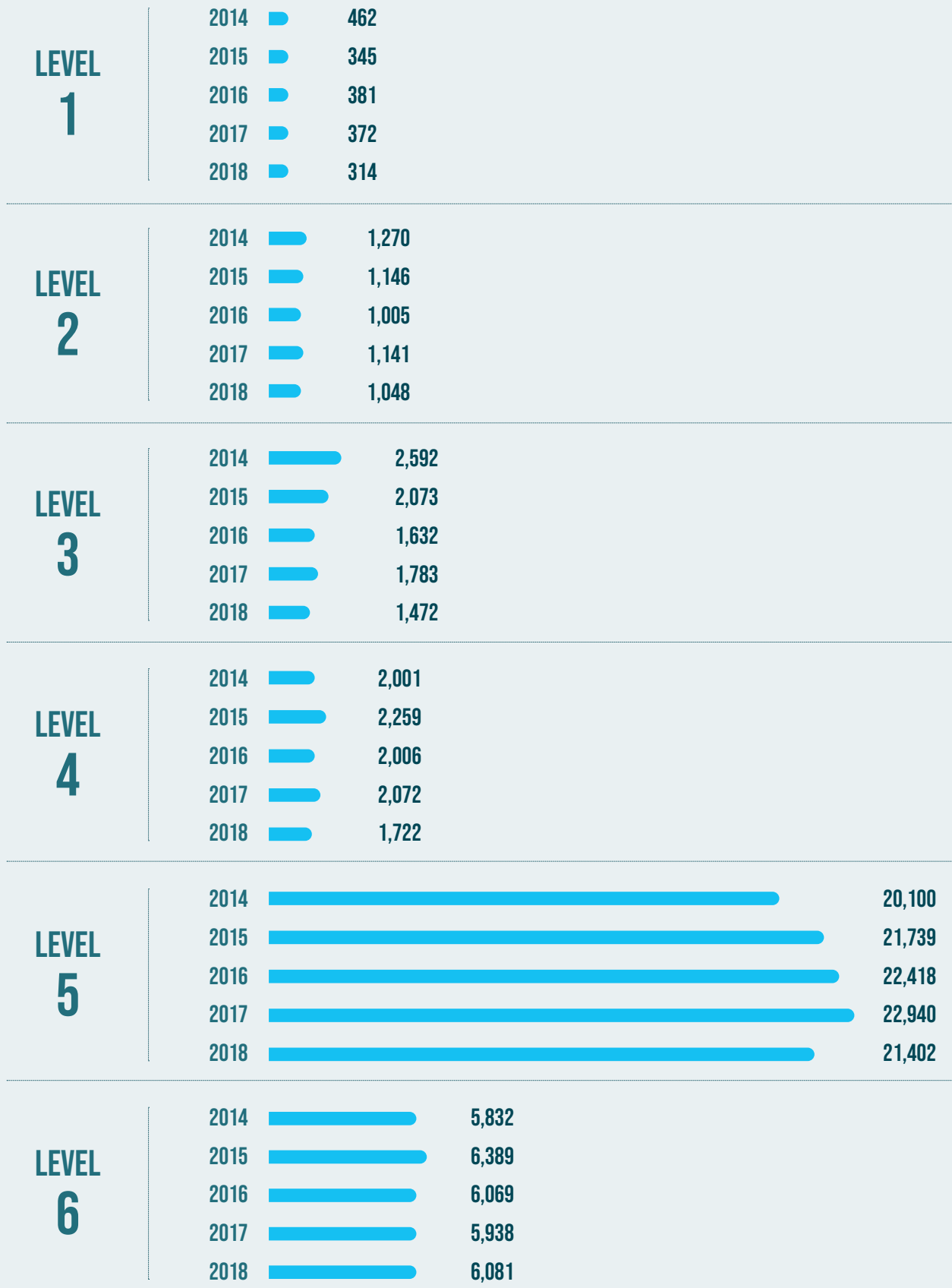
Table 2.1 – QQI Major awards in the FET sector by NFQ Levels between 2014-2018

FET SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Level 1	462	345	381	372	314	- 32%
Level 2	1,270	1,146	1,005	1,141	1,048	- 17%
Level 3	2,592	2,073	1,632	1,783	1,472	- 43%
Level 4	2,001	2,259	2,006	2,072	1,722	- 14%
Level 5	20,100	21,739	22,418	22,940	21,402	+ 6%
Level 6	5,832	6,389	6,065	5,938	6,081	+ 4%

3 See CSO reports on data from 2016 Census: 'there has been a decrease in the number of people who were educated to primary level' only, which could explain the decrease in demand at the lower levels of the NFQ. For further information: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil/le/>

2. MAJOR AWARDS BY NFQ LEVELS [CONTINUED]

Figure 2.1 – QQI Major awards in the FET sector by NFQ Levels between 2014-2018





A Closer Look....

2.1.1 – Major awards at Level 5

Numbers of QQI Major awards at Level 5 declined significantly between 2017 and 2018 from 22,940 to 21,402. This decline was mostly, but not exclusively, caused by a decrease in numbers in the 'Health & welfare' field as numbers between these two years declined in all fields of learning except in 'Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary', 'Business, administration & law' and 'Engineering, manufacturing & construction'.

LEVEL 5 – FIELD OF LEARNING	2017	2018	% change between 2017 & 2018
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary	3,302	3,455	+ 5%
Arts & humanities	1,926	1,845	- 4%
Business, administration & law	3,444	3,024	- 12%
Education	9	11	+ 22%
Engineering, manufacturing & construction	446	520	+ 17%
Health & welfare	9,322	8,430	- 10%
Information & Communication Technologies	604	545	- 10%
Natural sciences, mathematics & statistics	331	365	- 10%
Services	2,424	2,151	- 11%
Social sciences, journalism & information	1,127	1,054	- 7%
TOTAL	22,940	21,402	- 7%

The decline in demand for 'Health & welfare' between 2017-2018 was caused by a decline in all related awards, except for 'Youth Work', and is mostly explained by a drop in demand for the 'Healthcare Support' award (further information on this award in Table 4.1).

HEALTH & WELFARE FIELD OF LEARNING AWARDS AT LEVEL 5	2017	2018	% change between 2017 & 2018
Community Care	282	221	- 22%
Community Development	38	3	- 92%
Community Health Services	758	703	- 7%
Early Childhood Care and Education	2,335	2,259	- 3%
Health Service Skills	1,390	1,220	- 12%
Healthcare Support	3,116	2,611	- 16%
Intellectual Disability Practice	113	103	- 9%
Nursing Studies	1,245	1,249	- 0.3%
Youth Work	45	61	+ 36%
TOTAL	9,322	8,430	- 10%

2. MAJOR AWARDS BY NFQ LEVELS [CONTINUED]

2.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector

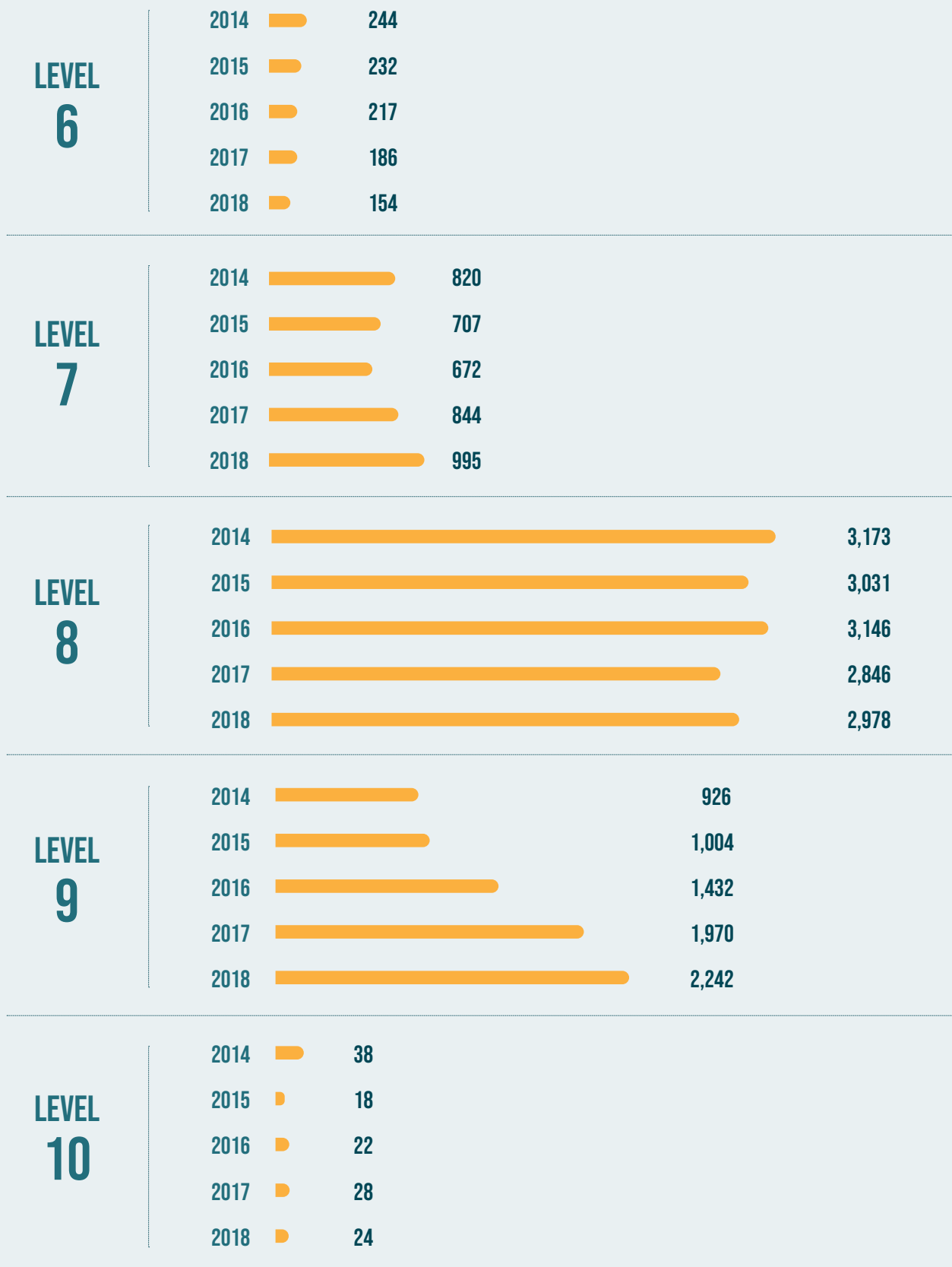
- » The majority of QQI Major awards were made at Level 8, comprising 54% on average of all Major awards made in the HE sector.
- » This proportion decreased in 2018 to 46% as a result of a significant increase at Level 9 (34% of QQI Major awards were made at Level 9 in 2018, an increase of more than 100% between 2017 and 2018). Some of the relative change in the numbers of Level 8 and 9 awards was caused by the introduction of the Professional Master of Education to replace the Higher Diploma in Education.
- » Over the 5-year period, the number of QQI Major awards made at Levels 6, 8 and 10 decreased while awards made at Levels 7 and 9 increased. The increase was very significant at Level 9 (an increase of 142% between 2014-2018).

Table 2.2 – QQI Major awards made by NFQ Levels between 2014-2018 in the HE sector

HE SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Level 6	244	232	217	186	154	- 37%
Level 7	820	707	672	844	995	+ 21%
Level 8	3,173	3,031	3,146	2,846	2,978	- 6%
Level 9	926	1,004	1,432	1,970	2,242	+ 142%
Level 10	38	18	22	28	24	- 37%

2. MAJOR AWARDS BY NFQ LEVELS [CONTINUED]

Figure 2.2 – QQI Major awards in the HE sector by NFQ Levels between 2014-2018



2. MAJOR AWARDS BY NFQ LEVELS [CONTINUED]

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A Closer Look....

2.2.1 – QQI Major awards at Level 8 and 9

Major awards at Level 8 represent almost 50% of all QQI Major awards achieved by HE learners; but numbers have declined consistently since 2014. The table below shows that this decline was evident primarily in ‘1-year Higher Diplomas’.

LEVEL 8 - MAJOR AWARDS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
1 year Honours Bachelor Degree	187	264	205	220	293	+ 57%
1.5 years Honours Bachelor Degree	-	-	15	17	35	-
3 years Honours Bachelor Degree	1,388	1,198	1,495	1,481	1,382	- 1%
4 years Honours Bachelor Degree	449	406	416	548	533	+ 19%
1 year Higher Diploma	1,177	1,199	937	517	598	- 49%
1.5 years Higher Diploma	-	-	-	13	43	-
2 years Higher Diploma	-	26	106	95	74	-

There was a noticeable increase in *Major awards at Level 9* between 2014 and 2018 (142% increase). The increase was the result of:

1. the substantial increase in Postgraduate Diplomas (in 2014, 101 awards in 15 diplomas were made, this doubled to 404 awards in 31 diplomas in 2018, an increase of more than 300%); and
2. the introduction of two professional qualifications in 2016, the Professional Master of Education in Primary Education and the Professional Master of Education (PME) in Post-Primary Education, which were introduced as the minimum legal requirement for those wishing to work as registered teachers. There was a corresponding reduction in demand for the Higher Diploma in Education which was replaced by the PME.

LEVEL 9 - MAJOR AWARDS	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		% change between 2014 & 2018
	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	
Post Graduate Diplomas	15	101	22	161	25	193	26	212	31	404	+ 300%
Master Degrees	56	825	58	843	56	892	64	1,014	55	1,053	+ 28%
Professional Master	0	-	0	-	2	347	2	744	2	785	-

*N.' refers to number of the different awards within each qualification.



A Closer Look [continued]....

Between 2016 and 2017, these Professional Masters qualifications accounted for almost 400 extra Major awards at Level 9. However, the significant increase in Major awards at Level 9 between 2017 and 2018 cannot be explained entirely by this change (in fact awards of the Professional Master of Education in Post Primary Education declined in this period); there was also a substantial increase in Postgraduate Diplomas during those years.

LEVEL 9	Professional Master of Education in Primary Education	Professional Master of Education in Post Primary Education
2016	269	78
2017	566	178
2018	632	153

3. MAJOR AWARDS

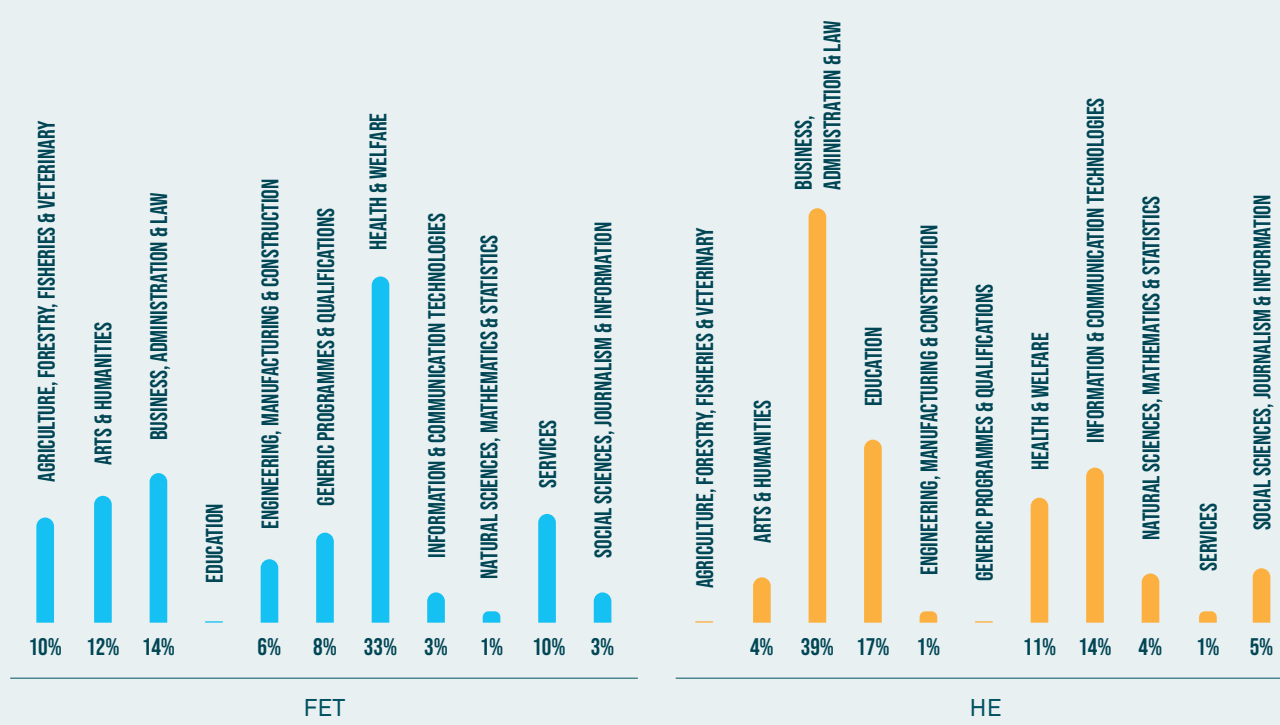
BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED)

QQI Major awards were made in all eleven broad fields of learning between 2014-2018. The largest number of QQI Major awards made year on year was in the 'Health & welfare' field: on average almost one third (30%) of all Major awards were made in this field (the majority in the FET sector, 95%).

The distribution and proportion of QQI Major awards made between 2014-2018 by field of learning and sector are indicated below, showing that on average:

- » one quarter of all QQI Major awards in FET were made in the 'Health & welfare' field (33%)⁴; followed by 'Business, administration & law' (14%) and 'Arts & humanities' (12%).
- » almost half of QQI Major awards in HE were made in the 'Business, administration & law' field (39%); followed by 'Education' (17%) and 'ICTs' (14%).

Figure 3 – Average proportion of QQI Major awards by Field of Learning between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

3.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector

- » Year on year, the largest number of QQI Major awards made were in the 'Health & welfare' field of learning. The awards made in this field increased by 14% between 2014 and 2018 and on average by 4% year on year over the 5-year period, although numbers decreased by about 7% since their peak in 2016.
- » The largest increase between 2014 and 2018 (70%) occurred in the 'Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary' and 'Natural sciences, mathematics & statistics' fields; both increased year on year by 15%.
- » 'Information & Communication Technologies' decreased steadily over the years and was the field that declined most (by 35%) between 2014-2018. On the other hand, QQI Major awards in this field increased significantly in the HE sector (see further information below).

⁴ There is a large number of Major awards for 'childcare and youth services' which are classified under the 'Healthcare and welfare' field of learning, according to ISCED classification. However, there is an argument that these awards should be included in the 'Education' field instead as 'training for pre-school teachers'. This might reflect the split systems in many countries where there are "teachers" for children aged 3 until school starting age and "childcare" assistants for children under 3 years. If Early Learning and Care-related awards were classified under the 'Education' field, the distribution and proportion of Major awards by field of learning between the two fields of learning concerned would narrow dramatically.

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 19]

Table 3.1 – QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Field of Learning between 2014-2018

FET SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018	Yearly change trend 2014 - 2018*
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary	2,448	2,602	3,521	3,949	4,166	+ 70%	+ 15%
Arts & humanities	4,362	4,272	3,994	3,897	3,501	- 20%	- 5%
Business, administration & law	5,195	4,852	4,299	4,709	4,077	- 20%	- 5%
Education	31	26	20	54	36	+ 16%	+ 24%
Engineering, manufacturing & construction	2,040	1,709	1,677	1,983	2,515	+ 23%	+ 7%
Generic programmes & qualifications	3,384	2,827	2,419	2,744	2,358	- 30%	-8%
Health & welfare	9,153	11,692	11,890	11,444	10,440	+ 14%	+ 4%
Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs)	1,079	1,031	811	816	699	- 35%	-10%
Natural sciences, mathematics & statistics	215	209	281	333	365	+ 70%	+ 15%
Services	3,184	3,516	3,391	3,174	2,805	- 12%	-3%
Social sciences, journalism & information	1,166	1,215	1,204	1,143	1,077	- 8%	-2%

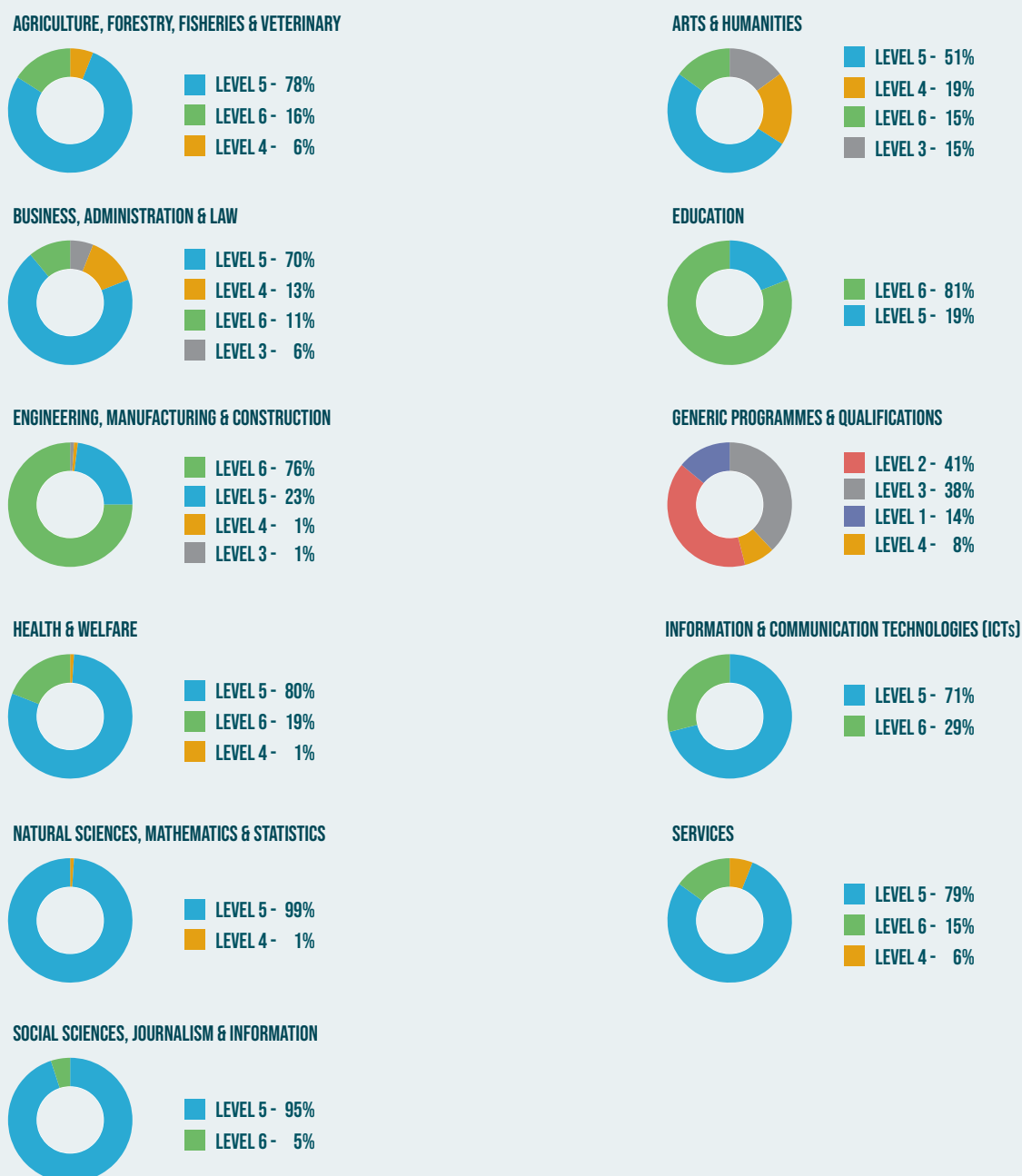
* The 'yearly change trend' calculates the percentage change in value each year. It is calculated by taking the average of its year-over-year difference.

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]

The distribution and proportion of QQI Major awards made in the FET sector between 2014-2018 by field of learning and NFQ Levels are indicated below, showing that on average:

- » The majority of QQI Major awards were made at Level 5 in eight of the fields and at Level 6 in two fields. This was most noticeable in 'Social sciences, journalism & information' where 95% on average of all QQI Major awards were made at Level 5. The largest proportion of QQI Major awards made at Level 6 (81%) was in 'Education'.
- » 'Art & humanities' had the highest proportion of QQI Major awards made at Levels 3 (15%) and 4 (19%).
- » QQI Major awards at Levels 1 and 2 were only made in the 'Generic programmes & qualifications' field.

Figure 3.1 – Average proportions of QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Field of Learning and NFQ Level between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 21]



A Closer Look....

3.1.1 – QQI Major awards in ‘Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary’; ‘Natural sciences, mathematics & statistics’; ‘Generic programmes & qualification’ and ‘ICTs’ in the FET sector

The significant increase between 2014 and 2018 (70%) in ‘Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary’ resulted from the increase in the number of ‘Agriculture’ awards; mostly at Level 5 as 78% of awards in the field were made at this level.

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHERIES & VETERINARY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Agriculture	1,120	1,282	2,311	2,806	2,987	+ 167%
Animal Care	435	431	374	405	407	- 6%
Animal Science	173	162	155	115	150	- 13%
Aquaculture	6	5	6	4	-	-
Commercial Fishing	-	-	4	-	1	-
Craft – Farriery	5	5	6	1	-	-
Equine Breeding	5	9	14	15	18	+ 260%
Farming	-	1	-	-	-	-
Forestry	20	21	18	24	15	- 25%
Golf and Sports Turf Management	16	14	9	11	10	- 38%
Horsemanship	145	134	111	124	146	+ 1%
Horticulture	523	538	513	444	432	- 17%
TOTAL	2,448	2,602	3,521	3,949	4,166	+ 70%

The significant increase (70%) in ‘Natural sciences, mathematics & statistics’ was the result of the increase in the numbers of ‘Laboratory Techniques’ and ‘Food Science’ awards between 2014 and 2018; mostly at Level 5 as 99% of awards in the field were made at this level.

NATURAL SCIENCES, MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Applied Ecology	2	1	-	-	4	-
Food Science	24	32	49	49	52	+ 117%
Laboratory Techniques	187	173	232	282	309	+ 65%
Science Skills	2	3	-	2	-	-
TOTAL	215	209	281	333	365	+ 70%

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]



A Closer Look [continued]....

A decline of 30% occurred in 'Generic programmes & qualification' of Major awards made during the five-year period. The analysis below shows that all awards in this field of learning have declined over the five-year period, most noticeably at Levels 1 and 3.

GENERIC PROGRAMMES & QUALIFICATION	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Communications – Level 1	91	64	54	39	54	- 41%
Employability Skills – Level 3	1,430	1,092	837	990	823	- 43%
Employment Skills – Level 4	222	244	196	241	173	- 22%
General Learning						
Level 1	371	281	327	333	260	- 30%
Level 2	1,270	1,146	1,005	1,141	1,048	- 18%
TOTAL	3,384	2,827	2,419	2,744	2,358	- 30%

There was also a significant decline (of 35%) in the 'Information & Communication Technologies' (ICTs) field. The decrease in numbers occurred at both Levels 5 and 6, but was more noticeable at Level 6. This contrasts with the HE sector, where there was a significant increase of more than 100% of QQI Major awards in this field of learning between 2014 and 2018 – see section 3.2 below.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
LEVEL 5						
Computer Systems and Networks	282	246	221	242	213	- 25%
Information Technology	-	-	-	42	24	-
Office Informatics	487	481	304	320	308	- 37%
TOTAL	769	727	525	604	545	- 30%
LEVEL 6						
Computer Systems and Networks	55	60	79	69	54	- 2%
Multimedia and Web Development	61	60	55	40	-	-
Software Development	194	184	152	103	100	- 49%
TOTAL	310	304	286	212	154	- 50%

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]

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3.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector

- » Year on year, the largest number of QQI Major awards made were in the ‘Business, administration & law’ field of learning. QQI Major awards in this field increased steadily over the years by 28% between 2014 and 2018 and on average by 7% each year.
- » The largest increase occurred in ‘Engineering, manufacturing & construction’; followed by ‘Information & Communication Technologies’ (see the ‘A closer look’ section below for further information)
- » Awards in ‘Social sciences, journalism & information’ decreased by 29% between 2014-2018, and steadily by 0.2% over the five years, particularly in 2017, although there was an increase in 2018.

Table 3.2 – QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Field of Learning between 2014-2018

QQI MAJOR AWARDS HE – FIELD OF LEARNING	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018	Yearly change trend 2014 - 2018*
Arts & humanities	273	261	278	218	196	- 28%	- 7%
Business, administration & law	2,049	1,930	2,248	2,095	2,631	+ 28%	+ 7%
Education	982	933	1,034	886	948	- 3%	-0.4%
Engineering, manufacturing & construction	1	24	58	57	121	+ 12,000	+ 638%
Health & welfare	740	586	516	607	694	- 6%	- 0.2%
Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs)	480	592	728	673	1,313	+ 173%	+ 17%
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	177	287	222	180	155	- 12%	- 2%
Services	28	36	30	32	34	+ 21%	+ 6%
Social sciences, journalism & information	394	322	351	174	279	- 29%	- 0.2%
UNCLASSIFIED	76	21	24	952	22	- 71%	- 928%

* The 'yearly change trend' calculates the percentage change in value each year. It is calculated by taking the average of its year-over-year difference.

3. MAJOR AWARDS BY FIELD OF LEARNING (ISCED) [CONTINUED]

The distribution and proportion of QQI Major awards made in the HE sector between 2014-2018 by field of learning and NFQ Levels are indicated below, showing that on average:

- » Most QQI Major awards in the HE sector were made at Level 8, followed by Levels 7 and 9.
- » ‘Social sciences, journalism & information’ had the highest proportion of QQI Major awards at Level 8 (76%); ‘Engineering, manufacturing & construction’ at Level 7 (99% of all QQI Major awards in this field were made at Level 7); and the fields of ‘Education’ and ‘Natural, science, mathematics & statistics’ had the highest proportion of QQI Major awards at Level 9 (44%).

Figure 3.2 – Average proportions of QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Field of Learning and NFQ Levels between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.



A Closer Look....

3.2.1 – QQI Major awards in ‘Engineering, manufacturing & construction’ and ‘Information & Communication Technologies’ in the HE sector.

The significant increase in QQI Major awards made in ‘*Engineering, manufacturing & construction*’ between 2014 and 2018 is mostly explained by the significant increase in awards achieved in the Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations in 2018.

ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING & CONSTRUCTION	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Master of Engineering by Research	1	3	4	2	1
Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations	-	21	32	27	83
Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial Engineering	-	-	22	28	37
TOTAL	1	24	58	57	121

The significant increase in QQI Major awards made in ‘*Information & Communication Technologies*’ between 2014 and 2018 was the result of a significant increase in awards achieved in Higher Diplomas. Master and Postgraduate Diplomas also increased after 2014.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards	N.*	Awards
Bachelor (Honours)	8	183	8	169	10	221	7	260	9	277
Higher Certificate	2	89	2	166	3	58	3	56	3	34
Higher Diploma	4	142	4	173	5	269	5	252	5	614
Master	5	60	6	100	8	130	6	78	9	205
Postgraduate Diploma	1	6	4	34	6	50	3	27	6	183
TOTAL		480		592		728		673		1,313

*N.’ refers to number of the different awards within each qualification.

4. TOP MAJOR AWARDS

This section provides information on the QQI Major awards most in demand between 2014-2018 in both FET and HE sectors.

During the 5-year period there were on average 149 different QQI Major awards in the FET sector and 196 in the HE sector.

NUMBER OF QQI MAJOR AWARDS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average
FET	161	145	157	142	144	149
HE	187	192	200	206	195	196

4.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector for the Top 15 QQI Major awards

- » There were 15 Major awards most in demand between 2014 and 2018 in the FET sector. At least 500 of each of these awards were made in each year from 2014 to 2018.
- » On average, these 15 awards represent 65% of all QQI Major awards in the FET sector.
- » The largest number of QQI Major awards made year on year were in 'Early Childhood Care & Education'.
- » The demand for 'Health Service Skills' and 'Agriculture' awards increased by more than 100%; and 'Employability Skills' declined most, by 42% between 2014 and 2018 or a yearly decline of 11%.

Table 4.1 – Top 15 QQI Major awards in the FET sector between 2014-2018

TOP QQI AWARDS FET SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018	Yearly change trend 2014 - 2018
Early Childhood Care & Education	3,975	5,079	4,705	4,193	3,942	- 1%	+ 1%
Agriculture	1,120	1,282	2,311	2,806	2,987	+ 167%	+ 31%
Healthcare Support	2,376	3,276	3,115	3,116	2,611	+ 10%	+ 4%
General Learning	3,081	2,983	2,703	2,891	2,422	- 21%	- 5%
Nursing Studies	1,212	1,299	1,348	1,245	1,249	+ 3%	+ 1%
Health Service Skills	293	498	1,228	1,390	1,220	+ 316%	+ 305%
Sport and Recreation	873	1,237	1,136	1,096	941	+ 8%	+ 4%
Employability Skills	1,430	1,092	837	990	823	- 42%	- 11%
Office Administration	1,117	950	923	934	822	- 26%	- 7%
Business Studies	887	870	812	869	815	- 8%	- 2%
Business Administration	729	788	670	785	714	- 2%	0%
Community Health Services	634	870	830	758	703	+ 11%	+ 4%
Applied Social Studies	556	545	555	576	582	+ 5%	+ 1%
Art	553	519	486	456	440	- 20%	- 6%
Horticulture	523	538	513	444	432	- 17%	- 4%

4. TOP MAJOR AWARDS [CONTINUED]

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4.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector for the Top 18 QQI Major awards

- » There were 18 QQI Major awards in which more than 100 awards were issued in a single year since 2014. These were the QQI Major awards in the HE sector most in demand between 2014 and 2018.
- » On average, these 18 awards represented 50% of all QQI Major awards in the HE sector.
- » The demand for the ‘Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics’, ‘Bachelor of Business’, ‘Master of Business Administration’ and ‘Higher Diploma in Science in Computing’ awards increased by more than 100% between 2014-2018; the largest decline in that period occurred in ‘Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care’.
- » Within this group of the Top 18, discontinuation or creation of some awards occurred which explains the lack of information in some years (e.g. ‘Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business’ did not exist in 2014).

Table 4.2 – Top 18 QQI Major awards in the HE sector between 2014-2018

TOP QQI AWARDS HE SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018	Yearly change trend 2014 - 2018
Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education	546	596	418	10	-	-	
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business	308	230	282	394	389	+ 26%	+ 9%
Professional Diploma in Education in Post Primary Education	254	197	-	-	-	-	
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance	199	206	388	386	371	+ 86%	+ 26%
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies	141	139	160	164	194	+ 38%	+ 23%
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing	137	111	91	90	102	- 26%	- 7%
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology	134	117	114	114	101	- 25%	+ 7%
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing	121	161	202	181	283	+ 134%	+ 29%
Master of Business Administration	96	175	199	215	245	+ 155%	+ 35%
Bachelor of Business	86	73	102	147	252	+ 193%	+ 40%
Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics	81	148	117	193	259	+ 220%	
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	80	68	72	50	51	- 36%	- 6%
Higher Certificate in Business	79	81	101	89	53	- 33%	- 6%
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing	79	66	89	103	98	+ 24%	+ 9%
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in HRM Strategy and Practice*	47	47	48	102	79	+ 68%	+ 22%
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business	-	54	43	78	115	-	- 9%
Professional Master of Education in Post Primary Education	-	-	-	178	153	-	
Professional Master of Education in Primary Education	-	-	269	566	632	-	

* Called in 2014-2016 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management

5. MAJOR AWARDS

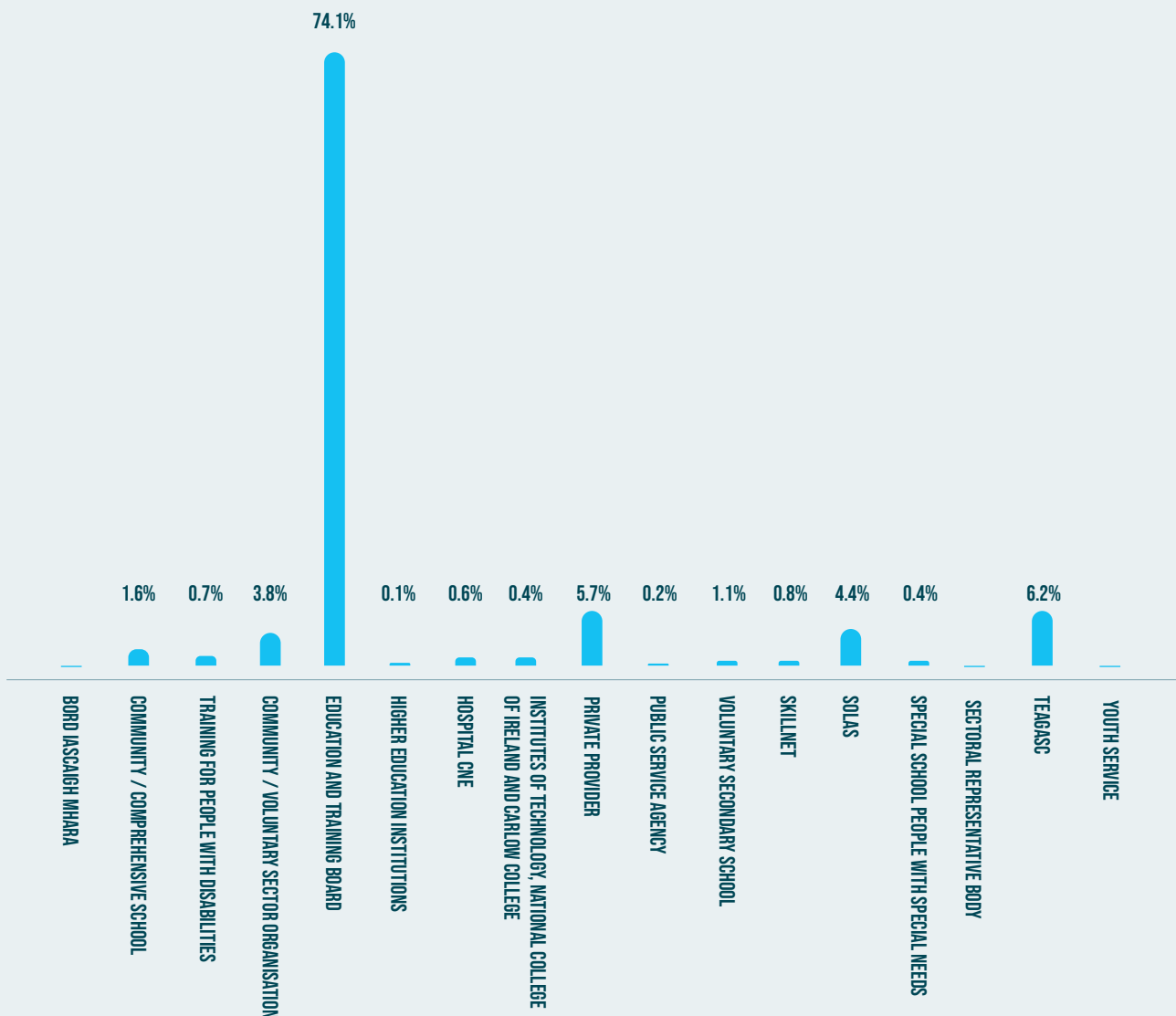
BY TYPE OF PROVIDER

QQI Major Awards were made by all 18 types of providers that offer validated programmes leading to QQI awards. There were three types of provider making QQI awards in the HE and all three operated in the FET sector also.

5.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector

- » The provision of FET awards was dominated by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), which on average issued 74% of all QQI Major awards year on year. This was followed by Teagasc (TAG) and Private Providers (PRC) which on average issued 6% of all Major awards.
- » The largest increase in the provision of QQI Major awards between 2014-2018 has been by providers of type Higher Education Institution (HEI) and Teagasc (TAG). This was followed by providers of type Centre of Nurse Education (HOS) which significantly increased provision since 2014 but experienced a decrease of 23% between 2017 and 2018.

Figure 5.1 – Average proportion of QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Type of Provider between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

5. MAJOR AWARDS BY TYPE OF PROVIDER [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 29]

Table 5.1 – Average proportion of QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Type of Provider between 2014-2018

PROVIDER TYPE FET	CODE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
Bord Iascaigh Mhara	BIM	15	13	17	9	6	- 60%
Community / Comprehensive School	CMS	505	597	515	562	502	- 1%
Training for People with Disabilities	CPD	264	217	211	217	225	- 15%
Community / Voluntary Sector Organisation	CVS	1,209	1,468	1,481	1,136	946	- 22%
Education and Training Board	ETB	25,115	25,748	24,572	24,779	22,783	- 9%
Higher Education Institutions	HEI	5	4	7	72	33	+ 560%
Hospital CNE	HOS	86	241	250	227	175	+ 103%
Institutes of Technology, National College of Ireland and Carlow College	IOT	138	149	160	171	92	- 33%
Private Provider	PRC	1,361	2,032	2,065	2,047	1,960	+ 44%
Public Service Agency	PSA	42	93	57	45	22	- 48%
Voluntary Secondary School	SCS	312	372	406	387	308	- 1%
Skillnet	SKN	333	305	210	424	99	- 70%
SOLAS	SOL	1,466	1,221	1,220	1,462	1,924	+ 31%
Special School people with Special Needs	SPS	132	129	128	105	106	- 20%
Sectoral Representative Body	SRB	28	8	9	6	15	- 46%
Teagasc	TAG	1,246	1,353	2,199	2,594	2,842	+ 128%
Youth Service	YTS		1		3	1	-

5. MAJOR AWARDS BY TYPE OF PROVIDER [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 30]

5.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector

- » There were three types of providers in the HE sector that offer validated programmes leading to QQI awards and all issue Major awards. The types were: Private Provider (PRC), Institute of Technology (IOT) and (other) Higher Education Institution (HEI).
- » Although the dataset makes a distinction between Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and Private Providers (PRC) both can be considered as one group of HE independent/private providers that seek QQI certification on a voluntary basis⁵.
- » The provision was dominated by Private Providers (PRC), which on average issued 73% of all Major awards year on year. This was followed by the other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) issuing 26%.
- » The HEI group was the only group to increase the number of awards issued between 2014-2018, which was by 58%.

Figure 5.2 – Average proportions of QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Type of Provider between 2014-2018

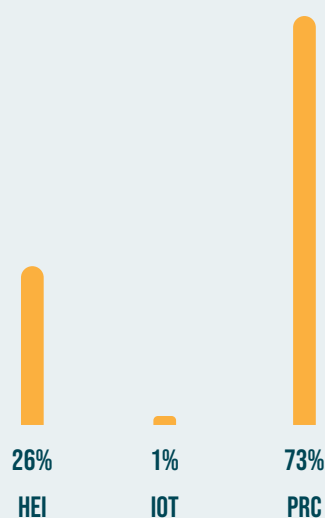


Table 5.2 – QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Type of Provider between 2014-2018

PROVIDER TYPE HE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 & 2018
HEI	1,157	1,296	1,275	1,619	1,832	+ 58%
IOT	91	71	59	38	27	- 70%
PRC	3,953	3,625	4,155	4,217	4,534	+ 14%

⁵ **HEI and PRC** are considered independent/private providers that seek QQI certification on a voluntary basis. The HEI providers are: Carlow College, National College of Ireland and The Open Training College. PRC includes: CCT College Dublin, Children's Therapy Centre, Clanwilliam Institute, Dorset College, Dublin Business School, Dublin Institute of Design, Gaelchultúr, Galway Business School, Griffith College, Hibernia College, IBAT College Dublin, ICD Business School, IICP Education and Training Limited, Independent Colleges, Institute of Physical Therapy and Applied Science, International College for Personal and Professional Development, International School of Business, Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences Limited, Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management, Irish Payroll Association, Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland, Setanta College, SQT Training Limited and The American College, Dublin.

IOT includes Athlone Institute of Technology, Cork Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, Institute of Technology, Sligo, Institute of Technology, Tallaght, Limerick Institute of Technology and Waterford Institute of Technology.

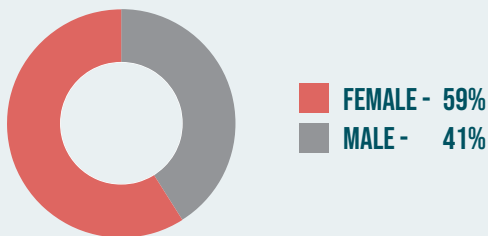
6. MAJOR AWARDS

BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

6.1 – Gender

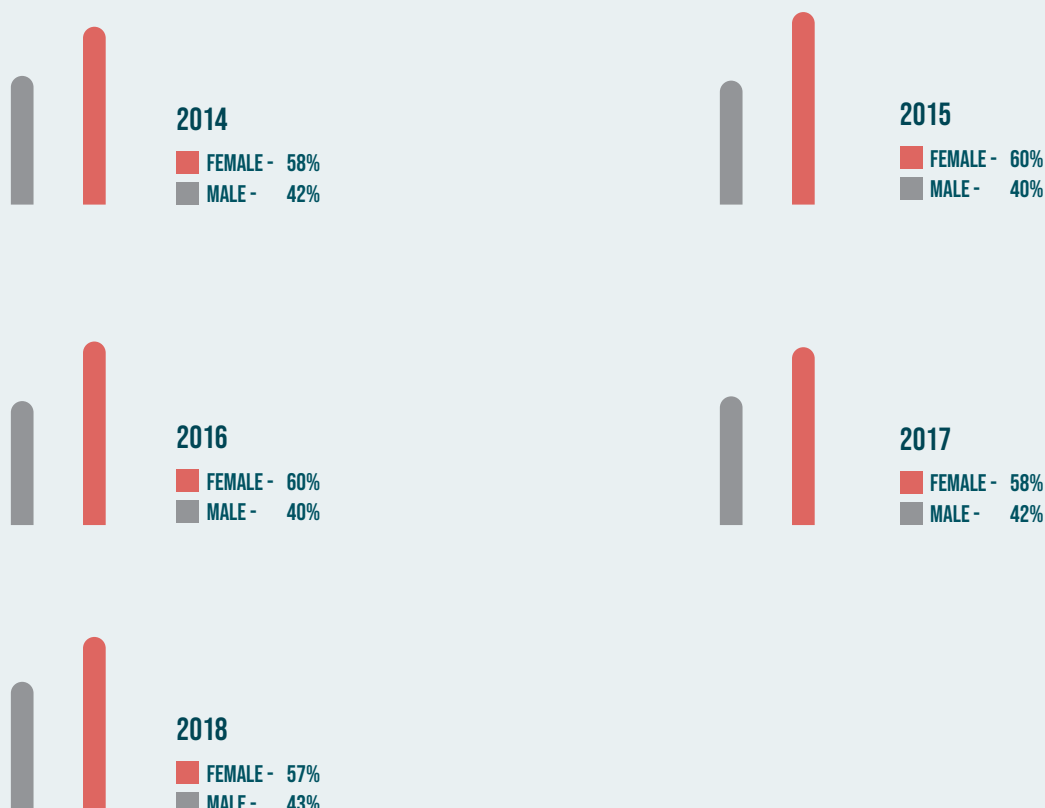
On average between 2014-2018, 59% of recipients of QQI Major awards were female. This proportion decreased by 1% in 2017 and 2% in 2018.

Figure 6.1a – Average proportions of QQI Major awards by Gender between 2014-2018



The largest gap between the number of Major awards received by females versus males occurred in 2015 and 2016 when 20% more female than male learners received QQI Major awards. In 2018, this gap narrowed by 14%.

Figure 6.1b – Proportions of QQI Major awards by Gender between 2014-2018



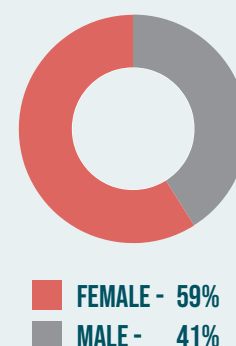
6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

6.1.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector

- » On average 59% of recipients of QQI Major awards between 2014-2018 were female.
- » The largest gap between the number of Major awards received by females versus males occurred in 2015 when 61% of all Major awards made in the sector were to female learners.

Table and Figure 6.1.1 – QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Gender between 2014-2018

RECIPIENTS OF FET QQI MAJOR AWARDS BY GENDER	Female		Male	
	N.	%	N.	%
2014	18,811	58%	13,446	42%
2015	20,593	61%	13,358	39%
2016	20,195	60%	13,312	40%
2017	20,074	59%	14,172	41%
2018	18,470	58%	13,569	42%
Av. proportion	59%		49%	

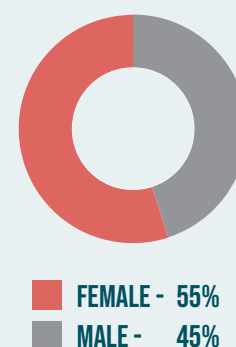


6.1.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector

- » There was a more even balance between male and female recipients in the HE sector on average. Yet, the proportion of female learners achieving QQI Major awards between 2014-2018 was 10% higher.
- » The gap between the number of QQI Major awards received by females vs. males narrowed most in 2015.

Table and Figure 6.1.2 – QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Gender between 2014-2018

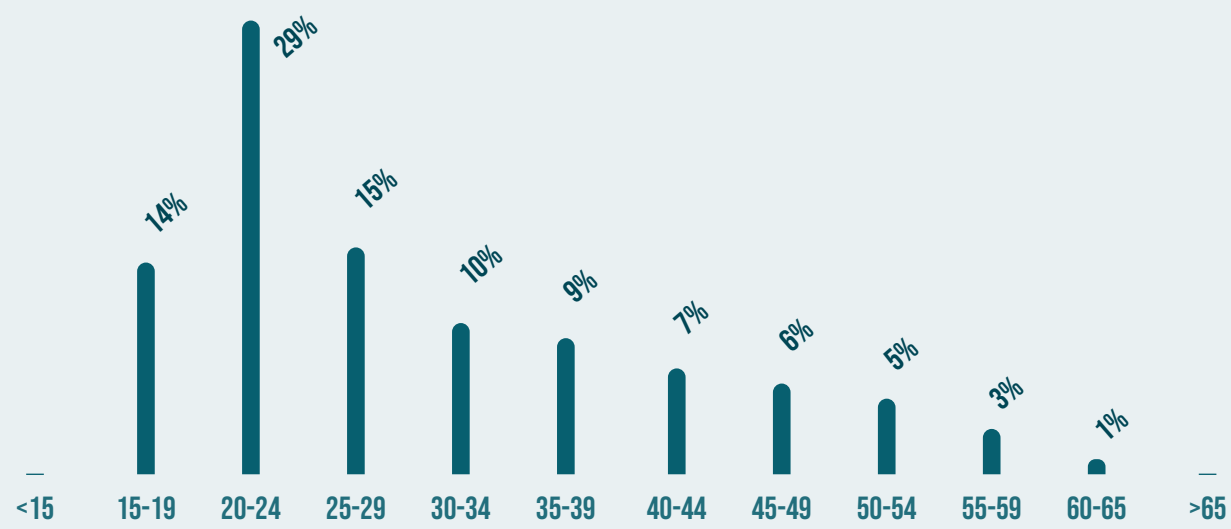
RECIPIENTS OF HE QQI MAJOR AWARDS BY GENDER	Female		Male	
	N.	%	N.	%
2014	2,930	56%	2,271	44%
2015	2,698	54%	2,294	46%
2016	3,074	56%	2,415	44%
2017	3,239	55%	2,635	45%
2018	3,537	55%	2,856	45%
Av. proportion	55%		45%	



6.2 – Age

On average, the 20-24 age band received the greatest number of QQI awards (29%) over the five-year period 2014-2018, followed by the 25-29 and 15-19 age bands.

Figure 6.2a – Average proportions of QQI Major awards by Age between 2014-2018*

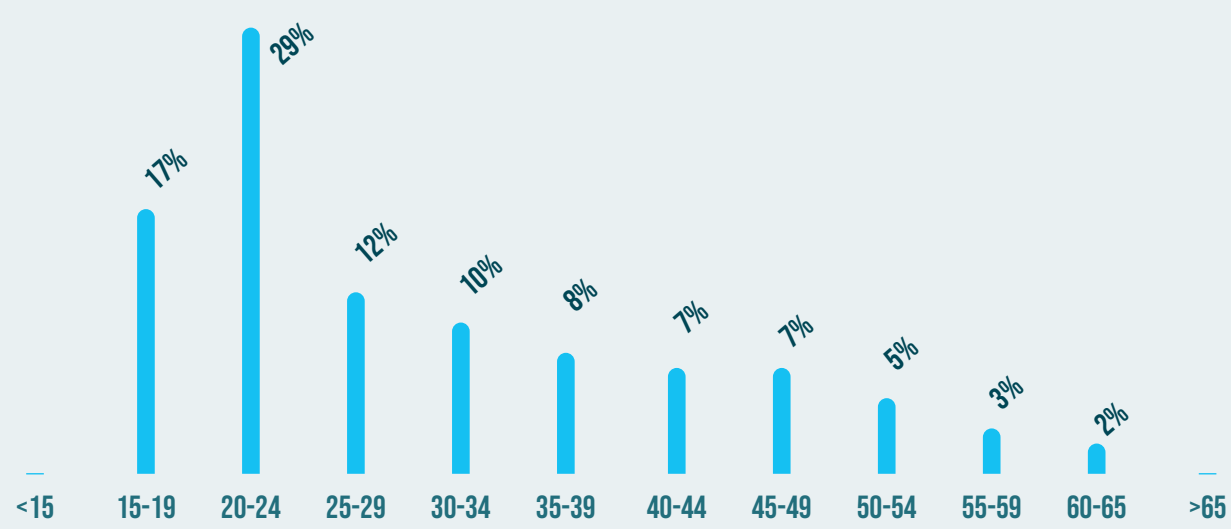


* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

6.2.1 – Trends 2014-2018 in the FET sector

- » On average, the 20-24 age band received the greatest number of QQI awards (29%) over the five-year period 2014-2018, followed by the 15-19 (17%) and 25-29 (12%) age bands.
- » Between 2014 and 2018, there has been an increase in older learners between 30 to 59 achieving Major awards; the increase was particularly significant in the 35-39 age band (21% increase).
- » This increase was important given that overall QQI Major awards achieved in FET have been declining since 2014.
- » The distribution of QQI Major awards by age-band was more even in the FET than in the HE sector.

Figure 6.2.1a – Distribution of QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Age between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 34]

Table 6.2.1 – QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Age between 2014-2018

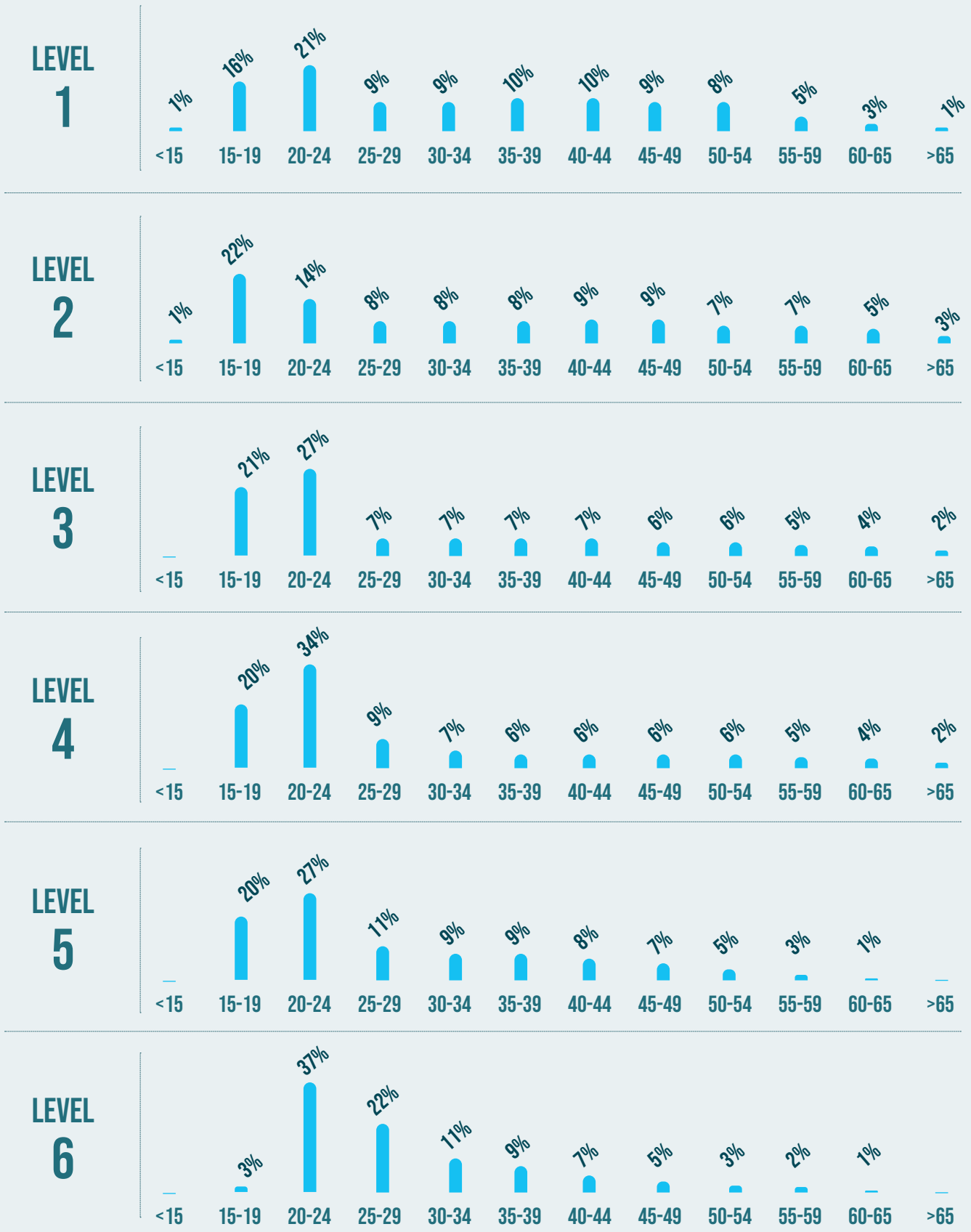
RECIPIENTS OF FET QQI MAJOR AWARDS BY AGE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014 and 2018
<15	50	14	12	13	16	- 68%
15-19	5,495	5,713	5,636	5,675	5,389	- 2%
20-24	10,018	9,963	9,351	9,564	9,115	- 9%
25-29	4,179	4,296	4,127	4,047	4,004	- 4%
30-34	2,807	3,123	3,238	3,352	3,129	+ 11%
35-39	2,310	2,738	2,839	3,122	2,785	+ 21%
40-44	2,240	2,385	2,525	2,578	2,361	+ 5%
45-49	1,981	2,228	2,257	2,239	2,045	+ 3%
50-54	1,524	1,739	1,750	1,782	1,514	+ 1%
55-59	966	1,098	1,071	1,153	1,026	+ 6%
60-65	541	533	571	597	532	- 2%
>65	146	121	130	124	123	- 16%

The proportions of Major awards by age-bands for the different NFQ Levels are shown below. They indicate that:

- » on average there was a more even age distribution at Level 1 than at any other level; and
- » the least even age distribution occurred at Level 6, where almost 60% of awards made at this level were achieved by learners in the 20-29 age band.
- » the analysis of age by levels reveals that the FET sector exhibits a more even age distribution than the HE sector.

6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

Figure 6.2.1b – Distribution of QQI Major awards in the FET sector by Age and NFQ Levels between 2014-2018*

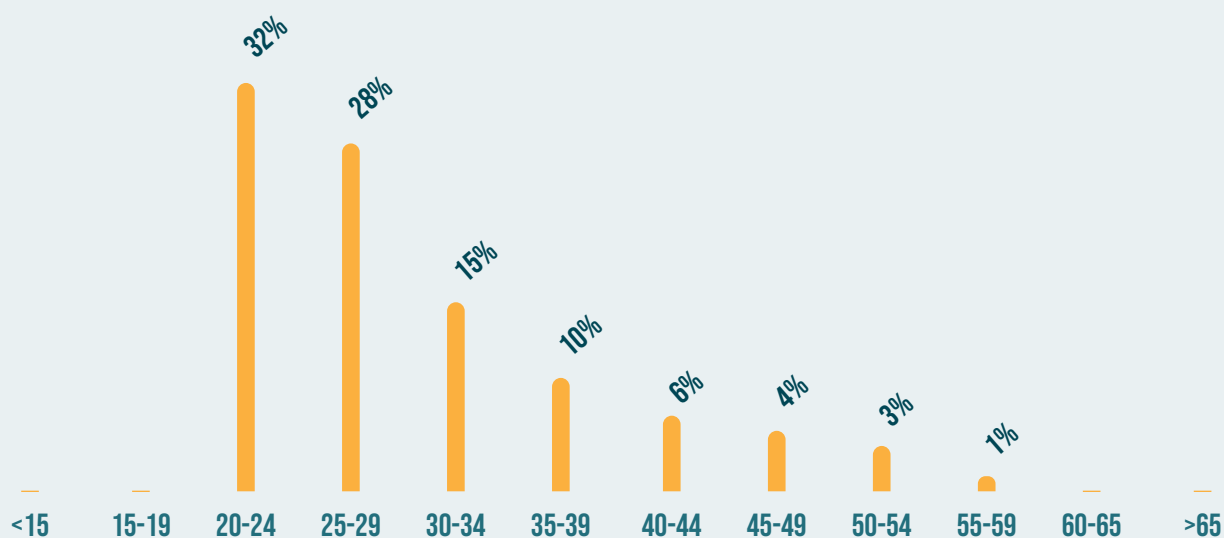


* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Figure 6.2.2 – Trends 2014-2018 in the HE sector

- » On average 32% of QQI Major awards were issued to learners in the 20-24 age band, followed by the 25-29 (28%) and 30-34 (15%) age bands.
- » There was an increase in the number of QQI Major awards achieved by all age bands, except the 60-65 age band, between 2014 and 2018. This increase was significant in the 40-44 and 50-54 age bands.

Figure 6.2.2a – Distribution of QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Age between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 37]

Table 6.2.2 – QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Age between 2014-2018

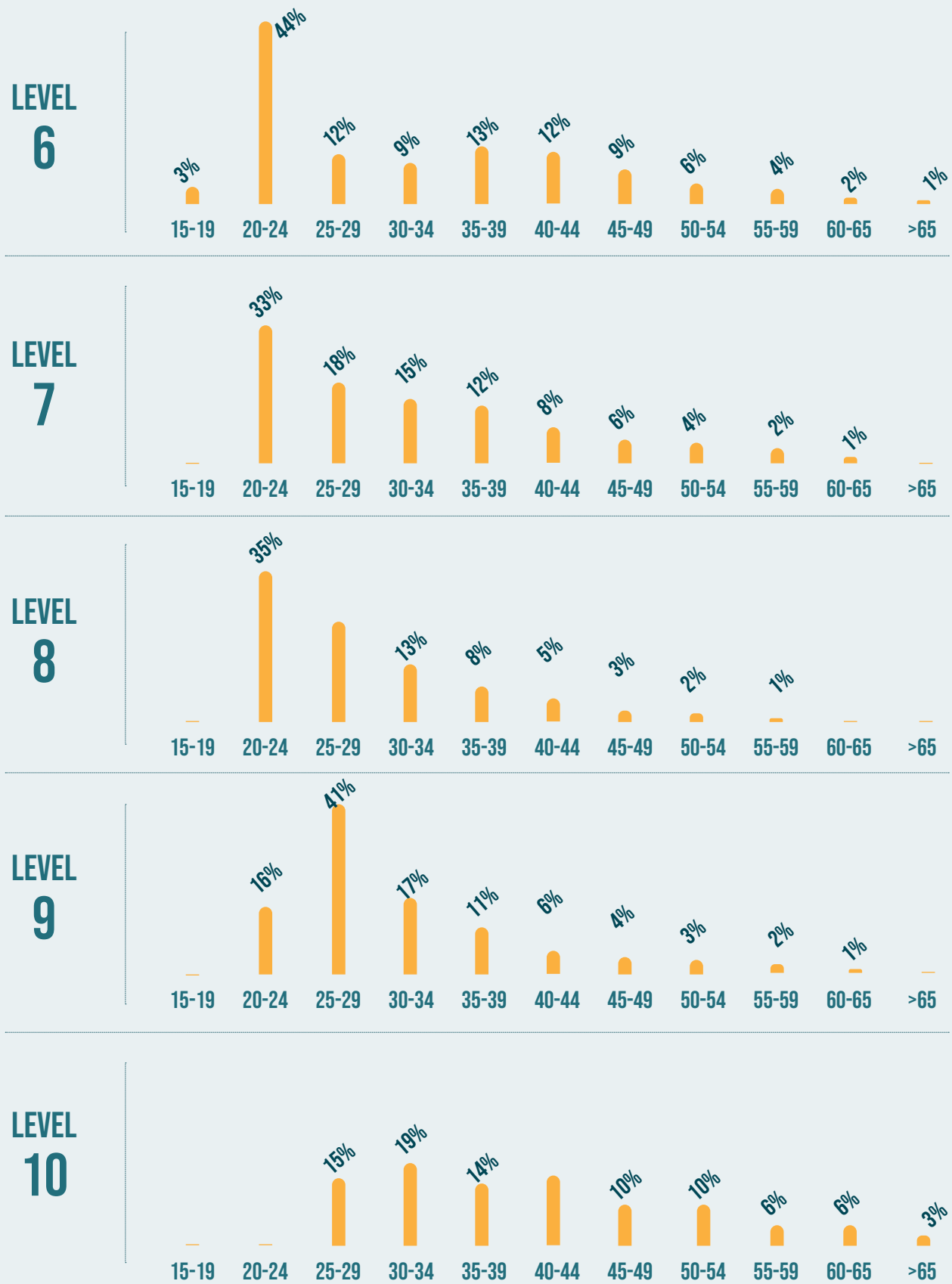
RECIPIENTS OF HE QQI MAJOR AWARDS BY AGE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014-2018
15-19	5	4	11	4	9	+ 80%
20-24	1,701	1,583	1,848	1,811	1,872	+ 10%
25-29	1,460	1,356	1,537	1,646	1,815	+ 24%
30-34	783	780	841	920	973	+ 24%
35-39	517	511	530	593	713	+ 38%
40-44	298	319	301	364	426	+ 43%
45-49	223	211	209	225	296	+ 33%
50-54	126	132	112	175	180	+ 43%
55-59	53	66	73	79	73	+ 38%
60-65	25	27	22	40	21	- 16%
>65	9	3	5	17	9	-

The proportions of QQI Major awards in the HE by age-band for the different NFQ Levels are shown below. They indicate that:

- » on average there was a more even age distribution at Level 10 than at any other level; and
- » the least even age distribution occurred at Level 6 with 44% of awards made at this level in the 20-24 age band; and Level 9, where 41% of awards achieved were by those in the 25-29 age band.

6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

Figure 6.2.2b – Distribution of QQI Major awards in the HE sector by Age and NFQ Levels between 2014-2018*



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

[PAGE 39]

6.3 – Apprentices

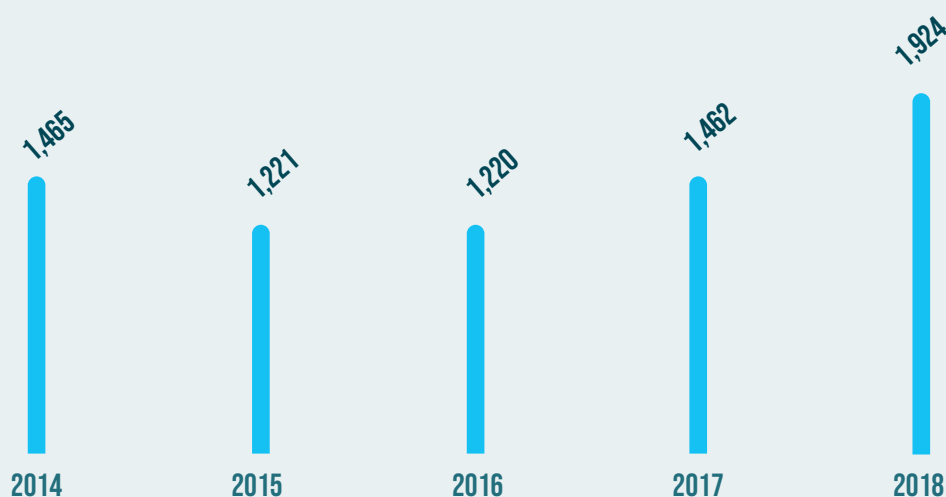
QQI Major awards to apprentices were mainly made at NFQ Level 6, for example Advance Certificate Craft in the FET sector. SOLAS is the relevant provider for craft apprenticeships. A number of new apprenticeships were been validated by QQI in 2019 but are not included in this analysis.

- » QQI Major awards made to apprentices increased by 31% between 2014-2018; and peaked in 2018 when 1,924 awards were made.
- » In 2014-2018 QQI apprenticeship awards were made in three fields of learning only, the majority in the 'Engineering, manufacturing & construction' field. However, the number of apprenticeships is growing and apprenticeship is expected to expand into new fields in the future.
- » On average, more than 99% of apprentices who achieved QQI Major awards in 2014-2018 were male and between 20-29 years of age (84%).

Table 6.3.1a – QQI Major awards in the FET sector to Apprentices between 2014-2018

NUMBER OF QQI MAJOR AWARDS TO APPRENTICES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change between 2014-2018
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries & veterinary	5	5	6	1	1	- 80%
Arts & humanities	9	9	17	13	15	+ 67%
Engineering, manufacturing & construction	1,451	1,207	1,197	1,448	1,908	+ 32%
TOTAL	1,465	1,221	1,220	1,462	1,924	+ 31%

Figure 6.3.1a – QQI Major awards in the FET sector to Apprentices between 2014-2018

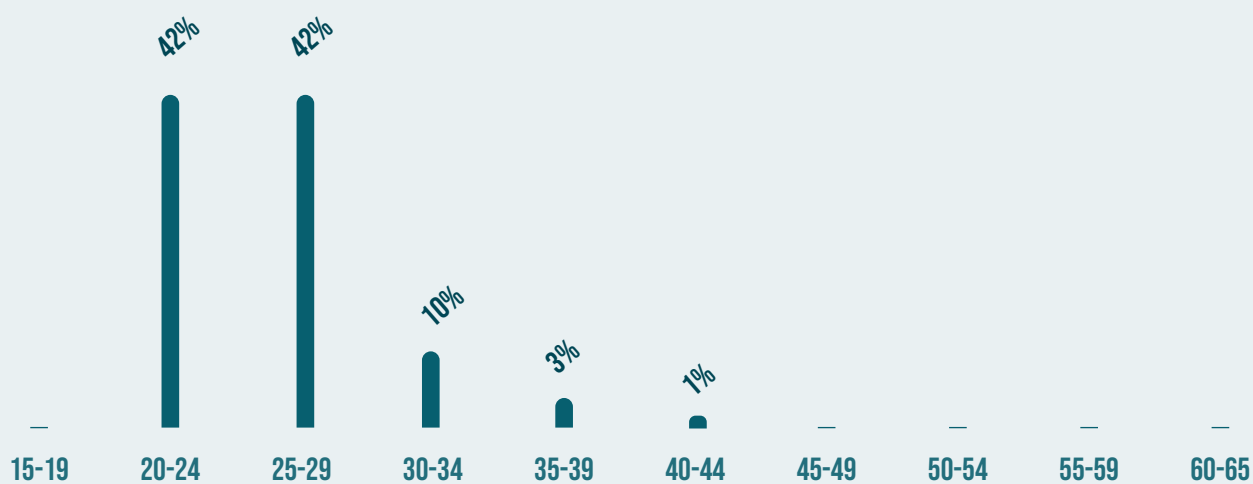


6. MAJOR AWARDS BY LEARNERS' SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS [CONTINUED]

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Table and Figure 6.3.1b – QQI Major awards to Apprentices by Gender and Age between 2014-2018*

	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHERIES & VETERINARY		ARTS & HUMANITIES		ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING & CONSTRUCTION	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2014	–	5	1	8	5	1,446
2015	–	5	1	8	2	1,205
2016	–	6		17	1	1,196
2017	–	1	1	12	6	1,442
2018	–	1	2	13	4	1,904



* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

7. KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- » Between 2014 and 2018, the number of QQI Major awards achieved by learners in the FET sector decreased by about 1% but has increased in the HE sector by about 6% since 2015.
- » The decline resulted mainly from a reduction in numbers at the lowest levels of the NFQ (i.e. levels 1 to 4). Higher prior education achievement among the Irish population could explain the reduction in demand for FET at these levels.
- » Postgraduate Diplomas at level 9 have seen the largest relative increase over the 5-year period.

Characteristics of learners achieving QQI Major awards 2014-2018

SECTOR

85% of QQI Major awards made in this five-year period were FET qualifications. A large proportion of these were made at Level 5.

GENDER

Females were more likely than males to achieve QQI Major awards, although the gender gap is narrowing, particularly in the HE sector.

AGE

The 20-24 age band accounts for the greatest number of QQI Major awards.

PROVIDER

The largest numbers of QQI Major awards in both the FET and HE sectors were made by ETBs and Private Providers.

FIELD

'Health & welfare', followed by 'Business, administration & law' and 'Arts & humanities' were the top fields in FET in which QQI Major awards were achieved. 'Business, administration & law', 'Education' and 'ICTs' were the top fields in HE.

AWARD

A higher demand for 'Early Childhood Care & Education' in FET and 'Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics' in HE was noted.