

*Generation*

IRELAND

# BRIDGING IRELAND'S TECH SKILLS GAP THROUGH SOCIAL MOBILITY

Skills, Social Mobility, and Growth:  
a future-ready and inclusive approach to  
addressing the digital skills gap in Ireland

September 2025



# CONTENTS

Page No.



Acknowledgments

2



At a glance

4



Economic and labour market performance of Ireland in the context of Europe

6



Ireland's technology skills training

15



Benchmarking approaches to skills gaps against European and global peers

34



Ireland's path to closing the technology skills gap in a socially conscious way

45



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At a point where Ireland's economy is thriving, with record low levels of unemployment and high tertiary educational attainment, this is a research-based report to showcase the transformative potential of adult upskilling and reskilling. This report reimagines the role of accessible adult education in the wider adult education ecosystem for rapid upskilling and reskilling, while fostering social mobility, helping underrepresented groups access careers in technology.

We would like to acknowledge and thank:

1. McKinsey & Company whose research insights helped inform this report
2. JP MorganChase Foundation for supporting the launch of the report
3. Those who contributed interviews and who's research we built on including the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, SOLAS, UCC Micro-credentials, IBEC, IDA, Skillnet Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and other organisations who supported the creation of this report

### Report sponsors

*Generation*

IRELAND

In collaboration with:

McKinsey  
& Company



**Michael Houlihan**  
CEO of Generation UK & Ireland,  
Secretary of Generation Ireland



**Ronan Harbison**  
Executive Director  
Generation Ireland

AT A GLANCE



# AT A GLANCE | Exploring Ireland's technology skills gap and the training landscape essential for bridging it while enhancing social mobility

Ireland's technology sector is poised for significant growth, with projections indicating the **creation of 40,000 new technology roles between 2025 and 2030**, subject to changes in the Irish jobs market from international tariffs and AI market disruption. Yet, this promising growth is hindered by a formidable skills gap, as **83% of employers report significant difficulties in sourcing skilled professionals**. This report, for the first time, delves into the intricacies of this challenge and proposes bold solutions to ensure Ireland's continued leadership in the tech sector, anchoring on the ability to **unlock the opportunity from latent talent pools**, with thousands of people who are motivated and intrinsically well suited to these careers, but need a clearer pathway and formalised training to do so.

Despite the success of current government initiatives in equipping a large segment of the population with the necessary education and training through delivering industry leading levels of degrees and apprenticeships, **there remain pockets of society where barriers to entry persist**. These barriers, which include a lack of formal qualifications and systemic socioeconomic disadvantages, **hinder social mobility and exacerbate inequality**.

There are many education pathways in Ireland, such as Universities, corporate bodies, SOLAS FET initiatives, and NGOs. Each education pathway has inherent access challenges for people with barriers to entry, however, **some educational pathways have been proven internationally to lend themselves to be a transformative way to build social mobility**.

To address these challenges, the report recommends a **multifaceted approach to upskilling and reskilling**, emphasising the importance of lifelong learning. Key ideas include creating affordable and accessible education pathways, engaging employers in co-creating training curricula, and providing targeted support for individuals **most at risk of exclusion from the workforce**.

The report also highlights the potential **economic benefits of improving social mobility**, with estimates suggesting that enhancing education and employment opportunities could increase GDP by 3-9% across European countries. In Ireland, addressing childhood disadvantage alone could recover approximately **4% of GDP annually**.

Drawing inspiration from successful European models, **Ireland can implement skills strategies to meet employer needs while fostering social mobility**. These programmes have demonstrated the potential to uplift individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, equipping them with the skills and confidence to access high-quality jobs and achieve economic independence.

To maintain its leadership in education and skills, Ireland could **establish a pathway to lifelong learning and enable targeted interventions for rapid education** to meet the market's evolving demands. This report underscores the critical role of targeted rapid adult education in bridging Ireland's technology skills gap while promoting social mobility. By prioritising the inclusion of underrepresented groups and investing in scalable, targeted training programs, Ireland can unlock the potential of its untapped talent pool, create a more equitable society, and drive economic growth. **The state stands to save approximately €3,500 per learner per year** who attends a skills bootcamp, through increased tax contributions and reduced social welfare costs.



# 1

## Economic and labour market performance of Ireland in the context of Europe

Ireland's labour market has consistently outpaced EU averages, with record-high employment levels and low unemployment rates achieved in recent years, but this economic prosperity is not the lived reality of all, with 154,000 people in under-employment, systemically excluded from Ireland's booming tech sector.

This chapter delves into Ireland's economic and labour market performance, highlighting trends, challenges, and policy responses shaping the future of work against the backdrop of Europe as a whole, with specific nation comparative deep dives provided later in this report.

By examining these dynamics, this report aims to provide insights into how strategic investments in education, training, and innovation can enhance Ireland's competitiveness and ensure sustainable economic growth across the region.

Europe's economic and labour market performance has undergone significant transformations in recent years, characterised by steady growth, increased employment rates, and evolving workforce dynamics.

The European Union's initiatives, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, have aimed to foster sustainable and inclusive growth by raising employment levels and improving competitiveness across member states. While the EU has demonstrated resilience, individual countries like Ireland have stood out for their exceptional recovery from past economic crises. The EU's focus on reducing inequality and promoting social cohesion has been pivotal in maintaining economic stability, yet challenges such as a persistent skills gap and demographic shifts continue to pose significant hurdles.

# IRELAND IS WELL POSITIONED TO LEAD EUROPEAN PEERS AS A FLAG BEARER FOR ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT EXCELLENCE...

## Ireland's performance



## European Union average



### Economy



**€54,400**

GNI\* per capita

**€38,093**

GNI PER CAPITA

**4.9%**

Unemployment rate

**5.8%**

Unemployment rate

### Jobs market



**66%**

Labour force participation

**58%**

Labour force participation

**56%**

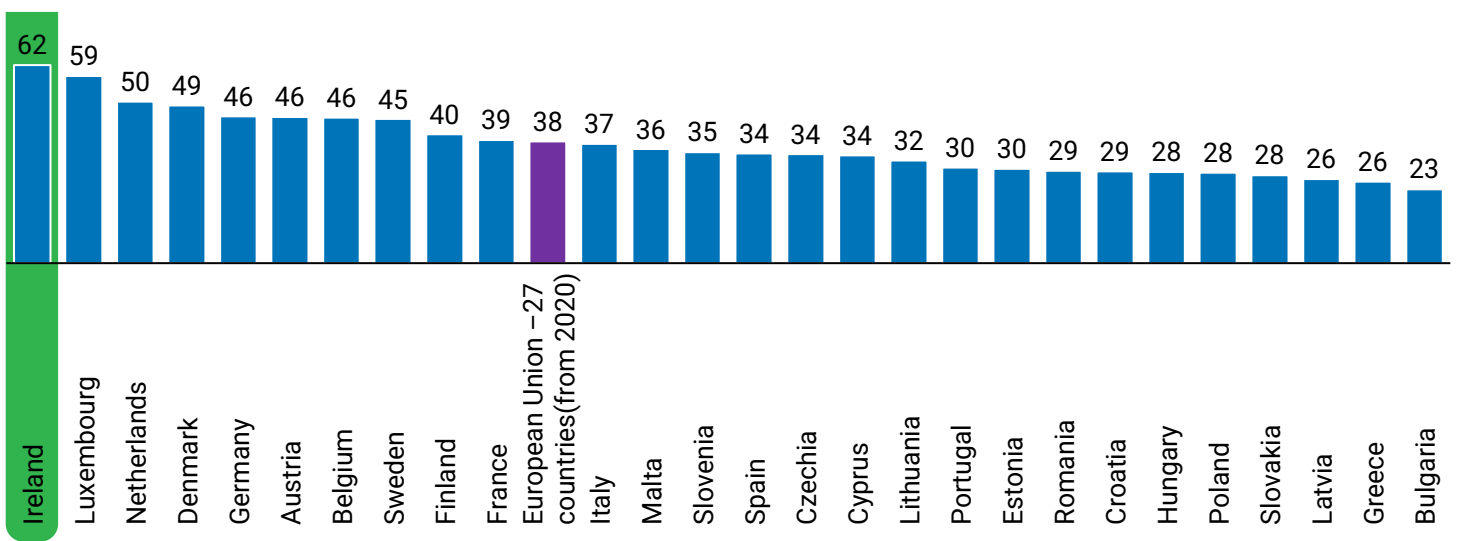
Third level education rate

**33%**

Third level education rate




GNI per capita and employment growth rates, 2023



# ...HOWEVER, MAKING FURTHER PROGRESS WILL BE CHALLENGING AS THERE ARE KEY TRENDS CHANGING THE EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

## Key trends

 Deep dive to follow

### Enacting social mobility

For society, improving **social mobility** could increase the **GDP** of European countries by between **3 and 9 percent**. The OECD estimates that **Ireland loses ~4 percent in GDP** annually because of childhood disadvantage.

### Skills refresh

The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) found that over **370,000 people** in Ireland work in occupations **at high risk of automation** and **further 600,000** are in jobs considered at **medium risk of automation**. This means that many people will need to develop skills for new jobs or upgrade their skills for existing ones.

### Supply does not equal demand

Unemployment rates do not necessarily tell the full story on labour surpluses or shortages. **In Ireland, over 4 in 5 employers report that they are struggling to find skilled talent**, despite the low job vacancy rate.

### Irish future employment landscape


The complex and ever-changing world of technology means that Ireland's employment landscape is likely to see a larger than normal skills gap in the labour market, with the World Economic Forum claiming that **76% of employers in Ireland see a skills gap in the labour market** being a barrier to organisational transformation by 2030, which is **13% higher than the global average**.

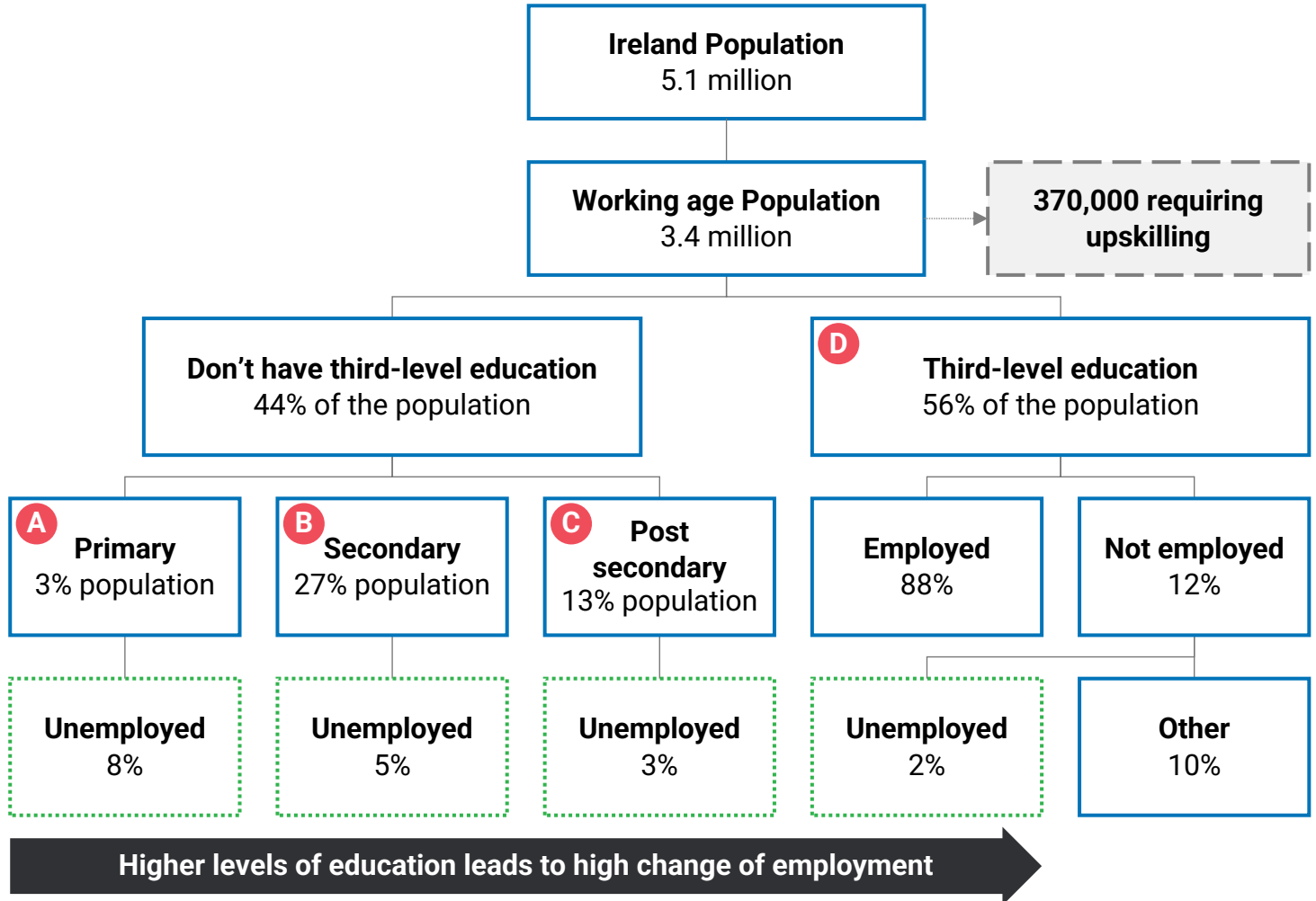
### External risk factors

The Irish jobs market is **increasingly affected by volatile external factors**, such as **changing exchange rates** and **tariffs imposed by major trading partners**.

# SOCIAL MOBILITY | THERE IS A CLEAR CORRELATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED TO UPSKILL PEOPLE

## Ireland Population

 Deep dive to follow



## Key Facts

**154,000**

people who are "underemployed", those who would like to work more hours for more pay

**2 times**

as likely to be a student in third level education if you are from an affluent area vs being from a disadvantaged area, despite these areas having roughly the same population<sup>1</sup>

**2.5 times**

more likely to be unemployed with only a secondary education level compared to someone with a third level education

**45,000-50,000**

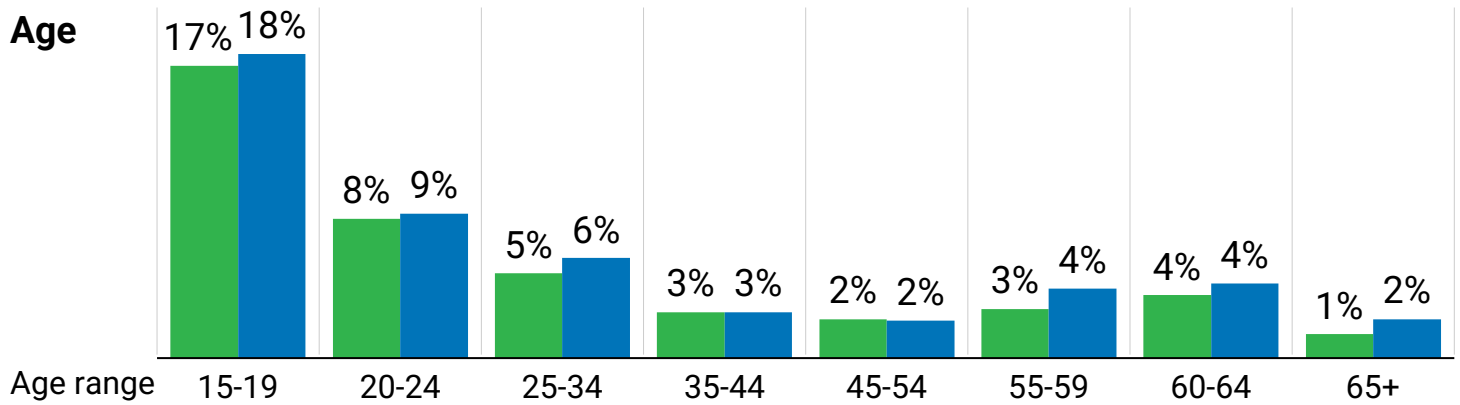
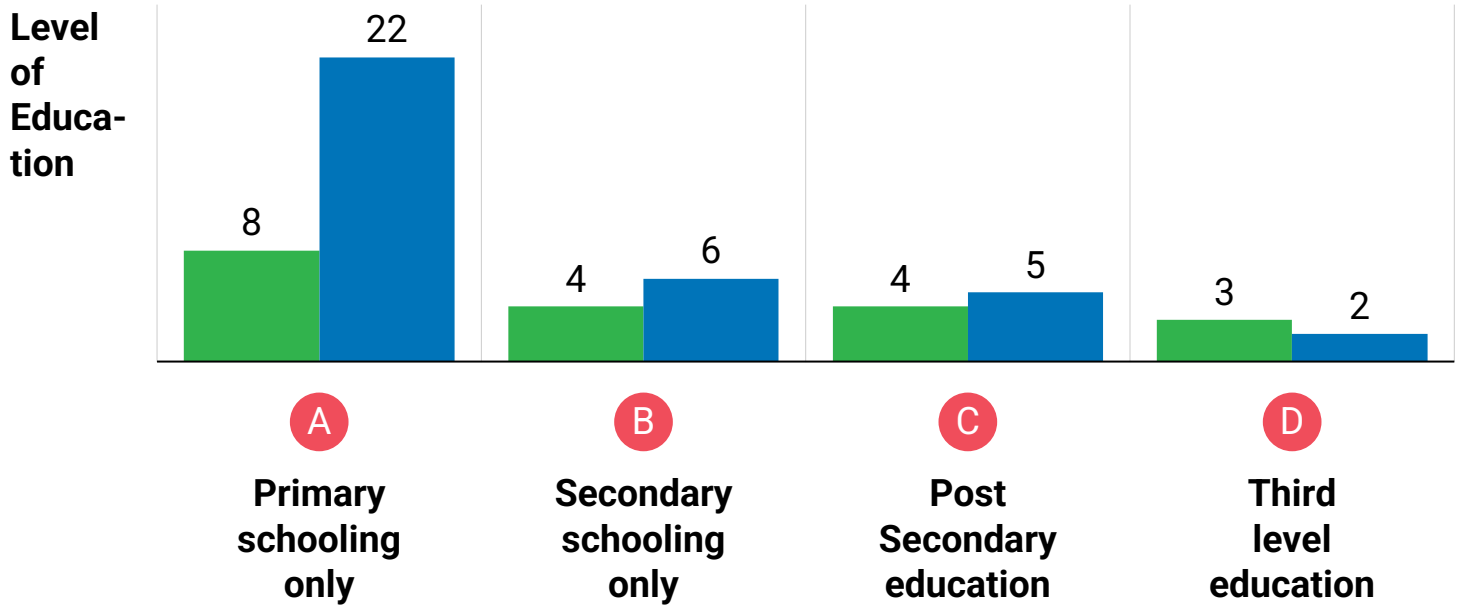
people of working age who have no education past secondary schooling are unemployed

1. Affluence based on the Deprivation Index Scores (DIS)

# SOCIAL MOBILITY | LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND AGE ARE LEADING INDICATORS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Unemployment composition, % unemployed

Men Women



## Key facts

**12.2%**

Unemployment rate for those under 24



70% of young Irish people contemplate emigrating

**2%**

Unemployment rate for those with third level education, compared to 3.8% of the EU

# THERE IS A NEED TO REINVENT OUR WORKFORCE TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY

## Unemployment disproportionately impacts specific groups of society, with the most vulnerable impacted the most

The Irish economy is currently experiencing a period of significant growth, buoyed by a strong labour market and a dynamic demographic profile. Employment in Ireland reached a record high in the third quarter of 2024, driven by the resilience of the service sector and net inward migration. The unemployment rate remains low at 4.9%, with notable increases in female employment and employment among older people (55-65) in line with national average.

However, unemployment continues to be experienced disproportionately by specific groups in Ireland with youth unemployment at 12.2%. There is a clear pattern that individuals with barriers to education and the workforce struggle to find meaningful employment. For example, someone with a secondary education level is more than twice as likely to be unemployed compared to someone with a third level education.

## Ireland and the EU have recognised that adult education and the concept of 'lifelong learning' will be critical to ensure future social and economic success

The European Union has recognised the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to upskill and reskill its workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global economy. The "Union of Skills" initiative aims to support the development of inclusive and adaptable education and training systems across the EU. This initiative emphasises the importance of lifelong learning and the need for a coordinated approach to skills development, involving public authorities, businesses, and educational institutions.

Despite these efforts, participation in adult learning remains insufficient, with only 40% of adults engaging in training annually, far below the EU's target of 60% by 2030. This gap is even more pronounced among low-skilled adults. For low-skilled adults, the EU has identified that "alternative approaches are needed" beyond traditional school-based learning. In this context, upskilling is not only a necessity for individual career development but also a strategic imperative for Europe and Ireland's economic future.

By investing in human capital and fostering a culture of continuous learning, Ireland and Europe can enhance its competitiveness, support sustainable growth, and ensure that its workforce is equipped to navigate the challenges of the digital and green transitions, while driving social mobility by bringing low skilled adults and individuals with barrier to employment into the workforce.

## A rapidly aging population in Ireland will lead to a larger portion of the population being outside of the labour market

Ireland's population grew by 13.5% from 2016 to 2024, reaching 5.4 million people. The demographic shift implies a rapidly aging population, with projections showing that the bracket of population aged over 65 will increase by 41% by 2030. The aging trend poses challenges for the labour market, potentially leading to labour shortages and increased fiscal pressures on the exchequer.

**Increasing the participation rate of working aged people in employment is critical to sustaining economic growth and addressing labour market challenges**

# TO BRIDGE THE TECHNOLOGY SKILLS GAP, FUTURE EMPLOYEES WILL NEED TO INCREASE THEIR TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES AT ALL LEVELS

Ireland, despite its low unemployment levels (4.9% in July 2025) and only 29,500 job vacancies for the working population, is grappling with an intensifying skills shortage, particularly in the Information Technology (IT) sector. As of 2025, the Manpower Group reports that approximately 83% of employers face significant challenges in acquiring skilled professionals, a dramatic increase from 34% in 2019.

An OECD report from 2023 suggests that skills shortages are not a new issue. In the report the OECD underscored the necessity for Ireland to develop a dynamically responsive skills ecosystem to address the skills gap imbalances, emphasising that such adaptability is crucial for both economic viability and societal well-being. The Irish Government has responded with strategic commitments outlined in its National Skills Strategy, focusing on enhancing skill levels among residents and leveraging foreign talent to help mitigate these deficits.

The Irish jobs outlook, in 2030, sees four key roles for business transformation that are going to grow significantly, with 'Software and Applications Developers' growing at more than twice the global average.

## Role types with the highest expected growth in Ireland, from 2025 to 2030

Role	Irish job growth by 2030 (%)	Global job growth by 2030 (%)
Software and Applications Developers	132	57
AI and Machine Learning Specialists	98	82
Data Analysts and Scientists	42	41
Data Engineers	32	36

The skills outlook, in 2030, echoes the need for improved technical skills, such as AI and big data, married with soft skills, such as resilience, flexibility and agility, to be a successful and transversal employee in a technology focused role. This shift in increasingly innovative technical skills means that roles will no longer "just" require a good intrinsic skillset, but also a sophisticated understanding and ability to interact with and leverage cutting edge technology, such as integrating Generative AI tools into everyday workflows to maximise efficiency.

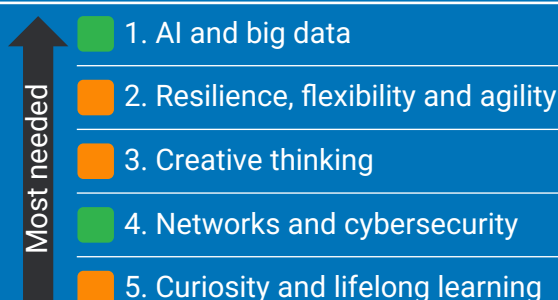
## Top skills required across all role types in Ireland, from 2025 to 2030

■ Hard/technical skills  
■ Soft skills

### Top skills needed in 2025

- 
1. Analytical thinking
  2. Resilience, flexibility and agility
  3. Curiosity and lifelong learning
  4. AI and big data
  5. Leadership and social influence

### Top skills needed in 2030

- 
1. AI and big data
  2. Resilience, flexibility and agility
  3. Creative thinking
  4. Networks and cybersecurity
  5. Curiosity and lifelong learning

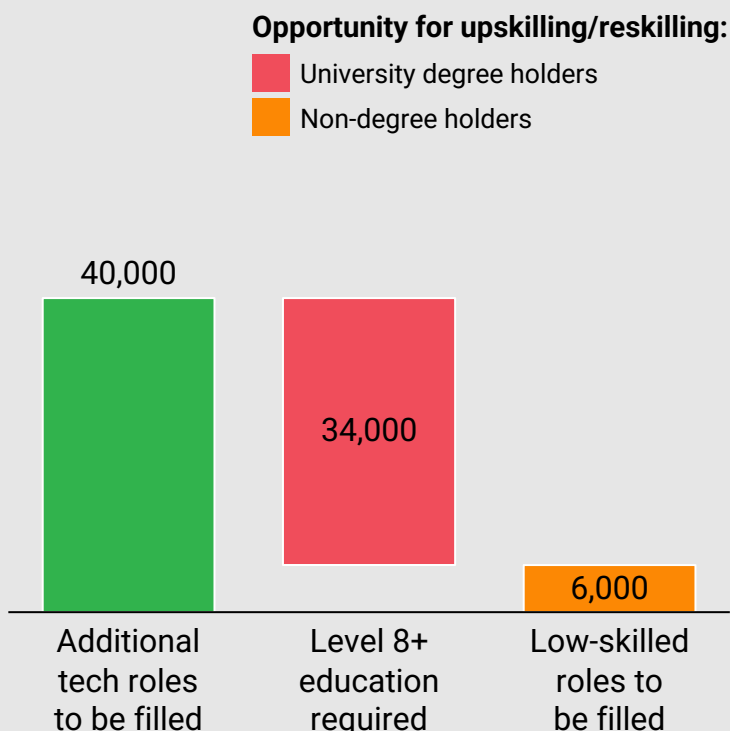
# EMPLOYERS IN IRELAND NEED TO HAVE ACCESS TO A MORE DIVERSE RANGE OF ADEQUATELY EDUCATED CANDIDATES TO CONTINUE GROWING

At the end of 2024, Ireland had an estimated 25,400 job vacancies<sup>1</sup>, representing 1.1% of the working age population. Currently, 73% of adults possess basic digital skills, surpassing the EU average of 56%, and has placed Ireland on track to achieve the EU's goal of 80% by 2030. Ireland currently employs 142,600 ICT specialists (6.2% of the workforce)<sup>2</sup>.

The Manpower Group report revealed that 78% of companies are reporting skills shortages in IT roles and across all skills gap in Ireland, with IT and data skill the most difficult skillset to source. IT and Data skills are highlighted as particularly challenging to source driven by their prevalence across multiple industries, not limited to the technology sector alone.

Ireland's National Skills Strategy stated that IT skills are at the forefront of Ireland's skills scarcity. There is an estimated demand for over 8,000 high-level IT professionals annually, with 15% of these roles, or 1,200 per year, not requiring a university degree, based on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 8 accreditation.

## Additional new tech roles to be filled in Ireland from 2025 to 2030<sup>3</sup>



## Steps Forward

Ireland's National Skills Strategy has called for a multi-faceted approach to tackle skills shortages in Ireland.

The Government has identified that providing varied educational pathways, promoting ICT careers, particularly targeting underrepresented groups, and emphasising continuous professional development will help close the skills gap.

By fostering a robust skills pipeline, Ireland aims to not only meet current industry demands but also anticipate future workforce needs.



The nation stands at a pivotal juncture where strategic action can transform impending challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation.

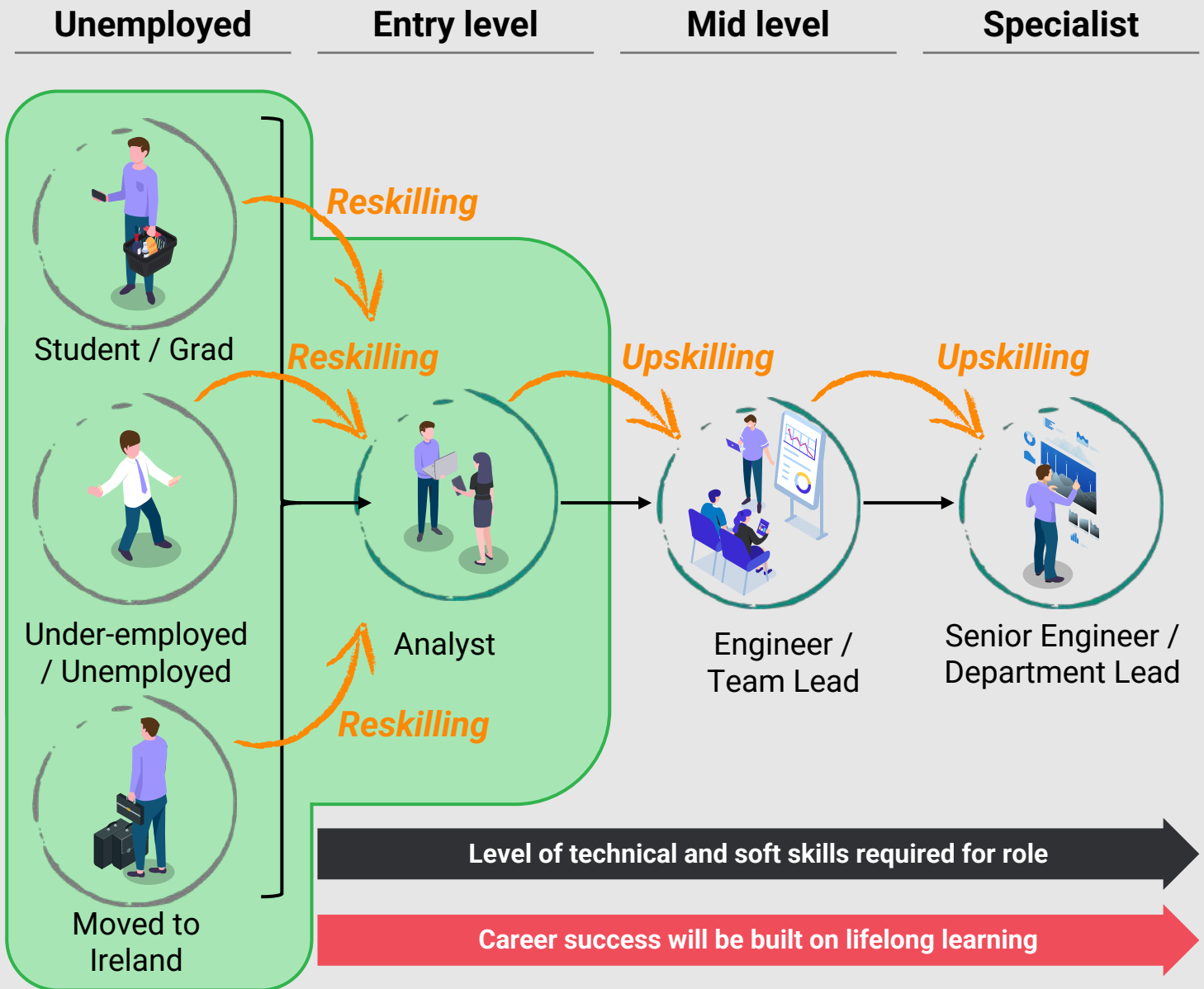
1. As of December 31st, 2024

2. Defined as individuals for whom ICT constitutes the majority of their working tasks

3. These roles are in addition to natural replacements from retirements, people leaving the workforce, people emigrating, etc.

# MOVING PEOPLE QUICKLY FROM UNEMPLOYMENT OR LOW-DEMAND AREAS TO HIGH-DEMAND AREAS WILL BE CRITICAL IN AN EVER-EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF TECHNOLOGY DISRUPTION

 Opportunity to leverage upskill / reskill  
 Generation Ireland's core area of intervention



Beyond technical skills, individuals will need to build transversal skills to successfully continue to change roles throughout their tech careers

# IRELAND'S TECHNOLOGY SKILLS TRAINING





# 2

## Ireland's technology skills training

### **The complex web of Ireland's skills infrastructure and training**

Ireland's skills training infrastructure is a complex and dynamic ecosystem, motivated by educating citizens, providing opportunities for social mobility, and delivering employment outcomes. This infrastructure is defined by a six-step journey influenced by four key stakeholders, each playing a distinct role in guiding learners towards sustainable, equitable employment job opportunities.

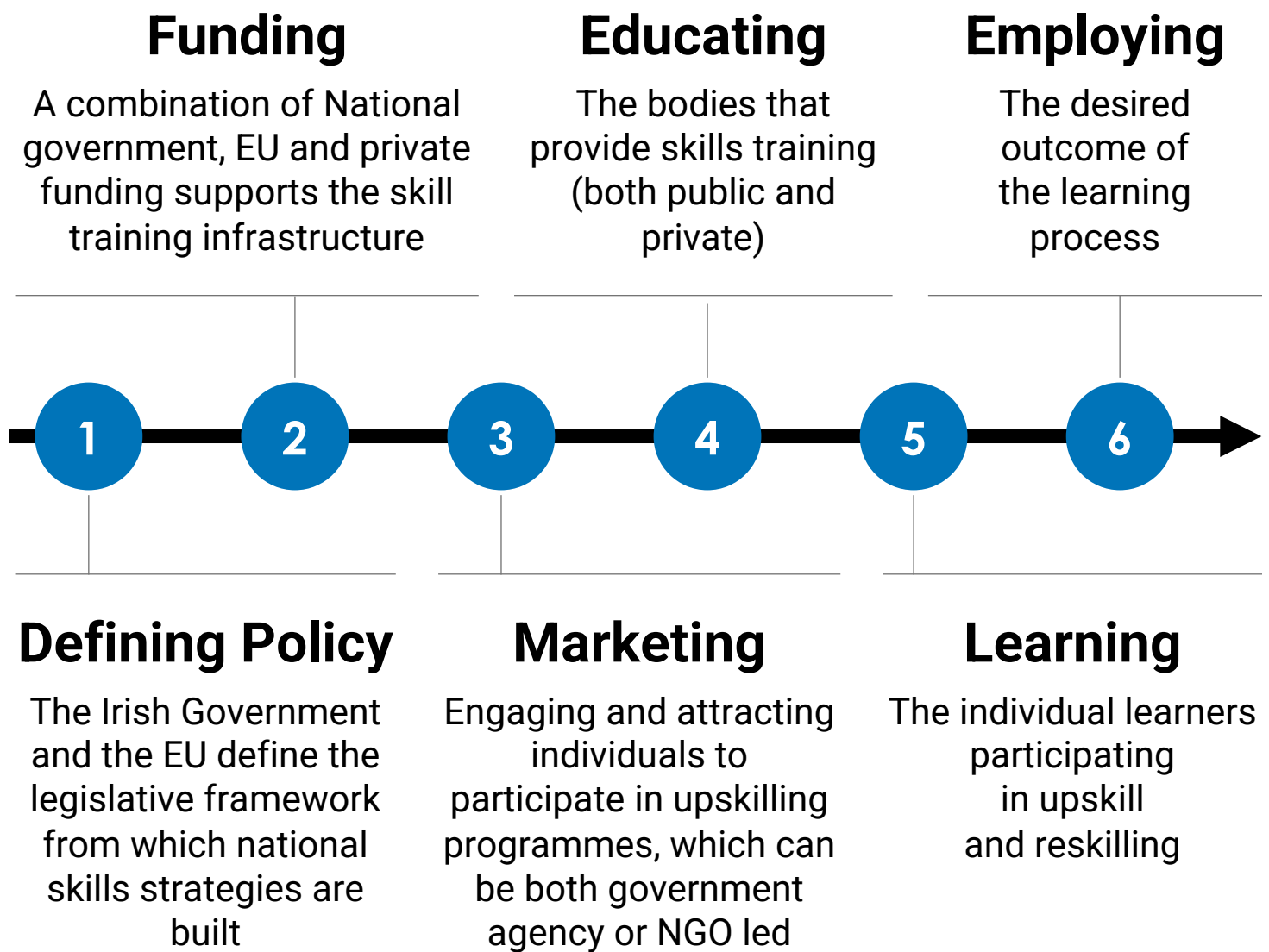
However, the system's impact is not uniform. We have defined a group of typical upskilling personas, based on Generation's experience working in the upskilling space in Ireland, to reveal how different segments of Ireland's population interact with the existing training infrastructure. We will revisit these same personas later in the report to look at how adult education and training could redirect their career trajectory over time.

The disparity of opportunity to education and employment underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach to address diverse needs, overcome any barriers to entry and promote equitable opportunities.

By analysing this journey, core stakeholder archetypes can highlight opportunities to strengthen skills training, ensuring it supports learners while advancing enterprise, government, and social goals for a more adaptable workforce.

# THERE ARE SIX STEPS THAT DEFINE THE END-TO-END JOURNEY OF IRISH ADULT EDUCATION

## Six steps of the end-to-end journey



There are four core stakeholder archetypes that interact with and influence this journey in different ways:





- Government bodies
- Non-Government Bodies
- Individuals
- Companies

# FOUR STAKEHOLDER ARCHETYPES INTERACT WITH THE SIX-STEP JOURNEY TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

■ Key role within journey

● Deep dives to follow

## Activities across the education-to-employment journey

	Government bodies 	Non-Government Bodies 	Individuals 	Companies 
<b>1</b> → <b>Defining Policy</b>	Set policy	Provide feedback on policy	N.a.	N.a.
<b>2</b> → <b>Funding</b>	Allocate funding	Receive funding	Receive funding for education or self-funds	Fund 3rd party programmes; upskill staff through internal training
<b>3</b> → <b>Marketing</b>	Establish bodies to support upskilling	Raise awareness; build engagement	N.a.	Advertise social mobility initiatives
<b>4</b> → <b>Educating</b>	Establish bodies to provide training	Provide training programmes	N.a.	Run upskilling workshops
<b>5</b> → <b>Learning</b>	N.a.	N.a.	Participate in upskilling initiatives	N.a.
<b>6</b> → <b>Employing</b>	Employ graduates from upskilling programmes	N.a.	N.a.	Employ graduates of upskilling programmes

# 1. POLICY | THE SKILLS TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE IS DEFINED BY GOVERNMENT AND IS EVOLVING

## Key frameworks and strategies set out by the EU and Irish governments

### Governing body



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



### Legislative framework



- The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999
- The National Training Fund Act, 2000: established the National Training Fund
- The Further Education and Training Act 2013: established SOLAS

No EU directives on the area but there are initiatives to support upskilling;

- Union of Skills (2027)
- European Skills Agenda
- Upskilling Pathways

### Published Strategies



- National Skill Strategy



Horizon 2020  
European Union funding  
for Research & Innovation



## Ireland's skills training infrastructure

Irish and EU policy frameworks have shared goals of improving youth employment outcomes and addressing skills mismatches. Both frameworks emphasise the importance of collaboration between stakeholders, including governments, employers, and education providers. The EU does not have directives (i.e. legally binding guidance) on skills development but rather operates on skills strategies and provides financial support across the bloc.

Feedback from key stakeholders has indicated a greater need of integration throughout the infrastructure, reflected in an “demand-led” model, where skills strategy is informed by skills demand.

This year, the Government published Ireland's national skill strategy 2025, with the mandate to “make sure that Ireland is renowned at home and abroad as a place where the talent of our people thrives”<sup>1</sup>.

# 2. FUNDING | THERE IS €2.5BN OF PUBLIC FUNDING TO SUPPORT FURTHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND...

## Funding model provided by the EU and Irish governments

### Governing body



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



### Total Funding



**€1.3Bn+ p.a.**

for public bodies providing upskilling training

Comprised of;

- National training fund (“NTF”): €0.6Bn
- Exchequer funding: €0.6Bn

**€51Bn (avg. €8.5Bn p.a.)**

of funding for public and private bodies providing upskilling training across the entire EU

Comprised of;

- European Social Fund: €42Bn across 2021-2027 (€508M allocated to Ireland)
- Erasmus+: €9Bn

### Funding mechanisms



- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

- European Commission
- European Investment Bank

## Ireland | Funding Landscape

**€500M**

Of EU funding to DHFERIS between 2021-2027 for upskilling

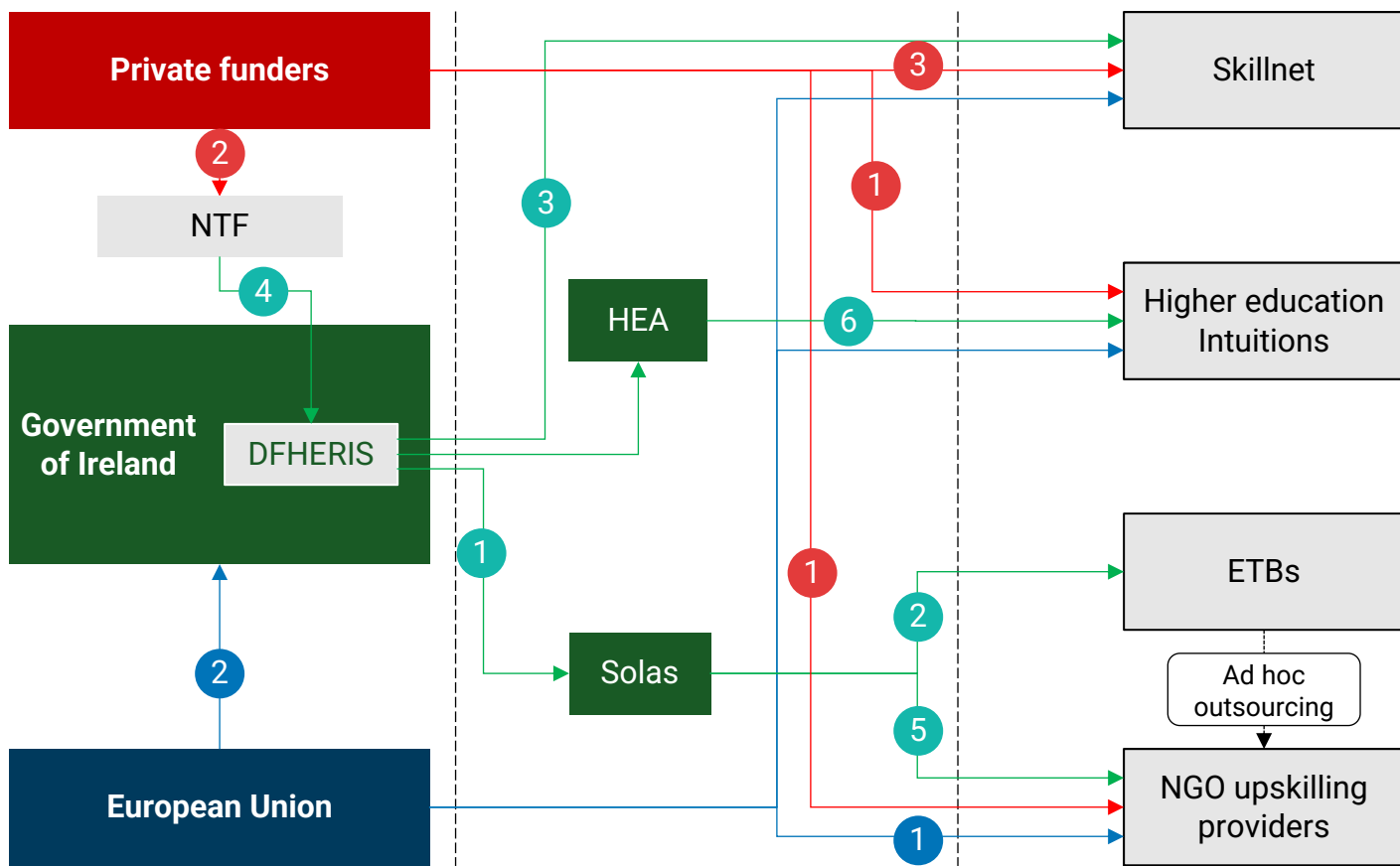
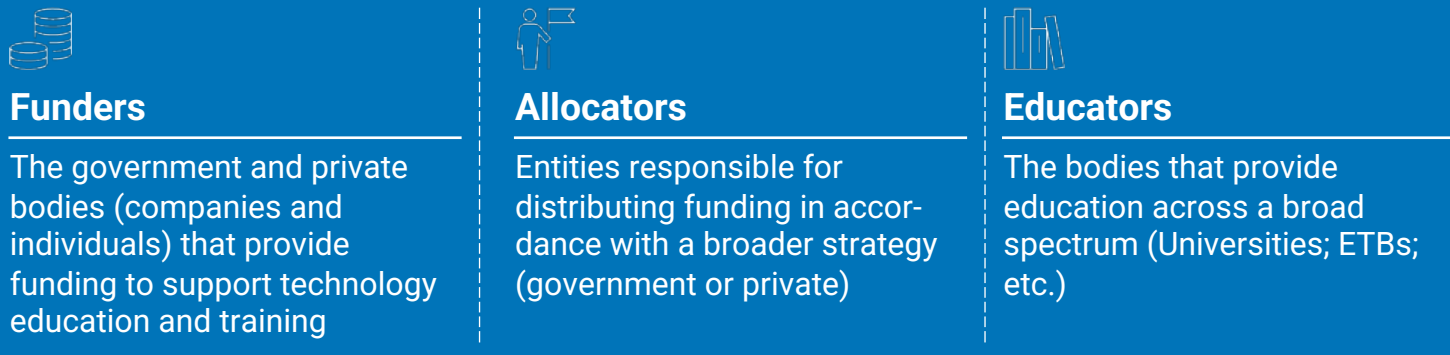
**€1.3Bn**

annual funding available from the Irish government for skills training

**64.2%**

the EU’s target for Ireland’s adult participation rate in education and training, up from 48.3% in 2022

# 2. FUNDING | ... BUT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO ACTIVATE DUE TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SYSTEM



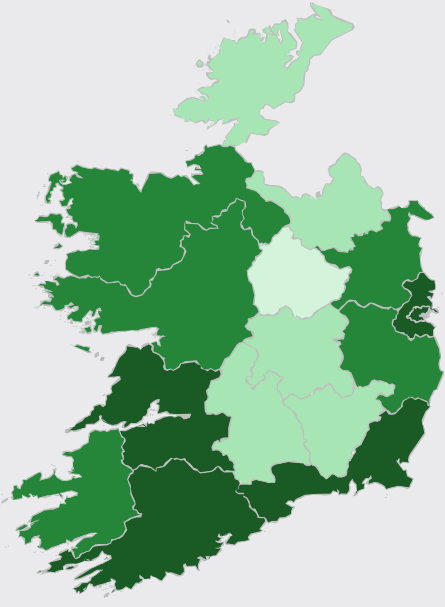
## Funding legend

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Variable</li> <li>2 €1Bn</li> <li>3 €30M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 €1.3Bn<sup>5</sup></li> <li>2 €800M</li> <li>3 €63M</li> <li>4 €602M</li> <li>5 Variable</li> <li>6 €1Bn+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Variable</li> <li>2 €500M</li> </ul>
--	---	---

## 2. FUNDING | ETBS PROVIDE COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION FOR EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF EDUCATION LEVEL

“” *“FET is unique. FET is for everyone”*

### Ireland’s ETB regional model



**Operating across 16 regions**, the devolved model brings localised solutions meeting regional needs.

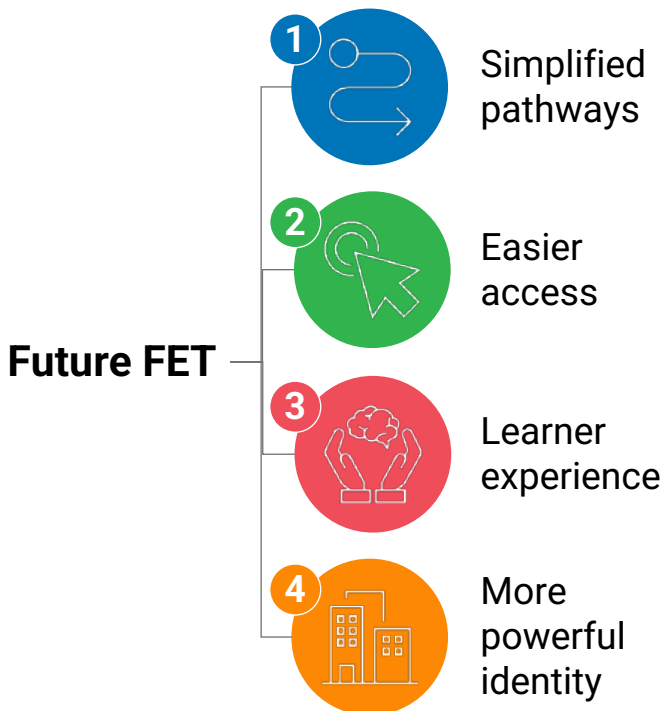
In 2024, there were **400,000 courses completed** by **219,000 individual learners**.

ETBs operate across **1,000 learning locations** and are the **largest providers of multid denominational education** in Ireland.

Courses are provided across:

- Post-Leaving Certificate Courses
- Apprenticeships and traineeships
- Community and Adult education

### Integration of existing FET provision with skills bootcamps



ETBs are a well established, trusted local presence, with expert educators, training facilities, and deep employer networks. They offer every individual, regardless of any previous level of education, an educational pathway.

In their strategy, SOLAS identified the necessity for FET to meet the needs of the future world and the evolving needs of economy and society.

#### Partnership | Generation Ireland & ETBs

Generation offer a proven model to support people out of unemployment into in-demand careers with high success rates, leveraging an agile skills bootcamp model that can flex to current and future needs.

In partnership, ETBs and Generation can provide an additional and effective education-to-employment pathway for learners, achieving high job outcome rates.

# 3. MARKETING | CONTINUED SUCCESS IS DEPENDENT ON RAISING AWARENESS OF ALL EDUCATION PATHWAYS AVAILABLE TO LEARNERS

## Stakeholder archetypes

### Government bodies



### Non-Government Bodies



### Companies



## Strategy to engage



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip schools to provide an overview of the full spectrum of learning and training options</li> <li>• Support early school leavers with routes back into education</li> <li>• Promoted FET outcomes</li> <li>• Courses are open to anyone who is a national of the EU and EEA, Swiss or UK, is at least 16 years old. Academic requirements are subject to course level</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage target population through community outreach, digital marketing and alumni referrals</li> <li>• Target population includes persons who:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Face significant barriers to employment</li> <li>— Right to work in Ireland</li> <li>— Motivated to enter the relevant profession</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upskilling</li> <li>• Tuition support</li> <li>• Target population varies on a case-by-case basis</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## Channels to engage



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduates as ambassadors</li> <li>• Online</li> <li>• ETBs</li> <li>• Partnerships (e.g. Digital marketing institute)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital (e.g., Meta, LinkedIn)</li> <li>• Partner organisations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Intreo centres</li> <li>— Open Doors</li> <li>— Community groups (e.g., youth clubs)</li> <li>— Charities (e.g., Focus Ireland)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Alumni referrals</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities (access programs)</li> <li>• Employer run training</li> <li>• Online (e.g., Google Certificates)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## Key takeaways

The success of education and training programs is contingent on **raising awareness with target learner groups**.

Government run training providers, NGOs, and Companies use **varying strategies and channels** to build awareness and engage **directly with potential candidates**.

The decision criteria to accept a candidate can be complex and highly specific to the training, which can make it **difficult for some applicants to gain access to educational programmes** due to personal **barriers to education** that could exist.

The government provides education opportunities to a broad base of citizens, whereas **NGOs can be more selective, focusing on advancing certain social goals**.

# 3. MARKETING | CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS NEED MORE SUPPORT TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ENTRY IN THE IRISH ADULT EDUCATION JOURNEY

## Upskilling personas<sup>1</sup>



### Daniel

18-year-old from middle income family and has just graduated from secondary school



### Gabriel

35-year-old with dependents working as retail assistant in a zero-hours contract with no third level education



### Rebecca

52-year-old with dependents and was recently made redundant from her job in the bank, where she worked for 35 years



### Patrick

45-year-old part-time mechanic who joined their most recent employer straight from school and is now unemployed. No other formal education



### Priscilla

28-year-old unemployed with no dependents and is 3<sup>rd</sup> level educated with a degree from her home country

## Potential barriers to entry for learners<sup>2</sup>

↑ Individuals can have any number of these barriers and Generation target anyone with 3+ ↓



Self declared disability



Homeless



No degree



Secondary school only



Young carer



Lone parent



Low socioeconomic status



Refugee or asylum seeker



Long-term unemployed



Woman (tech programme)



Ethnic minority



Non-fluent English speaker



LGBTQIA+



Care leaver

1. These are some possible persona types that could be seen in the Irish Adult education space

2. This example list of barriers to employment was compiled by Generation Ireland following quantitative and qualitative research

# 4. EDUCATING | NAVIGATING THE DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT CAN BE CHALLENGING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS

 Deep dives to follow

## Upskilling personas

All learners need to choose the optimal education pathway that works for them and in their current situation



Daniel



Gabriel



Rebecca

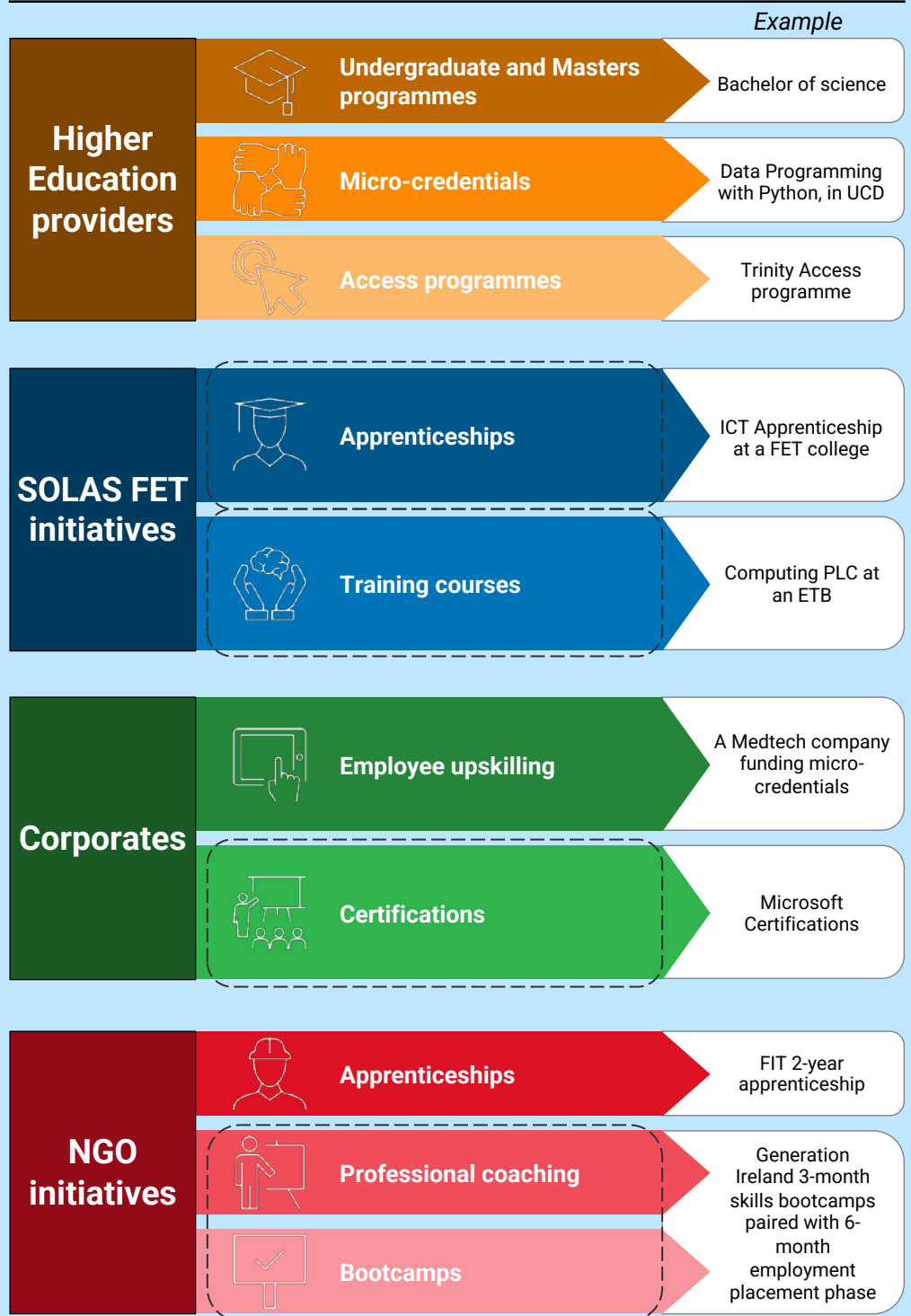


Patrick



Priscilla

## Most popular options for upskilling<sup>1</sup>



1. List of educational options not exhaustive

# [DEEP DIVE] 4. EDUCATING | FIT APPRENTICESHIPS DELIVER STRONG EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES WITH A MEDIUM-TO-LONG-TERM TIME COMMITMENT

## Course overview

---

### Course set-up



Two-year programmes that combine off-the-job training with on-the-job experience.

- The first six months involve intensive classroom-based learning at dedicated technology training centres, equipping apprentices with foundational technical skills.
- The remaining 18 months integrate work-based learning with supplementary instruction at training centres, allowing apprentices to apply their knowledge in real-world environments.

### Candidate overview



- Applicants must be at least 18 years old and hold a Leaving Certificate (or equivalent qualification).
- Aptitude assessments are part of the selection process to ensure candidates have the necessary skills and enthusiasm for the ICT sector.

### Funding



- State-funded programmes that cover all training costs for participants.
- Employers receive financial incentives to support apprenticeship placements:
  - A grant of €2,000 per year per apprentice, totaling €4,000 over two years
  - Additional bursaries are available for underrepresented groups, such as care leavers and members of the Traveller community, providing up to €3,000 in support

Apprentices earn weekly wages ranging from €260–€385 depending on their year of study. These wages are paid by employers throughout the programme duration, ensuring apprentices can "earn while they learn".

## programme outcomes

---

**90%**

of employees retain their apprentices

**250,000**

course participants

**120,000**

employed in tech

# [DEEP DIVE] 4. EDUCATING | ETBS OFFER COURSES TO A BROAD BASE AND ACROSS A LARGE SPECTRUM OF TOPICS

## Course overview

---

### Course set-up



SOLAS offers over 1,500 FET courses across apprenticeships, traineeships, Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses and literacy and numeracy services. Courses can be part or full time and delivered in-person, online or a combination of both.

Some specific examples of courses include skills training in computer Applications, Retail, Business Administration, IT Security Management, Business Process Improvement, Manual and Computerised Payroll and Book-keeping and Life Sciences Manufacturing Operations.

---

### Candidate overview



Participants include school leavers, adult learners, employees looking to upskill, and those seeking to re-enter the workforce. All learners must be over the age of 16.

---

### Funding



Courses are funded through the Irish Government (directly and through government agencies) and the European Social Fund.

## Programme outcomes

---

**52%**

FET graduates from labour market focused FET programmes secured some of employment

**400,000**

Learners in 2024

**219,000**

Unique learners in 2024

# [DEEP DIVE] 4. EDUCATING | MICROSOFT PROVIDE FREE UPSKILLING TRAINING WHICH CAN RESULT IN CERTIFICATION

## Course overview

---

### Course set-up



Four learning options:

**Learning Paths:** 17 free learning paths available, including topics like Generative AI, Cybersecurity, Data Analysis, and Project Management. These paths provide a certification on completion.

**Individual Courses:** Over 400 individual courses are available with free certificates ranging from foundational to advanced skill level.

**Career Essentials Certifications:** Microsoft and LinkedIn offer several free Career Essentials certifications, including Data Analyst, Project Manager, Business Analyst, and Software Developer. These certifications are designed to bridge the gap between basic digital literacy and advanced technical skills.

**Microsoft Essentials Professional Certificates:** Designed for early-in-career learners, these include the Microsoft Azure AI Essentials Professional Certificate and the Microsoft Security Essentials Professional Certificate.

### Candidate overview



The typical candidate profile varies depending on certification level, ranging from early in career individuals looking to enhance skills in emerging technologies to IT professionals looking to upskill.

### Funding



The courses are entirely free to participants.

## Programme outcomes

---

### Microsoft Certified Professional

Industry recognised certificate across multiple paths

**15-30%**

Salary increase reported by Microsoft Certified Professionals

# [DEEP DIVE] 4. EDUCATING | GENERATION HELPS PEOPLE WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT TO GAIN INDUSTRY SKILLS AND PROVIDES GUIDED SUPPORT

## Course overview

---

### Course set-up



Intensive, profession-specific skills bootcamp programmes lasting up to 2-3 months of coursework plus 6 months of placement support focused on sectors with skills gaps, potential employer demand and career progression opportunities for learners.

Bootcamps are structured across two phases:

- Instruction phase: 10-12 weeks of full-time, live training with an expert instructor, providing learners with the skills and qualifications to embark on a new career
- Employment phase: 6 months of employability coaching and placement support to help learners secure employment and succeed in their new roles

### Candidate overview



- 760+ learners to date have been:
  - ~50% from low socio-economic backgrounds
  - ~50% identify as female
  - ~55% from ethnic minorities
  - ~20% with physical or mental disabilities
  - ~8% refugees or asylum seekers
  - ~35% unemployed for over 12 months
  - >90% unemployed

### Funding



- Funded primarily through corporate philanthropy grants. Examples include J.P. MorganChase and LinkedIn.

## Programme outcomes

---

### 760+ learners

supported across Ireland

### 67% employment rate

average job placement rate from 2021-2024, within 6 months of bootcamp completion

### >200 employers

including AIB, Bank of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, and Amazon

# 5. LEARNING | OUR PERSONAS WILL HAVE DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS WHICH SERVE THEIR UNIQUE BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Not exhaustive

Number of barriers to employment faced by average learner

Low

High

Third level

Not third level

Under-graduate

Micro-credentials

FET PLC Certificate

Apprentice-ships

Skills bootcamps



Upskilling personas



Daniel



Patrick



Rebecca



Priscilla



Gabriel



Time commitment

3-4 years

Weeks to months

Up to one year, full-time, part time or evenings

1-2 years

3 months



Typical requirements

Leaving Certificate or equivalent

Varies on a course-by-course basis

Varies on a course-by-course basis

Junior certificate or equivalent

Multiple barriers to employment



Employment outcomes

80% within 9 months<sup>1</sup>

Not available

Not available

90% conversion rates to full time

67% within 6 months



Typical candidate profile

18-24 years old

In employment seeking to upskill and/or reskill

Mixed

Mixed

Diverse



Typical barriers to completing training

Socioeconomic; household income<sup>23</sup>

Income; employer support

Limited: local courses; varying levels of time commitment

Time commitment

Varied personal challenges



Training volumes

90,000

Not available

92,000

9,300

<1,000

## Takeaways for Ireland

- Time commitment varies greatly across educational pathways, indicating faster lead times in responding to employer needs for shorter courses
- Barriers vary across the different educational pathways

# 5. LEARNING | PERSONAL STATEMENTS FROM LEARNERS WHO ATTENDED GENERATION, FET, AND FIT COURSES SUGGEST THAT THERE IS REAL IMPACT

“The Generation bootcamp was an excellent way to go around the barrier of the lack of experience and no degree. [...] The support from the post programme and partnership team was amazing, along with the support from my tutor and mentor. [...]. It has changed my life totally.”

- Daniel, Generation Ireland graduate, IT Support Analyst, Maples Group



“Now I tell anyone who is struggling to find work, go and talk to Generation. They will train you and they will place you into a job. Generation is what got me here. Generation has my heart and I’m so grateful to be a part of it!”

- Christine, Generation Kenya Graduate

Generation changed everything! It changed my way of thinking. It changed my whole point of view of what’s possible, and it enabled me to dream much bigger and to be able to fulfil those dreams. It’s been a huge blessing!”

– Gabriella, Generation Colombia Graduate”

“A major challenge I faced was lack of experience. A lot of companies are looking for candidates with about two years’ experience. [...] I was actively searching for a way to move into tech and came across Generation. I wanted to join because of how the curriculum is structured and it provides the opportunity to learn from industry experts.[...] liked the post programme support with our employability coach and placement manager. We had mock interviews, and our CV was continuously reviewed. This was something I struggled with before Generation”

– Hadiza, Generation Ireland Graduate, IT Infrastructure Support Engineer, AIB

“I really enjoyed it. We have a very broad range of ethnicities. There’s people from Nigeria, parts of Asia, Poland, all stuff, so you’re getting completely different perspectives of how people were raised and how their views formed. I find it very easy to learn in settings like that where I’m listening.”

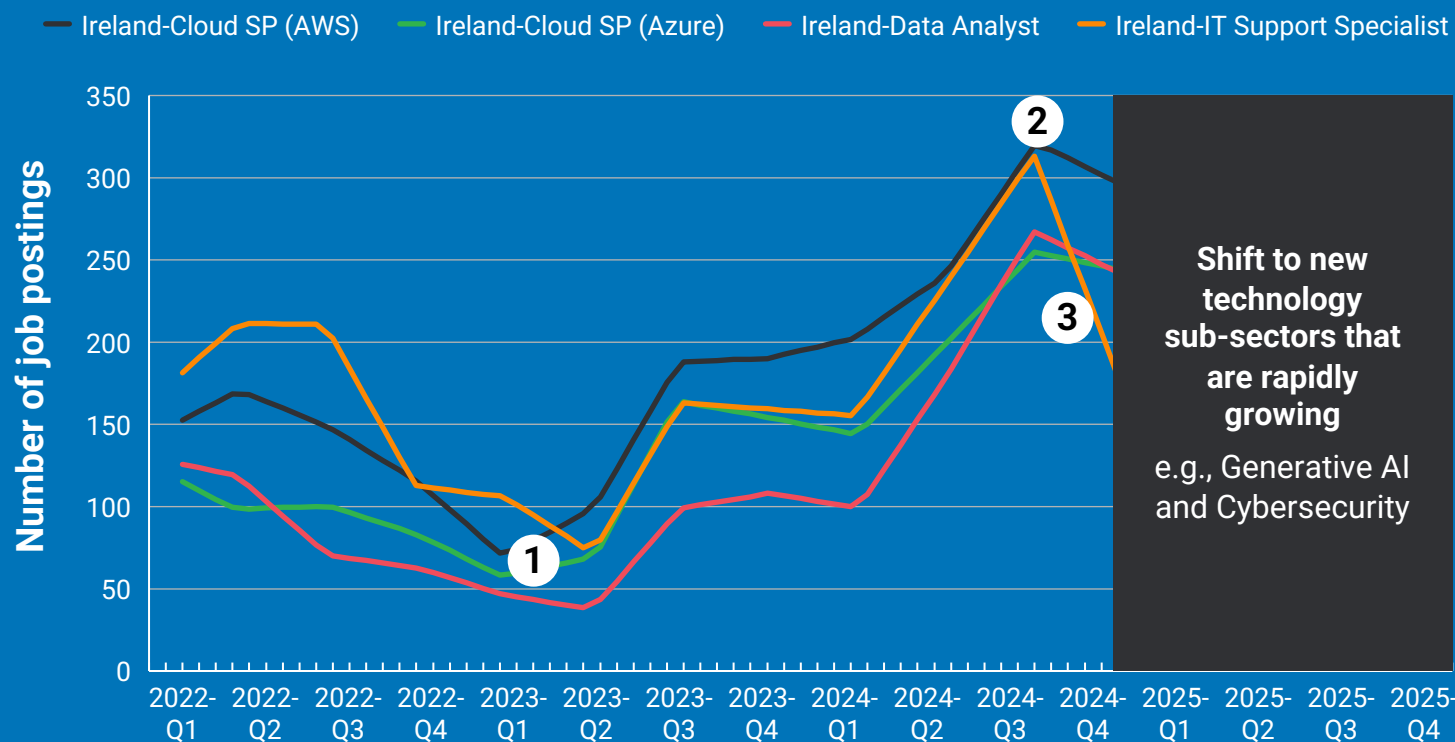
- FET Learner Forum Participant

“FIT is a great programme for practical learners from all backgrounds and all ages who are passionate about IT, and want to learn the fundamentals of development but have struggled to get in the door of a tech company”

– Tom Croft, FIT Graduate, Software Developer Associate, Mastercard

# 6. EMPLOYMENT | SKILLS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES ARE CHANGING RAPIDLY MAKING IT HARD TO PREDICT MARKET NEED FAR IN ADVANCE

## Open roles in Ireland across four key entry-level tech roles, #



### Key insights

- 1 Clear trend of number of open roles increasing over time from 2022 onwards
- 2 Drop in roles across all categories aligns with large scale tech layoffs, which flooded the Irish jobs market with unemployed tech savvy employees
- 3 Drastic drop in roles for IT support specialists suggests a rebalancing of the entry-level tech roles in Ireland with automated SAAS solutions for IT support becoming more sophisticated and widespread in the market

Over a three-year period, the four main entry-level tech role categories have seen high growth and, in parts, steep declines.

This pattern will become increasingly normalised in the rapidly changing Irish technology industry leading to a constant need for new skills, in newly emerging areas, and will also lead to large-scale redundancies in entry-level roles.

**Protecting Ireland's high employment rates will require workforce reskilling to fill the newly emerging entry-level tech roles**

**BENCHMARKING APPROACHES TO SKILLS GAPS AGAINST EUROPEAN  
AND GLOBAL PEERS**





# 3

## Benchmarking approaches to skills gaps against European and global peers

Ireland's skills training infrastructure is currently performing well in several key areas, including tertiary education attainment, labour force participation, and maintaining a low percentage of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and unemployment rates. These metrics position Ireland as a top performer in the European and global context, reflecting a robust educational and employment framework.

However, through interviews with key stakeholders including IBEC, IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Skillnet, it is clear that there is a recognised lack of co-authoring in skills training programmes between policy makers, training providers and potential employers. This gap in collaboration contrasts with successful models in other European countries, where co-authored programmes with employers have yielded significant benefits.

For instance, the German apprenticeship model, the Italian Java coding skills bootcamps, and the UK's software development camps have all been developed in close partnership with industry, ensuring that the skills taught are directly aligned with market needs.







### Takeaways for Ireland

- Targeted programmes with collaboration from employers drives positive employment outcomes
- In Europe and the UK, targeted adult education programs have a proven record of delivering employment outcomes by upskilling staff at SMEs to closing the skills gap

# EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL PEER SET OVERVIEW | IRELAND, GERMANY, AND THE UK LEAD EUROPEAN PEERS WITH HIGH LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Skills training across Europe has evolved uniquely across the continent, leading to a diverse skills training landscape. Despite notable variation across the Irish, German and British skills training infrastructure, all three nations have achieved comparative levels of employment. Whilst governments set policy, inevitably there is strong historical and cultural drivers behind each nation's skills training landscape. We have looked five of Ireland's European peers' approach to skills training, and the impact of their initiatives

 Case studies to follow

Country	Tertiary education attainment (25-34)	Labour force participation <sup>1</sup>	NEETs (18-30)	Unemployed <sup>2</sup>
 Ireland	62.3%	66.4%	9%	4.9%
 France	51.9%	55.6%	11.8%	7.7%
 Germany	38.4%	61.1%	7.5%	3.4%
 Italy	31%	49.8%	12.7%	6.5%
 Spain	52.3%	57.7%	9.9%	11.4%
 UK	60.0%	61.8%	12.8%	4.4%

1. Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active

2. As of December 2024, for all countries bar Ireland which is as of February 2025

# CASE STUDY

## SKOLA PROGRAMME BY LES APPRENTIS D'AUTEUIL



### Description

SKOLA is a programme launched by Les Apprentis d'Auteuil, a French foundation dedicated to supporting young people facing social and economic challenges. The programme targets young people aged 16-30 who are unemployed, have little to no qualifications, and face difficulties in social or professional integration.

### Education

#### Programme overview

Each SKOLA programme is structured as

- **Pre-qualification phase:** 1 to 3 months focused on basic knowledge, interpersonal skills, and understanding workplace norms
- **Qualification phase:** 3 to 18 months of hands-on training through a professionalisation contract, leading to a level IV or V qualification (professional certification, vocational title, or skill set) aligned with the targeted career.

#### Sector covered

In collaboration with private companies, SKOLA programmes are developed sector by sector, in selected geographies.

- **Retail:** in the Ile-de-France region, SKOLA retail has taken place in malls focusing on ready-to-wear fashion
- **Vineyard professions,** with Lesparre Médoc or Vignerons du vivant Saint Emilion Libourne
- And other sectors or professions: telco – Optical fibre; logistics, mechanics, etc.

### Employment

**65% of the people supported** by SKOLA are employed afterwards

### Takeaways for Ireland

Targeted programmes with **collaboration from employers** drives positive employment outcomes

# CASE STUDY

## IT SPECIALIST FOR APP DEV IN GERMANY



### Description

Germany has long operated successful vocational training programmes. A category of vocational training programmes for IT Specialist Training in Germany facilitates several specializations. This example is focused on the IT Specialist for Application Development.

### Education

#### Programme overview

- Part of Germany's "Dual vocational training" approach, with theoretical education at a vocational school and practical training at a participating employer
- The tuition is free, with trainees receiving a monthly stipend

#### Candidate profile

- Those interested in a career in IT, particularly in software development
- Secondary schooling is required

#### Curriculum

- **Theoretical Training:** programming languages (e.g., Java, Python), software development, database management, and IT security
- **Practical Training:** Trainees work in a company, applying theoretical knowledge in real-world settings
- **Specialisation:** Focuses on application development, including software design, and programming,
- **Course length:** typically, 3 years
- **Participating companies:** Siemens, SAP, Deutsche Telekom, Accenture and Google

### Employment

**Employment outcomes:** In Germany, 96% of dual vocational programmes graduates are employed on course completion

### Takeaways for Ireland

In Ireland, household income was identified as a barrier to pursuing third level education. The vocational training programme provides a **salary alongside theoretical education, and high employment outcomes**

# CASE STUDY

## JAVA DEVELOPER BOOTCAMP'S IN ITALY



### Description

Tech employers in the region required entry-level Java developers.

### Education

#### Technical skills

- Data structures and algorithms
- Programming in java
- Databases and SQL language
- Web development fundamentals

#### Soft skills

- Agile and SCRUM Methodology
- Problem solving, Teamwork, Communication, Adaptability
- Growth Mindset, Future Orientation, Persistence,
- CV Preparation, Job Interview Simulations, Personal Branding
- Stress Management, Online Work

### Education

#### Marquee corporate sponsor

- Intesa, Italy's largest banking group, support Generation Italy through;
  1. **Multi-year funding cycles** which facilitates long-term planning
  2. **Learner mobilisation:** using their network of retail bank customers to market Generation courses
  3. **Placement:** leveraging corporate banking relationships to help place graduates

#### Public funding

- Generation Italy hope to receive more government funding primarily through the Digital Republic Fund, a national initiative to address the country's skills gap and promote digital inclusion

### Employment

6-month placement rate since launch: 76% (2024: 57%)

### Takeaways for Ireland

Partnering with a large, reputable brand with a broad reach across citizens and corporations helped deliver a reliable source of learners, funding and influence for Generation Italy's initiatives

# CASE STUDY

## WORKER'S EMPLOYABILITY GUARANTEE (GOL) IN ITALY



### Description

Government initiative under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) aimed at improving workforce employability. It provides personalised career support, including job placement, upskilling, and reskilling, targeting unemployed individuals, women, young people, and workers over 50.

### Education

#### Programme overview

The programme offers a variety of training paths tailored to different needs:

- **Re-employment:** for those who can easily find a new role with support
- **Upskilling:** short-term interventional training where a learner's skills are at risk of unemployment
- **Reskilling:** in-depth professional training where skills are outdated

#### Target group

- The GOL programme targets various groups, including:
  - Unemployed or underemployed
  - NEETs (under 30 years)
  - Women from underrepresented backgrounds
  - People with disabilities
  - Workers over 55 years old

### Employment

As of January 2025, **35.8%** of individuals enrolled in the GOL programme were employed

### Takeaways for Ireland

Clear, distinct strategies categories learners to help find the most appropriate training course (re-employment, upskilling or reskilling)

# CASE STUDY

## DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN SPAIN



### Description

“Formación Profesional Dual” is a vocational training model introduced in Spain in 2012, combining theoretical education with practical work experience. It aims to bridge the gap between education and labour market needs by providing students with real-world skills and enhancing their employability.

### Education

#### Training description

- Combination of classroom learning with work-based training in companies.
- Structured into three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Higher. Each level has different entry requirements, although a secondary level of education is sufficient to participate in all levels
- The internships in the companies are paid, and it normally has a cost of 400 euros per course

#### Courses available

- Computer Science and Communications (including cybersecurity and web development)
- Healthcare and Nursing
- Hospitality and Tourism

#### Curriculum

- Structured around the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications, attempting to match training to industry needs.
- Educational institutions collaborate with companies to design training

### Employment

**Employment outcomes:** 70% of graduates are employed in the sector relevant to their training scheme

### Takeaways for Ireland

Vocational training schemes can operate as an **alternative to third level education**, providing job-ready graduates after a period of education and training

# CASE STUDY IRONHACK PRIVATE BOOTCAMP IN SPAIN



## Description

Offer a variety of programmes, for example “Data Analysis Bootcamp” is a 9-week fulltime programme, or 24-week part time; which can be in person in Madrid or Barcelona, or remote and which does not require previous experience.

## Education

### Training description

- Provide a learning platform, and the profile to which students can aspire is the Junior Data Analyst role
- Training in the most solicited and in-demand capabilities; for their students to be the most updated possible
- Previous experience in data analysis is not required, enabling learning from the bottom-up

### Modules available

1. Programming in Python
2. Statistics and probabilistic concepts (pair-programming methodology)
3. Basic machine learning and data extraction and analysis project

## Employment

**Employment outcomes:** 84% of students which completed the programme found employment in the following 90 days after completing the programme

## Takeaways for Ireland

**Short, intensive skills bootcamps** can deliver positive employment outcomes when delivered for **in-demand skills**

# CASE STUDY

## SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

### SKILLS IN THE UK



#### Description

This 16-week bootcamp is offered by the Code Institute in partnership with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and City of Bristol College. It is designed for unemployed learners interested in transitioning into the tech industry.

#### Education

##### Course overview

- **Agile Methodologies:** Efficient planning and design.
- **MVC Frameworks:** Implementing Model-View-Controller frameworks.
- **Data Models:** Designing and implementing data models.
- **Security Features:** Authorisation and authentication.
- **Cloud Deployment:** Testing, version control, and deployment to cloud platforms.
- **Python:** a linchpin in AI development, future proofing learners' skills against AI

##### Candidate overview

- The programme is open to adults aged 19 or older living within the Local Enterprise Partnership region or willing to secure employment there
- Participants must be unemployed and available for full-time training

##### Benefits

- **Fully Funded:** The programme is fully funded by the UK Government, making it free for participants
- **Job Interview Guarantee:** Participants are guaranteed a job interview with an employer upon completion

#### Employment

98% of Code Institute graduates are employed in a tech role within 1 year of completing this programme

#### Takeaways for Ireland

Short, intensive skills bootcamps can deliver positive employment outcomes when delivered for in-demand skills

# CASE STUDY

## DIGITAL MARKETING SKILLS

### IN THE UK



#### Description

Skills Bootcamps are part of the UK's Lifetime Skills Guarantee and Plan for Jobs, aiming to address the skills gap by providing sector-specific training. Farefort Training provide a 14-week Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp in the UK with a class size of 12 participants.

#### Education

##### Course overview

- **Branding:** Understanding how to create and maintain a brand identity.
- **E-mail Marketing:** Techniques for effective email campaigns.
- **Social Media Strategies:** Leveraging platforms to reach target audiences.
- **SEO and PPC Advertising:** Optimizing search engine visibility and managing paid advertising campaigns

##### Candidate overview

- Marketing leads at SMEs
- Learners over the age of 19 from any background

##### Benefits

- **Free Training:** fully funded by the UK government
- **Guaranteed Job Interview:** On completion, participants are guaranteed a job interview with an employer in their sector
- **Industry-Aligned Skills:** training focuses on in-demand skills,

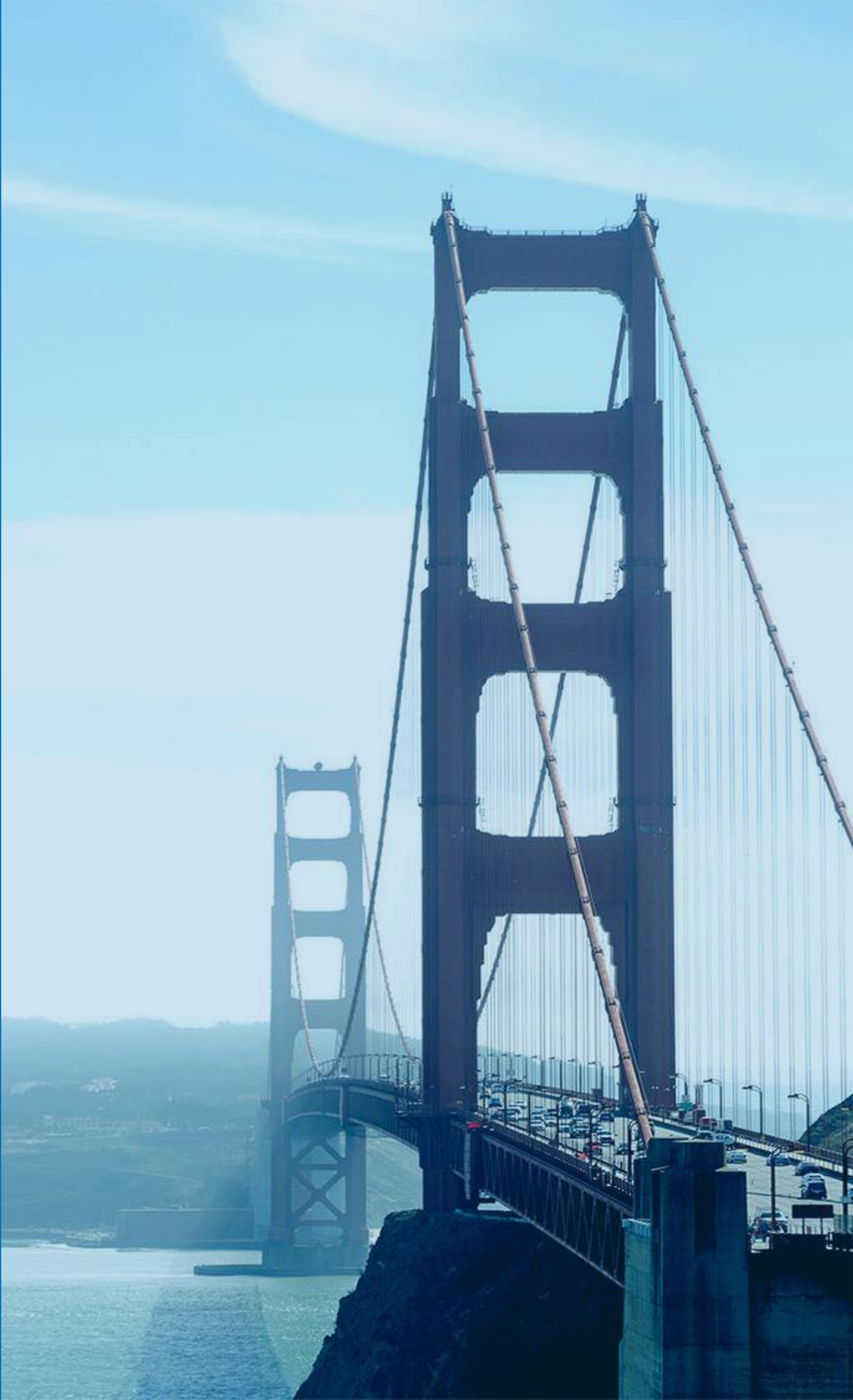
#### Employment

Candidates are typically employed before commencing the course

#### Takeaways for Ireland

Government funded upskilling initiatives support SME businesses in training staff, which Enterprise Ireland identified as a key challenge facing Irish SMEs

**IRELAND'S PATH TO CLOSING THE TECHNOLOGY SKILLS GAP IN A SOCIALLY  
CONSCIOUS WAY**





# 4

## Ireland's path to closing the technology skills gap in a socially conscious way

Actions to consider to grow skills training



### 1. Creating a pathway to lifelong learning for all

- 1a Explore funding and support for education and training options that are affordable (or fully subsidised) that are feasible paths to a sustainable career for those facing multiple barriers to employment
  - Create a dedicated fund, or ringfence resources, to provide skills training, particularly targeting groups at risk of exclusion from the workforce
- 1b Decision makers could create a process to educate and enable employers to change their mindset, culture, and recruitment processes to value educational pathways beyond university degrees
  - One degree will no longer be enough for a 30-year career
- 1c Consider extending the reach of Government agencies supporting SMEs' access to affordable education pathways, enabling learning alongside work
  - Broaden SME access to subsidies for direct education costs, reimbursement of business costs to companies who have staff unavailable due to upskilling or reskilling, and/or provide business training credits to incentivise employer participation in skilling employees

### 2. Enabling more targeted interventions for rapid education, to meet the market's constantly changing demands for new or updated skillsets

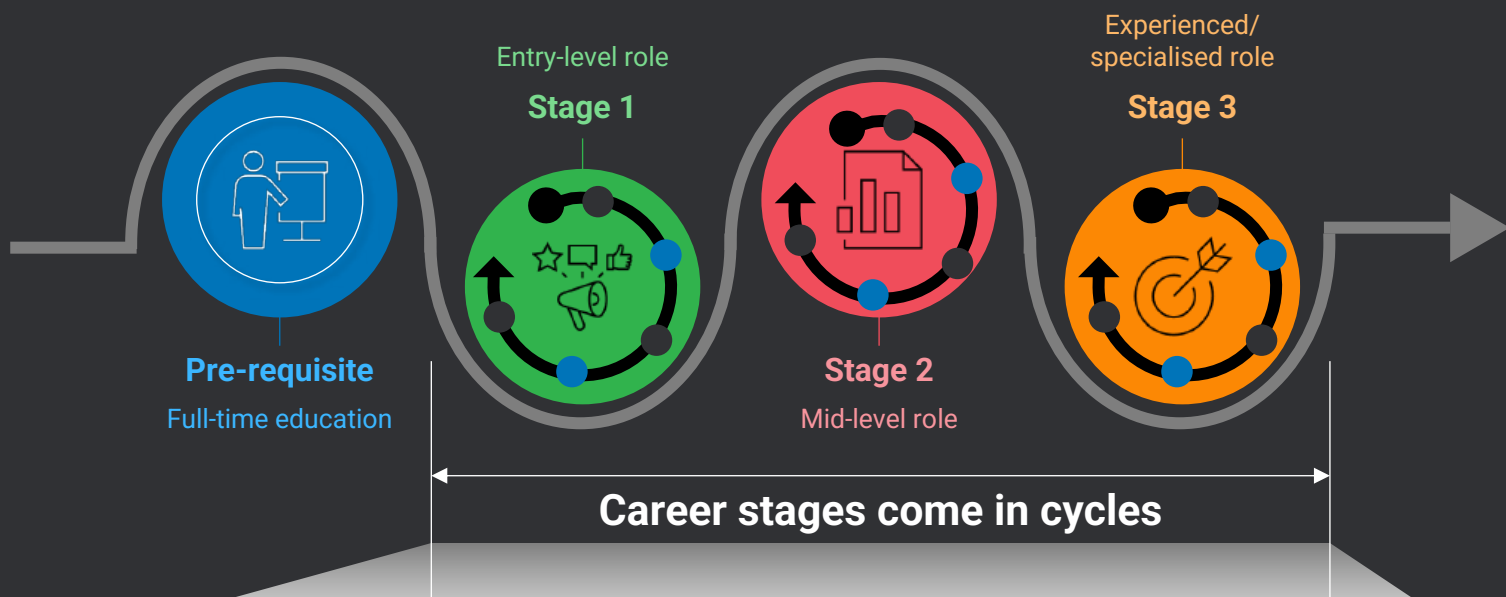
- 2a Consider creating a central source of information to communicate the adult education landscape, and the multiple educational pathways available
  - Facilitate candidates finding their optimal educational pathway, and provide guidance on how barriers to education can be overcome
- 2b Look to engage employers to co-create skills training, focusing on ensuring graduates are truly 'job ready' on course completion
  - Operate a "demand-led" model, where employers provide feedback on skills demand which leads to a co-authored curriculum design. Employers should partner with educational institutions to hire trained graduates

# ALL STAKEHOLDER ARCHETYPES HAVE A PART TO PLAY IF THE ACTIONS OUTLINED ARE TO BE TAKEN FORWARD, AT SCALE, TO ENABLE THEM TO REACH LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS TO ENTRY

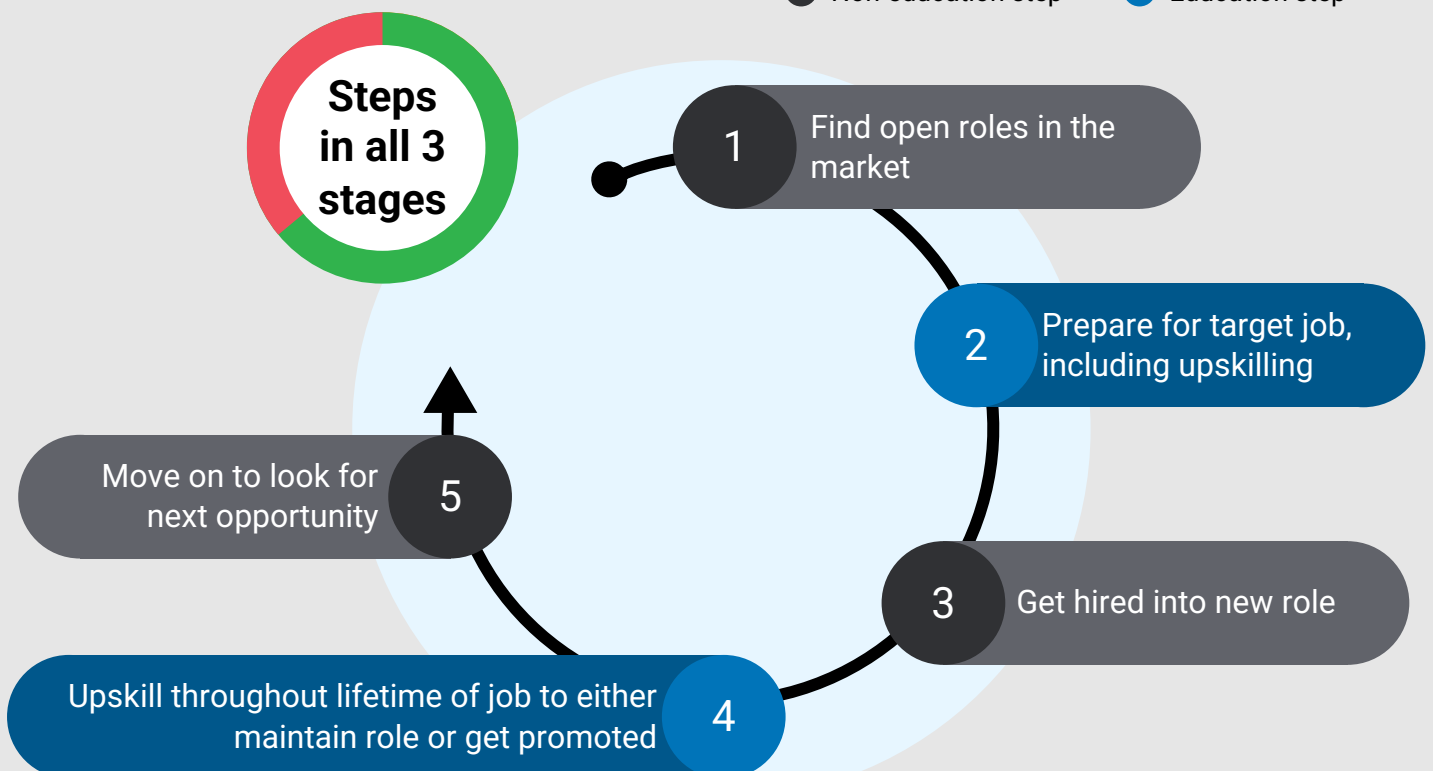
	Stakeholder archetypes			
	Government bodies 	Non-Government Bodies 	Individuals 	Companies 
<b>1a Fund and support access programmes</b>	Consider enabling all learners to access the necessary training needed to enter the Irish tech jobs market	Work to provide education with extra supports for individuals most at-risk	Consider attending courses provided by educators	Work to engage with access programmes in local area to provide mentorship and coaching to learners
<b>1b Create a process to incentivise employers</b>	Potential for a framework that creates non-financial incentives for employers to recruit individuals from non-standard routes	Consider engaging with companies to showcase value of non-degree hiring	N/A	Consider reviewing recruitment processes to allow individuals to be hired, who don't have a degree but do have the skills needed for the job
<b>1c Design affordable education pathways for employers</b>	Opportunity to create a framework that creates financial incentives for employers to upskill and reskill their employees	Explore providing employer sponsored training courses which can also be run for non-employees to ready them for a new job	N/A	Try to create trainings to enable continuing professional development and skills building in emerging technologies
<b>2a Create central source of information</b>	There is space for an easy-to-use resource that enables the adults of Ireland to understand potential education pathways	Work to publicise the resource to people in target demographics who struggle to gain adequate education to get a good job	Try to find time to engage with and share the resource with family, friends, coworkers, etc.	Work to promote the resource to employees in need of upskilling
<b>2b Employer engagement is the first step in creating any skills training</b>	Consider consulting employers to co-create all training programme curriculums to ensure outcomes meet the skills needed	Consider consulting employers to co-create all training programme curriculums to ensure outcomes meet the skills needed	N/A	Try to work with training creators to ensure up-to-date job skills are taught and provide jobs to those completing the course

# IRELAND AND THE EU HAVE BOTH IDENTIFIED LIFELONG LEARNING AS ONE OF THE CORE DRIVERS OF FUTURE SUCCESS WHICH REQUIRES MORE LEARNING BOTH PRIOR TO WORK AND DURING

Lifelong learning must be embedded across all stages of the career journey, after formal full-time education ends. These stages can be viewed as cycles, where an individual may go through multiple cycles at each stage and will need to be constantly learning to access new roles, and to grow in their current role.



● Non-education step    ● Education step



# TO SUCCEED, OUR UPSKILLING PERSONAS WILL NOT ONLY NEED TO LEARN NEW SKILLS FOR THEIR NEXT JOB, BUT ALSO FOR EVERY FUTURE ROLE TOO (1/2)

## Key takeaways for Ireland

The volume of non-level 8+ educational option will need to increase based on lifelong learning journeys becoming more common. This will have a disproportionately large impact on the need for short, employment focused forms of either publicly or employer funded education programmes.

## Personas



Daniel



Gabriel



Rebecca

## Possible path of lifelong learning



Worked in an entry-level job in a who use an apprenticeship model to upskill Daniel to become a competent employee pushing to the next level



Daniel upskilled with a micro-credential to help him advance to a manager role within his company. While working as a manager a part-time master's programme



After receiving an offer from a competitor, Daniel transition to director role and undertook a 12-week skills bootcamp to build his proficiency in executive skills



Undertook a skills bootcamp from home, while minding her children, to secure an entry-level tech role in a global tech company in Dublin



After 4 years of hard work and 2 employer-funded micro-credentials later, Gabriel was moved into a team leader position



Gabriel was excelling as a team lead and was selected by her boss to undertake a skills bootcamp in a rapidly emerging new type of technology to become a specialist engineer in this space



Undertook a part-time FET PLC Course, balancing her responsibilities as a care giver. Rebecca began a career in project management at another bank



After 3 years and incremental progression, her employer funded a micro-credentials course. Rebecca then moved into a team leader position



N/A

## Education completed

2 Degree(s)

1 Apprenticeship(s)

1 Micro-credentials

1 Skills bootcamp(s)

0 Degree(s)

0 Apprenticeship(s)

2 Micro-credentials

2 Skills bootcamp(s)

0 Degree(s)

0 Apprenticeship(s)

1 Micro-credentials

1 Skills bootcamp(s)

# TO SUCCEED, OUR UPSKILLING PERSONAS WILL NOT ONLY NEED TO LEARN NEW SKILLS FOR THEIR NEXT JOB, BUT ALSO FOR EVERY FUTURE ROLE TOO (2/2)

## Key takeaways for Ireland

The volume of non-level 8+ educational option will need to increase based on lifelong learning journeys becoming more common. This will have a disproportionately large impact on the need for short, employment focused forms of either publicly or employer funded education programmes.

## Personas



Patrick

## Possible path of lifelong learning

## Education completed



Under-employed in his job as a mechanic, Patrick decided he wanted to pursue a career in technology. He signed up to a skills bootcamp through an NGO and upskilled to land a role in a small tech company



Patrick's company was growing rapidly, and he was asked to move into a team leader role. To prepare Patrick for this change, his employer funded a skills bootcamp to upskill him in the necessary new technologies he would need to manage



As a company leader, Patrick was a firm believer in the skills bootcamp model and created a policy to hire people to his team who had come from bootcamps, as well as fund skills bootcamps for his employees who would benefit from them



0 Degree(s)  
0 Apprenticeship(s)  
0 Micro-credentials  
2 Skills bootcamp(s)



Priscilla



Priscilla had been unemployed since arriving in Ireland. She had a computer science degree from her home country but was struggling to get a job in tech until she was accepted onto an NGO lead tech skills bootcamp



As a team lead, Priscilla were made redundant. She again undertook a skills bootcamp, funded by her ex-employer as part of her redundancy package to upskill in a new area before moving to a new growing sector



Priscilla moved multiple times over the next 10 years in a rapidly changing tech market, completing 2 more skills bootcamps along the way to keep herself up to speed on all of the newest tech trends and become an expert



1 Degree(s)  
0 Apprenticeship(s)  
0 Micro-credentials  
3 Skills bootcamp(s)

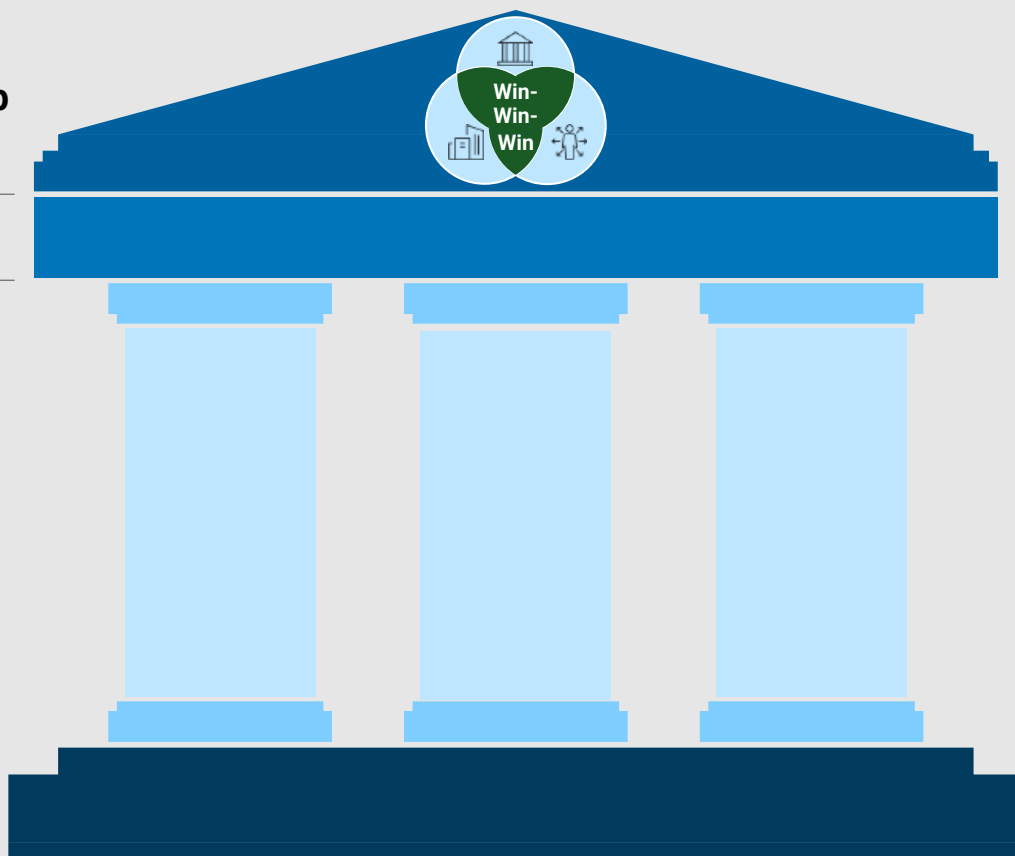
# THE PATH FORWARD TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP CAN BE A WIN-WIN-WIN SCENARIO FOR SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND ENTERPRISE

1 Closing the skills gap

2 Social mobility

3 Irish government

4 EU directives



1  
There are benefits across all elements of society, enterprise, and government to close the skills gap by:

- Empowering individuals to find work in equitable jobs
- Creating a skilled workforce
- Providing fiscal value to the exchequer

2  
Provide unemployed or under-employed individuals who have barriers to education and the workforce with a route to:

- Access a life-changing career in a growing sector
- Save the state ~€3,500 per learner per year who attends a skills bootcamp by increasing tax paid and offsetting social welfare costs

3  
Build a system that supports upskilling across the country:

- Create central source of information on available adult educational resources and associated funding
- Build framework that monitors current and future enterprise skill needs and provide rapid response training to bridge any gaps

4  
Anchor on the Key Strands of the Union of Skills:

- Build skills for quality jobs and lives
- Upskill and reskill an agile workforce
- Circulate skill, to enable tactical skills immigration
- Attract, develop and retain talent

# *Generation*

---

IRELAND