



# **RETENTION RATES OF PUPILS IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS**

## **1999 COHORT**

March 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

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This is the third published report, by the Department of Education and Science, on school retention in Ireland. It is based on a detailed analysis of the records held in the Department's Post-Primary Pupils Database (PPPDB) for the cohort of entrants to the first year of the junior cycle in the years 1997, 1998, and 1999.

It should be noted that this report is limited in that it deals only with retention within the State-aided schooling system. It does not take account of important educational pathways outside this system such as Youthreach and apprenticeship training and, in effect, pupils leaving school to undertake these programmes are treated as early school leavers for the purposes of this analysis.

It is also important to note that while the analysis allows for movement of pupils between schools, it does not enable the tracking of those who leave State-aided schools including publicly funded fee-paying schools and move to non-aided education providers. In the absence of a comprehensive tracking system encompassing all providers of education, it is only possible to estimate these numbers. The rates were further adjusted at national level to allow for other factors such as emigration and death to account for pupils in the original cohort who left the country or died, in the periods under consideration. These variables (private institutions, emigration and death) are included in the determination of the adjusted Leaving Certificate retention rate, which corresponds to a final rate of 83.7 percent for the 1999 cohort. A detailed profile of this is contained in Table 3. (See Appendix A for further details on the methodology employed.)

It seems reasonable to assume that the 'true' retention rate, comparable to completion of upper second-level education, is higher than that shown in Table 3 below when participation in apprenticeship, out-of-school programmes and other training within the first year of leaving school is considered. The ESRI School Leavers Survey of 2003/04 leavers, published in November 2007, indicates that 53% of those who left school prior to the Leaving Certificate participated in various types of further training within a year of leaving school. However, the extent of this difference is difficult to quantify (see the reference in Section 5 to the Quarterly National Household Survey data for more on this point).

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## SECTION

## 1

## Retention Rates for 1999 Cohort - General Trends

An analysis of the 1999 cohort shows:

- (a) **Junior Cycle, Year 1 cohort:** The number of pupils enrolled in the 709 second-level schools in Year 1 of the Junior Cycle, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1999 was 60,786<sup>i</sup>.
- (b) **Junior Cycle, Year 2 cohort:** The number of pupils progressing to the second year of the junior cycle was 59914. This represented a decrease of 1.4 per cent on the initial cohort.
- (c) **Junior Cycle, Year 3 cohort:** The number of pupils entering year 3 of the junior cycle amounted to 58,805 pupils. This represented a retention rate, from year 1 to year 3, of 96.7 percent.
- (d) **Junior Certificate examination 'sits':** The number of pupils, who sat and were graded in at least one subject in the Junior Certificate examination, amounted to 57,510. This corresponds to 94.6 per cent of the initial cohort.
- (e) **Senior Cycle, Year 1:** In their first year of senior cycle, some pupils pursue the first year of the Leaving Certificate while others take the Transition Year Programme. This corresponds to a 2 and 3-year senior cycle respectively. The number of pupils continuing with their education into the senior cycle amounted to 55,913 (or 92% of the initial cohort).
- (f) **Senior Cycle, Year 2:** In their second year of senior cycle, some pupils pursue the second year of the Leaving Certificate while others take the first year of the Leaving Certificate (if they had taken the Transition Year Programme). The number of pupils in senior cycle year 2 was 51287 (or 84.4% of the initial cohort).
- (g) **Leaving Certificate retention:** The final school based retention rate for the 1999 cohort was 80.5 per cent (*This figure is not adjusted for factors such as pupils who left the State-aided schools to pursue their senior cycle education in private institutions, emigration or death*).

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<sup>i</sup> This is different from the official published statistic for the junior cycle, year 1 pupils, by some 444 pupils. The difference may be accounted for by transactions that have taken place on the Post-Primary Pupils Database subsequent to the generation of the statistical abstracts for the 1999/2000 Annual Statistical Report.

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**RETENTION OF PUPILS IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS**

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**COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS COHORTS**

Table 1 compares the retention rates for the 1999 cohort with the rates for all previous cohorts since 1991. The Leaving Certificate retention rate remained relatively stable from 1991 to 1996. For the most recent cohorts there has been a slight increase year-on-year in the retention rate. Overall, the national unadjusted Leaving Certificate retention rate has increased by 3.4% since 1991, and 2.7% since 1996.

**Table 1: Retention Rates for each milestone, 1991-1999 cohorts\***

MILESTONE	COHORT (%)								
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Junior Certificate, Year 1 (No)	70,455	70,851	70,737	69,103	67,254	64,068	62,105	61,144	60,786
Junior Certificate, Year 2	n/a	n/a	98.2	98.6	98.7	98.7	98.7	98.6	98.6
Junior Certificate, Year 3	95.3	95.1	95.7	96.4	96.7	96.7	96.8	96.8	96.7
Junior Certificate 'sits'	93.4	92.3	93.4	94.3	94.4	94.6	94.5	94.5	94.6
Senior Cycle, Year 1	**	**	**	**	90.9	91.1	90.9	91.3	92.0
Senior Cycle, Year 2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	81.5	81.1	81.7	83.1	84.4
Final retention Rate	77.1	78.0	78.1	78.3	78.0	77.8	78.7	80.1	80.5

\* Data are unadjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools and other destinations.

\*\* Data previously published for Senior Cycle Year 1 for the 1991-1994 cohorts are not comparable with data for the 1995-1999 cohorts.

A significant gender gap remains at national level between male and female cohorts. The retention rate to Leaving Certificate for males in the 1999 cohort was 75.5%, compared with a rate of 85.7 % for females, a difference of 10.2%.

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RETENTION OF PUPILS IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

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**Table 2(a): Male Retention Rates for each milestone, 1995-1999 cohorts\***

MILESTONE	COHORT (%)				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Junior Certificate, Year 1(No)	34416	32872	31946	31158	30763
Junior Certificate, Year 2	98.3	98.3	98.4	98.4	98.5
Junior Certificate, Year 3	95.7	95.9	96.0	96.0	96.2
Junior Certificate 'sits'	93.1	93.4	93.3	93.3	93.7
Senior Cycle, Year 1	87.8	88.1	87.9	88.3	89.5
Senior Cycle, Year 2	76.2	75.6	76.7	78.7	80.0
Final retention Rate	72.5	72.1	73.5	75.4	75.5

*\* Data are unadjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools and other destinations.*

**Table 2(b): Female Retention Rates for each milestone, 1995-1999 cohorts\***

MILESTONE	COHORT (%)				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Junior Certificate, Year 1(No)	32838	31196	30159	29986	30023
Junior Certificate, Year 2	99.1	99.0	99.0	98.9	98.6
Junior Certificate, Year 3	97.7	97.6	97.7	97.5	97.3
Junior Certificate 'sits'	95.8	95.8	95.8	95.8	95.5
Senior Cycle, Year 1	94.2	94.3	94.1	94.3	94.5
Senior Cycle, Year 2	87.0	86.9	87.0	87.8	88.8
Final Retention Rate	83.8	83.8	84.2	85.1	85.7

*\* Data are unadjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools and other destinations.*

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**SECTION**

**2**

**Adjusted Leaving Certificate Retention Rate**

There is a consistent level of departure by pupils other than ‘early school leavers’ from the State-aided school system. This is due for the most part to pupils going to ‘private’ institutions to complete their senior cycle, and, to a more limited extent, to emigration and death. It is not possible to establish the exact number of persons completing their education in private institutions, however in order to sit the Leaving Certificate examination a person must apply to the State Examination Commission for admission as an external candidate. An adjustment was made, based on estimates, to the national Leaving Certificate retention rates for the 1997-1999 cohorts, in order to take these external candidates into account. An estimate was also made to take account of pupils in the original cohorts who left the country or died, in the periods under consideration, and the final figure was adjusted accordingly.

Based on the above, the adjusted Leaving Certificate retention rates for the 1997-1999 cohorts are set out in Table 3.

**Table 3: Adjusted National Leaving Certificate Retention Rate, 1996-1999 cohorts\***

CATEGORY	1996		1997		1998		1999	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Junior Cycle cohort	64,068		62105		61144		60786	
Less emigration, death etc.	260		233		251		257	
Net cohort	63,808	100	61872	100	60893	100	60529	100
Leaving Certificate retention	49,838	78.1	48864	79.0	49000	80.5	48959	80.9
External Candidates ( <i>estimated</i> )	2,050	3.2	2064	3.3	1862	3.1	1700	2.8
Total	51,888	81.3	50928	82.3	50862	83.5	50659	83.7

*\* Data are adjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools but not to other destinations.*

For the purposes of this report, the adjusted rates described above have been applied to the overall national rates only. It is not feasible to further disaggregate this rate (*e.g. by county or school type*). Therefore, all rates, other than the national adjusted rate, should be read subject to the understanding that emigration, death and external candidates are not taken into consideration.

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**ANALYSIS OF TRENDS FOR 1999 COHORT**

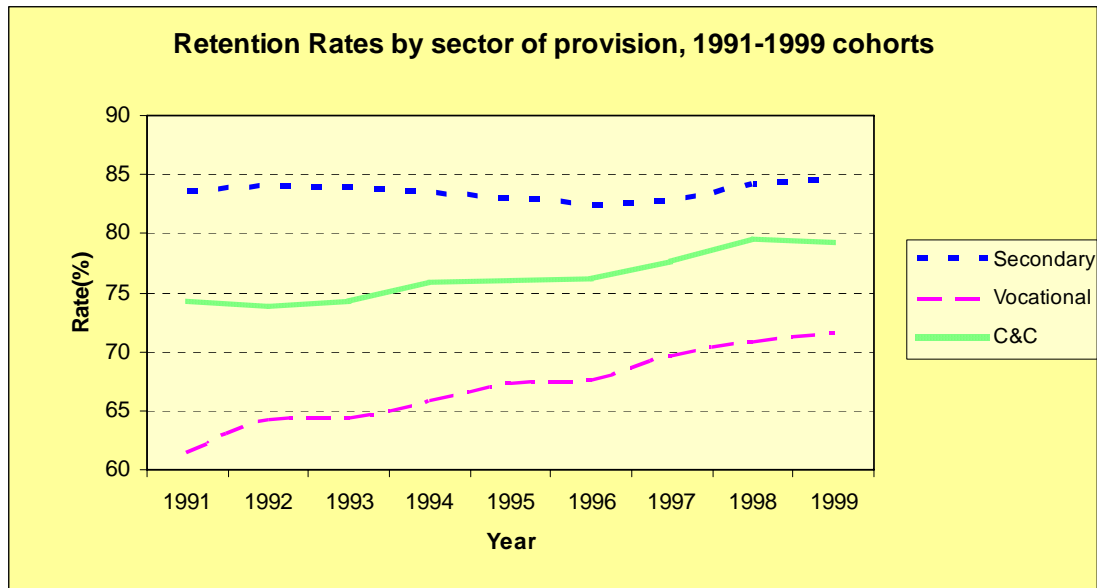
Secondary schools continue to have the highest retention rates at both the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate stage. The retention rate to Junior Certificate for the 1999 cohort in secondary schools was 95.8%, compared with 92.2% for vocational schools and 94.0% for community and comprehensive schools. The Leaving Certificate rate for the 1999 cohort for secondary schools was 84.6%, which was 5.4 percentage points higher than the rate for community and comprehensive schools and 13 percentage points higher than the rate for vocational schools (See Appendix B for a detailed table of retention rates by sector).

The retention rate in secondary schools was fairly stable up to the Junior Certificate Examination stage for the 1991-1999 cohorts. Vocational schools showed an improvement in retention to the Junior Certificate stage, from 87.3 per cent in 1991 to 92.2 per cent in 1999. The Junior Certificate retention rates in community and comprehensive schools also remained relatively stable between the 1991 and 1999 cohorts, with the biggest decrease (1.8 percentage points) occurring between the 1991 and 1992 cohorts, and the biggest increase (1 percentage point) occurring between the 1993 and 1994 cohorts.

The retention rates to Leaving Certificate for secondary schools have shown relatively little variation since analysis began in 1991. Community and comprehensive schools show a significant increase in retention rates to Leaving Certificate. The rate for the 1999 cohort, at 79.2 percent is an increase of 5 percentage points over the retention rate for the 1991 cohort. The gap in retention rates to the Leaving Certificate between the secondary sector and the community and comprehensive sector has almost halved since 1991. The Leaving Certificate retention rate for Vocational schools has shown the biggest improvement, with an increase of 10.1 percentage points on the retention rate for the 1991 cohort. *As indicated in the previous chapter, all Leaving Certificate retention rates are unadjusted unless otherwise stated.*

The following graph shows the retention rates for the 1991-1999 cohorts for each milestone, by sector of provision.





The retention rates by sex at each milestone are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Retention Rates by School Type and Sex, 1999 cohort\***

Milestone	SECONDARY		VOCATIONAL		COMMUNITY & COMP'VE		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Junior Cycle, Year 1 (no.)	16532	19333	8603	6012	5628	4678	30763	30023
Junior Cycle, Year 2	98.7	98.6	98.0	98.5	98.6	99.1	98.5	98.6
Junior Cycle, Year 3	97.3	97.5	94.3	96.2	96.0	97.8	96.2	97.3
Junior Certificate 'sits'	95.5	96.0	90.8	94.1	92.9	95.3	93.7	95.5
Senior Cycle, Year 1	93.0	95.2	83.8	92.0	88.0	94.8	89.5	94.5
Senior Cycle, Year 2	85.2	89.9	70.9	85.5	78.6	88.6	80.0	88.8
Leaving Certificate Retention	82.5	86.4	63.7	82.9	72.9	86.8	75.5	85.7

\* Data are unadjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools and other destinations.

Table 4 confirms that across all types of schools, males were less likely to complete their Leaving Certificate than females with retention rates of approximately 83 per cent for males in secondary schools, 64 per cent in vocational schools and 73 percent in community and comprehensive schools compared to approximately 86, 83 and 87 per cent respectively for females. Vocational schools experienced lower retention rates than other school types, especially with regard to male retention between senior cycle year 1 and the Leaving Certificate examination with a drop of over 20 percentage points being recorded between these two milestones. However, many of these transfer to apprenticeships and other forms of training.

**SECTION  
4**

**Retention Rates by County**

This section describes the trends in school retention in each administrative county area. Data were analysed by address of schools rather than address of pupils. In general, retention rates in the cities are lower than elsewhere. Dublin City had the lowest retention rate in the country, at 72.1%, while Leitrim continues to have the highest retention rate, at 91.3% for the 1999 cohort.

**Table 5: Retention Rates by county, 1999 and 1996 cohorts.\***

County	NO. OF SCHOOLS	No of pupils	Junior Certificate Retention (1999 cohort)	Leaving certificate Retention (1999 cohort)	Leaving Certificate Retention (1996 cohort)
Carlow	11	874	97.5%	82.6%	79.3%
Cavan	10	867	96.9%	85.0%	82.0%
Clare	18	1512	93.2%	83.8%	81.1%
Cork City	26	2351	95.2%	79.8%	75.1%
Cork County	61	4691	95.3%	82.8%	81.1%
Donegal	23	2525	93.5%	81.0%	77.5%
Dublin City	80	6461	92.8%	72.1%	69.0%
Dublin South	32	3600	93.8%	74.6%	70.3%
Dublin Fingal	24	2915	95.4%	80.7%	76.8%
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	31	2517	94.7%	83.2%	78.1%
Galway City	10	944	94.2%	80.2%	79.8%
Galway County	36	2409	96.9%	87.6%	83.0%
Kerry	27	2033	95.8%	86.2%	83.0%
Kildare	27	2641	95.2%	80.1%	77.5%
Kilkenny	16	1178	96.3%	83.1%	79.9%
Laois	12	852	93.3%	80.8%	78.9%
Leitrim	8	480	97.1%	91.3%	87.1%
Limerick City	15	1594	92.9%	78.0%	72.9%
Limerick County	19	1177	94.3%	80.2%	81.5%
Longford	10	656	93.9%	85.2%	79.7%
Louth	16	1877	92.5%	78.2%	76.5%
Mayo	28	2007	95.4%	84.9%	84.6%
Meath	19	1801	96.1%	82.7%	80.9%
Monaghan	11	1061	95.4%	79.1%	73.8%
Offaly	12	1025	94.2%	79.0%	79.8%
Roscommon	8	594	95.8%	85.6%	85.9%
Sligo	14	971	95.7%	83.2%	82.7%
Tipperary NR	16	1252	96.7%	85.6%	83.1%
Tipperary SR	16	1272	95.4%	77.8%	78.4%
Waterford City	8	912	93.2%	77.2%	77.3%
Waterford County	9	638	96.4%	85.2%	79.4%
Westmeath	15	1423	94.7%	85.3%	84.6%
Wexford	20	2007	92.5%	80.4%	79.5%
Wicklow	21	1669	93.7%	77.4%	75.3%
TOTALS	709	60786	94.6%	80.5%	77.8%

\* Data are unadjusted for students transferring to non-aided schools and other destinations.

**SECTION  
5****Data on the Educational Attainment of young people in  
Ireland**

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) conducted by the Central Statistics Office collects information on the educational attainment of the population. Data on early school leavers aged 18-24 are available from this survey. Early school leavers are defined as persons aged 18 to 24 whose highest level of education or training is the Junior Certificate or equivalent, and who had not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. The information collected relates to all education or training received including initial education, further education, continuing or further training, training within a company, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, seminars, distance learning, evening classes, self-learning etc.

Table 6 presents data on early school leavers from 1996 to 2006. It shows a decrease in the proportion of early school leavers from 18.9 per cent in 1996 to 12.3 per cent in 2006 (however, some of this decrease is undoubtedly due to breaks in the time series, see footnote under table). In any case, we can say that, in 2006, 12.3 per cent of persons in Ireland aged 18-24 had attained at most lower secondary education or equivalent and had not participated in education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey, a lower rate than the EU-27 rate of 15.4 per cent.

Table 7 gives a time series with the proportion of persons aged 20-24 years who had attained at least a Leaving Certificate or equivalent (QNHS data). Almost 86 per cent of persons aged 20-24, in 2006, had attained at least a Leaving Certificate or equivalent, up from 82 per cent in 1999. This suggests that there has been a growth in the proportion of young people with at least the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, possibly due to the increasing numbers of students now participating in second chance Further Education and Training programmes. Table 8 shows international comparisons for the same data, and shows that Ireland's rate for 2006, at 85.7 per cent, is higher than the EU-27 average of 77.8 per cent.

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**Table 6: Early school-leavers - Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Slovenia	:	:	:	:	:	7.5	4.8 u	4.3u	4.2 u	4.3 u	5.2u
Czech Republic	:	:	:	:	:	:	5.5	6.0b	6.1	6.4	5.5
Poland	:	:	:	:	:	7.9	7.6	6.3	5.7 b	5.5	5.6
Slovakia	:	:	:	:	:	:	5.6	4.9 b	7.1	5.8	6.4
Austria	12.1	10.8	:	10.7	10.2	10.2	9.5	9.3b	8.7 i	9	9.6
Lithuania	:	:	:	:	16.7	13.7	14.3b	11.8	9.5b	9.2	10.3
Finland	11.1	8.1	7.9	9.9	8.9 b	10.3	9.9	8.3 b	8.7	9.3	10.8p
Denmark	12.1b	10.7	9.8	11.5	11.6	9	8.6	10.3b	8.5	8.5	10.9
Sweden	7.5	6.8	:	6.9	7.7	10.5b	10.4	9.0b	8.6	11.7b	12
Ireland	18.9	18.9	:	:	:	:	14.7	12.3b	12.9	12.3	12.3
Hungary	:	17.8	15.9	13	13.8	12.9	12.2	11.8b	12.6	12.3	12.4
Belgium	12.9	12.7	14.5	15.2b	12.5	13.6	12.4	12.8	11.9b	13	12.6
Netherlands	17.6	16	15.5	16.2	15.5	15.3	15	14.2b	14	13.6	12.9
United Kingdom	:	:	:	19.7	18.4	17.7	17.8	16.8	14.9i	14	13
France	15.2	14.1	14.9	14.7	13.3	13.5	13.4	13.7b	14.2	12.6	13.1
Estonia	:	:	12.6	14	14.2	14.1	12.6	11.8	13.7	14	13.2
Luxembourg	35.3	30.7	:	19.1b	16.8	18.1	17	12.3	12.7	13.3	13.3
Germany	13.3	12.9	:	14.9	14.9	12.5	12.6	12.8 i	12.1	13.8	13.8
<b>EU-27</b>					17.6e	17.3e	17.1	16.6b	16.1	15.6	15.4
Greece	20.7	19.9	20.7	18.6	18.2	17.3	16.7	15.5b	14.9	13.3	15.9
Cyprus	:	:	:	17.5	18.5	17.9	15.9	17.4b	20.6	18.1	16
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:	20.3	21	22.4	21.4	20	18
Romania	:	19.7	19.1	21.5	22.3	21.3	23.2	23.2	23.6b	20.8	19
Latvia	:	:	:	:	:	:	19.5	18.1	15.6	11.9	19p
Italy	31.7	30.1	28.4	27.2	25.3	26.4	24.3	23.5	22.3	21.9	20.8
Spain	31.4	30	29.6	29.5	29.1	29.2	29.9	31.3	31.7	30.8b	29.9
Portugal	40.1	40.6	46.6b	44.9	42.6	44	45.1	40.4	39.4b	38.6	39.2p
Malta	:	:	:	:	54.2	54.4	53.2	48.2	42.0b	41.2	41.6

b: Break in series

u: unreliable or uncertain data

p: provisional value

**Footnotes:**

**Ireland:** before 1998, data relate only to education and training which was relevant for the current or possible future job of the respondent. In addition, data for Ireland are not strictly comparable between 2003 and earlier years as modifications to the questionnaire in 2003 increased capture of information on receipt of education in the four weeks prior to the survey.

Source: Eurostat ([www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat))

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**Table 7: Persons aged 20-24 years who have attained at least the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, 1999-2006**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>
1999	82.0%	79.1%	85.0%
2000	82.6%	79.7%	85.6%
2001	83.9%	80.4%	87.4%
2002	84.0%	80.7%	87.3%
2003	85.1%	81.6%	88.5%
2004	85.3%	82.3%	88.4%
2005	85.8%	82.6%	88.9%
2006	85.7%	82.0%	89.3%

Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey

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**Table 8: Persons aged 20-24 years who have attained at least the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, 1999-2006-International comparisons**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Portugal	40.1	43.2	44.4	44.4	47.9	49.6	49	49.6
Malta	:	40.9	40.1	39	45.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	51	53.7	50.4
Spain	65.2 <sup>(i)</sup>	66	65	63.7	62.2	61.2	61.8	61.6
Luxembourg	71.2 <sup>(b)</sup>	77.5	68	69.8	72.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	72.5	71.1	69.3
Germany	74.6	74.7	73.6	73.3	72.5	72.8	71.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	71.6 <sup>(p)</sup>
Netherlands	72.3	71.9	72.7	73.1	75	75	75.6	74.7
Italy	66.3	69.4 <sup>(b)</sup>	67.9	69.6	71	73.4	73.6	75.5
Romania	77.8	76.1	77.3	76.3	75	75.3	76	77.2
Denmark	73.2	72	78.4 <sup>(i)</sup>	78.6	76.2 <sup>(b)</sup>	76.2	77.1	77.4
<b>EU (27 countries)</b>	:	76.6	76.6	76.7	76.9	77.1	77.4	77.8
United Kingdom	75.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	76.6	76.9	77.1	78.7	77	78.2	78.8
Bulgaria	:	75.2	78.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	77.4	76.3	76.1	76.5	80.5 <sup>(i)</sup>
Greece	78.6	79.2	80.2	81.1	81.7	83	84.1	81.0 <sup>(p)</sup>
Latvia	74.6 <sup>(b)</sup>	76.5	71.7 <sup>(i)</sup>	77.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	75.4	79.5	79.9	81
Estonia	83	79.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	79.8	81.4	81.5	80.3	82.6	82
France	80	81.6	81.8	81.7	81.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	81.4	82.6	82.1 <sup>(p)</sup>
Belgium	76.2 <sup>(i)</sup>	81.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	81.7	81.6	81.2	81.8	81.8	82.4
Hungary	85.2	83.5	84.7	85.9	84.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	83.5	83.4	82.9
Cyprus	80.8	79	80.5	83.5	79.5	77.6	80.4	83.7 <sup>(p)</sup>
Finland	86.8	87.7 <sup>(b)</sup>	86.1	85.8	85.3	84.5	83.4	84.7
<b>Ireland</b>	82	82.6	83.9	84	85.1	85.3	85.8	85.7
Austria	84.7	85.1 <sup>(b)</sup>	85.1	85.3	84.2	85.8 <sup>(i)</sup>	85.9	85.8
Sweden	86.3	85.2	85.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	86.7	85.8	86	87.5	86.5
Lithuania	81.3	78.9 <sup>(i)</sup>	80.5	81.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	84.2	85	87.8	88.2
Slovenia	85.8	88.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	88.2	90.7	90.8	90.5	90.5	89.4
Slovakia	93.3	94.8	94.4	94.5	94.1	91.7	91.8	91.5
Poland	81.6 <sup>(i)</sup>	88.8 <sup>(b)</sup>	89.7	89.2	90.3	90.9	91.1	91.7
Czech Republic	91.8	91.2	90.6	92.2	92.1	91.4	91.2	91.8

b: Break in series

u: unreliable or uncertain data

p: provisional value

Source: Eurostat ([www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat))

The Post Primary Pupil's Database gives the Department the capacity to track pupils at various stages through the second-level system. Together with State exams data, it provides a comprehensive picture of a pupil's movement through second-level education.

Individual pupil data are supplied by schools, using a unique pupil identifier. More recently, with the co-operation of the schools, the Department has been in a position to use the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) as the means to identify and track the vast majority of second level pupils.

The methodology employed takes the cohorts of entrants to the first year of the junior cycle in 1997, 1998, and 1999 and tracks these cohorts through each subsequent year of their participation in State-aided second-level schools.

### **Technical points**

The following technical points should be noted:

- For the purposes of the retentions process, pupils are assigned to the school they first entered even though they may have subsequently changed school.
- Should two schools have amalgamated during the time under consideration, their pupils are assigned to the newly created school. If a school closes and is amalgamated with another school, pupils are assigned to the new school.
- When a school closes and there is no associated amalgamation, the school and pupils in the school are excluded from the retentions process.

### **Adjustments to the Leaving Certificate Retention Rate**

In the absence of definitive information on the numbers of students who leave State-aided schools including publicly funded fee-paying schools and move to non-aided education providers, it is only possible to estimate these numbers. Persons availing of such options apply to sit<sup>ii</sup> the Leaving Certificate examination as external candidates, and thus are recorded by the State Examinations Commission. In 2004 and 2005, 2,473 and 2,383 persons respectively, sat at least 5 subjects in the Leaving Certificate as external candidates. This averages as approximately 2,428 in cohort terms. In the absence of precise data on the number of Irish external candidates sitting the L.C. for the **first time**, it was assumed that

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<sup>ii</sup> The term 'sits' is used to denote those pupils who sat and were graded in one of the State examinations

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approximately 30% of the 2,428 above were either repeating the examination, or were foreign students and hence not in our original cohort. We therefore estimate that 1700 of our 1999 cohort sat the examination for the first time in either 2004 or 2005. This estimate has been incorporated into the determination of a more accurate Leaving Certificate retention rate.

A further adjustment is made to take into account those from the cohort who may have emigrated or died in the period under consideration. An estimate of these numbers is made using CSO data for deaths and emigrants among 12-18 year olds.



**APPENDIX  
B**

**Retention Rates by Sector of Provision, 1991-1999  
cohorts**

	MILESTONE	JC YEAR 1 (NO)	JC YEAR 2	JC YEAR 3	JC SITS	SC YEAR 1	SC YEAR 2	LC RETENTION
1991	Secondary	43822	n/a	96.5	95.6	*	n/a	83.6
	Vocational	16016	n/a	91.6	87.3	*	n/a	61.5
	C&C	10637	n/a	94.3	93.2	*	n/a	74.2
1992	Secondary	44800	n/a	96.4	94.6	*	n/a	84.0
	Vocational	16566	n/a	91.7	86.3	*	n/a	64.2
	C&C	9485	n/a	94.8	91.4	*	n/a	73.7
1993	Secondary	44270	98.6	97.1	95.6	*	n/a	83.9
	Vocational	16424	97.1	92.3	88.2	*	n/a	64.4
	C&C	10043	98.3	94.8	92.1	*	n/a	74.2
1994	Secondary	43233	98.9	97.8	96.4	*	n/a	83.4
	Vocational	15837	97.5	93.2	89.4	*	n/a	65.9
	C&C	10033	98.5	95.5	93.1	*	n/a	75.8
1995	Secondary	39928	99.0	97.8	96.2	94.1	86.4	83.0
	Vocational	16248	98.1	94.0	90.4	84.1	70.9	67.3
	C&C	11078	98.6	96.4	93.9	89.3	79.2	75.9
1996	Secondary	38059	98.9	97.8	96.3	94.3	85.6	82.4
	Vocational	15425	98.3	94.5	91.1	84.5	71.1	67.6
	C&C	10584	98.6	96.0	93.5	89.3	79.1	76.1
1997	Secondary	36638	99.0	97.7	96.1	93.8	85.6	82.7
	Vocational	15061	98.2	94.8	91.1	84.5	73.0	69.7
	C&C	10406	98.6	96.5	94.0	89.9	80.3	77.5
1998	Secondary	36145	98.8	97.6	96.0	93.8	86.6	84.2
	Vocational	14853	98.1	94.8	91.5	85.8	75.2	70.9
	C&C	10146	98.7	96.5	93.8	90.3	82.2	79.4
1999	Secondary	35865	98.6	97.4	95.8	94.2	87.8	84.6
	Vocational	14615	98.2	95.1	92.2	87.2	76.9	71.6
	C&C	10306	98.8	96.8	94.0	91.1	83.1	79.2

\* Data previously published for Senior Cycle Year 1 for the 1991-1994 cohorts are not comparable with data for the 1995-1999 cohorts.