

# Graduate Outcomes Survey Ireland

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**HEIRNETWORK**

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL  
RESEARCH NETWORK



In this presentation...

Graduate Outcomes Survey operation

What do we do with the data?

Review of the Graduate Outcomes  
Survey (2024)





# Higher Education Authority

The HEA is the state agency for higher education in Ireland.

Responsible for:

- Strategic development of higher education system
- Policy advice to Minister
- Funding
- Governance and accountability
- Equity of access and equality
- International (e.g. Erasmus)
- Teaching and learning
- Research policy
- Statistics and data analytics

# Graduate Tracking in Ireland

Ireland gathers data on its graduates in two ways:

## The Graduate Outcomes Survey

- Since 2017, annual survey
- Universities, TUs, IoTs, Colleges
- NFQ Levels 6 (Short UG) - 10 (Doctorate)
- 9 months after graduation

## Administrative data in Central Statistics Office (CSO)

- Uses PPSNs (Personal Public Service Numbers - unique individual identifiers) to track graduates over time
- 10 years of longitudinal data



# Graduate Outcomes Survey

Distributed approach to data collection:

**Universities:** University College Dublin, University College Cork, University of Galway, Maynooth University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Limerick, Dublin City University

**Technological Universities:** TU Dublin (3), Munster TU (2), South-East TU (2), Atlantic TU (3), TU Shannon (2)

**Institutes of Technology:** Dundalk IT, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

**Colleges:** National College of Art and Design, Mary Immaculate College, Dublin Business School



# Survey operation

Census date is 31 March of each year.

Each HEI decides on its own fieldwork window.

- Usually about six weeks, generally three weeks for emails and three weeks for calls.
- Some start in March, others run up to August.

Data comes into the HEA by early September, with two weeks to resolve any identified issues with the data.

HEA publishes the national report by year end.

Response rate nationally is around 50%.



## Platforms used:

- Qualtrix
- Verint
- MS Forms
- Banner
- Formstack
- Survey Monkey

Most HEIs carry out in-house, some outsource.



# Incentives

Varying approaches:

Vouchers

Donation to Student Assistance Fund

GoPros/Weekend away

HEA is trialling use of vouchers this year.



# What do we do with the data?



# The data is for the public!

## Technological university graduates more likely to be employed after leaving college

Within nine months of graduating 80% of graduates are employed, with most earning up to €40,000 a year

Expand



Fewer than one in 10 graduates in 2020 from disadvantaged backgrounds



On average, female graduates were less affluent than males, albeit the gap was relatively small.

THU, 16 FEB, 2023 - 06:00

JESS CASEY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

Fewer than one in 10 graduates from the class of 2020 were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The finding is included in the Graduate Outcomes for Various Socio-Economic Groups published on Thursday by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

### LATEST STORIES >

Police in Gran Canaria issue appeal for information on missing Irish woman

Workers in 'slavery-like conditions' found at BYD factory site in Brazil

Lorry driver dies in single-vehicle crash in Co Tyrone

Man charged with murder after allegedly setting woman on fire inside New York subway

Twelve people killed in explosives factory blast in Turkey

### CLASSROOM CENTRAL

# Irish Independent

IRELAND'S BEST-SELLING NEWSPAPER



## Let's talk about sexual health Health & Living

Eight pages inside

Limerick rise to challenge of being champions  
Eamon Sweeney - Sport

P27-34

Monday, February 18, 2019

€2.20 (€1.95 in Northern Ireland) C



SAD LOSER: Jockey Stephen Cottier (left) goes company with Cope's Webs while Timmy Love and Fildhers O'Donney also fall at the last fence at Punchestown's go-in-to-point meeting yesterday. All were unscathed in their falls. PHOTO: RAY MULCAHY/RACING SPORT, PAGES 44-45

A hard Border means violence, report warns

Karen Dayle  
GROUP POLITICAL EDITOR

A RETURN to violence on the island of Ireland is inevitable if a hard border is imposed, with the report being on what scale', a stark new warning.

Young people will be 'grinned into violent activity', according to the influential report from Ulster University, which also warns that making two communities in a divided Ireland would result in conflict.

A problem identified by Professors Mark Thompson and Pat Doherty is that the [Good Friday] Agreement generates hope for the future after the pain caused by decades of Troubles.

Meanwhile, with the Brexit deadline less than six weeks away, France has denied reports that President Macron has offered concessions on the border to end the stalemate in negotiations.

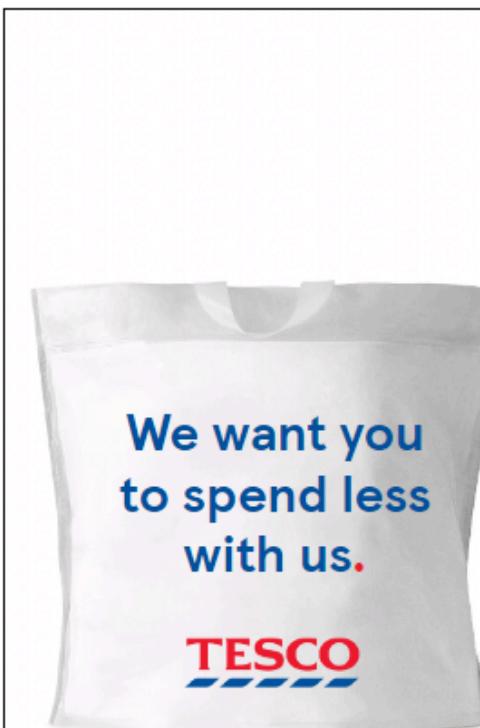
Full report: Page 45

## Teachers top pay league for our recent graduates

## Revealed: graduates with disabilities are less likely to be employed – and are paid less



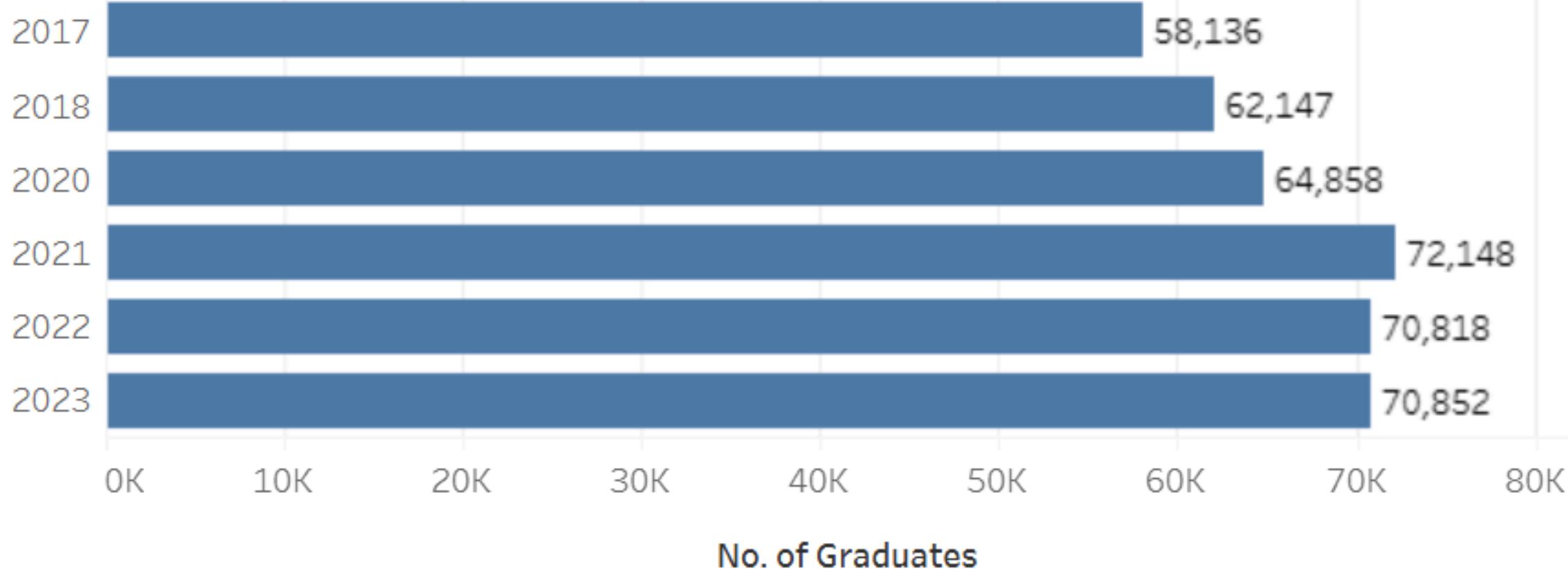
Equality of opportunity is the goal. Photo: Getty Images



Katherine Donnelly



70,852  
Graduates





80.2%  
in Employment

10.9%  
in Further Study

2.5%  
in Other Activity

6.5%  
seeking employment

52% in  
professional  
occupations



92% working  
in Ireland



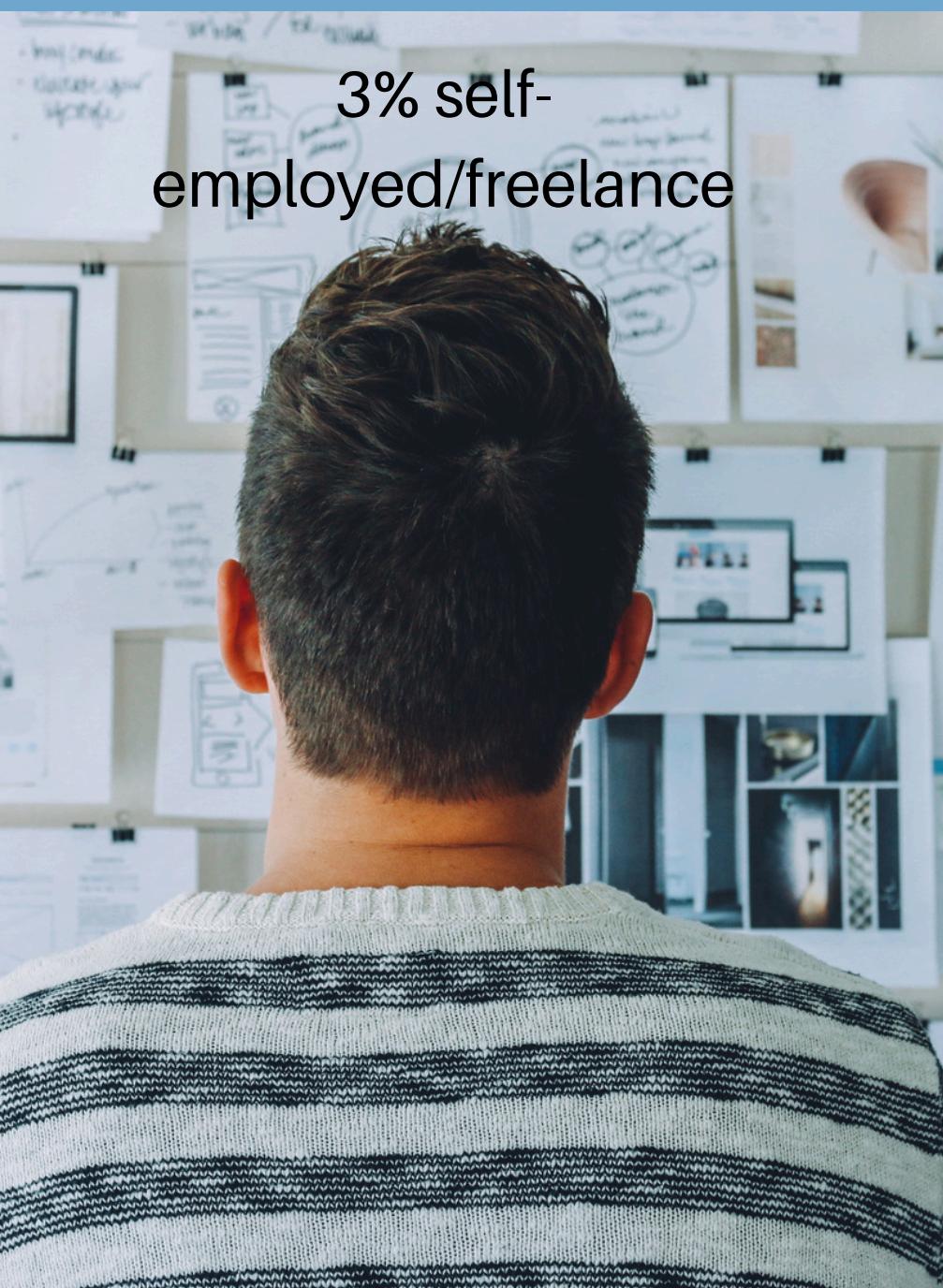
41% working  
in Dublin



57% have  
completed  
internships



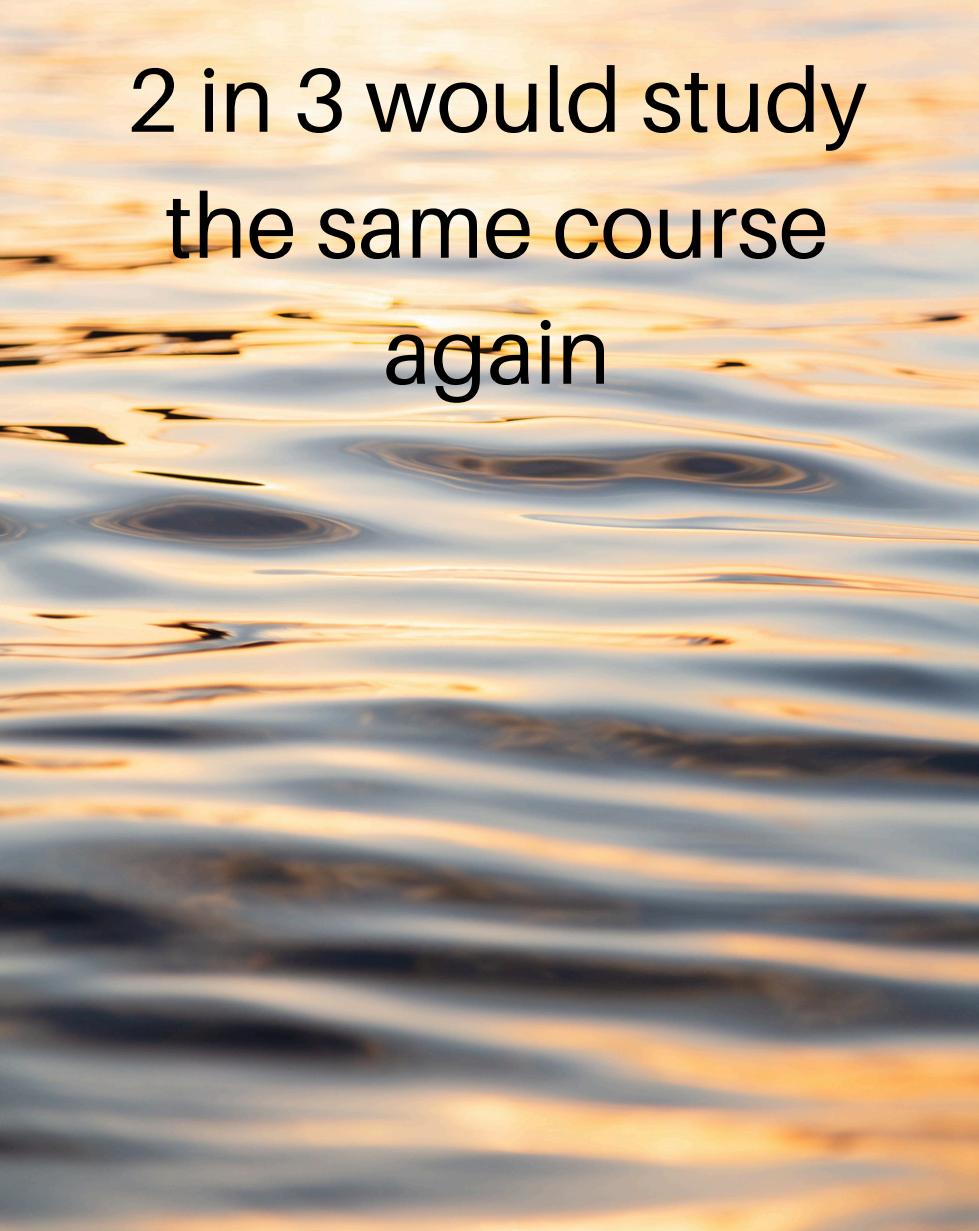
64% on  
permanent contracts



# Undergraduate Degrees

59% earn  
between €30k  
and €50k





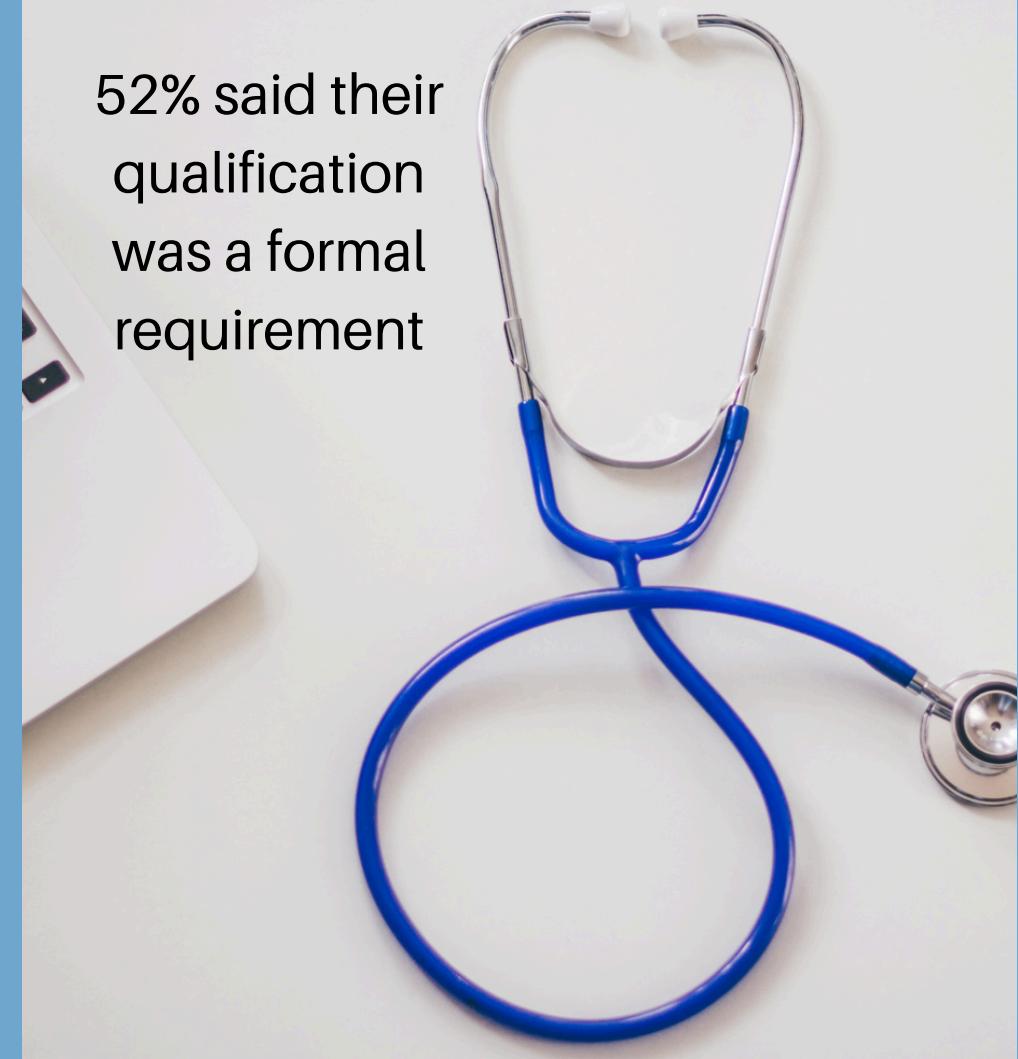
2 in 3 would study  
the same course  
again

# Undergraduate Degrees

63% said their course is  
relevant or very relevant  
to their job



18% found  
their job  
through  
personal  
contacts



52% said their  
qualification  
was a formal  
requirement

Background
Overview
Employment
Further Study

Gender  
(All)
Degree  
(All)
Field of Study  
(All)
Domicile  
(All)
Year  
2023

## Highest employment rates by detailed field of study

### Top 100 Graduate Employers

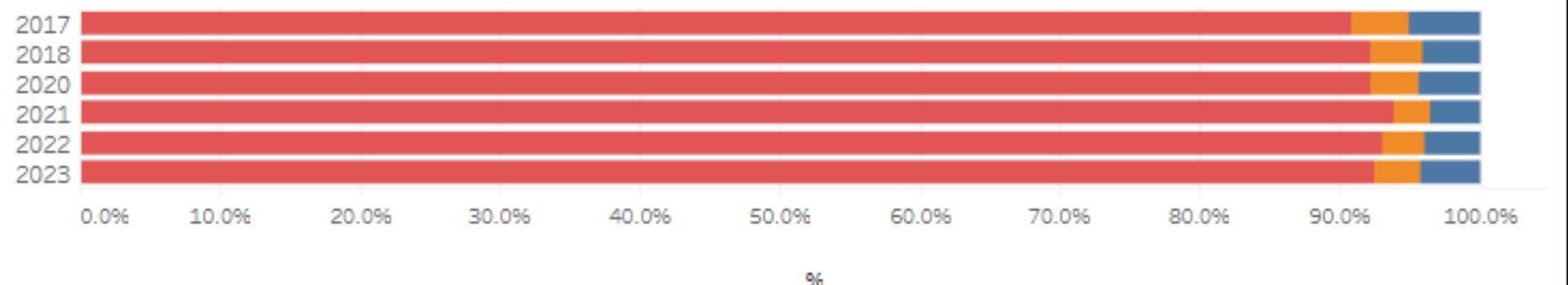
Protection of persons and property	100.0%
Interdisciplinary programmes an..	100.0%
Environmental protection technol..	100.0%
Care of the elderly and of disable..	100.0%
Military and defence	98.7%
Materials (glass, paper, plastic an..	97.3%
Teacher training without subject ..	97.2%
Occupational health and safety	96.5%
Work skills	95.5%
Architecture and construction not..	94.1%

N/A	2,188
Schools	1,189
HSE	987
Department of Education	436
Defence Forces	238
PwC	225
Freelance/Self-Employed	219
KPMG	207

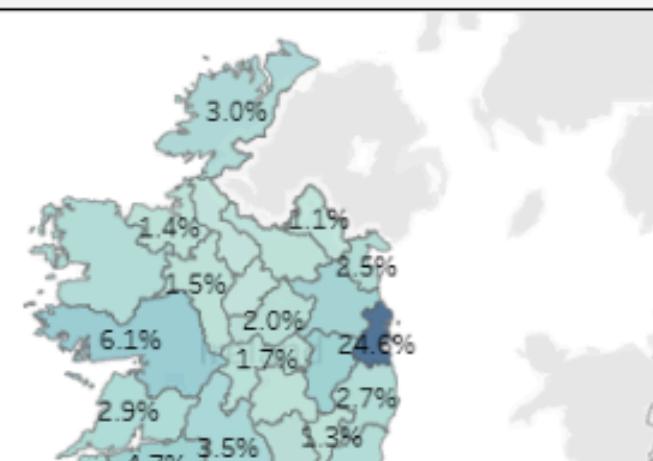
\* Of graduates who responded (49.3% response rate). Total count is unweighted. Companies with <10 graduates are excluded.

## Employment Type

Filter  
Employment Type



## Where are graduates from?

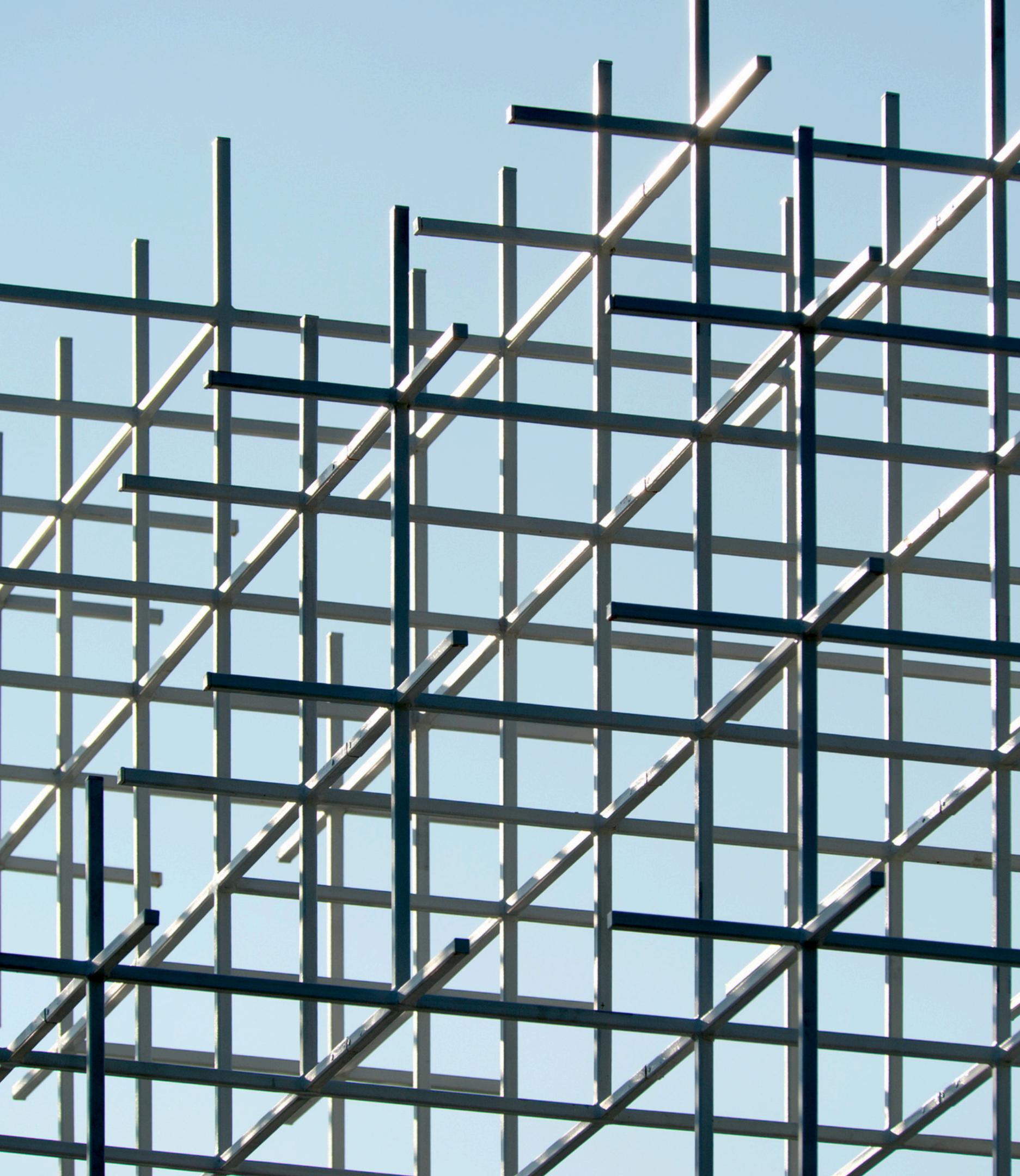




## The data is for HEIs!

Note that higher education institutions have strong say into the content of the Graduate Outcomes Survey - the survey is designed in collaboration with higher education institutions and other stakeholders (e.g. career guidance, disability, employers, students, state).

HEIs use data for career guidance, programme review, quality assurance, marketing, employer engagement etc.



## What does the HEA use the data for?

Performance reporting in Irish higher education is assessed through the Higher Education System Performance Framework:

The *System Performance Framework 2023-2028* sets out parameters under which HEIs identify their contribution to the achievement of institutional and national strategy, as appropriate to their mission, scale, location, and strategic plan.

The HEA and HEIs meet in person to develop their multi-annual performance agreements, and an annual review takes place.

# Performance Objective 1

To integrate Transversal skills (TS) in curriculum delivery and University processes for an expanded set of undergraduate Programmes across five Faculties.

DCU Performance Agreement 2024–2028

## Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 1

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
1.1	<b>Percentage of students from relevant programmes engaging with the platform to evidence TS</b>	Unihub	Quantitative	0% of relevant students engaging with the platform	N/A - no benchmark available at present	20%	40%	60%	80%	80%
1.2	<b>Proportion (%) of relevant<sup>2</sup> students that report valuing transversal skills as part of their education</b>	Institutional Student Survey on TS	Quantitative and qualitative	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	5%	20%	35%	50%	50 %
1.3	<b>Proportion (%) of relevant Students who perceive transversal skills as important to their employability</b>	Institutional Student Survey on TS	Quantitative and qualitative	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	20%	40%	60%	80%	80%
1.4	<b>Proportion (%) of Employers reporting 'excellent' or 'very good' across a range of transversal skills (on average)</b>	INTRA Employer survey	Quantitative	Baseline to be established.	N/A - no benchmark available at present	30%	45%	60%	75%	75%



## What does the HEA use the data for?

Graduate Outcomes Survey data is key national data metric and informs the evidence base for higher education.

It is not used for allocation of funding.

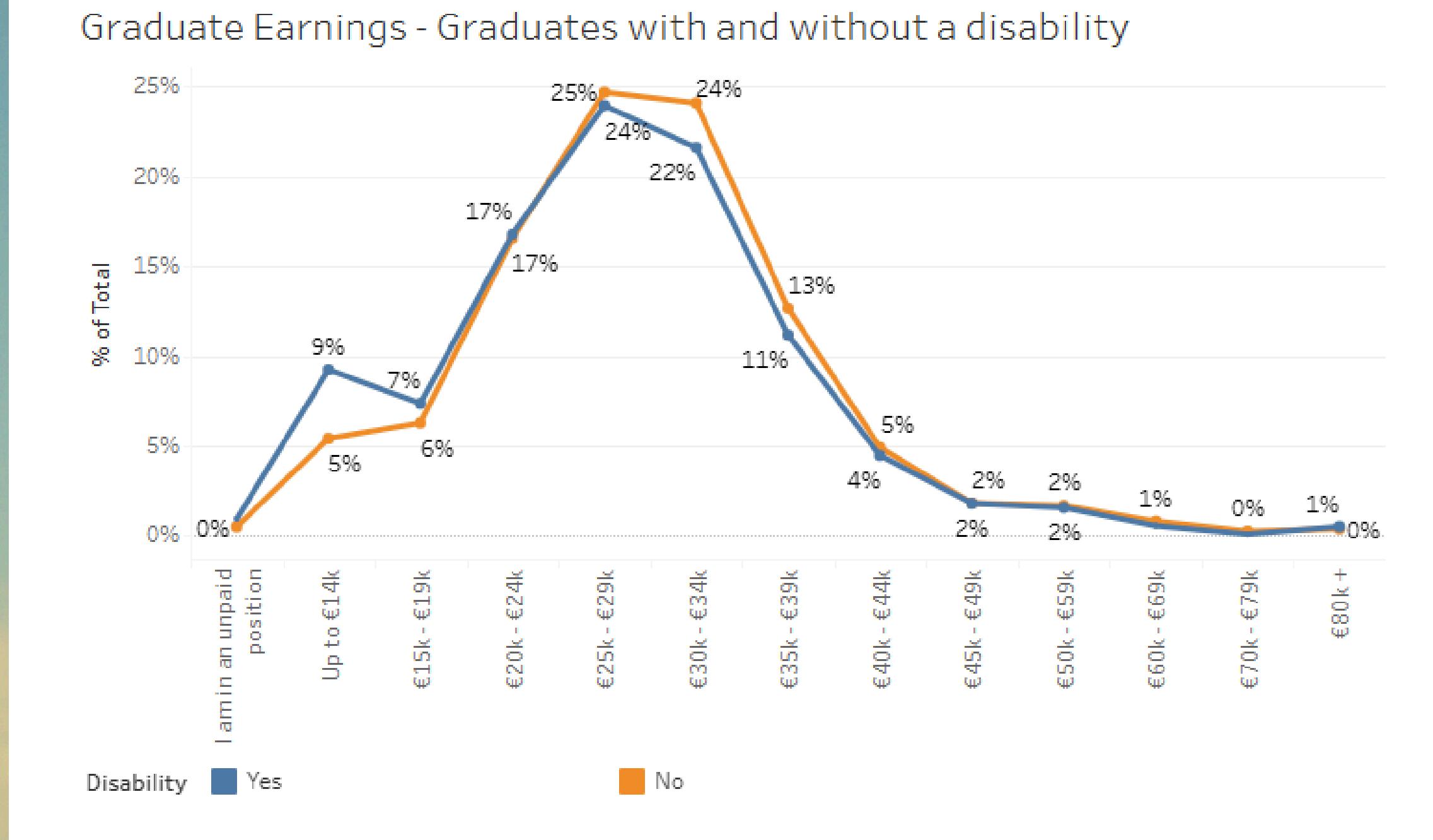
Data is generally produced at national level.

- Institutional data is available, but not presented with the aim of direct HEI-to-HEI or course-to-course comparison.
- Specific statistical reports with HEI comparisons have focussed on the need to consider HEIs' levels and fields of study and make-up of their student population.

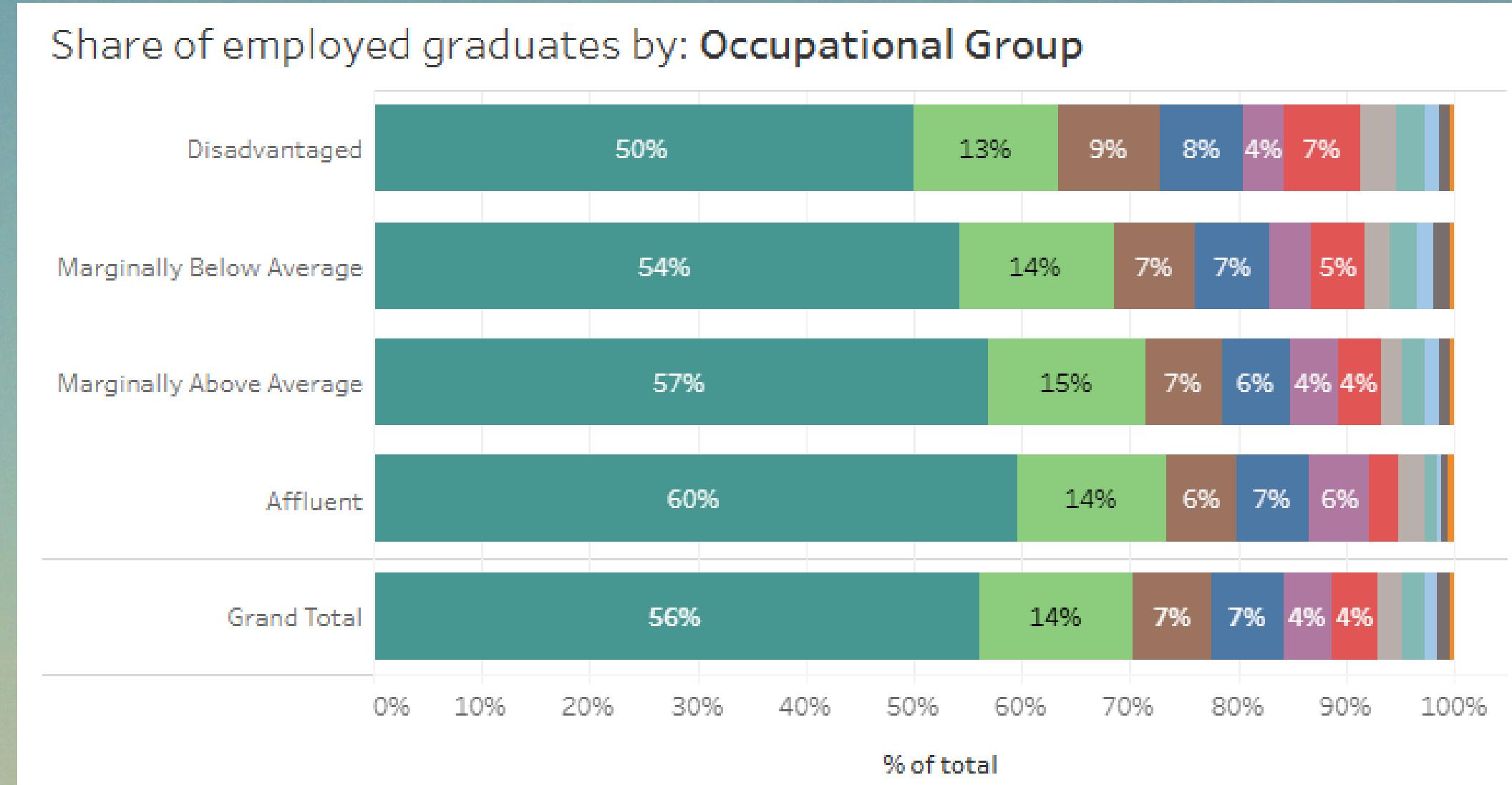
# Enriching the evidence base e.g. Access

We have linked our Graduate Outcomes Survey data with **disability data** collected through the Equal Access Survey, and this gives an insight into the post-graduation outcomes of students with a disability.

This then feeds into national policy objectives in the area of Access - particularly the National Access Plan 2022-2028.



# Enriching the evidence base e.g. Access



We have linked our Graduate Outcomes Survey data with **address data** collected through our main student record, so we can look at graduate outcomes through the lens of socio-economic status.

This also allows us to measure progress in the National Access Plan 2022-2028.

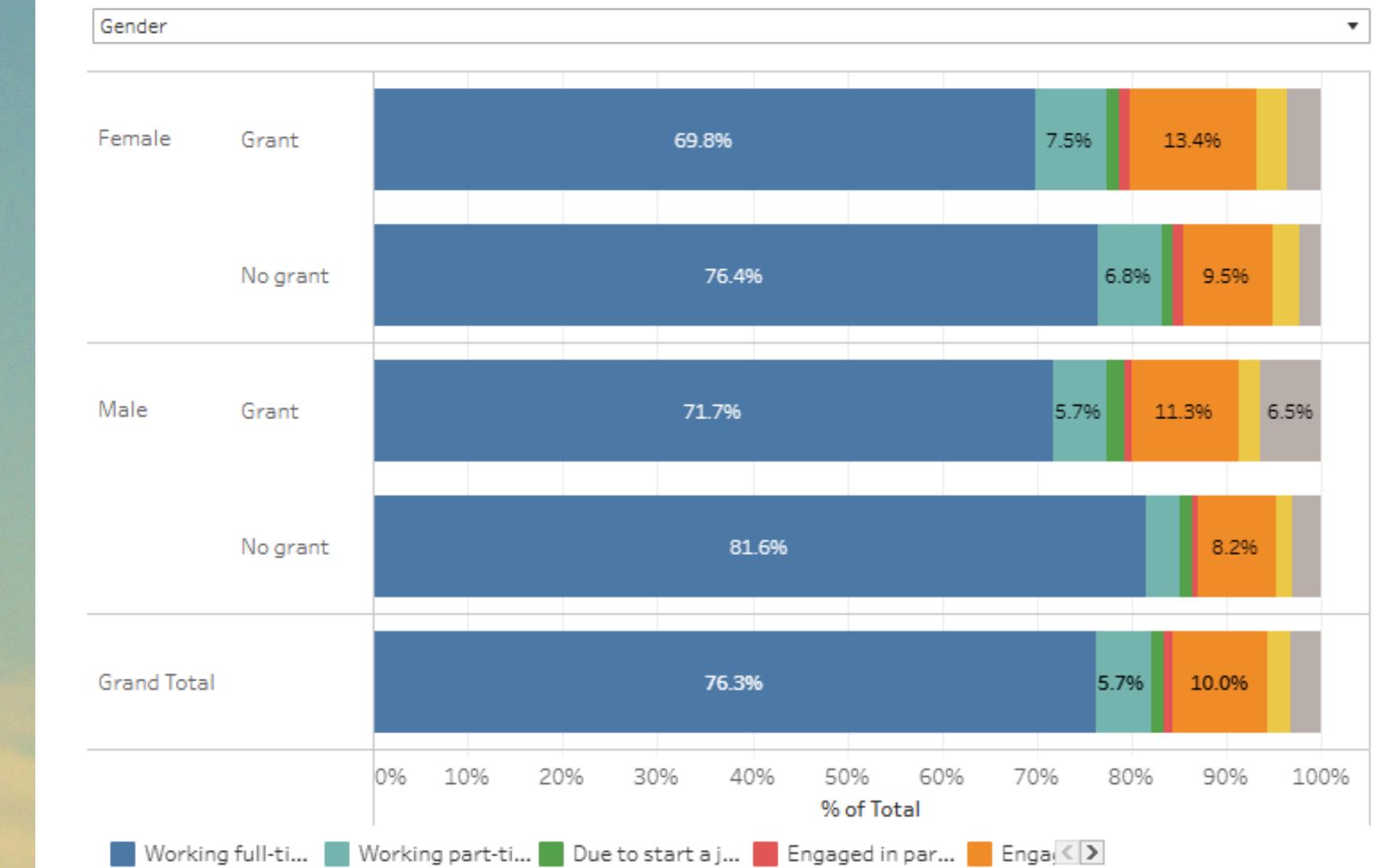


# Enriching the evidence base e.g. Access

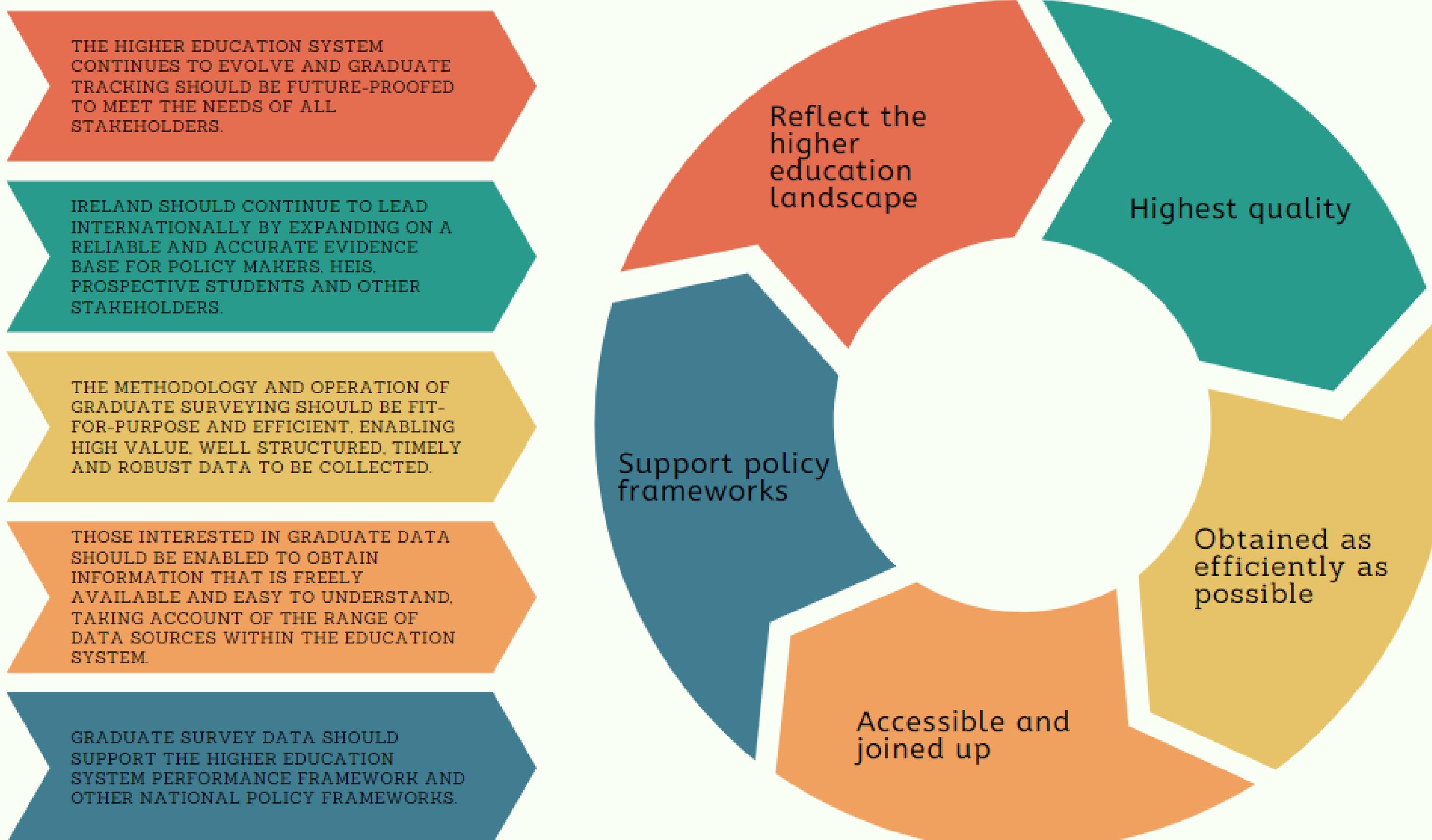
Most recently, we have collaborated with the state agency for student grants (SUSI) to consider graduate outcomes for those in receipt of a grant.

We are developing data sharing agreements with other agencies in order to expand on what we know about our students and graduates.

**86.4% of non-recipient male graduates were in employment nine months post graduation versus 78.2% of recipients.**



# Graduate Outcomes Survey Review

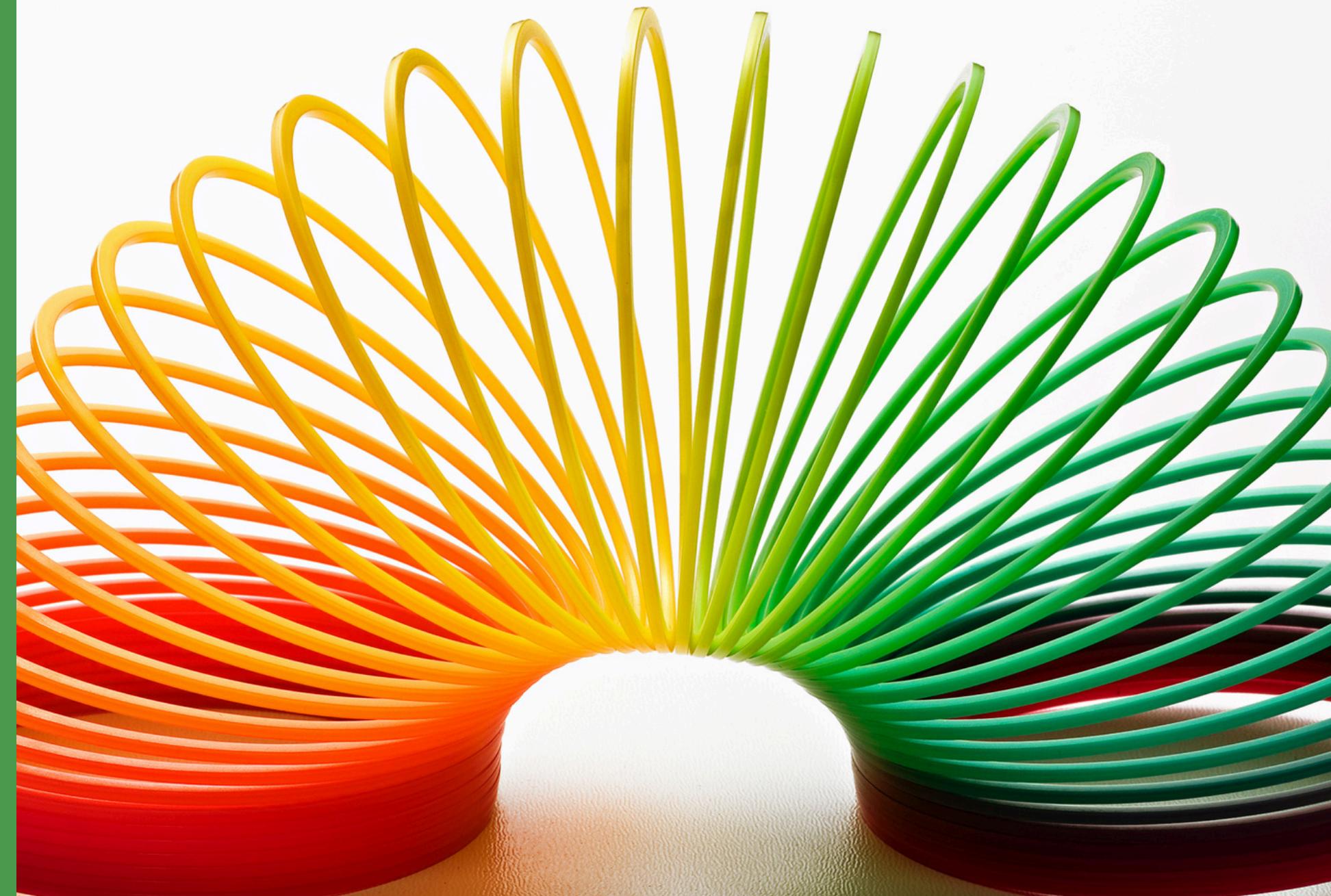


# Findings/Recommendations

Top level finding:

“Our overall finding is that the HEA is delivering a robust and efficient survey of third-level graduate outcomes.

“The survey generates high-quality data, while also delivering a strong response rate, ensuring flexibility in the methodology for institutions to collect meaningful response rates.”



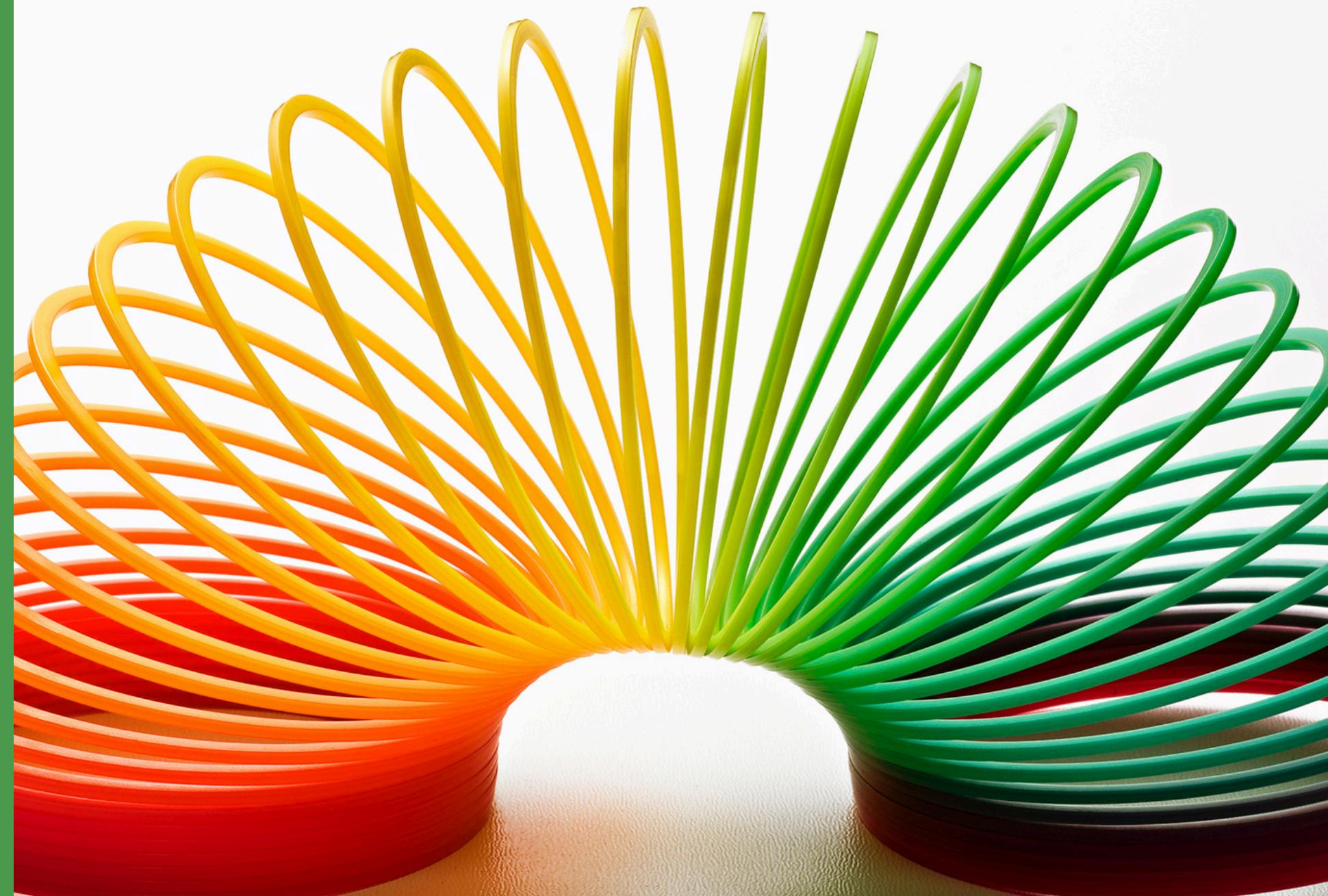
# Findings/Recommendations

Census date and distributed approach to data collection both stand.

Recommendations for:

- Survey questions
- Cohort to be included
- Promotions
- Accessibility
- Communications

Changes will be in place for 2026.

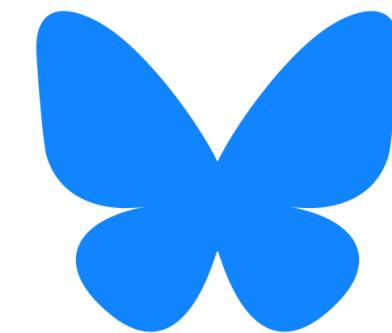


# GRADUATE OUTCOMES

## WHERE TO NEXT?



[www.graduateoutcomes.ie](http://www.graduateoutcomes.ie)



@heastatisticsirl.bsky.social



hea-graduate-outcomes



# GRADUATE OUTCOMES

WHERE TO NEXT?

Thank you!